

GAP Band fills space with others technique

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One of the hottest items on the Billboard charts is *The Gap Band III*. It's catapult up the charts is paralleled with the rise of "Burn Rubber" which recently hit number one on the soul single charts.

The Gap Band consists of Charlie Wilson on lead vocals, keyboards, synthesizer, percussion and background vocals, Ronnie Wilson on trumpet, keyboards and background vocals and Robert Wilson on bass and background vocals.

Despite their "sudden" success on the soul scene, this band has been together for a considerable length of time, the oldest of the trio of brothers, Ronnie, founded The Gap Band in 1967, with other local tulsa musicians.

At the time the group was called the G.A.P. Band; the initials then stood for the Greenwood, Archer and Pine streets which were in the heart of the black business community of Tulsa.

The Gap Band started out slowly but once it hooked onto the Mercury Label, success soon followed. Their debut Mercury album *The Gap Band* appeared in February 1979, propelled by the hit singles "Shake" and "Open Up Your Mind (Wide)."

The progress continued with *The Gap Band II* which produced the hit singles "Steppin'", "Oops, (Upside Your Head)" and "Party Lights."

The Gap Band III is the group's best effort yet. In general it is indicative of the direction in which soul music has been progressing since the disco era, incorporating the heavy bass of disco and the best of the previous type of soul, in terms of lyrics and rhythm.

At this point in their history, "Gap" is supposed to signify

'Idolmaker' slickslick (continued from p. 18)

backdrop, clanging tamborines and all but shouting hallelujah. Where is Billy Graham?

Tommy Dee and Caesare are inevitable has beens and Vaccari is too soon sucked dry from his trip to the top. He will come back because he has the natural talent.

Sound corny? Well it is, but that's what makes "The Idol Makers" work. Teen idols are an industry, promoted by managers, peddled like the merchandise they truly are in sickening magazines like *Tigerbeat* or *Teen Scene* as is the case in this movie. Vaccari



that they fill in the gaps where other bands leave holes or don't quite include everything in their songs. "That's where the Gap Band is filling the space between other musical forms, filling the holes, the gaps."

Actually the band borrows a lot of techniques from other groups, particularly Earth, Wind and Fire. The excellence of the harmonies in "Are You Living" certainly brings Earth, Wind and Fire to mind.

The Gap Band further shows their ability to pick up on the success of other groups in "Humpin'." This highly funky soul tune is indeed reminiscent of the "street-corner-jive-jamming" sound which groups like the Sugarhill Gang pioneered over a year ago.

Overall, the album's finest cut is likely "When I Look In Your Eyes," which is tight, coordinated and effective. Look for this to become a big single. Another strong number is "Burn Rubber On Me (Why You Wanna Hurt Me)," which was the first single released from *The Gap Band III*. It quickly soared to number one in the Billboard soul charts and stayed there for two weeks; it

delivers what his pubescent audience wants: a perfect, handsome prince charming.

The acting is fine by all concerned. Sharkey is as Italian as Ragu spaghetti sauce. Land and Gallagher as Dee and Caesare are as glossy as an 8 x 10 pin up and every bit as phoney. The music by Jeff Barry is splendid and the singing would put Shaun Cassidy to shame. (There would be no contest for the Da Doo Ron Ron of the year award!)

"The Idolmaker" is playing at the Gaiety Theatre on Queen St.

is now starting up the pop charts. "Yearning For Your Love" is also very technically sound, and should be a successful single if released.

The only truly sour note which *The Gap Band* strikes on the album is Robert Wilson's feeble attempt at lead vocals in "Gash, Gash, Gash". The song itself is similar to "Humpin'" but it simply does not come over. Nice try, Bob, but you'd better stick to what you do best - playing bass and confining your singing to background vocals.

Overall, however *The Gap Band III* is a very strong album which should be commercially successful. Better still, the Wilson brothers and producer Lonnie Simmons have created an album that is technically strong as well.



Steven Staryk

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recorded, and has performed internationally as a solo violinist. He has been hailed as "today's greatest Canadian-born violinist."

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