



1968

The Beat Goes On

Classic
ROCK

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

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- 1 **Nobody but Me** The Human Beinz
- 2 **Magic Carpet Ride** Steppenwolf
- 3 **Mony Mony** Tommy James and the Shondells
- 4 **Cowboys to Girls** The Intruders
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- 6 **Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing** Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell
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- 8 **Soulful Strut** Young-Holt Unlimited
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Classic ROCK

1968 : The Beat Goes On

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

2CLR-11
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- 1 Nobody but Me 2 Magic Carpet Ride 3 Mony Mony 4 Cowboys to Girls
5 People Got to Be Free 6 Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing 7 I Heard It
through the Grapevine 8 Soulful Strut 9 Elenore 10 With a Little Help from
My Friends 11 I Wish It Would Rain 12 Dance to the Music 13 Girl
Watcher 14 Itchycoo Park 15 Green Tambourine 16 Chain of
Fools 17 Slip Away 18 There Is 19 Bend Me, Shape
Me 20 Bottle of Wine 21 Just Dropped In (To See What
Condition My Condition Was In) 22 Hush

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In 1968, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy inspired two of the year's biggest hits, Dion's *Abraham, Martin and John* and the Rascals' **People Got to Be Free**. Whereas the former projected a weary melancholy, the latter was so irresistibly upbeat that it served as one of the era's top dance records. Atlantic was reluctant to release such a "political" song, but *People Got to Be Free* proved to be a near-perfect blend of message, melody and soul groove. The Rascals' Felix Cavaliere, the primary author, later said, "This is one song that I would like to leave behind that I feel strongly about."

The universal appeal achieved by *People Got to Be Free* was rare in an era when fewer and fewer releases could transcend the cultural divisions inherent in the burgeoning pop marketplace. Not many songs could reach a 14-year-old teeny-bopper, a 22-year-old hippie and a 30-year-old black at once. In 1968, a twist of the AM radio dial could create dramatic segues from the banality of the Turtles' *Elenore* to the portentous excess of Deep Purple's *Hush* to the ominous throb of Marvin Gaye's *I Heard It through the Grapevine*.

By 1968, many of rock's more progressive acts were ignoring singles altogether, leaving Top 40 radio to groups and producers catering to the tastes of young teenagers. A new genre of lightweight but danceable pop ditties emerged that was somewhat derogatorily labeled "bubblegum." Like many advertising jingles, bubblegum hits such as **Green Tambourine** by the Lemon Pipers were so insistent and catchy that even a tie-dyed hippie might find himself singing one in the shower. In truth, the Lemon Pipers aspired to heavier musical statements and recorded *Green Tambourine* only because they feared losing their contract with Buddah Records if they refused.

Tommy James and the Shondells also endured the

scornful bubblegum tag, yet *I Think We're Alone Now* and **Mony Mony** have outlasted much of the more ambitious (and pretentious) music of the late-'60s counterculture legends. While writing the song in New York City, James searched for a clever girl's name to use in the title, something on the order of Slooppy from *Hang On Slooppy*. Stepping out onto the terrace of his apartment, he spotted at the top of the Mutual of New York Insurance Company building a large neon sign flashing "M.O.N.Y." Thus the song's heroine was born.

Bend Me, Shape Me by Chicago's American Breed typified the clean-cut pop-rock that was gaining more air play in 1968. The group eventually moved to Los Angeles and, after several personnel changes, emerged as Rufus, starring Chaka Khan. With **Elenore**, the all too clever Turtles actually wrote a romantic pop song that was a parody of a romantic pop song. If their somewhat subtle satire went over most teenagers' heads, the song at least captured their hearts.

Not all AM radio was so lightweight in 1968. In fact, rumblings from what would become the heaviest of rock genres—heavy metal—were first heard this year via hard rock progenitors Cream, Iron Butterfly, Vanilla Fudge and Steppenwolf (their first single, *Born to Be Wild*, yielded the phrase "heavy metal thunder"). Steppenwolf, named after the Hermann Hesse novel, scored two more major hits, **Magic Carpet Ride** and *Rock Me*, before John Kay's politically oriented songs rendered them more of an underground FM radio act.

Also debuting in 1968 was Deep Purple, a British quintet that became one of the great heavy-metal groups of the '70s, earning the title of "loudest rock band" in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Their first single was a cover version of Joe South's *Hush* (earlier a minor hit for Billy J. Royal) featuring organist Jon Lord, whose

neoclassical keyboard stylings gave Deep Purple an “artsy” aura. However, by 1971 guitarist Ritchie Blackmore had effectively reduced the band’s sound to a few chords and lots of decibels.

Though Joe Cocker was still a year away from his incredible performance at Woodstock, he made the American charts for the first time in 1968 with a cover of the Beatles’ **With a Little Help from My Friends**. Heavily indebted to Ray Charles, Cocker transformed the song, which had featured Ringo’s deadpan rendition, into an intense gospel plea with a little help from musician friends like guitarist Jimmy Page. By 1970, the year of his Mad Dogs and Englishmen tour with Leon Russell, Cocker had perfected the histrionic vocal style and spastic stage presence that turned him into a counterculture hero.

The psychedelic era brought more experimental production techniques to records by the Small Faces, whose **Itchycoo Park** incorporated electronic phase shifting to evoke the experience of being stoned. These little big men (all four members were under five feet six, hence the name) reigned as one of

Kenny Rogers and the First Edition (inset) checked out their minds in 1968, then moved on to greener country-pop pastures.

The Intruders





London's top mod bands in the mid-'60s. The group fell apart in 1969 when lead singer Steve Marriott left to form Humble Pie with Peter Frampton, but soon regained its footing after newcomers Rod Stewart and Ron Wood took control. An especially unlikely source of druggy pop was Kenny Rogers and the First Edition, who were organized by ex-members of the New Christy Minstrels. Though **Just Dropped In** made timely use of far-out lyrics and a taped electric-guitar intro played backwards, the First

Edition quickly developed a more middle-of-the-road country-rock sound. Even party records were not immune to psychedelic touches, which may explain

An ex-plumber from Sheffield, England, Joe Cocker had the well-worn pipes of a veteran bluesman.

why the Human Beinz successfully updated the Isley Brothers' 1963 dance number **Nobody but Me** with a little feedback and fuzz-tone guitar. This Cleveland bar band also had to update the song's litany of dances, replacing the passé twist, popeye and mashed potatoes with the shake, shingaling and boogaloo. Conventional inebriants received their due in 1968 thanks to the Fireballs' raucous "ode de vin," **Bottle of Wine**. This was the same New Mexico band that had several instrumental hits in 1959 and 1960 (*Torquay, Bulldog*), played the overdubs on a number of Buddy Holly's posthumous releases and topped the charts in 1963 with *Sugar Shack*.

The hippest dance music of the era belonged to Sly and the Family Stone, whose first big seller, **Dance to the Music**, revealed Sly's flair for innovative vocal and

The Small Faces, formed by Steve Marriott (far left), played a vital role in swinging London's mod scene during the mid-'60s.



instrumental arrangements. In September 1968, the group's first English tour fell apart when bassist Larry Graham was arrested for possession of grass. It was Graham's percussive (i.e., slapping and popping) playing that defined "funky" for a generation of bass guitarists.

A lighter and sweeter brand of soul music cropped up in songs like the O'Kaysions' **Girl Watcher**. The coolest groove of all was struck by Young-Holt Unlimited in their breezy instrumental **Soulful Strut**. Bassist Eldee Young and drummer Red Holt had been two thirds of the Ramsey Lewis Trio before they teamed up with pianist Ken Cragen to form Young-Holt Unlimited. The horn charts on *Soulful Strut* were by Sonny Sanders, who co-wrote the tune with Eugene Record of the Chi-Lites.

The influence of Sly Stone and progressive rock on black music accounted for bolder production approaches. In Philadelphia, two of the most important producers of the '70s, Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, formed their own company and struck gold with **Cowboys to Girls** by the Intruders. At Motown, producer Norman Whitfield dressed up the Temptations' **I Wish It Would Rain** with the sounds of seagulls, thunder and rain. Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson created a flute-and-string arrangement to buoy the romantic give-and-take of Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell in **Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing**.

As good a year as it was for rock and soul music, almost nothing on the AM or FM radio matched the chilling intensity of Marvin Gaye's **I Heard It through the Grapevine**. Norman Whitfield had overseen a saucier performance of the song (which he wrote with Barrett Strong) by Gladys Knight and the Pips, and it reached No. 2 in 1967. Gaye's version, with its sinister tom-toms, piano and bass, was actually made first, but languished in the vaults until 1968. It held the No. 1 spot for seven weeks and was the biggest hit of Motown's first 20 years. "Voodoo music," guitarist Mike Bloomfield called it.

—Joe Sasyf



Several years after Bend Me, Shape Me, Chicago's American Breed headed west to Los Angeles, where they changed musical gears and their name to Rufus, led by the sultry Chaka Khan.

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. Nobody but Me** The Human Beinz • Music and lyrics by Rudolph Isley, O'Kelly Isley and Ronald Isley. *Capitol 5590*. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from Capitol Special Markets, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 8*
- 2. Magic Carpet Ride** Steppenwolf • Music and lyrics by Rushton Moreau and John Kaye. *Dunhill 4161*. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 3*
- 3. Money Money** Tommy James and the Shondells • Music and lyrics by Bobby Bloom, Ritchie Cordell, Bo Gentry and Tommy James. *Roulette 7008*. Produced under license from Roulette Records, a Division of ABZ Music Corp. No. 3*
- 4. Cowboys to Girls** The Intruders • Music and lyrics by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. *Gamble 214*. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Inc. No. 6*
- 5. People Got to Be Free** The Rascals • Music by Edward Brigati Jr., lyrics by Felix Cavaliere. *Atlantic 2537*. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 1*
- 6. Ain't Nothing like the Real Thing** Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell • Music and lyrics by Nicholas Ashford and Valerie Simpson. *Tamla 54163*. Courtesy of Motown Record Corp. No. 8*
- 7. I Heard It through the Grapevine** Marvin Gaye • Music and lyrics by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong. *Tamla 54176*. Courtesy of Motown Record Corp. No. 1*
- 8. Soulful Strut** Young-Holt Unlimited • Music and lyrics by Eugene Record and Sonny Sanders. *Brunswick 55391*. Courtesy of Brunswick, under license from CBS Special Products. No. 3*
- 9. Elenore** The Turtles • Music and lyrics by Howard Kaylan, Mark Volman, Jim Pons, Al Nichol and John Barbata. *White Whale 276*. Courtesy of Flo & Eddie, Inc. No. 6*
- 10. With a Little Help from My Friends** Joe Cocker • Music and lyrics by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. *A & M 591*. Courtesy of A & M Records, Inc. No. 68*
- 11. I Wish It Would Rain** The Temptations • Music and lyrics by Barrett Strong, Roger Penzabene and Norman Whitfield. *Gordy 7068*. Courtesy of Motown Record Corp. No. 4*
- 12. Dance to the Music** Sly and the Family Stone • Music and lyrics by Sylvester Stewart. *Epic 10256*. Produced under license from CBS Special Products. No. 8*
- 13. Girl Watcher** The O'Kaysions • Music and lyrics by Ronald B. Killete and Wayne Pittman. *ABC 11094*. © 1973 ABC Records, Inc. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 5*
- 14. Itchycoo Park** Small Faces • Music and lyrics by Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane. *Immediate 501*. Produced under license from CBS Special Products. No. 16*
- 15. Green Tambourine** The Lemon Pipers • Music and lyrics by Shelley Pinz and Paul Leka. *Buddah 23*. © 1964 Buddah Records, Inc. Courtesy of Buddah Records, Inc. No. 1*
- 16. Chain of Fools** Aretha Franklin • Music and lyrics by Don Covay. *Atlantic 2464*. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 2*
- 17. Slip Away** Clarence Carter • Music and lyrics by William Armstrong, Wilbur Terrell and Marcus Daniel. *Atlantic 2508*. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 6*
- 18. There Is the Dells** • Music and lyrics by Bobby Miller and Raynard Miner. *Cadet 5590*. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 20*
- 19. Bend Me, Shape Me** The American Breed • Music by Laurence Weiss, lyrics by Scott English. *Acta 811*. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 5*
- 20. Bottle of Wine** The Fireballs • Music and lyrics by Tom Paxton. *Alco 6491*. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 9*
- 21. Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Is In)** Kenny Rogers and the First Edition • Music and lyrics by Mickey Newbury. *Reprise 0655*. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 5*
- 22. Hush** Deep Purple • Music and lyrics by Joe South. *Tetragrammaton 1503*. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 4*

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NOTES INSIDE

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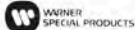
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