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Soft rock in the psychedelic era emanated primarily from two places: England, where the music hall tradition was still strong enough to temper rock's big beat, and Los Anaeles, where the recording industry (which generally sought to soften everything if it would increase commercial appeal) was based. In Southern California, folk-rock and soft rock were often virtually indistinguishable. Los Angeles filled up with sentimental former folkies who had fled the harsh weather and hostile social environment of New York City; in the wake of Bob Dylan and the Beatles, many of them plugged in and went electric. The story of how the Mamas and the Papas came together is archetypal.

John and Michelle Phillips had been members of the Journeymen in Greenwich Village. Denny Doherty was part of the Halifax Three, then the Big Three with Cass Elliot. Those two later formed the electrified-folkie Mugwumps. Denny joined John and Michelle in the New Journeymen, and the three of them went to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands to woodshed. They were soon joined by Cass, who took a job as a waitress. Cass then moved to California with her husband, and when the New Journeymen followed, she formally joined the group.

The four singers were cutting backup vocals for their friend Barry McGuire, a former New Christy Minstrel, when their smooth, soaring harmonies caught the ear of Lou Adler, McGuire's producer and record company president. Adler signed the guartet, which settled on the name the Mamas and the Papas (using biker slang) after briefly considering the Magic Circle. One of the songs McGuire cut was California Dreamin', which John had written after he and Michelle went for a restless walk in New York the winter before going to the Virgin Islands. Adler decided to erase McGuire's vocals and had the Mamas and the Papas sing over the old band track, and a hit was born.

There was staggering variety in Hollywood pop music in 1966. The Beach Boys had been around L.A. for most of the decade, and leader Brian Wilson had grown increasingly unstable as he struggled to match the Beatles and Phil Spector in broadening the production boundaries of his recordings. **Good Vibrations**, by far his biggest volley yet, was put together during 17 sessions in four studios over six months. The song wound up consuming some 90 hours of tape and costing a thenunprecedented \$16,000. Good *Vibrations* featured the theremin, an eerie-sounding instrument first heard in the 1945 movie Spellbound.

Brian had remembered the hook phrase "I'm pickin' up good vibrations" from childhood conversations in which his mom told him of invisible vibrations, or feelings, between people, a concept that scared him considerably. Bandmate Mike Love took Brian's line and turned it into a set of lyrics that traded on what quickly became one of the hippest catchphrases of the day.

Many of the top L.A. singles were marvels of production in which the artists seemed almost superfluous except as pretty voices. Curt Boettcher produced the Association, who scored with Along Comes Mary in 1966 and then settled into a series of ballads along the lines of **Cherish.** The group's Terry Kirkman had jotted the title word down on a piece of paper he carried around for three weeks before he finally wrote the song. The New Christy Minstrels performed Cherish live for months before the Association recorded it. Only two members of the Association even played on the session, suggesting again the dominance of the producer and his hired sidemen.

Gary Lewis, the son of comedian Jerry Lewis, headed up the Playboys, but **She's Just My Style**, like all their hits, was actually equal parts Lewis, producer Snuff Garrett and arranger Leon Russell. Cher's **Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)** was her first "solo" million seller, though the only thing that really distinguished it from the records she made with husbandproducer Sonny Bono was the absence of his voice.

The Monkees, of course, were the



ultimate example of producer's clay. They were put together from auditions of about 500 hopefuls in the fall of 1965 for a television series designed to exploit the Beatles' flick A Hard Day's Night. The band was run by a coalition of TV and music-biz execs. most prominently Don Kirshner of Screen Gems. They launched the aroup's career in September 1966. when the first Monkees episode aired and last Train to Clarksville turned into a No. 1 hit. When Kirshner wanted an even bigger follow-up, he went to his producer friend Jeff Barry, who got I'm a Bellever from his friend Neil Diamond, at that time a Village coffeehouse singer with Tin Pan Alley leanings. As always, the Monkees merely sang, with session men playing the instruments: but advance orders on the single exceeded one million.

Producer Phil Spector was the brains behind the Righteous Brothers; after their You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin' was the sensation of 1964-1965, he commissioned the song's writers, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, to pen another hit. But they thought their (You're My) Soul and Inspiration was so derivative that they didn't even bother to finish it. By 1966, Spector had lost interest in Bill Medley and Bobby Haffield and sold the duo's contract to MGM for one million dollars so he could concentrate on Ike and Tina Turner. Medley himself then got Mann and Weil to polish off Soul and Inspiration. Ironically, having no real track record as a producer, Medley came closer than anyone ever had to duplicating the elusive Spector sound.

Petula Clark had been a child movie star in England in the mid-'40s and a hit recording artist on the Continent from the '50s. But she didn't crack American charts until 1965. Her producer, Tony Hatch, wrote **My Love** for her as they flew across the Atlantic for her first-ever American sessions. She hated the song but recorded it anyhow, then tried to stop its release. Lucky for her, she failed. The Seekers were an Australian group who sang two different sets of lyrics over open-



ing and closing credits to a black comedy set in swinging London called **Georgy Girl.** The two pieces of tape were later edited together to create a song that was nominated for an Oscar.

The Lovin' Spoonful was made up of New York folkies who declined to go west. Leaders John Sebastian and Zal Yanovsky had even been in the Mugwumps with Cass and Denny before forming this rock band, named after a phrase in bluesman Mississippi John Hurt's Coffee Blues. **Daydream** offers a prime slice of their good-timey, electrified jug-band sound.

Dionne Warwick's **Message to Michael,** part of a long string of hits written and produced by Hal David and Burt Bacharach, was black pop at its finest. Both Lou Johnson and Adam Faith had previously recorded the song as Message to Martha (Kentucky Bluebird). The Supremes' **You Can't Hurry Love** was an attempt by the fabled Holland-Dozier-Holland team to clone the girl trio's 1964 Come See about Me. Percy Sledge and collaborators had worked and reworked **When a Man** Loves a Woman for months before cutting a final version that was leased by Jerry Wexler at Atlantic. Because the performance was out of tune, Wexler sent the artists back into the studio one more time—and then released the original version accidentally. When it quickly became the standard by which all deep soul ballads would be judged, the crew let him in on his "mistake."

Bobby Hebb, a Nashville native with a country song-writing background, penned **Sunny** both in tribute to his brother Hal, who was killed by a mugger in 1963, and with the recent assassination of President Kennedy in mind. Unable to sell *Sunny* to another artist, he cut it as filler at the end of his own album session. When it shot to No. 2 on the charts, *Sunny* proved that black artists, contrary to popular image, knew their way around folk-rock as well as anyone else.

-John Morthland



DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

 California Dreamin' The Mamas and the Papas • Music and lyrics by John E. A. Phillips and Michelle Phillips. MCA Music Publ., a Division of MCA, Inc. ASCAP. Dunhill 4020. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 4*

2. Good Vibrations The Beach Boys • Music by Brian Wilson, lyrics by Brian Wilson and Mike Love. Irving Music Inc. BMI. Capitol 5676. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 1*

3. Sunny Bobby Hebb • Music and lyrics by Bobby Hebb. Portable Music Co., Inc./Unichappell Music Inc. BMI. Philips 40365. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 2*

4. Daydream The Lovin' Spoonful • Music and lyrics by John B. Sebastian. Alley Music Corp./Trio Music Co., Inc. BMI. Kama Sutra 208. Courtesy of Buddah Records, a Division of Essex Entertainment, Inc. No. 2*

5. Elusive Butterfly Bob Lind • Music and lyrics by Bob Lind. EMI-Unart Catalog, BMI. World Pacific 77808. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 5*

6. You Don't Have to Say You Love Me Dusty Springfield • Music by Pino Donaggio. English lyrics by Vicki Wickham and Simon Napier.Bell. EMI Miller Catalog Inc. ASCAP. Philips 40371. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 4*

7. A Groovy Kind of Love The Mindbenders • Music and lyrics by Toni Wine and Carole Bayer. Screen Gems-EMI Music Co., Inc. BMI. Fontana 1541. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 2*

8. Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down) Cher • Music and lyrics by Sonny Bono. Chris-Marc/Cotillion Music, Inc. BMI. Imperial 66160. Courtesy of EMI-USA, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 2*

9. See You in September The Happenings • Music by Sherman Edwards, lyrics by Sid Wayne. Laurie Productions, Inc. ASCAP. B.T. Puppy 520. Under license from Rhino Records, Inc., by arrangement with Butterfly Enfertainment Corp. No. 3*

10. Message to Michael Dionne Warwick • Music and lyrics by Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Blue Seas Music, Inc. IJAC Music Co., Inc. / Nibbor Music Co./U.S. Songs Inc. ASCAP. Scepter 12133. Courtesy of Blue Seas Music, Inc. IJAC Music Co., Inc. / Dionne Warwick. No. 8*

11. When a Man Loves a Woman Percy Sledge • Music and Iprics by Calvin H. Lewis and Andrew Wright. Pronto Music Inc. (Quinvy Music Publ. BMI. Atlantic 2326. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 1*

12. You Can't Hurry Love The Supremes • Music and lyrics by Brian Holland, Lamoni Dozier and Edward Holland Jr. Stone Agate Music. BMI. Motown 1097. Courtesy of Motown Record Company. LP. No. 1*

13. I'm a Believer The Monkees • Music and lyrics by Neil Diamond. Screen Gems-EMI Music Co., Inc. BMI. Colgems 1002. Courtesy of Arista Records, Inc. No. 1*

14. Sweet Talkin' Guy The Chiffons • Music and lyrics by Doug Morris. Elliof Greenberg, Barbara Baer and Robert Schwartz. Screen Gems-EMI Music Co., Inc./Northvale Music. BMI. Laurie 3340. Released by arrangement with 3C Records. No. 10'

15. Cherish The Association • Music and lyrics by Terry Kirkman. Beechwood Music Corp. BMI. Valiant 747. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1*



16. She's Just My Style Gary Lewis and the Playboys -Music and lyrics by Gary Lewis, Leon Russell, Thomas Lessile and Al Capps. Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. Liberty 55846. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 3*

17. You Didn't Have to Be So Nice The Lovin' Spoonful -Music and lyrics by John Sebastian and Steve Boone. Alley Music Corp./Trio Music Co., Inc. BMI. Kama Sutra 205. Courtesy of Buddah Records, a Division of Essex Entertainment, Inc. No. 10*

18. Georgy Girl The Seekers • Music by Tom Springfield, lyrics by Jim Dale. Warner-Chappell & Co., Inc. ASCAP. Capitol 5756. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 2*

19. Winchester Cathedral The New Vaudeville Band • Music and lyrics by Geoff Stephens. Meteor Music Publ. Co. Ltd. (PRS) Fontana 1562. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1*

20. My Love Petula Clark • Music and lyrics by Tony Harch. Welbeck Music/Duchess Music/AVV Music. BMI. Warner Bros. 5684. Recording issued under license from Castle Communications PLC. No. 4*

21. (You're My) Soul and Inspiration The Righteous Brothers • Music and lyrics by Barry Mann and Cynthia Well. Screen Gems-EMI Music, Inc. BMI. Verve 10383. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1*

22. I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry B. J. Thomas and the Triumphs • Music and lyrics by Hank Williams. Acuff-Rose Music Co./Hiriam Music. BMI. Scepter 12129. Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 8*



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