

The Dave Godin Column

IT SEEMS almost impossible to believe that is now just over ten years since the "pirate" off-shore radio stations were successfully closed down.

Such was the vividness of their impact, and the fundamental changes that they made on British musical consciousness, that it seems like only a few years ago they were operating; and yet, things have surely but certainly slowly reverted back to the routine monotony of pre-pirate broadcasting patterns, and in the competitive fight to gain audience listening figures (and thus, advertising revenue), "safety first" has again become the prime rule in broadcasting in Britain.

Remember after the last "pirate" had stopped broadcasting, and the BBC in a public-relations stunt devised to conceal their former ruthlessness, issued a photo to the press of all the pirate DJs they had recruited to join the new Radio 1?

At the time I wondered aloud in print how many would survive the inflexible regime that prevails at the Beeb, and I also felt certain that the Beeb had no intention of keeping half of them on to begin with, but had merely offered them probationary spots in order to appease an angered public, and as a means of picking off the plums with very little effort on their part!

Ten years later it is easy to see how true these predictions were, and easy to see too that there is very little scope in Radio 1, or many of the commercial stations, for creative programming or for individual hunches to pay off.

It is all too easy now to forget the tremendous debt that Soul music owes to the existence of the pirates, and without them and their faith in Soul, who knows how recording history in Britain might now have to be written? We all forget now how when it was first issued, the Supremes' "Where Did Our Love Go" was in competition with a diabolical UK cover version of the song, and but for the fact that the pirates plugged the original rather than the British version, the Supremes got their first UK hit.

Had it been up to the Beeb, there's no doubt in my mind that they would have played the UK version to death, and who can tell how long that might have delayed the breakthrough for *Tamla-Motown* in this country?

Donna Warwick might well be a "great unknown" over here had the pirates not leaned heavily upon her second release in compensation for her having missed out with her first due to a British cover version . . . and so the instances could carry on being listed, and if there were just one reason why I felt (and still feel) a sense of gratitude to the pirate stations, it is because they finally killed off the odious phenomena known as the "cover version".

The Pirates, ten years after...

The misguided allegiance of the BBC to "country" rather than "art", ensured that almost always the local version scored over the original, and it was nearly always in the field of R&B and Soul that the losses and casualties were heaviest.

Evie Sands never made it here, not did **Dee Dee Warwick**, but the **Supremes** did, and so did **Otis Redding**, and we have the pirates to thank for that at least. I doubt if many would disagree with me when I say that were the **Rolling Stones** just starting out on their career today, I doubt if they'd even reach the lower reaches of the Top 200, and many other acts who made it to the top on the talents and skills of other people, have fallen by the wayside because they had no original talent of their own to fall back on when they most needed it.

For this, and much else besides, I'm deeply grateful to the pirate radio stations for finally breaking the stranglehold on taste and aesthetics that the BBC pompously thought was its monopoly.

Now, ten years on, we have a different situation but one that is rapidly stagnating into routine patterns that make innovation difficult, and which tends towards a policy of conservative programming; but above all, the most magic ingredient which was the ace card that the pirates held in their hands, was their very illegality, and no amount of "respectability", "dedicated programming" and "artistic integrity" can replace that tear-away element that made the pirates so appealing.

They threw the record industry, and they threw the broadcasting establishment, and eventually they even threw all three political parties, and although they were finally defeated, their real victory can now be seen in the simple fact that things on the record scene were never quite the same afterwards.

And this is perhaps the epitaph that is most fitting for them, and the one which Soul fans in particular should underscore with gratitude and affection.

Dave's Rave's

Your fortnightly guide to the sounds you can buy today, and might be searching for tomorrow . .

1 Sylvester "Over And Over" Fantasy (Import)

Written by **Ashford & Simpson** (who also have their own recorded version on release in the States), this is an ace introduction to **Sylvester**, and likely in my opinion, to establish his remarkable vocal talents in the US charts, and perhaps even over here if the side gets released.

Available as a single, and as an LP track, it is yet again available as a nine minute 12" disco cut, and in all three versions it's excitement plus.

Produced by our old comrade **Harvey Fuqua**, it proves overwhelmingly that good disco sides do NOT have to sell their Soul in order to swing — just the reverse in fact since this one gets its magic "something" by just the right amount of pure gospel thrown in the mix. **Sylvester** is a newcomer to me (although I have since learnt that he made some albums for *Blue Thumb*), but he's got the sort of vocal ability that'll make the ears of all Soul fans pick up as soon as they hear it, and that beat and rhythm drives the message finally home that "Over And Over" is talent plus! Plus Soul in fact!

2 Patrice Rushen "Roll With The Punches" Prestige

Patrice Rushen's "Shout It Out" LP is well worth seeking out, and marks the long overdue debut in the UK of the *Prestige* logo, which has, over the years, built up an enviable reputation amongst Jazz buffs for issuing superlative material in this field.

Of course, this isn't the label's first excursion into the Jazz-Soul field, and if only people could get to hear this properly, then I've a feeling **Patrice Rushen** would become a greatly admired newcomer in short order. Much in the same mould as incomparable dolls like **Lisa Richards** or **Lezli Valentine**, **Patrice** is no mere singer, and is an accomplished instrumentalist as well!

If you are (like me) knocked out by the sublime beauty of **Roy Ayers'** material, then this too will delight because it is in a similar groove bag. An ultra-rare collector's item of tomorrow if ever I saw one!

3 Moon "Name of the Game" CBS

This side was first issued at the beginning of June this year, and already their follow-up single is out, but since everybody seems to have overlooked this superb outing, I make no apology for drawing your belated attention to it now.

Hot on the heels of *Heatwave*, this indigenous UK group can be really proud of the undoubted Soul groove they've managed to

create here. Even though the record was officially a "flop", I hope you'll re-group and back-track on it because it does merit praise and adulation, and is far too good a side to vanish through media neglect.

If this particular track is anything to go by, this particular **Moon** is definitely waxing!

4 Bobby Bland "It Ain't The Real Thing" ABC

And, talking of sublime artists, who better merits that description than **Bobby Bland**? What a singer! What a man! And this ultrasoulful, heart-stirring mid-pacer from his "Reflections in Blue" LP deserves 100% unflinching support from all who aspire to the name of Soul music fan.

Superb arrangement with nicely distanced sax, an incredible tight rhythm, satin strings and sexy gal chorus — all provide an appropriate backdrop for the miraculous voice of **Bobby Bland**.

This guy really rules. There's no "O.K." about it — it's just fact! Get him into your consciousness soon, and you'll be the richer for it.

5 Ramsey Lewis "Stash Dash" CBS

From his "Love Notes" LP, **Ramsey Lewis** is no newcomer to Soul folk, but "Stash Dash" is a logical development of his previously hinted at Jazz style. A touch of **Pierre Henry** at the beginning, and it soon splashes out into a funky chanting mover that has sophisticated excitement right the way through it.

Should become a disco certainty in no time at all, and yet again, **Roy Ayers** fans will be pleased with it. "Wade In The Funk" might perhaps have been a more apt title!

6 Nancy Wilson "Car Of Love" Capitol

From her "I've Never Been To Me" album, the enigmatic **Nancy Wilson** has a very nice love ballad with "Car Of Love" which is likely to do well for her if issued as a single.

Sadly, I have to report that the rest of the LP was slightly disappointing, but her fans will want it, and this particular track shows the direction that I personally would like to see her go more often in future.

7 J.J. Barnes "How Long" Contempo

This song, originally recorded by UK group **Ace**, has also been waxed by **Bobby Womack** on an LP, but this is the one that's most likely to garner attention in my view, if only for the fact that **J.J. Barnes** has seldom been in better vocal form before!

Wide appeal likely to reach the maximum audience possible, and if Soul people give this enough support to begin with, it might well be that the pop market will pick up on it too. I hope so — the charts could do with an infusion of Soul

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(as opposed to "black") sound these days.

8 Flavor "Don't Freeze Up"
Motown

Co-arranged by veteran Soulman **Richard Parker, Flavor** debut with a single that has a strangely 60s feel about it, but is not the worse for all that! The swing and lilt are similar to **Richard Parker's** classic "Sugar Love", and if it has not in fact fragmented itself out of its former patterns and styles, the Northern disco circuit should find it a delight. Could well cross over pop too.

9 William Bell "Coming Back For More"
Mercury

From his LP of the same title, at first hearing one is staggered by the similarity it bears to **Al Green**, but that said, it is undoubtedly a way above average Soul ballad and one that will win many new fans for **William Bell**.

One of the major tragedies of 1977 was the failure of "Trying To Love Two" to make any headway over here, and although this isn't quite so fair as that side, it is,

nevertheless, very worthy and commendable.

10 George McCrae "Nothing But Love"
TK

Starting off like an Ian-Levine-Special, this furious mover should set the North ablaze in no time at all, and is just the sort of sound which at this precise moment in time, I'd like to see crash the UK pop charts.

Should exhaust all but the most blocked dancers, it's excitement plus and a sensible, shrewd and wise departure from the somewhat stereotyped style that **George's** big hit forced him into. 100 m.p.h. Soul, but straight from the heart. Make sure it doesn't outpace you!

Run-out groove

Unfortunately, pressure on space meant that "Dave's Raves" had to be left out of the last two editions, and, as I know so many of you put such store on this feature of my column, I thought I'd just itemise the sounds that were included and which I've been unable to list over in this edition. They were (in no particular order) **The Meters** "Be

My Lady" Reprise; Tyrone Davis "This I Swear" CBS (excellent this, don't miss it!); **The Crusaders "Feel It" ABC; Soul Train Gang "All My Life" Soultrain** (perhaps one of the greatest Deep Soul outings of the decade!); **Patrice Rushen "Let Your Heart Be Free" Prestige.**

Let nobody be unaware of the really great job **Pye** has done in presenting the **Casablanca** label in this country. With acts like **Parliament, Brenda & the Tabulations** and **Cameo**, it can, surely, only be a matter of time before they have the chart breakthrough they so richly deserve.

Congratulations from all of us to DJ **Pat McGuire** on his recent engagement, and at his DJ engagements his popularity is growing all the time. Check him out if you're in his neighbourhood.

Delighted that **Rufus'** immaculate "Everlasting Love" has been issued as a single in the States. Now let's hope **ABC** put it out here in that form too, and then, importantly, let's hope we can all get behind it and really help this talented and ultra-soulful group get a little better known in this country.

How many of you (like me) I wonder, sat through the TV screening of the excruciatingly bad **Russ Meyer** movie "The Seven Minutes" lured on by the credit-title promise of the song "The Seven Minutes" performed by **B.B.King**? Well, if you managed to stay awake until the end of this horrendous pot-boiler, you'll know that the song sung by him featured just briefly over the closing titles! Such a long trek to hear a bit of talent! It seemed more like Seven Hours!

Great version of "We Can Work It Out" in the pipeline from **Contempo** by **Sam & Dave**. More about this in due course.

Delighted to pass on the news that the rumour that the **Grapevine** label was going to live and die with just its initial trio of releases was NOT true. **RCA** are well pleased with the reception it has had so far, and look forward very much to distributing and promoting future releases on the logo. And that goes for me too!

**Until next time then,
Keep the faith — right on now!**