



SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • 1972

- 1 **I'll Take You There**
The Staple Singers
- 2 **Let It Rain** Eric Clapton
- 3 **Let's Stay Together** Al Green
- 4 **Listen to the Music**
The Doobie Brothers
- 5 **Hold Your Head Up** Argent
- 6 **Oh Girl** The Chi-Lites
- 7 **Black and White** Three Dog Night
- 8 **Long Cool Woman (in a Black Dress)** The Hollies
- 9 **Back Stabbers** The O'Jays
- 10 **Rocket Man** Elton John
- 11 **School's Out** Alice Cooper
- 12 **Lean on Me** Bill Withers
- 13 **Go All the Way** The Raspberries
- 14 **A Horse with No Name** America
- 15 **Nights in White Satin**
The Moody Blues
- 16 **I Can See Clearly Now**
Johnny Nash
- 17 **Without You** Nilsson
- 18 **I Saw the Light** Todd Rundgren
- 19 **Layla** Derek and the Dominos

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TIME
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disc
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SOD-03
OPCD-2579

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- 3 Let's Stay Together
- 4 Listen to the Music
- 5 Hold Your Head Up
- 6 Oh Girl
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SOUNDS OF THE
1970
& SEVENTIES

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In the late '60s, the rise of progressive rock led to the rise of FM radio. FM grew out of the Haight-Ashbury scene in San Francisco and gave air play to experimental and political records that would otherwise have gone unheard.

Labels quickly learned their acts didn't need a hit single if they could instead get FM air play on album cuts, and soon the album replaced the single as the basic unit of rock. Soon after that, when its profitability became more apparent, FM radio grew nearly as formulaic and tightly controlled as AM, its playlists almost as hard to crack.

By 1972, the single was becoming acceptable again. Rock had fragmented into numerous factions, most of them in reaction to the extended jams and virtuoso soloing of the '60s bands, and yet nearly all of these factions respected the

45 single. So, suddenly, did some of the very '60s acts that had inspired this reaction. Nilsson, Alice Cooper, and Derek and the Dominos perhaps best defined the parameters of that growing trend.

Harry Nilsson was a clever writer, singer and arranger who signed his first record contract in the early '60s. Throughout most of the '60s, his material was recorded by others while he worked as a computer processor at a bank in the San Fernando Valley. His first hit, *Everybody's Talkin'*, was written by someone else, Fred Neil, and received major exposure as the theme from the popular

film *Midnight Cowboy*. Nilsson initially mistook **Without You**, which he first heard while drinking at a friend's house, for a John Lennon song. But it was actually by Badfinger, Beatles soundalikes.

Clapton was *the* blues-rock guitarist of



the '60s, an artist who considered pop hits antithetical to good music. After a bad experience with the 1969 supergroup Blind Faith, he purposely adopted a less flashy profile, working as a sideman for Delaney and Bonnie and Friends, and then cutting a solo album influenced by their gospel-rock stylings. This effort yielded **Let It Rain**, which scored modestly as a single some two years after it was first recorded. *Let It Rain* set the stage for Derek and the Dominos. That group was intended, in Clapton's words, to recapture "the spirit," if not the sound, of '50s rock and included studio veterans Bobby Whitlock, Jim Gordon and Carl Radle.

This album also featured appearances by Duane Allman, former Muscle Shoals session whiz and now guitar hero of the Allman Brothers Band. He and Clapton reached their apex on **Layla**, which was Clapton's plea to Patti Harrison, Beatle George's wife, with whom he had fallen in love. The guitars duel in a frenzy and then mesh in soft-spoken resignation. Ultimately the song's magic worked; Patti Boyd Harrison eventually left her husband for Clapton, finally marrying him in 1979.

But *Layla* failed as a single in 1970. By the time it hit in 1972, Derek and the Dominos were long gone, and Clapton had dropped out of the scene while he battled his drug addiction.

Alice Cooper exemplified perhaps the most vehement reaction to experimental rock. Alice Cooper was the name of both the band and its lead singer, a Phoenix minister's son whose real name was Vincent Furnier. The band moved to Hollywood in 1968 and hooked up with Frank Zappa, who released their first album on his own label, Straight. It was loud, crude, bone-crunching rock with a fascination for the macabre. The music was so out of step with everything else happening in pop that it masked the group's burning ambitions.

That drive led Cooper to relocate to Detroit, which had a huge audience for hard rock—and which also, not coincidentally, was on the Canadian border. The band recorded in Canada with a Canadian producer, Bob Ezrin, and took advantage of the new "Canadian content" law, which required radio to devote a certain percentage of its air play to native groups or groups that recorded

in Canada. Cooper received substantial air play, and of course, his records were heard back across the border in Detroit by kids who weren't getting that heavy sound from anyone else. **School's Out**, the title taken from a line in a Bowery Boys movie, was the band's second hit, updating a popular rock 'n' roll theme. By the next year, Cooper was one of the biggest acts in the nation, touring with a "shock rock" show (including a guillotine and boa constrictor) designed to offend both parents and mature rockers such as Eric Clapton.

Among other significant newcomers, the Raspberries emerged from Cleveland with **Go All the Way** and a leader, Eric Carmen, who regarded the studio pop of the early '60s as the Holy Grail. The Doobie Brothers ("doobie" being slang for marijuana joint) came from the blue-collar town of San Jose, California, with a reputation as a Hell's Angels party band. The Doobies' ability to play boogie with folk harmonies and their appreciation for production values endeared them to mainstream rock fans. With **Listen to the Music**, they added to the growing body of rock songs about rock. Argent was led

by Rod Argent, veteran of the British invasion group the Zombies, which broke up in 1968. He formed his namesake band two years later and wrote **Hold Your Head Up** with former Zombie Chris White. As a sign of the times, the song was initially released as a single over six minutes long; when it began attracting attention, the single was shortened to a more conventional length to insure its success.

The soft, acoustic band America consisted of three military brats living in London. **A Horse with No Name**, a dead ringer for a Neil Young song, was inspired by member Dewey Bunnell's homesickness for the desert a few hours away from Vandenberg Air Force Base in San Luis Obispo, California, where his father had once been stationed. The Moody Blues' **Nights in White Satin** was hardly new; it had stiffed as a single in America (but not England) in 1968. But two 1972 Moody Blues tours and a growing audience for art-rock made the song popular the second time around.

In black music, the Chi-Lites, together since 1960, finally took their sensitive-guy persona to the top of the charts with the

poignant **Oh Girl. Back Stabbers** was the first, and arguably the best, in a series of topical records by the O'Jays that featured the blossoming Gamble and Huff production sound of Philadelphia, which defined mid-'70s soul and disco. Bill Withers' folkish **Lean on Me** was written for his fellow workers at the Boeing plant where, until the year before, he had manufactured toilet seats for airplanes. The Staple Singers, once gospel purists and standard-bearers of the civil rights movement, consolidated their hold on the new genre of "inspirational pop," or "secular gospel," with songs such as **I'll Take You There**. Al Green's sensual, pleading male, who had much in common with that of the Chi-Lites, urged, **Lel's Stay Together**. Crooner Johnny Nash introduced Americans to reggae with **I Can See Clearly Now**, which was cut with members of the Wailers as sidemen. (Reggae superstar Bob Marley used money he earned as a staff writer for Nash to start his own Tuff Gong label.)

And then there was Three Dog Night's **Black and White**. This tune went back to 1955, when Earl Robinson and David Arkin (father of actor Alan Arkin) wrote it

to celebrate the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling banning segregation in public schools. Sammy Davis Jr. cut *Black and White* shortly after it was written for an EP issued by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Three Dog Night, however, learned the song from a version they heard on the radio by the Jamaican reggae band Greyhound. After their version was released, Earl Robinson, who had been blacklisted during the McCarthy Era, found himself at the top of the rock 'n' roll charts—further proof that the 45 single ruled once again.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

**Indicates highest Billboard chart position*

- 1. I'll Take You There** The Staple Singers • *Music and lyrics by Alvertis Isbell. Irving Music, Inc. BMI. Stax 0125. © 1979 Stax Records. Courtesy of Fantasy Inc. No. 1**
- 2. Let It Rain** Eric Clapton • *Music and lyrics by Eric Clapton and Bonnie Bramlett. Unichappell-Stigwood/Cotillion Music/Delbon Pub. BMI. Polydor 15409. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 48**
- 3. Let's Stay Together** Al Green • *Music and lyrics by Willie Mitchell, Al Green and Al Jackson. Irving Music, Inc. BMI. HI 2202. Courtesy of HI Records. No. 1**
- 4. Listen to the Music** The Doobie Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Charles Johnston. Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp. BMI. Warner 7619. © 1972 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 11**
- 5. Hold Your Head Up** Argent • *Music and lyrics by Rod Argent and Chris White. Mainstay Music, Inc. BMI. Epic 10852. © 1972 CBS Records Inc. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Records Inc. No. 5**
- 6. Oh Girl** The Chi-Lites • *Music and lyrics by Eugene Record. Unichappell Music. BMI. Brunswick 55471. © 1972 Brunswick Records, Inc. Courtesy of Brunswick Records, Inc. No. 1**
- 7. Black and White** Three Dog Night • *Music and lyrics by David Arkin and Earl Robinson. Templeton Pub. Co., Inc. ASCAP. Dunhill 4317. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 1**
- 8. Long Cool Woman (In a Black Dress)** The Hollies • *Music and lyrics by Roger Cook, Harold Clarke and Roger Greenaway. Blenstock Pub./Jerry Leiber Music/Mike Stoller Music (adm. by Herald Square). ASCAP. Epic 10871. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Records Inc. No. 2**
- 9. Back Stabbers** The O'Jays • *Music and lyrics by Leon Huff, Gene McFadden and John Whitehead. Assorted Music. BMI. Philadelphia International 3517. Courtesy of PIR/CBS Records Inc. No. 3**
- 10. Rocket Man** Elton John • *Music and lyrics by Elton John and Bernie Taupin. Dick James Music, Inc. BMI. Uni 105328. © 1972 THIS RECORD CO., LTD. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 6**
- 11. School's Out** Alice Cooper • *Music and lyrics by Michael Bruce and Vincent Furnier. Ezra Music/Bizarre Music Co. BMI. Warner 7596. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 7**
- 12. Lean on Me** Bill Withers • *Music and lyrics by Bill Withers. Inferior Music. BMI. Sussex 235. © 1972 CBS Records Inc. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Records Inc. No. 1**
- 13. Go All the Way** The Raspberries • *Music and lyrics by Eric Carmen. Eric Carmen Music. BMI. Capitol 3348. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 5**

14. A Horse with No Name America • *Music and lyrics by Dewey Bunnell. WB Music Corp. ASCAP. Warner 7555. © 1972 Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1**

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16. I Can See Clearly Now Johnny Nash • *Music and lyrics by Johnny Nash. Cayman Music, Inc. ASCAP. Epic 10902. © 1972 CBS Records Inc. Produced under license from CBS Special Products, a Service of CBS Records, a Division of CBS Records Inc. No. 1**

17. Without You Nilsson • *Music and lyrics by Will Peter Ham and Thomas Evans. Apple Music Publishing Co., Inc. ASCAP. RCA 0604. Courtesy of RCA Records, a label of BMG Music. No. 1**

18. I Saw the Light Todd Rundgren • *Fiction Music, Inc./Todd Rundgren/Screen Gems-EMI Music, Inc. BMI. © 1972 Bearsville Records, Inc. Bearsville 0003. Courtesy of Rhino Records Inc./Bearsville Records, Inc. No. 16**

19. Layla Derek and the Dominos • *Music and lyrics by Eric Clapton and James Beck Gordon. Unichappell Music/Casserole Music. BMI. Atco 6809. Produced under license from PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 10**



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1972 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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