

#1 HITS OF THE '70s

I AM GOLD '70-'74 I AM GOLD



THREE DOG NIGHT

JIM CHOICE

BILLY PRESTON

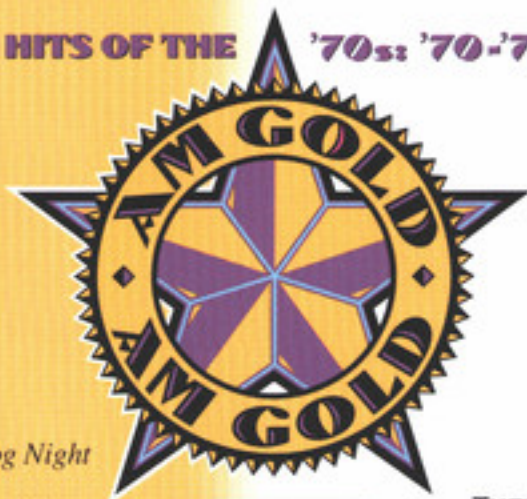
LOVE UNLIMITED DISCOBAND

HARRY CHAPIN

THE O'JAYS RAY STEELE THE GUESS WHO

HELEN REDDY

#1 HITS OF THE '70s: '70-'74



- 1 JOY TO THE WORLD *Three Dog Night*
- 2 AMERICAN WOMAN *The Guess Who*
- 3 WAR *Edwin Starr*
- 4 VENUS *The Shocking Blue*
- 5 MAMA TOLD ME (NOT TO COME)
Three Dog Night
- 6 THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL
Charlie Rich
- 7 I AM WOMAN *Helen Reddy*
- 8 BROTHER LOUIE *Stories*
- 9 THE STREAK *Ray Stevens*
- 10 ROCK YOUR BABY *George McCrae*

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- 11 LOVE TRAIN *The O'Jays*
- 12 THEME FROM SHAFT *Isaac Hayes*
- 13 KUNG FU FIGHTING *Carl Douglas*
- 14 WILL IT GO ROUND IN CIRCLES
Billy Preston
- 15 LOVE'S THEME
Love Unlimited Orchestra
- 16 THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT
IN GEORGIA *Vicki Lawrence*
- 17 CAT'S IN THE CRADLE *Harry Chapin*
- 18 TIME IN A BOTTLE *Jim Croce*
- 19 SUNSHINE ON MY SHOULDERS
John Denver
- 20 AMERICAN PIE *Don McLean*



#1 HITS OF THE '70s: '70-'74

AMERICAN GOULDS

- 1 Joy to the World
- 2 American Woman
- 3 War
- 4 Venus
- 5 Mama Told Me (Not to Come)
- 6 The Most Beautiful Girl
- 7 I Am Woman
- 8 Brother Louie
- 9 The Streak
- 10 Rock Your Baby
- 11 Love Train
- 12 Theme from Shaft
- 13 Kung Fu Fighting
- 14 Will It Go Round in Circles
- 15 Love's Theme
- 16 The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia
- 17 Cat's in the Cradle
- 18 Time in a Bottle
- 19 Sunshine on My Shoulders
- 20 American Pie




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In the early 1970s, the hippie generation began burning out on the long, loud, improvisational rock songs of the psychedelic era. Musicians and fans alike sought new directions. The dominant trend was toward confessional, folk-based songs, while the nostalgia movement that produced *Sha Na Na* reflected the yearning for a simpler time and music. Don McLean's


AMERICAN PIE embodied both impulses.

The suburban New Yorker claimed rock 'n' roller Buddy Holly as his first idol, but McLean began his music career as a folk singer. In the late '60s, he was appointed "Hudson River Troubadour" by the New York State Council on the Arts, and sang in river communities three times a day. Then Pete Seeger, one of McLean's heroes, invited him to join the crew of the sloop *Clearwater*, to sail the Hudson for six weeks giving concerts and warning about industrial pollution. McLean's debut album was rejected by 34 labels before being released to mass indifference, but *American Pie*, the title song of his second LP, won him a major-label deal. More than eight minutes long, the song was released as a two-part single. McLean's been-there-and-gone tale dated the first death of rock 'n' roll to February 3, 1959,

the night Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and the Big Bopper went down in a plane crash. *American Pie* was riddled with nostalgic references to Holly especially, and equated the deaths of the musicians with a spiritual death in their fans. The song summoned up a late-'50s end of innocence that resonated with folks facing a similar crisis in the turbulent early '70s; meanwhile, the galloping folk-rock melody seemed to pick up momentum as the record progressed, and DJs wound up playing the song at its full length. Though he enjoyed further chart success, McLean never duplicated the impact of his first hit.

John Denver emerged shortly before McLean and sustained a much more enduring career—despite being routinely eviscerated by critics for his perceived have-a-nice-day-like-me philosophy. An Air Force brat raised in the Southwest, Denver replaced Chad Mitchell in the folk-revivalist

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Chad Mitchell Trio for three years before going solo. **SUNSHINE ON MY SHOULDERS**, he insisted, began as a feeling-bad song before it turned into one of the tunes that cemented his image; he couldn't help it if he liked life. Helen Reddy had been involved with the L.A. feminist movement for less than a year when, unable to find songs for her debut album that reflected a positive self-image, she wrote the lyrics to **I AM WOMAN** (fellow Australian Ray Burton composed the music). Reddy didn't like the way it turned out, so when producer Mike Frankovich asked to use the song as the theme to his "feminist comedy" **Stand Up and Be Counted**, she returned to the studio to cut this version, with a different arrangement and a new last verse. The song made a false start up the charts in June 1972 for three weeks, then disappeared until September, when it struck one of femi-

nism's first pop-culture blows by shooting to No. 1.

*Jim Croce was on the rise, and Harry Chapin on the decline, when their careers were cut short. The former had already enjoyed two hits off his debut album, with no plans to release **TIME IN A BOTTLE** (from the same LP) as a single; indeed, Bad, Bad Leroy Brown, Croce's first No. 1, had come from his second album. But a Hollywood producer picked up **Time in a Bottle** for the made-for-TV film **She Lives**, which aired the night Croce was finishing up his third LP; eight days later, on September 20, 1973, he died in a plane crash. The son of a jazz drummer, Harry Chapin had been a cabbie and a documentary film producer before beginning a career in music and scoring quickly with his calling card, **Taxi**. His wife, Sandy, suggested the story line for **CAT'S IN THE CRADLE** after Chapin missed his son's birth while out on tour; in 1975, the song became the theme to **The Night That Made America Famous**, a Tony-nominated multimedia Broadway show. Devoting himself to the **World Hunger Fund**, Chapin fell from the charts for four years before winning one more hit (**Sequel**) less than a year before his death in an auto*

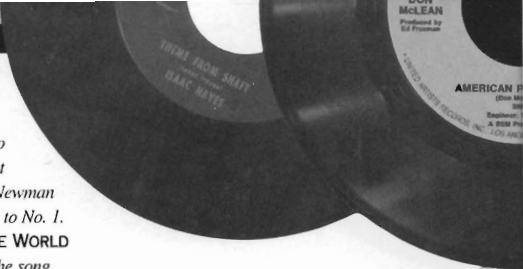
accident on July 16, 1981.

Despite the trend toward songs with meaning, pop-rock and soul (evolving into disco) held their ground. Three Dog Night achieved the unlikely by taking a Randy Newman song, **MAMA TOLD ME (NOT TO COME)**, to No. 1. Their version of Hoyt Axton's **JOY TO THE WORLD** was even bigger. Axton originally wrote the song for an animated TV special that never went into production; he pitched it to 3DN because he had an in after opening for them on tour. The Guess Who's **AMERICAN WOMAN**, in which the Canadian band not-so-subtly trashes its neighbors to the south, capitalized on the trend toward topical songs. So did Stories' cover of **BROTHER LOUIE**, a tune about parental interference in an interracial love affair that was done first by the black-and-white British pop-soul group Hot Chocolate. The Shocking Blue's **VENUS** went to No. 3 in the group's native Holland and No. 1 in five other European nations before becoming the biggest Dutch single thus far in the U.S.

The Temptations cut the Norman Whitfield-Barrett Strong tune **WAR** for their 1970 Psychedelic Shack album; miffed that Motown was pushing other songs off the album as singles, the production team recut the tune with Edwin Starr. In London, Indian-born producer Biddu

hired Carl Douglas to record a country-pop song after Douglas did the title song to the Richard Roundtree blaxploitation movie Embassy for him. For the B side, Douglas already had lyrics to **KUNG FU FIGHTING**, and Biddu slapped together some music in 10 minutes in the studio. The A side went ignored, but at the height of Bruce Lee mania, Kung Fu Fighting broke from the British dance clubs and was picked up for American release.

The writing and production team of Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff plucked the O'Jays out of limbo to record the first album for their new Philadelphia International label; **LOVE TRAIN** was the third single from that maiden effort. Producer-writer Barry White assembled the 40-piece Love Unlimited Orchestra to back his girl group, Love Unlimited. **LOVE'S THEME** was the overture to the Under the Influence of Love Unlimited album, and segued into the vocal





trio's *Under the Influence of Love* single. Disco DJs made the whole nine-minute package a dance-floor sensation, but the orchestral instrumental was a much bigger hit on the radio. Former Stax Records writer-producer Isaac Hayes thought he was up for the lead in the movie when he agreed to write **THEME FROM SHAFT**. Richard Roundtree got the part instead, but Hayes finished the sound track. Harry Wayne Casey and Richard Finch were still a year away from their first hit with *K.C. and the Sunshine Band* when they wrote and cut the track for **ROCK YOUR BABY** in less than an hour at a cost of \$15. After George McCrae added his sultry vocals, the song made millions. Billy Preston was known primarily as the "fifth Beatle" when he solidified his own solo career with **WILL IT GO ROUND IN CIRCLES**.

Vicki Lawrence rose to prominence playing

"Mama" in an ongoing sketch on television's *The Carol Burnett Show* from 1967 to 1978. That sketch eventually earned its own show, *Mama's Family*, which starred Lawrence. Married briefly to country-pop songwriter Bobby Russell in the early '70s, Lawrence cut the demo to his **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN GEORGIA**, and after the song was rejected by several artists, she wound up recording the hit single as well. With **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL**, Charlie Rich proved that after two decades on the fringes of the record biz, he could make something soulful out of the flimsiest "country-politan" material. And speaking of country, Ray Stevens, known mainly for whacked-out novelty songs, outdid himself with **THE STREAK**. The song was written about the fad of dashing one's completely undressed self through public places, which was occurring everywhere from libraries to the Academy Awards presentation. While numerous other quickie singles tried to cash in, the fad was such a natural for Stevens' imagination that he claimed the only hit on the subject. A Don McLean ballad it wasn't, but it sure proved that Ray Stevens could write his own kind of topical song.

—John Morthland



◆ DISCOGRAPH

- 1 JOY TO THE WORLD**
Three Dog Night • (Axton) Dunhill 4272 (1971) No. 1*
Irving Music Inc. BMI. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.
- 2 AMERICAN WOMAN**
The Guest Who • (Bachman-Cummings-Peterson-Kale)
RCA 0325 (1970) No. 1*
Shillelagh America Music/Unichappell Music Inc. (Six
Continents). BMI. Courtesy of the RCA Records Label, under
license from BMG Special Products.
- 3 WAR**
Edwin Starr • (Strong-Whitfield) Gordy 7101 (1970) No. 1*
Stone
Agate Music. BMI. Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P.
- 4 VENUS**
The Shocking Blue • (Leeuwen) Colossus 108 (1970) No. 1*
Dayglow Music Inc. ASCAP. Courtesy of Red Bullet Productions
B.V., Holland, by arrangement with Celebrity Licensing Inc.
- 5 MAMA TOLD ME (NOT TO COME)**
Three Dog Night • (Newman) Dunhill 4239 (1970) No. 1*
Super Songs Unltd. (January)/Unichappell Music Inc. (Six
Continents). BMI. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.
- 6 THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL**
Charlie Rich • (Bourke-Sherrill-Wilson) Epic 11040 (1973) No. 1*
EMI Al Gallicco Music Corp./EMI Algee Music Corp. BMI.
© 1973 Sony Music Entertainment Inc. Under license from Sony
Music Special Products, a division of Sony Music, a group of
Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
- 7 I AM WOMAN**
Helen Reddy • (Reddy-Burton) Capitol 3350 (1972) No. 1*
Bugglerlugs Music/Irving Music Inc. BMI. © 1972 Capitol
Records, Inc. Courtesy Capitol Records, under license from EMI-
Capitol Music Special Markets.
- 8 BROTHER LOUIE**
Stories • (Brown-Wilson) Karma Sutra 577 (1973) No. 1*
U.S. Music & Media. ASCAP. © 1973 BMG Special Products.
Under license from BMG Special Products.
- 9 THE STREAK**
Ray Stevens • (Stevens) Barnaby 600 (1974) No. 1*
Ahab Music Company Inc. BMI. © 1974 Ahab Music Co., Inc.
Courtesy of Barnaby Records, Inc., by arrangement with Celebrity
Licensing Inc.
- 10 ROCK YOUR BABY**
George McCrae • (Casey-Finch) T. K. 1004 (1974) No. 1*
EMI Longitude Music. BMI. © 1974 T. K. Records. Produced
under license from Rhino Records, Inc., by arrangement with
Warner Special Products.
- 11 LOVE TRAIN**
The O'Jays • (Gamble-Huff) Philadelphia International 3524
(1973) No. 1*
Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. © 1972 Sony Music
Entertainment Inc. Under license from Sony Music Special
Products, a division of Sony Music, a group of Sony Music
Entertainment Inc.
- 12 THEME FROM SHAFT**
Isaac Hayes • (Hayes) Enterprise 9038 (1971) No. 1*
Irving Music Inc. (East Memphis). BMI. Courtesy of Fantasy, Inc.
- 13 KUNG FU FIGHTING**
Carl Douglas • (Douglas) 20th Century 2140 (1974) No. 1*
Sinless Music. ASCAP. © 1974 Castle Copyrights Ltd. Courtesy
of Castle Copyrights Ltd.
- 14 WILL IT GO ROUND IN CIRCLES**
Billy Preston • (Preston-Fisher) A&M 1411 (1973) No. 1*
Almo Music Corp. ASCAP. Irving Music Inc. BMI. © 1972 A&M
Records, Inc. Courtesy of A&M Records, Inc.

15 **LOVE'S THEME**
Love Unlimited Orchestra • (White-Schroeder)
20th Century 2069 (1974) No. 1*
Sa-Vette Music/Super Songs Unltd. (January)/Unichappell Music
Inc. (Six Continents). BMI. © 1974 Mercury Records. Courtesy of
Mercury Records.

16 **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN GEORGIA**
Vicki Lawrence • (Russell) Bell 45303 (1973) No. 1*
Pri-Russ Music, ASCAP. © 1973 Garrett Music Enterprises.
Courtesy of Garrett Music Enterprises.

17 **CAT'S IN THE CRADLE**
Hurry Chapin • (Chapin-Chapin) Elektra 45203 (1974) No. 1*
Story Songs Ltd. ASCAP. © 1972 Elektra/Asylum Records.
Produced under license from Elektra Entertainment Group.

18 **TIME IN A BOTTLE**
Jim Croce • (Croce) ABC 11405 (1973) No. 1*
Universal MCA Music Publishing, a division of Universal
Studios, Inc./Denjac Music Company. ASCAP. Courtesy of
LeFrak-Moelis Records.

19 **SUNSHINE ON MY SHOULDERS**
John Denver • (Denver-Kniss-Taylor) RCA 0213 (1974) No. 1*
Cherry Lane Music Publishing. ASCAP. Courtesy of the RCA
Records Label, under license from BMG Special Products.

20 **AMERICAN PIE**
Don McLean • (McLean) United Artists 50856 (1972) No. 1*
Songs of Universal Inc. BMI. Courtesy EMI Records, under
license from EMI-Capitol Music Special Markets.

* Indicates highest Billboard chart position

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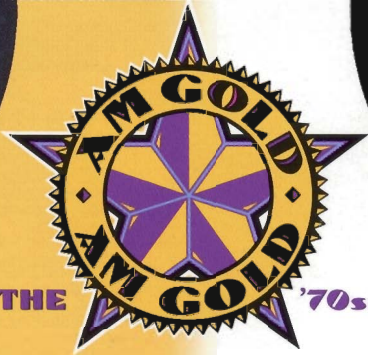
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THE AUTHOR: *John Morthland has been an associate editor for Rolling Stone and Creem. He has freelanced for virtually every rock magazine published during the last 20 years.*

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