

HEAVY HITS

SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • AM HEAVY HITS

- 1. Carry On Wayward Son Kansas
- 2. Evil Woman Don't Play Your Games With Me Crow
- 3. Jesus Is Just Alright The Dooble Brothers
- 4. Looking for a Love The J. Geils Band
- 5. Good Lovin' Gone Bad **Bad Company**
- 6. Drivin' Wheel Foghat
- 7. Two Tickets to Paradise **Eddie Money**
- 8. Good Times Roll The Cars
- 9. Girl of My Dreams Bram Tchaikovsky

- 10. Are You Ready? Pacific Gas & Electric
- 11. Stealer Free
- 12. Neanderthal Man Hotlegs
- 13. I Didn't Know I Loved You (Till I Saw You Rock and Roll) Gary Glitter
- 14. Overnight Sensation (Hit Record) The Raspberries
- 15. Long Time Boston
- 16. (Wish I Could Fly Like) Superman The Kinks
- 17. Welcome to My Nightmare Alice Cooper
- 18. Driver's Seat Sniff 'n' the Tears

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Popular music of the 1970s was characterized not by a common thread, but by the great diversity of acts that made appearances on the charts. Artists with such disparate styles as James Taylor,

Bad Company, Donna Summer and the Cars typified the

fragmentation of popu-

lar music that occurred during the era. No single theme dominated the rock 'n' roll aliwaves, and the biggest trends tended to fill niches—singer-songwriters, heavy metal and punk/ New Waye.

While blues-based rock 'n' roll fell increasingly out of favor, it still provided one of the decade's

biggest groups in the J. Geils Band. They were actually one of the first new bands to emerge in the '70s, having been formed in Boston in 1967 when a local band called the Hallucinations broke up. That group's lead singer Peter Wolf, also an artist of note and an R&B disc

jockey under the name Woofuh Goofuh, then took drummer Stephen Jo Bladd with him to join a trio already known as the J. Gells Band (named after its lead guidarist, Jerome). They

built a strong local following in Boston with their pleasing mix of modern

blues and soul, and their debut album in 1971 yielded the hit **Looking for a**

Love. This song was a remake of a 1962 No. 8
R&B hit by the Valentinos, a Cleveland family band headed by
Bobby Womack,
whose solo career was going strong around the same time that J. Geils emerged.

As the decade wore on, the J. Geils Band evolved con-

siderably; hit singles were erratic, and often not even very representative of the band. Their sound grew heavier as they became arena-rock's favorite get-down combo. But they stayed together, with the original personnel, well into the '80s, and retained their blues sensibility right to the end.

Through the decade, a few other bands showed blues or soul influences as well. Foghat, formed in London in 1971 by former Savoy Brown guitarslinger "Lonesome" Dave Peverett, was the quintessential British boogle band—even though they were based in Long Island by the time **Drivin' Wheel** hit in 1977. Pacific Gas & Electric, named after the San Francisco utilities company, was a racially-mixed, blues-gospel outfit whose biggest of three hits came with the 1970 debut **Are You Ready?**

Reigning impresario Bill Graham discovered Eddie Money while the former New York police officer was working Bay Area rock clubs. Money favored a sweet, romantic brand of R&B that owed a lot to Smokey Robinson, as evidenced by tracks such as Two Tickets to Paradise. Crow's career began as a band in Minneapolis named South 40 that won a talent contest. They were awarded free studio time and a possible contract with Columbia, but the label did not like what the band recorded. One of the contest judges, however, co-owned the independent Chicago label Amaret, and he kept after his partner for a year before winning the right to record the band under the new name. The first single flopped, but the label then overdubbed horns against Crow's wishes and released 1970's R&B-flavored Evil Woman Don't Play Your Games With Me to great success.

Mostly, however, the 1970s was a decade of getting away from the blues. Bad Company, formed partly out of the ashes of Free, is a classic example. Free had formed in England in 1968 as a "heavy" R&B band, which is most evident on All Right Now, their riff-rocking debut smash single, but which also carries over to the follow-up, **Stealer**.

Stealer not only died at No. 49 in the United States (where All Right Now had been No. 4), but it never charted at all in England. By 1973, gravelly-voiced singer Paul Rodgers and drummer Simon Kirke were forming Bad Company, one of the first arena-rock supergroups, with one refugee each from Mott the Hoople and King Crimson. The band got off to a great start with a '74 debut single (Can't Get Enough) that hit top 10, off a debut album that went to No. 1. They followed with a string of bone-crunching hard-rock singles such

as Good Lovin' Gone Bad that echoed the blues only faintly, and though chart positions on their singles did not necessarily reflect it, they remained a top band on the arena circuit into the '80s.

Neanderthal Man was the sole hit for Hotlegs, which quickly evolved into 10cc, the clever Kevin Godley, Lol Creme, Graham Gouldman and Eric Stewart band which saw considerably more success. Kansas came out of Topeka in 1974 with two keyboard players and a classically-trained violinist as a Midwestern art-rock band combining British progressive sounds with American proto-metal. Carry On Wayward Son marked their commercial breakthrough.

The J. Gells Band's original Beantown stomping grounds gave rise to two more success stories—the Cars and, of course, Boston. The former was the brainchild of Ohioans Ric Ocasek and Ben Orr, who had been working together in various bands for more than 10 years before hopping the crest of the New Wave. This quintet formed in Boston in the bicentennial year of 1976, and two years later, their glossy debut album yielded three hit singles marked, like Good Times Roll, by meticulously-crafted keyboard and

guitar hooks. The band Boston was essentially Tom Scholz, who designed products for Polaroid by day and created music in his basement studio by night. His tapes attracted Epic, and Scholz then formed a band with local musicians to re-record the songs—with, as it turned out, only minor changes. The clean, electronic arena-rock sounds were a sensation, the record business's best-selling debut ever to that point. Long Time was the follow-up single to the breakaway smash More Than a Feeling.

Gary Glitter (born Paul Francis Gadd) had been through numerous names and images before catching on; he had even appeared in Jesus Christ Superstar in the late '60s. However in 1971, he buried all the accoutrements of Paul Raven, his most recent incarnation, in a coffin which he dumped into the Thames. At that point, he became Gary Glitter, and he and longtime producer Mike Leander began recording new material marked by metronomic drumming, echo gultar, handclaps and simple sports-chant lyric hooks. Adopting a glitter image, he saw immediate success with Rock and

Roll Part 2 and seconded the notion with I Didn't Know I Loved You (Till I Saw You Rock and Roll). That was the end of his hits in America, though he remained huge in his homeland.

Around the end of the decade. Englishman Bram Tchaikovsky was swept up by the burgeoning New Wave and delivered his only hit, Girl of My Dreams. About the same time, the Kinks got new life by switching labels and concentrating on singles-oriented songs such as (Wish I Could Fly Like) Superman rather than concept albums, which had been their forte for the last decade. The album from which Superman came was their first gold record since a 1966 "greatest-hits" package of their earliest releases. Sniff 'n' the Tears was a vehicle for artist Paul Roberts. who wrote, sang, played aultar and created his own album cover art. Three years passed between the time label executives heard his demos and the time he actually released his debut album, but that did not hurt the timeliness of the atmospheric Driver's Seat.

The Raspberries, the vehicle of Beatles fanatic Eric Carmen, came out of Cleveland in 1972 with a scratch-'n'-sniff album cover and a calling-card single in Go All

the Way. Overnight Sensation (Hit Record) was the hit from a concept album about pop stardom optimistically titled Starting Over, and when that failed to come true. Carmen went solo in 1975 to great success. The previous year. Alice Cooper left the band bearing his name after a handful of crushina hard-rock singles and a reputation for theatrical stage shows. Welcome to My Nightmare was the title song to a solo album and tour much more theatrical. and much less musical, than the work he had done with his old mates. Jesus Is Just Alright was one of the only sinales that the Doobie Brothers did not write for themselves. A revival of the Byrds' last chart single (No. 97 in 1970), it easily surpassed its predecessor, though it was likewise surpassed by most of the following Doobies singles. In fact, Jesus Is Just Alright helped lay the foundation for a career that, for all the band's changes in personnel and style, stayed on course throughout the next decade.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

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18. Driver's Seat Sniff 'n' the Tears • Music and lyrics by Paul Roberts. Complacent Toonz Inc. BMI. Atlantic 3304 (1979). (b) 1979 Atlantic Recording Corp. Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 15'



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