



THE KNACK

DOOR DAVID NAUGHTON

REX SMITH

DAVID NAUGHTON

I AM GOLD
1979
I AM GOLD

COMMODORE

WIND AND FIRE

JOHN STEWART

CHIC THE DOORS



- 1 MY SHARONA *The Knack*
- 2 HOLD THE LINE *Toto*
- 3 EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU
The Babys
- 4 LONESOME LOSER
Little River Band
- 5 SHARING THE NIGHT TOGETHER
Dr. Hook
- 6 MAKIN' IT *David Naughton*
- 7 I WAS MADE FOR DANCIN'
Leif Garrett
- 8 SAD EYES *Robert John*
- 9 JUST WHEN I NEEDED YOU MOST
Randy Vanwarmer
- 10 AFTER THE LOVE HAS GONE
Earth, Wind and Fire

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- 11 HEART OF GLASS *Blondie*
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Nicolette Larson
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- 19 I'LL NEVER LOVE THIS WAY AGAIN
Dionne Warwick
- 20 YOU TAKE MY BREATH AWAY
Rex Smith

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AM GO HOME

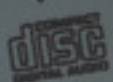
- 1 My Sharona
- 2 Hold the Line
- 3 Every Time I Think of You
- 4 Lonesome Lover
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- 6 Makin' It
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- 16 Gold
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- 18 Still
- 19 I'll Never Love This Way Again
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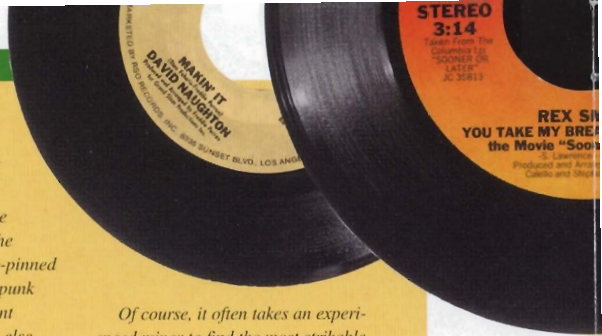


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While the nose-thumbing 1970s musical (or anti-musical, as its detractors deemed it) movement called punk rock never quite managed to upset the rock 'n' roll applecart in quite the world-conquering way its safety-pinned revolutionaries hoped it would, punk did nonetheless have a significant impact on pop music. If nothing else, the back-to-basics, do-it-yourself attitude of punk gave many musicians the inspiration to try to make their own kind of music, regardless of whether it "fit" anywhere or not.

By 1979, punk's nonconformist approach had helped create a number of sub-genres that, while not as overtly threatening as punk was perceived to be, nonetheless signaled the emergence of fresh musical perspectives. Because of the commercial stigma attached to punk, many bands began performing under the friendlier, more easily marketable terms "new wave" and "power pop"—and, as evidenced by the chart-topping success of groups emanating from both coasts in 1979, there certainly was AM gold lurking in them thar punk-sprouted hills.

Of course, it often takes an experienced miner to find the most strikable veins, and in 1979 that prospector was producer Mike Chapman. With his background as an architect of Great Britain's glitter-rock sound of the early '70s, songwriter-arranger Chapman was well-versed in ear-catching techniques, and showed the full range of those talents with his work on two of the year's biggest hits. Blondie's lead singer Deborah Harry and group guitarist Chris Stein had originally penned **HEART OF GLASS** as a funk-reggae song, but when Chapman heard the tune, he suggested that the hip, downtown new wave band go in a completely different direction by trying it with the high-tech production and over-the-top beat that were associated at the time with rock's sworn enemy, disco. Sure enough, Chapman's hunch proved dead-on, and Blondie had



WITH
AWAY (From
er Or Later?)

By
by Charis
Lawrence

SAD EYES

THE BABSYS

not only their first top-100 single ever, but a No. 1, career-making smash.

With the California power-pop band the Knack, Chapman took the opposite approach. The producer decided that their music, propelled by driving guitars and thumping drums, needed to sound as raw and spontaneous as possible. To that end, he took the quartet into an L.A. studio and recorded them as if they were playing live in a club. The entire Get the Knack album took less than two weeks from start to final mix, and cost a do-it-yourself total of just \$18,000. Again, Chapman's instincts were right: With singer Doug Fieger's stuttering vocal matching guitarist Berton Averre's pogo-ing riffs, **MY SHARONA** became not only a No. 1 hit but the No. 1 single of the year, and helped sell two million LPs.

Another power-pop band, one clever enough to recognize that not just the

sound but the look of rock was changing in the late 1970s, was the London group the Babys. Fronted by lead singer and bassist John Waite, the Babys got their U.S. record deal mainly on the basis of what was then a new and expensive marketing tool—a video. The promotional film, which cost the Babys some \$10,000, showcased their neatly coifed, long-scarved image as much as their music, and the investment proved a wise one, as evidenced by their cache of American hits that included 1977's Isn't It Time and 1979's **EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU**.

At the other end of the image-conscious scale were the members of Toto. Formed in 1978 by L.A. studio musicians who kept meeting up at other artists' sessions, Toto scored a top-five hit in 1979 with their debut single, **HOLD THE LINE**, a song that showcased the considerable technical chops of its members, in particular guitarist Steve Lukather, keyboardist David Paich and vocalist Bobby Kimball.

Another artist used to working behind the scenes who hit it big in 1979 was Rupert Holmes. With a résumé dating

back to the '60s that included work as an arranger for the Drifters, a producer for Sparks and the Strawbs and a songwriter for artists ranging from Barbra Streisand (for the film *A Star Is Born*) to the Buoy (the macabre 1971 novelty hit *Timothy*). Holmes had never had any success with his own recordings until his lighthearted 1979 tale of love on the rocks, **ESCAPE (THE PIÑA COLADA SONG)** helped do for that mixed drink what the Eagles' *Tequila Sunrise* had done for another alcoholic concoction years before.

Like Rupert Holmes, singer-songwriter Robert John certainly paid his dues in the music business. From the time of John's first chart single, a 1958 ballad called *White Bucks and Saddle Shoes* released under his complete name, Bobby Pedrick Jr., until his recording of **SAD EYES**, Robert John hung in as a writer and performer for over 20 years.

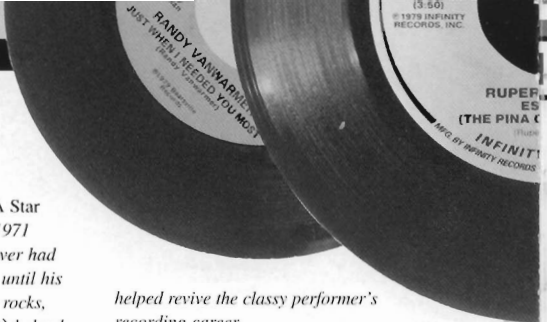
Dionne Warwick had been a consistent hit-maker throughout the 1960s, when her association with writer-producers Hal David and Burt Bacharach helped her garner nearly two dozen top-40 singles. The 1970s were less kind to Warwick, who had not enjoyed a top-10 entry in nearly five years when the swirling, Barry Manilow-produced **I'LL NEVER LOVE THIS WAY AGAIN** made it to No. 5 in 1979 and

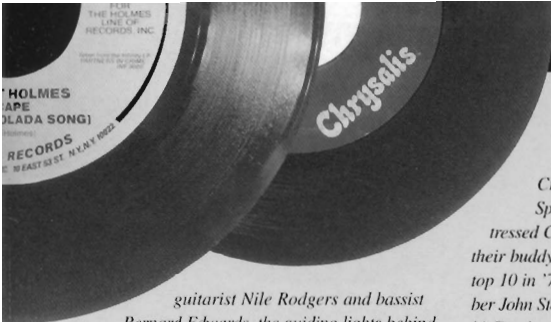
helped revive the classy performer's recording career.

Speaking of classy, Lionel Richie certainly gave the Commodores a slew of sophisticated hits during his days as their chief songwriter and lead singer. While they were first known as a hard-funk band, the Alabama-based group really came into its own as a crossover pop group when pianist Richie began authoring smooth ballads such as *Easy*, *Three Times a Lady* and the '79 smash **STILL**.

Another soul group that achieved great pop success after reorienting its sound was the nine-piece *Earth, Wind and Fire*. Founded as a jazz band in Chicago in the late 1960s by drummer Maurice White, the group metamorphosed into a sprawling soul-funk outfit during the mid-'70s, dominating both the pop and R&B charts with songs such as **AFTER THE LOVE HAS GONE**, a No. 2 hit on both charts in 1979.

Nearly as hard-working as White on both their own music as well as numerous side projects were





guitarist Nile Rodgers and bassist Bernard Edwards, the guiding lights behind the pop-funk group Chic. Over the years, the duo contributed to hits by an impressive range of artists including Sister Sledge, Diana Ross, David Bowie and Madonna. Their own group's records didn't do too badly, either, as two of Chic's songs—1978's *Le Freak* and 1979's *GOOD TIMES*—both made it to the top of the charts.

Though by the end of the decade it was not even half the force it had been in the early 1970s, country-rock nonetheless provided a slew of memorable hits in 1979. Due to the profound influence of keyboardist Michael McDonald, who joined in 1975, the Doobie Brothers had moved pretty far away from their original country-rock sound by the time **WHAT A FOOL BELIEVES** became their first No. 1 single since 1975's *Black Water*. The Doobies' rich harmonies still retained a country flavor, though, as did those of **LONESOME LOSER**'s creators, the Little River Band, the Australian group led by vocalist Glenn

Shorrock and guitarist Graham Goble, who originally modeled themselves after U.S. country-rock supergroup Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Speaking of CS&N, honey-voiced, long-tressed California girl Nicolette Larson took their buddy Neil Young's **LOTTA LOVE** into the top 10 in '79, while onetime Kingston Trio member John Stewart, author of the Monkees' 1967 hit *Daydream Believer*, achieved his highest-charting single with the haunting **GOLD**, a track featuring harmonies by Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks.

Still, in a year that found such fresh-faced teen idols as Leif Garrett (**I WAS MADE FOR DANCIN'**), Rex Smith (**YOU TAKE MY BREATH AWAY**) and David Naughton (**MAKIN' IT**) scoring hits alongside acts like eye-patched Ray Sawyer and the rest of the scruffy Dr. Hook (**SHARING THE NIGHT TOGETHER**), 1979 remains best remembered as the year that punk's motorcycle-jacketed minions finally saw the bright lights of AM gold. Case in point: Suzi Quatro, the Detroit-bred rocker who spent the mid-'70s as a leather-clad star in England. Quatro finally made it in the U.S. in 1979 singing a duet with Chris Norman called **STUMBLIN' IN**, a record produced by her old mate from England's glitter days—one Mike Chapman, proving once again that what comes around goes around.

—Billy Altman

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