

# insight&sound

## NEW YORK — IN SINGULARITY THERE IS INTEREST

It must have been two years ago or so that Frank Zappa set down his idea of the next step in rock bands: certain established, name musicians would get together with others of the same fame for a reasonably rehearsed concert, and that would be the only time that band would ever play together on stage. We haven't gotten to that point yet, though the idea is still very attractive. What we do have is the established working (or worked) super group which we've all come to know and love — Blind Faith, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Delaney & Bonnie And Friends, Ginger Baker Air Force, to name a few. One of the splinter movements coming out of the whole "what next after the super group" thought is the rock star cutting his own album. The way things are looking, this looks like it may be the next trend for top chart albums.

Al Kooper probably started it when he organized his super-session albums and his own headline act. Jack Bruce, after leaving Cream, did a superior Atco album called "Songs For A Tailor." Neil Young, late of Buffalo Springfield and prior to and during joining C, S&N, has recorded a couple of fine albums on his own with sidemen. Others in the move include John Sebastian, Rod Stewart, and more. Now Eric Clapton is recording on his own and Stephen Stills is said to have been getting it on in the studio for his own solo venture.

Most noted and successful of all groups to have its members working on their own LP's, though, is The Beatles. George Harrison was, with John, a pacesetter for the thing. He wrote and produced the music for the film "Wonderwall." That soundtrack album revealed his steeping in Indian music and thought. A beautiful LP, it is also probably the most interesting of the separate Beatles ventures. He followed that up in 1969 with an album called "Electronic Sound" but the experimental nature of the LP slowed its popularity. His latest work has been with the Radha Krishna Temple of London, yielding a single of a song called "Govinda."

John Lennon's solo work started before he married Yoko. He's done three albums so far, the latest of which, "Live Peace In Toronto," just went off the charts after a few months. And now, of course, Paul and Ringo have thrown their hats in to the ring. Paul's is the most solo of all The Beatles' solo albums because he sang and played all the instruments himself — shades of the ol' Chuck Berry method.

Perhaps it is the dawn of another trend — perhaps it is not. Could be that the rock group is still the word. But the rock & roll star making his own music with the people he chooses simply reflects the independence that is natural to the artist. Also, it remains to be seen if the idea will work well for any other than the very top stars (Harrison, Clapton, Lennon, etc.). Although we may someday realize Zappa's one-time-band concept, for now it's fun to just sit tight and see what the stars have kept hidden up their personal sleeves for the past few years of their lives.

fred holman

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## HOLLYWOOD — THE FLIP SIDE

Back in the 1950's, as teenage disk collectors, we made many value judgements of groups based on the quality of 'B' sides. In fact, flip sides formed the basis for an entire subculture of rebels who would rather spend their nickels listening to the flips (remember those 5¢ days) rather than to the over-exposed 'A' sides. In the very early days of rock there were no flip sides on juke boxes, so when the new, improved, advanced machines came out and displayed both sides of the record, it was only natural that curiosity would lead to play.

The popularity of flip sides was usually local, lending a sense of neighborhood patriotism to them. I doubt if anybody remembers the flip of the second Buddy Knox disk 'A' side was "Whenever I'm Lonely" but it was one of the most popular sides on New York's 107th St. Groups like the 5 Satins, the Channels, the Charts and even Danny & the Juniors pulled in double coin for such 'B' sides as "The Jones Girl," "My Loving Baby," "Zoop" and "Sometimes When I'm All Alone" and established themselves as "heavies." Most New York (and to a lesser degree, L.A.) R&B group disks had two good sides, one slow, one fast, because nobody wanted to guess whether slow or fast was the order of the week.

As vocal groups lost ground to Philly hitters, 'B' side quality went downhill, until in 1963 or so, Phil Spector showed the industry that 'B' sides didn't matter by putting instrumental jams on the flip of most of his hits. (A practice picked up by Levine-Resnick, who fill many of their flips with backward tracks).

The birth of "progressive rock," wherein each song was a total work of art, brought the 'B' side back to some degree, but it's never regained its one-time importance.

Remembering which 'B' sides fooled their producers and went on to become major hits is a hard task, but "The Horse," "Midnight Mary" (a song way overdue for revival), "Gloria" (the original by Them, which hit in L.A. while the 'A' side was a mild national winner), "Heartbreak Hotel" (which was almost pulled off the record because RCA people thought it was terrible) and more recently, "Atlantis," come readily to mind. (This is the spot where we announce our unofficial contest to see who can submit the longest list of 'B' side winners from 1956 on. Winner gets a free plug).

Certain artists were so talented that they never had a 'B' side, including Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Creedence and a few more we've forgotten.

As for writers, well, sometimes we wish we had a 'B' side for some of our work.

allan rinde

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The Beatles  
Townes Van Zandt (& friends) / Sleeve Art, "Govinda"  
Crabby Appleton

