

Feed your head

50 ESSENTIAL SONGS FROM THE SUMMER OF LOVE!



Words by MICHAEL BONNER & TOM PINNOCK

1 THE SEEDS "Can't Seem To Make You Mine"

[SINGLE, MARCH 1965; REISSUED MAY 1967]



The Seeds were a critical link between the mid-'60s garage scene and the Summer Of Love's acid daze, of which "Can't Seem To Make You Mine" was a fuzzed-out early peak. Led by the indomitable Sky Saxon, The Seeds later appeared opposite Jack Nicholson in hippy cash-in film *Psych-Out*. Guitarist Jon Savage eventually joined the LAPD while Saxon disappeared into the Source Family, a religious commune at the fringes of the Age Of Aquarius.

2 DONOVAN "Sunshine Superman"

[SUNSHINE SUPERMAN, AUGUST 1966; SINGLE, DECEMBER 1966]



Initially branded a Dylan copyist, Donovan Leitch nevertheless proved himself a pioneer in at least one key area. He was the first high-profile British pop star arrested by the Drug Squad, led by DS Pilcher, who'd later oversee the Redlands bust. Represented by The Beatles' lawyer David Jacobs, Donovan avoided prison while fortuitously his first record after the trial, "Sunshine Superman", became a US No 1. Session guitarist Jimmy Page received just over £3 for his services.

3 THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS "Strange Young Girls"

[THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS, AUGUST 1966]



The quartet got together while tripping at Denny Doherty's Greenwich Village apartment in 1965; a meeting indicative of their collective hedonistic pursuits. From their second album, "Strange Young Girls" is a cautionary tale about LA living where unwitting hipsters are "Offering their youth/On the altar of acid". John Phillips further cemented the band's counterculture credentials as co-organiser of the Monterey festival, which they also headlined.

4 SONNY & CHER "Little Man"

[SINGLE, SEPTEMBER 1966; IN CASE YOU'RE IN LOVE, MARCH 1967]



Sonny & Cher first visited the UK in August 1965, at the suggestion of The Rolling Stones, making them among the earliest representatives of the emerging West Coast scene to reach British shores. Together they represented the

acceptable face of hippie culture: bell-bottoms, love beads and fringed jackets, but without a radical agenda. Characterised by gypsy guitars and exotic textures, "Little Man" was the closest they came to reflecting the freewheeling spirit of the era.

5 THE ELECTRIC PRUNES "I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night)"

[SINGLE, NOVEMBER 1966; THE ELECTRIC PRUNES, APRIL 1967]



Prime movers on the garage rock circuit, the Prunes ("What's purple and goes 'Buzz buzz'? goes the joke") were courted by Hendrix – who invited them to his pad to watch home movies – and later co-opted by David Axelrod, who encouraged them to perform an elaborate psychedelic version of the Greek mass. The opening track on Lenny Kaye's *Nuggets* compilation, "I Had Too Much..." was a Billboard Top 20 hit: the kaleidoscopic sound of the underground moving overground.

6 THE BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD "For What It's Worth"

[BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD, DECEMBER 1966; SINGLE, JANUARY 1967]



Stephen Stills' song focused on an early confrontation in the culture wars: the November 1966 riots centred around music venue Pandora's Box on Sunset Strip. By then, the Springfield were embedded in LA culture, regulars at the Whisky A Go Go, and Stills' song captured the Us vs Them wariness of the era. Similar conflicts raged within the band. Neil Young quit by Monterey, then rejoined; the band was done by May 1968, just as the glow faded from the peace and love generation.

7 THE DOORS "Light My Fire"

[THE DOORS, JANUARY 1967; SINGLE, MAY 1967]



The point at which the counterculture met the mainstream. To promote the LP, Elektra purchased a billboard on Sunset Strip – the first time a rock band appeared on one. Subsequently booked to perform the song on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, The Doors were refused permission to use the word "higher", but did so anyway – receiving a ban as a result. The song exists not only as three-minute single but a seven-minute LP track, giving Morrison's preoccupations with sex and death full rein.

8 THE YOUNGBLOODS "Get Together"

[THE YOUNGBLOODS, JANUARY 1967; SINGLE, JULY 1967]



The Doors: higher consciousness

TOP 50 SUMMER OF LOVE SONGS



Interlopers from New York's folk scene, The Youngbloods' appeal for peace and brotherhood "Get Together" earned them a warm welcome among the SF clans. Written by Quicksilver Messenger Service's Dino Valenti, the song was also recorded by Jefferson Airplane. The Youngbloods – whose number included a guitarist called Banana – later walked off the Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* after being told they could only play their hit.

9 THE BEATLES "Strawberry Fields Forever"

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10 THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS "I've Got Levitation"

[SINGLE, FEBRUARY 1967; *EVERYWHERE*, NOVEMBER 1967]



The avatars of Houston's underground scene, the Elevators were critical in turning garage into psych. Among their

admirers, Janis Joplin considered joining the group before moving to San Francisco. The reverb-drenched "I've Got Levitation", meanwhile, foregrounded the band's unhinged mix of psychedelics and philosophy, where "higher bodies... will centre my vibrations". Lyricist and jug player Tommy Hall advocated a daily LSD regimen while Roky Erikson once ate a fistful to exorcise a "bad spirit".

11 THE MOVING SIDEWALKS "99th Floor"

[SINGLE, FEBRUARY 1967]



Later gifted a guitar by Hendrix, Billy Gibbons started out fusing the sound of British Invasion beat groups with Texas blues before getting switched on to the groundbreaking work being done by his friends in the Elevators. Retooling a song by his old band, The Coachmen, "99th Floor" became a significant hit in Texas. A support slot on The Doors' national tour in 1968 promised greater success, but ended after they accidentally set the headliner's amps on fire. For Gibbons, ZZ Top beckoned.

12 SOFT MACHINE "Feelin' Reelin' Squeelin'"

[B-SIDE, FEBRUARY 1967]



The Canterbury group's debut single, "Love Makes Sweet Music" was a straightforward slice of soul-influenced pop produced by Chas Chandler; its B-side, however, was a nightmarish, atonal descent

into madness. Recorded by provocateur Kim Fowley and released on the same day as "Strawberry Fields Forever"/"Penny Lane", this bad trip put onto tape was one of the wildest 'pop' creations yet. Crucially, all four members – Kevin Ayers, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt and Daavid Allen – went on to make essential contributions to underground music post-Summer Of Love.

13 JEFFERSON AIRPLANE "White Rabbit"

[SURREALISTIC PILLOW, FEBRUARY 1967; SINGLE, JUNE 1967]



A bridge between two mutually inclusive worlds: the Victorian fantastic and the '60s psychedelic. Imported by Grace Slick from her previous band, The Great Society – one of the forerunners of the Bay Area acid rock scene – Slick wrote "White Rabbit" after she'd listened to Miles Davis' *Sketches Of Spain* for 24 hours straight on acid. The month before *Surrealistic Pillow*'s release, the band performed at the Human Be-In in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park – the harbinger of the Summer Of Love.

14 BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY "Down On Me"

[SINGLE MARCH 1967; *BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY*, AUGUST 1967]



Later to share a manager, Albert Grossman, with Bob Dylan, Big Brother And The Holding Company evolved from extended jam sessions at their Haight-Ashbury home before becoming the house band at the Avalon Ballroom. The group's second single, "Down On Me" was an old protest song whose lyrics, delivered over a distorted R&B backing, exhorted its audience to "help each other, honey, if you can". It was an inclusive message and one that the band chose to share during their breakthrough Saturday set at Monterey.

15 GRATEFUL DEAD "Viola Lee Blues"

[THE GRATEFUL DEAD, MARCH 1967]



The terrific run of records emanating from San Francisco during the spring of '67 continued with the Dead's debut album – of which the 10-minute "Viola Lee Blues" went some way to capture the band's live essence. Dating from the start of their career, it was the song in their shows where they'd regularly jam and stretch out, as an indication of where

the music might go next. Encouraged by the Acid Tests gatherings to expand the perimeters of both music and consciousness, the song also features on the band's very first rehearsal tape from January 1966.

16 THE MOVE "I Can Hear The Grass Grow"

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Encouraged to form by David Bowie (then, simply, 'Davy Jones'), The Move's songs reflected the dark, overpowering aspect of the acid experience. Roy Wood himself didn't indulge, but bassist Ace Kefford's experiments helped inspire "Night Of Fear", "Disturbance" and "I Can Hear The Grass Grow". Hendrix was a fan – Wood and guitarist Trevor Burton provided backing vocals for "You Got Me Floatin'" – and at one point, they were in discussion to succeed Pink Floyd as the new residents at UFO.

17 THE PURPLE GANG "Granny Takes A Trip"

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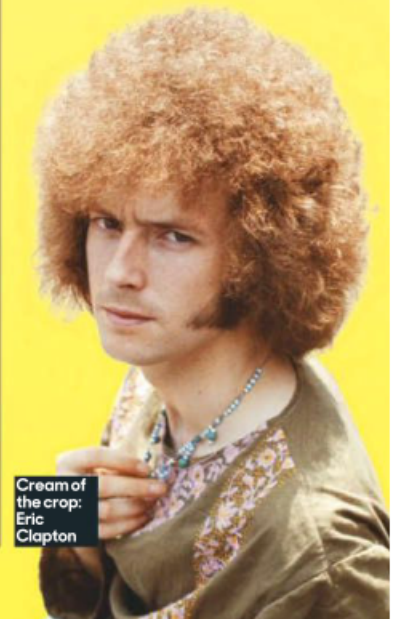


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The Move: put out to grass

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Cream of the crop: Eric Clapton

TOP 50 SUMMER OF LOVE SONGS



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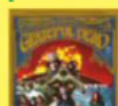
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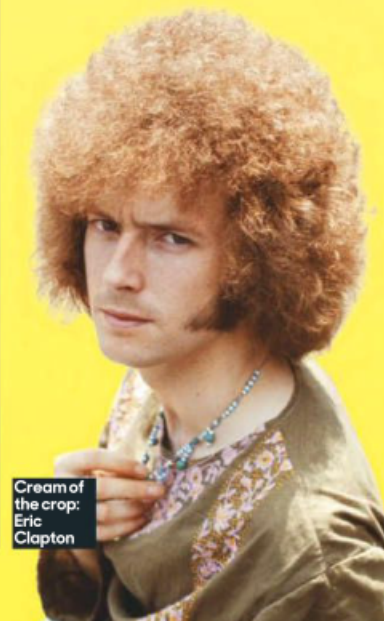


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Cream of the crop: Eric Clapton

Lennon, dressed in full *Sgt Pepper* regalia, in the Speakeasy. That same year, the *Bee Gees*' 1st album arrived, zigzagging between robustly crafted ballads ("To Love Somebody") and baroque-pop psychedelia. "Every Christian Lion Hearted Man..." is particularly switched on, featuring Gregorian chanting, Mellotron work and a woozy "Strawberry Fields..." feel; a high point among a string of majestically skewed '60s albums.

30 THE BYRDS
"Lady Friend"

[SINGLE, JULY 1967]

The Byrds enjoyed a rewarding relationship with The Beatles, exchanging ragas, 12-strings and sunglasses; David Crosby even hooked up George Harrison to Indian music. The month before "Lady Friend" was released, The Byrds appeared at Monterey, where Crosby advocated LSD for "all the statesmen and politicians in the world"; the next day, he stood in for an absent Neil Young during Buffalo Springfield's set. It transpired that "Lady Friend" was effectively Crosby's swansong for the band; a blissful blast of baroque and roll.

31 INCREDIBLE STRING BAND
"Way Back In The 1960s"

[THE 5000 SPIRITS OR THE LAYERS OF THE ONION, JULY 1967]

On the final track of Mike Heron and Robin Williamson's second album, the Scottish duo perceptively recognised the future significance of the mid-'60s counterculture they were immersed in, with Williamson singing as if looking back at the era from the 21st century (2034 or 2035, if the reference to Williamson's 91st birthday can be taken seriously). Laid over guitar and sitar, the lyrics are a multi-layered feast, mixing mentions of "wild World War Three" with jokey references to "real food cans" and Bob Dylan, "one fellow singing in those days... who was quite good".

32 PEARLS BEFORE SWINE
"Morning Song"

[SINGLE JULY 1967; ONE NATION UNDERGROUND, OCTOBER 1967]

Aged 10, Tom Rapp entered a Minnesota talent contest where he beat another budding musician: 'Bobby Zimmerman'. Some years later, Rapp's band Pearls Before Swine signed with New York avant-garde label ESP; home of The Fugs and



The Bee Gees: psychedelic fever

William Burroughs. Behind a Hieronymus Bosh cover, the band's debut *One Nation Underground* is transportive psychedelic folk. The centrepiece, "Morning Song", layers organ drones over a brackish guitar motif; there is a recorder solo too. Rapp currently practises law.

33 KEITH WEST
"Excerpts From A Teenage Opera (Grocer Jack)"

[SINGLE, JULY 1967]

A former art school friend of Ray Davies, Mark Wirtz worked as an in-house producer at EMI during the '60s. There he worked on "...Grocer Jack", fronted by Tomorrow vocalist Keith West and envisaged as the first instalment from an ambitious project, *A Teenage Opera*; a series of sketches featuring different characters all living in a fictitious village. Both Pete Townshend and Paul McCartney cited its influence on, respectively, *Tommy* and side two of *Abbey Road*.

34 ERIC BURDON & THE ANIMALS
"San Franciscan Night"

[SINGLE, AUGUST 1967; WINDS OF CHANGE, SEPTEMBER 1967]

In early 1967, Eric Burdon relocated to California, where he assembled a new lineup of The Animals, reconstituted for the Age of Aquarius. Ringing in Burdon's own cultural changes, "San Franciscan Night" was written about an evening spent in the company of Janis Joplin, where "Strobe lights beam create dreams". The UK B-side, "Gratefully Dead", celebrated one of the city's fabled institutions; later that year, Burdon

immortalised his experiences performing alongside many of his new friends in "Monterey".

35 THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE
"Burning Of The Midnight Lamp"

[SINGLE, AUGUST 1967; ELECTRIC LADYLAND, OCTOBER 1968]

The creation of "Burning Of The Midnight Lamp" spanned the Summer Of Love. Began in May, Hendrix only returned to finish the song in July – a three-month period of fast, irrevocable change, including the release of *Sgt Pepper's* in June. It finds Hendrix trying his hand at the harpsichord, but it's also his first use of the wah-wah pedal and one of the best examples of the kind of fluid, Paisley-patterned psychedelic pop records Hendrix made during his London days.

36 PINK FLOYD
"Interstellar Overdrive"

[THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN, AUGUST 1967]

The snappy psych-pop of "Arnold Layne" and "See Emily Play" might have come first, but it was "Interstellar Overdrive" that saw Syd Barrett's group truly expanding minds in the Summer Of Love. Mixing the avant-improv of AMM and free jazz with a burly riff inspired by Love's "My Little Red Book", this abstract, exploratory piece lasted almost 10 minutes on record. However, it could stretch to half an hour when performed at underground havens such as the UFO Club or Middle Earth, Barrett and Rick Wright using their Binson tape-echo units to extreme effect.

37 THE ROLLING STONES
"We Love You"

[SINGLE, AUGUST 1967]

Busted at Redlands in February, briefly jailed in June, the Stones convened at Olympic Studios in July to record "We Love You", a 'thank you' to fans for their support during recent travails. Lennon and McCartney supplied backing vocals, conducted by Allen Ginsberg, who was in town for a pro-cannabis rally at Hyde Park. An accompanying promo was shot by filmmaker Peter Whitehead, fresh from capturing the capital's groovy goings-on in *Tonite Let's All Make Love In London*. The B-side, "Dandelion", continued the Stones' psychedelic summer.

38 SMALL FACES
"Itchycoo Park"

[SINGLE, AUGUST 1967]

Previous single "Here Come The Nice" had extolled the virtues of amphetamines, but for "Itchycoo Park", Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane opted for mellow vibes. The band's "Green Circles" had been an early pass at psych grooves, but "Itchycoo Park" found the band expand their creative consciousness with phasing, Mellotrons and a desire to "get hung up, feed the ducks with a bun". A later photo shoot involved kaftans.

39 VANILLA FUDGE
"You Keep Me Hangin' On"

[SINGLE, AUGUST 1967; VANILLA FUDGE, AUGUST 1967]

Less directly connected to the utopian expressions of the era, Vanilla Fudge were managed by an

DAVID MAGNUS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

affiliate of New York's Lucchese crime family. All the same, their brown-acid version of The Supremes' "You Keep Me Hangin' On" involved baroque Hammond riffs, freak-out jams and proto-heavy drumming from Carmine Appice, an old Village friend of Hendrix.

40 CHOCOLATE WATCHBAND

"Are You Gonna Be There (At The Love-In)"

[NO WAY OUT, SEPTEMBER 1967]



Bay Area live favourites, Chocolate Watchband were British Invasion heads, fusing Stones/Pretty Things-style workouts to subterranean garage riffs. They appeared in two exploitation films, *Riot On Sunset Strip* – performing in a mocked-up version of Pandora's Box nightclub – and Haight-Ashbury melodrama *The Love-Ins*, which inspired "Are You Gonna Be There (At The Love-In)". "Gonna find a way into society," yells singer Dave Aguilar over thuggish riffs.

41 THE FAMILY

"Scene Through The Eye Of A Lens"

[SINGLE, SEPTEMBER 1967]



Immortalised as "Relation" in *Groupie*, Jenny Fabian's fictionalised account of Swinging London, Leicester's The Family cut demos with Kim Fowley before signing with John Gilbert (son of Bond director, Lewis). Dosed with the lysergic spirit of the times ("Raindrops that sparkle

like gems"), their pulsating debut, "Scene Through The Eye Of A Lens" features uncredited contributions from Traffic and laid the groundwork for their ambitious psychedelic debut, *Music In A Doll's House*.

42 TOMORROW

"Revolution"

[SINGLE, SEPTEMBER 1967; TOMORROW, FEBRUARY 1968]



UFO regulars, Tomorrow's debut single "My White Bicycle" was inspired by a community scheme launched by Dutch anarchist group Provo. They continued these heady countercultural themes on impassioned follow-up "Revolution", where co-writers Keith West and future Yes guitarist Steve Howe claimed, "We just want peace to blow our minds." Producer Mark Wirtz's work at Abbey Road alongside Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick gave credence to rumours that John Lennon was inspired to write The Beatles' "Revolution" as a response to the Tomorrow song.

43 THE WHO

"I Can See For Miles"

[SINGLE, SEPTEMBER 1967; THE WHO SELL OUT, DECEMBER 1967]



Nestling in Pete Townshend's back pocket for as long as a year, "I Can See For Miles" seemed to fit with the prevailing mood of '67: a trippy, single-note guitar sustain, layered harmonies and dreamy lyrics ("The Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal are mine to see on clear days"). But

Townshend – who began following Indian spiritual master Meher Baba in the autumn of '67 – was not a "head" and the song bristles with the distrust and paranoia of a bad trip. It gave The Who their highest single US chart placing – No 9 – but only reached 10 in the UK, a disappointment for Townshend: "I spat on the British record buyer."

44 BONZO DOG DOO-DAH BAND

"Death Cab For Cutie"

[GORILLA, OCTOBER 1967]



More concerned with Dada absurdity and musical collage than LSD and free love, on their debut album the Bonzos chopped up jazz, baroque pop, calypso, *musique concrète* and, on "Death Cab For Cutie", '50s doo-wop death ballads, into a proto-Python celebration of the ridiculous. Though they laughed at the counterculture, they found devoted fans in The Beatles, who raved about Neil Innes' "Music For The Head Ballet" and invited the band to mime "Death Cab..." on *Magical Mystery Tour* – but only after McCartney kitted out the suited Viv Stanshall with a trendy pink scarf.

45 LOVE

"A House Is Not A Motel"

[FOREVER CHANGES, NOVEMBER 1967]

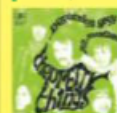


Already veterans of the LA scene by the time they released their third album *Forever Changes*, Arthur Lee's Love painted a chilling picture of the shadows cast by the Summer Of Love. The circuitous arrangements of "A House Is Not A Motel" are interrupted by a nervy, double-tracked guitar solo and Lee's foreboding lyrics: "More confusions, blood transfusions/The news today will be the movies for tomorrow/And the water's turned to blood."

46 THE PRETTY THINGS

"Defecting Grey"

[SINGLE, NOVEMBER 1967]



Moving from raucous R&B to eclectic psychedelia, The Pretty Things' "Defecting Grey" is an ambitious, multi-sectioned extravaganza of sitar, backwards guitar and throbbing bass, produced by Beatles/Floyd engineer Norman Smith. Although it failed to chart, the song paved the way for *SF Sorrow*, the world's first rock opera; David Bowie was such a fan, he filed singer Phil May's phone number under "God" in his address book.

47 FIFTY FOOT HOSE

"Red The Sign Post"

[CAULDRON, DECEMBER 1967]



One of the most radical groups from the SF scene, Fifty Foot Hose were founded by Louis 'Cork' Marcheschi – who graduated from building his own Theremins to masterminding *Cauldron*, the band's only LP. An extraordinary blend of jazz, psych, rock and electronics, engineered by future Dead soundman Dan Healy, the standout is heavy acid rave-up "Red The Sign Post". The band split in 1969, signing on for a touring production of *Hair*.

48 COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH

"I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag"

[EP, OCTOBER 1965; I FEEL LIKE I'M FIXIN' TO DIE, NOVEMBER 1967]



With its roots in Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, "...Fixin'-To-Die-Rag" (also known as "The Fish Cheer") was first played in good-humoured jug-band fashion at an anti-war protest in Oakland in 1965. The band relocated to SF and became part of the city's underground scene while "Rag" evolved into a totemic anti-war song, performed at Monterey and also when Country Joe McDonald filled in for Jeff Beck at Woodstock.

49 THE CHARLATANS

"Alabama Bound"

[THE CHARLATANS, 1969]



This hypnotic take on Lead Belly's "I'm Alabama Bound" helped map the path that roots rock pursued beyond the Summer Of Love. The Charlatans' choice of antique tailoring and an acid-soaked summer '65 residency at a saloon in Nevada set the bar for what followed on the Bay Area scene. Although they cut sessions between 1966 and '68, only a 45 was released during their lifetime; "Alabama Bound" proved a highpoint of their posthumous debut.

50 THE SMOKE

"My Friend Jack"

[SINGLE, FEBRUARY 1967]



The LSD-inspired lyrics of The Smoke's debut single – "My friend Jack eats sugar lumps/Oh what beautiful things he sees" – were too much for the BBC who weren't convinced this slice of Yardbirds-esque beat-psych was about a hungry equine pal. It reached No 2 in Germany and in 1980 was covered by Boney M, whose sound engineer was Smoke guitarist Zeke Lund. ☉



Love: is all you need