

Teeny-boppers**and the top ten**

There's a message in that music

By LEONA GOM

Really listen to those teenybopper songs sometime.

It's amazing what you hear. And what they say that you don't hear—well; that's even more interesting.

The songs listed here were on the top ten on either CHED or CJCA or both, last week. By now they're probably spinning in The Skies in the best epic tradition. Really shaking up that music of the spheres.

There's something called "The Rain, the Park, and Other Things" by the Cow-sills, where the lyricist seems to have gotten as hung up on a vanishing girl in the park as the photographer in "Blow-Up."

The dream-reality theme here, though, comes across in images more concrete than the imaginary tennis ball—the rain, the flowers, the sun. Represented by the flowers, the girl herself, "who crept into my mind" was apparently the illusion, and disappeared when "the sun broke through." The guy winds up still wondering if she was a flower girl of the mind, proceeding from the rain-oppressed brain. But maybe she was real and just got sunburned easily.

What seems most important to him, though, is that "she had made me happy" (in some unspecified way), suggesting that the reality or unreality of the experience doesn't actually matter.

Then there's this really double-entendre laden thing called "Beg, Borrow and Steal" by The Ohio Express. Apparently it's about this poor sap-sucker whose bird kicked him out of the nest and now wants him back. The sex of his love, however, is pretty questionable.

Lines like "you threw me out," "want me back in your arms," "hope I will be your friend," "I'd rather stay out in the street without a dime" and "I want to walk out like a man"—well, it doesn't need an especially prurient mind to conclude that the author has been prostituting himself to this "friend" of his but has now decided to salvage what's left of his manhood "before his life turns into a tragedy." Even if he has to beg, borrow and steal. It's the principle of the thing.

Alienation themes are still pretty popular. The Doors are apparently supposed to be closed—when they do "People Are Strange." The juxtaposition of "strange" and "stran-

ger" plays on the "lonely crowd" idea, where the individual is in emotional isolation from the self-interested people around him.

"Women seem wicked when you're unwanted" makes a subtle stab at traditional moralists, following the priceless thought that they're actually frustrated "decadents," wanting to "avenge themselves successfully upon life."

"Faces look ugly when you're alone:" again it's the sour grapes attitude of the marginal man, the stranger and afraid in a world he never made, where "no one remembers your name." Like the university, of course. Beautiful identification lines.

Here's a real challenge called "Let It All Hang Out" by the Hombres. It's either about a Freudian nightmare or a bad trip or somebody playing shuffle poetry with deliberately meaningless lines.

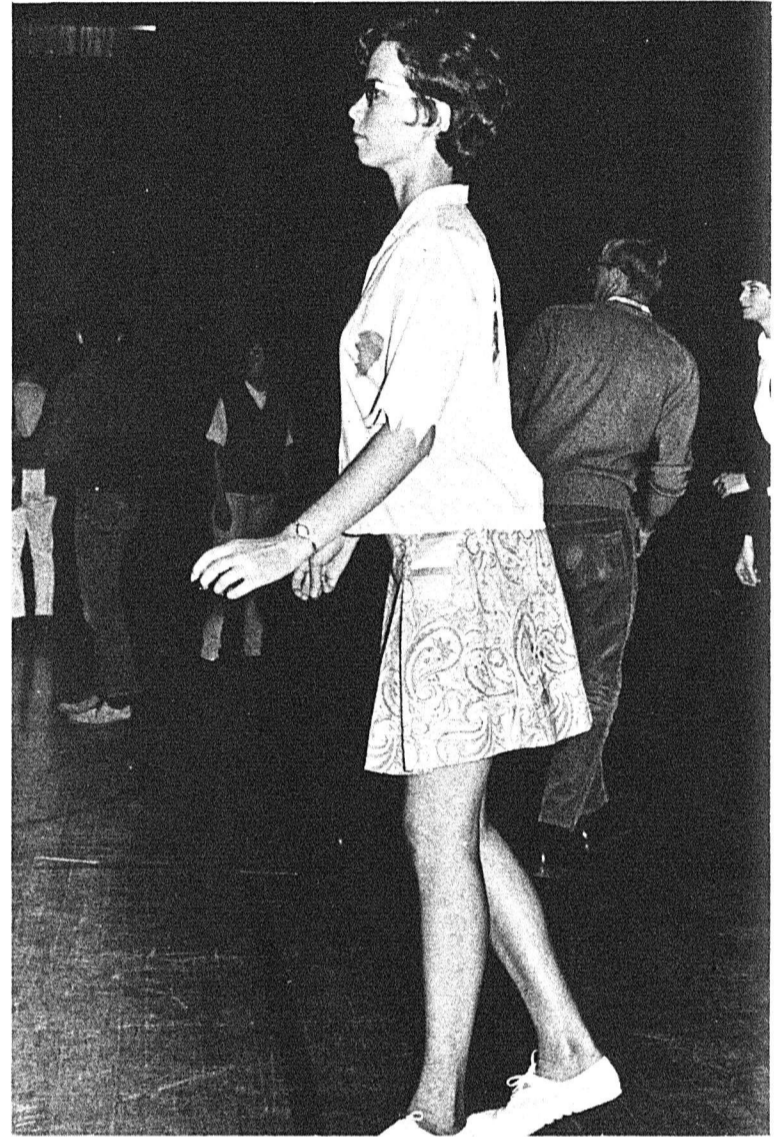
Assuming the obviously latter case isn't, the quote meaning unquote of the song hangs on the "it" that hangs out. Since the Alberta censorship board ignored the more obscene implications of that line and others such as "water dripping up the spout," "sleep all day, drive all night" and "brain went numb, can't stop now," maybe it's best to leave sleeping "its" lie and assume "it" is some Elevated Concept like Life or Love or Hippiedom that is supposed to "hang out."

The author's strange perspective is likely due to his "hanging from a pine tree by my knees," or because "the TV's on the blink" and cut off both his medium and his message. Or maybe eating all that sauerkraut did it. Anyway, the whole point seems to be a pointlessness, a what-the-hell's-the-sense-of-anything attitude. Life's a great eyeball-full of messed-up symbols. "Nobody knows what it's all about." Yeah. It's the answer to Alfie.

Something along the same line of jargon is done by the Strawberry Alarmclock in "Incense and Peppermints," a collection of "meaningless nouns" that aren't that meaningless.

"Good sense, innocence crippling mankind" suggests that rationality is as much a hang-up for modern man as virginity. Which might sound ambiguous unless you're a hippie.

"Who cares what games we play, little to win but nothin' to lose." The existential now is the thing; tomorrow is as dead as the "dead kings" of yesterday. But it's a pretty futile "now," full of all sorts



THE BUBBLEGUMMERS LISTEN AND REACT
... but "nobody knows what it's all about"

of psychological threats of non-being. Unless you discover the beautiful escape of introspection: "turn on, tune in, turn your eyes around, look at yourself, to divide the cock-eyed world in two."

Live inside yourself, create your own reality—throw out the "occasions, persuasions" that "clutter your mind" with social-oriented materialism; throw out your pride; forget politics, the "yardstick for lunatics." Know thyself. Opt out. Big Brother couldn't care less.

The Third Rail have a song out called "Run, Run, Run," one of these not-so-subtle protest songs against the Establishment about the twentieth Century Everyman caught in the machinery of capitalism and routine and conformity and competition and money-making and all such vices.

"Can't have your breakfast or you'll be late" means he hasn't heard of Instant Breakfast; "Tie your tie like a hangman's noose" means that just because shaving has become pretty innocuous does not mean that all the morning rituals have to lose their hari-kari potential; "Stand on the

corner and wait for your bus—it's late again, you start to cuss" means the ETS has infiltrated the Great Society, which "unfortunately is down five points," suggesting that Wall Street is thinking of opting out again and causing another depression.

"Holiday" by the Bee Gees uses the idea of life being "a funny game" again, with the desire for escapism expressed pretty graphically: "Put a soft pillow on my head."

There's the call to appreciate the simple things of life: ironic that the puppet, the cliché symbol of man, should be used to represent the worthwhile things that "make you smile." The fall from innocence results in aggression; if you lose your capacity to enjoy simplicity, then "you're throwing stones." The addressed person in the song is apparently the "holiday," the alternative to the head-under-pillow escape, but it sounds suspiciously like the puppet is the object of the author's affection. Which must be archetypal somehow.

Really listen to those teenybopper songs sometime.

They say something.



TURN ON, TUNE IN
... and wail, baby, wail