

1961

STILL ROCKIN'



TIME  
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MUSIC

*The*  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
•ERA•

Digital Remaster

**1961 STILL ROCKIN'**

- 1. Who Put the Bomp** Barry Mann
- 2. School Is Out** Gary "U.S." Bonds
- 3. Let the Four Winds Blow** Fats Domino
- 4. Walk Right Back** The Everly Brothers
- 5. Look in My Eyes** The Chantels
- 6. Wheels** The String-a-Longs
- 7. Mama Said** The Shirelles
- 8. Little Egypt** The Coasters
- 9. A Little Bit of Soap** The Jarmels
- 10. Gypsy Woman** The Impressions
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- 16. Rama Lama Ding Dong** The Edsels
- 17. Last Night** The Mar-Keys
- 18. Barbara-Ann** The Regents
- 19. Ya Ya** Lee Dorsey
- 20. A Hundred Pounds of Clay** Gene McDaniels
- 21. Please Stay** The Drifters
- 22. I Love How You Love Me** The Paris Sisters

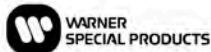
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OPCD-2547



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2RNR-18  
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COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

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*Bobby Vee*

## 1961: STILL ROCKIN'

Who put the bomp in the bomp-bomp-bomp-pa-bomp? Who put the ram in the rama-lama-ding-dong? These were musical questions particularly worthy of study in 1961. Just when it looked as if girl groups, teen idols and dance fads had taken over, doo-wop enjoyed one last flourish that year, yielding nearly two dozen top-20 hits. Suddenly, rock 'n' roll's instrument of choice was the human voice, and the airwaves came alive with a nonsensical stream of resonant di-dits, bomp-a-bomps, ding-dangs, shoo-by-dooos and doh-dohs.

To hold on to older rock 'n' roll fans, DJs spun more doo-wop classics from the '50s, and two of these, *I'll Remember (In the Still of the Night)* and *Tonight, Tonight*, reappeared on the charts in 1961. Little Caesar and the Romans rode this wave of nostalgia with *Those Oldies but Goodies*, as did Original Sound and Roulette Records, the two labels that issued the first oldies albums. The mania for vocal-group music in the New York City-New Jersey area created an a cappella movement. Groups such as the Zircons, the Chessmen, the Camelots and the Del-stars pursued the purest street-corner style of all — just voices, no instruments.

It was probably the bomp-heavy intro of the year's biggest doo-wop hit, *Blue Moon* by the Marcels, that inspired Barry Mann to write and sing his satirical **Who Put the Bomp**. That same great bass intro caught the ear of a New York DJ who remembered a similarly absurdist doo-wop release from 1958. He began playing it and, three years after the Edsels first recorded **Rama Lama Ding Dong** (titled *Lama Rama Ding Dong* on the original 45), the song became a hit.

*Blue Moon* characterized the exaggerated vocal stylings of early-'60s doo-wop, which pitted comic bass lines against high-flying falsettos. **Barbara-Ann**, by the Bronx quartet the Regents, and Curtis Lee's **Pretty Lit-**

**tle Angel Eyes** were two more examples. Lee was sharing sleeping space in his manager's living room with songwriter Tommy Boyce (who later penned a number of hits for the Monkees) when the two collaborated on *Pretty Little Angel Eyes*. The song's vibrant production mix of squawking sax, pounding drums and kinetic doo-wop backing (courtesy of the Halos) was the work of the 20-year-old Phil Spector.

Between his professional start in 1958 and the launching of the Philles label in late 1961, Spector honed his craft, writing and producing for a variety of artists. In contrast to the exuberant *Pretty Little Angel Eyes*, Spector also cracked the top 10 with the Paris Sisters' quiet **I Love How You Love Me**. Here he applied a soft blanket of strings to the harmonies of Priscilla, Sherrell and Albeth Paris, re-creating the breathy allure of his first hit, *To Know Him, Is to Love Him* by the Teddy Bears.

Another innovative producer, Bert Berns, used strings and a booming bass drum to add atmosphere to the Jarmels' one hit, **A Little Bit of Soap**. But the key figures in the metamorphosis of R & B to a more urbane sound were Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, the song-writing and production team for Atlantic Records. With the departure of Ben E. King from the Drifters, Leiber and Stoller enlisted Rudy Lewis as the new lead vocalist and continued the group's string of hits with *Some Kind of Wonderful* and **Please Stay**. Burt Bacharach's dramatic arrangement of his song *Please Stay* not only included elaborate percussion and strings, but also stacked an all-star chorus — Dee Dee and Dionne Warwick, Cissy Houston (Whitney's mother and Dionne's aunt) and Doris Troy — behind the Drifters' voices.

**Little Egypt**, Leiber and Stoller's last hit with the Coasters, hilariously applied Billy Guy's lascivious delivery to a lurid tale of an exotic dancer and her No. 1 fan.

The record might have done better, but some radio stations refused to air it because of its teasingly erotic lyrics. Gene McDaniels had a similar problem with **A Hundred Pounds of Clay**, only it was the song's religious references that made stations anxious. Nonetheless, his mellow baritone and Snuff Garrett's sleek pop production resulted in McDaniels' first and biggest hit.

Garrett visited New York City in early 1961 to get some songs for Bobby Vee, and returned to L.A. with a gem, **Take Good Care of My Baby** by Gerry Goffin and Carole King. It was a chart topper for Vee, a teen idol who often seemed to be an all too cute version of Buddy Holly, a connection with a historical basis. After the plane crash that killed Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper, it was a 15-year-old Vee (then Robert Velline) and his band, the Shadows, who replaced Holly at a Moorhead, Minnesota, concert. Vee later recorded a Holly tribute album and an LP with his group, the Crickets.

Standing apart from the orchestral sophistication of Spector and Leiber and Stoller was producer Frank Guida. In fact the raucous, distorted sound he patented with Gary "U.S." Bonds evoked nothing less than drunken chaos. Bonds wrote **School Is Out** with his sax player, Daddy G (Gene Barge), a teacher then celebrating the close of the school year. *School Is In*, their follow-up three months later, was predictably less well received by America's youth.

In New Orleans, ex-prizefighter Lee Dorsey got the idea for his first hit, **Ya Ya**, while relaxing on his front porch watching the neighborhood kids play. Dorsey recalled: "They were singing, 'Sittin' on the slop jar, waitin' for my bowels to move,' and it was catchy the way they were singing it. So that night I just jotted it down. 'Sittin' in la la, waitin' for my ya ya.' " Dorsey overdid a good thing by filling his debut album with songs drawn from children's games, including *Do-Re-Mi*, *Eenie Meenie Mini Mo*, *Yum Yum* and *Ixie Dixie Pixie Pie*.

*The Impressions, with lead vocalist Curtis Mayfield (center)*





The Chantels, the biggest girl group of the '50s, scored their highest chart hit in 1961 with **Look in My Eyes**. Though the quintet had lost its wailing lead singer, Arlene Smith, producer Richard Barrett managed to recreate the haunting atmosphere of their 1958 classic, *Maybe*. The Shirelles, who also started recording in the '50s, made a more successful transition to the '60s thanks to producer Luther Dixon's arrangements and such superlative teen-oriented material as **Mama Said**.

Although the Impressions began in the '50s as a street-corner-style harmony group, they became soul music pioneers in the '60s by drawing on their gospel roots and the creative powers of leader Curtis Mayfield. Mayfield was not only a gifted songwriter but also a fine guitarist and a unique vocalist, possessing a distinctive feathery falsetto. After debuting impressively in 1958 with *For Your Precious Love*, the Impressions failed to come up with another hit, and singer Jerry Butler left for a solo career. In 1961 Mayfield took over the lead vocals, and his flamenco-flavored fantasy, **Gypsy Woman**, brought them back into the top 20.

Gladys Knight and the Pips have outlasted just about every vocal group of the '50s. Formed in Atlanta in 1952, the Pips were a Knight family quartet of Gladys, her brother and two cousins. Though Knight was only eight years old, she had already won a \$2,000 prize on the *Ted Mack Amateur Hour*, singing Nat King Cole's *Too Young*. In 1961, the group actually competed with itself as two different versions of **Every Beat of My Heart** landed on the charts. Presented here is the more successful Vee-Jay recording.

Like Knight, Carla Thomas had spent nearly a decade in show business before waxing her first hit,  **Gee Whiz**. Thomas was 17 when her father, the legendary song-and-dance man Rufus Thomas, brought her in to record for a new Memphis label, Satellite Records. Though leased to Atlantic, *Gee Whiz* got Satellite off to a promising start,

and the company's hits continued with **Last Night**, a raunchy instrumental by the Mar-Keys. Eventually another company claimed rights to the Satellite name and the fledgling Memphis label became Stax Records.

The Mar-Keys were actually a studio aggregation that had grown out of the Royal Spades, a white Memphis band specializing in R & B. Within a year, the Mar-Keys split up and various members went on to form Booker T. and the MG's and the Memphis Horns, two groups that played on all Stax recordings throughout the '60s. With the funkiest studio band in the world now in place, it would only take the arrival in 1962 of a Little Richard imitator named Otis Redding to transform Stax into the home of Southern soul music.

— Joe Sasy



*The Paris Sisters*



## DISCOGRAPHY

\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. Who Put the Bomb** Barry Mann • *Music and lyrics by Barry Mann and Gerry Coffin. Original issue: ABC-Paramount 10237. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 7\**
- 2. School Is Out** Gary "U.S." Bonds • *Music and lyrics by Gary Anderson and Gene Barge. Original issue: Legrand 1009. Courtesy of Legrand Records International, No. 5\**
- 3. Let the Four Winds Blow** Fats Domino • *Music and lyrics by Antoine Domino and Dave Bartholomew. Original issue: Imperial 5764. Courtesy of EMI America, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 15\**
- 4. Walk Right Back** The Everly Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Sonny Curtis. Original issue: Warner Bros. 5199. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 7\**
- 5. Look in My Eyes** The Chantels • *Music and lyrics by Richard Barrett. Original issue: Carlton 555. Under license from PolyGram Special Projects, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 14\**
- 6. Wheels** The String-a-Longs • *Music by Jimmy Tonnes and Richard Stephens. Original issue: Wanzick 603. Courtesy of Dundee Music. No. 3\**
- 7. Mama Said** The Shirelles • *Music and lyrics by Luther Dixon and Willie Denson. Original issue: Scepter 1217. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 4\**
- 8. Little Egypt** The Coasters • *Music and lyrics by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. Original issue: Atco 6192. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 23\**
- 9. A Little Bit of Soap** The Jarmels • *Music and lyrics by Bert Russell. Original issue: Laurie 3098. Courtesy of 3C Records. No. 12\**
- 10. Gypsy Woman** The Impressions • *Music and lyrics by Curtis Mayfield. Original issue: ABC-Paramount 10241. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 20\**
- 11. This Time** Troy Shondell • *Music and lyrics by Chips Moman. Original issue: Liberty 55353. Courtesy of Dominion Entertainment, Inc. No. 6\**
- 12. Pretty Little Angel Eyes** Curtis Lee • *Music and lyrics by Tammy Boyce and Curtis Lee. Original issue: Dunes 2007. Courtesy of Janus Records. No. 7\**
- 13. Take Good Care of My Baby** Bobby Vee • *Music and lyrics by Gerry Coffin and Carole King. Original issue: Liberty 55354. Courtesy of EMI America, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1\**
- 14. Gee Whiz** Carla Thomas • *Music and lyrics by Carla Thomas. Original issue: Atlantic 2086. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 10\**
- 15. Every Beat of My Heart** The Pips • *Music and lyrics by Johnny Otis. Original issue: Vee-Jay 386. Courtesy of Vee-Jay Records. No. 6\**
- 16. Rama Lama Ding Dong** The Edsels • *Music and lyrics by George Jones. Original issue: Twin 700. Produced and licensed by James D. (Jimbo) Maderitz. No. 21\**
- 17. Last Night** The Mar-Keys • *Music by Charles Axton, Jerald Smith, Floyd Newman, Chips Moman and Gil Caple. Original issue: Satellite 107. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 3\**
- 18. Barbara-Ann** The Regents • *Music and lyrics by Fred Fasset. Original issue: Gee 1065. Produced under license from Roulette Records, a Division of ABZ Music Corp. No. 13\**
- 19. Ya Ya** Lee Dorsey • *Music and lyrics by Clarence Lewis, Lee Dorsey and Morris Levy. Original issue: Fury 1053. Under license from Arista Records, Inc. No. 7\**
- 20. A Hundred Pounds of Clay** Gene McDaniels • *Music and lyrics by Bob Elgin, Luther Dixon and Kay Rogers. Original issue: Liberty 55308. Courtesy of EMI America, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 3\**
- 21. Please Stay** The Drifters • *Music by Bart Bacharach, lyrics by Bob Hilliard. Original issue: Atlantic 2105. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 14\**
- 22. I Love How You Love Me** The Paris Sisters • *Music and lyrics by Barry Mann and Larry Kolber. Original issue: Gregmark 6. Courtesy of Gregmark Music. No. 5\**

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**Art Director:** Robin Bray  
**Associate Producer:** Brian Miller  
**Art Studio:** Nina Bridges  
**Production Director:** Fernando Pargas  
**Production Manager:** Karen Hill


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