

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

SOUNDS OF THE
AM POP
CLASSICS II
SERIES



SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • AM POP CLASSICS II

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4. **Heartbeat—It's a Lovebeat**
The DeFranco Family featuring
Tony DeFranco
5. **The Guitar Man** Bread
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The English Congregation

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WARNER
SPECIAL PRODUCTS



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2. Wham Bam (Shang-a-Lang)
3. Rendezvous
4. Heartbeat—It's a Lovebeat
5. The Guitar Man
6. Stay Awhile
7. Toast and Marmalade for Tea
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As Elton John evolved in the '70s from sensitive singer-songwriter to freewheeling pop star, he opened the door for the return of several artists from the late '50s and early '60s, in which his new music was rooted. In the case of Neil Sedaka, he did so almost literally.

Sedaka's career as an artist seemed pretty well over following *Bad Girl*, which reached No. 33 in 1963. He became a Screen Gems staff writer, and by the turn of the decade had dumped his longtime co-writer Howard Greenfield in favor of Phil Cody, with whom he turned out a handful of forgettable hits. Determined to revive his singing career, the *New Yorker* decided to tour England, and the ploy worked. British audiences still turned out for him, and they cheered his new material along with the old.

While there, he cut an English-only

album backed by a band called Hotlegs (which later became 10cc). They soon teamed up for another set that failed to earn American release, and then Sedaka and Cody wrote

Laughter in the Rain. This one was recorded with an all-star Los Angeles sessions band and quickly became a hit single in England.

Around that time, Elton John was launching his own label, Rocket, and Sedaka became one of his first signings. Because Lea Arthur's cover of *Laughter in the Rain* was beginning to make noise in America, Sedaka and John arranged for MCA, Rocket's distributor, to rush-release the original, which

promptly shot to No. 1 stateside. The hit became the title track of an American comeback album compiling material from the two Hotlegs sets and the L.A. sessions, and Sedaka stayed near the top of the charts for the next two years.

Frankie Valli had similar good luck



with a new label after being out of the top 40 since 1968 both as a solo artist and as lead singer of the 4 Seasons.

My Eyes Adored You had come to him originally as *Blue Eyes in Georgia*, but he rewrote the lyric before recording it during a frustrating stint with Motown. The track stayed in the can some 18 months before the soul powerhouse dropped both Valli and the 4 Seasons. The singer bought the recording back from Motown for \$4,000 and began shopping it. After being rejected by several labels, he got a bite from the fledgling Private Stock, which, like the solo Valli, enjoyed its first-ever No. 1 single.

Gwen McCrae, a native of Pensacola, Florida, recorded for Miami-based T.K. Records, which had perfected a swaying, Caribbean-derived brand of disco. She and her husband, George, cut duets that failed to arouse interest, but then Gwen was given first crack at a ballad called *Rock Your Baby*. She turned it down, only to see George turn it into one of the multimillion-selling landmarks of the disco era; when she was offered a follow-up, **Rockin' Chair**, she did not make the same mistake twice.

The Main Ingredient had been vari-

ously known around Harlem since the mid-'60s as the Poets, the Solitaires and the Insiders—before settling on a name they took off a Coke bottle. When lead singer Donald McPherson died of leukemia in 1971, original member Cuba Gooding rejoined his old group. **Just Don't Want to Be Lonely** was one of the three soft-soul crossover hits that followed.

Bloodstone was one of the few black acts to evolve out of the a cappella vocal tradition and into hard funk. Launched in Kansas City as the Sin-ceres in 1962, they moved to Las Vegas for a year before going on to Hollywood in 1971, where they learned to play their own instruments and changed their name to reflect the harder edge of their new sound. Soon after they moved to England to work with producer Mike Vernon, **Natural High** became Bloodstone's first hit. The Sweet Sensations, a soft-soul group from Manchester fronted by 15-year-old tenor Marcel King, were No. 1 in their homeland with **Sad Sweet Dream**, which impressed American fans almost as much.

Family groups such as the Jackson 5

and the Osmonds were one of the decade's minifads, thanks to the late-'60s success of the Cowsills. The Partridge Family, which was based on the Cowsills, was not only a group, but a television show—the series was about a touring family rock band headed by mom Shirley Jones and fronted by David Cassidy. In real life, the group hit No. 1 the first time out, but their third straight top-10 single, **I'll Meet You Halfway**, was also their last.

The Canadian entry in this category was the DeFranco Family, managed—and heavily promoted—by Laufer Publications, which put out such teen magazines as *Tiger Beat* and *Fave*. With 10-year-old Tony singing lead, the group's **Heartbeat—It's a Lovebeat** debut was its only top-10 hit. **Rendezvous** was the second straight (and last ever) top-40 effort by the Hudson Brothers from Portland, Oregon.

The decade brought a growing number of Canadians to AM radio. The Bells were formed in 1965 when singers Jacki Ralph and Cliff Edwards met at a Quebec ski resort. The band they formed kicked around Montreal clubs for five years, before **Stay Awhile** took advan-

tage of newly passed laws requiring radio stations to include a specified percentage of Canadians on their playlists. With border stations playing the song, it soon became popular in America and was added to programming lists here as well.

Tin Tin was the Australian writing team of Steve Groves and Steve Kipner. They moved to England and their Beatles-like psychedelia quickly caught the ear of fellow Aussie Maurice Gibb of the Bee Gees. The duo named themselves after a Belgian cartoon character, and Maurice produced **Toast and Marmalade for Tea**, which proved their only hit.

Pete Wingfield was a British critic who loved American blues and soul, and who played with Keef Hartley, the Olympic Runners and Jellybread, named after a Booker T. and the MG's tune. His sole solo hit was **Number Eighteen with a Bullet**, which on November 22, 1975, actually hit No. 18 with a bullet on *Billboard's* Hot 100. The Pipkins were a studio-only group assembled by British producer John Burroughs with Tony Burrows (formerly of Ivy League and the Flowerpot Men) singing lead;

Burrows also played this role in such other studio one-shots as Edison Lighthouse, Brotherhood of Man, White Plains and First Class. **Gimme Dat Ding** was written by Albert Hammond and Mike Hazelwood for the British television children's show *Oliver and the Underworld*.

Ashton, Gardner and Dyke were three English studio vets who went hard-rock for **Sweet Resurrection**, their only hit. Ambrosia was a Los Angeles trio who preferred pop with classical flourishes, along the lines of **Holdin' on to Yesterday**. Band members claimed to play a total of 72 instruments among themselves.

American harmony groups took on a myriad of forms. **Wham Bam (Shang-a-Lang)** was an atypically pop offering from country-rockers Silver, started by John Batdorf after Batdorf and Rodney ended its five-year run in 1976. **I'd Really Love to See You Tonight** was the debut and biggest hit of England Dan and John Ford Coley, soft-country Texans who also did well on easy-listening charts. Bread, originally known as Pleasure Faire, was formed in 1969 when writer-keyboardist David Gates joined the group after the album he had produced stiffer, **The Guitf Man** was the title song of the group's fifth

album. Blue-eyed soulsters the Righteous Brothers re-formed after a three-year layoff, and eight years out of the top 40, to cut **Rock and Roll Heaven**, an homage to dead rock stars.

Three Dog Night and Dawn relied on harmonies while flaunting distinctive lead singers. Danny Hutton was the star voice of Three Dog Night, soul-influenced L.A. pop-rockers whose reading of Hoyt Axton's folkish **Never Been to Spain** attracted additional versions by both Elvis and Tom Jones. Dawn, which started as a studio-only group featuring (anonymously) early-'60s journeyman Tony Orlando, peaked in 1973 with *Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree*. **Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose** then became the first in a series of three ragtime-inspired ditties by Irwin Levine and Larry Brown that the group recorded. After that, fittingly enough for this era, the group became known as Tony Orlando and Dawn.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

1. **Gimme Dat Ding** The Pipkins • Music and lyrics by Albert Hammond and Mike Hazelwood, Duchess Music Corp. BMI./Shair Music Ltd. PRS. Capitol 2819 (1970). Courtesy of Air Records Ltd. No. 9*

2. **Wham Bam (Shang-a-Lang)** Silver • Music and lyrics by Richard Giles. Colgems-EMI Music Inc. ASCAP. Arista 0189 (1976). © 1975 Arista Records, Inc. Courtesy of Arista Records, Inc. No. 16*

3. **Rendezvous** Hudson Brothers • Music and lyrics by Bruce Johnston, William Hudson, Mark Hudson and Brett Hudson. Artists Music Inc. ASCAP. Rocket 40417 (1975). © 1975 Rocket Record Company. Courtesy of Rocket Record Company. No. 26*

4. **Heartbeat—It's a Lovebeat** The DeFranco Family featuring Tony DeFranco • Music and lyrics by William Gregory Hudspeth and Michael Kennedy. Schline Music. ASCAP. 20th Century 2030 (1973). © 1973 PolyGram Records, Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Markets, a division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc. No. 3*

5. **The Guller Man** Bread • Music and lyrics by David Gates. Kipahulu Music Co. ASCAP. Elektra 45803 (1972). © 1972 Elektra Entertainment. Produced under license from Elektra Entertainment. No. 11*

6. **Stay Awhile** The Bells • Music and lyrics by Ken Tobias. Gloosecap Music Publishing/Pangaea Music. PROCAN. Pierrecap Music Publishing Co. BMI. Polydor 15023 (1971). Courtesy of PolyGram Special Markets, a division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc. No. 7*

7. **Toast and Marmalade for Tea** Tin Tin • Music and lyrics by Steve Groves. Unichappell-Stigwood Music c/o Warner-Chappell. BMI. Atco 6794 (1971). Courtesy of PolyGram Special Markets, a division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc. No. 20*

8. **I'll Meet You Halfway** The Partridge Family • Music and lyrics by Wes Farrell and Gerry Goffin. Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. BMI. Bell 996 (1971). Courtesy of Arista Records, Inc. No. 9*

9. **Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose** Dawn featuring Tony Orlando • Music and lyrics by Irwin Levine and L. Russell Brown. Levine & Brown Music Inc. BMI. Bell 45374 (1973). © 1973 Arista Records, Inc. Courtesy of Arista Records, Inc. No. 3*

10. **My Eyes Adored You** Frankie Valli • Music and lyrics by Kenny Nolan and Bob Crewe. Kenny Nolan Publishing. ASCAP. Stone Diamond Music Corporation/Tannyboy Music Co. BMI. Private Stock 45003 (1975). © 1974 The Four Seasons Partnership. Produced under license from The Four Seasons Partnership by arrangement with Warner Special Products. No. 1*

11. **Natural High** Bloodstone • Music and lyrics by Charles E. McCormick. The Crystal Jubilee Inc. BMI. London 1046 (1973). © 1973 PolyGram Records, Inc. Courtesy of PolyGram Special Markets, a division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc. No. 10*

12. **Never Been to Spain** Three Dog Night • Music and lyrics by Hoyt Axton. Irving Music, Inc. BMI. Dunhill 4299 (1972). © 1972 MCA Records, Inc. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 5*

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15. **Resurrection Shuffle** Ashton, Gardner and Dyke • Music and lyrics by Tony Ashton, Mauve Music, Inc. ASCAP. Capitol 3060 (1971). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 40*

16. I'd Really Love to See You Tonight England Dan and John Ford Coley • Music and lyrics by Parker McGee. Dawn-breaker Music Co. BMI. Big Tree 16069 (1976). © 1976 Atlantic Recording Corp. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 2*

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18. Laughter in the Rain Neil Sedaka • Music and lyrics by Neil Sedaka and Phil Cody. Enico Music. BMI. Suite 1510/Weilbeck Music, adm. by MCA Music Publishing, a division of MCA Inc. ASCAP. Rocket 40313 (1975). © 1974 Rocket Music Co. Courtesy of Rocket Music Co. No. 1*

19. Rockin' Chair Gwen McCrae • Music and lyrics by Clarence Reid and Willie Clark. Longitude Music Co. BMI. Cat 1996 (1975). © 1975 Cat Records. Courtesy of Rhina Records Inc. No. 9*

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22. Softly Whispering I Love You The English Congregation • Music and lyrics by Roger Greenaway and Roger Cook. PolyGram International Publishing, Inc. ASCAP. Atco 6865 (1972). Courtesy of EMI USA, a division of ERG, under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 29*



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