

1961



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

The
ROCK'N'ROLL
»ERA«

Digital Remaster

1961

- 1 **Runaway** (2:16) Del Shannon
- 2 **I Like It like That** (1:55) Chris Kenner
- 3 **Dedicated to the One I Love** (2:02)
The Shirelles
- 4 **Quarter to Three** (2:25) Gary "U.S." Bonds
- 5 **The Lion Sleeps Tonight** (2:35) The Tokens
- 6 **There's a Moon Out Tonight** (2:10)
The Capris
- 7 **Blue Moon** (2:15) The Marcels
- 8 **Will You Love Me Tomorrow** (2:36)
The Shirelles
- 9 **Tossin' and Turnin'** (2:15) Bobby Lewis
- 10 **Shop Around** (2:40) The Miracles
- 11 **My True Story** (2:29) The Jive Five
- 12 **Runaround Sue** (2:36) Dion

SEE PROGRAM NOTES INSIDE

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The Jive Five

Hanging halfway between the reign of Elvis Presley and the coming of the Beatles, 1961 is often described as one of rock 'n' roll's "limbo" years. True, the pop airwaves were full of sounds both benign and dismaying: the tame crooning of a post-Army Elvis; the genteel folk music of the Kingston Trio and other crew cut-styled trios and quartets; the supper-club strains of Lawrence Welk and Ferrante and Teicher; and the treacly balladry of a seemingly endless procession of dimple-faced teen idols.

However, with a simple twist of the AM radio dial, a rock 'n' roller could hear the physical exhortations of Chubby Checker, the euphonious cries of the last doo-wop groups or the sweet pleas of the first girl groups. The truth is that rock 'n' roll was always busy creating its own future. Nineteen sixty-one witnessed not only the birth of the girl-group sound and surf music but also the first major hits from the most successful black-owned record company in history: the Motown Record Corporation of Detroit.

Motown's founder and owner, Berry Gordy Jr., had boxed professionally, worked on the Ford assembly line and helped write hits for singer Jackie Wilson before he formed Tamla Records, the first Motown-affiliated label, in 1959. Tamla's first hit, **Shop Around**, came from the Miracles and was co-authored by the group's silky-voiced lead singer, Smokey Robinson. Added to his delicious crooning for the Miracles, Robinson's outstanding song-writing and production talents made him perhaps the most important artist on Motown's incredible roster during the 1960s.

The popularity of *Shop Around* immediately allowed Gordy to attract much of the musical talent then lying dormant in the Detroit area. From the distant suburb of Inkster came five high-school girls who mockingly called themselves the Casingnettes (i.e., can't sing yet). After

they auditioned for Motown, Gordy renamed them the Marvelettes and their debut single, **Please Mr. Postman**, became the label's first No. 1 chart hit. Playing drums on the date was Marvin Gaye, another of Motown's creative giants.

The Marvelettes' hit followed the success of the Shirelles, four young women from Passaic, New Jersey, who earlier in the year had become the first all-female group in rock 'n' roll to have a No. 1 record. **Will You Love Me Tomorrow**, written by the team of Gerry Goffin and Carole King, captured the emotional ambivalence of a teen-age girl on the verge of physical surrender to her lover. With producer Luther Dixon surrounding Shirley Owens' aching vocal with dizzying eddies of strings, the song was an instant classic. After this wildfire success Scepter Records quickly re-released the Shirelles' **Dedicated to the One I Love**, a minor hit for them in 1959, and it went to No. 3.

There's no doubt that *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* established not only the Shirelles' appeal but also that of the girl-group sound itself. The song also introduced two ingredients that were somewhat new to rock 'n' roll but would become hallmarks of girl-group recordings. These were music and lyrics by professional song-writing teams, who had an uncanny knack for dramatizing teen life; and elaborate, often majestically romantic production effects that made the mindramas unforgettable.

Pioneering in both of these new approaches was the team of Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. The duo had already introduced strings, Latin rhythms and complex percussion into a number of hits by the Drifters. When their lead singer, Ben E. King, left the group, Leiber and Stoller helped him create one of 1961's most emotional ballads, the stark and powerful **Stand by Me**. Often hanging out in the studio with Leiber and Stoller was a

young student of production, Phil Spector. In late 1961, Spector started his own Philles label and began an amazing string of girl-group hits distinguished by his orchestral "wall of sound."

The impact of producers was also felt in New Orleans, where Allen Toussaint assumed the studio chores for the new Minit and Instant labels. Toussaint played piano, wrote, arranged and produced Ernie K-Doe's No. 1 novelty hit, **Mother-in-Law**. K-Doe, who found the song in Toussaint's trashcan, says he was drawn to its caustic lyrics (e.g., "she was sent from down below") because he felt his own mother-in-law was causing his marital problems. Toussaint, who also produced Chris Kenner's smash **I Like It Like That**, became the central figure in the New Orleans music scene in the '60s and '70s.

In Norfolk, Virginia, producer Frank Guida used double bass drums and an overloaded tape deck to develop a distorted, booming sound perfectly suited to the wild party records he was making with a young rocker named Gary Anderson, better known as Gary "U.S." Bonds.

Quarter to Three was originally a failed instrumental called *A Night With Daddy G*. Bonds wrote some lyrics for it and, loosened up by a few jugs of wine, he and his friends created one of the greatest — and noisiest — dance records ever.

The dance craze was building in 1961 largely because of Chubby Checker and his *Pony Time*, *Let's Twist Again* and reissue of *The Twist*. The most famous twist club was New York City's Peppermint Lounge, immortalized by its house band, Joey Dee and the Starlites, when they took **Peppermint Twist** to the top of the charts. In 1964 the Starlites included three future members of the Young Rascals and in 1965 boasted a left-handed guitarist by the name of Jimi Hendrix. Although Dee seemed to have an eye for talent, during a 1963 tour of England he advised Beatles manager Brian Epstein that his group would never make it in America.

The Miracles



Dick and Dee Dee





While the dance fads and girl groups gave the early '60s a sound and look all its own, the doo-wop revival taking place, especially in the big cities, called the '50s back for an encore. In 1961, two doo-wop hits from the '50s, the Five Satins' *In the Still of the Night* and the Mello-Kings' *Tonite, Tonite*, reappeared on the pop charts. This was also the year the first "golden oldies" collections were issued, and in Los Angeles Little Caesar and the Romans apotheosized this wave of nostalgic yearning with **Those Oldies but Goodies**.

The year's most striking doo-wop hit came from the Marcells, a Pittsburgh quintet named after a popular hair style. When Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart wrote **Blue Moon** in 1934, they could hardly have imagined that it would reach mass popularity via the Marcells' absurd introduction of "ba-bomp-bompa-bomp, danga-dang-dang, dinga-dong-ding, blue moon." The Jive Five struck a more tragic note with their heartbreaking **My True Story**, based on lead singer Eugene Pitts's autobiographical tale of losing his high-school sweetheart to his best friend.

The most unusual doo-wop hit of 1961 belonged to a Brooklyn group, the Tokens. Lead singer Jay Siegal had an interest in the burgeoning folk music scene and was attracted to a South African Zulu folk song, *Wimoweh*, performed by both Miriam Makeba and the Weavers. The Tokens were so embarrassed by their version of the song, containing new words and a striking arrangement highlighted by Siegal's falsetto, that they didn't want it released. But their label, RCA, and the nation's teenagers disagreed and the song soared to No. 1 as **The Lion Sleeps Tonight**.

Charles Westover, a.k.a. Del Shannon, made the most exciting debut of the year with **Runaway**, which proved to be his only No. 1 hit. His follow-up, **Hats Off to Larry**, was another tension-packed smash that, like *Runaway*, featured a strange, piping solo by Max Crook's

musitron (a keyboard instrument that was a primitive precursor of the synthesizer). Dion DiMucci, who had left the Belmonts in 1960 for a solo career, also scored his only chart topper in 1961 with his tale of a foot-loose female, **Runaround Sue**.

Although Elvis Presley had some big songs in 1961, perhaps the best "Presley" hit of the year was **You Don't Know What You've Got**, performed by Elvis sound-alike Ral Donner. Elvis did star in the blockbuster movie *Blue Hawaii*, and its success led him into an eight-year procession of shallow musicals that drew him further and further away from rock 'n' roll. On March 25, Presley played a benefit concert at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. It was his last live concert performance until 1969 and marked the passing of an era. Rock 'n' roll was in the hands of a new generation.

— *Joe Sasfy*



The Marvelettes

DISCOGRAPHY

* Indicates highest Billboard chart position

1. **Runaway** (2:16) Del Shannon • *Music by Del Shannon and Max Crook, lyrics by Del Shannon. Original issue: Big Top 3967. Courtesy of Bug Records. No. 1**
2. **I Like It Like That** (1:55) Chris Kenner • *Music and lyrics by Allen Toussaint and Chris Kenner. Original issue: Instant 3229. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 2**
3. **Dedicated to the One I Love** (2:02) The Shirelles • *Music and lyrics by Ralph Bass and Louman Pauling. Original issue: Scepter 1203. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 3**
4. **Quarter to Three** (2:25) Gary "U.S." Bonds • *Music and lyrics by Roy Royster, Gene Barge, Gary Anderson and Frank Quidia. Original issue: Legrand 1008. Courtesy of Legrand Records International. No. 1**
5. **The Lion Sleeps Tonight** (2:35) The Tokens • *Music and lyrics by Solomon Linda, Paul Campbell, Hugo Peretti, Luigi Creatore, George Weiss and Albert Stanton. Original issue: RCA 47-7954. The Lion Sleeps Tonight by The Tokens courtesy of RCA/Ariola International. No. 1**
6. **There's a Moon Out Tonight** (2:10) The Capris • *Music and lyrics by Al Gentile, Al Striano and Joe Luccisano. Original issue: Old Town 1094. Courtesy of Old Town Record Corp. No. 3**
7. **Blue Moon** (2:15) The Marceles • *Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Lorenz Hart. Original issue: Colpix 186. Courtesy of Roulette Records, Inc. No. 1**
8. **Will You Love Me Tomorrow** (2:36) The Shirelles • *Music and lyrics by Gerry Goffin and Carole King. Original issue: Scepter 1211. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 1**
9. **Tassin' and Turnin'** (2:15) Bobby Lewis • *Music and lyrics by Matou Rene and Ritchie Adams. Original issue: Beltone 1002. Courtesy of Celebrity Licensing, Inc. No. 1**
10. **Shop Around** (2:40) The Miracles • *Music and lyrics by William Robinson and Berry Gordy Jr. Original issue: Tamla 54034. Courtesy of Motown Record Corporation. No. 2**
11. **My True Story** (2:29) The Jive Five • *Music and lyrics by Eugene Pitt, Oscar Waltzer and Phil Belmonte. Original issue: Beltone 1006. Courtesy of Celebrity Licensing, Inc. No. 3**
12. **Runaround Sue** (2:36) Dion • *Music and lyrics by Ernie Moresca and Dion DiMucci. Original issue: Laurie 3110. Released by arrangement with Laurie Productions, Inc. No. 1**
13. **Mother-in-Law** (2:24) Ernie K-Doe • *Music and lyrics by Allen Toussaint. Original issue: Minit 623. Courtesy of K-Tel International Inc. No. 1**
14. **Raindrops** (2:45) Dee Clark • *Music and lyrics by Dee Clark. Original issue: Yee-Jay 383. Courtesy of Yee-Jay Records. No. 2**
15. **Peppermint Twist** (2:00) Joey Dee and the Starliners • *Music and lyrics by Henry Glover and Joey Dee. Original issue: Roulette 4401. Courtesy of Roulette Records, Inc. No. 1**
16. **Hats Off to Larry** (1:56) Del Shannon • *Music and lyrics by Del Shannon. Original issue: Big Top 3075. Courtesy of Bug Records. No. 5**
17. **Those Oldies but Goodies** (3:23) Little Caesar and the Romans • *Music and lyrics by Nick Curingo and Paul Politi. Original issue: Del-Fi 4158. Courtesy of Rhino Records. No. 9**
18. **Please Mr. Postman** (2:23) The Marvelettes • *Music and lyrics by Brian Holland, Freddy C. Gorman, Georgia Dobbins, William Garrett and Robert Bateman. Original issue: Tamla 54946. Courtesy of Motown Record Corporation. No. 1**
19. **Stand by Me** (2:57) Ben E. King • *Music and lyrics by Ben E. King, Elmo Glick, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Original issue: Atco 6194. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 4**
20. **You Don't Know What You've Got** (2:09) Ral Donner • *Music and lyrics by George Burton and Paul Hampton. Original issue: Gone 5108. Courtesy of Roulette Records, Inc. No. 4**
21. **The Mountain's High** (2:12) Dick and Dee Dee • *Music and lyrics by Dick St. John. Original issue: Liberty 55350. Courtesy of EMI America Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 2**
22. **Daddy's Home** (2:56) Shep and the Limelites • *Music and lyrics by William Miller and James Sheppard. Original issue: Hull 740. Courtesy of Roulette Records, Inc. No. 2**

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NOTES INSIDE

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