
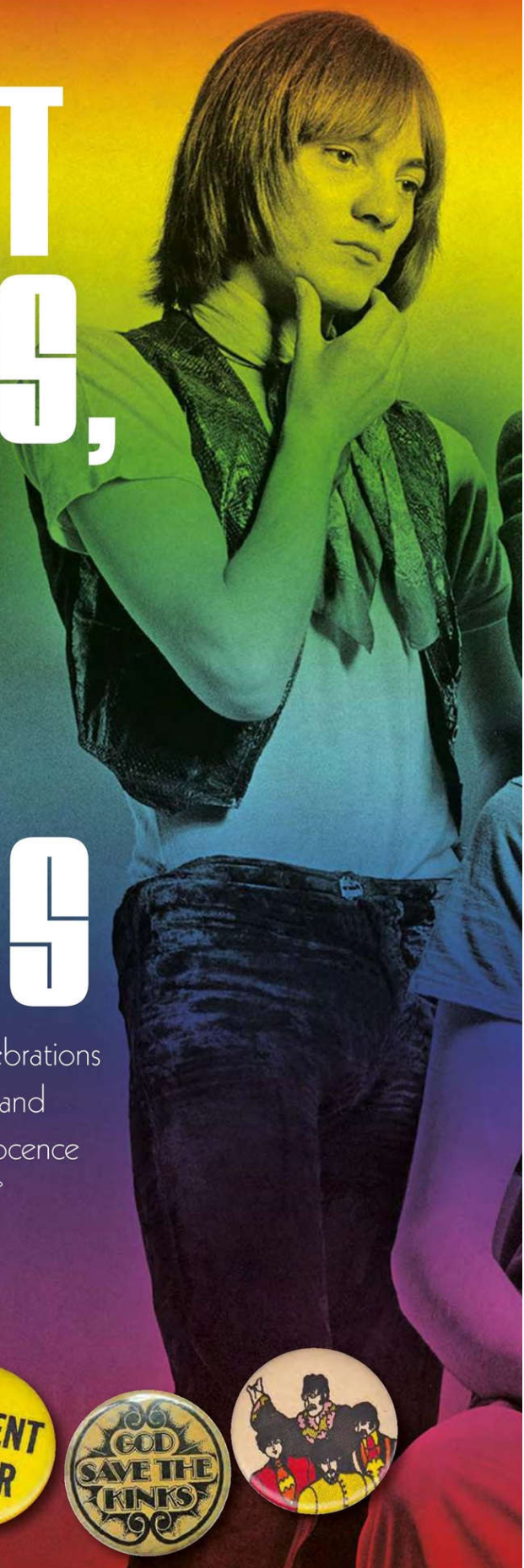


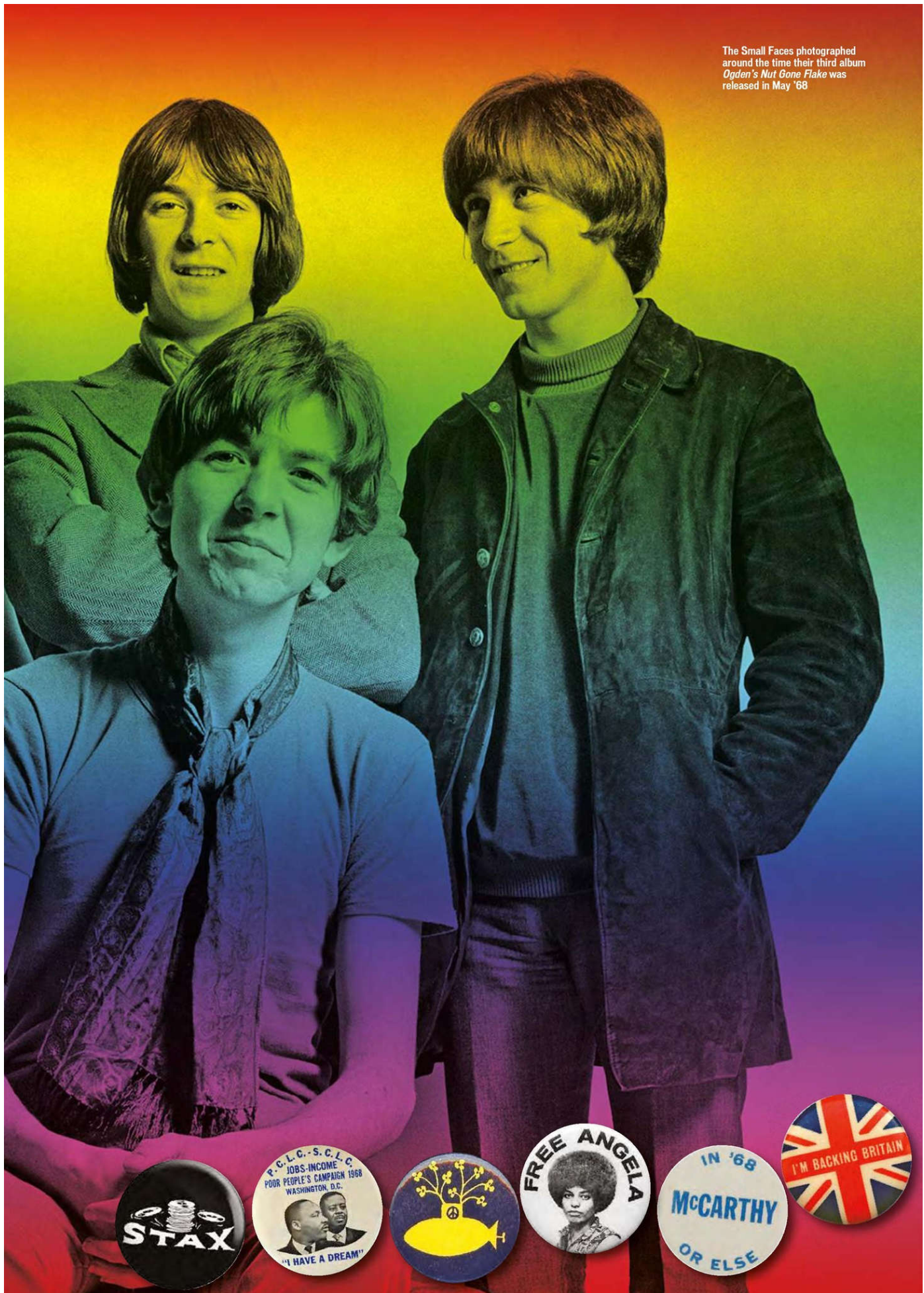
1968 

THEY GOT THE GUNS, BUT WE GOT THE NUMBERS

JON SAVAGE opens *Shindig!*'s 1968 celebrations with his thoughts on how the year's political and social shifts influenced youth, transforming innocence into consciousness and pop into rock 



The Small Faces photographed around the time their third album *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* was released in May '68





Arthur Brown, whose 'Fire' proved to be "an unstoppable force of nature" and a UK #1

1968 was the year of no escape. Pop had been asserting its place in the world ever since '65 – with the advent of Drugs, Meaning, Protest and Soul in the mainstream – but the world came back to claim it during '68 with a sequence of terrible events: riot, revolution, assassination, and the ever escalating war in Vietnam. After a brief few years, America was again driving youth culture – and, as it was bearing the brunt of violence and division – could not help but reflect it in its popular music.

The split between pop and what was now generally called rock was irrevocable, in England at least. Apart from The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, the only #1 in the UK that year with countercultural associations was The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown's 'Fire' – an unstoppable force of nature (#1 UK and #2 US) that caught the combustible nature of that wild summer. The album charts told a different story, with chart toppers by Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel, Otis Redding and The Small Faces.

It was a similar story in the US, although the singles charts wasn't quite so dominated by ballads and novelties. Pop-psych was the order of the day with #1's from John Fred & His Playboy Band, The Lemon Pipers, The Doors – and The Rascals' rousing pop/soul anthem 'People Got To Be Free'. Soul was represented by Otis Redding and Archie Bell & The

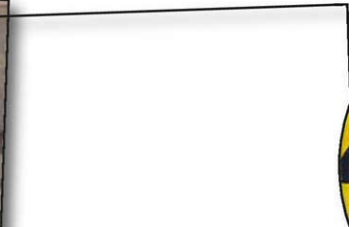
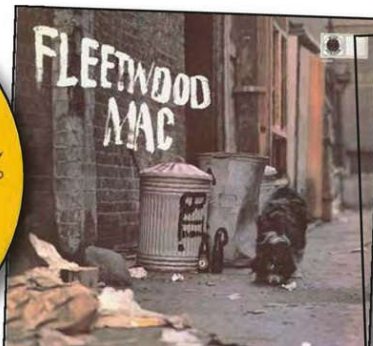
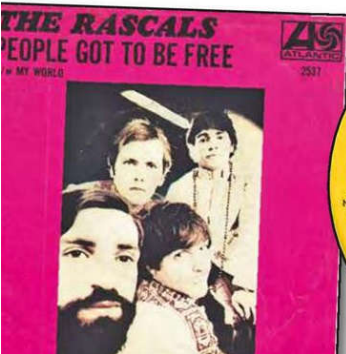
Drells, while the year ended with two killer Motown strikes: Diane Ross & The Supremes' 'Love Child' and Marvin Gaye's 'I Heard It Through The Grapevine'.

It was the album charts that showed the underground coming into its own, with #1s by The Doors, Big Brother & The Holding Company, Cream, The Jimi Hendrix Experience and The Beatles. The fact that the last three were sprawling double albums – that sold massively – showed the ambition and confidence of the new rock. As Paul McCartney said on Tony Palmer's TV film *All My Loving*: "Pop music is the classical music of now." Inflation and self-indulgence – especially on the live disc of *Wheels Of Fire* – were already there, but did not yet dominate.

All My Loving sought to relate the "new rock" to the world outside and did so brutally. About 11 minutes in, there was a quick cut into the audio 'Yellow

Submarine': a man suddenly comes up to another man in a chaotic Saigon street, he waves the guards away (for the smaller man is a prisoner), holds up a pistol and shoots: the smaller man collapses, blood pouring out of his head. This was the execution of Nguyen Van Lem, a Viet Cong insurgent, by South Vietnam's Chief Of Police, Nguyen Ngoc Loan on 1st February.

It's so quick – blink and you'd miss it – but it totally disturbed me when I saw it that year. Even so, it was only one of many jarring images to be seen on the television screen during '68: the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the brutal Tet offensive in January, the Grosvenor Square protest in March, the shoot out between Black Panthers and the police that April, The Paris Student Riots in May and the organised police thuggery at The



"Musicians were already **straining at the confines** of a strict blues format – straying into jazz, medievalisms and the power chords and time changes that would define **heavy** and **progressive**"

Democratic Party Convention in Chicago in August.

It wasn't only in Europe and America. In Mexico, an unprovoked massacre occurred in October, when police and secret security agents opened fire on a large crowd, about 10,000 strong, in the Tlatelolco district – and killed about 3-400 protestors and bystanders. It seemed as though the fabric of society was coming apart in country after country, under pressure from tyrannical regimes, unjust wars, and the demands of a feisty and impatient youth cohort coming into its own. As The Doors sang – in burlesque revolution style – on 'Five To One': "The old get old / And the young get stronger / May take a week / And it may take longer / They got the guns / But we got the numbers / Gonna win, yeah / We're takin' over / Come on!"

Clearly, '68 was going to be a very different year than '67.

It started in acid reflux, as The Beatles' 'Hello Goodbye' and *Magical Mystery Tour* dominated the charts in the US and the UK. Psychedelia had been the sound of the previous year and it would hold sway for much of '68 – although in fad-obsessed Britain Flower Power was declared over by Easter, by which time there was a brief rock 'n' roll revival – with both Bill Haley and Buddy Holly making the Top 20 – and the first Brit-blues album *Fleetwood Mac* had entered the charts.

George Melly called it in *Revolt Into Style*: if '67 had been Cavalier, with flowing clothes and musical fripperies, 1968 would be Roundhead – with rootsy styles and downbeat, workers clothes. (The first Fleetwood Mac went to so far as to have a dustbin on the cover). The year saw many albums by Brit-Blues groups – Savoy Brown, Ten Years After, and debuts by Free, Jethro Tull, Chicken Shack, The Brunning Sunflower Blues Band and The Groundhogs – while both The Beatles ('Yer Blues'), The Rolling Stones ('No Expectations') tackled the genre head on.

It took the Bonzos to satirise the whole thing in 'Can Blue Men Sing The Whites?' but to no avail: the Brit-blues

groups would multiply during '69 – the year that Alvin Lee sent the genre into frazzled meaningless with his endless gurning version of 'I'm Going Home' at Woodstock. But in '68 musicians were already straining at the confines of a strict blues format – straying into jazz, medievalisms and the power chords and time changes that would define heavy and progressive retrospectively.

1968 was the official start of Americana in the US, with the release of The Band's *Music From Big Pink* and The Byrds' *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* during the summer. Austerity was the name of the game – Robbie Robertson repudiated psychedelia in all its forms – and there was a harking back towards simpler values and more direct musical forms. When The Byrds sang 'The Christian Life' it was difficult to know whether they were being ironic; The Band's 'Tears Of Rage' and 'I Shall Be Released' left the listener in no doubt of their severe intentions.

Music From Big Pink was extremely influential, but it obscured another vein of Americana that had been flourishing under the aegis of Lenny Waronker at Warner Brothers. It took in Brian Wilson – the deepest examination of American music, myth and history was theme of *Smile* – and Van Dyke Parks, whose first solo album, *Song Cycle*, was released in '68, as well as Randy Newman's first album, The Beau Brummels' wonderful *Bradley's Barn* and The Everly Brothers' psychedelic/nostalgic *Roots*, an elegy to their Kentucky adolescence.

Meanwhile, for those of us who liked that psychedelic shit, there was plenty of it around as the fall out from '67 continued. The first half of the year had dozens of great psych singles which went nowhere and were barely heard in the UK: The Pretty Things' 'Talking About The Good Times', Fairport Convention's 'If I Had A Ribbon Bow', Big Boy Pete's 'Cold Turkey', The Turtles' 'Sound Asleep', The Fleur De Lys' 'Gong With The Luminous Nose' and Dave Mason's 'Just For You' – to name just six.

This was partly due to the change in fashion, also partly due to the disappearance of the Pirate Radio

Stations: with pop radio reduced to Radio 1 and its mainstream daytime playlist, the odd and unusual were all too often excluded. The pop charts were full of ballads and auto-pop: Cliff's dreadful Eurovision entry 'Congratulations', Des O'Connor's 'I Pretend' and the like. The album charts were full of *Greatest Hits Albums* – by The Supremes, Temptations, Four Tops, Hollies – as if to seal in amber an era that was already over.

At the same time, the soul explosion of '66/67 had receded somewhat: Aretha Franklin and Johnny Johnson & The Bandwagon had big hits – as did home grown groups like The Equals and The Foundations – but Stax was temporarily adrift after the death of Otis Redding. Motown continued its hold on the nation's consciousness, albeit in a muted form. A split was opening up in the UK black music audience, between those who went for the emerging funk style and those who held fast to Motown 4/4 – "northern soul" as it was coined by Dave Godin in '68.

The great surge in Black American music had been integrally tied into the Civil Rights Movement, and as that began to dissolve into hopelessness and violence, the vibrant spirit that drove so many high '60s classics began to disappear. The April assassination of Martin Luther King drove a wedge into the integrated dream of soul – of Stax in particular – with Black American artists moving further towards Black Power and self-determination: records like James Brown's 'Say It Out Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud' (#10 US) paved the way.

Black American music was dominated by two forces in '68: the move towards funk was propelled by Archie Bell & The Drells US #1 hit, 'Tighten Up', while Sly & The Family Stone's 'Dance To The Music' (#8 US, #7 UK) broke down and reconstructed dance forms in a revolutionary three minute package. Its influence – plus that of the move towards greater soul consciousness – can be seen in the two huge hits for Motown late in the year: Diana Ross & The Supremes' 'Love Child' and The Temptations' drug critique, 'Cloud Nine'.



BRILLIANT DYNAMITE FOR SMALL FACES FANS

LP OF THE MONTH

SMALL FACES: "Ogden's Nut Gone Flake." Title track; Afterglow; Long Agos And Worlds Apart; Rene; Song Of A Baker; Lazy Sunday. Side 2—"Happiness Stan." Title Track; Rollin' Over; The Hungry Intruder; The Journey; Mad John; Happydays-toytown. (Immediate).

Some people always said that one day, the Small Faces would make a great record. Their last three singles were very good indeed, pointing out the general direction the Faces were going; now they BURST upon us with this, which amply fulfils if not surpasses all those hopes for the great record. It is.

Not only is the music superlative throughout; the record also has one of the most awesome covers ever seen. Actually it's not so much a cover, more a cardboard replica of an old-fashioned tobacco tin—"Ogden's Special Nut Gone Celebrated Flake Tobacco."

It keeps unfolding, layer after layer, to finally reveal four superb photos of the boys themselves, all looking exceptionally bright and happy—and with this record behind them, who could blame them for that?

One of the most beautiful things about the record is having the mad Professor Stanley Unwin relating the long story on side two of Happiness Stan's search for the eternal truth (and the other half of the moon!)—and finding it in the words "Life is just a bowl of All-Bran."

It is a really beautiful story, including the other characters—Mad John who finally reveals all, and the giant magic fly who takes him there ("if all the flies in the world were one fly, what an enormous fly it would be!") Stan climbs on the fly's back and soars away on the seven-day journey to the forest where dwells Mad John—who is, like the Faces, a hip Cockney and proud of it.

And the music is all incredibly, unbelievably irresistible—just so groovy and quite indescribable. You just must hear this LP—and buy it! The Faces have reached and passed their "Sgt. Pepper;" or, as Prof. Unwin puts it: "Freaked them out and blasted their mindboles!"

Many black Americans had been resistant to the allure of LSD – thinking it a white person's thing – but the drug culture began to percolate soul and Motown in '68, with Sly's radical deconstructions, the formation of Funkadelic, and records like The Chambers Brothers' "Time Has Come Today" (#11 US). It was a testing time for Motown after the departure of the unerring hit writing team Holland-Dozier-Holland, but Norman Whitfield's psych productions for The Temptations in particular paved the way forward.

The ultimate cross over act – between funk, mod pop, psychedelia and soul – was Jimi Hendrix, who in '68 had three albums in the American charts: *Are You Experienced* (77 weeks in all), *Axis: Bold As Love* (#3) and the double *Electric Ladyland* (#1). For many, he defined psychedelia with the Experience's wild lyricism and outer-space elements, yet he appealed

year for psychedelia in general, as the San Franciscan explosion fully came on stream – with great albums by Quicksilver (*Quicksilver Messenger Service*), The Steve Miller Band (*Sailor*), The Grateful Dead (*Anthem Of The Sun*) and Moby Grape (*Wow*). In the less messianic British style, Family's *Music In A Doll's House*, The Pretty Things' *SF Sorrow*, The Zombies' *Odessey & Oracle* and The Small Faces' *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* are landmark records.

Ogden's Nut Gone Flake sat at #1 UK for six weeks that summer – sandwiched between Otis Redding's *Dock Of The Bay* and Tom Jones' *Delilah*. Yet The Small Faces' fall from grace from that point was as vertiginous as it was indicative: fed up of being seen as a teenybopper fodder, Steve Marriott unsuccessfully attempted to push the group in a heavier direction. Their final single, 'Wham Bam Thank You Mam' – recorded in '68 but released

"The album charts were full of *Greatest Hits* Albums – by **The Supremes, Temptations, Four Tops, Hollies** – as if to seal in amber an era that was already over"



Ogden's Nut Gone Flake sat atop the UK album charts for six weeks in July and August; Nina Simone saw out the year with a #2 single.

the next year – showed mod-pop brushing up against power chords in a mix that would not be sustained.

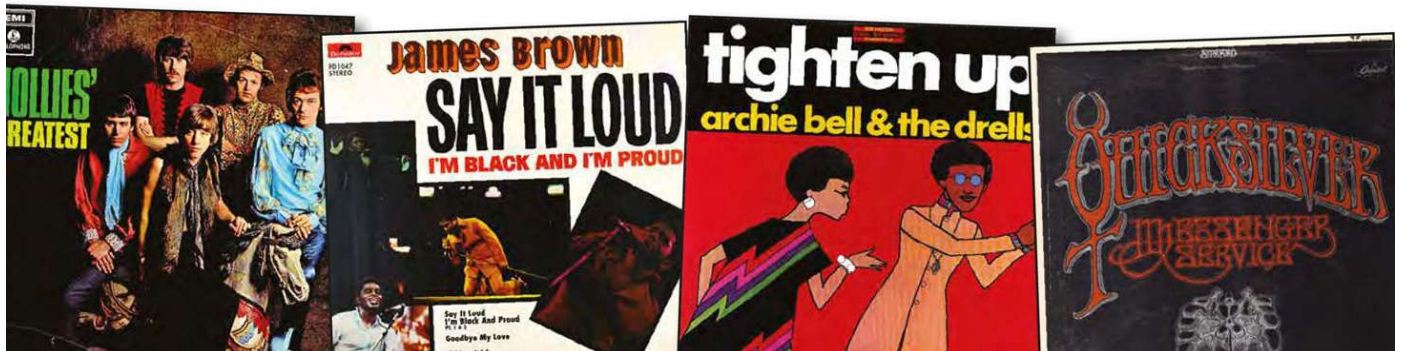
The centre could no longer hold: it was not possible to be both pop and underground unless you were The Beatles or The Rolling Stones – and they were both in the process of profound change. Pop would be fine, as it always is: it just carried on, not caring whether it was hip or not. The problem for

principally to the white market – a facet of marketing and musical style that would cause him considerable grief in the years to come.

different, as the demands for greater technical virtuosity clashed against the impossibility of continuing the beatific visions of '67 in a much harsher climate. It wasn't just the drugs – although there could be diminishing returns there – but the world itself.

The two defining statements of '68 are *Electric Ladyland* and *The White Album*. Both are chaotic, sprawling, self-indulgent yet magnificent records that hold all of this chaotic year within them: violence, riot and dissolution ('Revolution', 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun', 'House Burning Down') are balanced by beautiful visions hinting at other worlds ('Dear Prudence', '(Have You Ever Been To) Electric Ladyland'). But even dreams like '1983... (A Merman I Should Turn To Be)' and 'Cry Baby Cry' have sinister overtones: war, decay, madness.

By the end of '68, heavy was beginning to take over from psych. Steppenwolf had two huge US hits with 'Magic Carpet Ride' (#2) and 'Born To Be Wild' (#3) – the latter's phrase "heavy metal thunder" helped to name the new mood. The bludgeoning (as opposed to the subtle and quirky) side of Cream had something to





Fairport Convention Mk I released their debut single and album in '68 before singer Judy Dyble's departure

do with it, as did the necessity of playing large stadia. In September, the second album by Iron Butterfly – with its thundering title track – entered the US charts: *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* would stay there for 87 weeks.


In December, Neil Young released his wonderful first album to almost no acclaim. Skip Spence went to Nashville to record what would become *Oar*. The Small Faces split up onstage, spectacularly. James Brown and Canned Heat with The Chipmunks released Christmas singles. The American charts were owned by Motown, with Marvin Gaye's threatening 'I Heard It Through The Grapevine', 'For

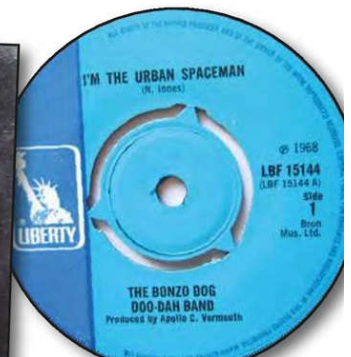
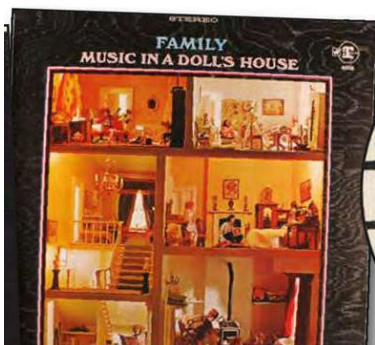
Once In My Life' and 'Love Child' taking the Top Three on the last chart of the year: The Supremes (again) and The Temptations were at #7 and #10 respectively.

The British charts of December 28th were eclectic to say the least, with a novelty record at #1 ('Lily The Pink') and a mixture of ballads, soul (Nina Simone at #3), pure pop (Marmalade at #7 with a Beatles cover and the Bonzos at #6 with a Beatle production), and two breakneck examples of heaviness – Love Sculpture at #5 with 'Sabre Dance' and Gun at #10 with 'Race With The Devil'. The Beatles did not have a Christmas 45 but were at

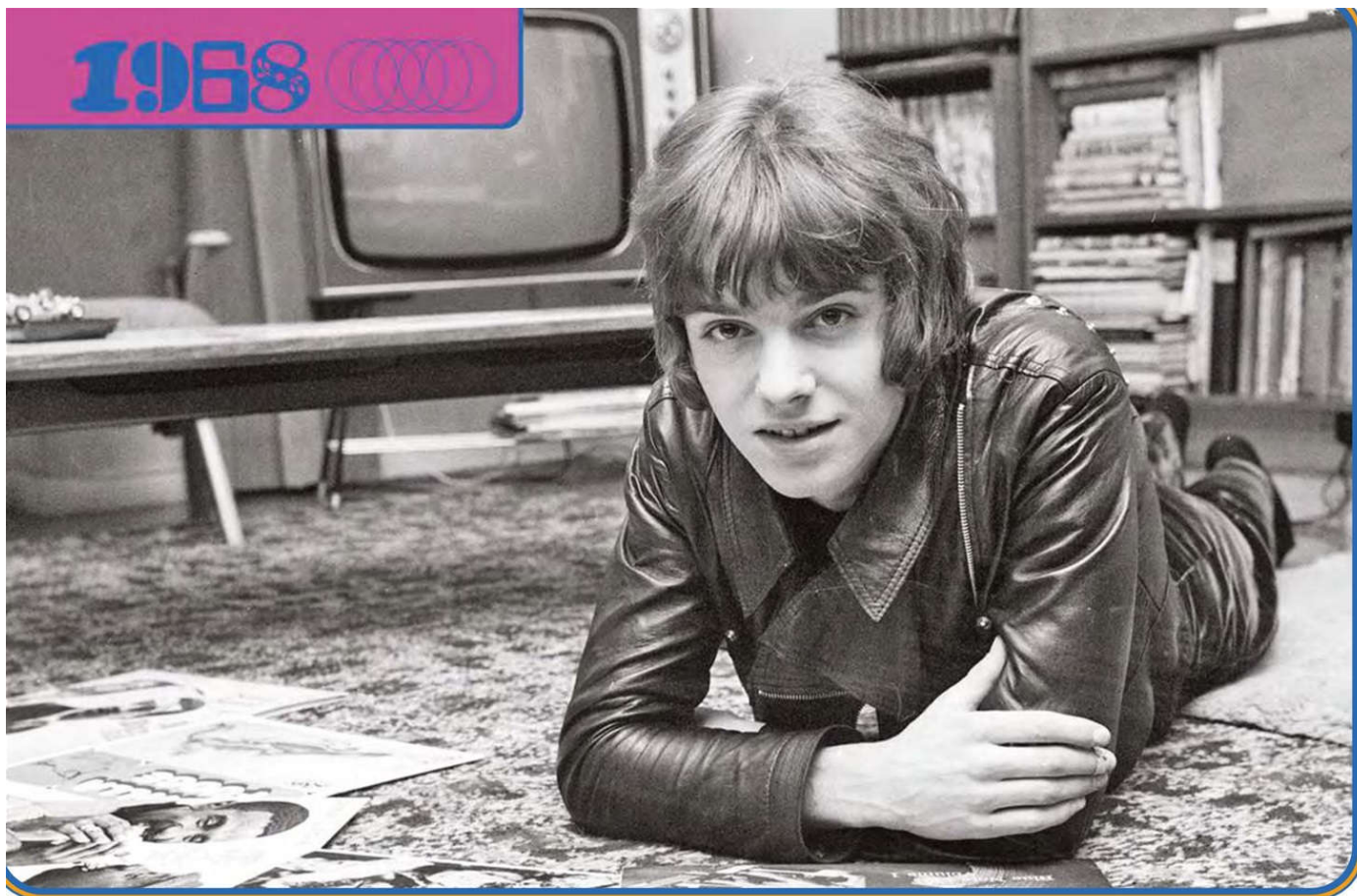
#1 US and UK with *The Beatles* – the last great unifying artefact of The High '60s.

The last, fourth side of "*The Beatles*" had everything: revolution, faithful '20s nostalgia, irresistibly sweet pop-rock, sinister half-remembered children's fairy stories, the radio scan of all time and finally, a blessing. "Can you take me back where I came from?" Paul McCartney asked in a haunting fragment – which implied the answer in the negative. It was too late: *The White Album* would be The Beatles' last masterpiece: both they and the age of optimism that they embodied would soon be gone.

Good night, sleep tight. 



1968



AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS

Pop music grew up quickly in the mid-60s, leaving its teenage consumers clinging helplessly to rapidly maturing rock stars or instead seeking their musical kicks on Radio One and in Woolworth's. Then a wave of pop records made by cute, covetable British groups gave them something to love again.

ANDY MORTEN praises the Supergroup sound of '68

In musical terms, 1968 will forever be remembered as a year of unrest; a rain-soaked 12-month comedown from flower-power and the hippie ideal during which navels were contemplated, drugs were taken and long-haired, soap-dodging rock bands posed a constant threat to the nation's morals. Meanwhile, back in the real world, there was the British singles chart, in which the year's biggest selling artists were Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck and Des O'Connor. Even The Beatles only made #7, outsold by The Bee Gees, The Four Tops and Otis Redding, the latter posthumously taking soul music's purifying message of love to a global saturation point of which the school of '67 could barely have conceived.

The ninth biggest selling act in the UK that year (sandwiched between a briefly re-invigorated Beach Boys and the puzzlingly evergreen Cliff Richard) was Love Affair, whose adventures have been lovingly chronicled in these pages on more than one occasion. A worthy, modish pop-soul quintet that had escaped its humble North London origins, Love Affair possessed two key factors missing from the arsenal of their many contemporaries: a swoonsome lead singer in 17-year-old Steve Ellis, and a major label production/record deal that resulted in a January '68 chart-topper with 'Everlasting Love'. Ellis was famously the only member of the group to appear on the record, his band mates' performance deemed less than satisfactory by the suits at CBS, who replaced them with session musicians under the auspices of their in-house hit factory. "I was sent off to CBS with Mike Rossi, Mike Smith and a 40-piece orchestra with Clem Cattini on drums," Ellis told *Shindig!* last year. "Russ Stableford was on bass and Keith Mansfield on piano. It was a wall of sound, almost akin to Phil Spector, and it knocked me out. I did the song in two takes. I loved it."

Love Affair scored two further Top 10 hits that year, both helmed in the same fashion. If you want to hear what the group sounded like, flip the 45s for the Small Faces-ish psychedelic soul of 'Someone Like Me' and 'I'm Happy'. Their records notwithstanding, a large part of Love Affair's success and their inescapable presence in both the weekly inks and the teen magazines of '68 was down to their looks. Handsome but rough round the edges, always decked out in the latest Kings Road threads and, crucially, the same age as their audience. These guys were teenagers. Tom Jones was 27 for God's sake; he might as well have been 40. Too old; over the hill; unattainable. Miriam from Margate would more likely associate Jones with her parents than with herself and therein lies the key to The Great Superpop Boom Of '68.

Love Affair continued to make regular live appearances as their records occupied the upper echelons of the charts, the fact

that their stage show – still rooted in the tough mod-rock that was allowed to breathe on that year's *Everlasting Love Affair* album – bore little resemblance to those Mansfield/Smith productions, was presumably rendered immaterial as the group was drowned out by screaming fans who'd seen them on *Top Of The Pops* and torn their faces out of *Fab 208*.

1968 was the year in which homegrown boy bands (and they were, without exception, male) aimed at teenagers and swallowed up whole by them in their thousands truly re-emerged for the first time since Beatlemania. The previous year may have seen the indomitable rise of The Monkees wipe out everything in its path, but they were American (almost) and so colossal that they were unlikely to be playing at The California Ballroom, Dunstable on Saturday night. They were also, let's not forget, already sliding down the popularity stakes by early '68, their TV show soon to be axed and their records stalling outside the Top 10. US Bubblegum music, in the shape of 'Green Tambourine', 'Simon Says' and 'Yummy Yummy Yummy', got pretty sticky for a while but suffered over here from being anonymous and American.

The Beatles had grown moustaches, publicly admitted to taking drugs, made a crap TV film that nobody could understand and were now sitting at the feet of an Eastern mystic in the foothills of The Himalayas. "What's an LSD, mum?" Hardly the stuff of teenage dreams. The 13-year-olds that had peed themselves as the Fabs bashed out 'She Loves You' at The Royal Variety Performance just four years earlier had left school and discovered boys. Where were their boys now? Mid-60s mainstays the Stones, Who and Kinks had become immersed in high-falutin' concept albums and forays into psychedelia, art-rock and music hall that all but alienated their young mod followers, who were by this time presumably getting their soul and R&B kicks at source. Only The Small Faces remained the focus of the teenage gaze, their singles remaining accessible and successful; their fashion sense continuing to inspire and influence. As the live cuts

on Small Faces compilation *Autumn Stone* show, the kids were still screaming at them as late as November.

Britain's teens needed something new and exciting on which to spend their Saturday job shillings; someone new and young on whom to dote, and that something, it seemed, would arrive in the form of a wave of commercial, chart-orientated singles fronted by dilettante dandies and dimpled delinquents.

Marmalade were a hard working soul/harmony act, schooled in Glasgow's tough club scene when they were gifted 'Lovin' Things', cut by the Mansfield/Smith team around the same time as 'Everlasting Love', and similarly utilised only the group's vocal skills. It gave them their first Top 10 hit at the point when they were very likely to have been kicked off CBS after four flop 45s. Singer Dean Ford was an unassuming frontman – his colleagues a mixed bag of boy-next-door types – but they found favour with young audiences and become unlikely pin-ups. For a while. They closed the year at #1 with their version of 'Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da' before spending the following year shaking off the trappings of mainstream adulation and getting into The Band.

After style Bible *Rave* named him "The Face Of '68", Peter Frampton's time as a teenage icon and heart-throb was assured. His band The Herd had been transformed from a credible mod outfit into a Gothic-tinged pop band by 'Have I The Right?' hit-makers Ken Howard and Alan Blaikley and producer Steve Rowland the previous year but when 'I Don't Want Our Loving To Die' hit #5 in April '68, Frampton – and his similarly photogenic band mates Andy Bown, Gary Taylor and Andrew Steele – found himself at the centre of a whole heap of unwanted attention. In Frampton's case, this newfound status as a pop icon ended up overshadowing his abilities as a singer, guitarist and songwriter, which led directly to him quitting The Herd after their exquisite self-penned October single 'Sunshine Cottage', which, of course, failed to chart. By the following January he'd formed Humble Pie with fellow refugee Steve Marriott.





Howard Blaikley (as they were professionally known) had also been steering the ship of fools that was Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Tich for three years, chalking up eight hit singles that had gradually morphed from taught fuzztone stompers like 'Hideaway' into the pseudo-exotic gibberish of late '67's Top 3 smash 'Zabadak!' While none of Dee's band of brothers could be considered fresh meat by early '68 (Dee was 26), they nonetheless captured the imaginations and wallets of Britain's newly solvent teenage consumers while concocting a series of increasingly dramatic 45s that peaked with February's whip-crackin',

mattered not. They were now a pop group and they should be recording hits, not 40-year-old blues songs. They reached #1 the following January with the none more pop '(If Paradise Is) Half As Nice'. The Tremeloes had been chalking up hits for five years by this point and had enjoyed an incredibly successful '67 (a #1 and two Top Five smashes), their thuggish charm and cheeky demeanour (not to mention the '66 addition of fresh-faced Len 'Chip' Hawkes) ensuring they were regular visitors to the colour pop pages. Their '68 singles found them peddling Dave Dee-style nonsense ('Helule Helule') and Eurovision-friendly singalongs ('Suddenly You Love Me', 'My Little Lady') under the auspices of CBS's Mike Smith with their trademark aplomb. Lincolnshire quartet The Casuals were eight years into their career and had relocated to Italy, where they'd released Italian language covers of British hits alongside a smattering of inconsequential soft-pop 45s, before they recorded 'Jesamine'. Written by Marty Wilde and Ronnie Scott (whose other '68 offerings

the finished recording that could be guaranteed to include a member of the group – maybe even the singer). They were designed to satisfy radio playlist criteria and were generally released on one of the major labels of the day (Decca, Philips, CBS, EMI), whose ability to ensure radio play, TV coverage and press advertising was part and parcel. They employed ornate, often kitsch string and horn arrangements that harked back to a more ersatz, showbiz-dominated era while simultaneously hammering home the post-*Pepper* prerequisite for orchestral ornamentation in pop. The click of Russ Stableford's flatwound Fender bass that so characterises 'Everlasting Love', 'Lovin' Things' and their ilk (that's him on 'Je T'aime' too) also became a key ingredient; and if it wasn't Russ on the record, chances are it was either Herbie Flowers or John Paul Jones, whose bass playing invigorated countless hits of the late '60s. Female vocal accompaniment became a mainstay of the first three Love Affair singles – Lesley Duncan, Madeline Bell and Kay Garner on 'Everlasting Love' and

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include 'Ice In The Sun' for The Status Quo, 'I'm A Tiger' for Lulu and Wilde's own return to the charts, 'Abergavenny') The Casuals' impeccable rendition raced to #2 in the UK, its sound chiming perfectly with the summer's pop spoils. Improbably, also hailing from Lincolnshire were The Ends, who, after a name change to Cupid's Inspiration and a record deal inked with NEMS, took their barnstorming version of 'Yesterday Has Gone' to #4 in June. Veteran arranger Johnny Arthey's OTT strings, Terry Rice-Milton's impassioned, throaty delivery and the song's insistently catchy chorus encapsulate the sound

Sue & Sunny on 'Rainbow Valley' and 'A Day Without Love'. Add liberal amounts of Hammond organ and/or grand piano, stir well and stand back. Thumb through the pages of any edition of *Honey*, *Rave* or *Fab 208* from '68 and you'll be confronted by full-page "posters" wherein Davy Jones, George Best, Tony Blackburn, Barry Gibb and Scott Walker (the latter pair far too "out there" in their own ways to be considered Superpop, despite their huge teen appeal and charting singles) vie for space with Steve Ellis, Peter Frampton, Dave Dee and Andy Fairweather-Low. These guys were the poster boys for British pop that year, whether they liked it or not, and as such, became one-man marketing campaigns; ambassadors for not just their own records but an entire wing of teen-friendly artists trapped somewhere between the commercial requirements of the industry and their own artistic and creative goals. Sure, they wanted desperately to play the blues and write their own singles – who wouldn't? – but just for a while they unwittingly forged as formidable a frontline of working class pop stars and reluctant icons as Britain has ever offered.

chart-toppin' 'The Legend Of Xanadu' and would touch on themes *risqué* enough to make them both covetable and just a tiny bit dangerous. Amen Corner, a seven-piece Cardiff blues act that had seen minor chart action in '67 with their doleful reading of Bessie Smith's 'Gin House Blues' and melodramatic torch song 'World Of Broken Hearts', were duly hosed down, stuffed into Nehru jackets and encouraged to stand immovable honey-eyed front man Andy Fairweather-Low onto a plinth where the girls could see him better. That their brassy re-imagining of 'Bend Me, Shape Me' and its similarly-constructed follow-up 'High In The Sky' both shot into the Top 10 in '68 owed about as much to the blues as 'Zabadak!' did,

of '68, but once again the group quickly deemed it unrepresentative of their sound, which they considered better exemplified by the vaguely psychedelic rocker 'Dream' that occupied the flipside. Both The Casuals and Cupid's scored minor follow-up hits in October with songs that further typified the '68 sound, before disappearing from the charts forever. So what was that sound? In a nutshell, these records shared a number of fundamental factors: they were immaculately produced in professional studios (often by "aging" white-coats and staffers), expertly played (often by session musicians – you can bet your last guinea that Clem Cattini, Herbie Flowers and Alan Hawkshaw were never far away) and well sung (possibly the only element of

By the following year they were either gone or hell-bent on using those column inches to convince their readers that they'd "grown up", "were investigating new styles" or "thinking of chucking it all in", when all we wanted to know was what sort of girls they liked. Back to the serious stuff. Meh. [44](#)

THE SUPERPOP EXPLOSION

ANDY MORTEN grabs 10 45s that define the British chart sound of '68

THE AMEN CORNER

Bend Me, Shape Me
(Deram, January)



Originally recorded by US band The Outsiders on their self-titled album in early 1967 and subsequently taken into the US Top 5 at the end of the year by The American

Breed, this irresistible tune from the pens of Scott English and Larry Weiss (see also 'Hi Ho Silver Lining', 'Help Me Girl') was grafted shamelessly to Smokey Robinson & The Miracles' '66 album track 'More, More, More Of Your Love' to better suit the brassy, soulful style of Cardiff seven-piece The Amen Corner (and raised in pitch by two semi-tones to give singer Andy Fairweather-Low something to justify his tight trousers), who duly scored their first Top 3 hit with it.

DAVE DEE, DOZY, BEAKY, MICK & TICH

The Legend Of Xanadu
(Fontana, February)



Formerly Dave Dee & The Bostons, the Salisbury quintet were one of the biggest bands in the country by the time this, their 11th single, became their first #1. Writers Ken Howard and

Alan Blaikley (AKA Double-R Productions) had found a niche for DD & co that saw increasingly hokey A-sides approximating percussion fights in Greek tavernas while the group expertly crafted a series of daring, psych-tinged B-sides. A change of setting to the imaginary deserts of Spain/The Wild West/East Sussex and those whip cracks quickly elevated 'Xanadu' to the top of the pile.

THE PAPER DOLLS

Something Here In My Heart
(Keeps A Tellin' Me No)
(Pye, February)



Tellingly, the sole female entry in our rundown (lest we open the gate to Cilla, Lulu, Sandie *et al*) comes from the pen of Tony Macaulay and John

Macleod, then riding high on the back of smashes with The Foundations and Long John Baldry. Northampton song and dance act The Dolly Set (Pauline Bennett, Sue Marshall and Susie Mathis) successfully auditioned for the role of a new group that would make records and a TV show under the songwriters' supervision. That they didn't even show up for the recording of planned follow-up 'Build Me Up Buttercup' (see right-hand column) pretty much sealed their fate as one hit wonders.

THE HERD

I Don't Want Our Loving To Die
(Fontana, March)



After two 1967 hits that introduced a defiantly Gothic slant (one based on the Greek myth of Orpheus, the other named after Milton's epic poem), Howard and Blaikley performed a 180-

degree turn for their charges' first outing of '68. 'Loving' chugs along on a rhythm plucked straight from ska/rocksteady one of the year's most influential but undersung musical movements, yet the ultra-commercial song, metered out to all three of the group's vocalists, is pure UK Britpop. It topped at #5 and became The Herd's last hit, despite several worthy follow-ups.

CUPID'S INSPIRATION

Yesterday Has Gone
(NEMS, May)



If all that existed by the Cupids was their performance of this song on German TV's *Beat Club*, they'd still be legends. Go and watch it. As it is, this OTT rendition of Little

Anthony & The Imperials' '67 *Reflections* album track (subsequently prepared for US single release after the Cupids' version broke in the UK) finds the band buried beneath layers of strings, brass and Terry Rice-Milton's impassioned vocal outbursts. Follow-up 'My World' walks a similar path but leans more towards the Bee Gees-style big ballads of the day.

THE CASUALS

Jesamine
(Decca, May)



One of the greatest pop singles of all time in the eyes of this writer (and Paul Weller, among others, who both covered it and included it on his *All Back To Mine* BBC playlist in 1998).

'Jesamine' had already flopped in the hands of Welsh wonders The Bystanders when *Opportunity Knocks* winners The Casuals cut it for their third UK single. It's a beautifully understated, gossamer-light performance that defines the orchestrated pop sound of '68 like little else and dominated the airwaves that summer as it sat at #2.

LOVE AFFAIR

A Day Without Love
(CBS, August)



'Everlasting Love' would have been the obvious choice here but it's Love Affair's third single of 1968 that truly excels. The template established by its two predecessors - punchy

brass, clicky Fender bass, dreamy female backing vocals and Steve Ellis's soulful lead - is pushed to even greater heights, made flesh by Mike Smith's peerless production and Superpop Zelig Alan Hawkshaw's impeccable arrangement. A defining single and a well-deserved #6 hit.

MARMALADE

Wait For Me Mary-Anne
(CBS, September)



Again, it's the earlier Keith Mansfield-produced Top 10 smash 'Lovin' Things' that screams "obvious" but there's something about its low-charting follow-up that ticks the boxes on this

writer's checklist. Often written off as a weak carbon copy of its predecessor, 'Mary-Anne' is arguably the stronger song (courtesy of Howard Blaikley again) and boasts a snappier production. Revelations about the group not playing on these two Superpop must-haves probably did them few favours. And then came The Beatles cover...

BARRY RYAN

Eloise
(MGM, October)



OK, a bit of an anomaly this one. Having decided to divide themselves into singer and songwriter, and with the Keith Mansfield-produced flop 'Goodbye' behind them, the hearth-throb Ryan twins

embarked on an ambitious new project after hearing an acetate of Richard Harris' version of 'MacArthur Park' at one of the actor's parties. Its five-minute length and shape-shifting nature were deemed unworkable by everyone, Barry included, but the resulting single, hurriedly cut with Hull beat heroes The Majority and boasting an OTT Johnny Arthey arrangement, became a surprise smash.

THE FOUNDATIONS

Build Me Up Buttercup
(Pye, November)



Multi-cultural London seven-piece aggregation The Foundations hit the ground running when their '67 debut 'Baby, Now That I've Found You' made #1 here and #11 in the US. It was also the first

hit for its producer and co-writer Tony Macaulay, who would go on to achieve unparalleled Superpop success that's beyond our remit here. He helmed most of The Foundations' subsequent singles, of which this, co-written with Manfred Mann's Mike D'Abo and clearly indebted to The Four Tops' classic Motown sides, stopped one place shy of the top spot at the end of the year.

1968



Up in the clouds.
The Temptations on
stage in 1968

A WORLD OF LOVE AND HARMONY

The Temptations, Norman Whitfield and the changing face of Motown.
PAUL RITCHIE investigates how 'Cloud Nine' defined a new era and saved the corporation

1968 was a year of significant change at Motown. Berry Gordy's vision of a gold plated, pop factory accepted by the all-American household was by now fully realised. The Supremes were to meet The Queen Mother that year but the Detroit riots of '67 and the subsequent assassination of Dr Martin Luther King in April '68 changed the landscape back home completely.

James Brown, weeks away from releasing the epochal 'I'm Black, I'm Proud', was summoned to use his growing influence to calm inner city tensions from boiling over, telling crowds, "The real answer to race problems in this country is education. Not burning and killing. Be ready. Be qualified. Own something. Be somebody. That's Black Power."



In this climate, something was brewing within the Motown organisation. The growing influence of the young and ambitious producers and writers combined with the hard-toiling musicians Berry had hired from the jazz clubs of downtown Detroit, sensed it was time for Motown to get with it.

Sly & The Family Stone had got their first, anticipating a new hard-edged, dark funk sound that echoed the prevailing mood of black America. Despite the euphoria of the messages behind 'Dance To The Music' and 'Everyday People' there was a foreboding undercurrent to the funk hits of '68 that still permeates today in the best music of black origin.

The influence of Sly Stone would inevitably rub off on the likes of Norman Whitfield who used The Temptations to push the boundaries, creating conflict within the higher echelons of the Motown corporation. Famously, Gordy didn't want the term "funk" to be associated with Motown.

The Temptations themselves were at a crossroads and in danger of imploding. The classic five line-up of Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, Paul Williams, Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin had enjoyed a huge run of success between '64 and '68 with smashes such as 'My Girl', 'Get Ready' and 'Ain't Too Proud To Beg'. The latter was the first single Whitfield produced for the Temps in '66 and signalled a new direction for the group primarily influenced by James Brown.

Trouble was brewing though with an increasingly erratic David Ruffin beginning to assume control over the others. His behaviour and demands for top billing subsequently irritating the others, leading to his controversial firing in June '68. The affable Dennis Edwards of The Contours was hired

familiar Motown ballad or 4/4 beat. Nor did it reflect the clean cut, well-oiled image of the band.

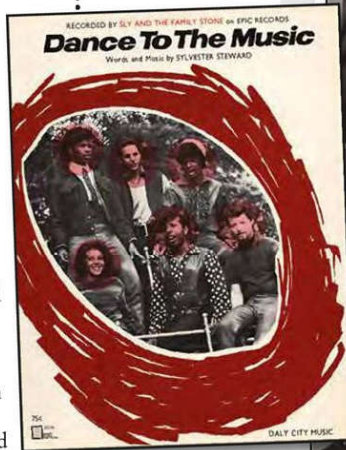
It's unrestrained wah-wah funk and hard-hitting lyrics from Barrett Strong reflected the socially conscious mood of the times. It was Whitfield's attempt to keep the vocal group current and encapsulated a loss of innocence and a time of social unrest. A reluctant Berry Gordy thought the song was glorifying drug use but Whitfield convinced him otherwise and the song went on to win the labels' first Grammy.

Funk brother Dennis Coffey became Whitfield's go-to guy for guitar effect. Speaking to *Shindig!* in 2011 he explained how the song came about. "I pulled out my guitar, we got the intro line that he had for 'Cloud Nine' and I happened to have a wah-wah pedal in my bag that I was using on the gigs so I hooked it up, cranked it up and

proven right every time so I've stopped asking questions now!"

Speaking to *In The Basement* magazine in 2000, Edwards acknowledged the influence of Sly Stone. "We were in the studio and the radio came on and there was a record by a group out of San Francisco that changed the path of The Temptations' career. It was called 'Dance To The Music' by Sly & The Family Stone. And I'll tell you why it changed it... because we were trying to figure out how to use all of the dynamic leads we had. When we heard 'Dance To The

Dennis Edwards (right) comes in for a departing David Ruffin; Sly's influential '68 hit



"Clearly influenced by Sly Stone, 'Cloud Nine' was nothing like the familiar Motown ballad or 4/4 beat.

Nor did it reflect the clean cut, well-oiled image of the band"

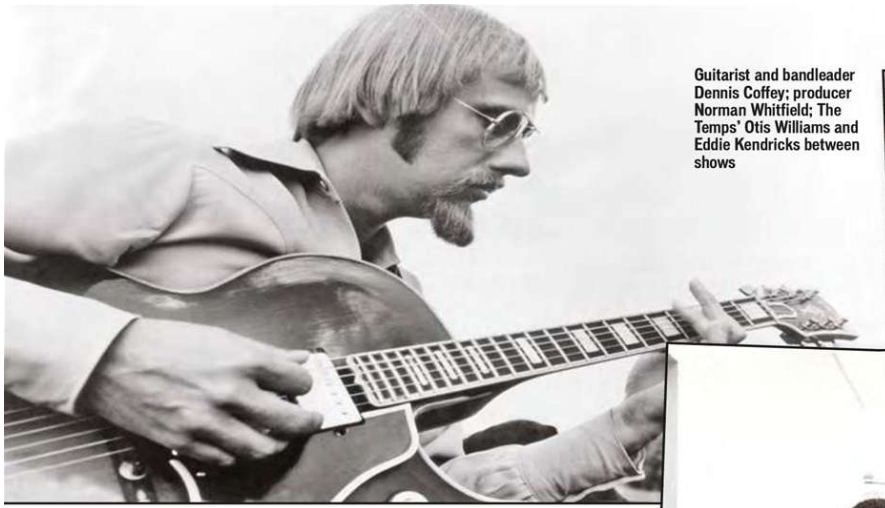
as his replacement. Ruffin didn't take too kindly to this decision, turning up at gigs uninvited and invading the stage to take over lead vocals. Williams would also suffer personal problems that would eventually lead to his departure and the writing was on the wall for Kendricks, frustrated at the sacking of Ruffin and the direction the group was taking.

With Edwards on board, Whitfield began his psychedelic experiments with The Temptations hitting the Top 10 in October '68 with his magnum opus 'Cloud Nine'. Clearly influenced by Sly Stone, 'Cloud Nine' was nothing like the

Norman heard it and he said, "That's good man, that's what I want."

The band were reportedly reluctant to change direction too but following a string of commercial success, Edwards was enthusing about the producer's experimental approach in a '70 *Blues & Soul* interview. "He comes up with such unusual ideas. Least ways, they seem unusual when he first throws them at us but I've got used to the idea that he's about four steps in front of me. I used to think to myself, 'Well, what's all this about; he must be joking,' but we all trusted in him completely and he's been

Music', Sly was doing something that no other group was doing at the time, they were using most of the leads. Everybody was singing a line. That was unheard of. There was a lead singer and there was the background. When Sly came up with 'Dance To The Music', Norman Whitfield came up with the idea of 'Cloud Nine'. He said 'You take this line, you take this line...' And the rest is history. Of course, it didn't sink in to us, the group members. We were mesmerised by that. We didn't like 'Cloud Nine' the first time we ever did it. I'd sing a line, Eddie would sing a line, Paul would sing a line, Melvin sing a



Guitarist and bandleader Dennis Coffey; producer Norman Whitfield; The Temps' Otis Williams and Eddie Kendricks between shows



line but we found out that the public liked it and it brought about what we called at the time 'psychedelic soul'."

Coffey continues, "Norman was trying to take Motown in a new direction, more of a social commentary 'cos he was watching Sly Stone and the psychedelic movements and I was his guy 'cos he saw that's where I was at. I was playing in the black clubs and I could do the funk. I had the feel that they needed at Motown. I had that extra thing with distortion pedals"

For his own part, Whitfield became a reluctant interviewee. He was non-committal on politics telling one interviewer. "I don't like to speculate. My thing was to revolutionise the sound but without the speculating."

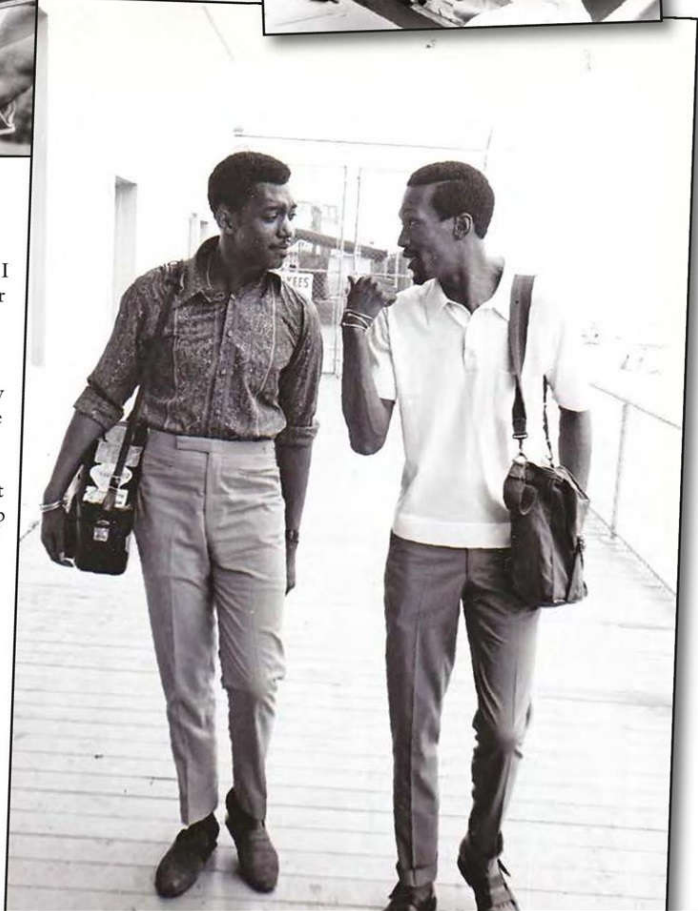
Conversely, the emerging Black Panthers group The Lumpen parodied the Temptations message claiming their message was "messed up" and didn't address the oppression faced by the black community.

Otis Williams responded to critics in a '70 *Melody Maker* interview saying, "I don't think that politics and music go hand in hand. Music is for entertainment

"You see, I'm not a singer – I can't sing, it's as easy as that! So I had to use other people's voices as my outlet.

Yes, I was influenced early on by Sly Stone – and other black acts on other labels that were coming up with fresh ideas and new sounds.

"To me, it was a case of the black man coming forth from the sound that had been given to him. It was a case of the black man doing his own thing for the first time and



"It's more or less what we call 'funkedelic'. It's a combination of R&B, psychedelic and a funky African-type beat. I'm experimenting..."

and we're just playing our part in trying to alleviate some of the people's problems through our music."


Despite any negative connotations, the band did have a profound impact on Motown and what was to follow, with the emergence of key individual works by Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, who enthused to a *Melody Maker* reporter in '67, "Have you heard The Temptations' 'Cloud Nine'? it's more or less what we call 'funkedelic'. It's a combination of R&B, psychedelic and a funky African-type beat. I'm experimenting... a lot of things I've done recently are funkedelic."

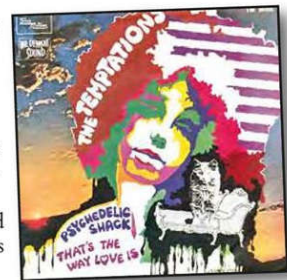
Whitfield gave further insight into his motives in a '77 *Blues & Soul* interview.

I was proud to be part of it."

"Norman was a master of dynamics," says Dennis Coffey, "I always remembered him counting off each song while standing in front of drummers Uriel Jones and Pistol Allen. He would then conduct breakdowns leaving just a few musicians playing and then bring the other Funk Brothers back in one by one. Other producers would let the arranger count off the songs and they would sit in the control room. Norman was a hands-on producer who stayed in The Snake Pit at Studio A with us. I learned how to use breakdowns from Norman which is why I put one in 'Scorpio', which helped to make it a million selling record".

The work Norman Whitfield produced for The Temptations changed the face of Motown and cemented his place as one of the

greatest ever producers, bringing black music into the psychedelic era with subsequent hits such as 'Ball Of Confusion', 'Psychedelic Shack' and 'Papa Was A Rolling Stone'. 



A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

STUART COSGROVE picks 10 of 1968's key soul albums

Aretha Franklin

Lady Soul
(Atlantic, January)

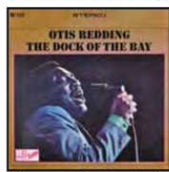


Lady Soul was officially the #1 R&B album of 1968, by which time Aretha was an international superstar. All the great voices feature somewhere: Aretha, her sisters Carolyn and Erma,

and ubiquitous backing singer Cissy Houston, mother of Whitney. Big tracks are 'Chain Of Fools', the proto-feminist 'You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman' and a modern reading of Curtis Mayfield's 'People Get Ready', where Aretha returns to her roots in civil rights protest songs.

Otis Redding

The Dock Of The Bay
(Volt/Atco, February)

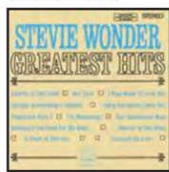


Immediately prior to his death Otis Redding had part-written a song, whilst relaxing on a houseboat on Waldo Point, California after a residency at San Francisco's legendary

Fillmore West. His collaborator at Stax, Steve Cropper sensed that the song 'Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay' had an unusual appeal. It was quiet and poetic, hinting at departure, loneliness and yearning, universal themes that could appeal far beyond the ghetto. Redding's death brought the song prophetically to life. Stax rush-released the song. It hit the streets on 8th January 1968 and became an instant success, reaching #1 in the USA, the UK and much of Europe. Cropper had gone to a local sound effects studio in Memphis and dubbed on the sound of seagulls and distant waves. It was the making of the song for some and an unnecessary contrivance for others. What is beyond dispute is that the album has become an anthem of self-reflection and personal enquiry.

Stevie Wonder

Greatest Hits
(Tamla, March)



Hit compilations were one of Motown's stock in trade and whilst nothing could ever match the towering excellence of *The Four Tops Greatest Hits*, Stevie Wonder came close. This is the hits

prior to 'Superstition' and *Innervisions*; he was still a child star. His effervescence shines through, especially on the ebullient 'Uptight (Everything's Alright)', 'Nothing's Too Good For My Baby' and 'Work Out Stevie, Work Out' but those that want social history may prefer one of Motown's earliest diversions into social commentary - Little Stevie's version of 'Blowin' In The Wind'.

The Fantastic Johnny C

Boogaloo Down Broadway
(Phil LA Of Soul, March)

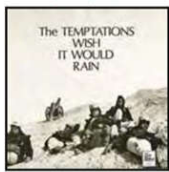


The only album ever released by The Fantastic Johnny C is one of the all-time classics of the dance-craze era. Over and above the title track, there's 'Barefootin'', 'The Bounce'

and the ubiquitous 'Land Of A Thousand Dances'. It's unusual for an unknown artist to make such an impact then simply disappear. Described as "a mini-masterpiece of gritty soul", it's the only album out there by the mysterious Johnny Corey. The cover, which features Mr C doing the boogaloo on Broadway, is given a special status in soul clubs to this day.

The Temptations

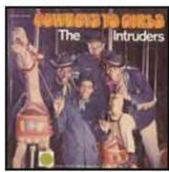
The Temptations Wish It Would Rain
(Gordy, April)



In the last days of 1967, Motown songwriter Roger Penzabene committed suicide leaving a small catalogue of stunning, self-reflective songs behind him. One of them became the title track of The Temptations' seventh album. It's a song from the very top drawer of mournful soul in which the singer seems to wallow in a damaging and self-destructive pessimism. Paradoxically, The Temptations are dressed as French Legionnaires on the front cover, an art department decision that is baffling to this day. If suicide can ever be described as shaping art then this is it.

The Intruders

Cowboys To Girls
(Gamble, April)



Famous as much for what it predicted than what it actually delivered, 'Cowboys To Girls' was the first green shoot of The Philly Sound. The majority of the tracks were written and produced

by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who would shoot to prominence in the '70s as the brains behind countless gold records. Ignore the comic cover in which The Intruders are mocked up as cowboys reigning in an alabaster horse and focus instead on the lush Philly harmonies.

The Impressions

We're A Winner
(ABC, June)



One of the last Impressions albums before the legendary Curtis Mayfield went solo. Whilst its title track is one of growing defiance and self-confident civil rights, elsewhere it's elegant

Chicago soul with an unmistakable mid-tempo style.

The 5th Dimension

Stoned Soul Picnic
(Soul City, August)



One of the stand-out albums of the psychedelic soul era, featuring husband and wife team Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr alongside Florence LaRue, Lamonte McLemore and Ron Townson. Among

the best tracks are the much-covered 'California Soul' and the Laura Nyro-penned title track, whose titles alone are redolent of The Summer Of Love and the gentle pacifism of hippie counterculture.

Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell

You're All I Need
(Tamla, August)



A remarkable album still shrouded in mystery. In October 1967 Tammi Terrell collapsed on stage at a college in Virginia and was rushed to hospital with a brain tumour from which she eventually died. Profoundly unwell but in the minds of Motown fans still part of the greatest soul duo ever, it remains unclear which of the tracks Terrell actually sings on. Cleverly constructed in the studio the album was completed with the aid of singer Valerie Simpson. Whatever the reality, it's a towering monument to aching love duets - including the title track and the evergreen 'Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing'.

Diana Ross & The Supremes

Love Child
(Motown, November)



When Motown's famous writing team of Holland, Dozier & Holland went on strike after a fall out with Berry Gordy it was a potentially ruinous moment for the corporation. Gordy retaliated by forming a collective of new writers under the anonymous name The Clan. Holed up in a Detroit hotel, they wrote one of Motown's transformational songs - 'Love Child' - a socially strident story of young ghetto pregnancy, which broke with The Supremes' innocent reputation for romantic love songs. The front cover challenged orthodoxy too: jeans, sweatshirts and afros were in, and out went the shimmering cocktail dresses of old.

Memphis 68: The Tragedy Of Southern Soul by Stuart Cosgrove is published by Polygon



1968



Soft Machine, London, 1967.
L-R: Daevid Allen, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt, Kevin Ayers

THE WORLD SPINS

The pace of social change during the '60s was too fast for some and too slow for others. Conflict was rife as teenagers all over the world enjoyed newfound freedoms just as political events surrounding The Vietnam War, Civil Rights and the threat of nuclear holocaust began to shape the music they were listening to. After 1968, rock 'n' roll would never sound the same, as **JOHNNIE JOHNSTONE** discovers

In political terms, 1968 was an extraordinary year. American youth had been galvanised by the Washington demonstration of October '67, before The Tet Offensive in the first month of the new year heightened opposition towards The Vietnam War. Civil rights protests escalated into full-scale riots in the urban ghettos following the assassination of Martin Luther King in April, and the killing of RFK in June only intensified a mood of overwhelming despair. Protest in popular music had been largely confined to folk music but bands like The Fugs and Country Joe & The Fish had already made overtly political statements on record.

But it was in '68 that rock and radicalism became inextricably intertwined. In Detroit and Ann Arbor, the rise of John Sinclair's White Panther Party was soundtracked by The MC5, and African-American music would change beyond recognition, becoming infused with righteous indignation and a growing pride in black consciousness. The era of Soul Power had arrived. That radicalism wasn't simply the preserve of American youth. In Europe too the barricades were shaking, and music had a part to play in events which saw huge anti-war demonstrations in London and which would bring France and Czechoslovakia to the brink of revolution.

If, during the '60s, London (via Liverpool) had become the epicentre of the music and fashion world, Britain was still by and large a fairly conservative country and the counterculture rarely provided any substantial threat to the establishment. Young people may have joined marches but the records they bought gave little encouragement to their subversive dreams. They seemed more content to take pills and dance 'til the early hours of the morning. When Lennon sang about 'Revolution' and the Stones of "fighting in the street", the sentiments were not only non-combative but unmistakably sardonic.

But on the continent things were different. In West Germany, '68 proved to be year zero for rock music, with the birth of krautrock. This was partly fuelled by German teens' rejection of the values of their forefathers. Their country had an unspeakable past, so much so that more often than not, German bands opted to articulate their feelings without using words at all. What could one say? The touch paper was lit by the killing of West Berlin student Benno Ohnesorg by a police officer, triggering the '68 protests, and after The Essen Rock Festival that

rather than the antidote to it. The writings of Sartre and de Beauvoir were *de rigueur*, and the French ideology of high culture contributed to a uniquely anti-American mindset, so that cultural protest was more likely to be found in university, cafés and street theatre than at rock concerts.

The French pop charts were a peculiar mix of traditional chansons, easy listening and pop, with the odd aberration. For instance Greek band Aphrodite's Child enjoyed a 14-week stint at the top of the charts with the mildly baroque 'Rain And Tears', 10 weeks longer than 'Hey Jude' managed, but at the moment the shit hit the fan in May, almost surreally it was Tom Jones' 'Delilah' at the summit. In many ways rock and radicalism were separate entities in France, but one British rock band would manage to penetrate the cultural barriers, to find themselves caught up in the May events: Soft Machine.

Before Aussie-born Daavid Allen arrived in the UK, he had spent time in Paris nurturing a love for the jazz he heard there in the city's cafes. It would be to Paris he would return after forming Soft Machine with fellow jazz lover Robert Wyatt, Canterbury scenester Mike Ratledge and Kevin Ayers, whom he had first encountered in Ibiza. Ayers' more commercial sensibilities counterbalanced the more experimental *avant-garde* dimension to the band's sound, concocting a perfect potpourri for goat-scratching French students. The Ayers-penned 'Love Makes Sweet Music' was one of the first British psychedelic releases (February '67) and Soft Machine toured Europe soon after, performing trance-inducing 40-minute renditions of 'We Did It Again' in St Tropez and the capital, thus making them darlings of the Parisian hipsters. Upon their return to the UK, Daavid Allen was refused entry to the

standstill and as the events unfolded on television screens across the globe, Allen instinctively was drawn to the heart of the action. "I got caught up in the '68 riots but when I turned up on the barricades to confront the armed paratroopers with a teddy bear, I managed to anger both sides – the paras and the humourless left-wing students," he told Aidan Smith in 2009.

Allen was ridiculed as "a beatnik" and decanted to Majorca for a time before eventually returning to Paris where he would work on Gong's debut album *Magick Brother* in '69. His former bandmates had beaten him to the punch with their own landmark debut, made without their founding member, and released in October '68. Soft Machine returned to play Paris after the threat of revolution had subsided, but if the political aspirations of French youth had been quashed, the country was in the midst of huge social upheaval, which transformed attitudes towards rock music. By the end of '68, France's most celebrated cinematographer and auteur Jean-Luc Godard had filmed *One Plus One*, a film featuring images of The Rolling Stones recording 'Sympathy For The Devil' juxtaposed with footage of The Black Panther Party's military manoeuvres. By '69, the French musical landscape had been transformed by the events of '68 and the influence of Soft Machine and Gong was not hard to discern in the new

progressive sounds of Magma and Ange. The Western influence had been insidious but France's social revolution softened

Soft Machine's Daavid Allen was in Paris and shortly afterwards the student demonstrations at the Sorbonne began to ignite. **"I got caught up in the '68 riots but when I turned up on the barricades to confront the armed paratroopers with a teddy bear, I managed to anger both sides – the paras and the humourless left-wing students"**

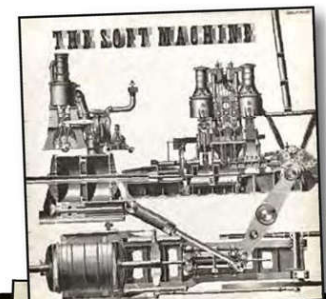
year the musical revolution would follow.

Meanwhile in France, the political situation had reached boiling point. France was a unique proposition. There was – particularly amongst more radical elements – an uneasy relationship with rock 'n' roll and consumerism. Sure, teenagers bought Beatles records like anyone else, but rock music was often considered symptomatic of the problem

country and returned to France where he formed Gong with his partner Gilli Smyth, a poet and teacher at Sorbonne University.

While Soft Machine toured the States in early '68 supporting The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Allen was in Paris and shortly afterwards the student demonstrations at the Sorbonne began to ignite. Strikes had brought the economy to a virtual

attitudes and the music would win out in the end. The revolution would not be televised, so what could a poor boy do, 'cept sing in a rock 'n' roll band?



THIS IS THEIR COUNTRY

The *Shindig!* team offers 10 songs of revolt and turmoil

THE BOB SEGER SYSTEM

2+2=?

(Single, Capitol, also Ramblin' Gamblin' Man)



Seger's first single for Capitol as The Bob Seger System resonated strongly with those who had just received their draft notices. A radical departure from his earlier work, it is not so

much a tune as an urgent, truly passionate rant against The Vietnam War, sung over a powerful fuzz guitar riff. With lyrics like "Young men buried in the mud / Off in a foreign land", Seger had come a long way since writing the reactionary 'Ballad Of A Yellow Beret' a mere two years earlier. Seger showed how attitudes to the war and the establishment had changed dramatically by 1968.

NINA SIMONE

Why? (The King Of Love Is Dead)

(Single, RCA Victor, also 'Nuff Said!)



Simone and her band first performed this song, written by bass player Gene Taylor, the same day they learned it – three days after Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in April 1968.

Musically reminiscent of gospel spirituals, it gently mourns the senseless murder of a great leader while passionately denouncing the racial unrest that led to his death – and bluntly challenging those left behind not just to weep, but to do better. "Folks, you'd better stop and think; everybody knows we're on the brink."

SLY & THE FAMILY STONE

Everyday People

(Single, Epic)



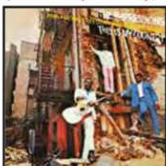
It wasn't only civil rights and war that got a look in by the folkies and hippies, the multi-racial Sly & The Family Stone still preached peace and love. 'Everyday People' is concerned with, in a rather

Sesame Street fashion, the way human beings treat each other. A notion that goes beyond civil rights and racism and calls for all people of all colour, creed, class and nationality to get along. A plea that was needed. Not only was the country at war and seeing increasing racial hatred, but students, hippies and liberals were also a target from authority. A nice, and needed, sentiment.

THE IMPRESSIONS

This Is My Country

(This Is My Country, Custom)



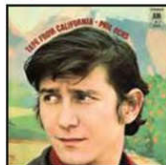
Curtis Mayfield, who had been penning political songs for years, paralleling Martin Luther King's message of non-violent resistance with classic civil rights anthems such as 'Keep On Pushing'

and 'People Get Ready'. Mayfield's Christian faith would, over the next decade, keep his frustrations in check, but by the time he wrote 'This Is My Country' the message was more ambiguous. Was it a show of African-American patriotism or might it have been construed as an invitation for black youth to seize the day? Whatever the case, Mayfield never sounded more radical, nor despite the sound – a typical gorgeously stoic slice of soul – more desperate than he did here: "I've paid three hundred years or more / Of slave driving, sweat, and welts on my back / This is my country."

PHIL OCHS

White Boots Marching In A Yellow Land

(Tape From California, A&M)



Firmly aligned to the left and the anti-war movement, Phil Ochs, was no stranger to protest songs. 'I Ain't Marching Anymore' and 'Draft Dodger Rag' to name but a few. 1968's 'White Boots Marching In A Yellow Land' went deeper into this hopeless war and was a return to Ochs' earlier minimalist protest songs, with the slightest interjection of horns and drums to create a militaristic feel. The anger had now turned to pessimism: "We're fighting in a war we lost before the war began". Unlike Dylan, whose protest material was masked, Ochs addressed the issue directly.

COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH

Untitled Protest

(Together, Vanguard)



Country Joe McDonald only wrote two songs for the Fish's third album but the dark 'Untitled Protest' showed how he had lost none of his vitriol. "Khaki priests of Christendom, interpreters of love / Ride a stone leviathan across a sea of blood", he incants over an organ drone and finger bells. It's like The Byrds' 'Mind Gardens' tackling a political abomination head on. "The oxen lie beside the road their bodies baked in mud / And fat flies chew out their eyes then bathe themselves in blood." A harrowing, darkly poignant and considered song, which must have sounded even more ominous at the time.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Love Song For The Dead Che

(The United States Of America, Columbia)



Proving that great revolutionary songs don't have to be about tearing down the walls and manning the barricades, West coast radical Communist Joe Byrd wrote this yearning ballad

after hearing of the violent death of Che Guevara. Beautifully sung in a restrained fashion by vocalist Dorothy Moskowitz, on first hearing it could be just a

romantic love song: "I remember the taste of you sweet in my mouth / Late in the year", but there were darker and more thoughtful strands lying below the surface. Che was on his way to becoming the poster boy for the counterculture.

ERIC BURDON & THE ANIMALS

Sky Pilot

(Single, MGM, also The Twain Shall Meet)



What essentially sounds like a UK pop-psych record hides one of the era's most effective anti-war songs. Anti-war, rather than just anti-Vietnam. The lyrics concern a chaplain: "He blesses the boys / As they stand in line / The smell of gun grease / And the bayonets they shine / He's there to help them / All that he can / To make them feel wanted / He's a good holy man." The stark reality of the atrocity of war ends the piece: "In the morning they return / With tears in their eyes / The stench of death drifts up to the skies / A soldier so ill looks at the sky pilot / Remembers the words / Thou shalt not kill".

THE WEST COAST POP ART EXPERIMENTAL BAND

A Child Of A Few Hours Is Burning To Death

(Vol 3: A Child's Guide To Good And Evil, Reprise)



Bob Markley was a very credible lyricist, which is often overlooked, and the title 'A Child Of A Few Hours Is Burning To Death' speaks for itself. Based on a TV news clip of a young Vietnamese mother holding her napalm burned baby ("A child of a few hours / Is burning to death / Her eyes are full of smoke / Her mouth is full of fire / Napalm is perfect / For women and children") the song points a cynical finger at how an American family cast the barbarous act aside ("Pretend it's not happening / It will be clipped / Out of tomorrow's news show").

THE DOORS

Unknown Soldier

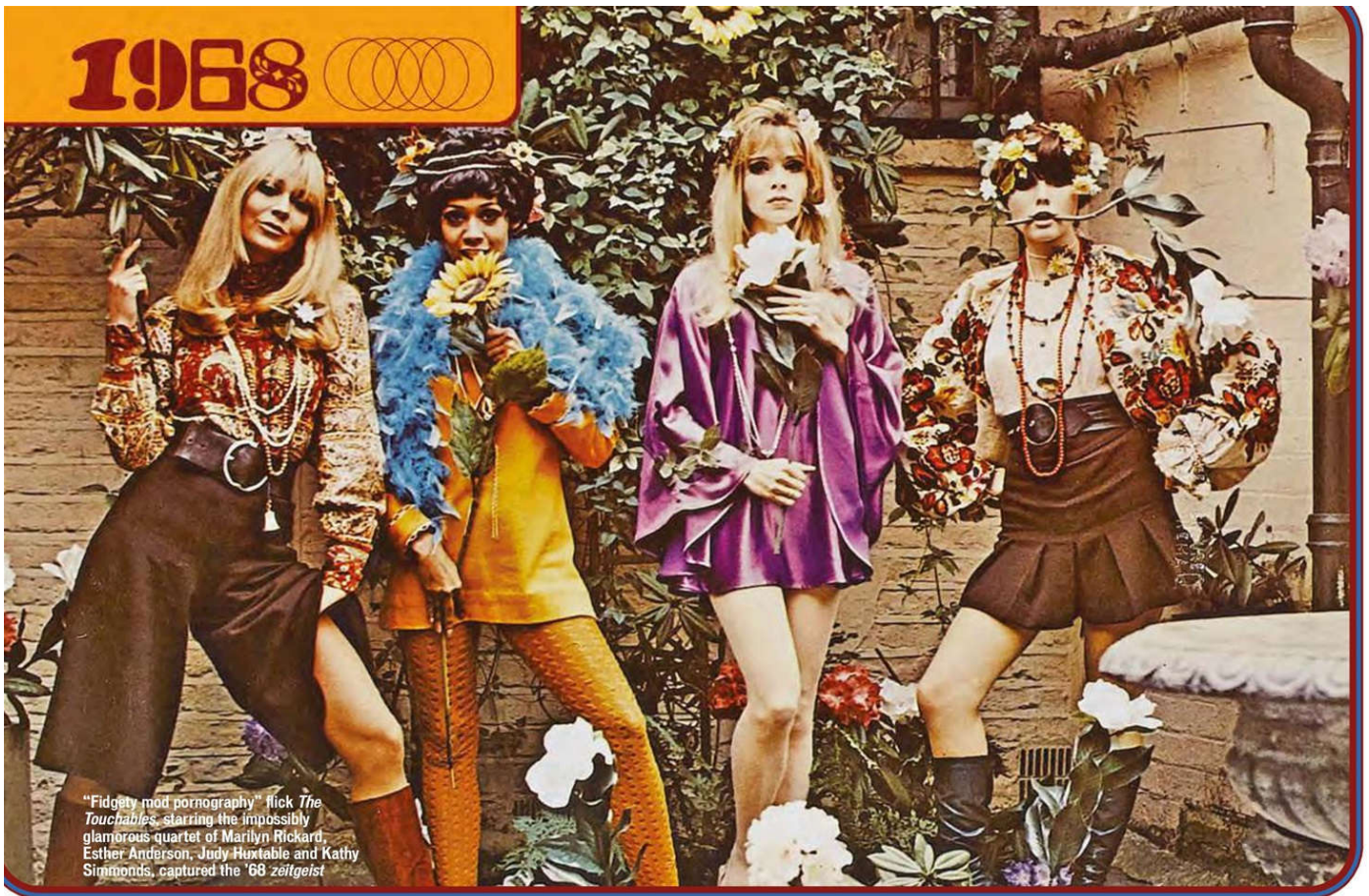
(Waiting For The Sun, Elektra)



The Doors could never really be considered political, but the 'Unknown Soldier' was Jim Morrison's reaction to The Vietnam War. Like The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band's 'A Child Of A Few Hours...' the manner in which TV news reported on the war is a main theme: "Breakfast where the news is read / Television children fed / Unborn living, living dead / Bullets strike the helmet's head". The song was a live favourite, allowing Morrison to act out the lyric in a theatrical manner.

Contributors: Johnnie Johnstone, Fiona McQuarrie, Jon 'Mojo' Mills and Phil Suggitt. Thanks to Hugh Dellar and Ross Hannan

1968



"Fidgety mod pornography" flick *The Touchables*, starring the impossibly glamorous quartet of Marilyn Rickard, Esther Anderson, Judy Huxtable and Kathy Simmonds, captured the '68 zeitgeist

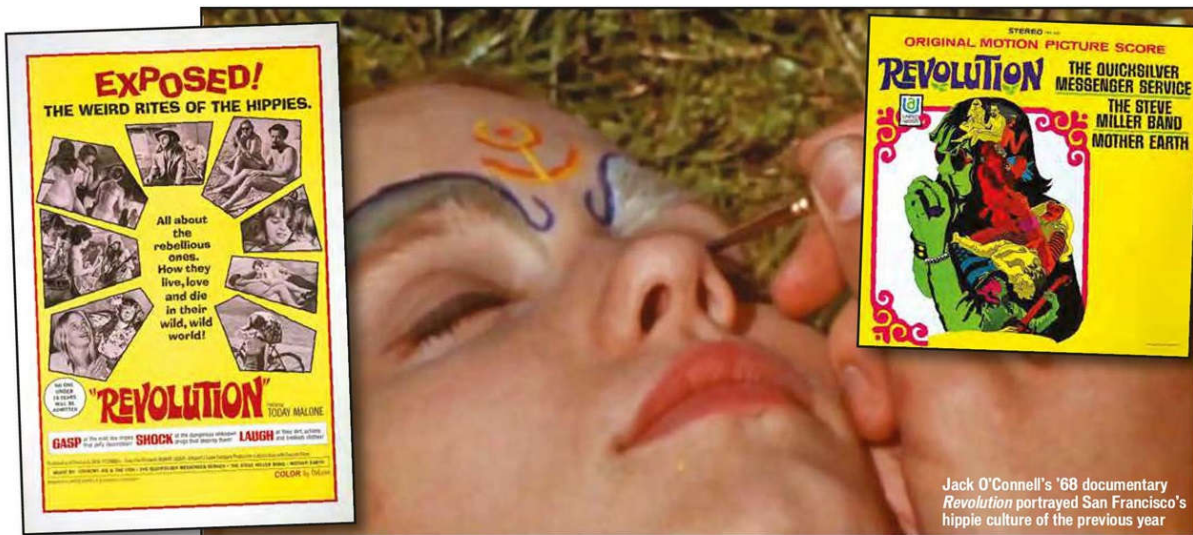
TURN ON WITH THE TRY ANYTHING GENERATION

If we had to choose the key year for pop films, the moment when the phenomenon peaked, 1968 lays a better claim than most: 12 months that produced dozens of rock documentaries, quirky dramas and psychedelic capers that are still watched 50 years later.

SIMON MATTHEWS turns on

A year earlier, in 1967, Peter Whitehead's *Tonite Lets All Make Love In London* had memorably showcased what was happening in the centre of the pop and film world. Twelve months on, San Francisco, to which the centre of gravity had to a certain extent shifted, produced its own riposte to this: *Revolution*, a documentary with various talking heads, light shows and dancers. Plenty of bands featured too, including The Quicksilver Messenger Service, The Steve Miller Band and Country Joe & The Fish as well as lesser acts like Mother Earth, Dan Hicks and Ace Of Cups.





Jack O'Connell's '68 documentary *Revolution* portrayed San Francisco's hippie culture of the previous year

Another exploration and charting of the emerging hippy culture was provided by *You Are What You Eat*, one sequence of which was even shot at The Greta Garbo Home For Wayward Boys And Girls. (A real location, aka The Kirkland Hotel, San Francisco, hence Manfred Mann's hit version of the soundtrack song). On display here, either in the film or on the soundtrack album, are The Electric Flag, Harpers Bizarre, The Band, Tiny Tim, Emperor Rosko and David Crosby. Distributed by US TV producers Commonwealth United it did sufficiently well at the box office to persuade them to fund *The Magic Christian* a few months later. London remained very much in the game though and with Jean-Luc Godard in town the outcome was *Sympathy For The Devil*, a gritty agitprop variant that proposed revolution of a different kind: not in your head, but on the streets. Made with money from Michael Pearson (4th Viscount Cowdray) one wonders today

film production and the launching pad for Jane Birkin's subsequent ascent to stardom. Those searching for the full Monty of psychedelic cinema need browse no further. This has sets designed and decorated by The Fool (when they weren't busy recording their debut album with Graham Nash) and a soundtrack – the debut album on Apple – with The Remo Four, Harrison, Starr and Eric Clapton. The film was hard to see in '68 but the album sold okay, charting at #49 in the US even though the film itself wasn't released there. The plot? It's all a bit obscure... trippy stuff with eastern mystical overtones. Solitary, put-upon little man glimpses a gorgeous girl through a crack in his living room wall. Or something. Today we recognise it as the point at which the four Beatles moved into individual projects rather than just being members of the

'68: *Separation*, another Pearson/Cowdray production, with Procol Harum and a woman having a nervous breakdown; *Nerosubianco* a meditation on mixed race sexuality freewheeling around London with The Freedom (director Tinto Brass had wanted Procol Harum but got their offshoot instead – the film led to him being offered *A Clockwork Orange* with David Hemmings and Mick Jagger, like *The Lord Of The Rings*, a project that came to naught); *Up The Junction*, Battersea set and a clichéd slice of life but a very elegant score from Manfred Mann; *Work Is A Four Letter Word* with Cilla Black and David Warner, Warner mad again in a piece about conformism and hallucinogenic mushrooms; *The Committee* with The Pink Floyd, Paul Jones and The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown in an obscure RD Laing(ish) parable; *Girl On A Motorcycle* with Marianne Faithfull having a great deal of casual sex; Richard Lester and

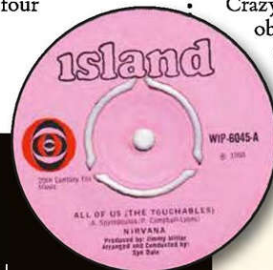
"Alas, the critics in '68 were underwhelmed, one referring to it as **"fidgety mod pornography"** and the film vanished from sight, absent from Halliwell and with its soundtrack album quickly deleted"

exactly how serious its political intentions were. Still, the footage of The Rolling Stones rehearsing the title song, with Brian Jones slowly going down to destruction as they do so, remains gripping and a testimony to how quickly the bouncy optimism of the era could turn sour.

One of the "names" of the time, Iain Quarrier, co-produced and appeared in *Sympathy For The Devil*. He also turns up in *Wonderwall*, George Harrison's *entrée* to

biggest band in the world. Briefly glimpsed, later that year, in the animation fest *Yellow Submarine* they were slowly ceasing to function as a coherent group and an attempt around this time by John Boorman to film *The Lord Of The Rings* with them playing groovy, drug-toking hobbits (McCartney as Bilbo Baggins) came to nothing.

If youth-orientated films with a band, singer or up to the moment soundtracks were your bag, there was a lot on offer in





John Barry's *Petulia* set in San Francisco, and, like *Revolution*, with various bands on show – in this case Big Brother & The Holding Company and The Grateful Dead; *Joanna*, similarly an Anglo-US effort featuring the future Mrs John Phillips – Genevieve Waite – with Donald Sutherland and wistful folksy music from Rod McKuen. Mike Sarne directed and, like the film itself, quickly became emblematic of an era that faded away very quickly indeed.

All of these were serious, modish, contemporary efforts. A lighter, glossier, approach came from *The Touchables*, the debut production from David Cammell, a partner in Cammell Hudson Brownjohn (CHB), at that point possibly the coolest advertising agency on the planet. The idea that they would one day move into feature films – co-partner Robert Brownjohn had already done the stunning title sequences for *From Russia With Love* and *Goldfinger* – started back in '66 when Cammell and his brother Donald made *Go Go Said The Bird* for Rediffusion TV from a script by 20 years old Nik Cohn. This shows Cammell about to put a film into production and Simon Napier-Bell forming a new band (John's Children). The film ended up, of course, being *The Touchables* with Beatles photographer Robert Freeman directing; earlier he'd been camera man on the '67 CHB Pirelli commercial *The Tortoise & The Hare* ('67), a much admired and sleek flow of images set to music by The Spencer Davis Group. Ian Le Frenais, late of *The Likely Lads*, co-wrote the script and Chris Blackwell, then moving Island Records from a reggae/rock steady label to a hip reflection of the burgeoning counter-culture came in to "compile" the soundtrack.

Obligingly, he selected his signings Nirvana for the title theme with Wynder K Frog, a mod-soul outfit, providing another couple of tracks. Pop-soul act Ferris Wheel were there too as were The Pink Floyd with an extract from the original pre-EMI recording of *Interstellar Overdrive*.

Alas, the critics in '68 were underwhelmed, one referring to it as "fidgety mod pornography" and the film vanished from sight, absent from Halliwell and with its soundtrack album quickly deleted. Like a TV commercial it wasn't noted for high powered acting, the cast being led by high society model Judy

Huxtable and beauty queen/DJ/dancer Esther Anderson, who just happened to be a close friend of Chris Blackwell, with James Villiers in a supporting role. The plot – in which a pop star is held hostage as a sex slave by four dolly birds inside an inflatable plastic dome (the housing of the future in '68, but not much thereafter) whilst being pursued by a gang of assorted heavies – never quite gels and the script veers uneasily between rather twee comedy, sex scenes where we don't see very much sex and knockabout violence that pulls its punches.

Forgotten and difficult to locate for about 30 years, we watch it today





"Tom Courtenay sauntering through Portobello Road market to the strains of Don Partridge's **'Homeless Bones'**. Blink for a second and you'll miss the long-haired busker in the background – surely **Dave Brock, pre-Hawkwind**"



"Otley hasn't dated." Peter Frampton (yes, him again) with star Romy Schneider (above left); writers Ian La Frenais and Dick Clement with star Tom Courtenay and actor/designer Robert Brownjohn on location in London

knowing how it's back story links the Bond movies via Nik Cohn with the 'Hole In My Shoe' era of Island records whilst admiring the music, clothing and general ambience. And, of course, we know what came next: the Cammell's kept the same plot of rock star + kinky sex + gang of heavies and reworked it as *The Performers*, subsequently renamed *Performance* and shot August-November '68 with a real rock star (Jagger), real sex (Pallenberg and Breton) and real criminals (Bindon and Shannon). Here they work from a much darker, deeper palette. The fey dialogue of *The Touchables* and its misfiring comedy was dropped and replaced by hard streetwise vernacular courtesy of hustler (and blues enthusiast) David Litvinoff – a man as at home cruising the streets with The Krays as he was hanging out at The Colony Club with Lucien Freud or at Bob Fraser's latest gallery.

If *The Touchables*, despite its glittering credits, fails to be a truly brilliant comedy caper there are many others from this time that vie for that crown, *30 Is A Dangerous Age*, *Cynthia* in which Dudley Moore frets about being unmarried and chases around town in a Mini Moke trying to find the ideal bride, *The Bliss Of Mrs Blossom* with music from The Spectrum and The New Vaudeville Band and a brassiere manufacturer staging a lingerie show at Alexandra Palace, *Only When I Larf* about jet-setting con-artists led by David Hemmings and a mournful title theme from Whistling Jack Smith, *Seven Times*

Seven, an Italian production where crooks break out of jail to rob The Royal Mint and escape in a London bus with a great title song by The Casuals, and, for those much taken with Ms Pallenberg, well, you could see quite a bit of her in every sense in sprawling entertainments like *Candy* and *Barbarella*.

But, contender for the best example of the comedy caper can only be *Otley*. Combining the genres of spy film, pop film and Swinging London, this has one of the defining opening scenes of the period: Tom Courtenay as a useless layabout sauntering through Portobello Road market to the strains of Don Partridge's 'Homeless Bones'. Blink for a second and you'll miss the long-haired busker in the background – surely Dave Brock, pre-Hawkwind. Like *Performance* much of this was shot in Notting Hill Gate and Kensington. Like *The Touchables* it has a script from Ian Le Frenais (this time with partner Dick Clement and much more assured it is too), James Villiers as a villain and even a cameo from Robert Brownjohn. It has the obligatory band as well – The Herd posing in an investiture scene at Buckingham Palace, frozen forever in time in their finest suits, ruffles and cravats shortly before Peter Frampton left the group. Easily as good as Clement and Le Frenais *The Likely Lads*

the dialogue is crisp, the plot is assured and even makes – mildly – some political points by setting up the hapless Courtenay against amoral establishment types like Alan Badel. Unlike much of what was around half a century ago, *Otley* hasn't dated.

Has there ever been a time, before or since, when so much pop culture was on show in your local cinema? The year gave birth to around 100 feature films from the UK, Europe and the US that collectively pillaged contemporary graphics, camera techniques, design, fashion, art and music.

The last in particular, was the calling card of the era with an automatic assumption that almost everything being made had to have, somewhere, a band in a discotheque/club/studio or a band posing around as PR for their latest release, or a singer in an acting role, or an actor/actress who was making records (and

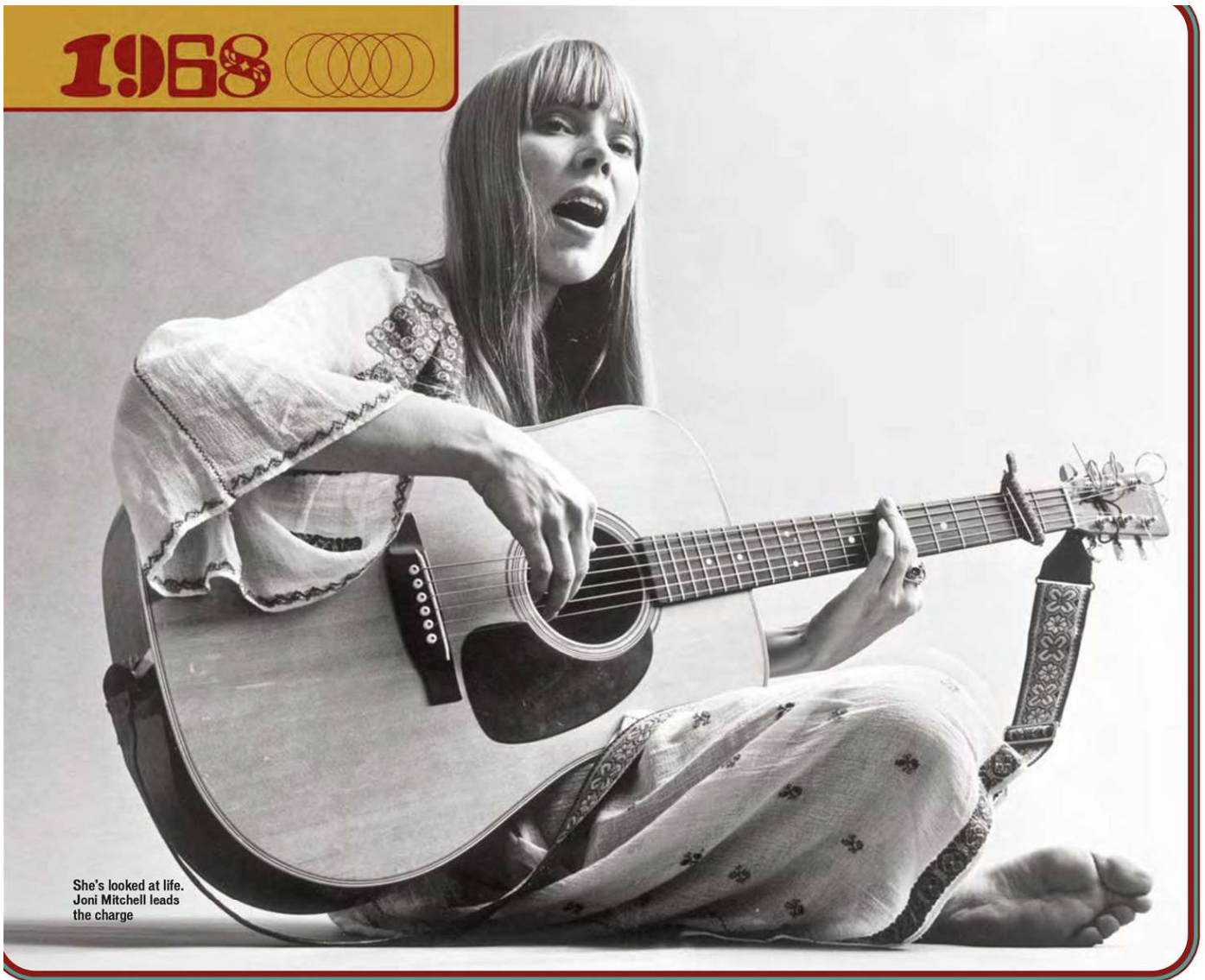
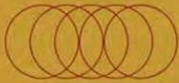
there were many of those), or a couple of newly released singles prominently used on the soundtrack, or a great title theme or just simply a combination of all of these. The high style that this produced leached into almost every conceivable genre – horror, crime, romance, comedy, even sci-fi in the trippy bits of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Today we take them for granted. But at the time – with some exceptions – much of these were difficult to see once they'd completed limited cinema bookings and difficult to hear with the soundtrack albums usually deleted once a thousand or so had been pressed. In the best "pop" traditions they were transient, disposable. Rediscovery came via The NFT and the Scala (and similar) doing selected screenings and 58 Dean Street – the legendary mecca for OST collectors – still holding a few copies of pretty much everything. Today, decades later, we can't get enough of them. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive... but to be young was pure heaven! 🎧

Psychedelic Celluloid by Simon Matthews is published by Oldcastle



1968



She's looked at life.
Joni Mitchell leads
the charge

YOU DON'T OWN ME

1968 saw both the emergence of a wave of female artists and a shift in the way many established acts updated their image to reflect the changing times.

FIONA McQUARRIE focuses on three very different key female acts and their movements that year

To understand “women in music” in 1968 – and to understand why that’s even a thing worth talking about – we have to look at what was going on during that time with women in society. In ’68, women in music and women in society were second class citizens, and they were angry. That anger laid the groundwork for change that would happen in subsequent years. But before we go there: why “women in music”? Why not “everybody in music”? Men were, and are, the majority in the music business, so looking at women in music does have the effect of making them the outsiders, the oddities, the exceptions. But that separation is necessary to fully understand those women’s experiences, and to assess their impact on music then and now.

So roll back, Father Time, roll back, to the early '60s – when father knew best, when mother was at home, and when women only stayed in higher education or the workplace until they found a husband. In '63, Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* started turning all that on its head. For many women, the book was the "a-ha!" that identified why, even though they had everything that they were supposed to have, their lives felt meaningless and unfulfilled. Discovering that they weren't alone, and realising that society had short-changed them by selling them a false ideal, sparked an activism among women that coalesced into the women's liberation movement.

Consider now what things looked like for women in the music industry around that same time. The folk music boom of the early '60s created one stereotype for women performers, which Kris Needs of this parish has described as "fragile, guitar-picking songstrels": doe-eyed, flaxen-haired waifs usually found flitting through an idyllic forest or a field.

Another dominant stereotype for women in music was that of the girl groups, who made some great records but, especially in the disposable universe of producers like Phil Spector, came and went in clouds of hairspray and interchangeably trendy dresses. Solo female artists usually looked and sang like girl group members who had somehow become separated from their herd, and the occasional woman musician, like drummer Honey Lantree of The Honeycombs, was regarded more as a novelty act rather than as a serious performer.

By the mid-60s, the legalisation of the birth control pill, along with wider access to legal abortion, gave women more control over their lives and careers. That contributed to more liberal societal attitudes toward lifestyles and sexuality. However, what was presented as sexual freedom for women often became a different form of oppression. To be "cool" and "with it", women were expected to be

the constraints of female stereotypes. Artists like Lesley Gore, Aretha Franklin and Jackie DeShannon were being recognised as songwriters, producers and arrangers. There were successful women behind the scenes: songwriters Carole King and Ellie Greenwich, composer Delia Derbyshire and TV producer Vicki Wickham. Journalists such as Lillian Roxon, Penny Valentine and Ellen Willis were breaking into the previously all-male domain of music writing. And a few performers, such as Cass Elliot and Janis Joplin, were so prodigiously talented that they became successful despite not fitting into accepted norms of attractiveness.

1968 was the year of several key events in the women's liberation movement: for example, the strike by female workers at Ford's Dagenham plant, protesting unequal wage rates between men and women, and the "bra burning" rally at the Miss America beauty pageant, protesting the outdated feminine ideals that the contest promoted. (It should be noted that the bras in question were actually tossed in trash bins rather than incinerated, since the local police forbade the protesters from setting anything on fire.) If we look at what happened in '68 to three specific female artists – Joni Mitchell, Dusty Springfield, and The Supremes – we can see how some of the dynamics behind those events were also affecting what was happening to women musicians.

Mitchell's first album, *Song To A Seagull*, was released in March '68. Mitchell had already established herself as a distinctive songwriter and an innovative guitarist, but those accomplishments were apparently less newsworthy than her looks – *Rolling Stone* described her as "a penny yellow blonde with a vanilla voice" – and her famous boyfriends. She told one interviewer that "all people cared about" was "who was she schtupping" when they tried to figure out the meanings behind her songs.

It's been suggested that

sonic palette *du jour*. But the recording had technical flaws – the miking of the performances produced an audible hiss on the master tapes, and reducing the volume of the hiss dampened the album's overall sound. Critics nevertheless praised *Song To A Seagull*, admiring Mitchell's poetic lyrics and the album's song-cycle structure – but the album was promoted with an ad proclaiming in large letters "Joni Mitchell is 90% Virgin". The smaller type below revealed that the 90% figure referred to the part of the potential audience who had not yet heard the album, and offered a poster of Mitchell to anyone who mailed in their address and 25 cents. It's difficult to imagine a male artist of the time being marketed with a come-on like "We're hoping this generous offer will help Joni cure her 90% virginity". Mitchell's website dryly notes, "Joni was not impressed".

In '68 Dusty Springfield had been a solo artist for five years. She started her career in The Lana Sisters trio, singing songs that weren't to her taste – at the time, according to manager, Vicki Wickham, "Women performers in Britain tended to get a raw deal from the music publishers" – and then found success with her brother Tom in The Springfields. However, her ideas for production and arrangements were usually dismissed by male musicians and executives, and she gained a reputation as being a perfectionist and "difficult" – even though often her ideas were eventually used, to the extent that she was effectively the uncredited producer of many of her records. By the start of '68 she'd chalked up more than a dozen hit singles – but, she told Penny Valentine, "I don't think the public

"It's difficult to imagine a male artist of the time being marketed with a come-on like 'We're hoping this generous offer will help Joni cure her 90% virginity'"

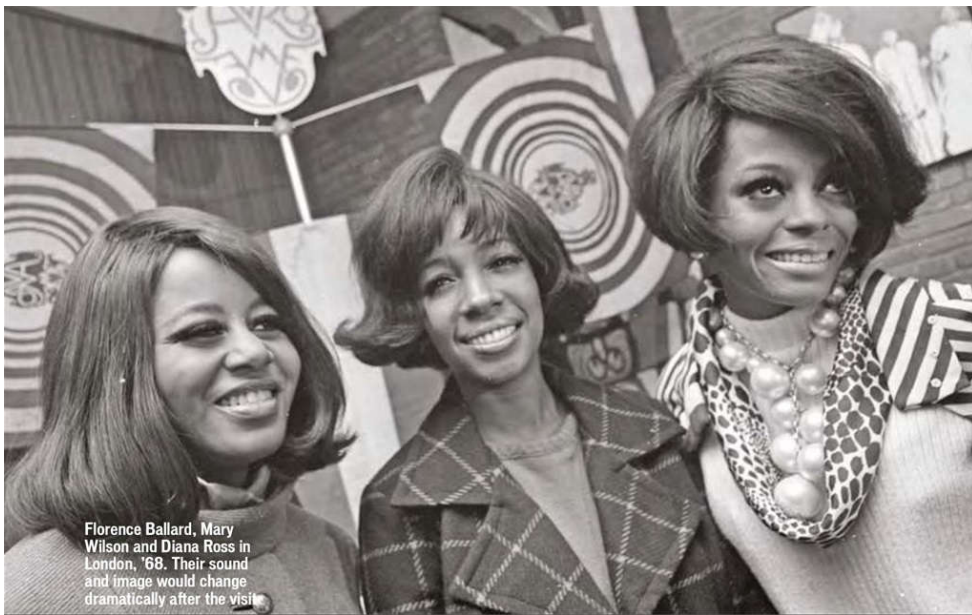
agreeable to casual sex whenever a man was so inclined. This expectation was particularly oppressive in the music industry, where women performers were often subjected to unwanted advances from producers, executives, or even fellow musicians, and often gave in simply because they feared consequences to their careers if they refused.

At the same time, though, some women in the music business had started escaping

Mitchell initially got a record deal not because of her own skills, but because David Crosby, one of those famous boyfriends, was willing to produce her first album. Crosby had enough power in the industry to insist that the album be acoustic, rather than having the elaborate orchestrations that were the

Dusty takes control and prepares for Memphis





Florence Ballard, Mary Wilson and Diana Ross in London, '68. Their sound and image would change dramatically after the visit

received thousands of letters from black fans begging the label to let the Supremes wear their natural hair, the staff in Motown's Artist Development department refused; they did not want to "give [the women] a radical edge that could scare away white fans". To Motown's credit, The Supremes did get to stretch out artistically in '68 with songs like September's #1 single 'Love Child' that touched on previously taboo subjects such as premarital sex and single parenthood. But the conflict between producing innovative, current-sounding records while maintaining the group's core audiences at cabarets and show clubs ultimately proved to be

realises how much pressure is put on artists by certain parts of the management. Eventually you have to comply with this business of being 'a good girl'. I've probably complied a lot less than many other poor singers in the business. I did a pantomime in Liverpool which I really didn't want to do, because they said, 'If you do the pantomime you can do this,' and 'this' happened to be my first Talk Of The Town season, which I knew I really NEEDED for my career." (Valentine's article also noted, prosaically, that Springfield had purchased over 50 "special dresses" for performing, each at a price of £250 – the equivalent of £4000 today).

Springfield struggled to pursue musical directions that were not typical for a white female singer; she was implicitly pressured to conceal her lesbianism at a time when same-sex relationships were seen not only as immoral aberrations but also as career-ending. In late '68, Springfield took the unusual step for a woman performer of that era by assuming

pressures facing The Supremes as an example of "intersectionality" – the interaction of multiple social identities (in this case, young, female, black and working class) that produces discrimination more intense than the discrimination associated with any of those identities on their own. The original members of The Supremes grew up in a Detroit housing project, and were taught by Motown's "finishing school" to act like "classy" young women in voice, demeanour and dress. Some activists objected to the idea that young black women were only "classy" if they were mimicking the behaviour of upper-class whites, but The Supremes appealed to some black audiences precisely because of the societal aspiration they embodied. Former *Vogue* editor André Leon Talley, who was raised by his grandmother in segregated rural North Carolina, has recalled that, as a child, seeing The Supremes on TV was his only opportunity to see "women of colour looking affluent.

unresolvable.

1968 was clearly a year of upheaval, but its outcomes resulted in significant advances for women in society and in music. The next few years saw many female performers find success through their own voices and their own personas, including the proud feminist lesbians that started the "women's music" movement – a genre that would have been unthinkable even a decade earlier. On a more mainstream level, mega-selling albums like Carole King's *Tapestry* and hit singles like Helen Reddy's 'I Am Woman' proved that audiences would respond to women performing songs of individuality and empowerment.

Opinions are divided on whether things are better or worse now for "women in music". MTV and social media have been condemned for making appearance and image possibly even more important for women musicians than was the case in '68. There have definitely been improvements for women in society, in areas such as pay

"Motown was criticised for coaching **The Supremes** to avoid controversy in interviews, to the extent that they came across as being oblivious to current issues such as **feminism and civil rights**"

management of her own career – a risky move that paid off with the international hit 'Son Of A Preacher Man' and the following year's *Dusty In Memphis* album.

The Supremes, unlike many other girl groups, had a highly successful career throughout most of the early and mid-60s. However, by '68 they were trapped in the pop style that had brought them fame but which was becoming increasingly outdated as musical tastes shifted to rock and psychedelia. The group also was under the heavy-handed control of Motown Records as both their record label and their management.

Modern sociologists might identify the

They were living the dream".

Despite that attractiveness to black audiences, by '68 The Supremes' audience was primarily white – paradoxically, at the same time that black Americans were protesting the rampant discrimination and poverty in communities like The Supremes' hometown. Motown was criticised for coaching the members of The Supremes to avoid controversy in interviews, to the extent that they came across as being oblivious to current issues such as feminism and civil rights. Motown so micro-managed The Supremes' public image that, according to Motown historian Gerald Posner, when Motown

equity, employment, education, and reproductive rights – but women are still underrepresented in the management and executive ranks of the music industry. The recent cascade of revelations about sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry also suggests that harassment is still a serious problem for women performers. Some societal observers suggest that now is a watershed moment – where the #metoo movement will result in serious and lasting change that will see women in music and in society treated respectfully and as equals. But we can look back to '68 as the point when the seeds of that change might have first been

THESE WOMAN'S WORKS

CHARLES DONOVAN explores 10 essentials from 1968

JONI MITCHELL

Joni Mitchell (AKA Song To A Seagull)
(Reprise, March)



"Folk singer" was a reductive tag for an artist whose finesse was apparent from the first few bars of 'I Had A King', her glacial account of divorce. Side Two ('Out Of The City And Down To The Seaside') reflected her career trajectory from New York to California (a journey facilitated on record by truculent cabbie 'Nathan La Franeer'). The album teemed with characters: The 'King', 'Michael From Mountains', love-sick 'Marcie'. A steely meditation on romantic independence, 'Cactus Tree' was a fitting conclusion. David Crosby served as producer merely to protect Mitchell's sound from meddlers.

LAURA NYRO

Eli & The Thirteenth Confession
(Columbia, March)



On her debut, producer Milton Okun had worked against Nyro. Charlie Calello worked with her. Originally due as *Soul Picnic* via Verve, the album revealed an artist whose songs took the detours they fancied, startling the listener with abrupt shifts in time signature, tempo and ambience. These 13 mystical, gospel-pop gems inspired everyone from Rickie Lee Jones to Melissa Manchester and Todd Rundgren. The album spawned three US hits, 'Eli's Comin'', 'Sweet Blindness' and 'Stoned Soul Picnic'. Even if they weren't hits for Nyro, they got people's attention; her next album would go Top 40.

BUFFY SAINT-MARIE

I'm Gonna Be A Country Girl Again
(Vanguard, July)



Buffy went to Nashville and it worked; her narrative songwriting - economical with chords and with a focus on lyrical content - was a good fit for the genre. Her vibrato was reined in for a set that was like a creative pit-stop before the pioneering, synthesiser-folk of *Illuminations* (1969). 'Take My Hand For A While' picked up where 'Until It's Time For You To Go' had left off. The album yielded a belated '71 hit when the title track went Top 40 in the UK.

JANIS IAN

The Secret Life Of J Eddy Fink
(Verve Forecast, August)



A sobering insight into child stardom, Janis Ian's third album was a noir-ish mini-masterpiece. From trenchant observations about fame on '42nd Street Psycho Blues' to character studies like

'She's Made Of Porcelain' (about her manager, the late, rather tragic Jean Harcourt-Powell), Ian ventured confidently into jazz-rock. Deserted by Shadow Morton, she patched the album together with Carol Hunter (bass and guitar). 'Sweet Misery' and 'Mistaken Identity' were nocturnal snapshots of an upended life. Newly independent, Ian was living in a drug-saturated Manhattan hotel, heading inexorably to a nervous breakdown in 1970.

DANA GILLESPIE

Foolish Seasons
(Decca, September)



Dana was a Swinging Londoner with a style that visited Greenwich Village by way of South Kensington. Dylan was spellbound. And no wonder - most of the British competition were smirking hairdos with people attached as an afterthought. Dana was cosmopolitan. Mixing two of her songs with material from Richard Farina, Billy Nicholls and French star Michel Polnareff, *Foolish Seasons* introduced a woman of exceptional taste with an unaffected, sensual voice. 'You Just Gotta Know My Mind' (Donovan) was the very essence of La Giaconda in song.

MARGO GURYAN

Take A Picture
(Bell, October)



Guryan's meringue-like vocals made it difficult for her to stand out, as did her reluctance to tour. It wouldn't be until the 2000s that she benefitted from renewed interest and a series of reissues. Although her singing was 90% air, it was a perfect match for her self-written music, which stood at the intersection of lounge, sunshine pop and jazz. She turned in a definitive version of the irrepressible 'Sunday Morning', a hit for Spanky & Our Gang and Oliver, and her most well-known song.

MAMA CASS

Dream A Little Dream
(Dunhill, October)



There was a disconnect between Mama Cass, singles artist, and Mama Cass/Cass Elliot, albums artist - the former all showbiz froth, the latter serious. Her first album, produced by John Simon, was a tasting menu of popular styles (blues, pop, jazz, country) with material from John Sebastian, Graham Nash and cult singer/songwriter Cyrus Faryar. As with every Cass album, there was a contribution from sister Leah Cohen (later Kunkel). The title track was not the smash hit produced by Lou Adler, but an all-new, less syrupy version.

JUDY COLLINS

Who Knows Where The Times Goes?
(Elektra, November)



Coming in the middle of Collins's essential phase (before she mellowed into orchestrated ballads and pop), *Who Knows...* featured some of the art-song flavours of its predecessor (*Wildflowers*), notably on harpsichord-accompanied 'Story Of Isaac' (Leonard Cohen), Rolf Kempf's 'Hello, Hooray' and Collins's semi-autobiographical 'My Father'. With its stately, nostalgic yearning, 'My Father' indicated where Collins would go with *True Stories & Other Dreams* ('73) and *Judith* ('75). The title track elevated not only Collins's reputation as an interpreter, but also Sandy Denny's profile as a songwriter.

THE CITY

Now That Everything's Been Said
(Ode, November)



A Carole King album in all but name, *Now...* allowed King to record in the comfort of a group identity, flanked by husband-to-be Charles Larkey (bass) and Danny Kortchmar (guitar). 'Snow Queen', 'I Wasn't Born To Follow' and 'That Old Sweet Roll (Hi-De-Ho)' remain King classics. The elements of *Tapestry* were present, but Lou Adler hadn't worked out that King's USP was the personality, rather than prowess, of her singing. This album and its follow-up, *Writer*, had a jazz-infused folk-rock quality. By removing this and prioritising singer and piano in the mix, the formula for *Tapestry* was reached. Nevertheless, this was the sound of a woman getting ready to fly, even if she didn't know it.

MELANIE

Born To Be
(Buddah, November)



History sometimes scoffs at Melanie but from the very beginning she had a way with a melody ('I Really Loved Harold', 'In The Hour', an ear for novelty ('Animal Crackers') and a Piaf-meets-Joplin singing style. *Born To Be* presented her as a disillusioned Manhattanite chanteuse, newly divested of innocence, particularly on the blues aria, 'Momma Momma', the deceptively chirpy 'I'm Back In Town' and the louche 'Bo Bo's Party'.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Dusty Springfield - *Dusty...* Definitely (Philips)
Libby Titus - *Libby Titus* (Hot Biscuit Disc Company)
Joan Baez - *Baptism* (Vanguard)
Jackie DeShannon - *Me About You* (Imperial)
Nina Simone - 'Nuff Said! (RCA Victor)
Aretha Franklin - *Lady Soul* (Atlantic)
Cilla Black - *Sher-ool!* (Parlophone)
Sandie Shaw - *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* (Pye)

1968



Blink and you'll miss 'em. The short-lived *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* Byrds line-up. L-R: Kevin Kelley, Gram Parsons, Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Out of the stoned Hollywood nights of 1968 came a loose coterie of musicians that would unwittingly birth a new sound, one that took from the old and dragged it into the new.

BRENT RADEMAKER considers why **CHRIS HILLMAN** is The Uncrowned King Of Country-Rock

The grimy alley behind The Troubadour in West Hollywood, California is hallowed ground when you think about the birthplace of country-rock. Just how many of the pioneers of that "down home" sound have loaded their gear out the back door? How many joints have burned while the unknowing architects wearing the finest western wear were dreaming up their next move in that darkened space hidden from the bright lights of the Hollywood nights?



After a somewhat lengthy industry “meet and greet” following his magnificent sold-out show, out through the shadows hobbles Chris Hillman, propped up with a Bat Masterson western tipped cane and sporting a thick frontier style moustache. He’s limping but not in a feeble way, at 72 Hillman has been there and done that and he ain’t got time for “Rank Strangers” so he navigates quickly through this final gauntlet before he makes his getaway from “sin city”.

There’s a kid waiting impatiently across the alley from me wearing an all too obvious Flying Burrito Brothers T-shirt, clutching two albums and without fail as Hillman appears he whips ‘em out and presents them for the mandolin virtuoso turned bass player to notarise. Both albums are from our year 1968 and both are by The Byrds: *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* and *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*. Hillman signs them both and the records

suddenly turn into priceless artefacts right before our very eyes. Okay, back to ‘68 and the birth of country-rock.

In the three years leading up to ‘68 the members of The Byrds sure did their part in helping to conceive what would become known as country-rock. More than just being a hillbilly cousin to folk-rock and acid-rock, the country-rock movement became a viable art form to some, a marketing tool to others and thorn in the side of Nashville purists that still exists today in the form of that dreaded contagion known as Americana.

More than any other member it was Chris Hillman with his authentic bluegrass/country roots as the mandolin player for The Scottsville Squirrel Barkers and later The Hillmen who seem to be the catalyst for country-rock. The Byrds had recorded ‘A Satisfied Mind’ (a C&W #1 hit for Porter Wagoner) in ‘65 on their second LP *Turn, Turn, Turn* but it was

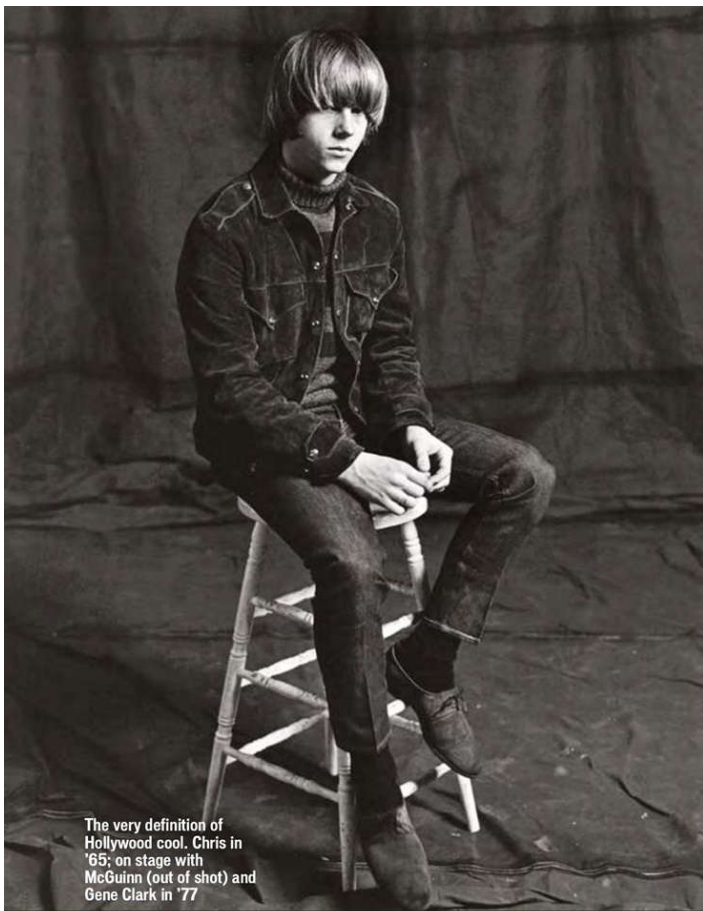
Hillman’s compositions on their fourth album, ‘67’s *Younger Than Yesterday*, ‘Time Between’ and ‘The Girl With No Name’ that really helped usher in the age of country-rock. Chris for all practical purposes was a country artist who was recruited by a rock group. More Louvin Brother than Beatle.

Founding Byrd Gene Clark was also doing his best to incorporate the C&W sound he grew up with in the Ozarks into his first solo album. After abruptly leaving The Byrds he recruited The Gosdin Brothers who were well known as a country duo. Vern Gosdin had even played with Chris Hillman dating back to the early ‘60s. Have a listen to the proto country-rock of ‘Tried So Hard’ and ‘Keep On Pushing’. Heck, Gene even played a solo show at The Whisky A Go Go decked out in a Stetson and

“It’s fairly incredible to think that one guy, **Chris Hillman**, was there quietly in the background as debate rages on about Gram and Gene and countless others”



Brothers. Chris and Gram flying in '69; The Byrds perform at The Troubadour, April '68



The very definition of Hollywood cool. Chris in '65; on stage with McGuinn (out of shot) and Gene Clark in '77



"When the **Gram-led Byrds** finally graced the stage of The Grand Ole Opry in '68, they were treated with disdain by the Nashville purists"

full country garb. By '68 Gene would be teamed up with *bona fide* country player Doug Dillard and gave us *The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard And Clark* also in '68.

The '68 album *The Notorious Byrd Brothers* had pointed the way for what was to come as it was brimming with country charm: 'Old John Robertson', 'Wasn't Born To Follow', the breakdown of 'Change Is Now' were all rock songs infused with C&W feels. The rest of the album still held onto psychedelia and The British Invasion influence.

Roger McGuinn was a "folky" but quickly fell under the C&W spell. Although his nasal country delivery of The Louvin Brothers song 'The Christian Life' on *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* was cool, it was hardly buyable.

And just how did David Crosby fit into all this? Well, if Crosby hadn't been fired by Hillman and McGuinn it would've never opened the door for Gram Parsons to join The Byrds.

Bringing Gram into The Byrds was the final piece in the country-rock puzzle. Gram had an extensive knowledge of the music of George Jones, Merle Haggard and other stars of The Grand Ole Opry. Oddly enough, when the Gram-led Byrds finally graced the stage of the Opry in

'68, they were treated with disdain by the Nashville purists. It was while on tour with The Byrds that Hillman and Parsons hatched the idea for The Flying Burrito Brothers, recruited original Byrds drummer Mike Clarke and were in the studio before the close of the year actually recording what would become *The Gilded Palace Of Sin*.

Gram Parsons is well documented as the king of country-rock to most. He had already recorded another proto country-rock album with The International Submarine Band and its release was also in '68... I said 1968!

It's funny, because the quintessential country-rock LP of all time, *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*, almost sounds like it was to be a straight country record without the rock (if it weren't for Gram's 'One Hundred Years From Now'). The album had its heart in the right place but ego and lack of follow through ultimately led to the dismantling of the group as it stood.

Another notch in Hillman's belt was that he was responsible for recruiting Clarence White into The Byrds. Clarence was a *bona fide* bluegrass star as a member of The Kentucky Colonels and ultimately the poster boy for country-rock guitar with his co-creation and mastering of the

B-Bender guitar and authentic country licks played in rock arenas from the Fillmores East and West. Hillman had seen The Kentucky Colonels when he was 15. Funny how the "circle is a wheel". Clarence White's Nashville West and his session work had a major impact on the genre.

It's fairly incredible to think that one guy, Chris Hillman, was there quietly in the background as debate rages on about Gram and Gene and countless others (Dylan, Beatles, Stones, Elvis, Rick Nelson, even Mike Nesmith) for the title of founding father of country-rock and through it all Hillman endured. Post-Burritos, he founded Manassas (country congas), Souther Furay Hillman, McGuinn Clark Hillman (FM country-rock gold) The Desert Rose Band (pure country) and his solo career, all grounded firmly in country with the players like Herb Pedersen, Stephen Stills and Al Perkins tracing back to the roots of country-rock.

Soon the country-rock gold rush would be come an attractive bandwagon for musicians and a marketing tool for the record companies selling Stetson-clad cowboys and cowgirls to the masses. In the years that followed a stampede of

HEROIC WIND

JON 'MOJO' MILLS looks at the year's genre-defining long-players

THE INTERNATIONAL SUBMARINE BAND

Safe At Home
(March, LHI)



The Beatles worked The Bakersfield Sound early on, and first wave American followers The Byrds, Lovin' Spoonful and Monkees all added some country to their sound, but it was on The International Submarine Band's pioneering album that the genre fully replaced any semblance of pop. Recorded between July and December of 1967, this is undeniably the initial country-rock album. Others had hinted at it, many would further it ... but this came first. Gram Parsons' talent was already fully formed.

THE DILLARDS

Wheatstraw Suite
(March, Elektra)



Perhaps one of the most unsung efforts in the evolution of country-rock, *Wheatstraw Suite* is easily as strong as The Byrds and Beau Brummels similarly focused efforts of the same year - and earlier. Adding a rock template with Joe Osborne on electric bass and Jim Gordon's drums, The Dillards' bluegrass picking and harmonies perfectly fuse together on their own classics ('Nobody Knows', 'Lemon Chimes') and reworked covers ('Reason To Believe', 'I've Just Seen A Face' - the latter yet another Beatles tune steeped in folk and country).

THE BAND

Music From Big Pink
(July, Columbia)



The one thing that binds what The International Submarine Band/Byrds/Clark/Band were all doing was the notion of looking back. If 1967 had been about expanding consciousness, psychedelia and the "there and now" '68 was about pulling elements of the old American frontier together from the blues to country. And no one did it better than The Band. 'The Weight', fuses folk and gospel to create a sound that could have stemmed from a Methodist chapel or the Avalon. It was that sentiment that country-rock grew from.

HEARTS & FLOWERS

Of Horses, Kids & Forgotten Women
(July, Capitol)



Described as "Merle Haggard-meets-*Sgt Pepper*", Hearts & Flowers influenced many young LA musicians. They combined folk, country and psych in a style befitting the location - and with

Bernie Leadon (who would soon join The Flying Burrito Brothers and later The Eagles) taking over from Rick Cunha as guitarist/singer furthered the connection to the rich LA country-rock tapestry. Shortly after this, their second album, was issued the band came to an end - just as The Byrds released *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*. Although layered with Nick Venet's Hollywood dappled psych production, the roots of country-rock are more than apparent in both the vocals and material.

THE BYRDS

Sweetheart Of The Rodeo
(August, Columbia)



As important as this album is, Dylan's *The Basement Tapes* - which first saw the light of day in 1968 as *The Great White Wonder* bootleg (recorded in Woodstock in '67 with the fellows that would become The Band) - made an impact greater than Haley's Comet. That 'You Ain't Going Nowhere' from those sessions opens The Byrds' country album is very telling. Dylan and The Byrds go back to day one, but in reinventing this ragged tune with a slightly stoned hippie swagger they laid down the template for all country-rock that would follow. Opinion was split at the time, and the McGuinn, Hillman and Parsons relationship never easy, but *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* uncannily became more than it ever set out to be.

DILLARD & CLARK

The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark
(October, A&M)



After quitting The Dillards and making *The Banjo Album* virtuoso bluegrass player Doug Dillard hooked up with ex Byrd songwriting wonder Gene Clark to collaborate on one of the era's finest albums. Clark wasn't new to the genre, and the previous year's *With The Gosdin Brothers* had hinted at this. Here his dewy-eyed, honeyed voice accompanied by stellar ensemble playing, including Byrd Chris Hillman on mandolin, just shines. He sings wonderfully and brings the sensibilities of the old time porch song into the era of reflection. 'Why Not Your Baby' seamlessly joins The Beatles, Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash without sounding contrary.

THE BEAU BRUMMELS

Bradley's Barn
(October, Warner Bros-Seven Arts)



Following Dylan and The Byrds to Nashville, and working with the city's finest country musicians, San Francisco's The Beau Brummels, now solely consisting of founding members Sal Valentino and Ron Elliot, cut a very American album hewn on rustic music. If producer Lenny Waronker had made previous album *Triangle*,

baroque psychedelia lit by LA's neon lights, *Bradley's Barn* adds a bluesy funky back bone to both country and rock creating a very distinctive sound, equal parts then and now. 'Cherokee Girl' fuses strings, blues and country into a seamless panoramic sound.

JERRY JEFF WALKER

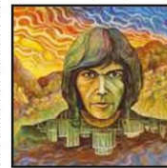
Mr Bojangles
(November, Atco)



Having fronted the East Coast psychedelic group Circus Maximus, Jerry Jeff Walker stripped away the layers for his plaintive debut album, which birthed the classic 'Mr Bojangles' - a hit in 1970 for The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. (Other famous covers include those by Sammy Davis Junior, Neil Diamond, Chet Atkins and the main inspiration on the song, Bob Dylan.) The remainder of the album swings with a gentle country-soul groove that is in keeping with the other choices here. Also check out Tony Joe White and Bobbie Gentry for similar vibes.

NEIL YOUNG

Neil Young
(November, Reprise)



Buffalo Springfield were littered with country elements so it would come as no surprise to discover that Young maintained part of this on his debut release as a solo artist. Instrumental opener 'The Emperor Of Wyoming' is the most country-rock thing on the album. Elsewhere Young enjoys rocking out and even touches on psych, but numbers like 'Here We Are In The Years' and 'I've Loved Her So Long' kindle the countryish vibe with which he would strike "gold" a few years down the line.

THE EVERLY BROTHERS

Roots
(December, Warner Bros)



That the Brothers, heard singing country music as teenagers in 1952 at the start and close of this album, would pick up on hippified country-rock made perfect sense. It was their music after all. *Roots*, produced by Lenny Waronker and featuring a stunning cover of The Beau Brummels' *Bradley's Barn* classic 'Turn Around' (writer Ron Elliott also contributes 'Ventura Boulevard' and arranges), sees Phil and Don tackling the country-tinged sound as favoured by the new guns. Alongside other new material by Merle Haggard ('Mama Tried', 'Sing Me Back Home'), Randy Newman ('Illinois') and Glen Campbell ('Less Of Me') are updated takes of George Jones' 'You Done Me Wrong' and a brilliant version of Jimmie Rogers' 'T For Texas'. Sweet country harmonies, fuzz guitars and that token Hollywood '68 production. Perfection.



Chris (left) and The Byrds in New York City, '67; on stage with Stephen Stills in Mannassas, '71

country-rock records were recorded and released giving crate diggers like us the opportunity to strike obscure gold and literally yell “eureka” at record shops, thrift shops and garage sales.

Of course it was The Eagles that ultimately took the genre to the bank – it’s no shock to discover that Glenn Frey moved to LA in ’68 and Henley shortly after. But it was Bernie Leaton of Hearts & Flowers, and his roots with Hillman, that was the link in the chain to the original Troubadour scene. With the likes of the Dead, Elton John, The Band, CCR and many more mainstream artists using the imagery and the sound, it’s cool to think that one small group of friends from LA could ignite such a fire.

For every New Riders Of The Purple Sage and Pure Prairie League, there’s a Cowboy or Cherokee record just waiting in the next crate. The bins are filled with hippies playing hillbillies or vice versa – 50 years of it.

There’s always “the next big thing” and country-rock soon gave way to singer-songwriter, soft and hard rock, glam-rock, prog-rock, southern-rock, punk-rock, indie-rock and ultimately Classic Rock. It’ll always be that allure of the west, from the frontier days to post-British Invasion/folk-rock times when Neil Young drove his hearse out west to meet up with Stills and Furay and the other members to form The Buffalo Springfield.



“Poof” Poco was soon born, a band that didn’t invent it but nevertheless personifies the country-rock sound, check out their ’72 album *A Good Feelin’ To Know* – it’s a nearly perfect example of what this writer calls country-rock.


You can’t help but remember that nearly every one of these ’68 pioneers grew up with The Everly Brothers, who could very well be the first country-rockers. They released their landmark album *Roots* in ’68, with its sound clips of an early ’50s Everly Family original country radio show. It just might be the first country-rock album.

As my mind wanders back through the 50 years since ’68, through the canyons

and plains of my record collection and memory, I think of the friends who shared their discoveries with me. I think of the good friends who gave me my copies of *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*, *The Gilded Palace Of Sin* and *Gene Clark With The Gosdin Brothers*. Some of those friends are no longer walking this earth and some deserve a phone call and it occurs to me that the whole nature of what became country-rock was to celebrate heritage, family, friends and mostly the comforts of HOME.

As Chris Hillman signs my copy of his latest album *Bidin’ My Time* a smile comes across his face as he holds it up proudly in the light and makes sure that his signature is strong, like he is signing a contract or a landmark treaty. The album contains a history, his story... from The Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, Byrds, Desert Rose to tonight, here at ground zero, The Troubadour. Just days later the album’s producer and longtime Byrds fan Tom Petty had sadly passed away making the night even more poignant.

As he hurries off to his waiting car where his side kick, who is selling his records has the motor running, he kisses his proud daughter goodnight and heads west on Santa Monica Boulevard to eventually catch HWY 101 North.

I know he’d never lay claim to it but to me, there goes the secret king of country-rock. 

SHINDIG! SELECTION

SNAPPED ANKLES
'COME PLAY THE TREES'
 (THE LEAF LABEL)
 CD • LP • TRANSLUCENT YELLOW LP
 "As debuts go, it might be one of the best you'll hear this year" 4/5 MOJO



MIDORI TAKADA
'THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS'
 (WRWTFWW)
 CD • LP
 "Belongs in the pantheon alongside Steve Reich's most notable works" 8.7 BEST REISSUE ON PITCHFORK



TERRY
'REMEMBER TERRY'
 (UPSET THE RHYTHM)
 CD • LP
 "Shambly Television Personalities/Swell Maps style earworm indie rock" BROOKLYN VEGAN



DISCO INFERNO
'IN DEBT'
 (ROCKET GIRL)
 CD • LP
 "Indebted to post-punk with Wire and Joy Division especially evident" 8/10 UNCUT



WILSEN
'I GO MISSING IN MY SLEEP'
 (DALLIANCE RECORDINGS)
 CD • LP
 "Evokes the mood of Nick Drake and epic soundscapes in the vein of Arcade Fire" CLASH



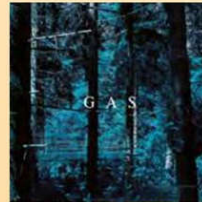
EUROS CHILD
'HOUSE ARREST'
 (NATIONAL ELF)
 CD • LP
 "With his 14th solo album, ex-Gorky Euros Childs has created a lo-fi keyboard masterpiece" 4/5 SHINDIG!



TORO Y MOI
'BOO BOO'
 (CARPARK)
 CD • 2LP
 "'Boo Boo' just might be his masterpiece" LOUD AND QUIET Album Of The Week



GAS
'NARKOPOP'
 (KOMPAKT)
 CD • 3LP
 "Bigger and richer than what came before" 8.8 PITCHFORK



UFOMAMMUT
'8'
 (NEUROT/SUPERNATURALCAT)
 CD • LP
 "Nothing less than all-out sonic annihilation from start to planet-shaking finish. Yum!" THE QUIETUS



EL GOODO
'BY ORDER OF THE MOOSE'
 (STRANGETOWN)
 CD • LP
 "Beautiful production... bears similarities to Alex Chilton's work" 4/5 SHINDIG!



THE COMET IS COMING
'CHANNEL THE SPIRITS'
 (THE LEAF LABEL)
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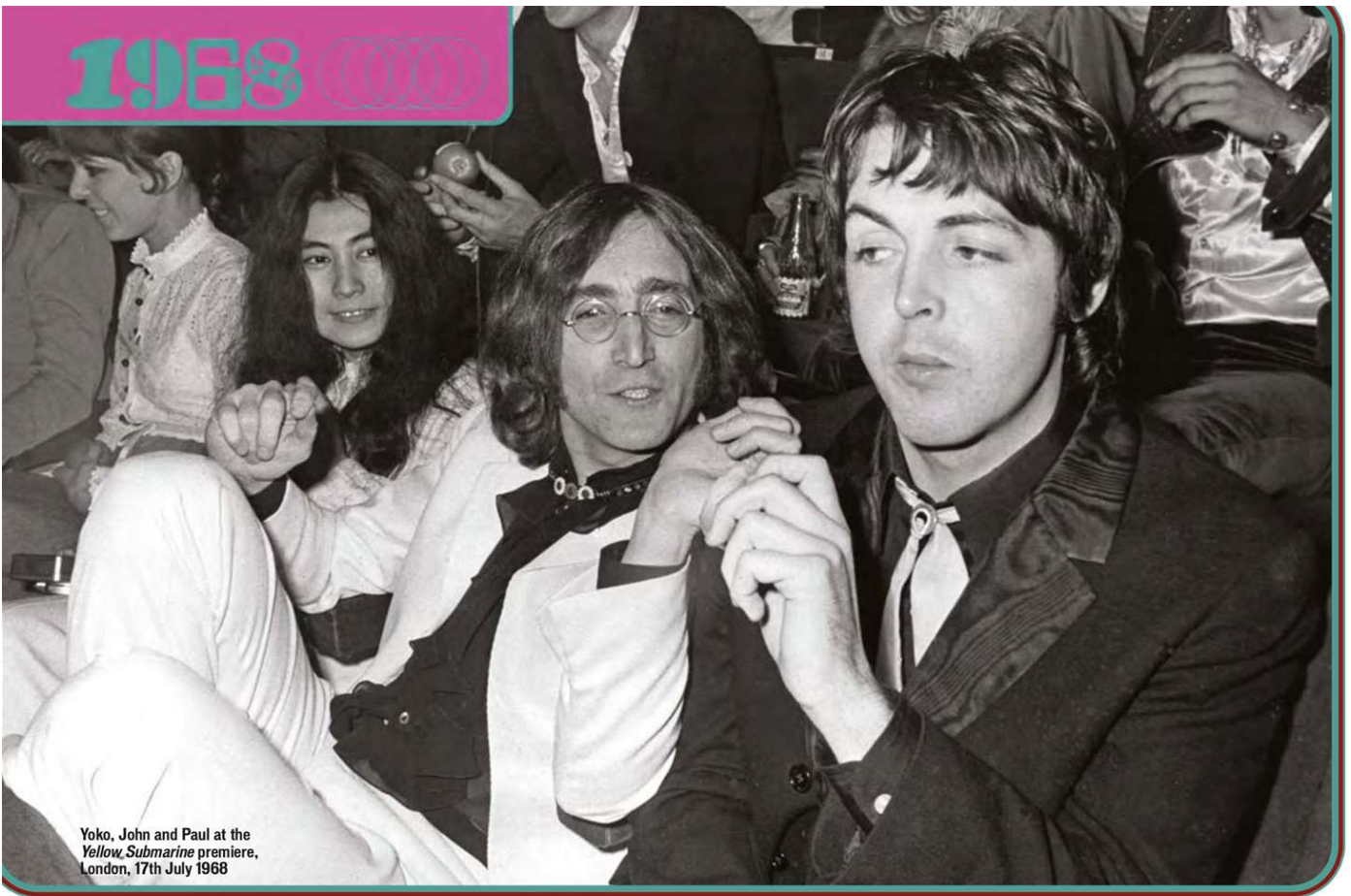


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1968



Yoko, John and Paul at the *Yellow Submarine* premiere, London, 17th July 1968

THE SOUND OF AN ILLUSION SHATTERING

1968 was the year in which the *avant-garde* seeped into the very heart of popular culture. Its inevitable pinnacle: *The Beatles*.

SPENSER TOMSON discovers how the experimental notions of pop's greatest innovators put high art into 100,000 living rooms

Of 1967 was the year in which free love and psychedelic experimentation made its first benevolent steps into the mass consciousness, '68 is the year it kicked the doors of perception off their hinges and made itself comfortable in the sitting room.

Where previously, these influences might have been considered *avant-garde* or the realm of the outsider, *The Beatles* catapulted these new creative techniques and aesthetics onto the hi-fis of every home. While it is possible to see this as merely reflecting the rising social tensions of this period, a more accurate outlook is that in fact everything – from music and art to politics and identity – becomes more complex.

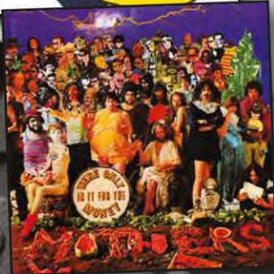
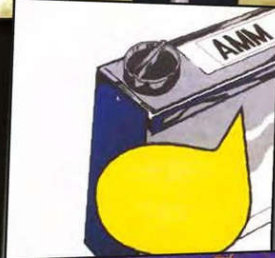


It was apt, then, that the biggest band in the world adopted a newly sober, more considered and grown-up tone; this move away from the bubblegum of straight-forward pop music must have been almost unfathomable to many fans. But this very public maturation of influences and shifting styles is now commonplace and, quite often, is met with cynicism rather than outrage or surprise. Interviewed in '67 for Tony Palmer's BBC documentary *All My Loving: A Film Of Pop Music*, Paul McCartney spoke about his attitudes towards pop and its perceived place in society.

"I was always frightened of classical music. And I never wanted to listen to it because it was Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, and sort of, big words like that... and Schoenberg... I used to think, 'Well you know, that's very clever, all that stuff.' And it isn't, you know. It's just exactly what's going on in pop at the moment. Pop music is the classical music of now." It's worth noting that Palmer also included interviews with Frank Zappa, who was himself highly influenced by *musique concrète*, but this interview

points to a widening of influence and a willingness to experiment.

Ken Scott was an engineer at Abbey Road during the recording of



The Beatles and he remembers this experimental outlook. "They always wanted things different," he begins. "I was learning my gig at this time so I had the most incredible freedom being able to use different microphones, different placement and anything else I could lay my hands on always knowing that either if they liked or hated the sound I was doing exactly what they wanted."

But The Beatles were far from the only musicians exploring this experimentalism; formed in London in '65, AMM embodied it both musically and technologically. While more traditional instruments would be amplified for performances, strange objects such as jam jars and transistor radios were also often used in this way. In '68, the core line-up consisted of saxophonist Lou Gare, Christopher Hobbs and Eddie Prévoist on percussion, Keith Rowe on guitar and Cornelius Cardew on piano and cello. Cardew had studied as assistant to Karlheinz Stockhausen and alongside John Cage – it's his influence that turned McCartney on to the aleatory techniques of the *avant-garde* (where aspects of creation are left to chance) at an earlier AMM concert. 1968 saw the release of their second album – and possibly most important: *The Crypt*. 45 minutes of strung-out, improvised electronic noise, it's at times a physically difficult listen, as the tones shriek and reverberate around irregular percussive bursts. But its intensity is always compelling and is indicative of a rising tide of experimentalism in the capital.

Pentangle also released their second fusion of jazz and folk, *Sweet Child*; consisting of Terry Cox, Bert Jansch, Jacqui McShee, John Renbourn and Danny Thompson, the music drew heavily on British traditional pieces, the guitars of Renbourn and Jansch weaving beautifully into the vocals of McShee. However, the song 'Moondog' indicates that their sound was also influenced by experimentalism from across the Atlantic. Also known as The Viking Of 6th Avenue, Louis Thomas Hardin was a street performer, having previously worked as a notator of music. During the '60s he gained notoriety via his use of self-made instruments and circular percussive rhythms, and by '68 he is one of several key American figures of the *avant-garde* that also numbered Harry Partch, who similarly invented his own instruments, and also designed his own system of notation. 1968 saw The Mothers Of Invention release *We're Only In It For The Money* and *Ruben And The Jets*, highly inspired by the European composers Edgard Varese and, of course, Captain Beefheart who, along with his Magic band would release their second album of deconstructed R&B, *Strictly Personal*. If none of the other Beatles members were fans, then Lennon certainly was – he was photographed in his Weybridge home lounging below two *Safe As Milk* bumper stickers.

However, back in Europe, some experimental musicians were less concerned with breaking down the old forms than building sounds from

Karlheinz Stockhausen, an over-arching influence on The Beatles' *avant-garde* infatuation; The Radiophonic Workshop's seminal '64 'Doctor Who' 45; Paul discusses "highbrow" classical music in '67 documentary, *All My Loving*; AMM and Mothers Of Invention albums





John enjoys *The International Times* at home at Kentwood as those *Safe As Milk* bumper stickers keep a watchful eye, summer '67 poster for the Million Volt Sound And Light Rave! Yoko at her *Half A Room* exhibit, July '68

“**‘Revolution 9’** is the conflux of these disparate directions. Lennon’s new flourishing relationship with Yoko Ono alongside McCartney’s willingness to test the limits of the studio with techniques pilfered from *musique concrète*”

nowhere, as if pulled directly from the ether.

The Radiophonic Workshop had been formed 10 years previously to create sound effects for BBC television and radio. Notable employees include Daphne Oram, John Baker and Brian Hodgson, although it’s Delia Derbyshire and her pioneering use of tape techniques, who would prove most influential. This often consisted of spooling tape all around the studio, spooled between milk bottles in order to achieve the new sounds she desired. By ’68, Derbyshire’s work was gracing every television in the land via the massively popular *Dr Who* and the Workshop now began to provide not only the theme tune, but the incidental music. This meant that techniques that had sprung from the work of pioneers such as Stockhausen, Cage and Derbyshire were now becoming firmly entrenched in the mass consciousness. While The Beatles would never adopt a completely electronic aesthetic of this kind, their journey into experimentalism enabled others to do so as the ’70s dawned.


In ’66, Derbyshire had formed an aggregation called Unit Delta Plus with Brian Hodgson and Peter Zinovieff that aimed to promote electronic music as an art form. Two years later they’d morphed into the massively influential White Noise, but not before they helped to stage the Million Volt Sound And Light Rave in

January ’67, at which McCartney’s infamous tape piece ‘Carnival Of Light’ received its only airing. This still unreleased 14-minute sound collage is very much a prototype for ‘Revolution 9’, which would appear on *The Beatles* a year later, and indicates the way the band was beginning to think around this time. Consisting of myriad randomly screamed words collaged around strange snippets of music and sheer, raucous noise, this is McCartney at his most out there.

But the whole band was invested in this exploration of more *avant-garde* projects; alongside their existing record label Apple, Zapple was created as its experimental sister and was run by Barry Miles who, erstwhile London scenester and chronicler of all things underground. The label would release two records: George Harrison’s Moog-based *Electronic Sound*, the other *Unfinished Music No 2: Life With The Lions* by John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Neither record was a commercial success and the imprint was forced to close on the instruction of Allen Klein in ’69.

But it is their album of November ’68, *The Beatles*, which represents the true extent of their journey into the *avant-garde* and ‘Revolution 9’ is the conflux of these disparate directions being pursued by all of the band members – Lennon’s new and flourishing relationship with Yoko Ono (herself a key figure of the

avant-garde) and his continuing exposure to these art forms, alongside McCartney’s widening tastes and willingness to test the limits of the studio with his tape loop techniques, pilfered from *musique concrète* and the new wave of electronic artists. The true influence of the album is visible, not in the sound of the album itself but in the music that followed; this willingness to appropriate, deconstruct and reform existing styles and sounds into new meanings hadn’t previously been done as successfully or to such a wide audience. The purity of the sleeve (designed by the father of Pop-Art, Richard Hamilton) suggests that all content and meaning must be taken from the music within, all clues (other than the blink and you’ll miss it “The Beatles” in small black type) are concealed within the groove of the vinyl itself.

Barry Miles puts it perfectly in his McCartney biography *Many Years From Now*: “One of the reasons The Beatles were such an exceptional group was that they did not rest on their laurels. Rather than stay with the simple pop-music formula of their early work, the period of Beatlemania, they pushed the boundaries of their music, making each album more complex than the one before, although never enough to alienate the fans. They were the first group to make rock ‘n’ roll an art form and show the other bands what could be done with it.” 

LIKE SOUND NEVER SOUNDED

The *Shindig!* team plugs itself into 1968's electronic grid

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States Of America
(Columbia)

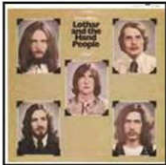


Recorded entirely without guitars, The United States Of America, brainchild of Kentucky-born multi-instrumentalist Joseph Byrd utilised electric harpsichord and violin, Farfisa organ and

synthesisers enhanced with the use of echoplex, to create a uniquely invigorating blend of folk, vaudeville, psychedelia and the *avant-garde*. Dorothy Moskowitz's vocals on 'Cloud Song' and 'Love Song For The Dead Che' are genuinely bewitching while Byrd pushed the boundaries on 'The American Way Of Love', whose ingenious tape-splicing prefigured The Beatles 'Revolution 9' by several months. The album sleeve was initially supposed to be a Manila envelope with simple stencilled print, but Columbia saw fit to use one of the pictures intended for the insert instead.

LOTHAR & THE HAND PEOPLE

Presenting...
(Capitol)



Lothar was actually a Theremin, with The Hand People being its musical manipulators, and collectively the group achieved some degree of renown for being perhaps

the first act to tour and record with synthesisers. Their debut album was a rather peculiar - but incredibly chipper - mix of slightly warped goodtime music, electronic country ballads and out-and-out futuristic stoned insanity. 'Sex And Violence' is the hairy freaks bursting discordantly into Mary Whitehouse's nightmares, while 'It Comes On Anyhow' is ohm chanting in deep space while HAL 9000 has a burbling, bleeping breakdown in the background, and somehow ended up being sampled by The Chemical Brothers.

MORT GARSON

The Wozard Of Iz: An Electronic Odyssey
(A&M)



Whether satirical commentary or counter-cultural cash-in, this parody of L. Frank Baum's story could only have been birthed at the tail end of the '60s when the politicised hippie

mindset met with the newly available Moog synthesiser. The music draws on quasi-classical passages, bubblegum, advertising jingles and the occasional atonal wig-out. Its accompanying spoken word story (written by Jacques Wilson) features Lee Hazlewood's protégé Suzi Jane Hokom as Dorothy. Hipster lingo abounds with the yellow brick road replaced with riots on "Upset Strip". Other era-specific references include happenings, free press, getting stoned, dog tags and love beads. Bonkers and a tad subversive.

BBC RADIOPHONIC WORKSHOP

BBC Radiophonic Music
(BBC)



When you let a team of audio boffins loose in the bowels of Maida Vale studios with roomfuls of tape and oscillators, don't be amazed when they re-invent *musique concrète* and soundtrack the

teatime fears of a nation of maladjusted children. This disc celebrated the Workshop's first decade by compiling some of Baker, Cain and Derbyshire's most offbeat, inventive jingles and theme tunes. That the Workshop existed at all is testament to a peculiarly British combination of Heath Robinson-esque invention and the fearless futurism of the atomic age.

PAUL BEAVER & BERNARD KRAUSE

The Nonesuch Guide To Electronic Music
(Nonesuch)



Released on Elektra's eminently collectible budget classical and world music subsidiary, *The Nonesuch Guide...* is a boxed, four-sided, 48-minute demonstration of the kind of

textures one could squeeze out of the then brand-new Moog synthesiser. Beaver and Krause were responsible for introducing the revolutionary tones of the machine to The Byrds, The Doors, The Monkees and, most famously, George Harrison (indirectly spawning 1969's *Electronic Sound*). They heard the future coming, even if it's now a tough listen for anyone other than historians, synth freaks and samplers.

FIFTY FOOT HOSE

Cauldron
(Limelight)



Just up the coast from Byrd and Moskowitz, Fifty Foot Hose's Cork Marcheschi was making his own experiments in textured, *avant-rock*, using an instrument that he built himself out of commercially

available electronics, bric-a-brac and a speaker from an aircraft carrier. Producer Dan Healy (Grateful Dead) captured a heavy Frisco-centric sound in the guitar and voice of husband and wife David and Nancy Blossom, but their debut also turned out to be their swan song - at least until a '90s reformation.

SILVER APPLES

Silver Apples
(Kapp)



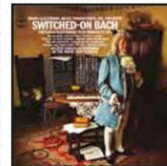
Though they later slipped into obscurity, oscillator jockey Simeon Cox III and drummer Danny Taylor were New York's hippest act in 1968, feted by Andy Warhol and commissioned by the city to

play summer concerts in Central Park. Their boldly

experimental debut even cracked the Top 100, showcasing the bizarre junkshop synthesiser Simeon assembled from WWII surplus electronics, atop barely discernible bluegrass and jugband influences. With often Freudian lyrics by poet Stanley Warren, 'Lovefingers' and 'Oscillations' sound both impossibly ancient and uncannily futuristic, even to this day.

WALTER CARLOS

Switched-On Bach
(Columbia)



Spawning dozens of baroque Moogy copycats, *Switched-On Bach* is the most commercially and critically successful record on this list. Meticulously recorded over five painstaking months with

a tetchy modular synth and a hand-built eight-track recorder, its otherworldly sound captured the imagination of Stanley Kubrick, who hired Carlos to score *A Clockwork Orange*. The album also found a fan in Giorgio Moroder and, more recently in AIR's Nicolas Godin, whose 2015 LP *Contrepoint* is part homage.

BRUCE HAACK

The Way-Out Record For Children
(Dimension 5)

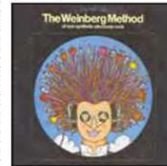


Canadian experimental composer and electronicist Haack spent five years putting together educational activity records for his own Dimension 5 label. The culmination of this period of

his work, *The Way-Out Record For Children* is enormous fun, light-hearted and engaging, but to modern ears possessing a dolorous edge provided by the electronically manipulated voices and creepy primitive whirrs and chatters. In some ways a hipper, transatlantic cousin of David Cain and Ronald Duncan's BBC outing *The Seasons*.

FRED WEINBERG

The Weinberg Method Of Non-Synthetic Electronic Rock
(Anvil)



"May we suggest that this album be played at 33, 45 and 78 RPM," boasts the sleeve note. Says it all really. The "non-synthetic" qualifier of the title alludes to the fact that Weinberg, a classically-

trained composer and arranger born in Colombia to opera singer mother and concert pianist father, recorded his own samples to fashion sounds. The resulting aural funfair therefore contains "slowed-down, speeded-up, turned upside-down and inside-out" manipulations of a secretary filing her nails, an alka-seltzer fizzing and a toilet flushing, all set to largely bouncy, up-tempo easy-pop.

Contributors: Christopher Budd, Hugh Dellar, Duncan Fletcher, Ben Graham, Johnnie Johnstone, Andy Morten