

THE DAVE CLARK FIVE



<i>Recording years</i>	<i>Main genre</i>	<i>Music sample</i>
<i>1962-1973</i>	<i>Classic pop-rock</i>	<i>Because (1964)</i>

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GLAD ALL OVER

Album released:

March 1964

V A L U E
2 3 3 3 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) *Glad All Over*; 2) All Of The Time; 3) Stay; 4) Chaquita; 5) Do You Love Me; 6) Bits And Pieces; 7) I Know You; 8) *No Time To Lose*; 9) Doo Dah; 10) Time; 11) She's All Mine.

REVIEW

It is extremely easy to laugh off the so-called «Tottenham Sound» (which, to the best of my knowledge, was never represented by anybody other than the Dave Clark Five) as a clumsily marketed attempt to build up a commercial counter-proposition to the Mersey Beat — in fact, this is precisely what all the hip-minded artists and their fans had been doing for half a century. It is also not difficult to play the Millennial Contrarian and start a public worship cult of the Dave Clark Five as the ultimate proto-poptimist professionals, crafting a loud, dense, immaculate pop sound that could actually make one feel more *complete* than the Fab Four.



What is far more complicated is being able to embrace both sides — being able to respect the Dave Clark Five for their truly one-of-a-kind sound, enjoy the craftiest and catchiest of their hits and deeper cuts, and at the same time not shying away from mocking the overtly commercial, derivative, and stagnant nature of their music-making. Almost from the very start, the band clearly stood out from the countless masses of second- and third-rate UK Beatle imitators — not only for chronological reasons (their first single actually preceded ‘Love Me Do’ by a good couple of months), but also because their emphasis on the drum / organ / sax combo, rather than electric guitars, as the music’s combustion engine made their voice

a strong and solitary one — at least until Manfred Mann came along and kind of developed their own variation with a slightly more sophisticated edge. The fact that they pretty much left it at that, lending this interesting sound to fairly cheap and boring purposes, is lamentable, but couldn't we just live with that? I could probably live with that.

As with so many other classic UK bands, the Dave Clark Five's LP discography should be studied from across the Atlantic: not only did their first American LP actually come out earlier than their first UK LP, but they actually managed to have *seven* LP releases during their 1964–65 peak period in the US, as compared to a meager *two* in the UK. Of course, their management pulled it off exactly the same way as in every other case: for instance, about half of this debut LP is constructed from A- and B-sides originally released in the UK from early 1963 to early 1964, and most of the other tracks were recorded specially for the American market and never even saw the light of day in England (at least, not early on). The cover carefully notes that this is **Glad All Over** (*Featuring "Bits And Pieces"*), because, of course, those two songs were their biggest hits at the time, both at home and overseas — and how could a stereotypically rich American teenager, as opposed to the stereotypically poor British one, miss a chance to scoop up an LP with *both* of the hit singles of Britain's second-best band after the Beatles?

Seriously, though, 'Glad All Over' is quite a wonderful creation. Dave Clark may not have been quite as unpredictable and ferocious as Keith Moon when it came to drumming, but at least he was every bit as loud — no other drummer in the UK at the time brutalized the poor bass drum with that much force (although rumor has it that famous session drummer Bobby Graham actually played some of his parts in the studio, including on this song). And when that wall-rattling pounding is joined by Denis Payton's «rhythm sax», running across the entire song rather than simply soloing at the right moments, the effect is undeniable — like a joyful band of young friendly hippos, rhinos, and elephants stampeding into town to plunder the nearest candy shops. In other words, take that Mersey beat, amplify the drum sound ten times, replace rhythm guitar with sax, introduce a Motown / Isley Brothers influence with the call-and-answer vocals, and take a production lesson from Phil Spector — if that ain't a recipe for idiosyncratic success, I don't know what is.

Then, however, comes the problem: 'Bits And Pieces', the immediate follow-up and an even more popular single in the US (but not in the UK), is a near-perfect repetition of that same formula. The only difference is that the vocal melody is notably more Brit-poppy this time, far more similar to some English drinking song than to the Isley Brothers — but all the other construction ingredients, from the insistent opening drum stomp to the pervasive sax and rowdy lead vocals, are exactly the same: the band has found its formula and it is sticking with it to the bitter end. "Other girls may try to take me away / But

you know, it's by your side I will stay, I will stay" — truly, more prophetic words have never been delivered by any artist on their first hit record.

This is not to say that **Glad All Over**, the LP, offers no variety whatsoever: when we are not talking about monster hit A-sides, the band's chief masterminds — Dave Clark himself and organist / lead vocalist Mike Smith — allow themselves to stretch out and reach into adjacent dimensions. Arguably the most creative efforts by the band are their instrumentals. 'Chaquita', usually described as a variation on the Champs' 'Tequila', actually bears little resemblance to its famous prototype, being based on a deeper, denser, «junglier» rhythmic groove and hooking the listener with some killer call-and-response interplay between Payton's distorted lusty-elephant sax riffs and Lenny Davidson's twangy lead guitar. (For the record, the version on this LP is a re-recording: the original version of 'Chaquita', slightly less dense and echoey, had actually been the Dave Clark Five's very first single, released on the small Ember label rather than Columbia). And the Clark/Davidson-cowritten 'Time' is a clearly Mancini-influenced lounge jazz composition with a suspenseful undercurrent which... well, let's just say the Beatles could *never* have come up with something like that, even if you are totally free not to interpret this remark as a compliment in the DC5's direction.

I am also quite partial to the tasty surf-style slide guitar lick ringing off the chorus harmonies in the otherwise fully formulaic 'All Of The Time'; and to the way the stinging, choppy verse vocals of 'I Know You' metamorphose into the glorious gang chorus of "you don't love me any mo-o-o-o-re". I am much less partial to the idea of changing the lyrics to 'Twist And Shout', renaming the song into 'No Time To Lose' and having the arrogance to credit it to Clark and Smith; and I think that when it comes to British bands, 'Stay' and 'Do You Love Me' have *both* been done much better by the Hollies on their debut record — simply because the shrill and triumphant delivery of Allan Clarke is always preferable to the strong, rowdy, and much less expressive style of Mike Smith.

Finally, it is totally Mersey Beat 1 : Tottenham facepalm when we discover that the band has, for some mysterious extraterrestrial reason, appropriated the old minstrel tune 'Camptown Races', renamed it 'Doo Dah' (what else?), gave it new and even more stupid lyrics, and credited it to the bandleader. This is simply one of those cretinous moments of the early Sixties when you can only clench your head and scream WHY? To capture the 5-year old segment of the market? This is the kind of artistic move that even the weakest of the Merseybeat bands would hardly allow themselves. For sure, it was occasionally tempting in those days to take your warmest toddler memories and see how they fare against the rules of a modern production studio, but of all the things to prevent contemporary rock and pop music from being treated seriously...

and before you interrupt me, no, 'Yellow Submarine' belongs to a *different* category of problems. Anyway, I still cannot decide whether it is the blatant abduction of 'Twist And Shout' or the corny carnival of 'Doo Dah' that constitute the album's biggest embarrassment, so let's call it a friendly tie.

That said, given the almost total lack of artistic progress over the Dave Clark Five's peak years, **Glad All Over** emerges as one of the band's strongest efforts simply by way of being the first and freshest. Cumulatively, they would have somewhat more consistent chunks of vinyl in the near future, but the primal double punch of 'Glad All Over' and 'Bits And Pieces' was their crowning moment of influential glory — let us not forget, after all, that they happened to be the second UK band after the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show, and that they did not make it there *just* because of five more clean, attractive, well-combed British faces, or *just* because of Dave Clark's extraordinary business and marketing skills. And as late as early 1964, I suppose it would still take somebody like Leonard Bernstein to see through the fundamental difference between the Beatles and the Dave Clark Five — heck, just try to block any of your knowledge about what happened later out of your mind, arm yourself with pure emotion instead of cold intellect, and for a brief moment you might feel like treating **With The Beatles** and **Glad All Over** as comparable and compatible wave-of-joy generators.





THE DAVE CLARK FIVE RETURN!

Album released:

May 1964

V A L U E
2 3 3 3 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) **Can't You See That She's Mine**; 2) I Need You I Love You; 3) I Love You No More; 4) Rumble; 5) Funny; 6) Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah; 7) Can I Trust You; 8) Forever And A Day; 9) Theme Without A Name; 10) On Broadway.

REVIEW

I love 'Can't You See That She's Mine' — I really do. It might just be my personal favorite tune in the entire Dave Clark Five catalog. I love how it is so tight, intense, punctuated by these sharply accentuated staccato guitar chords. How the rhythm section just chugs along like it's some very serious business, unnerving and metronomic and without any signs of showing off. How Mike Smith contributes to the sternness of the proceedings by allowing himself to forget that the English language is in possession of long vowels — except for the third syllable of each opening line ("can't you se-e-e-e that she's MINE?"), imitating regular outbursts of irritation and frustration. How Denis Payton's saxophone break smoothly emerges from the general fray, marks the atmosphere with several well-placed shrapnel rounds and then packs itself back into its suitcase.

I mean, while it is still a pop song, 'Can't You See That She's Mine' actually bothers about adding a new dimension to the Dave Clark Five's sound: where 'Glad All Over' and 'Bits And Pieces' were both shiny-happy screamy anthems promoting lovesick giddiness, this follow-up adds a snarky defensive bite to the loud ecstatic bark. Perhaps they were explicitly



thinking that their equivalent of the Beatles' 'Please Please Me' needed to be followed by their equivalent of a 'She Loves You' — or perhaps they weren't thinking anything, and it just came out that way. Whatever be, it is easily their punchiest number of all time, and if only they'd bothered to follow it up with more compositions in a similar vein, their artistic reputation, if not necessarily their commercial impact, might have gotten a serious boost.

The song was actually taken as single from the band's first UK LP, called **A Session With The Dave Clark Five**; two months later, with two of the songs that had already been released on **Glad All Over** lopped off, the album was issued as **The Dave Clark Five Return!** for the American market. Once again, seven out of ten tracks were bona fide originals, confirming the band's desire to keep up with the Liverpool competition at least on that front; however, with the world already living in the age of **A Hard Day's Night**, the distance between the Fab Four and the Fop Five was growing quite rapidly. Nevertheless, if you agree to slow down time and judge **Return!** by the standards of 1963 rather than 1964, it certainly holds up to the level of the previous album — at the very least, it has fewer straightforward embarrassments such as 'No Time To Lose' or 'Doo Dah'.

In fact, 'Can't You See That She's Mine' gets extra support from at least two following numbers. 'I Need You, I Love You' has one of the band's catchiest vocal melodies, a shiny, upbeat pop tune which gets its hooks into you not through the tribal drum cannonade of a 'Glad All Over', but through a beautifully constructed vocal sequence where the verse rises to high heavens on the wings of group harmonies and then gets firmly, but gently conducted back to earth by Mike Smith's solo performance. In contrast to the joyful chivalry of this tune, 'I Love You No More' is crunchier, dirtier, closer in spirit to the Stones than the Beatles, and gives Smith a nice opportunity to play some mean bluesy chords on the organ — the «nastiest» DC5 tune to that date, a surprisingly rare occasion given their reputation for arch-cheerfulness.

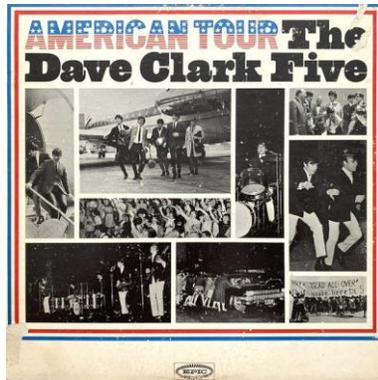
Side A closes with a pretty impressive cover of Link Wray's 'Rumble': the very decision to cover one of rock music's most important instrumentals is worthy of admiration, but the band also does a good job injecting some of its spirit into the melody — Payton's sax, charged with an odd distortion effect that gradually transforms its sound into that of a Jew's harp (no, really!), is at the forefront here, as important as the power chord guitar, and by the time they really rev it up, the Dave Clark Five almost transform themselves into a noisy predecessor of the early Who. Finally, Clark and Payton's 'Funny' is another harmless, danceable piece of pop fun, closest in atmosphere to the early big hits but strangely deprived of their booming, wall-of-sound production.

The bad news is that Side B hardly ever lives up to the potential of Side A. After an honorably rocking start, here the band

largely just mellows out and fizzles away. First, the inclusion of ‘Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah’, the good-time anthem from the controversial *Song Of The South*, is, I believe, intended as a sequel nod to ‘Doo Dah’ — there is no way this could be just a coincidence — although, admittedly, the sequel is more interesting from a musical perspective, what with the group harmonizing not against a steady beat, but against a slow, rhythmic, minimalistic-as-hell sequence of power chords: not so much a «wall of sound» as a «rubble of sound». Next, we have the fairly unmemorable, Searchers-style folk ballad ‘Can I Trust You’ which really does not work; the Mersey-style pop ballad ‘Forever And A Day’ which had already gone out of style; the slow-waltzing orchestrated instrumental ‘Theme Without A Name’ whose guitar melody seems to be copying the Shadows (come on, not in mid-’64!); and the oddest choice of all — a faithful cover of the Drifters’ ‘On Broadway’. Mike Smith sings the song reasonably well, but the band adds nothing to the original; honestly, I think they must have included it in their repertoire specially for their American visit or something.

Still, the very fact that **Return!** tries to build its image without resorting to the anthemic, wall-rattling sounds of ‘Glad All Over’ and ‘Bits And Pieces’ deserves a bit of respect; it is not a carbon copy of the first album, it is not a collection of intentional filler, and it tries out a few new ideas that sometimes work, sometimes do not, and sometimes you can’t really tell because they are so small and barely noticeable. It is not true that the Dave Clark Five bluntly refused to progress; it is simply that theirs was a decidedly *micro*-progress, far more suitable to the conditions of 2020 than 1964. But hey, maybe all the more reason to give them a 2020 type of aesthetic reassessment?..





AMERICAN TOUR

Album released:

V A L U E

August 1964

3 2 3 2 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) **Because**; 2) Who Does He Think He Is; 3) Move On; 4) Whenever You're Around; 5) I Want You Still; 6) Long Ago; 7) Come On Over; 8) Blue Monday; 9) Sometimes; 10) Any Time You Want Love; 11) I Cried Over You; 12) Ol' Sol.

REVIEW

On second thought, maybe forget what I said about 'Can't You See That She's Mine', *because* in reality my favorite Dave Clark Five song of all time... and if not for the blasted copula, I wouldn't even need to finish that sentence. Actually, if we went on living in the pre-streaming and even pre-CD era, it would have been simple as heck to define the one and only desert island recording by the band: the UK single from May '64 that had 'Can't You See' as the A-side and 'Because' as the B-side.

The saying goes that every mediocre poet has at least one great poem in him, and mediocre British Invasion bands are no exception — for the Clark / Smith writing team, their indisputable gem was this little ballad, which does not attempt to stray away from the formulaic conventions of early Sixties' Brit-pop, but instead uses them for a most soulful advantage. Taking a fairly simple quatrain, the band discovers a brilliant way to harmonize it, essentially creating a mini-mood for each of the first three lines before turning back full circle, going from statement of fact ("it's right that I should care about you...") to deep tenderness ("...and try to make you happy when you're blue...") to heavenward prayer ("...it's right, it's right to feel the way I do...") and back to even more definitive statement of simple fact ("...because, because I love you"). Even in the Beatles' catalog, such mood shifts within a single verse are hardly found around every corner.



As if that wasn't enough, Mike Smith finds the perfect instrumental companion for the vocal harmonies — a sparse, but sharp organ riff which echoes the same moods, particularly in the intro and in the laconic instrumental solo whose several bars have you slowly ascending that stairway to heaven and then quickly whooshing down the chute back to earth. Throw in a few contrastive, jack-knife-sharp arpeggiated chords from Davidson's guitar, and you are all set for an unforgettable sonic experience, which says it all in two minutes and twenty seconds. (And if you need a comparative angle to confirm just how superior it is, my advice is to listen to the Supremes' cover of the song on their Liverpool tribute album — they understand what it is that makes the song great, but are still unable to recreate it).

As for the album itself — the band's third US LP from 1964 — there is just one problem with it: next to the modest grandeur of 'Because', it sucks. Where the first LP was centered around their early singles and the second was at least more or less a «proper» LP, simultaneously released for the US and UK markets, **American Tour** is given away by its name: a fairly quick cash-in to commemorate the band's allegedly smashing success in the States (to dissipate anybody's doubts about that, the album sleeve was peppered with photos intended to prove that the Dave Clark Five were every bit the rival to the Beatles as the «Tottenham Press» would make you believe on the other side of the Atlantic). In Canada, the record was even released under the title of **On Stage With The Dave Clark Five**, although the only «stage» in the entire product is seen on the album cover (the DC5 never produced a proper live album in their life).

I am not sure when and how all these recordings were made (session details are hard to come by; I do not even know if any of these tracks were actually recorded in America); one thing is interesting, though, and that is all the songs counting as originals, credited to Clark and one of the other band members. Maybe it was the influence of the concurrently released **A Hard Day's Night** (the band, as usual, had to prove its equality with the competition), or maybe it was decided that the last thing all those hungry US fans of the British Invasion wanted were British Invasion covers of Motown or US rock'n'roll artists; whatever the reason, **American Tour** is indeed the Dave Clark Five's first album of all-original songs (that is, if you exclude a couple of instrumentals like 'Move On' which fairly openly plagiarize the likes of 'Green Onions'). Whether that is really a *good* thing is another, though fairly important, matter.

As this set of «original» pop-rockers quickly rolls by, I get the uneasy feeling that most of them were probably written quickly and on special order to impress the American market with as much «Beatle-style» product as possible. Song after song after song, you get similar formula that seems more rigidly bent than even before on emulating the loudness and exuberance of the Beatles, rather than going in the opposite direction and trying to forge a distinct «Tottenham» identity

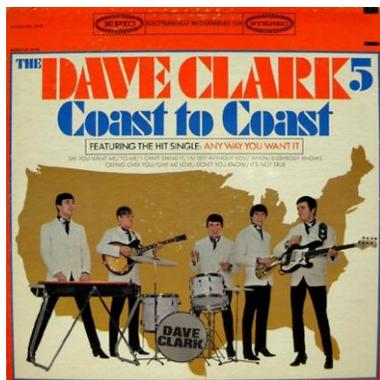
for themselves. This is particularly true of such tracks as 'I Want You Still', 'Come On Over', and 'I Cried Over You', all of which sooner or later succumb to vocal Beatlisms, while their pop hooks feel fairly artificial and meaningless. It would probably take a small army of musicologists, psychologists, and anthropologists to explain the quality difference between 'Glad All Over' and 'Come On Over' — both of which are loud, anthemic, catchy pop tunes, yet the former is unforgettable and the latter just feels rotten. Maybe it is the incompleteness and clumsiness of the main hook (that "come on over, any old time, now would be fine" bit just feels stupid and left hanging in the air). Maybe it is the stiffness of the harmonies, which just sound too monotonous and disciplined. Or maybe it is just the contextual realisation that all these songs offer nothing new — what sounded fresh and exciting less than a year ago (!) now sounds predictable and repetitive, hunting for the exact same emotional impact and atmosphere.

Maybe this is why 'Because' produces such a strong impact, since it is the band's strongest effort on the album to break the mould — and why, in general, their slower, softer, and folksier compositions on **American Tour** linger a little longer in the mind. On 'Whenever You're Around' and 'Sometimes' they seem to want to be the Searchers rather than the Beatles, and this mimicry comes off as a tad more convincing: 'Sometimes', in particular, has a very touching resolution of the vocal melody, where the spoken part subtly melts down into a melancholic hum — making good use of those two murmury m's in "soMetiMMMes" before seamlessly transitioning into sonic wordlessness. It feels weird to declare a band as extraverted and braggadocious as the DC5 to have mastered the art of musical melancholy, but on this album at least, they sure are better at it than at getting away with banging on all cylinders.

And speaking of banging, they do not quite forget about the needs of rhythm'n'blues-loving crowds: 'Move On', 'Blue Monday', and 'Ol' Sol' are all tracks intended to keep all those fans of the Stones and the Yardbirds occupied while their idols are off on their bathroom break. 'Move On', in particular, is nice to play right next to the Stones' 'Stoned', as both are very similar variations on the 'Green Onions' theme — and while the DC5 predictably get a fuller, more professional, more layered sound going on, emphasizing the sheer musical potential of the groove, they have nothing on the Stones when it comes to creating an atmosphere of suspense and danger. Jagger's ominous and certainly unsettling (for 1963–64) echoey murmurs of "stoned... out of my mind... yeah, here I go..." make far more sense than Mike Smith's meaningless "Move on..", and Keith Richards' angry Chicago blues guitar licks scratch and bite, while Payton's harmonica soloing is utterly inoffensive. At least the composition moves at a steady mid-tempo; 'Blue Monday' drags on like a wounded turtle, with none of the players offering anything even vaguely interesting.

In the end, **American Tour** looks like the first Dave Clark Five album which, while not overtly horrible on its own, clearly showed that the band did not have a future — because only bands developing and nurturing their own style had a future, and **American Tour** seems content to sacrifice those little sprouts that the DC5 had developed with their first hits in favor of stylistic emulation of whichever trends were rockin' the boat in mid-'64. The band itself was far from over, with more chart successes looming over the horizon, but their chance to make a difference — if they ever had one — went kaputt. Which, mind you, *still* has nothing to do with 'Because' being a truly beautiful pop song which, in my opinion, belongs in everybody's collection / playlist.





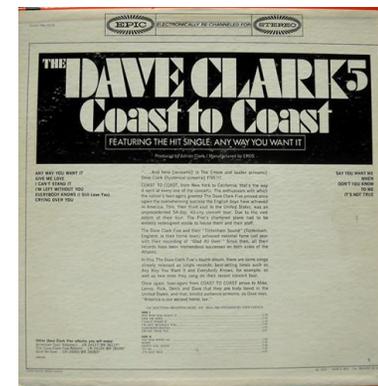
COAST TO COAST

Album released:

December 1964

V A L U E
2 2 3 2 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) *Any Way You Want It*; 2) *Give Me Love*; 3) *I Can't Stand It*; 4) *I'm Left Without You*; 5) *Everybody Knows*; 6) *Crying Over You*; 7) *Say You Want Me*; 8) *When*; 9) *Don't You Know*; 10) *To Me*; 11) *It's Not True*.

REVIEW

By the end of 1964, it might almost have looked as if the Dave Clark Five were renouncing their UK citizenship for Uncle Sam. Their **American Tour** now extended from **Coast To Coast**, their Ed Sullivan appearances were more frequent than any other British Invasion band's, their singles appeared more often and at higher positions in the American than the British charts, and their LP output amounted to a record-breaking *four* US albums in 1964 alone, as compared to a pitiful sole LP for the UK market. Granted, there are only 11 songs on **Coast To Coast**, clocking in at an embarrassing 21 minutes and 21 seconds as per my playlist, but most of these songs were not even available in the UK other than as expensive American imports — clearly, Dave Clark and his pals were profiting from every minute of that short, but happy time window in which they were allowed to ride the American Dream for all it was worth.



The record continues the trend of its predecessor in that all of its tracks are original compositions, traditionally co-credited to Clark and one of the other band members; curiously, Mike Smith is seriously underrepresented this time, lending his name to only one track, with Payton and Davidson more or less evenly sharing the rest. However, the one and only song still cherished and remembered from this LP is also the only song credited exclusively to Dave Clark — though it has also been

reported that it was actually written or at least co-written by the band's friend Ron Ryan (who has also claimed credit for 'Because' and several other of the band's best tunes). This is, of course, 'Any Way You Want It', which, surprisingly, was not even a terribly big hit for the band at the time (UK #25, US #14 — they did much better than that many times), but has since then emerged as more or less *the* definitive DC5 tune, perhaps due to some special effect it had on many future rock stars: as early as 1977, KISS covered it for **Alive II**, and the Ramones were such huge fans that they used it to finish off their very last live show (as heard on their **We're Outta Here!** album).

The song is indeed a perfect embodiment of the band's classic bombastic sound, which they had begun to tone down a bit with their mid-'64 recordings — but here they return to the full wall-of-sound sonic glory of 'Glad All Over', with a focused, overpowering all-out instrumental attack on the senses, further increased by using the Echoplex effect (which is why there is a certain similarity between the song and, for instance, the wall-of-sound pop production of **Kimono My House** by Sparks). In terms of melody and structure, however, the song itself bears an uncanny resemblance to the Beatles' 'Please Please Me' — its effect on the listener is achieved through the exact same kind of build-up and release that the Beatles used a year and a half earlier, except that the rising wave of "come on, come on, come on, come on"s has been replaced by a similar wave of "it's alright, it's alright, it's alright, it's alright"s, and the place of the triumphant catchphrase resolution of "please please me oh yeah, like I please you" is now occupied by "any way you want it, that's the way it will be". Meanwhile, the melody itself is certainly cruder and less challenging than that of the Beatles song (no harmonica phrasing, no classy chord changes like 'Please Please Me's little ladder between verse and chorus, etc.), so the band has to overcompensate by sounding *louder* than the Beatles — a skill they'd already mastered much earlier — and you can kind of clearly see why this strategy would have appealed to both KISS and the Ramones in the end.

It's still a perfectly enjoyable song, relating to 'Please Please Me' in much the same way that 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' relates to Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3, with no need to underestimate the efficiency of the writers and performers; a significant difference, however, is that Procol Harum were using classical influences to vitalize and advance a completely new musical genre, while the DC5 worked in the exact same pop-rock paradigm as the Beatles — and the fact that, as late as the fall of 1964, they were still tweaking the same formula that the Beatles had already taken to its limit in early 1963, is quite telling: if the DC5 were not completely behind the times yet, it must have already become clear to those following recent trends with open eyes and ears that it would not take them long to disappear from the horizon.

Particularly since the rest of the album, while sounding consistent with the band's usual formula, is not too inspiring: ten

generally very short songs (seven of them not even exceeding the 2-minute mark!) written in exactly two styles — the loud mid-tempo pop-rocker and the slow, sentimental pop ballad, with nothing between or beyond. In terms of melody, lyrics, and arrangements nothing here seems to improve on the formula which had already been tested on the first album and which, essentially, is based on the same songwriting, singing, and arranging principles that were dominant on the Beatles' first two records (and were already being surpassed on **Hard Day's Night**). Each song has its own modest hook, but since the moods they create are completely similar, trying to discern any individuality within them is practically impossible.

Tentatively, I would say that they do a better job on the ballads, where you can at least occasionally grapple on to some particularly juicy melodic phrase — for instance, the soulful, Ray Charles-y piano introduction to 'When', further darkened by the overhanging brooding bassline and the band's slightly funereal group harmonies; or the less interesting, but still attention-grabbing dialog between piano and acoustic guitar at the start of 'Crying Over You', a song which a band like the Searchers might probably have made more touching and subtle, but that's OK. The pop-rockers, however, are pretty much all interchangeable: as before, I like the overall sonic onslaught, but at least if this were AC/DC, they'd have distinct guitar riffs to separate one from the other — nothing of the sort exists for pairs like 'Give Me Love' and 'Say You Want Me', which sound about as different from each other as their titles would suggest.

It doesn't exactly sound like a band completely out of gas — more like a band completely oblivious to the as-of-yet humble, but significant changes in the pop music industry taking place around them, and as loyally and religiously devoted to mining the still-current formula as an old school movie producer in the year 1930. That's fine and dandy and enjoyable, but hardly deserving of such astoundingly wild praise as found, for instance, in [Bruce Eder's assessment](#) of the album ("opens strong and gets better, blooming into an amazingly diverse yet consistently powerful record") — nostalgia for the classic sound of 1964 is one thing, of course, but distorted retro-revisionism is something completely different.





WEEKEND IN LONDON

Album released:

May 1965

V A L U E
2 2 3 2 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) Come Home; 2) We'll Be Running; 3) Blue Suede Shoes; 4) Hurting Inside; 5) I'll Never Know; 6) 'Til The Right One Comes Along; 7) I'm Thinking; 8) Your Turn To Cry; 9) Little Bitty Pretty One; 10) Remember, It's Me; 11) Mighty Good Loving.

REVIEW

The Dave Clark Five opened up 1965 on a much softer note than they closed up 1964: 'Come Home' is almost a tear-jerker of a ballad, starting off slowly, with a little intriguing interplay between Huxley's bass and Clark's quietly hissing cymbals, then quickly growing in intensity to become the band's finest exercise in the art of pleading. (Some have noted the synchronicity between the song's theme of separation and the Gulf of Tonkin resolution that had just been passed a few months back, but I don't think we should really go *that* far). Amusingly, I think that the song's biggest hook comes not from the melody or the lead vocals, but from the convincingly desperate "*oh yeah!*" backing vocal in the chorus (Lenny Davidson?) which, for a couple of seconds, brings the song close to «blue-eyed soul» territory. Other than that, it's still a little stiff, like most of the band's hits, to stir up genuine emotion. A decent enough counterpoint to 'Any Way You Want It', though.

For the follow-up, however, they came up with a fairly strange choice: Chuck Berry's 'Reelin' And Rockin', the first and, I believe, also the last time when they selected a classic rock'n'roll track as an A-side. It's certainly not the worst choice that they could have made: 'Reelin' And Rockin' is lightweight, playful fun without any rebellious, aggressive, or anthemic



qualities to it, and it fits the Dave Clark Five aesthetics to a tee. But unlike Chuck himself, who would constantly breathe new life into the song by adding or improvising new verses on stage and milking his «teasing clown» image for what it was worth, the DC5 hardly come up with anything unpredictable — the song sounds exactly how you'd expect it to sound with the big DC5 sound, extra sax and keyboards and rowdy group harmonies and all, and once they get past the first verse, you've pretty much heard it all. More importantly, this was a bad sign to show to the audiences: everybody knew that the band's strongest selling point was its own songwriting, and if they had to fall back on old Chuck Berry songs, right at the time when UK covers of US artists were quickly going out of fashion, what was even the point of going on?

Interestingly enough, they decided not to include 'Reelin' And Rockin' on the upcoming album — probably because it failed to crack the US Top Twenty, for the first time since the band became a regular on the Billboard charts. Rather tellingly titled **Weekend In London** (not sure if this means they were offering their US fans a weekend in London or if it hints at the fact that by now, they were spending the other five days of the week in Miami), the album does include a couple of totally unnecessary covers: their take on 'Blue Suede Shoes', as could be expected, never threatens the dominance of either Elvis or Carl Perkins, and their cover of Bobby Day and Thurston Harris' 'Little Bitty Pretty One', while expectedly «thicker» and glammier than the Fifties' original, does nothing to properly one-up the original versions' level of exuberance, although it at least cannot be said that it does not sound different from the originals.

But if you purge the (already quite short, as usual) album from the covers, it can easily be noticed that the band's own songwriting — with Mike Smith now returning to form as one of the primary composers — begins very heavily leaning toward the softer, balladeering side. Of the loud-and-proud, booming-and-bashing DC5 anthems à la 'Glad All Over' and 'Any Way You Want It', there is only one: 'We'll Be Running', with a nicely crafted hook emphasizing the "running" mood of the song (and by "running", I'm pretty sure they mean "fucking", but those resonant *r*'s and *n*'s just work a little better within the context of the chorus than obstruents, which you just can't draw out and roll in your mouth at will. Oh, what do you mean by "it was 1965, for God's sake?" It's all just a matter of phonetics!). The nasty problem is that they use the same vocal tricks as before — the drawn-out "you'll be wasting tiii-iiii-iiii-iime" sounds just like "so glad you're miiii-iii-iii-iine", and this, too, reinforces the impression that the band is starting to go around in circles.

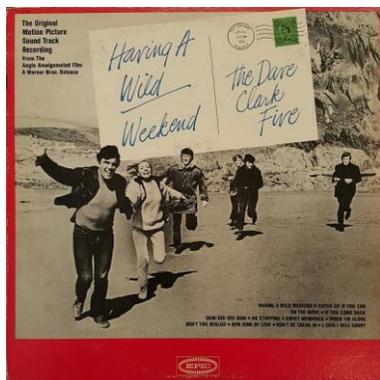
In the serenading department, we can just as well detect attempts at self-repetition in 'Your Turn To Cry', whose use of organ and group harmonies bears a strong resemblance to 'Because' — meanwhile, the slightly jazzy guitar sound of that song is re-enhanced for 'Hurting Inside', almost as if the collective goodness of the band's finest musical moment was split

in two and used up to make two inferior recreations. I really like 'Hurting Inside' (even if it has the audacity to steal a musical hook from the Beatles' 'I'm Happy Just To Dance With You'), but it feels like a conscious attempt to repeat the accidental magic of 'Because', and these things never truly work the way you want them to. Meanwhile, 'Remember It's Me' is an even more blatant attempt to slavishly rewrite 'Come Home', merely replacing the song's minimalistic bass intro with keyboards — what, they couldn't at least have waited to include it on their *next* album, so it wouldn't share the same LP space with its naturally superior role model?

Perhaps the oddest inclusion is 'Til The Right One Comes Along', which is, in itself, just another typically DC5 pop ballad, but recorded here without the typical DC5 pop sound — just Lenny Davidson on acoustic guitar and group harmonies accompanying Smith's lead vocal. There is nothing too special about the chords or the mood, but the approach is curious: not even the Beatles, by that time, had dared to record anything so minimalistic, sending Ringo out on a smoke break. Maybe they were trying to score with the folkies (a little too late for that, though); in any case, they should have probably tried out a different band member for the lead vocal as well (something like Phil Collins on 'More Fool Me', remember that one?), because Mike Smith's timbre is just... I don't know, a bit too flat, maybe, for such a stripped-down, «intimate» affair. He's definitely not John Lennon, who had a good flair for both loud and quiet; Smith is emotionally uninteresting in «quiet» mode, though I admit that these are all rampantly subjective judgements.

Anyway, the good news is that **Weekend In London** is, in its worst moments ('Blue Suede Shoes', etc.), merely expendable rather than cringey, and in its best moments, perfectly listenable as yet another product of the DC5's hit-making pop machine. The bad news is that the pop machine has all but ceased churning out new ideas, and is now more about recombining the best bits of old ideas in new variations — some of which work better than others — which is, of course, particularly disappointing for the spring and summer of 1965, when the age of brilliant idea-making in pop music was just beginning to cross over the threshold. The band may have been "*running, running, running*", but mostly on the spot: **Weekend In London** pretty much sounds like a 1964 album, totally unaware of the waters around them having grown — so we'll just have to accept it that soon they'll be drenched to the bone. Which they will.





HAVING A WILD WEEKEND

Album released:

July 1965

V A L U E
2 2 3 2 2

More info:



Tracks: 1) Having A Wild Weekend; 2) New Kind Of Love; 3) Dum-Dee-Dee-Dum; 4) I Said I Was Sorry; 5) No Stopping; 6) Don't Be Taken In; 7) Catch Us If You Can; 8) When I'm Alone; 9) If You Come Back; 10) Sweet Memories; 11) Don't You Realize; 12) On The Move.

REVIEW

Technical details first: **Having A Wild Weekend** was a US-only album, presented as the formal soundtrack to the band's first and last moving picture, which came out in the UK as *Catch Us If You Can* and in the US as *Having A Wild Weekend*, hence the LP title. However, only four of the songs (two of them instrumentals) were actually used in the movie; the other eight had no connection to it whatsoever — a tradition that the Dave Clark 5 obviously inherited from the Beatles. I have never seen the movie, although it might be interesting as the directorial debut of John Boorman (*Excalibur*, *Hope And Glory* etc.), and since even Pauline Kael is reported to have given it a thumbs up, it is well possible that it did have some artistic merit — however, it is highly unlikely that any such merit would have much to do with the complex and intriguing personalities of Dave Clark, Mike Smith, Denis Payton, Lenny Davidson, and Rick Huxley. The band did not even play themselves in the movie (rather, they were portrayed as a team of freelance stuntmen), so it probably relates to the music in much the same way as *Help!* the movie relates to **Help!** the LP — that is, tangentially at best. The only serious sign that you might be dealing with a soundtrack here is a notable (but not dramatic) increase in «incidental-music» type instrumentals.



Of the two vocal numbers written specially for the movie, 'Catch Us If You Can' is the clear winner. It's one of those 'Hey Hey We're The Monkees'-style anthemic songs — announcing the arrival of the band in playfully suspenseful, harmlessly vivacious ways. No genuine aggression or defiance, but just a nice statement of teenage self-assertion — «*we're here alright and what are you gonna do about that, huh?*» The pompous bombast of the chorus' group harmonies riding up on the twin rocket of sax and organ would be nothing new to fans of 'Glad All Over' or 'Any Way You Want It', of course, but this was the first time when the bombast would serve as the base for an «anthem of youth» rather than a love song; I wouldn't go far enough to call 'Catch Us If You Can' a social statement, but it's as close as the band made it up to that point. A weird detail is that the harmonica solo in the instrumental break is reminiscent of Lennon's playing on 'I'm A Loser' — probably just an amusing coincidence, but be my guest if you'd like to interpret it as a veiled hint at a bit of self-deflation in contrast to the self-aggrandizing "*we will yell with all of our might*" lyric.

On the other side, the title track is a relative letdown. 'Having A Wild Weekend' tries a bit *too* hard to paint the band as maniacal rockers who would be *truly* capable of making their weekends as «wild» as possible. From the opening hoarse *one-two-three-four!* countdown that feels like a parody on 'I Saw Her Standing There' and up to the crazy-mad-delirious instrumental break with Mike Smith whooping and wooing over Payton's ecstatic sax, this is one of those classic «guys who don't know how to rock pass themselves for natural-born rockers» moments that triggers gags, cringes, and facepalms. It's hard to explain why — on the surface, they are doing precisely the kind of stuff that the Beatles do when covering 'Long Tall Sally', but with the Beatles it works and with the DC5 it blows. Perhaps it's just Mike Smith's vocals, which are much better suited for a «pop» or «soul» style than «rock».

More likely, though, it is the fact that 'Having A Wild Weekend' itself is based on a thoroughly *pop* melodic structure — in fact, that entire «*on Saturday night, everybody having fun / you don't know it but I'm having me some*» melody is no rock'n'roll at all, but rather a *Jack-and-Jill-went-up-the-hill* type of singalong, and when you give it a 'Long Tall Sally' kind of arrangement, the resulting clash is embarrassing. My own gut reaction is telling here — these old guts *want* to go wild along with Ruth Brown's 'Wild Wild Young Men', or Steppenwolf's 'Born To Be Wild', or the Stones' 'I Go Wild', but when it comes to this song, all they send me is a strong signal that the Dave Clark Five are faking it and that they really spend their *actual* weekends at their parents' houses, playing cribbage and helping wash the dishes.

Fortunately for us, 'Having A Wild Weekend' is just about the only such blatant display of «musical inadequacy» on the entire record. The only other declarative «rocker» here is 'No Stopping', which is (a) an instrumental, so the problems with

Mike Smith's voice are automatically nullified and (b) blatantly steals the dangerous riff from Vince Taylor's 'Brand New Cadillac', further enhancing it with a distorted Payton sax lead line to kick-ass effect. They still end up sounding playful rather than outright aggressive, but with a bit of genuine snap — here's a track that maybe even The Who might have dug (after all, they did cover the musically similar 'Batman Theme' a year later, being no strangers to combining a little playful humor with kick-ass rock'n'roll aggression).

The rest of the compositions — all of them credited to band members, though some are more openly derivative than others — predictably veer between unimaginative, but catchy pop-rock and sentimental, but equally catchy ballads. The instrumental numbers, other than 'No Stopping', are okay; 'When I'm Alone' and 'Sweet Memories' are generic 1964-style movie serenades à la 'Ringo's Theme' from **Hard Day's Night**, with moody twangy guitars and nostalgic harp solos taking up the most prominent spots — while the fast-paced 'Dum-Dee-Dee-Dum' is a 100% spot-on (and 100% pointless) imitation of Duane Eddy's twangy-cowboyish 'Detour' style (even Payton's trademark saxophone here ends up sounding like all those Steve Douglas parts on Duane Eddy albums).

Of the vocal numbers, 'Don't You Realize' is perhaps a bit of a standout: the deep, cavernous echo, the variations in tempo, the emphasis on minimalistic bass and organ in the verse gives the song an aura of «deep soul», something that not a lot of British bands were going for in mid-'65 — maybe The Moody Blues and occasionally The Animals, but for the Dave Clark Five this type of sound was a first and Smith's voice is a much better instrument for it than for the «all-out rock'n'roll» of the title track. However, the song does not really go far enough with this vibe, and none of the other tracks try to milk it either — ballads such as 'I Said I Was Sorry' rather hearken back to the Beatles circa 1963. Catchy country-pop like 'If You Come Back' sounds more «modern» for 1965 in that respect, but not particularly interesting to write about in detail.

On the whole, **Having A Wild Weekend** does a good job of keeping the band «on the level» and is a fairly symmetric companion to **Weekend In London**, though the abundance of instrumentals would arguably take it down a peg or two. And for all the busy nature of 1965, the chronological distance from May to July wasn't *that* big, so it would be impossible to accuse the band of lagging even further behind the time than they did last time around. Though, admittedly, copycatting Duane Eddy was a bit of a weird move.

