



◆ NICK GILDER ◆ SWEET

ROB WELCH ◆ CHIC ◆

THE COMMODORES

LITTLE RIVER BAND

I AM GOLD

1978

I AM GOLD

JAY FERGUSON

TRUCE MANCIONE

DOLLY PARTON

ANDY GIBB ◆ KYNDY ◆



- 1 **HOT CHILD IN THE CITY**
Nick Gilder
- 2 **LOVE IS LIKE OXYGEN**
Sweet
- 3 **DON'T LOOK BACK**
Boston
- 4 **LOVE IS IN THE AIR**
John Paul Young
- 5 **SENTIMENTAL LADY**
Bob Welch
- 6 **REMINISCING** *Little River Band*
- 7 **BABY COME BACK** *Player*
- 8 **LOVE WILL FIND A WAY**
Pablo Cruise
- 9 **FEELS SO GOOD**
Chuck Mangione
- 10 **THREE TIMES A LADY**
The Commodores

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- 20 **HOW MUCH I FEEL**
Ambrosia

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- 1 Hot Child in the City
- 2 Love Is Like Oxygen
- 3 Don't Look Back
- 4 Love Is in the Air
- 5 Sentimental Lady
- 6 Reminiscing
- 7 Baby Come Back
- 8 Love Will Find a Way
- 9 Feels So Good
- 10 Three Times a Lady
- 11 Shadow Dancing
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- 13 Le Freak
- 14 Kiss You All Over
- 15 Use Ta Be My Girl
- 16 Here You Come Again
- 17 Thunder Island
- 18 I Just Wanna Stop
- 19 Time Passages
- 20 How Much I Feel

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AM1-25



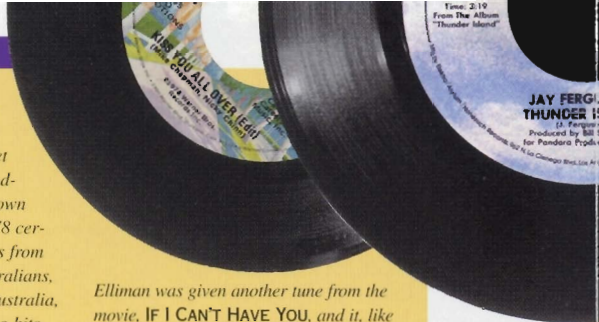
Perhaps it was something in the water, or the shrimp on the barbie, or maybe some secret ingredient in those Vegemite sandwiches so popular in the land down under. Whatever the reason, 1978 certainly was a year in which songs from Australia, or performed by Australians, or having some connection to Australia, had pretty good chances of being hits. And if the connection had anything to do with a Gibb—as in the Brothers Gibb, otherwise known as Brisbane, Australia’s, Bee Gees—well, everyone involved could probably start heading straight for the bank, because they’d just struck AM Gold.

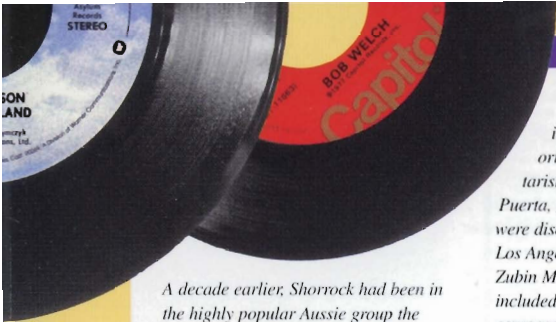
Take the case of Yvonne Elliman, the Hawaiian-born singer who played Mary Magdalene in the rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar for four years in the early 1970s (and in the 1973 film version) and later toured as a backup singer for Eric Clapton. Elliman’s voice so impressed Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb that when they began working on the music for the film Saturday Night Fever, they wrote How Deep Is Your Love specifically for her. When their label insisted that the brothers record that song themselves,

Elliman was given another tune from the movie, **IF I CAN’T HAVE YOU**, and it, like How Deep Is Your Love, became a No. 1 hit—the fourth Bee Gees–penned Saturday Night Fever track to do so.

No performer was closer to the Bee Gees than the trio’s little brother, Andy Gibb, whose **SHADOW DANCING** spent seven weeks at the top of the charts in the summer of ’78. Written by all four Gibb siblings, the song was the third and final No. 1 hit for teen idol Andy, who was only 30 years old when he died of a heart ailment in the spring of 1988.

Of course, not every hit Australian act in 1978 was Bee Gees–related. The Little River Band, led by singer Glenn Shorrock and guitarists Beeb Birtles and Graham Goble, hailed from Melbourne, and their Crosby, Stills and Nash–influenced sound on songs such as **REMINISCING** made them country-pop stars in the late ’70s.





A decade earlier, Shorrock had been in the highly popular Aussie group *the Twilights*, friendly rivals to the Easybeats of Friday on My Mind fame. Ironically, it was former Easybeats Harry Vanda and George Young who co-authored the breezy **LOVE IS IN THE AIR**, a top-10 smash for one-hit wonder John Paul Young.

The members of *Player* were not Australian: guitarists Peter Beckett and John Crowley came from Liverpool, England, and Galveston Bay, Texas, respectively, and the quintet was based in Los Angeles. But when an album they had recorded for a company that was going out of business got released instead on the RSO label, home to the Bee Gees and Andy Gibb and Yvonne Elliman, the magic rubbed off on them, too, as their Hall and Oates-styled **BABY COME BACK** went on to become a No. 1 hit.

Actually, California proved to be quite

a breeding ground for hit artists in 1978. Ambrosia, a classically oriented pop band fronted by guitarist David Pack and bassist Joe Puerta, got their big break when they were discovered at a UCLA concert by Los Angeles Philharmonic conductor Zubin Mehta. Their lengthy résumé included performing in the 1973 debut of composer Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as numerous hit singles, such as 1978's **HOW MUCH I FEEL**.

UCLA also had a hand in the career of Burbank's Jay Ferguson; it was while he was attending the university in the mid-'60s that the singer first met several of his future bandmates in the critically acclaimed jazz-rock group *Spirit*. After leaving *Spirit* in 1971, Ferguson spent some time as the leader of *Jo Jo Gunne* before scoring a top-10 hit as a solo artist in 1978 with **THUNDER ISLAND**. And, speaking of performers leaving groups to find solo success, L.A. guitarist Bob Welch, who helped keep Fleetwood Mac together during his four-year Mac stint in the early 1970s, emerged from that legendary band to register a memorable hit for himself with the gentle

SENTIMENTAL LADY.

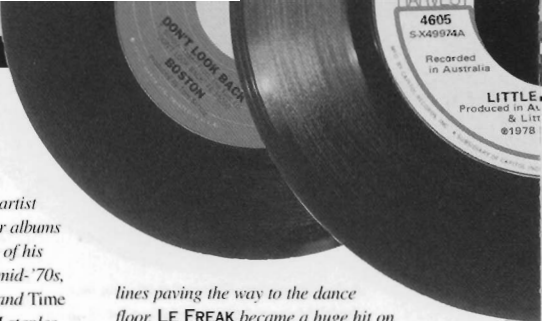
Another late-'70s artist known for gentle music was Al Stewart. The Scotland-born, London-raised singer-songwriter began his career as a folk artist in the late '60s, and while his first four albums drew critical acclaim in England, little of his music was heard in the U.S. until the mid-'70s, when his albums *The Year of the Cat* and *Time Passages* became platinum-selling FM staples. Both yielded top-10 hits in their title tracks, with **TIME PASSAGES** reaching No. 7 in 1978.

While she is not usually talked about as a singer-songwriter, a check of Dolly Parton's long career shows a surprising number of self-penned classics, including *Jolene* and *I Will Always Love You*. **HERE YOU COME AGAIN** proved to be the country music diva's breakthrough crossover pop hit in 1978. And on the subject of crossovers, it was not until a certain rock-funk band from Alabama started spotlighting the songs and lead vocals of member Lionel Richie—such as the smooth-as-silk **THREE TIMES A LADY**—that *The Commodores* became major stars.

Not that all R&B artists had to abandon funk to achieve pop success. New York's *Chic* had an immensely infectious pop-soul sound built around the hot instrumental playing of Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards. With Rodgers's skittering guitar riffs and Edwards's sloping bass

lines paving the way to the dance floor, **LE FREAK** became a huge hit on both the pop and R&B charts. Crossover success was also a hallmark of Philadelphia International, the label run by writer-producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. The O'Jays understood that company's Midas touch: The singing group had been recording since 1961, but didn't hit their stride until they hooked up with Gamble and Huff, leading to such memorable '70s hits as *Love Train*, *Back Stabbers* and 1978's **USE TA BE MY GIRL**.

Of course, all kinds of stylistic musical roads can lead to pop success, as evidenced by jazz musician Chuck Mangione's top-10 instrumental hit, **FEELS SO GOOD**. A virtuoso on the trumpet-like flugelhorn seems an unlikely candidate for the pop charts, but when Mangione's 1975 composition *Chase the Clouds Away* was used as background music during telecasts of the 1976 Olympics, the Rochester, New York, native began to get noticed by a mass audience. He won a



3:26

Screen
Gems-EMI
Music Inc.
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RIVER BAND
Australia by John Boylan
River Band
MI (Australia)
limited

CINO VANNELLI
Produced & Arranged by
Cino Vannelli
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Grammy that year for the instrumental *Bellavia*, and two years later, the title track from his multi-platinum album, *Feels So Good*, became his biggest single.

Providing the sound track for television sporting events was also quite beneficial to the career of Pablo Cruise, a San Francisco combo led by guitarist Dave Jenkins and keyboardist Cory Lerios. The band's energetic music was often used to propel shows such as "Wide World of Sports" and "Sportsworld," and was also featured in the surfing documentary *Free Ride*. Their infectious **LOVE WILL FIND A WAY** found its way to the top 10 in 1978.

When all is said and done though, 1978's *AM Gold* remains best remembered for the long, winning shadow cast by Australia. In the fall of that year, *Exile*, a Kentucky group that got its start in the mid-1960s backing up artists such as Brian Hyland and Tommy Roe on Dick Clark's "Caravan of Stars" tours and had been kicking around for over a decade without much success,

scored an unexpected No. 1 hit with the soft-rock, soft-disco **KISS YOU ALL OVER**. That tune was followed into the top spot on the charts by **HOT CHILD IN THE CITY** from Nick Gilder, a singer who was born in England, raised in Canada and made his musical mark while living in Los Angeles.

Gilder's street-wise tale of teenaged runaways on Hollywood Boulevard could not have been more different in theme and tone from *Exile*'s sensual song, but both singles had one important thing in common: They were produced by Mike Chapman. A native of—where else?—Australia, who guided a number of glitter bands to hits in England during the first half of the 1970s (among them *Sweet*, heard here on their final international hit, **LOVE IS LIKE OXYGEN**), Chapman relocated to L.A. in 1975 and proceeded to conquer American radio too, with works such as *Kiss You All Over* and *Hot Child*, not to mention two 1979 chart-toppers, *Blondie's Heart of Glass* and *The Knack's My Sharona*. Guess you could call the production on all those songs "gilt" by association, Aussie-style.

—Billy Altman

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AMI-25

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