

circular

The Ups and Downs of a Top 40 Pioneer

BY HARVEY GELLER

New York City, the late 50s. While an importunate planet awaits confirmation of reports that Charles de Gaulle will momentarily emerge from retirement to assume command of a tottering French Republic, Bill Edmonds, an enterprising newsman at radio station WMGM, places a transatlantic call to the General's residence in Versailles.

Deejay Jerry Marshall, who has lavished his audience with news bulletins and "teasers" throughout his mid-morning disc show, interrupts a Newport commercial at 10:28 a.m., jubilantly announcing that De Gaulle has indeed been contacted and will soon reveal his decision "live" and "exclusively" on WMGM's 50,000-watt clear channel outlet. Edmonds mans the mike and 200,000-plus Easterners eavesdrop on an historic conversation . . .

EDMONDS: General, I would like to . . . [pause to the crackle of overseas static] Are you there, General?

VOICE: Oui . . . Oui?

EDMONDS: I would like to have you make a statement for our listeners about the crises in France.

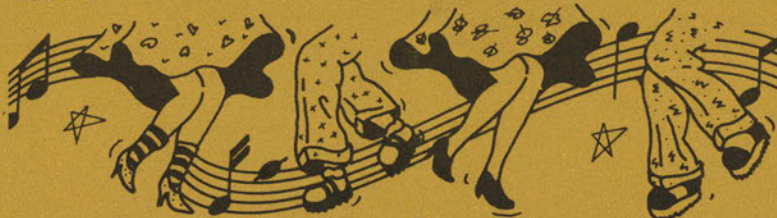
VOICE: I am an old soldier . . . If and when I take over the government, it will not be by dictatorial means. The people of France deserve a good government.

EDMONDS: Can you say at this time when you will be taking over?

VOICE: It is too soon . . . Monsieur, could you tell me, please,



Mel Leeds



who I am speaking to?

EDMONDS: My name is Bill Edmonds, one of the "Minute Men" here at WMGM . . .

VOICE: MGM, the motion picture company?

EDMONDS: Yes, well—we have a radio station here in New York City, blanketing the entire Eastern Seaboard of the United States . . .

VOICE: Oh, I see. But, of course, everybody knows that the *best* station in New York is WINS! Vive la France! (click)

A stunned WMGM staff checks with the New York Telephone Company and is told that Edmonds' overseas call hasn't yet been completed. Slowly it dawns. It is a hoax . . . a colossal canard. Soon to be the most celebrated in the annals of radio broadcasting.

WMGM's general manager, Art
Continued on page 10

Summer Break

Since *Circular* hasn't had a summer vacation in 2½ years, this season she cashes in. Beginning with the next issue and extending through the rest of the summer, *Circular* will be published once every two weeks. The coming issue will be dated July 9. *Circular* deserves a breather, and this gives you the rare opportunity to go over all your old *Circulars* in the off weeks.

Alan Price Rocks When Opportunity Knocks

If Alan Price's personal philosophy is true: "All experience prepares one only for the moment, not for the future," then his years of hard work as a musician have seasoned him well for that moment he was approached to act in and write the music for *O Lucky Man!*

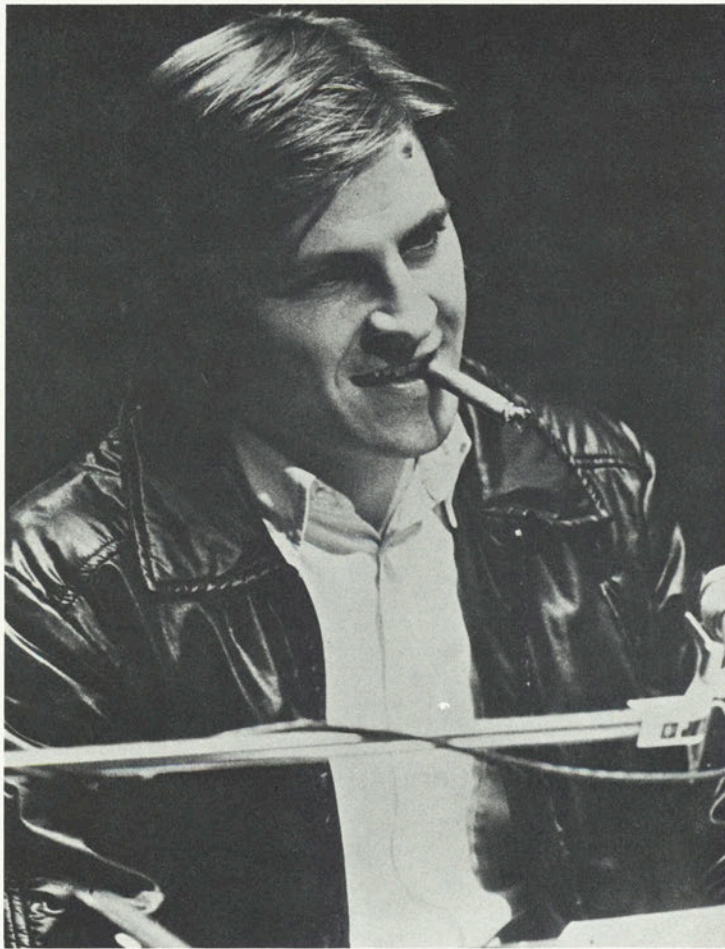
A singer, pianist and songwriter, he began with his own band, the Alan Price Combo, in England in 1958. During the next five years he played all over Great Britain, and as The Beatles and Stones prepared to set foot on American shores, he turned the Combo into the Animals. After "House of the Rising Sun" rocketed to #1, the group spent 18 grueling months touring America. It was hard and dull and Alan soon lost interest. In 1965 he quit the group. Besides, he refused to travel by air—relying mainly on boats and trains to keep him moving.

Alan retired to his native North-east England, where after some turbulently insecure months he formed a new band, the Alan Price Set.

The group ran up a string of British hits ("I Put a Spell on You," "The House That Jack Built," "Simon Smith and His Amazing Dancing Bear"), toured England and Europe and attracted the attention of director Lindsay Anderson (*If . . .*), who met him not long afterward.

Cordial Dispute

"We got into an argument about the relative merits of the Consett Male Choir, which he liked, and Ray Charles, which I liked," jokes Alan. "We didn't



see eye to eye at all."

"He lived up to his reputation of being a bit gruff and a bit aggressive," recalls Anderson, "but it was in a way I sympathized with because I know that combination of sensitivity and aggression."

Alan disbanded the Set in 1968 but surfaced again a year later with his Price To Pay TV series and a new band, Alan Price and

typically brusque way. "In England you have to work all the time because there's not a lot of money. Since I don't play in the US . . . Well, I couldn't take the time off."

Anderson and Alan remained friends, though, and in 1970 Lindsay asked him to do the music for a play he was directing, David Storey's *Home*. Alan agreed, and the play enjoyed a successful run.

A Moving Movie

Anderson next suggested that Alan be the subject for a film documentary about the life of a band on the road. Although Anderson followed Alan for almost a year tape recording interviews, concerts and snapping photos, the project was scrapped due to copyright problems. But by that time Anderson was already beginning work on *O Lucky Man!* with Malcolm McDowell (*If . . .*, *A Clockwork Orange*). He again asked Alan to write the score.

"Lindsay felt it would be a good idea to slot in music in the Brechtian sense throughout the picture. So they sent me the script and I wrote the songs following only his annotated suggestions on placement and philosophical content."

Besides creating the music, Alan and his band also appear in the film in three capacities: (1) as a band playing in limbo and seemingly unrelated to the context of the film, (2) as a group driving to London in their minibus and narrowly missing a collision with Malcolm McDowell on his bicycle and (3) practicing in their London loft.

Friends. Two more television ventures followed, *Monster Music Mash* and *The Price of Fame or Fame at any Price*, with his good friend Georgie Fame, with whom he still performs today.

During their meeting, Anderson asked Alan if he were interested in becoming an actor. Alan turned him down. "I was too busy trying to run a band," he says in his

One of England's finest musical performers makes his acting debut in Lindsay Anderson's latest flick. "I totally identified with the movie," says Price, "and I've seen it 18 times."

Though it seems strange, a trademark of *O Lucky Man!* is that the same actors and actresses appear in many different roles throughout. It is one of the film's major contentions: that the same type of person turns up in almost any walk of life, depending on luck.



Parallel Music

Alan claims to have played no part in the development of the story or his own segment of the film, but he enjoys the band's role in the picture. "The group was a catalyst/commentator that tried to be parallel to Malcolm. He was supposed to represent someone totally inexperienced, just taking his luck where he found it, while the band portrayed those who were experienced and who realized that all of the changes one goes through in life leave one no better in the end, only a little wiser."

The film's message, Alan says, is congruent with his own personal philosophy, and he feels he'll never have to wonder where his next meal is coming from.

"I totally identified with the movie, and I've seen it 18 times (54 hours!). I've had my ups and downs, like Malcolm does in the show, but I know there'll always

be a market for my talents because I'm a professional."

Slow-Brewed Disc

Aside from *O Lucky Man!*, Alan continues to tour as always and work on a record whose release has been pending for years. "I never released the album because I was never quite happy with it," Alan explains. "Besides it only serves to create doubt in people's minds. I was going to put it out about two years ago, but Warner Bros. said they weren't quite sure about it and would

I do it again? If someone else has doubts about it then you tend to have doubts yourself, so I agreed to do it over.

"I'm now starting on it for the fourth time—and that's recording, not remixing."

Meanwhile, the public should have no trouble contenting itself with the just-released WB soundtrack to *O Lucky Man!*, an exceptionally well thought out work itself.

Now, years after he began his musical trek, Alan is tasting the

sweet rewards of success again. He's never regretted leaving the Animals—"they never had a million seller after I left"—and appears to be content with things "the way they are."

In fact, he's even become the actor he couldn't be long ago.

"Actor? No! All I had to do for my part was sit in a van, which is what I've been doing for the last 12 years anyway.

"It was certainly no hassle."

— DAVID RENSIN

May Flowers Are Round and Black

If you're a regular reader of Top 40, you've probably wondered at one time or another where we came up with the catchy little subtitles used here. Well, you know something? It wasn't any big deal brainstorm or anything. We just thought 'em up one day, right out of the blue. It wasn't very hard at all. Sure hope you like 'em.

May's ten tops, bubbling unders, pleasingly plumps and not to be sneezed at's follow now, with month-before performances in parentheses.

Ten Tops

1. Doobie Bros./*The Captain and Me*
2. Seals & Crofts/*Diamond Girl*
3. Deep Purple/*Made in Japan*
4. Seals & Crofts/*Summer Breeze* (1)
5. Deep Purple/*Machine Head* (4)
6. Faces/*Ooh La La*
7. Fleetwood Mac/*Penguin*
8. Foghat/*Rock & Roll*

9. Deep Purple/*Who Do We Think We Are!* (3)
10. Arlo Guthrie/*Last of the Brooklyn Cowboys*

Bubbling Under

11. Doobie Bros./*Toulouse Street* (7)
12. Cold Blood/*Thriller*
13. Malo/*Evolution*
14. The Allman Brothers Band/*Eat a Peach* (8)
15. Todd Rundgren/*A Wizard, A True Star*
16. T-Rex/*Tanx*
17. Alice Cooper/*Killer* (9)
18. Jethro Tull/*Aqualung* (13)

19. Alice Cooper/*Love It to Death* (10)
20. Steeleye Span/*Parcel of Rogues*

Pleasingly Plump

21. Neil Young/*After the Gold Rush* (14)
22. Beach Boys/*Holland* (6)
23. Robin Trower/*Twice Removed From Yesterday*

24. Foghat (12)
25. Neil Young/*Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (20)
26. Deep Purple/*Deep Purple in Rock* (17)
27. Neil Young/*Harvest* (15)
28. Wet Willie/*Drippin' Wet* (5)
29. *The Marshall Tucker Band* (11)
30. *America* (29)

Not to Be Sneezed At

31. Jimi Hendrix/*Electric Ladyland* (24)
32. Fleetwood Mac/*Future Games* (28)
33. Fleetwood Mac/*Bare Trees* (22)
34. Mason Proffit/*Bareback Rider*
35. Black Sabbath/*Paranoid* (26)
36. Gordon Lightfoot/*If You Could Read My Mind* (30)
37. Jimi Hendrix/*Smash Hits* (25)
38. Alice Cooper/*Easy Action* (37)
39. Van Morrison/*Moondance* (27)
40. *The Best of Peter, Paul and Mary* (35)

Bronchitis Shortens Breath

Germs Fly Between Tuesday and Monday

In hot pursuit of a fantastic Caribbean tale (see below), Groovy Tuesday last week flew in and out of Dominica unsuspectingly collecting Latin American bacteria. While she related the scoop to me we shared a glass of Pertussin. Whatever the bug was it got me too, so this is a short stroke you're getting this week.



Ruby Monday

State of Emergency Declared Over DeeJay

Dominican Premier Edward Leblanc removed beloved and much-listened-to disc jockey Daniel Caudeiron from the air last week. Leblanc's motives for doing this, according to Groovy, centered around Caudeiron's comments on the air about Watergate and his vocalized permissive views on sexual activity. Leblanc reportedly also did not approve of what he termed "unsuitable" pop tunes and Calypso music which Caudeiron (p.k.a. "Papa Dee") featured on his Saturday show, Teen Tempo. The population promptly rose up in a fury: all the unions struck and local merchants closed up shops, successfully bringing the island's economy to a halt. Immediately, the local militia confiscated guns of all kinds from weapon shops and individuals and banned public meetings

until June 30. Leblanc's rationale for all this brouhaha is that he believes a "third force" is trying to overtake the government and so far he has refused to negotiate with representatives of the Civil Service Association.

A Moving, Shaking Globe Trotter

English A&R man Larry Yaskiel (pictured herein somewhere)



has become a VIP at WB these days. Talent spotter nonpareil, his list of discoveries is anything but spotty. Several years ago Yaskiel was managing director of A&M Records in England. While there he signed and broke the likes of Humble Pie, Stealers Wheel, the Strawbs, Rick Wakeman and Peter Frampton. Yaskiel specializes in building an act's career by finding compatible management, adequate funding and equipment, effective promotion and, most important, the perfect producer. Anyone who can do all this is OK with us. What follows is an impressive list of signings on Larry's say-so: Back Door (an instrumental group consisting of Ron Aspery on sax, Colin Hodgkinson on bass and Tony Hicks on drums), who are being produced by Felix Pappalardi with an album due this month; Leo Sayer (a lyricist

Hot Stills and Chilling Ills

Klaus Doldinger and his group Passport being welcomed to these shores for the first time (to my knowledge) in the middle of November. They'll launch a preliminary tour in Mexico, taking in Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterey. A hop, skip and jump up the Coast and they'll play the fabulous Whisky-a-Go-Go. One giant step to the left and they'll be chopping around Japan. The world waits . . . **Chris Wright, Terry Ellis and Chrysalis crew** have taken over the world-famous English Rainbow. In case you're not in the know, the Rainbow is to England what the Fillmores were to the U.S.A. . . . Smashing through the Iron Curtain this week is **Alice Cooper**. Believe it or not, *Billion Dollar Babies* is #1 in Yugoslavia. Wait'll they see the show . . . **Groovy's Hold-Your-Breath-Department** reports **Fabian** will be September's nude fold-out in *Playgirl* . . . **Faces** have replaced dear departed **Ronnie Lane** with a gent named **Tetsu Yamauchi**, who everyone knows was formerly with **Free** . . . Chatter from Monday Singles Meetinggoers indicates **Tower of Power's** newest 45, "So Very Hard to Go," doesn't have much farther to go before it's a #1 across the continent. "So Very Far" rated one of the Big Three Spots in *Cash Box*, charting in that rag at #38 with a bullet. It won a Super Seven

Star in *Billboard* at #39 and pulled in #36 with a square in *Record World* . . . Meanwhile, the **Doobie Brothers** are home with "Long Train Runnin'" at #9 in the *Board*, #14 with a bullet in the *Box* and #12 in the *World* . . . **Deep Purple** is, of course, the super-trouper group of the month with, count 'em, three LPs on all the charts (*Made in Japan*, *Machine Head* and *Who Do We Think We Are!*), plus 45 "Smoke on the Water" continues to burn up Singles Charts everywhere . . . **Marc Bolan** planning on videotaping his recording sessions, taking place later this month in Munich . . . Happy, Happy Birthday Baby to **Carly Simon Taylor** (June 25); **Georgie Fame** (June 26); **Bruce Johnston** (June 27); **Richard Rogers** and **David Knight** (June 28); **Ian Paice, Nelson Eddy, Little Eva** and **Billy Hinsche** (June 29); **Florence Ballard** and **Lena Horne** (June 30) and **Marc Benno** (July 1) . . . **Ruby's Final Hot Still** comes in the form of news from the *Hollywood Reporter*. It seems that **Las Vegas' Public Relations Association** (made up of hotel publicity directors and advertising executives) is searching for an official town song. For Las Vegas? It's gotta be "Tumbling Dice," what else?

From Gnidrolog to Steeleye



Back Door

who, with melody-maker Dave Courtney, created all the songs on Roger Daltry's currently hot LP) is coming out with one all his own shortly, produced by onetime singer Adam Faith; Rab Noakes (a singer-songwriter formerly with Stealers Wheel), who'll be cutting in Nashville with ever-so-famous songwriters Leiber and Stoller as producers; Ernie Smith (a solo artist of Jamaican citizenship with several #1 hits there to his credit) will be waxing shortly also under Leiber and Stoller's production; a new group Atlas (four-man band including vocals, bass, guitar and drums), whose producer will be Lou Reisner (famous himself for his work on *Tommy*), and who are now handled by Cat Stevens' manager, Barry Knost; Three Man Army, an English trio made up of Adrian Curtis (formerly with Buddy Miles), who is lead singer and guitarist, Paul Gurvitz (formerly with Parrish and Gurvitz), who plays twin-neck bass, and drummer Tony Newman (formerly with Sounds Inc., Jeff Beck and May Blitz). All of these plus T-Bone Walker, for whose signing we also have Larry Yaskiel to thank.

LONDON—If you thought it would only be a matter of time until Steeleye Span got themselves a drummer (particularly after the developments on the *Parcel of Rogues* album), then you were right. Although the group originated without a drummer and performed and recorded quite happily that way for several years, they now find themselves increasingly attracted by percussion. Peter Knight says that it became obvious that they could do with a full-time professional drummer and the one they settled on, after wading through some 50 applicants, is Nigel Pegrum (nine years



Nigel Pegrum

a pro, the most recent two and a half with Gnidrolog). Nigel will also play woodwind instruments for Steeleye. The band are tremendously active at the moment, debuting the new man (Now we are six!), getting set to play Ire-

land, then to return to the States for the third time in seven months, then (pant, pant) back home for the Cambridge Folk Festival in late July. Meanwhile, back here in June, the Steeleyes are playing at a pair of the Oxford Summer Balls—legendary all-night flings with strawberries and champagne and ladies in long dresses with dew-stained hems.

Cricket Rages

Speaking of seasonal delights, the huge color telly in the WEA offices was found switched on in the middle of the afternoon last week so that all those so inclined could take in the test match between England and New Zealand. Cricket is every bit as popular as uncomprehending American jokes about it have led you to believe. I will not attempt to explain the game to you here and now (nor could I), but suffice it to say it is the chess of athletics. Although the stereotype cricket enthusiast is an older man, Marc Bolan manned a rock & roll team a couple of years ago and there are many musicians who share his interest. Recently the paper revealed a PR plan to pitch (forgive pun) a younger crowd by getting various celebrities known to like the game to do their bit. They mentioned Mick Jagger. Is he secretly a dynamite fast bowler?

Staging Silverworld

There are complex plots afoot to develop this thing of Kenny Young's—this thing being his latest LP creation, *Last Stage for Silverworld*—into a brain-boggling stage production, complete with things none of us have heard of

yet. Does this sound vague, if exciting? Well, they were being so secretive about it at the office I thought I'd stumbled into the White House. Details to follow, no matter what it takes to get them . . .

Another Doc

The tee-shirt mania continues unabated and WEA London must be the reigning exponents. The other day Bill McAllister, who exhausts himself on behalf of the "A" of WEA, treated me to a Dr. John, which I think was the tee-shirt man's finest hour. It turns heads in London, but in the country it's downright provocative. I was poking through a cider press in deepest Somerset when a pair of red and rotund Falstaffian gents insisted on knowing exactly whose name was spelled out in silver glitter across my frontal extremities. Since I knew the truth would be hard enough to get across I just said Dr. John was a famous Olympic brain surgeon.

—SHELLEY BENOIT

Vinyl Statistics

Circular is pleased to present a weekly running account of newborn Warner Family Records, everything from 7 to 12 inches in diameter, a list stripped of adjectives, avoidable nouns and even verbs. This week gives birth to two singles, no known albums.

SINGLES (June 20)

"Happy Man"—Dee Clark—
Warner Bros. single WB 7720
"Hands"—Debbie Dawn—
Warner Bros. single WB 7721

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Birth of a Supers mashsingle

Rrrriiii . . . Rrrriiii . . .
Rrrriiii . . .

Something was ringing.

It was the telephone. The telephone in the den.

"It's your dime," I snarled huskily into the receiver.

It was Reprise Records' executive David Berson. Calling me. But his voice lacked its usual cheering amiability. Rather, it was business-like, almost terse.

Only a dope would fault David Berson for being terse. Ever. Like all visionaries, it's David Berson's cruddy fate to be grossly misunderstood in his own time. Lots of his fellow Reprise biggies think he's loco because of the people he's brought to the label. Like the group I'm in: Christopher Milk.

But this time he was terse for a reason only indirectly related to the visionary's classic woes. This time he was terse because, with our album threatening to explore uncharted perigees of public non-acceptance and the Whisky-A-Go-Go being only one of a host of local showcases sworn to have us back only at the end of a rope, he wasn't finding it child's-play to get us the manager and agent we so desperately require.

"We've little recourse, at this point, but to try to get something going record-wise," he said tersely.

"Wadja have in mind?" I wondered aloud.

"I suspect the band's making a hit single might create the sort of interest we're looking for," he confided.

"I'm hep," I rejoined, "but Chris Thomas, the recording wizard who produced our spectacularly unsuccessful debut album, *Some People Will Drink Anything* (Reprise MS 2111), has numerous commitments in his native England, what with Pink Floyd, Roxy Music and Procol Harum being but a few of the perennial Merit Picks who wouldn't dream of entering a recording studio without him."

Other Ears

"I'm apprised of that," Berson assured me. "I was going to suggest another producer."

He denied that he had Jimmy Miller in mind.

He denied that he had Lou Adler in mind.

He denied that he had George Martin in mind.

He denied that he had Gamble and Huff in mind.

He denied that he had Norman Whitfield in mind.

He denied that he had Phil Spector in mind.

"Who ya got in mind?" I asked him.

He hesitated, warily. "You," he finally managed.

"Hey, man, you know how busy I am with . . ." I began.

"Yes, I'm aware of all your other commitments," he interrupted, "but hey, this makes a lot of sense. Absolutely!"

I looked out the den window. It was drizzling. "Well, considering that I'm in the group, I suppose I can squeeze them in," I sighed.

"Dynamite!" he enthused. His voice was warmly amiable, assured and optimistic once more.

★ ★ ★

It was my superb good fortune to have at hand for this project a song that had been crying out for release as a single ever since I'd written it some five months earlier.

This song had, in a word, everything. It had an unforgettable attention-demanding riff that I'd adapted from that of "Finding It Rough," the 1966 chart blockbuster Chris Thomas had penned for the Everly Bros., Don and Phil. It had a stirring chorus based upon a dramatic-sounding chord sequence (E-Am-G) that came to me one evening during Bowling For Dollars with Chick Hearn. And the bridge, originally conceived as the main melody of a song in which I conspired vaguely to rhyme "Magnolia" with "console you," boasted most of the loveliest intervals available within an octave and a half.

Moreover, when performed at the tempo and with the inflections thereof favored by the paragons of How Teenage America Is Dancing These Days, it had the effect of reducing in both types of volume our audience's furious bellows of "You suck!"

Disturbing Undies

Unpropitiously, though, it also had a working title ("Lingerie") and lyrics (for example: "Don't rush out the door/I want nothing more than that you walk/Forward and yon with nothing on/Save these black lace undergarments")

inspired by a Lili St. Cyr advertisement in *Candid* magazine that I supposed might make at least a handful of program directors across the length of America just a little fidgety.

What did I do? Precisely what Cole Porter, Bob Dylan, Bert Brecht or Bernie Taupin would have done in a like fix: I ingested some benzedrine and knocked out a whole new set of lyrics—lyrics that could offend no one save my most virulent detractors, lyrics that mentioned Rod Stewart and included all of the month's more popular teenage colloquialisms, lyrics whose theme was at once simple but universal: the metamorphosis from a loser/geek/underdog just like you or me into a hot-shot superdude who bills himself as Dynamite with a !

Would that I were sufficiently ruthless to claim to have myself devised the step-by-step "game-plan" (to wit: record the basic rhythm track, overdub whatever additional instrumentation and vocals you may fancy and finally combine the ensuing 16 or however-many different signals onto one mono or two stereo tracks), but, as nearly everyone knows, credit for this immensely efficient scheme rightfully accrues to famed English producer Chris Thomas.

At whomever the Hatlo hat may ultimately tip, at any rate, that's exactly how we done it with "Dynamite!"

Ralph Oswald (on rhythm guitar), The Kiddo (on bass) and G. "Pee Wee" Whiz (on snare drum, bass—or "kick"—drum and cowbell) required only one "take"

John Ned Mendelsohn, fulltime musician with the nation's only rock group named after a dairy and sometime writer, traces the creation of Christopher Milk's new single from telephonic sperm cell to vinylite fetus.

to endow a roll of 16-track tape with a flawless foundation for our embryonic chartbuster.

Wall of Milk

This, or, as people who have suffered prolonged exposure to our pint-sized Mr. Whiz are often horrified to catch themselves saying, "dis," accomplished, the moment was now propitious for the overlaying of the additional instrumentation that would imbue "Dynamite!" with the characteristic almost-Wagnerian "wall of sound" that the public has come to expect from Christopher Milk.

Surehandedly, angelic-featured The Kiddo and Lennon-lookalike Ralph Oswald "overdubbed" our torrid waxing's infectious instrumental riff on clickily percussive Rickenbacker bass and three searing lead guitars, respectively.

Then Ralph Oswald lovingly placed his blond Stratocaster, Big Ernest, in his/its case and strode confidently to the tack piano, for which instrument he had earlier devised a most attractive arrangement for our probable-platinum's exquisitely melodic bridge. This he performed faultlessly after a couple of false starts which found his forehead joining his slender artist's digits among the 88 owing to his having consumed a characteristically immoderate ration of imported lager somewhere between basic-rhythm-track takes 1a and 1p.

Slapped back into the world of the sober by The Kiddo, whose seraphic good looks bely his burliness, Ralph Oswald was subsequently able to grace our tape with the required Hammond organ part.



Photo by Richard Creamer

Sixteen grueling hours were required to crown the recording with my own ebullient but erratic baritone lead vocals.

So disproportionate an expenditure of time was necessitated by my incapacity to sing more than two consecutive notes in tune, around which deficiency I de-toured as had Goulet, Tormé and Lesley Gore before me. As soon as I'd sung my two consecutive in-tune notes the engineer would interrupt the forward rush of the tape. I'd have a smoke, do a few tonal breath-control exercises and try to "psyche [myself] up" for the next two notes. At my signal the engineer would start the tape where I'd left off—"punch in," in

the vivid slang of the recording studio, and I'd blurt out the next two notes. And so on.



Mixing, in the words of famed English pinballer Chris Thomas, "is hell."

It doesn't mean beans how much sweat you've sweated getting everything as close to perfect as personnel allow. Because you can screw everything up in the mix just the same.

You listen to your 16 tracks over and over and over, changing levels and EQs until your guts feel like they're full of hot lead. You run through practice mixes until your ears scream out, "Enough! No

more, please! I'll tell you anything you wanna know!!!!"

You can't fall asleep afterwards. Because you know when you listen the next morning to what you finally settled for it's not going to sound like something that will soon be blasting from a trillion car radios across America. You know it's going to sound like turds, Mr. Big.

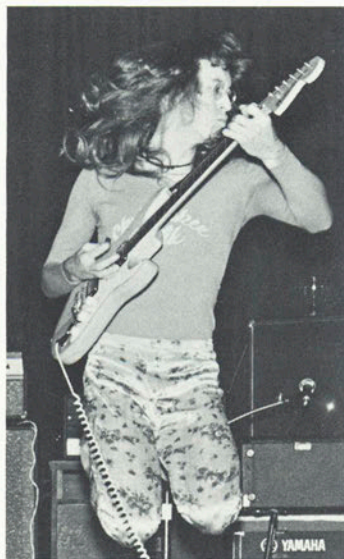
The evening that I was to combine the 16 bombastic tracks of the adolescent "Dynamite!" on two tracks that would alter the course of American popular music, I brought with me to the studio a cassette player, a cassette of *Exile on Main St.* and a pair of headphones. Upon seating myself

Christopher Milk Speaks Now

Continued from page 7

at the control-board, I inserted the cassette into the cassette-player, my head into the headphones and the headphones into the cassette-player, whose volume I turned to maximum.

Taking care to remove the headphones from my head only when it came time to remove myself from the studio, I was able to prevent my critical perspective on the



song being warped by overexposure thereto.

"Let's do one," I instructed the engineer after noticing that he had stopped twirling controls and had assumed an expectant pose.

"I think we've got it," I announced happily a couple of hours later, after divining from his expression and actions that we had, since my first pronouncement, tried several.

"Yeah, that's the one," I assured him after similarly divining

that he had just played one of our mixes back for my re-scrutinization.

"Dynamite!" was mixed, and therefore ready to become the anthem of a new generation of pop fans, to keep the flame of the Cosmic Choogles blazing brazenly, to sell hundreds of thousands of copies and save Christopher Milk from extinction, to . . .

★ ★ ★

Rrrriiiiing . . . Rrrriiiiing . . .
Rrrriiiiing . . .

Something was ringing.

It was the telephone. The telephone in the den.

"It's your dime," I snarled huskily into the receiver.

It was Reprise Records executive David Berson. Calling me. But his voice lacked its usual cheering amiability. Rather, it was business-like, almost terse.

Before I knew it, he had told me that it was the unanimous decision of the sales and promotion staffs at Warner Bros. Records that "Dynamite!" was totally devoid of commercial, artistic or other value.

I reeled.

As the tears began to trickle down my cheeks, and as I prepared to smash a fist, clenched in rage and frustration, through a life-sized oil portrait of Ron Saul that adorns the desk in the den of Chateau Mendelsohn, he continued:

"Having read your recent article in *Circular*, entitled 'Christopher Milk on the Road,' I recognize that your travails in the Northwest outback have left the Milk's spirits at low ebb. I am, therefore, in the name of Christian compensation,

going to put my own ass on the block and allow you to try twice more."

★ ★ ★

"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace," the A-side of the single that will surely catapult Christopher Milk into non-obscure, is so rhythmically infectious and melodically irresistible a song that it sounded career-savingly commercial even on its composer's—Terry Reid's—second album, which had apparently been recorded on a \$19.95 cassette-corder.

"Pee Wee" drummed and The Kiddo sang in the background and played bass. Laughing Ralph contributed dual organs, rhythm, and slide guitars, as well as background and lead vocals. A third organ part may be attributed to Danny the Session Man, a friend of Wally the Engineer. Blame me for the mellotron.

The recording of "Speak Now . . ." 's B-side, "I Want To Hold Your Hand," was one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences, one of those dreamed-about symphonies of felicitous circumstances, that many read about in *Circular* but few actually know the ecstasy of attending.

Having only moments before putting the finishing touches on "Speak Now" in Sun West's elegant Studio B, we decided to unwind by taking our respective axes in hand and "jamming"—that is, improvising in a casual, "laid-back" manner—on favorite themes of Thelonious Monk, as musicians like ourselves will at times.

As our extraordinary luck had

it, not a few of rock music's Truly Big Names also happened to be in Sun West that balmy March



evening, and all of them happened to be taking breaks from their own respective projects as we began to jam. So enticing must have been the vibes from our jam that they all wandered in and joined us on whatever axes were handy.

As we turned from Monk to moptops, Wally the Engineer alertly set the tapes to rolling, having quite correctly concluded that posterity shouldn't be cheated of what was to come.

The strings and background vocals at the end of the track were

Merv Griffin's Early Years

contributed by a few representatives of the L.A. Symphony Orchestra violin section and the King Family, respectively. Not wishing to encroach upon Dr. Demento's jurisdiction, but fearful of violation-of-contract suits, I can only hint at the identities of the other participants:

Vocals and harmonica on the first verse and bridges were provided by the gentleman whose garbage used to be ransacked frequently by a certain Alan J. W—, who was once called The Poet of His Generation but who has remained in relative seclusion since a motor-vehicle mishap in the mid-1960s. This gentleman brought with him a native Oklahoman with whom he's been collaborating recently, a funky fellow who first strode into the limelight as the ringmaster of a troupe of deranged canines and Britons.

This latter fellow was much influenced at the beginning of his career by the True Immortal who makes a characteristically flamboyant entrance on piano towards the end of the second bridge, a personage who fell into international disfavor for wedding a pre-pubescent cousin.

For the Warner/Reprise album of your choice . . . Oops.

And then, as always, there's "Pee Wee" Dragotta on drums, Il Kiddo on bass, and Laughing Ralph Oswald on guitar.

That's me bellowing in vain to be heard over the King Family in the last verse, and the song, of course, was written and originally popularized by the famous English rock group The Beatles.



The Doctor waxed a mite nostalgic last week, as we turned our quizzical attention to the twilight of the Big Band Era, and the simultaneous arrival of the vocal stars who ruled the roost in the immediate pre-rock era. These events are most famously represented, of course, by Frank Sinatra's magnificent graduation from the Tommy Dorsey and Harry James orchestras.

Last week I invited you to match up an octet of thrushes and romantic baritones with an eight-some of bandleaders with whom they primed their pipes in earlier days. First of the lot to wiggle a stylus was Perry Como, who was taking vocal refrains with Ted Weems' band as long ago as 1937, antedating Frankie by three years or so (though the two singers' ascensions to solo stardom were roughly contemporary). Perry was followed by Kay Starr, who started at the very top with a brief stint as Glenn Miller's featured vocaliste.

Kay's efforts were not among

Glenn's greatest hits; neither did Rose Mary Clooney's efforts with Tony Pastor's band approach the sales of the solo titles she cut after the merger of her first two names. Two other canaries on our list, however, really hit the jackpot as bandsingers: Peggy Lee, whose bluesy version of "Why Don't You Do Right" (a song whose original title had been "Weed Smoker's Dream") became one of Benny Goodman's biggest sellers; and Ella Mae Morse, who catapulted herself, bandleader Freddie Slack and Capitol Records to stardom as she charmed the hipsters with "Cow Cow Boogie," part of the label's very first release in 1942. One of the last of the big, big bands was Les Brown and his Band of Renown, the launching pad for several notable singers including Doris Day. Don Cornell, who could make such trifles as "I'm Yours" sound like something out of Puccini himself, pinned his first VU meter as vocalist with Sammy Kaye's band in the early 1940s. Our final star was probably the dimmest of the bunch, vocal-wise; his journeyman efforts with Freddy Martin's band were followed by a notably hitless solo career, but he made up on the tube for what he lacked on disc: Merv Griffin.

Question for Next Week

Another salutary trend of the 1940s was the frequent borrowing of classical melodies for pop music. That was, of course, an era in which classical records amounted to over 40% of the industry's dollar volume, several times their present-day slice of the pie. Young people of the 40s could be assumed to be consider-

ably more familiar with the music of the masters than are those of the 70s, an assumption evidently made by the late Spike Jones (a true master himself), who based several of his most riotous roasts on classical pieces.

One of Spike's finest draws its music and its title from an instrumental interlude from the solitary well-known opera of an otherwise obscure Italian composer (1834-1886), and its plot (?) from the Indianapolis 500. One would think that would be sufficient comedic glory for any piece of music, classical or otherwise. Fourteen years later, though, this very same composition was plundered once again, yielding the melody for one of the biggest-selling comedy singles in the history of Warner Bros. Records (perhaps *the* all-time champ). The album on which that gilded disc appeared is now out of print, but to receive any in-print single album in the Burbank catalog, you need only be the first to name that WB smash, plus the title (remember, it's the same as Spike's) and composer of the classical original.

The winner of Dr. Demento's three-weeks-ago contest question (Q: Name the English group and LP released in 1970 on another label that preceded the single from Faces, "Borstal Boys." A: The album was *Fresh Out of Borstal* by Fresh on RCA.) is Richard Power, Jr. of Tallahassee, Fla., who requested *Electric Ladyland* by Jimi Hendrix.

Honorable mention, but no album, to Mike Kostek of Montague City, Mass.

Each week the good doctor poses a music lore question whose answer is the focus of his subsequent column. The earliest reply to his question (mailed to Dr. Demento, c/o *Circular*, Warner Bros. Records, 3701 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91505) wins any single Warner/Reprise catalog album (please specify choice). Answers will be geographically pro-rated on the basis of two days per time zone, ties will be judged on the basis of penmanship, wit and lucidity.

Top 40 Trend Setter

Continued from page 1

Tolchin, is furious. He phones WINS' general manager, Jock Fearnhead, curiously suggesting that Fearnhead's new program director, Mel Leeds, is the villainous jackal. He threatens, "The next time I see Melvin, I'm gonna punch him in the nose." Fearnhead advises, "If Leeds really is responsible, you should hire him." *Time* magazine and the international news services detail the hoax. *The New York World-Telegram's* front page waggishly headlines, "Who Had De Gaulle to Call De Gaulle?"

Long presumed but unconfirmed till now, the hoax was hatched by Leeds, with the aid of an audacious staff newscaster, Tom O'Brien. Performed to the backdrop hum of a "ham" tape, it starred O'Brien as De Gaulle and featured O'Brien's Scandinavian stewardess fiancée as an overseas operator. "The strange thing," Leeds now confesses, "is that none of us discovered till months after that De Gaulle never spoke a word of English."

Leeds, who projects the eurythmy and demeanor of a hebetic Fred Astaire, was a prime target of the payola investigations in the late 50s. He was also the man who brought deejays Alan Freed, "Roscoe," Humble Harve, Tom Clay and Peter Tripp to the West Coast, pioneered free-form "underground" radio in LA and, 10 years earlier, as an unglorified war-god of the rock revolt, introduced Top 40 radio to New York.

The primogenitor of Top 40's tight playlist format was, undoubtedly, Your Lucky Strike Hit Parade, a twice-weekly one-hour

barrage of the most bromidic songs of that age, first heard on CBS-radio in the mid-30s. Its promiscuous concubine was an anonymous juke box in a nameless bar on 15th Street in Omaha, Nebraska, in the mid 50s. Its probable patriarchs were Bill Stewart, formerly of the Todd Storz radio chain, and Storz himself. Stewart often reminisces on how the formula was born "around 1955" in that Omaha bar.

From Odd Mix to Top 40

"We were sitting there and the juke box was playing, coming up to the same song. I can't remember what the song was but it was rock & roll. We must have sat there for four or five hours . . . I guess it was midnight or whatever time they closed and everyone was gone and they were kind giving us motions like we were supposed to leave. And the waitress went over and put a quarter in the juke box . . . Played the record three times in a row . . . The same record we'd heard all night long."

While Stewart's nostalgic narrative is engaging, it is not astonishing. The wonder is that Top 40 hadn't arrived earlier. Martin Block, who hosted The Make Believe Ballroom (a show that one critic described as "a careful selection of the most dreadful music ever put on records") for 25 years on WNEW, NY, had already discovered that his Hooper was highest on Saturday mornings, when he programmed the Top 24 juke box titles, culled from *Cash Box*, and lowest on Thursday nights, when he auditioned

new, unfamiliar sides. The Todd Storz format was nothing more nor less than Your Lucky Strike Hit Parade rockin' round the clock.

While Stewart was experimenting with his closed music list at KOWH in Omaha, Leeds, who had served his musical apprenticeship with several Brill Building publishers and at WNEW (assisting Al Trilling in the music library while helping produce the Art Ford and Rayburn and Finch shows) was a junior executive at General Artists Corp.

"In 1956," says Leeds, "I heard about an opening at KOWH . . . Bill Stewart interviewed me at the McAlpin Hotel in New York. Along with half a dozen other hopefuls I was shipped to Omaha and put through a 'crash' program." Out of that group Leeds was the only one selected for a position in the Todd Storz operations. He was dispatched to WHB (Kansas City, Mo.) where, for several months, he worked under Bud Armstrong. "But I was itching to get back to New York and I heard that WINS was looking for a program director.

Days of WINS and Roses

"Their format was neither fish nor fowl . . . no ratings to speak of. They had sports with Bill Stern and women's reports with Maggie McNellis. I was interviewed by Fearnhead and chosen in July, 1957, to revamp the operation. It emerged as a loose Top 40: about 60 titles including new sides and standards with meaning—a 'Pick Hit of the Week,' an 'Album of the Week.' Murry the K (Kaufman) joined us and, along with Alan Freed and Jack Lacy and a lot of wild ideas, we were #1 within six

months. And we stayed there.

"I wish I could say I was responsible for the success of Alan Freed. But he was the King, bar none—the guy who took 'race' music out of the ghetto and christened it rock & roll . . . his was the one show I couldn't control. He even refused to play the station's jingles.

"Our logo, 'You're listening to 10-10, WINS, New York,' was heard after every record. It got so that if we missed playing it, we got complaints from our listeners. I tried to pattern the station after the Daily News: sensationalism. If there wasn't any news, we'd invent it. We did things in those days that were unheard of. We kept our listener on the edge of his seat."

Promotion man Tony Richland recalls his early years with Famous Music, contacting people at WINS. "I was too young and green to ever get to see Leeds personally. But I was envious watching the 'heavies' walk into his office—Mo Shulman, Mel Turoff, Danny Winchell. Leeds got credit for a lot of Top 40 innovations in those days. But in recent pieces about radio in the 50s I never see his name mentioned. It could be that I thought he invented a lot of the stuff that he didn't because I was a kid and didn't know. But he was very powerful."

The Probe

When the payola scandal hit the front pages with Freed, Peter Tripp and Leeds as its major New York targets, WINS president Elroy McCaw came to Leeds' apartment and suggested he take an extended cruise to the Caribbean.



Greatest Payola Hits We Have Known—and Loved was the working title for this mock LP art, posed by Mel Leeds and rock rajah Alan Freed in 1962.

Mel told him, "I wouldn't take a trip across the Hudson—it would only prove my guilt." But McCaw finally prevailed upon him to accept a new position, as general manager of KDAY in Los Angeles.

The trial in Criminal Court was based on New York's antiquated commercial bribery law: the state would have to prove that the employee accepted gratuities without the knowledge of his employer. But when Leeds, his lawyer established, had asked management for a raise, he was told, "Go to your record company friends for the money." In September of 1962, the state prosecutor moved

for a dismissal and *all* charges against Leeds were dropped.

"The people I took money from," Leeds attests, "were those I made arrangements with . . . I was hired as a 'consultant' by a number of top labels, I had meetings with them in their offices, listening to masters, helping them select releases. And I paid taxes on that money—in fact the station's accountant handled my returns. It's laughable. People are under the impression that there were hundreds of thousands involved. The highest figure for any one year didn't exceed \$10,000. I never solicited. Men would come to me

"In the late 50s, program directors would come to New York and tape WINS for 24 to 48 hours straight. Our slogan, 'The Station That Other Stations Listen To,' may have been corny, but it was true."

and put records on my desk with \$500 bills attached. I never accepted these records and we didn't play them."

Probe Refugees

"Alan Freed was a 'consultant' also," says Leeds, "but he was involved with copyrights—not just cash . . . Alan was incensed when the investigations began. We tried joking but still it was all downhill after that.

"He abused his body. He didn't seem to care anymore. He started living in the past, never quite adjusting to the fact that he was no longer the Great Pied Piper."

Performer-music historian Ian Whitcomb in his newly published book, *After the Ball (Pop Music From Rag to Rock)*, affirms, "Freed lived for rock 'n' roll and he died for her too,—destroyed by the payola investigations of the late 50s."

At KDAY, a "daytime" station, Leeds enlisted an all-star cast of probe refugees—Freed, Tom Clay from Detroit, Jay Michaels from Pittsburgh, Peter Tripp from New York. "Even though we made a lot of noise in the short time we were on the air, we had two strikes against us. In the winter months we'd be off the air at 4:30 p.m. while the rest of the stations were raising hell."

Leeds' next assignment was KBLA, a "50-watt teapot station in the San Fernando Valley." Bill "Roscoe" Mercer and Humble Harve (Miller) were imported from the East. "But," Leeds maintains, "the station couldn't be heard beyond Magnolia Boulevard." Leeds quit KBLA in 1965, sold

commercial packages for a couple of years, then rejoined radio with KLAC as both assistant program director and program director for sister station KMET-FM.

Broken Bones

In October, 1970, while driving on the Ventura Freeway, Leeds swerved his car to avoid hitting a station wagon loaded with youngsters.

"I later discovered that I had shaved off 110 feet of fencing. Every bone on the left side of my body was broken. I had a brain concussion and suffered loss of memory." Doctors spent nine months piecing him together.

Recovered now, but no longer in broadcasting, Leeds expresses a desire to return to radio.

"It can be the most exciting medium in the world. But there are too many pirates borrowing other's formulas. In the late 50s, program directors would come to New York and tape WINS for 24 to 48 hours straight. Our slogan, 'The Station That Other Stations Listen To,' may have been corny, but it was true. There was something new happening there every day. We were willing to experiment: grabbing at ideas that were fresh, timely, exciting. Some, after 15 years, are still being aired."

Perhaps its most memorable ID was a solemn, stentorian-toned pronouncement—"We are the only station in the world that can make this statement . . . You are tuned to 10-10, WINS, New York."

North to Alaska, Go North the Rush Is On

America

8/26 Los Angeles

Tim Buckley

6/26-7/1 Kansas City
7/5-8 Placitas, New Mexico
7/12-15 Houston

Cold Blood

6/29-30 San Francisco
7/8 San Jose
7/14 Salt Lake City
7/20 Fresno
7/21 Long Beach
7/27 San Bernardino
7/28 San Carlos, California

Doobie Brothers

6/28 Vancouver, British Columbia
6/29 Seattle
6/30 Portland
7/1 Boise
7/6-7 San Francisco
7/8 Los Angeles
7/12 Phoenix
7/13 San Bernardino
7/14 Bakersfield
7/15 San Diego
7/16 Milwaukee
7/17 Springfield, Illinois
7/18 Kansas City
7/20 Anchorage
7/21 Fairbanks
7/22 Honolulu

Grateful Dead

6/29-7/1 Universal City, California

Malo

6/26 Hackensack, New Jersey
6/29 New York

Van Morrison

6/25 Sacramento
6/29 Santa Monica
7/5 Milwaukee
7/7 Toronto, Ontario
7/8 Montreal, Quebec
7/10 Pittsburgh
7/12-13 New York
7/14 Boston

Maria Muldaur

6/28-7/2 New York

Martin Mull

7/4-8 Chicago
7/11 Rochester, Michigan
7/18-21 Philadelphia
7/24-29 Los Angeles
8/6-11 Washington, D.C.

Randy Newman

8/17-19 Chicago
8/23-25 Washington, D.C.
8/26 Cape Cod

Mason Proffit

6/25 Crystal Lake, Illinois
6/26 Wheeling, Illinois
6/27 DuPage, Illinois
6/28 Vancouver, British Columbia
6/29 Seattle
6/30 Portland

7/1 Boise
7/5 Torrance, California
7/6-7 San Francisco
7/8 Los Angeles
7/13 San Bernardino
7/14 New York
7/16 Boston
7/23-28 Washington, D.C.

Seals & Crofts

6/27 Salt Lake City
6/28 Dallas
6/29 Houston
6/30 San Antonio
7/1 Corpus Christi
7/7 Maui
7/8 Waikiki
7/11 Anchorage
7/13 Seattle
7/14 Portland
7/15 Sacramento
7/22 Los Angeles
7/24 Lennox, Massachusetts
7/25 Edwardsville, Illinois
7/26 Minneapolis
7/27-28 Chicago
7/30 Detroit
7/31 Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
8/1-2 New York
8/3 Syracuse, New York
8/4 New Haven
8/5 Columbia, Maryland
8/10 Springfield, Illinois

Seatrain

7/16 New York

Tower of Power

6/26-28 Long Island
6/29 Ottawa, Ontario
6/30 Detroit
7/2-7 Atlanta
7/9 Cleveland
7/10 Toledo
7/11 Columbus
7/21 Long Beach, California
7/27 San Bernardino
7/29 San Diego

Marshall Tucker Band

6/30 Charlotte, North Carolina

Dionne Warwick

7/30-8/4 Cleveland
8/8-12 North Tonawanda, New York
8/27-9/1 Warwick, Rhode Island
9/3-8 Wallingford, Connecticut
9/10-16 Washington, D.C.
9/18-23 Chicago
9/24-30 Long Island, New York

Eric Weissberg

7/4-8 Crete, Illinois
7/14 Park City, Utah
7/15 Columbus, Ohio
8/11 Monticello, Iowa
8/24 Ottawa, Ontario

Wet Willie

6/29 Charlotte, North Carolina
6/30 Roanoke, Virginia



Maria Muldaur

Top Ten

Warner Bros. Sales Figures for
Week of June 18-24

1. Alice Cooper/*Billion Dollar Babies* (BS/M8/M5 2685)
2. Deep Purple/*Machine Head* (BS/M8/M5 2607)
3. Deep Purple/*Who Do We Think We Are!* (BS/M8/M5 2678)
4. Seals & Crofts/*Diamond Girl* (BS/M8/M5 2699)
5. Doobie Bros./*The Captain and Me* (BS/M8/M5 2694)
6. Deep Purple/*Made in Japan* (2WS/J8/J5 2701)
7. Procol Harum/*Grand Hotel* (CHR/M8/M5 1037)
8. Faces/*Ooh La La* (BS/M8/M5 2665)
9. Fleetwood Mac/*Penguin* (MS/M8/M5 2138)
10. Foghat (BR/M8/M5 2136)



Malo