

- Superstition
   Beck, Bogert and Appice
- 2. Everybody's Everything Santana
- 3. Casey Jones The Grateful Dead
- 4. Cross-Eyed Mary Jethro Tull
- 5. Click Clack Captain Beefheart
- 6. Nature's Way Spirit
- 7. Rock & Roll Stew Traffic
- 8. Only You Know and I Know Dave Mason
- 9. I Talk to the Wind King Crimson
- 10. Wishing Well Free

- 11. Hard Drivin' Man The J. Geils Band
- 12. Teenage Head
  The Flamin' Groovies
- 13. Rock and Roll

  The Velvet Underground
- 14. Life is a Carnival The Band
- 15. You Better Think Twice Poco
- 16. Johnny Strikes Up the Band Warren Zevon
- 17. Reason to Believe Rod Stewart
- 18. Oh Well Fleetwood Mac

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ROCK



FM radio opened up the airwaves to all manner of experimental rock bands in the late '60s and early '70s. Fleetwood Mac was one of the most prominent, but, ironically, was moving into a new phase right around the time the

medium was becoming more rigid in its air play.

The result was that Fleetwood Mac, a quintessential FM band, achieved prominence later in the decade as an AM hit-maker.

Fleetwood Mac came together during the 1967 Summer of Love and featured British blues guitarists Jeremy Spencer and Peter Green, who had previously replaced Eric Cla

previously replaced Eric Clapton in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Fleet-wood Mac was one of the most popular of the British blues bands to make their name by touring the American ballroom circuit and winning FM air play, but by 1969, the group was pointing in a radically different direction. An LP released

that fall showcased more experimental, pop-oriented material, as typified by Green's **Oh Well**. That song's stop-andgo rhythms and post-Dylan lyrics opaquely mirrored Green's renuncia-

tion of his Judaism in favor of Christianity. After Green quit early in

inity. After Green quit early in 1970 to pursue his new religious calling, Fleetwood Mac required nearly five years to get back on track. By then the personnel had turned over almost completely,

and their new sound was rich, mature adult pop that yielded a slew of hit singles. Personnel changed

frequently in the British FM rock bands. Consider Traffic, which also formed in 1967,

around still-youthful Stevie Winwood, the former blues-wailing vocalist for the Spencer Davis Group, and Dave Mason, who had roadied for them. Winwood brought his jazzy blues leanings to the venture, while Mason contributed a sharp pop sensibility. Traffic's music symbolized what was good about the new

FM eclecticism.

Mason quit-for the first of many times—by the end of 1967, before the debut album was even released. though he returned in time to contribute to the follow-up. But by 1969, the whole group had splintered, and Mason's first solo LP came out in 1970 bearing Only You Know and I Know. (In 1971. Delaney and Bonnie and Friends. a loose aggregation of sidemen and superstars—including Mason and Eric Clapton-built around the American husband-and-wife aospel-rock team. would hit No. 20 with the tune.) After a brief stint in Blind Faith, Winwood regrouped Traffic; with members constantly coming or going, the band recorded a series of loose, Jamming LPs such as The Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys, which contained Rock & Roll Stew

Jeff Beck was the penultimate British blues-rock guitar wizard in 1968 when he first tried to form a group with American bassist Tim Bogert and drummer Carmine Appice of Vanilla Fudge, However, he fractured his skull in a car wreck and was out of commission for 18 months. By the time he returned, his

Intended rhythm section was busy with Cactus, so he put together a different Jeff Beck Group, Both Cactus and Beck's new line-up were asunder by 1973, and Beck, Bogert and Appice finally got off the ground. Because they had little new material on such short notice, they relied on covers such as their version of Stevle Wonder's Superstition. Another former Beck associate. vocalist Rod Stewart, achieved his solo breakthrough with Every Picture Tells a Story. Stewart's bittersweet reading of folksinger Tim Hardin's Reason to Believe was the first single from that album, but DJs flipped it over and played Maggie May instead, giving Stewart his first solo bit.

Free, meanwhile, was formed in 1968 to exploit the growing popularity of the heavy rock sound. Their label, Island, even tried to rename them the Heavy Metal Kids. Free made a big splash in 1970 with All Right Now, split in '71, reformed in '72, and closed out their union in '73 with Wishing Well. Lead singer Paul Rodgers and drummer Simon Kirke quickly found commercial refuge in Bad Company. King Crimson represented an artsier approach to all

this flux. Crimson formed in 1969 featuring bassist Greg Lake, guitarist Robert Fripp. lyticist Pete Sinfield and multireed man lan McDonald. Lake left in 1970 to launch Emerson, Lake and Palmer; McDonald split and eventually wound up in Foreigner; and Sinfield fell out in 171. But by then, the group had already turned out three albums featuring progressive FM material such as I Talk to the Wind.

In the States, FM rock tended to be more song-oriented. Since the format developed largely in San Francisco, It was only natural that so many groups from that city's hippie-rock explosion would be among the first to take advantage of it. Most prominent was the Grateful Dead, whose initial material was long and improvisational. By 1970. the Dead were reacting to both their lack of national commercial success and to their part in the disastrous concert at Altamont. The Dead returned to their lua-band roots for a calmina acoustic approach featuring crisp harmonles and succinct sonas like Casey Jones. The Dead's new sound retained the feel of traditional American folk. Santana also formed in San Francisco in the Hispanic Mission District, employing an unusual blend of rock, Caribbean and Mexican influences. The group was the unanticipated star of the 1969 Woodstock festival, and parlayed that splash into a run of hit albums, the third of which included Everybody's Everything, backed by Oakland's Tower of Power horn section.

Around the nation, music was taking a number of forms. Spirit originated in L.A. under the guidance of teenage gultarist Randy California and jazz drummer Ed Cassidy, who met when Cassidy was dating California's mother. Spirit was one of the most experimental bands in a scene that valued clean production and rigid song structures, but began subsiding soon after the release of their most successful album. Twelve Dreams of Dr. Sardonicus, which vielded Nature's Way. The amazina Captain Beefheart, a sculptor, artist and Dadaist word-slinger, was the only true mayerick of the period. Click Clack makes more explicit the blues leanings that had always been at the heart of his free-form music, and was actually one of his most conventional sides, though totally unlike anything

anyone else was doing.

Bob Dylan's former road band had emerged from Woodstock in 1969 as. simply, the Band, and their timeless, traditional American themes and music transformed the back-to-basics movement. On Life Is a Carnival, they got help from New Orleans R&B wiz Allen Toussaint. The Flamin' Groovies hit the Bay Area scene at a time when the three-minute rock song was out of fashion. But their throwback Teenage Head was more than welcome among roots rockers. The J. Geils Rand was an alliance between Bostonarea folkles and R&B fanatics: the band's bruising debut album saluted truckers in Hard Drivin' Man. By the end of the '70s, Warren Zevon had become one of Hollywood's leading lights with volatile, literate material such as Johnny Strikes Up the Band.

One group that would later have a lasting influence had the least impact during its lifetime. The Velvet Underground began in 1964 when wild-eyed Welshman John Cale and Long Island boy Lou Reed joined forces. The Velvets hit their stride the next year when they hooked up with pop artist Andy Warhol. At a time when peace and love ruled,

the Velvets' grinding, abrasive music explored the seamy New York underbelly of heroin and sadomasochism. They had virtually no audience outside the downtown Manhattan scene—and even few fans there.

By the time they were tearing apart under the weight of commercial failure. flery personality clashes and various other excesses, the Velvet Underground had evolved into their own brand of modern spirituality. The result was Loaded released in the summer of 1970. while the group was renewing its Manhattan status with a residency at Max's Kansas City nightclub. Reed, the primary sonawriter, had ault by the time the album came out, but his off-covered Rock and Roll was a celebration of the music that affirmed not coincidentally. that he and the Velvets shared much with the average kld: that they came from the same places and were moved by the same things, including the radio. Nearly all vital music that has come out of FM, college or alternative radio since then has owed a tremendous debt to the Velvet Underground.

-John Morthland

## DISCOGRAPHY

\*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. Superstition Beck, Bogert and Appice Music and lyrics by Stevle Wonder, Black Bull Music, /Jobete Music Co., Inc., ASCAP, Epic LP 32:140 (1973), @1973 Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. Did not chart.
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18. Oh Well Fleetwood Mac. • Music and lyrics by Peter A. Green. CMINOR Music: BMI, Reprise LP 6368 (1970). Produced under license from Warner Bros. Recards Inc. No. 55\*



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