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TIME
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SOUNDS OF THE
SEVENTIES
FM ROCK III

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1. **Aqualung** Jethro Tull
2. **Nobody** The Doobie Brothers
3. **Roll Away the Stone**
Mott the Hoople
4. **The Bomber** The James Gang
5. **Long Distance Runaround** Yes
6. **Out of the Blue** Roxy Music
7. **Momamma Scuba** John Cale
8. **September Gurls** Big Star
9. **Moon Tears** Grin
10. **D.O.A.** Bloodrock
11. **Highway 61 Revisited**
Johnny Winter
12. **Bringing Home the Bacon**
Procol Harum
13. **Blue Sky** The Allman Brothers Band
14. **Oh Atlanta** Little Feat
15. **Panama Red**
New Riders of the Purple Sage
16. **Stranger in a Strange Land**
Leon Russell
17. **California** Joni Mitchell
18. **Angel from Montgomery** John Prine

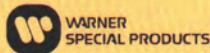
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OPCD-2686; SOD-28



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As FM radio rose to prominence in the early 1970s, two experimental rock forms flourished. Guitar rock consisted basically of songs which had lots of room in them for improvisation when performed live. Art-rock added new instruments and arranging techniques to the standard band line-up.

The Allman Brothers were a classic guitar band, built around brothers Gregg and Duane Allman, who first performed together in 1960 in Florida. While Gregg was primarily a keyboardist, Duane was a slide guitar player who had synthesized Southern country, blues and rock traditions into a modern and elegant—but still earthy—style. His foil was guitarist Dickey Betts, and in concert the two weaved long, atmospheric jams into the material. Though their first album came out in 1969, their breakthrough was the 1971 live album from the Fillmore East,



which became the ultimate Southern rock set and a lasting testament to Duane's genius. Shortly after its release, Duane was killed on his motorcycle near the band's headquarters in

Macon, Georgia. At the time, three tracks were finished for a new studio album; one was **Blue**

Sky, Betts's stately, insistent celebration of one of the South's many bounties. When it came out, *Blue Sky* served as one of Duane's many elegies.

The James Gang formed in Cleveland in 1966, but did not click until guitarist Joe Walsh joined in 1969. They were one of the many Midwestern bands to wrest the bedrock mantle back from the two coasts, and Walsh's trademark **The Bomber** was one reason why. When they opened for the Who's 1971 European tour and failed to break into the overseas market, they started falling apart; Walsh migrated to Hollywood and later became a member of the Eagles.

Little Feat may have been a guitar band or a band-like rock ensemble, depending on the point of view, but leader Lowell George had an undeniable feel for Southern forms. Indeed, while the L.A. outfit had only a cult following in most of the country, Little Feat was embraced wholeheartedly by the South, especially after key personnel changes in 1973 brought the sound closer to second-line New Orleans rhythms. **Oh Atlanta** reciprocated that Southern hospitality.

Texan Johnny Winter was the '60's first blues-rock bonus baby, signed after a flattering mention in *Rolling Stone*. While his debut was too funky for the mass market, his 1970 follow-up (a three-sided LP set) meshed blues and rock into a wild roadhouse romp that included his hair-raising remake of **Highway 61 Revisited**, Bob Dylan's moralistic, absurdist delineation of life gone wrong on America's heartland north-south highway. Bloodrock, another Texas act, was part of the early heavy metal wave with screechers like **D.O.A.**

Among art-rockers, Yes and Jethro Tull carried the banner for England with tracks such as **Long Distance Run-**

around and **Aqualung**, respectively. The Yes sound gelled after a couple of formless years, when keyboardist Rick Wakeman came over from the Strawbs in 1971, bringing with him such prestigious instruments as the mellotron and clavinet. With Wakeman, the group balanced more classically influenced textures with soothing vocal harmonies. *Aqualung* was the title track to the first of several concept albums—this one a diatribe against organized religion—by Jethro Tull, the group led by flutist Ian Anderson and named after the eighteenth-century British agronomist who invented the machine drill for sowing seeds.

Of course, in a wide-open era like the post-hippie 1970s, not everyone fit easily into such categories. John Cale, for example, was an art-rock (in the Warholian sense) going back to his days as a founding member of the Velvet Underground, but was primal in a way that bands like Yes and Tull couldn't imagine. After leaving the Velvets in '68 he recorded and/or produced music ranging from protopunk (including a Stooges album) to experimental rock (including a collaboration

with Brian Eno, Kevin Ayers, and fellow Velvet alum Nico). But the LP *Fear*, essentially a rock set that included **Momamma Scuba**, is often cited as his best work from the mid-'70s.

Procol Harum had started as an arty, two-keyboard pop band, but then followed Robin Trower's Hendrix fixation into guitar rock. By the time **Bringing Home the Bacon** was released, though, they had also recorded a live album with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and were shopping for a new sound. Keyboardist Leon Russell rode his band-leader's chair in Delaney and Bonnie's Friends and then in Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs and Englishmen into a lucrative solo career that played up hippie mystique along the lines of **Stranger in a Strange Land**, which borrowed its title from the most popular science fiction novel of the time.

Reaction to all this took several forms. One was the arch, almost terminally ironic Roxy Music, whose distance from its own music was part of the message. **Out of the Blue** was taken from *Country Life*, the first Roxy album to crack the U.S. top 40. The band, however, had already been popular for several years among

the glam-rock crowd that followed David Bowie and would soon form the basis for punk. Mott the Hoople, which had come out of working-class England in 1970 attempting to mate artiness and improvisation with metallic crunch, now appealed to much the same audience. When Mott was on the verge of breaking up in 1972, Bowie himself stepped in to write and produce *All the Young Dudes*, which gave the band a new image and new market potency and set them up for their greatest achievement, *Mott*, and the follow-up LP *The Hoople*, with its featured track, **Roll Away the Stone**.

Singer-songwriters, especially those rooted in folk music, provided a safe option for fans who had grown up with rock but were burned out on volume and teen themes. Joni Mitchell, a Canadian who based herself in Detroit in the mid-'60s and then went to New York and finally California by the end of the decade, was one of the architects of the movement, with such albums as *Blue* and songs like **California**. John Prine, a Chicago mailman with Kentucky coal-mining roots, became one of the first to benefit from this trend

when he was discovered in a Windy City club by Kris Kristofferson and recorded a landmark debut album which included **Angel from Montgomery**.

The New Riders of the Purple Sage, an offshoot of the Grateful Dead and named after a 1912 Zane Grey novel, were an important part of the laid-back California sound. Launched when Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia discovered pedal steel guitar, the New Riders played soft, succinct country-rock with sweet harmonies and hip themes. **Panama Red**, a fictional character named after a potent strain of marijuana, was written by folkie Peter Rowan, but summed up the band's stance perfectly. Marijuana gave the Doobie Brothers their name as well, "doobie" being slang for a joint. With their R&B grooves and upbeat vocals, the Northern California group was as much a presence on Top 40 radio as it was on FM rock, scoring such hits as *Listen to the Music* and *Black Water*. **Nobody** was the one song from the Doobies' first album to chart.

Then there were the misfits who fell between the cracks. Seventeen-year-old Nils Lofgren approached Neil Young after a gig in Washington, D.C., and his win-

some songwriting connected immediately. Before the year was out, he had appeared on Young's *After the Goldrush* album and on the debut by Young's backup rock band Crazy Horse, as well as winning a deal for his own band, Grin. However, despite brilliant songs like **Moon Tears**, Grin never went anywhere, and Lofgren has hung in for two equally up-and-down decades as a sometimes solo act and sometimes sideman (to Bruce Springsteen). Big Star was the skewed pop band Alex Chilton launched in Memphis after leaving behind the bubblegum soul of the Box Tops. They had a Beatlesque sense of melody and harmony as well as Who-like punch. With **September Gurls** they also paid homage to Brian Wilson, with whom they shared an over-the-edge sensibility that spelled career doom even as it made them one of the forerunners of punk, the late-'70s musical movement that laid waste to art-rock and guitar rock alike.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

**Indicates highest Billboard chart position*

- 1. Aqualung** Jethro Tull • Music and lyrics by Ian Anderson and Jennie Anderson. Chrysalis Music. ASCAP. Reprise LP 2035 (1971). © 1976 Chrysalis Records, Ltd. Courtesy of EMI Records Group/Chrysalis Records, under license from CEMA Special Markets.
- 2. Nobody** The Doobie Brothers • Music and lyrics by Tom Johnston. Warner-Tamerlane Publ. Corp. BMI. Warner 8041 (1974). Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 58*
- 3. Roll Away the Stone** Mott the Hoople • Music and lyrics by Ian Hunter. Ackee Music Inc. ASCAP. Columbia LP 32425 (1973). © 1974 Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.
- 4. The Bomber: Closet Queen/Cast Your Fate to the Wind** The James Gang • Music and lyrics by James Fox, Dale Peters, Joseph Walsh/Vince Guaraldi. ABC LP 711 (1970). Duchess Music Corp./Home Made Music./Unichappell Music, Inc. BMI. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.
- 5. Long Distance Runaround** Yes • Music and lyrics by Jon Anderson. Warner Bros. Inc. ASCAP. Atlantic LP 7244 (1972). © 1972 Atlantic Recording Corporation. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp.
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- 13. Blue Sky** The Allman Brothers Band • Music and lyrics by Dicky Betts. Forrest Richard Betts Music./Unichappell Music, Inc. BMI. Capricorn LP 0102 (1972). © 1972 Capricorn Records Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.
- 14. Oh Atlanta** Little Feat • Music and lyrics by Bill Payne. Naked Snake Music. ASCAP. Warner LP 2784 (1974). © 1974 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc.

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17. California Joni Mitchell • Music and lyrics by Joni Mitchell. Joni Mitchell Publishing Corp. BMI. Reprise LP 2038 (1971). Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc.

18. Angel from Montgomery John Prine • Music and lyrics by John Prine. Sour Grapes Music Inc./Walden Music, Inc. ASCAP. Atlantic LP 8296 (1971). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp.



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