



VAN MORRISON ♦ THE
DIONNE WARWICK ♦
CLASSICS IV ♦ THE YOUNG
THE VOICES ♦ THE TURTLES
♦ THE ASSOCIATION ♦ MAR
♦ THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL
♦ GLEN CAMPBELL ♦ FRANK
♦ THE PAPAS

THE LATE '60s



- 1 BROWN EYED GIRL *Van Morrison*
- 2 MIDNIGHT CONFESSIONS
The Grass Roots
- 3 CRYSTAL BLUE PERSUASION
Tommy James and the Shondells
- 4 STORMY *Classics IV*
- 5 GROOVIN' *The Young Rascals*
- 6 YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING
The Temptations
- 7 YOUNG GIRL *The Union Gap*
featuring Gary Puckett
- 8 COME ON DOWN TO MY BOAT
Every Mothers' Son
- 9 GREEN TAMBOURINE
The Lemon Pipers
- 10 NEVER MY LOVE *The Association*
- 11 DARLING BE HOME SOON
The Lovin' Spoonful

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THE LATE '60S

GO HOME

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- 2 Midnight Confessions
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- 5 Groovin'
- 6 You're Home Soon
- 7 Young Girl
- 8 Come On Down to My Boat
- 9 Green Tambourine
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- 16 My Special Angel
- 17 Elenore
- 18 Can't Take My Eyes off You
- 19 This Is My Song
- 20 Release Me (And Let Me Love Again)
- 21 Alfie

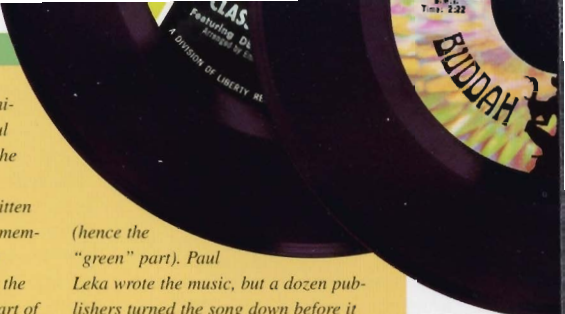
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Bubblegum music came to prominence alongside the Meaningful Rock explosion of the late '60s. If the latter—with its socially conscious, semi-poetic lyrics and its music written or at least improvised by the band members—was more accomplished and more relevant to the future of rock, the former certainly maintained that part of the tradition dealing in crassly simple songs and mindless fun. It also gave kids too young for Hendrix and the Airplane something to listen to. Like other genres, bubblegum was so imprecisely defined that it wasn't always clear who fit the description. To their chagrin, the Lemon Pipers and Tommy James and the Shondells made the cut by most definitions.

The Lemon Pipers hailed from Ohio, but **GREEN TAMBOURINE** came out of what was left of New York's Brill Building scene. Lyricist Shelley Pinz wrote the words after reading a newspaper story about an elderly British street musician who played in front of a bank, setting a tambourine on the sidewalk in front of him to collect money

(hence the “green” part). Paul Leka wrote the music, but a dozen publishers turned the song down before it caught the ear of Neil Bogart of Buddah Records, a bubblegum stronghold.

Bogart sent Leka to Ohio to play the song for the Lemon Pipers, who were selling poorly and were about to be dropped by the label. Because they were into psychedelic music, the band members rejected Green Tambourine, but Leka then informed them that Bogart would consider them history unless they rethought the offer. When they finally recorded the song, Leka's production turned out so badly that cellos and a new drum track had to be overdubbed back in New York. But it wound up the band's only top-40 hit.

Tommy James was also a Midwesterner, but he moved east from Indiana—the only one of the original Shondells to



do so—
after Hanky Panky
went to No. 1 in 1966. With 1968's
Crimson and Clover he began produc-
ing himself, and the psychedelic bubble-
gum of **CRYSTAL BLUE PERSUASION**
proved an effective summer song the
next year. "The title came right out of
the Bible," he insisted. "Crystal blue
meant truth." But when James tempo-
rarily left the business a while later to
deal with an amphetamines problem, the
song seemed to take on a new meaning.

The Union Gap began in San Diego
as the Outcasts, but they renamed them-
selves after Union Gap, Washington,
near where their leader, Gary Puckett,
grew up. To capitalize on their name,
the band members dressed in Civil War
uniforms, but the success of **YOUNG
GIRL** is probably due more to the fact
that it was crafted by Jerry Fuller, one
of Ricky Nelson's chief writers.

Bubblegum soul was the province of
Classics IV and R. B. Greaves. The for-
mer was a Jacksonville, Florida, band
that moved up to Atlanta to work ses-
sions for producer Bill Lowery (who
also worked with Joe South and Billy
Joe Royal) before cutting a short string
of hits like **STORMY**. R. B. Greaves,
born in British Guyana and related to
Sam Cooke, was raised on a Seminole
reservation in California; a further dis-
tinction was his authorship of the unde-
niably catchy **TAKE A LETTER MARIA**.

After this, bubblegum distinctions get
murkier. Frankie Valli first went solo from
the 4 Seasons in 1966, but 1967's **CAN'T
TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU** was the sin-
gle that established him, and could be
argued into the bubblegum camp. So
could **MIDNIGHT CONFESSIONS** by the
Grass Roots. The name of this band
originally belonged to a studio group
formed by writer-producers Steve Barri
and P. F. Sloan as a vehicle for their songs.
Once the studio band achieved a local hit,
Barri and Sloan recruited a Los Angeles
bar band called the Thirteenth Floor to
assume the name and play live.

Even a folk-rock band like the Turtles, with their buoyant melodies and sing-along lyrics and harmonies, had at least a little in common with bubblegum. The mocking **ELENORE** comes from a concept album late in their career in which they "played" several different types of groups and simulated a Battle of the Bands.

CREEQUE ALLEY was, of course, leader-writer John Phillips' capsule history of the genesis of the Mamas and the Papas. But it was also about the roots of the Lovin' Spoonful, because before either group formed, key members of both had worked together in various folkie outfits. The Spoonful's **DARLING BE HOME SOON** came from You're a Big Boy Now, a charming but often overlooked early movie from Francis Ford Coppola.

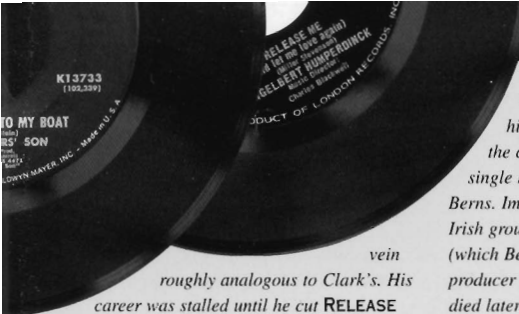
Every Mothers' Son grew out of the Greenwich Village folk duo of brothers Dennis and Lary Larden. After growing to five members, the group hooked up with bubblegum producer-writer Wes Farrell, who had them cover a group called Rare Breed on his song **COME ON DOWN TO MY BOAT**. Friend and Lover consisted of Jim Post and Cathy Conn, who met at an Edmonton, Alberta, fair where he was singing and she was dancing. They soon mar-

ried and began working as a vocal duet. Post's **REACH OUT OF THE DARKNESS** was inspired by hippies throwing flowers at a New York love-in. Neither Every Mothers' Son nor Friend and Lover saw the top 40 again. **NEVER MY LOVE**, a pop harmony ballad, was the Association's second straight megahit after Warner Brothers bought up Valiant Records in order to get the group's contract.

Petula Clark had been a star in England since she was a child but didn't conquer America until 1965, at the ripe old age of 33. **THIS IS MY SONG** was written by movie pioneer Charlie Chaplin (at the ripe old age of 77) for his comedy A Countess from Hong Kong, starring Sophia Loren and Marlon Brando. Pet saturated Europe with French, Italian and German versions of the song before recording it in English.

Engelbert Humperdinck was one of the British males working a middle-of-the-road pop





vein roughly analogous to Clark's. His career was stalled until he cut **RELEASE ME (AND LET ME LOVE AGAIN)**, a 1954 country smash for Ray Price that had become a standard. (Co-writer Eddie Miller got the inspiration for it after overhearing a couple arguing at the club where he was working in San Francisco; the woman kept telling her spouse to "release me," and Miller liked this euphemism for "divorce," then still taboo in a song.) On the heels of *By the Time I Get to Phoenix* and *Wichita Lineman*, **GALVESTON** was Glen Campbell's third straight "country-politan" hit supplied by Jimmy Webb with a city name in the title.

Over at Motown, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell had a series of best-selling duets, but few were as deeply felt as **YOUR PRECIOUS LOVE**, a slow dance with a doo-wop/make-out feel. The Temptations' **YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING** showed off lead singer Eddie Kendricks' gliding falsetto.

Van Morrison's **BROWN EYED GIRL**—his first solo hit after leaving *Them* and the closest thing to a conventional pop single he ever did—was produced by Bert Berns. Impressed with Morrison's lead on the Irish group's remake of *Here Comes the Night* (which Berns wrote), the veteran R&B writer-producer brought the singer to New York. Berns died later in 1967, but Morrison stayed in the States to continue his solo career.

Few records caught the mood of the late '60s better than the Young Rascals' **GROOVIN'**. The New York group was known for its blue-eyed soul covers but became inspired by the Beatles to write originals. Felix Cavaliere conceived *Groovin'* when he found that because of his work schedule he could see his new girlfriend only on Sunday afternoons; Eddie Brigati developed the lyrics from Cavaliere's idea. Their label, which was accustomed to Young Rascals rockers, wasn't even planning to record *Groovin'* until influential disc jockey Murray the K, who loved the tune, intervened. With *Groovin'* the Young Rascals had their second No. 1 hit, and bubblegum had to take a back seat to the new hippie anthem.

—John Morthland



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- 18** **REACH OUT OF THE DARKNESS** *Friend and Lover* • Music and lyrics by Jim Post. Lowery Music Co., Inc. BMI. Verve Forecast 5069 (1968). Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc. No. 10*
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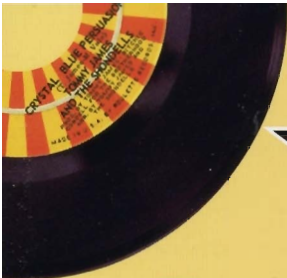
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