

KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND

MOEBE SNOW • ORLEANS

MINNIE RIPERTON

OZARK MOUNTAIN REBELS

I AM GOLD
1975
I AM GOLD

GLEN CAMPBELL • AMY

LINDA RONSTADT

B.J. THOMAS

EARTH, WIND AND FIRE

1 9 7 5



- 1 THAT'S THE WAY (I LIKE IT)
KC and the Sunshine Band
- 2 LONG TALL GLASSES
(I CAN DANCE) *Leo Sayer*
- 3 LADY MARMALADE *Labelle*
- 4 MAGIC *Pilot*
- 5 BALLROOM BLITZ *Sweet*
- 6 JACKIE BLUE
Ozark Mountain Daredevils
- 7 WILDFIRE
Michael Martin Murphey
- 8 POETRY MAN
Phoebe Snow
- 9 DANCE WITH ME
Orleans
- 10 I'M NOT LISA *Jessi Colter*
- 11 MY EYES ADORED YOU
Frankie Valli

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- 12 YOU'RE NO GOOD *Linda Ronstadt*
- 13 SHINING STAR
Earth, Wind and Fire
- 14 WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?
War
- 15 LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER
Captain and Tennille
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SOMEBODY DONE SOMEBODY
WRONG SONG *B. J. Thomas*
- 17 RHINESTONE COWBOY
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- 18 SISTER GOLDEN HAIR *America*
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- 22 LOVIN' YOU *Minnie Riperton*

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1 9 7 5

AM GO GOLD

- 1 There's The Blues (I Like It)
- 2 Lone Tall Glasses (I Can Dance)
- 3 Lady Marmalade
- 4 Music
- 5 Ballroom Blitz
- 6 Jackie Blue
- 7 Wildfire
- 8 Pretty Man
- 9 You're No Good
- 10 Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song
- 11 Why Can't We Be Friends?
- 12 I'm Not Lisa
- 13 My Eyes Adored You
- 14 Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song
- 15 Shine Your Cowboy
- 16 Love Will Keep Us Together
- 17 (They Won't) You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song
- 18 Sister Golden Hair
- 19 Black Water
- 20 I'm Not In Love
- 21 Sky High
- 22 Lovin' You

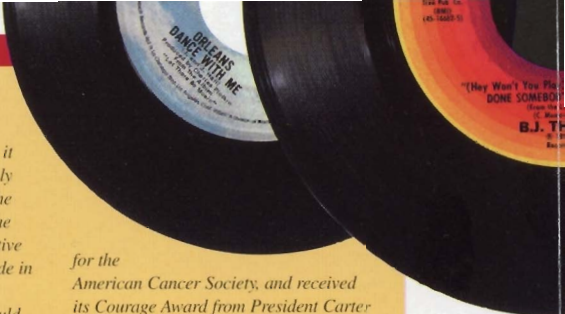
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If Minnie Riperton and Phoebe Snow are often remembered together by '70s AM radio listeners, it is probably because both had the only top-40 pop hits of their careers on the charts at the same time. In fact, in the week of April 12, 1975, their respective songs were nestled nearly side by side in *Billboard's* top five. In retrospect, it seems somehow fitting that they should have been together. Both singers had remarkably impressive voices, and both met adversity head on, with equally impressive courage and dignity.

The youngest of eight children, five-octave-voiced Chicago native Minnie Riperton studied opera until the girl-group craze of the early 1960s led her to join the *Gems*, who sang background vocals and toured for Chess Records. In the late '60s, she was a featured singer in the psychedelic soul group *Rotary Connection*, and her work there led Stevie Wonder to ask her to join his backup group, *Wonderlove*, as well as to produce her as a solo artist. It was not long after the dazzling **LOVIN' YOU** topped the charts that Riperton was diagnosed with cancer, but she continued to perform as she openly battled the spreading disease. She became a spokesperson

for the American Cancer Society, and received its Courage Award from President Carter at a White House ceremony in 1977. She died in July 1979.

Phoebe Snow grew up in Teaneck, New Jersey, where her mother often entertained folk music friends such as Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. Appropriately, Snow began her career singing in Greenwich Village coffeehouses, and it was there that she was discovered and offered a recording contract by Leon Russell's Shelter Records. **POETRY MAN**, with its earthy, jazz-blues sound, made the smoky-voiced Snow an immediate star in early 1975, but at the end of that year her life changed abruptly when she gave birth to a severely autistic child. A single mother, Snow declined the advice of doctors and chose not to institutionalize her daughter, instead keeping and caring for her at home. While that decision effectively derailed Snow's



recording career, she remained a familiar voice, as evidenced by the many commercial jingles she's sung over the years.

Another big-voiced singer who made a special mark in 1975 was Linda Ronstadt. While she had previously been regarded as a folk and country-rock singer because of songs like 1967's *Different Drum* and 1970's *Long Long Time*, her powerful rendition of Betty Everett's early-'60s R&B tune **YOU'RE NO GOOD** irrevocably changed all that, setting the talented Ronstadt on a course toward superstardom.

Though he had been a bona fide superstar since the late 1960s, country-pop performer Glen Campbell had never achieved a No. 1 hit before **RHINESTONE COWBOY**. Campbell had stumbled upon songwriter Larry Weiss's original version of the song one day on his car radio, and was still trying to track down a copy of it when a Capitol Records executive, know-

ing the singer was always looking for material to cut, happened to play it for him in his office. Campbell took the coincidence as a sign he should record the song, which he promptly did, and while Weiss's version never made it, Campbell's galloped to the top of the charts.

The wild, untamed horse known as **WILDFIRE** probably would not have been suitable for one of the "star-spangled rodeos" Campbell sang about, but California country-rocker Michael Martin Murphey's sagebrush saga certainly captured the imaginations of listeners, who made the song a top-five hit. Another California group with an evocative, country-flavored hit that year was the *Doobie Brothers*. Inspired by their stay in Mississippi during an early-'70s tour, guitarist Patrick Simmons' infectious **BLACK WATER** was the first No. 1 hit of this veteran roots-rock band's long career.

Ironically, two memorable songs from 1975 came from country artists whose respective hits went squarely against type. Springfield, Missouri's *Ozark Mountain Daredevils* were primarily known for their rollicking mix of old-time string band music and Southern boogie, but their biggest hit came with the decidedly pop

(and Todd Rundgren-like) **JACKIE BLUE**. Likewise, Phoenix, Arizona, native Jessi Colter, a singer-songwriter whose first marriage, to rock 'n' roll's "King of Twang," guitarist Duane Eddy, ended in 1969, was known as a member of country music's "outlaw" movement when she, as produced by her second husband, outlaw pioneer Waylon Jennings, had a major pop hit with the heart-tugging ballad **I'M NOT LISA**.

Nineteen seventy-five also saw a number of artists from the 1960s make triumphant returns to the charts. Frankie Valli, whose famous falsetto propelled a plethora of hits for the Four Seasons during the early and mid-'60s, had not had a top-10 hit in eight years when **MY EYES ADORED YOU**, penned by long-time Four Seasons producer Bob Crewe and his writing partner, Kenny Nolan, revived Valli's career.

Crewe and Nolan were also responsible for **LADY MARMALADE**, a lusty dance hit that reignited the career of Labelle. Comprised of lead singer Patti LaBelle, Sarah Dash and Nona Hendryx, the group got its start in Philadelphia in 1961 as Patti LaBelle and the Blue Belles, scoring a top-20 girl-group hit with **I Sold My Heart to the Junkman**. It was over a decade before they scored another major hit, but **Lady Marmalade**, expertly produced by New Orleans

R&B

legend Allen Toussaint, helped put Labelle back on track.

Crewe and Nolan were not the only veterans to author major hits in 1975. Producer Chips Moman, who had worked with the **Box Tops** and Merilee Rush, among others, co-authored and produced B. J. Thomas's **(HEY WON'T YOU PLAY) ANOTHER SOMEBODY DONE SOMEBODY WRONG SONG**, the longest named single ever to be a No. 1 hit. And "Captain" Daryl Dragon and his wife, Toni Tennille, who toured as members of the **Beach Boys'** backup band in the early '70s, went from unknowns to stars with their version of '60s song-writing machine Neil Sedaka's **LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER**.

Sedaka resurrected his career with that song and two of his own No. 1 hits in 1975 (**Laughter in the Rain** and **Bad Blood**), all of which stemmed from the appropriately titled Sedaka's **Back**—an album that featured a number of tracks he had recorded in England with the British group 10cc. Like Sedaka, 10cc had deep pop

Produced by
Alan Parsons
Recorded in
England

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roots. Singer and guitarist Eric Stewart had been in the Mindbenders, who, besides backing Wayne Fontana on the 1965 hit Game of Love, had scored their own in 1966 with A Groovy Kind of Love. Another member, Graham Gouldman, had penned numerous British Invasion hits such as the Hollies' Bus Stop and the Yardbirds' For Your Love. While 10cc were pretty big in the U.K. in the mid-'70s, only a few of their songs, like the Beatlesque I'M NOT IN LOVE, became hits in the U.S.

Speaking of things Beatlesque, longtime Abbey Road engineer Alan Parsons was the producer who helped the Scottish group Pilot make a three-point landing with **MAGIC**, their lone U.S. hit. And it was the Beatles producer himself, George Martin, who worked his control board magic on **SISTER GOLDEN HAIR**, a hit for the group America that was highlighted by a textbook George Harrison My Sweet Lord-ish slide guitar solo.

Another group that fared better in their English homeland than in America was Sweet, a

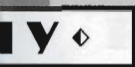
hard-rocking band with a bubblegum center. While never the teen idols here that they were in London, the band, led by vocalist Brian Connolly and tom-tom-pounding drummer Mick Tucker, did score their share of stateside hits—such as the frantic, outsized **BALLROOM BLITZ**.

Of course, by the end of 1975, there was plenty of ballroom blitzing going on throughout the U.S. in the form of mirror balls and strobe lights, as a new dance trend began to sweep the country. L.A.'s Earth, Wind and Fire had started out as a jazzy R&B band in 1969, but after adding singer Philip Bailey, leader Maurice White began to steer the band toward a more pop-oriented sound. **SHINING STAR**, from their breakthrough album, That's the Way of the World, helped instigate this new soul music craze, as did **THAT'S THE WAY (I LIKE IT)**, one of several influential mid-'70s hits by Hialeah, Florida, native Harry Wayne Casey and his hotter-than-hot group, KC and the Sunshine Band. By the end of the year, people all over the country were jamming clubs to do the Hustle and shout "uh-huh, uh-huh"—and help usher in the phenomenon known as disco.

—Billy Altman

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7 ♦ 5

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