

# contact

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IMPROVISED IMPRESSIONS

I should like to make a short critical survey of a few current singles which I consider to be of better than average quality.

First, George Harrison's 'My Sweet Lord' which is still retaining immense popularity, the reason not being hard to understand. This particular track was 'lifted' from his 'All Things Must Pass' L.P. which contains at least two songs which I maintain are even better than 'My Sweet Lord'. No doubt the material tag of 'commercial appeal' has dictated the choice, one with which I do not propose to criticise.

The song is marked by its spiritualism and is strongly reminiscent both in style and arrangement of the EDWIN HAWKINS' SINGERS 'Oh, Happy Day', but there the similarity ends. The whole song is underlined by some quite distinctive guitar work which just suits the mood as well as providing a solid tempo. Beginning with some syncopated rhythm guitar, with just a

suggestion of horn, the song builds towards a nice change of key which is not immediately obvious on first hearing but which serves to divide the recording into two separate parts. The first part is much more natural, with only the guitar and girl chorus providing backing, whilst the second part tends to be rather more artificial and commercial, with the introduction of bass and percussion; ~~the latter merely~~ resulting in destroying all vestige of syncopated rhythm. We witness a clever interchange, though between the Hallelujah chorus of the first part, and the now all-too-familiar 'Hare Krishna' chant of the second, with the two again interchanging before the inevitable fade-out takes the repetitions final chorus into oblivion. I do wish more writers and artists would try to end their records on a convincing note, certainly a writer of Harrison's ability should be capable of devising a more impressive ending. Nonetheless, it is still a very fine record.

Recently, ELTON JOHN has begun to receive a lot more recognition, which has long been overdue. His 'Your Song' which was lately in the U.S. top ten is also taken from an L.P. and is one which I never grow tired of singing. As principally a composer and performer, his careful choice of chords to elicit the appropriate degree of emotion, his distinctive piano style and clever use of voice, are all very much in evidence. Although most of his songs tend to be Blues and Rock orientated, yet I feel that his best efforts seem to be reserved for simple love songs, which this is.

Not having previously heard STEPHEN STILLS perform solo, I must admit that his 'Love the One You're With' took me somewhat by surprise. Gone were the high-pitched, tight harmonies of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, but in its place is a quite infectious, earthy sound of contrasting arrangement. There is some wild organ and 'gutsy' vocal from Stills, a solid chorus backing, (these girl choruses seem to be the 'in' thing nowadays) and some nice guitar and percussion, with a strange absence of bass. The song appears to have been built around a play on the words of the title and although I cannot personally agree with what is advocated, the song tends to grow on one.

It has been a strong point of contention to me whether there has been any substantial musical progression by Creedence Clearwater Revival over the past two years, but listening to their 'Have You Ever Seen the Rain' single, I do not really care if they stagnate so long as they continue to release recordings with such uninhibited excitement and co-ordinated mobility. It might be claimed with some justification that C.C.R. owe much to the creative talents of John Fogerty, but for my money, they are a synthesised partnership of four musicians each uniquely indispensable, each contributing their own special brand of modern rock 'n' roll. The relative failure of other artists to effectively 'cover' C.C.R. hits, notably, 'Proud Mary', only serves to emphasise their ability to produce such a closely-knit, vigorous sound over and above the sum total of the individual contributions. On this recording, rhythm guitar, drums and 'solo' bass together form a co-ordinated backdrop for John Fogerty's frantic and earthy vocal. The gradual introduction of organ highlights the presentation and intensifies the emotive element. A simple ending (not faded) concludes a song both technically and harmonically simple, and yet one which never fails to excite and impress me.