



SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES  
1971

TIME  
LIFE  
MUSIC

# SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • 1971

- 1 **What's Going On** Marvin Gaye
- 2 **Eighteen** Alice Cooper
- 3 **Tired of Being Alone** Al Green
- 4 **(I Know) I'm Losing You** Rod Stewart
- 5 **How Can You Mend a Broken Heart** The Bee Gees
- 6 **Oye Como Va** Santana
- 7 **Wild Night** Van Morrison
- 8 **Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)** The Temptations
- 9 **Love the One You're With** Stephen Stills
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In the late '60s, Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix changed the face of black popular music. Hendrix established the guitar as a lead instrument. He improvised solos like a blues or jazz player as well as yoked feedback and other elements of psychedelia to black idioms. Jimi's success was reflected primarily on the pop charts, although the black audience did relate to his music. Sly's polyrhythmic, contrapuntal soul music—with rhythm instruments taking leads and lead instruments playing rhythm—made it onto both the pop and soul charts and was even more influential than Hendrix's brand of soul. By 1971, their influences were fully absorbed into the black mainstream.

Ironically, 1971 was also the year of Sly's last real triumph. He was struggling with escalating drug use while also fighting gallantly to reconcile his status as a



counterculture icon with his street sense. Sly was feeling more allied to the increasing disillusionment and militance of the black community. *There's a Riot Goin' On*, his first album in 18 months,

was druggy, depressed and defiant; and it alienated many of his fans, particularly whites. But its first single, **Family Affair**,

was a gem. Clearly the song spoke to Sly's need to close ranks with the people he trusted, especially his band, the Family Stone. But Sly, contrary as ever, insisted the song had broader implications, which the pundits were missing. "Song's about a family affair, whether it's a result of genetic processes or a situation in the environment," he flatly declared.

The changes in black music were well established by the time they were adapted by Motown, the most mainstream and conservative force in black pop. At Motown, the impetus for change

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came from Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye, who released landmark albums at about the same time. Both produced themselves, which was new for Motown. Both artists wrote most of their own songs and deviated considerably from the classic Motown sound. Wonder's *Where I'm Coming From* was released first, but Gaye's **What's Going On** attracted the most attention.

*What's Going On* was a "song cycle," or concept album, which used recent production innovations to expand the song form rhythmically, melodically and thematically. With its Latin beats and soft soul sound, the LP was almost mood music, except that it concerned the everyday frustrations of life in the decaying and increasingly ignored black ghetto.

Gaye claimed he stumbled onto the idea for the song while jiving around his house with some golfing buddies. But the song actually originated one afternoon when Motown staff writer Al Cleveland visited the home of Four Tops member Renauldo "Obie" Benson. As they discussed world problems, Benson absent-mindedly improvised a soft, troubled figure on acoustic guitar that seemed to

echo their conversation. Cleveland provided the final touch three weeks later when he came up with the title phrase as he sat in his car looking out over Lake Michigan in Detroit.

The classic sound of Motown was holding up pretty well, too. The Jackson 5 typified contemporary Motown with the clamorous **Never Can Say Goodbye**, while the Temptations hearkened back to the mid-'60s with the aching ballad **Just My Imagination**. It was not merely nostalgia that led them in that direction.

The Temptations had been singing topical material for two years, but their most recent single, *Ungena Za Ulimwengu* (*Unite the World*), was the first since 1964 to miss the top 30. So producer Norman Whitfield asked co-writer Barrett Strong to flesh out the year-old idea behind *Just My Imagination*; then he assigned the lead to tenor Eddie Kendricks, who had sung lead on the Temptations' very first hit. Although the strategy worked, both Kendricks and Paul Williams had left the group to pursue solo careers by the time this ethereal fantasy about an unattainable woman reached No. 1..

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Looser, earthier and more country than the Motown sound was Al Green's brand of Southern soul, produced by Willie Mitchell in Memphis. Mitchell and Green had been working together for two years, their gospel-based work characterized by muted strings and sophisticated melodies, but **Tired of Being Alone** was the first song written by Green to chart. His vulnerable, sexually ambivalent persona pointed the way toward a new kind of soul man.

Bill Withers, an aerospace industry mechanic, developed an insinuating brand of soul-folk with **Ain't No Sunshine**. And Ike and Tina Turner, their hipness established for the white crowd after they opened on the Rolling Stones' tour in 1969, transformed Creedence Clearwater Revival's bar standard, **Proud Mary**, into churning blues-rock. Perhaps Ike's early days as a Mississippi Delta band-leader and talent scout gave him a special affinity for the song. Creedence's leader and the song's author, John Fogerty, had meant for it to be about a washerwoman; but the chords he played as he started making up words reminded him of a paddle wheel, which in turn re-

mind him of a riverboat chugging down the Mississippi.

Rod Stewart's **(I Know) I'm Losing You**, originally recorded by the Temptations, was one of the first of a deluge of white covers of Motown songs. But it was his **Maggie May**, a tale of a young man and the big-hearted older woman who introduced him to the ways of the world, that kicked Stewart's solo career into high gear (and in so doing hastened the demise of the Faces, the rock band he also fronted during this period).

The experimental wing of rock held its own. Santana translated salsa artist Tito Puente's **Oye Como Va** for the hip audience. Lee Michaels, a former cocktail-lounge pianist, thrilled rock ballroom audiences with his overamplified Hammond organ in **Do You Know What I Mean**. And the Grateful Dead's **Truckin'** was nothing less than the-story-so-far of San Francisco's psychedelic avatars.

But the virtues of the standard pop song and AM radio were also being reasserted. Elton John, one of the year's biggest new pop stars, inadvertently found his lyricist, Bernie Taupin, when both failed auditions with Liberty Records in

London. The talent scout, who liked nothing about Reginald Dwight (Elton's real name) except his piano melodies and nothing about Taupin except his lyrics, suggested that the two start working together. So they did, after a fashion. Taupin wrote lovey-dovey lyrics and sent them to Elton, who put them to middle-of-the-road music. They did this for two years without ever meeting. Then in 1968, their publisher told them to start writing more rock-oriented material for Elton to perform. After success with an album and several singles in England, Elton finally broke into the American charts with **Your Song**.

James Taylor's **You've Got a Friend** was written by Carole King, a brilliant songwriter of the Brill Building era who in 1970, after years of false starts, launched a singing career of her own. Her second album, *Tapestry*, which contains her version of Taylor's hit, moved 15 million units to become the best-selling album up to that point in history. King toured in 1971 as Taylor's opening act.

Another songwriter, Hoyt Axton, had similar success with Three Dog Night. Axton wrote **Joy to the World** as part of

the sound track to *The Happy Song*, an animated television special that never went into production. He then took the song to Three Dog Night, and although he hated their version, it proved the popular group's biggest-selling single.

The Bee Gees—brothers Robin, Maurice and Barry Gibb—had been working together in Australia and England since 1956 when Robin quit in a tiff in 1969.

**How Can You Mend a Broken Heart** was pulled from *Two Years On*, the first album they recorded after his return, and it became the group's first No. 1 single.

—John Morthland

## DISCOGRAPHY

*\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position.*

**1. What's Going On** Marvin Gaye • Music and lyrics by Al Cleveland, Marvin Gaye and Renaldo Benson. Jobete Music Co., Inc. ASCAP/Stone Gate Music. BMI. Tamla 54201. Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P. No. 2\*

**2. Eighteen** Alice Cooper • Music and lyrics by Alice Cooper, Glen Buxton, Dennis Dunaway, Neal Smith and Michael Bruce. Bizarre Music Co./Allive Enterprises Inc. BMI. Warner 7449. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 21\*

**3. Tired of Being Alone** Al Green • Music and lyrics by Al Green. Irving Music Inc. BMI. Hi 2194. Courtesy of Cream/Hi Records. No. 11\*

**4. (I Know) I'm Losing You** Rod Stewart • Music and lyrics by Cornelius Grant, Norman Whitfield and Eddie Holland. Stone Gate Music. BMI. Mercury 73244. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 24\*

**5. How Can You Mend a Broken Heart** The Bee Gees • Music and lyrics by Barry Gibb and Robin Gibb. Gibb Brothers Music. BMI. Atco 6824. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1\*

**6. Oye Como Va** Santana • Music and lyrics by Tito Puente. Full Keel Music Co. ASCAP. Columbia 45330. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Inc. No. 13\*

**7. Wild Night** Van Morrison • Music and lyrics by Van Morrison. WB Music Corp./Caledonia Produc-

tions Inc. ASCAP. Warner 7518. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 28\*

**8. Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)** The Temptations • Music and lyrics by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong. Stone Gate Music. BMI. Gordy 7105. Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P. No. 1\*

**9. Love the One You're With** Stephen Stills • Music and lyrics by Stephen Stills. Gold Hill Music Inc. ASCAP. Atlantic 2778. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 14\*

**10. Your Song** Elton John • Music and lyrics by Elton John and Bernie Taupin. Dick James Music Inc. BMI. Uni 55265. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 8\*

**11. Ain't No Sunshine** Bill Withers • Music and lyrics by Bill Withers. Interior Music Corp. BMI. Sussex 219. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Inc. No. 3\*

**12. Proud Mary** Ike and Tina Turner • Music and lyrics by John C. Fogerty. Jondara Music. BMI. Liberty 56216. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from Capitol Special Markets. No. 4\*

**13. You've Got a Friend** James Taylor • Music and lyrics by Carole King. Colgems-EMI Music Inc. ASCAP. Warner 7498. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1\*

**14. Maggie May** Rod Stewart • Music and lyrics by Rod Stewart and Martin Quittenton. MRC Music Inc. BMI/HG Music Inc. ASCAP. Mercury 73224. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1\*



**15. Do You Know What I Mean** Lee Michaels • *Music and lyrics by Lee Michaels. La Brea Music/Sattwa Music. ASCAP. A&M 1262. Courtesy of A&M Records, Inc. No. 6\**

**16. Never Can Say Goodbye** The Jackson 5 • *Music and lyrics by Clifton Davis. Portable Music Co., Inc. BMI/Jobete Music Co., Inc. ASCAP. Motown 1179. Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P. No. 2\**

**17. If You Could Read My Mind** Gordon Lightfoot • *Music and lyrics by Gordon Lightfoot. Early Morning Music. ASCAP. Reprise 0974. © 1972 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Originally recorded 1970. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 5\**

**18. Truckin'** The Grateful Dead • *Music and lyrics by Robert Hunter, Jerry Garcia, Philip Lesh, Bob Weir and Billy Kreutzman. Ice Nine Publishing Co., Inc. ASCAP. Warner 7464. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 64\**

**19. Joy to the World** Three Dog Night • *Music and lyrics by Hoyt Axton. Lady Jane Music. BMI. Dunhill 4272. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 1\**

**20. Family Affair** Sly and the Family Stone • *Music and lyrics by Sylvester Stewart. Mijac Music. BMI. Epic 10805. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Inc. No. 1\**

**21. Have You Ever Seen the Rain** Creedence Clearwater Revival • *Music and lyrics by John C. Fogerty. Jondara Music. BMI, Fantasy 655. Courtesy of Fantasy Records. No. 8\**



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1971 was produced by Time-Life Music in cooperation with Warner Special Products. Digitally remastered at K-Disc, Hollywood, Calif.; Ken Perry, engineer.

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Time-Life wishes to thank William L. Schurk of the Music Library and Sound Recordings Archives, Bowling Green State University Bowling Green, Ohio, for providing valuable reference material.

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