

# THE '60s: LAST DANCE



TIME  
LIFE  
MUSIC

*The*  
**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
•ERA•

Digital Remaster

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- 1 **It Will Stand** The Showmen
- 2 **Needle in a Haystack** The Velvelettes
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**ROCK'N'ROLL**  
• ERA •

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COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-35  
OPCD-2573

TIME  
**LIFE**  
MUSIC

- 1 It Will Stand 2 Needle in a Haystack 3 I Don't Want to Cry 4 Stairway to Heaven 5 Johnny Get Angry 6 Every Breath I Take 7 Something's Got a Hold on Me 8 Pain in My Heart 9 The Nitty Gritty 10 Mission Bell 11 Til 12 Road Runner 13 Harlem Shuffle 14 It Might as Well Rain until September 15 Sweets for My Sweet 16 Rinky Dink 17 I Can't Stay Mad at You 18 Twist, Twist Senora 19 Drag City 20 Cradle of Love 21 Bobby's Girl 22 Tragedy

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*The Velvelettes, the first group signed to Motown that hailed from outside Detroit*

## THE '60s: LAST DANCE

Years before he created the Monkees and the Archies and pioneered late-night rock television with ABC's *Rock Concert*, Don Kirshner helped launch a whole era of rock 'n' roll through his song publishing firm, Aldon Music. During the early '60s, rock 'n' roll was dominated by what is now called "Brill Building pop," a term referring to a large body of hits that emanated from young songwriters employed by music companies on New York's Broadway between 49th and 53rd Streets. In 1962, the lobby directory of the Brill Building (the most famous location in the strip of music companies, at 1619 Broadway) contained no less than 165 music business listings.

In 1958, Kirshner and Al Nevins started Aldon Music, setting up shop across from the Brill Building. By 1962, Aldon employed 18 songwriters, including Carole King, Gerry Goffin, Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, Neil Diamond, Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield. These young Aldon writers (all were under the age of 25), along with Doc Pomus, Mort Shuman, Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich, created a constant stream of songs in the early '60s, successfully wedding the professional craft of the older Tin Pan Alley tradition to the needs and concerns of the teen-age rock 'n' roll audience.

Aldon's first important employees were two classmates from Brooklyn's Lincoln High School, Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield. In 1958, they walked into Aldon's offices with 12 original songs and auditioned them for an impressed Don Kirshner, who asked Sedaka, "Where did you steal those songs?" Kirshner quickly placed the duo's *Stupid Cupid* with an old friend, Connie Francis, who would benefit from many more Sedaka-Greenfield compositions. Unlike other Aldon writers, Sedaka proved to be the best interpreter of his own material, scoring seven top-10 records from 1959 to 1962, including *Stairway to Heaven*.

In late 1959, Aldon signed the song-writing team of

Carole King and Gerry Goffin, and they quickly began churning out songs, including chart toppers such as the Shirelles' *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and Bobby Vee's *Take Good Care of My Baby*. When Gene Pitney's manager, Aaron Schroeder, went looking for a hit for his singer in 1961, he turned to the hottest writers in the business, Goffin-King, and to a hot young producer, Phil Spector. Spector spent a then unheard-of \$14,000 producing Goffin-King's **Every Breath I Take** for Pitney. Though the record didn't do that well commercially, it anticipated the dense "wall of sound" Spector would soon construct for the Crystals and the Ronettes.

Along with its song publishing activities, Aldon Music owned several record labels, most notably Dimension, which released hits by Little Eva and the Cookies. Though Carole King had no interest in a singing career in the early '60s, she did score a hit when Bobby Vee delayed recording **It Might as Well Rain until September** and Kirshner released King's demo on Dimension. King's talents were also employed as part of Aldon's independent production services. Her arrangement of Chuck Jackson's first Wand release, **I Don't Want to Cry**, was indebted to Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller's sophisticated productions for the Drifters.

No group made greater use of the Brill Building school of tunesmiths than the Drifters. The group's '60s recordings were largely composed by the teams of Goffin-King, Mann-Weil, and especially Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman (*This Magic Moment*, *Save the Last Dance for Me*, *I Count the Tears*, and *Sweets for My Sweet*). *Sweets for My Sweet* came from the Drifters' first session after Ben E. King left the group; it features Charlie Thomas on lead vocals and Doc Pomus on piano. The song was later covered by the Searchers, from Liverpool.



By 1963, Goffin-King compositions were in considerable demand, so it wasn't that remarkable that their **I Can't Stay Mad at You** ended up in the hands of a country star, Skeeter Davis. Davis had already crossed over to the pop market with *The End of the World*, and both she and producer Chet Atkins were anxious to pursue a teen-age audience. Atkins planned on using the Anita Kerr Singers to provide the typically soft "Nashville Sound" backup vocals. However, Davis insisted they sounded too "white," and two black vocalists from Fisk University were brought in to create a more authentic girl-group sound, helping Davis achieve her second and last pop smash.

Davis' *I Can't Stay Mad at You* was part of the early '60s boom in devotional tributes to boys. Following in the footsteps of ex-Mousketeer, Annette Funicello, a host of starry-eyed, white songstresses emerged, including the Angels (**Til**), Patti Duke, Little Peggy March, Linda Scott, Lesley Gore, Diane Renay and Marcie Blane. Songwriters Hank Hoffman and Gary Klein picked Blane from their Queens neighborhood to sing a demo of their **Bobby's Girl**, and Seville Records decided to take the song and Blane. Despite the song's popularity, Blane proved a reluctant star, retiring from show business at age 20.

One of the more memorable exercises in white female angst was Joanie Sommers' provocative **Johnny Get Angry**. Signed to Warner Brothers in 1959, Sommers replaced Connie Stevens as Edd "Kookie" Byrnes' singing partner and appeared in numerous episodes of *77 Sunset Strip*. During the '60s, Sommers' jingles for Pepsi-Cola were ubiquitous on radio and television. Since most of her

*Country singer Skeeter Davis crossed over to the pop charts with a devotional tribute to boys.*

recordings were adult-oriented, the decidedly teen-age *Johnny Get Angry* proved her only major hit, and like Dion's *Little Diane*, offered a riveting kazoo solo.

A more realistic view of the opposite sex was presented in **Needle in a Haystack** by the Velvelettes, the first group signed to Motown that hailed from outside Detroit.



*Bob and Earl*

Formed at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, the Velvelettes were discovered by fellow student Bob Bullock, the nephew of Motown head, Berry Gordy Jr. Produced and coauthored by Norman Whitfield, *Needle in a Haystack* provided a female perspective not unlike that in Whitfield's

song for the Marvelettes, *Too Many Fish in the Sea*.

A world apart from the sound of these female groups and singers was Etta James, the powerful R & B belter who first achieved success in 1955 with *The Wallflower*, an answer record to the Midnighters' *Work with Me Annie*. In 1959, James signed with Chess Records and began a string of hits, many of which reflected her unrequited love for Harvey Fuqua, lead singer of the Moonglows and A & R man for Chess. **Something's Got a Hold on Me** was a thinly disguised rewrite of a gospel song of the same name, but where a gospel chorus sang "it must be the Lord," Etta offered "it must be love."

In the early '60s, the influence of gospel music became apparent in records by artists such as Etta James, James Brown, Sam Cooke and Otis Redding. One of the most outstanding examples of Redding's ballad style was his third Volt single, **Pain in My Heart**, a song originally credited to Redding. The song, however, was so closely patterned on Irma Thomas' release, *Ruler of My Heart*, that Redding was sued, resulting in a reassignment of writing credits to Allen Toussaint (under his mother's name, Naomi Neville), the composer of *Ruler of My Heart*.

The R & B records of the early '60s were a major inspiration for many young rock bands just forming in England, such as the Animals and the Rolling Stones. In 1964 the Stones covered Redding's *Pain in My Heart* and recorded hit versions of the Valentinos' *It's All Over Now* and Irma Thomas' *Time Is on My Side*. However, their most successful cover record came in 1986 when they revived Bob and Earl's 1964 dance classic, **Harlem Shuffle**. Earl Nelson was the lead singer on the Hollywood Flames' 1957 *Buzz-Buzz-Buzz*, and he surfaced again in 1965 as Jackie Lee with a hit called *The Duck*.

Throughout its history, rock 'n' roll has celebrated itself in hundreds of songs, including such classics as Chuck Berry's *Rock and Roll Music*, the Lovin' Spoonful's *Do You Believe in Magic?* and Bob Seger's *Old Time Rock and Roll*.

Less well-known, but equally stirring, is the Showmen's **It Will Stand**, recorded for New Orleans' Minit label in 1961. Hailing from Norfolk, Virginia, the group changed its name from the Humdingers to the Showmen while en route to New Orleans. In 1968, lead vocalist General Norman Johnson left the Showmen to start the Chairmen of the Board, whose biggest record was *Give Me Just a Little More Time* in 1970. By the late '80s, new versions of both the Showmen and the Chairmen of the Board (with Johnson) were still performing regularly on the beach music circuit in the Carolinas, real proof that *It Will Stand* was no joke.

— Joe Sasfy

*Chuck Jackson*





## DISCOGRAPHY

\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. It Will Stand** The Showmen • Music and lyrics by Norman Johnson. SBK Unart Catalog Inc. BMI, Minit 632 (1961). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 61\*
- 2. Needle in a Haystack** The Velvelettes • Music and lyrics by William Stevenson and Norman Whitfield. Stone Agate Music Division, BMI V.I.P. 25007 (1964). Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P. No. 45\*
- 3. I Don't Want to Cry** Chuck Jackson • Music and lyrics by Luther Dixon and Charles Jackson. Ladd Publishing Co., Inc. BMI, Wand 106 (1961). Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 36\*
- 4. Stairway to Heaven** Neil Sedaka • Music by Neil Sedaka, lyrics by Houder Greenfield. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI, RCA 7709 (1960). Courtesy of RCA Records, a label of BMG Music. No. 9\*
- 5. Johnny Get Angry** Joanie Sommers • Music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards and Hal David. Tod Music, Inc. ASCAP/Warner Bros. 5275 (1962). Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 7\*
- 6. Every Breath I Take** Gene Pitney • Music and lyrics by Gerry Goffin and Carole King. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI, Musicor 1011 (1961). Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 42\*
- 7. Something's Got a Hold on Me** Etta James • Music and lyrics by Pearl Woods, Leroy Kirkland and Etta James. Longitude Music. BMI, Argo 5409 (1962). Courtesy of Chess/MCA Records. Inc. No. 37\*
- 8. Pain in My Heart** Otis Redding • Music and lyrics by Naomi Neville and Allen Toussaint. Arc Music Corp. BMI, Volt 112 (1963). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 61\*
- 9. The Nitty Gritty** Shirley Ellis • Music and lyrics by Lincoln Chase. Al Gallico Music Corp. BMI, Congress 202 (1963). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 8\*
- 10. Mission Bell** Donnie Brooks • Music and lyrics by William Michael and Jesse Hodges. Bamboo Music Inc. adm. by Music of the World. BMI, Em 3018 (1960). Courtesy of Dominion Entertainment, Inc. No. 7\*
- 11. Til** The Angels • Music and lyrics by Carl Sigman, Pierre Burissou and Charles Sansane. Chappell and Co. ASCAP, Caprice 107 (1961). Courtesy of Gerry Granahan c/o Original Sound Entertainment. No. 14\*
- 12. Road Runner** Bo Diddley • Music and lyrics by Elias McDaniel.

Arc Music Corp. BMI, Checker 942 (1960). Courtesy of Chess/MCA Records, Inc. No. 75\*

- 13. Harlem Shuffle** Bob and Earl • Music and lyrics by Bob Reff and Earl Lee Nelson. Keyman Music/Marc-Jean Music Publ. BMI, Marc 104 (1964). Courtesy of Janus Records. No. 44\*
- 14. It Might as Well Rain until September** Carole King • Music and lyrics by Gerry Goffin and Carole King. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI, Dimension 2000 (1962). Courtesy of Emus Records Corp. No. 22\*
- 15. Sweets for My Sweet** The Drifters • Music and lyrics by Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman. Trio Music Co., Inc./Unichappell Music, Inc. BMI, Atlantic 2117 (1961). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 16\*
- 16. Rinky Dink** Dave "Baby" Cortez • Music and lyrics by David Clouney and Paul Winley. Embassy Music Corp. BMI, Chess 1829 (1962). Courtesy of Chess/MCA Records, Inc. No. 10\*
- 17. I Can't Stay Mad at You** Skeeter Davis • Music and lyrics by Carole King and Gerry Goffin. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI, RCA 8219 (1963). Courtesy of RCA Records, a label of BMG Music. No. 7\*
- 18. Twist, Twist Senora** Gary "U.S." Bonds • Music and lyrics by Frank Guida, Gene Barge and Joseph Royster. Rockmasters Int'l. Network. BMI, Legrand 1018 (1962). Courtesy of Legrand Records International. No. 9\*
- 19. Drag City** Jan and Dean • Music and lyrics by Roger Christian, Jan Berry and Brian Wilson. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI, Liberty 55641 (1963). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 10\*
- 20. Cradle of Love** Johnny Preston • Music and lyrics by Jack Fauthere and Wayne Gray. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc./Unichappell Music Inc./Tree Publishing Co., Inc./Songs of PolyGram Int'l, Inc./Alley Music Corp. BMI, Mercury 71598 (1960). Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 7\*
- 21. Bobby's Girl** Marcie Blane • Music and lyrics by Gary Klein and Henry Hultman. American Metropolitan Enterprises of New York Inc. BMI, Seville 120 (1962). Courtesy of President Records. No. 3\*
- 22. Tragedy** The Fleetwoods • Music and lyrics by Gerald H. Nelson and Fred B. Burch. McCartney Music Inc. BMI, Dolton 40 (1961). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 10\*

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NOTES INSIDE

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**Associate Producer:** Robert Hull  
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**The '60s: Last Dance** was produced by Time-Life Music in cooperation with Warner Special Products. Digitally remastered at Hit and Run Studios, Rockville, Md.

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