



SOUNDS OF THE
1974
SEVENTIES

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • 1974: TAKE TWO

- 1 **Lookin' for a Love**
Bobby Womack
- 2 **You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet**
Bachman-Turner Overdrive
- 3 **The Joker** Steve Miller Band
- 4 **Until You Come Back to Me
(That's What I'm Gonna Do)**
Aretha Franklin
- 5 **Can't Get Enough of Your
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- 1 Lookin' for a Love
 - 2 You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet
 - 3 The Joker
 - 4 Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)
 - 5 Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe
 - 6 Mockingbird
 - 7 I've Got to Use My Imagination
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By 1974, disco music was creating new stars seemingly every week. Barry White was one of the genre's most unlikely and most enduring artists, while George McCrae was one of its flukiest and most fleeting. White, who had been enjoying hits for the last year, was a Texan raised in Los Angeles. He had been around the fringes of the Hollywood rock scene since 1955, when, at age 11, he played piano on Jesse Belvin's quintessential doo-wop ballad, *Goodnight My Love*. In the '60s, he was house arranger at Ramparts Records, East L.A.'s leading label, and arranged *Harlem Shuffle* for Bob and Earl and *The Duck* for Jackie Lee. Later, he did everything but sing and play on the records of the Banana Splits, a bubblegum band with a cartoon show on Saturday mornings.

In 1972, White wrote, arranged and

produced *Walkin' in the Rain with the One I Love* for Love Unlimited, a female soul trio he had met three years earlier. The lush sound of that million seller set the stage for White's own recording career. "The Prophet of Love," as this big man quickly

dubbed himself, first reached the top 10 under his own name in 1973, and **Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe** from 1974 proved to be his only No. 1 hit. With its simplistic melody and insistent hook held together by White's rumbling, half-sung and half-spoken vocals, this slow, heavily orchestrated disco tune set White up for a good long run on the pop charts.

Like White, George McCrae had been trying to enter the music business for years. He sang with bands in the early 1960s, and at the end of the decade, he and his wife Gwen signed to Henry



Stone's Alston Records in their native Miami. But their duets flopped, and Gwen moved over to Columbia as a solo act while George began studying criminology. Both, however, kept a hand in with Stone as his operations evolved into T.K. Productions, which had a Caribbean-flavored disco sound that had already caught on via underground hits in England, especially for KC and the Sunshine Band.

In fact, **Rock Your Baby** was written by Harry "KC" Casey for his band, which breezed through the track in 45 minutes. Because KC couldn't handle the high vocal line, he turned to Stone for help. The label head considered having either Jimmy "Bo" Horne or McCrae sing it before deciding on the latter, apparently because he happened to be around the studios that day. McCrae laid down the vocals in two takes, and his ethereal tenor quickly made *Rock Your Baby* a No. 1 record. It sold three million copies on its way to the top of the charts and helped to define the Miami Sound. The next year, not only did KC and the Sunshine Band begin dominating the charts in earnest, but Gwen McCrae had a

smash hit with *Rockin' Chair*.

Disco was not the only style of black music exploding during this period. Aretha Franklin remade Stevie Wonder's obscure **Until You Come Back to Me**, giving Lady Soul her biggest hit since 1971. The Jackson Five acknowledged the popularity of disco with the frenetic **Dancing Machine**, their first top-10 hit in three years and their last one for Motown. Gladys Knight and the Pips had already deserted Berry Gordy's label, a move that paid off. **I've Got to Use My Imagination**, composed by Brill Building songwriter Gerry Goffin and Chicago bluesman Barry Goldberg, provided the title to Knight's first Buddah album, which yielded three gold singles. Carl Carlton was a Little Stevie Wonder wannabe who had been a gospel star at age 14. He went secular in 1968, and in 1972 cut **Everlasting Love**, the 1967 Robert Knight hit. Because Carlton's label was in the process of being bought, the record sat on the shelf for two years before it was finally released.

Kool and the Gang had its genesis in 1964 as the Jazziacs, the hippest combo at Lincoln High School in Jersey City (the

great jazz artists Leon Thomas and Pharoah Sanders used to sit in with them). In 1968, they changed their name to Kool and the Gang and their sound to primal funk, and helped usher in a new wave of funky black music. Their 1973 *Wild and Peaceful* LP, which provided the theme music for the Miss Black America Pageant, included the proto-disco hit **Jungle Boogie**. Bobby Womack's **Lookin' for a Love** was a remake of a song his Cleveland group, the Valentinos, had first cut in 1962 for Sam Cooke's Sar label. On **Sideshow**, Blue Magic combined Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff's emerging '70s Sound of Philadelphia with the '50s Philly vocal-group style. Billy Preston, fresh off a tour as the sixth Rolling Stone, was tinkering at the piano in an Atlanta nightclub where he was performing when he began writing **Nothing from Nothing**. The song, which hit No. 1 on the pop charts and made the top 10 on the R & B charts, turned out to be a real soul-pop crossover.

Bachman-Turner Overdrive exemplified arena-rock, the new trend that grew out of high-volume '60s bands and that ultimately would lead to heavy

metal. **Takin' Care of Business** was a classic working-class rocker, but **You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet**, which lifted the Who's sound nearly intact, was BTO's biggest hit. Inspired by Dave Mason's *Only You and I Know*, Randy Bachman wrote the song as a spoof on his brother Gary, then the band's manager and a habitual stutterer. After taping the song on a whim, Randy decided he did not want it released. His A & R man insisted, so Bachman cut it again without the stutter. In fact, he tried several styles, including one takeoff on Frank Sinatra, but none worked, so the label buried the original as an album track. Radio stations jumped on it, though, and Bachman soon reluctantly agreed to issue it as a single.

Steve Miller had been an album artist known for lightening blues with Beatlesque harmony and production techniques. But while recuperating in 1972 from a broken neck and hepatitis, he decided to take a stab at writing a blatantly commercial hit. Combining several of his personae into **The Joker**, Miller succeeded so thoroughly that he wound up as one of the era's top singles artists.

Gordon Lightfoot was a Toronto folk artist who first made the pop charts in 1971 and stayed there most of the decade. But **Sundown**, written on deadline at his farm outside the city, was his only single to go all the way to No. 1. Within months after he died in a 1973 plane crash, Jim Croce had three albums in the top 20. **I'll Have to Say I Love You In a Song** kept him on the singles charts as well. But the reigning champion of soft acoustic rock was James Taylor, who joined his wife Carly Simon in a vigorous workout on Inez Foy's 1963 hit, **Mockingbird**. Simon was on her own for **Haven't Got Time for the Pain**, which was widely perceived as a commentary on the couple's shaky marriage.

As much as singer-songwriters and soft rock dominated the early part of the decade, Bachman-Turner Overdrive was, along with disco, a signal that music was changing. Grand Funk, a heavy-metal outfit that had paved the way for BTO, hit with **Shinin' On**, a pop effort produced by Todd Rundgren. Rick Derringer found common ground between glitter and blues-based arena-rock in **Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo**, written

years earlier when he was in Johnny Winter's band. (Johnny's brother, Edgar, also recorded the song with help from Derringer.)

And Golden Earring was finally cracking the American charts with its own brand of heavy-metal rock. This Dutch quartet had formed in the mid-'60s and first toured the United States in 1968. **Radar Love** was its first American hit, although the band couldn't capitalize on it; consequently, they didn't see the American top 40 again until 1983. Despite Golden Earring's erratic career, arena-rock joined disco to dominate commercial pop music for the rest of the decade.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

**Indicates highest Billboard chart position.*

1. Lookin' for a Love Bobby Womack • Music and lyrics by James Alexander and Zeldia Samuels. U.A. 375. © 1973 EMI. Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 10*

2. You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet Bachman-Turner Overdrive • Music and lyrics by Randy Bachman. Mercury 73622. © 1975 PolyGram Records, Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 1*

3. The Joker Steve Miller Band • Music and lyrics by Eddie Curtis, Steve Miller and Ahmet Ertegun. Capitol 3732. © 1973 Capitol Records, Inc. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 1*

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6. Mockingbird Carly Simon and James Taylor • Music and lyrics by Inez Foxx, Charlie Foxx and James Taylor. Elektra 45880. © 1974 Elektra/Asylum Records. Produced under license from Elektra Entertainment. No. 5*

7. I've Got to Use My Imagination Gladys Knight and the Pips • Music and lyrics by Gerry Goffin and Barry Goldberg. Buddah 393. © 1973 Buddah Records. Courtesy of Buddah Records. Division of Essex Entertainment Inc. No. 4*

8. Sundown Gordon Lightfoot • Music and lyrics by Gordon Lightfoot. Reprise 1194. © 1974 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1*

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10. Shinin' On Grand Funk • Music and lyrics by Mark Farner and Don Brewer. Capitol 3917. © 1974 Capitol Records, Inc. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 11*

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12. Takin' Care of Business Bachman-Turner Overdrive • Music and lyrics by Randy Bachman. Mercury 73487. © 1974 PolyGram Records, Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 12*

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14. Sideshow Blue Magic • Music and lyrics by

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16. Tin Man America • Music and lyrics by Lee Bunnell. Warner Bros. 7839. © 1974 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 4*

17. Dancing Machine The Jackson Five • Music and lyrics by Weldon Parks, Hal Davis and Donald Fletcher. Motown 1286. © 1974 Motown Record Company, L.P. Courtesy of Motown Record Company, L.P. No. 2*

18. Jungle Boogie Kool and the Gang • Music and lyrics by Ronald Bell, Robert Bell, George M. Brown, Richard Westfield, Claydes Smith, Robert Mickens, Donald Boyce and Dennis Thomas. De-Lite 559. © 1973 PolyGram Records, Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc. No. 4*

19. Nothing from Nothing Billy Preston • Music and lyrics by Billy Preston and Bruce Fisher. A&M 1544. © 1974 A&M Records, Inc. Courtesy of A&M Records, Inc. No. 1*

20. I'll Have to Say I Love You in a Song Jim Croce • Music and lyrics by Jim Croce. ABC 11424. Courtesy of LeFrak Entertainment. No. 9*

21. Radar Love Golden Earring • Music and lyrics by George Kooymans and Barry Hay. Track 40202. © 1973 MCA Records, Inc. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 13*



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