

## **SOUNDS OF THE SEVENTIES • FEEL GOOD '70s**

1 Dance with Me Orleans

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Considering the tumultuousness of the 1960s, it's no wonder that the 1970s turned out to be a decade in search of a good time. And many sounds of the '70s delivered just that: songs designed to put you in the mood for dancing, loving, or just plain feeling good.

Feeling good was certainly what Munao Jerry's music was all about. The group came together when lead singer and quitarist Ray Dorset lost both his bass player and drummer just before a gig in his native England, Instead of cancelling the show, the ever-optimistic Dorset and crew simply turned themselves into a jug band; the resulting unique sound paid off handsomely when the rollicking In the Summertime became a hit in both the U.K. and the U.S. in (what else) the summer of 1970.

Later that year, warm musical breezes also blew Montego Bay onto the charts. Co-written by Jeff Barry, who helped author such memorable '60s hits as Be My Baby, Leader of the Pack and Sugar Sugar, this tune was veteran New York session singer Bobby Bloom's

Ione hit—his shining moment in the top-10 sun.

The notion of sun worshipping takes on an Interesting slant in B. W. Stevenson's My Maria, in which the Texan known for his trademark stovepipe hats tells his beloved that she's the sun in my morning

sky." And at the end of the day, plenty of people doubtlessly found nocturnal pleasure **Dancing** in the **Moonlight** to that so-named 1973 hit by keyboardist Ron Altback and his jazz-tinged band, King Harvest.

One normally doesn't think of central New Jersey as seafaring country, but it was indeed on the campus of Rutgers University that guitarist-singer Elliot Lurie first put together the nucleus of Looking Glass, the quartet best remembered for Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)—the 1972 chart-topping tale of a waitress forever dreaming of the sailor who stole her heart before going off to sea, never to return.

Formerly the leader of the popular '60s group the Lovin' Spoonful, John Sebastian hadn't placed a record in the top 100 for over seven years when, in 1976, he was asked to furnish a theme song for a TV show about a guy named Kotter who returns to Brooklyn to teach at his high school alma mater. A native New Yorker himself, Sebastian obliged—and found himself back at No. 1 with the fittingly titled Welcome Back.

John Sebastian wasn't the only '60s star to make a major comeback in the 1970s. In 1976, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons' December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night) became the group's first No. 1 single since 1964's Rag Doll. It was an especially sweet triumph, since the song was written and produced by the Seasons' former member and

chief songwriter, Bob Gaudio.

While he wasn't a star in the 1960s, Todd Rundgren got his start during that heady decade with the Philadelphia-based, British-Influenced psychedelic band, the Nazz, Following their breakup in 1969, studio whiz Rundgren went solo, and in '72 he scored a memorable hit with I Saw the Light, a track on which the multi-talented musician plays all of the instruments.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then the Ozark Mountain Daredevils certainly paid a big compliment to Rundgren with their decidedly Todd-like 1975 hit.

Jackie Blue. To be fair, though, this group from Springfield, Missourl, was many bands to many people—owing to the fact that during their mid-'70s heyday, they mixed bluegrass, Southern rock and country pop into one eclectic mix.

Eclecticism was also the hallmark of War, the Southern California band who first became famous as the backing group on former Animals lead singer Erlc Burdon's 1970 hit, Spill the Wine. Once they ventured out on their own, War's saucy blend of jazz, funk and Latin music—featured on distinctive songs like 1975's Why Can't We Be Friends?—made them mainstays on the pop and R&B charts throughout the first half of the decade.

Another rootsy L.A.—area band of the early 1970s was Redbone though in their case, the roots were Native American, Led by guitarist-singer Lolly Vegas and his bass-playing brother Pat, Redbone hit the top 10 in 1974 with Come and Get Your Love, a chant-happy tune that exemplified their tradition-rich, family-bred sound.

Family ties were also at the heart of the Cornelius Brothers & Sister Rose's music. Eddle, Carter and Rose Cornelius began their career as a gospel act called the Split Tones. By the early '70s, the smooth-singing trio had turned their soulful voices to pop soulful voices to pop successful results such as 1972's Too Late to Turn Back Now.

Like the Cornelius clan, the Bellamy Brothers hailed from Florida. The author of Jim Stafford's 1974 novelty hit, Spiders and Snakes, David Bellamy first cut Let Your Love Flow while he was trying to establish himself as a solo artist. It wasn't until older brother Howard joined him in a re-recording

of the song that the track (featuring Neil Diamond's touring group) really clicked, leading the duo all the way to No. 1 in 1976.

New York's Orleans also sported a pair of siblings; keyboardist-singer Larry Hoppen and bassist brother Lance. The quartet's leader.

though, was former Taj Mahal guitarist John Hall, who with his songwriter wife
Johanna penned many a memorable tune, including Janis Joplin's Half Moon. Their lilting Dance with Me was
Orleans' breakthrough

Seventies superstars the Dooble Brothers were not really brothers, of course, but the communal spirit of the San Francisco Bay area's music scene of the late 1960s certainly influenced both their name ("dooble" being a slang term for a marijuana cigarette) and their sound—a rich mix of country, pop

hit in 1975.

and blues. All three of those styles are evident in their infectious first hit, 1972's **Listen to the Music**.

Listening to the music—and learning from It—is precisely what New York singer-songwriter Robert John spent a lot of time doing. He made his first record in 1958 under his given name, Bobby Pedrick, Jr., and kept plugging away without much success as a solo artist until 1972, when he reluctantly agreed to wax a remake of the early-'60s Tokens hit, The Lion Sleeps Tonight. When it hit No. 3, John, after a mere 15 years, finally had his first top-40 hit. Now there's a real good ending to a real feelgood '70s story.

- Billy Altman

## DISCOGRAPHY

"Indicates highest Billboard chart position

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