

Maidenhead

Lumpy Gravy Not Country Music

by ron grant

You know what country music is. Tune in our local radio station any time you wish. Chances are you will be greeted with sounds instinctively alien to your ears. Some woman is moaning about how her boyfriend has just left her, she has no money, and she will surely die.

But a few years ago, a very interesting development started. Astute observers on the music scene began to realize that country music was making inroads into another, previously very different form of musical expression. Some very prominent rock groups were recording songs that distinctly showed a country influence. And when you think about it, it is not that surprising an occurrence. Ever since the British predominance in rock started to subside around 1966, more and more American (and even more recently, Canadian) groups have found success in this field. And America is a rural country. If one checks the hometowns of rock musicians you are often likely to come with Yellow Springs, Ohio, or Cedar Falls, Iowa. Many of these musicians were beginning to let their younger influence show through in their newly embraced field of music.

And who are these groups? Well it started with two main ones, "The Byrds" and "The Buffalo Springfield." With both groups it wasn't a sudden transformation, but rather a gradual shift away from hard rock beginnings. "The Byrds," especially had a period of complete involvement in space age music, ie, "The Fifth

Dimension" and "Younger Than Yesterday." If you listen closely though, you can hear the country flavor building even these albums. "Wild Mountain Thyme" and "Time Between" is good evidence that "The Byrds," and especially their leader, Roger McGinn, were beginning the switch in their musical form. The complete change occurred in 1968. David Crosby left "The Byrds," and McGinn was now able to assert his ideas to a much greater degree. With their next album, "The Byrds" started a trend that is still growing. They burned their backs on the lavish West Coast recording facilities, and travelled to Nashville to record "Sweetheart of the Rodeo." With the aid of old-time country pickers such as Roy Huskie and Clarence White, "The Byrds" put out an album

that could not be mistaken for anything but country music. It is so authentic sounding it even fools our local yokels. I can remember talking with Don Poore who did the all night country show for Radio Atlantic, and he told me he used to get requests for cuts from this album all the time. Their next album, "Dr. Byrds and Mr. Hyde" was more of the same.

And what about the "Springfield?" Although they never came out with a ruly country album (their final effort "Last Time Around" came close though) they provided the start, and when they disbanded, two of their members started a new group call Poco. Poco's first effort "Picking Up the Pieces" is much like "Sweetheart of the

Rodeo", a heavy country flavor that could fool the Farmer-in-the-Dell himself.

Another country group called "The Flying Burrito Brothers" has been formed from ex-Byrds musicians Chris Hellman and Graham Parsons. This first album, "The Guilded Palace of Sin", is an especially beautiful one. For example: If you want a do-o-o-o right woman, Ya gotta be a do-o-o-o right man.

If you haven't heard any of these albums, you must be wondering by now how I can on one hand say they are so great, while simultaneously maintaining that in form they are so very close to that country music that you hate and despise so very much. The big difference is the musical philosophy of the artists. Just as when they were doing rock, and in strong contrast to most country musicians, these ex-rock artists are producing music that is a true musical expression of their ideas. They are not primarily trying to seal records, none of these albums have been immensely popular. Sure, they must sell enough to stay alive, but for the most part they are playing the music they love. They have no set form to follow. They play around with a tune, and when they like it, record it. These musicians just happen to like steel and twelve-string guitars, and their affection for the music and the instruments shows through on every tune. Their dedication is what makes the music so good, and to listen to it is a rewarding experience.

The Advent of Time

There was purple grass in an orange field,
That did a mighty thing,
It gave the power of insight
Into the diamond ring.

The woman looked with crystal eyes.
She knew not what she saw:
The vision was before her,
But time got in her way.

Now this is a sad tale,
But Jesus, Oh so true,
Of a virgin woman,
Who was completely blue.

Death is her and death is gone,
It never did exist.
Man has no destiny
He simply

gary constantine

All the King's Horses

You're the king of wisdom,
2000 years ahead of your time.
A rebel - Marx or Rimbaud incarnate.
Everyone else is a fool; a dunce.
Everyone else misunderstands life,
misunderstands the masters.
They hold you back
from your search of truth.
What do you know about truth?
The truth is

what you want it to be.
You change everything into your truth,
because you don't understand.
That would make you like everyone else
like the masses you so despise.
But worse is your cowardly arrogance
your open-minded prejudice
your esoteric ignorance
your collective individuality
your original cliches
your banal profundities.
But don't worry about us. We understand.
You see we understand you.

Richard Adams

To Jane

I do confess to
kneeling to you
and treading on our love
each thought
a separate flower
each poem
a flower

slow is the seed
gentle is the mother rain
a wisp of a stem
leaves green
vibrant
alive, forceful
overwhelming
and able to be crushed
by a summer gale

give to me no forevers
give to me now
and that is eternal enough
for a flowering heart.

Grant Vistorino

Youth

When I was young
Life seemed good,
Fresh and violent;
Floating?

It seemed so alive
Flowing with gentle sounds,
Sifting and searching;
Searching!

Hey wait.
I'm still young.
Aren't I?

Grant Vistorino