

arts/entertainment

Ex-Byrds' flight into the 70s

McGuinn and friends emerge with a sweet sounder

By Casey McCabe

An album reuniting three original members from a mid-60s supergroup might be expected to depend greatly on its nostalgic value.

album review

But on *McGuinn, Clark, and Hillman*, which brings together ex-Byrds Roger, Gene and Chris respectively, there is no attempt to raise any ghosts from the dead. Instead they have come out of the studio smelling sweet, romantic and like a very slick product of 70s audio technology.

The three, along with David Crosby and Mike Clarke, first lined up together in 1964 as the Byrds to become the leaders in the new category of "folk rock." Original members soon began to stray from the group and The Byrds went into a seven-

year power slide, disbanding completely in 1972.

Focus on production

The 1973 reunion organized by David Crosby, which featured the original line-up, was not well received critically nor financially. This might explain why *McGuinn, Clark & Hillman* has the air of a more pre-conceived, production-oriented album, something with much more tangible commercial success.

As The Byrds, the group was known for tight vocals. As McGuinn, Clark & Hillman they have taken a step further to become exclusive vocalists, allowing the instrumentals to be handled by an equally tight collection of back-up musicians.

Songwriting contributions find four by Clark, three by Hillman and two by McGuinn. The album leads off with Hillman's "Long Long Time," a fairly light, happy-go-lucky blend of acoustic and electric guitar leads, and as the rule goes for the rest of the album, consistent, well mixed vocals.

"Little Mama," like Gene Clark's other

compositions on the LP is a little sadder, slower, and more melodic than his companions', contrasting well with the following selections, McGuinn's "Don't You Write Her Off."

McGuinn, recognized leader of The Byrds provided that group with their most identifiable sound, the same throaty, somewhat nasal vocals head on classics like "So You Want To Be A Rock 'n' Roll Star" and "Chesnut Mare."

On *McGuinn, Clark & Hillman*, that voice creates the only audible connection with their former group. "Don't You Write Her Off" is the album's most intricate vocal undertaking, and, performed with studio flawlessness, emerges as one of the LP's stronger cuts. Best avoid analyzing the lyrics though—nothing very deep or revealing here.

"Surrender to Me" finds a very smooth, saleable sound along the lines of Firefall or The Little River Band, and the side winds up with Clark's "Backstage Pass," full of saccharine lyrics and grandiose musical backing, providing a commercial flip side to "Rock 'n' Roll Star."

The two Chris Hillman contributions, "Stopping Traffic" and "Sad Boy" on side two, give the album its only real rock 'n' roll edge, but it is still not a very sharp edge and wisely stays within the group's boundaries.

Clark's "Release Me Girl" adds a small touch of funk to the format, while once again it is a McGuinn composition, "Bye Bye Baby," that shows a sound reminiscent of the old Byrd days. Coincidentally or not, the song, aided by flute and string arrangements, is one of the album's best.

McGuinn, Clark & Hillman is aided greatly by a well arranged but unobtrusive string section, and the trio's fine knack for meshing vocals often carries them through some uninspired, something trite lyrics and music.

A good test of the group's capabilities will be their ability to reproduce the slick sound of the album on a live stage. They will have that change when they visit Omaha's Music Hall May 11. But as long as the memory of The Byrds lingers in fans' minds, don't be surprised if McGuinn, Clark & Hillman get just a little nostalgic.

Women loosen hold on male grasp in entertainment jobs

By Peg Sheldrick

Once upon a time, women who wished to work in the entertainment business had their choice of a small range of pursuits, from starlets to strippers. Some areas of the business were barred to them altogether.

But since the start of the women's movement in the late 1960's, women have slowly but surely found their way into new roles, both figuratively and literally.

Progress can be traced in many facets of show business, but one of the most noticeable male strongholds to succumb to change is the position of disc jockey. At one time, only masculine voices filled the gaps between songs. But all of that is changing.

Margy Ryan, disc jockey at KFMQ radio, said female air personalities still are rare, but that women in broadcasting are "considerably more common than five years ago."

"I think broadcasting as a whole is becoming much more open for women," she said. "(They've) been kept out of it for so long."

Broadcasting degree

Ryan received her training at UNL. She graduated last December with a degree in broadcasting. Her ambition is to work on the air in television.

She became a disc jockey first on a part time basis, found that she liked it, and is now at it full time. Though she wasn't the first woman to spin records for KFMQ, she still is part of a minority in the world of broadcasting.

She said stations are "feeling the push" to hire more women and that the women's movement has had an impact on the field.

"It's been very helpful because it is getting women into jobs they never had before," she said. Women disc jockeys may be rare because "there are a lot of broadcasting jobs that pay better" and women entering the field may be opting for them.

"The thing that nags at me now and will for some time is whether being a woman got me the job . . . not knowing whether or not you got the job on your own merits or because you're a woman," Ryan said.

Theatre

Theatre is another area in which women are pioneering new territories, ideologically and professionally.

Judith Pratt is a 33-year-old Ph.D. student whose experiences include acting, directing, and miming in locales such as New York and Boston. She considers herself "strongly feminist."

"In my early twenties when it (the women's movement) hit, I had to fight a harder battle than those who came after," she said. "I look at women who are forty and I wonder, my God, how did they get anything done? . . . I spent all of my early twenties thinking I was committed to the work, but in the back of my mind thinking Prince Charming would gallop along and marry me and I wouldn't have to be committed to anything . . . Then I said to myself, Judith, you have to do it for yourself. No one can do it for you, and if they did, you'd hate it."

Solo efforts

Pratt said changes in attitude have affected her work both as a mime and as a director. Her solo mime efforts began in 1974, and Pratt said she found herself working with primarily male images in

mind— Marcel Marceau, for example.

"When I was an audience member watching a woman, I realized I was watching and I was thinking I was watching a woman mime," she said. "There are more and more women in mime, but mime is a problem for women because the image to the mime is androgenous— read male. You think of the mime as the universal man."

"In 1974 I was at a mime festival, and I discussed the problem with a woman there. We discovered we had the same problem: we read female (have unmistakably feminine builds). So it's difficult being a mime and being the 'universal man.' Though nobody actually hisses you off the stage, you feel a little unnerved."

Alter routines

Pratt said some women alter routines to compensate for this uncomfortableness.

"I never did," she said. "I do it as a human. When I was at Columbia I did an all woman show, not on purpose but because all the people I wanted to work with were female."

UNL touring groups take the arts outstate

By Peg Sheldrick

Before the lively arts had been safely sequestered in concert halls and theatres, bands of performers were known to roam the countryside, carrying art to the hinterlands and making names for themselves among the people.

That tradition is not altogether dead. Consider, for example, the *Sweet Nebraskaland* company, the Scarlet and Cream Singers, and the Dance Lecture/Demonstration troupe. All three groups tour the state performing for old and young alike. They travel by vans as opposed to oxcart, but the spirit is similar.

"It's part of a goodwill-type thing," said Amy Mills, of the *Sweet Nebraskaland* cast. "It really shows people who don't live in Lincoln what the theatre department is like. It's also helping hit a lot of high school seniors interested in the theatre who might want to come to UNL. It's also a historical review. . . . But mostly it's goodwill for the department."

Gives workshops

The cast travels to such towns as Gordon, Falls City and Curtis performing their musical play and giving workshops for the local high school students. The

response varies.

"We've had some really good, some really mediocre," said Mills. "But mostly it's good."

Camaraderie characterizes the Scarlet and Cream Singers, according to four-year veteran Deb Schmidt.

"Throughout the four years we've always had a good relationship," she said. "I think it's great to get that many people to get along so well and enjoy each other."

She said members "party together" as well as perform together.

Their engagements are usually for Chamber of Commerce groups and alumni functions. On campus they perform occasionally in the Nebraska Union. They will appear Friday and Saturday of this week in Kimball Recital Hall.

Promotes dance

"We think of ourselves as an entertainment group, but we are aware when we go out somewhere that we are representing the university," Schmidt said.

The 20-member group gets favorable attention and provides "good PR (public relations) for the U," according to Schmidt.

The Dance Lecture/Demonstration ensemble promotes dance.

"The whole thing is oriented to showing

The women's movement has helped give "inner support" to "all of us," Pratt said. It was interesting that she reached her decision about commitment at age 23, she said, while a 23-year-old friend of hers went through the same decision process at age 11— about the same time as Pratt. That meant "a whole load of garbage she didn't have to dump."

In Pratt's opinion, mimes and directors who are female have the same basic difficulty.

"The problem is being aggressive," she said. "Women choreograph or design more often than they direct. I personally believe that people have difficulty taking direction from a woman. It makes them nervous," said Pratt.

Unwilling men

"One of the things that happens is it cuts both ways," she continued. "Not only would the men I directed be strangely unwilling to listen to what I said— I would be unwilling to come on strong."

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them what dance is— that it's just movement— that anyone can do it," said the group's only male dancer Jim Beal.

They visit elementary schools around Lincoln at the request of teachers.

"When you're performing you get a response," said Beal. "They laugh. By the end you can tell by their faces, the questions they ask that their skepticism is gone. They're much more enlightened. It shows up more in young boys."

Disco discussed

"The kids are coming in when we warm up. I always try to pick out one of the young boys who's the leader of the clan and if I can get him out on the floor to do it, the others will follow."

The children, after hearing the talk, watching the demonstration and participating themselves, have the opportunity to ask questions, some of which are "bizarre," said Beal. Disco is invariably discussed, and the children are always curious about how long the dancers have been at it.

"Probably the funniest question . . . was a little boy who asked a girl in the group for a date," said Beal.

"They ask who can dance. That's what the whole thing's about—who can dance," said Beal. "We show them by having them do the movements with us."