

ABC-TV



COUNT DOWN



INTRODUCTION BY IAN "MOLLY" MELDRUM

\$4.99 *Recommended Retail Price

Every year has its special film.
Last year it was Storm Boy,
this year it's the...

South Australian Film Corporation's

BLUE FIN

A stirring adventure of a
son and father who
became a team.



AUSTRALIAN
PREMIERE
Sydney, Melbourne,
Adelaide,
November
16th

The South Australian Film Corporation and McElroy & McElroy present HARDY KRUGER and GREG ROWE in "BLUE FIN" from the book "Blue Fin" by Colin Thiele. Made in association with the Australian Film Commission, the Seven Network and Life Station SKA, Adelaide.



South Australian Film Corporation
A ROADSHOW RELEASE



ANOTHER WONDERFUL
COLIN THIELE STORY!



HUMDRUM

Over the three years that Humdrum has been a regular part of Countdown I have talked about the business and the personalities in it, hopefully without fear or favour.

The simple reason is that I love this business and the music that goes with it whether it be from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, John Denver, Wahkoo, the Bay City Rollers, John Paul Young, Leif Garrett, Andy Gibb, Supernaut, AC/DC, LRB and so on.

As a result I've had the luck and honour to meet most of the top musical performers of the day many of whom have become very close friends.

Their support has played a major part in the success of the show.

But although the music covered on Countdown comes from the widest possible spectrum its aim as a pop show is to reflect the feeling and image of the moment.

So in years to come when I'm in a rest home rocking around in a wheelchair I sincerely hope Countdown is still on the air in this country reflecting the feeling and

musical taste of the time to the point that I may not even understand what is going on, because change is what music and Countdown are all about.

I trust and hope that is the message Countdown has conveyed over the last four years.

This, the first Countdown book, is not intended as a detailed history of the show, but rather as a mirror, reflecting mainly in photographs some of the events and personalities that have been a part of the world music scene and Countdown since the show first went to air in November, 1974.

My thanks for your support and keep rocking





THE COUNTDOWN BOOK

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SHERBET



Sherbet

In the last six years this group has succeeded in dominating the local pop scene and consequently has been one of the most frequent and popular performers to appear on Countdown. In 1975 Sherbet was the subject of the first Countdown special. The band completed a second special late this year. Sherbet is currently trying to repeat its Australian success on the world market, having signed with RSO Records, the most successful label of 1978. Lead singer Daryl Braithwaite also enjoys a successful solo career and has hosted Countdown on numerous occasions.



Smokie

Although not as strong in terms of personalities as some of their predecessors Smokie have enjoyed a string of hit singles well crafted in the classic 'pop' tradition.

The band first appeared on Countdown late in 1976, were one of the guests on the Countdown 100th Show and held the No. 1 spot for several weeks in 1977 with *Living Next Door to Alice*.



Abba

For two years, from early 1975 to their 1977 tour Swedish group Abba dominated Australian charts like no other group before them. Much of the initial reaction was a direct result of the brilliantly produced film clip of *Mamma Mia* screened exclusively by Countdown. The band's popularity had reached hysteria point by the time the group toured Australia although their following has levelled off somewhat in the eighteen months since the tour.



Carly Simon

Two of the most respected ladies of rock. Both have enjoyed lengthy careers although Carly found popular success first with the 1973 hit *You're So Vain* and several popular albums. 1978 has seen her back in the charts with the theme from the latest James Bond movie and *You Belong to Me* from her most recent album, *Boys in the Trees*.



Linda Ronstadt

Linda on the other hand took several years and a number of albums to reach the position she enjoys today as the best female interpreter in the business. She works to a clever formula of new material by a select batch of songwriters and revivals of former hits such as Roy Orbison's *Blue Bayou* and the Stones *Tumbling Dice*.



Among international artists to have appeared on the show Sayer has made a major contribution. He co-hosted the 100th Countdown from London with Ian Meldrum in April last year and while on tour this year hosted the show in Melbourne, performing two songs live on the Countdown set.

Gerry Rafferty

Baker Street will probably go down as the stand-out single of 1978. An instant hit following its showing on Countdown the song almost overnight won for Scottish singer Rafferty a mass audience of all ages. Irony, in the sense that Rafferty has been responsible for some of the best music of the 70s including the hit single, *Stuck in the Middle With You*, as a member of *Stealers Wheel*.



Don Hill

The latest in a long string of Canadian folk orientated artists to break internationally. Despite the success of his single *Sometimes When We Touch* and the album *Longer Fuse* a tour of Australia had to be cancelled for lack of support.





David Soul

One half of the successful TV duo, Starsky and Hutch, Soul also enjoys a successful singing career, specialising in soft ballads which have seen his name on the charts several times in the last 12 months.



Barry Manilow

Singer-songwriter Manilow is one of the few cabaret style artists to enjoy current chart success as sales of his albums and singles in this country show.



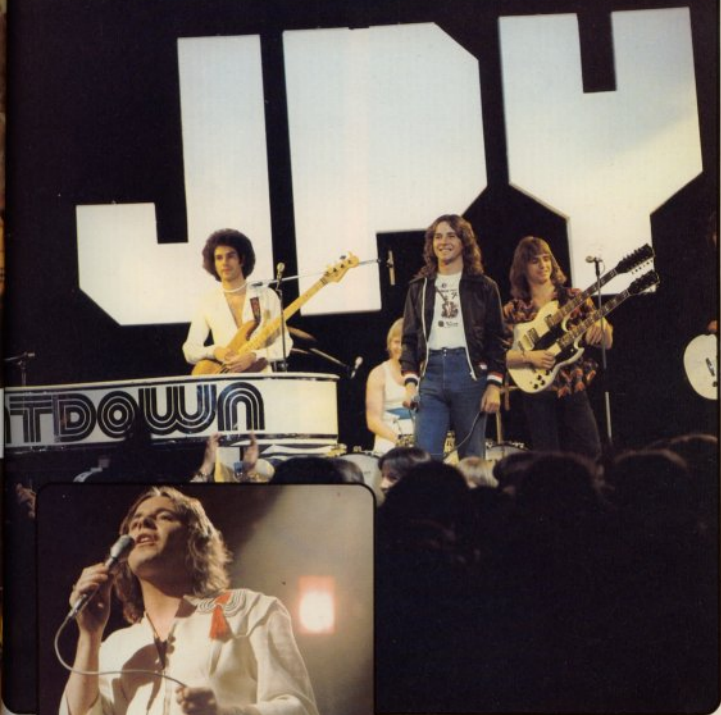
TMG

The Ted Mulry Gang first gained national prominence largely due to the exposure *Countdown* gave their first single, *Jump in My Car*, back in 1975. Since then the group has enjoyed a string of successful singles and has remained closely associated with the show in the succeeding years.



Angels

It has taken this Adelaide group a long time, but finally the Angels are beginning to see their years of struggle bring just rewards. Their latest album is a brilliant piece of hard rock and should establish the band as a frontline act once and for all.



John Paul Young

JPY is another Australian act who owes some of his success to the faith Countdown has displayed in his talent. On his first appearance on the show to perform *Yesterday's Hero* Young had his shirt ripped from his back by the studio audience. The song went on to become a major hit in Australia while achieving some success on the U.S. charts. Young has since been a regular performer on Countdown while songs such as *Standing in the Rain* and *Love is in the Air* have topped charts in many parts of the world.



Bob Welch

Success found Welch second time around with *Sentimental Lady*, the song he originally recorded while lead singer with Fleetwood Mac in 1972. As the single from his first solo album *French Kiss* it made charts worldwide. Although he left Fleetwood Mac in 1975 the ties are still strong as he is managed by Mick Fleetwood and members of the group feature heavily on several songs on the album.



Bryan Ferry

Something of a cult hero during his days with Roxy Music, Ferry emerged as a major solo artist last year with a string of successful singles and the hit album *In Your Mind*. Ferry moved out of the limelight following his 1977 Australian tour and has recently re-emerged with a new album and single.



Ringo Starr

When the Beatles broke up few people would have predicted the commercial success lovable drummer Ringo has achieved. Next to McCartney Ringo is without doubt the most successful ex-Beatle in commercial terms. Photograph: *You're Sixteen* and *It Don't Come Easy* are among the singles that have reached the charts for Ringo in the last eight years.

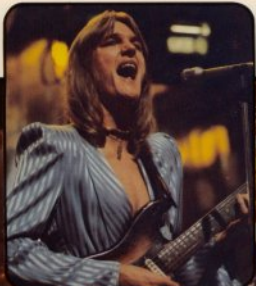


Joe Cocker

No stranger to Australia Cocker has managed to maintain an aura of controversy throughout a lengthy and erratic career. Although it's been some time since he made the charts Cocker is still respected as one of the best interpretive vocalists of the 70s.

Stylus

Stylus have had an erratic career. Always one of the most consistent groups in terms of their recording and performances the groups record releases have met with mixed receptions and it now seems their destiny is overseas where the population exists to support their brand of soul/pop.



Scandal

Since the release of their first single last year Scandal have generated a lot of interest for their versatility. The members of 10CC were among those impressed when the band supported them on tour and their first album released earlier this year demonstrated the groups ability to perform in a number of styles.





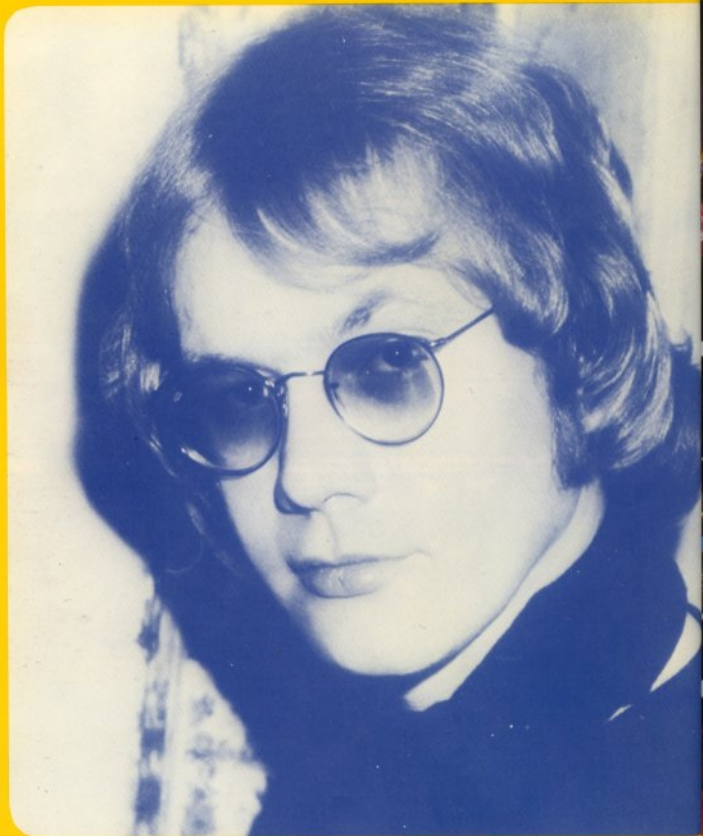
1978 was the year of the Bee Gees. The brothers Gibb dominated charts in the past 12 months like no other group before them. Indicative of their popularity was the soundtrack album of the hit movie *Saturday Night Fever* which has so far sold in excess of 20 million copies world wide. The movie *Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* in which the group stars with Peter Frampton is destined to be another major triumph for the group. The

brothers, particularly Barry, have played a major part in several other careers including those of Samantha Sang and young brother Andy Gibb who rose to become one of the biggest selling solo singers during the year. As a kind of roving ambassador person for Australia Dame Edna Everage found time during the year to visit Frampton and the Bee Gees on the *Sgt Pepper* set and to host *Countdown* on two occasions.



Andy Gibb





Warren Zevon

With his second album *Excitable Boy*, produced by longtime friend Jackson Browne, Zevon has found commercial success largely due to perhaps the strangest single of the year, *Werewolves of London*. Not that Zevon is a newcomer to the business, having provided a song for the *Midnight Cowboy* soundtrack, been musical director for the Everly Brothers and written hit singles for among others, Linda Ronstadt.



Kiss

Without doubt the most visual heavy rock band in the world Kiss are also one of the groups most frequently requested by Countdown fans. Although film clips of the band have appeared on the show several times a general shortage of such material makes it difficult to satisfy the Kiss Army. Although the band doesn't feature prominently on singles charts their albums are among the biggest sellers world wide.



The Babys

Definitely one of the success stories of 1978 the Babys are an Anglo-American band who gained mass media attention in the U.S. when their first album was released last year. Their second album *Broken Heart* provided the material that brought them to the attention of Australian fans this year.

Thin Lizzy

Although this band has failed to fulfil the predictions of critics as the next great English rock group they are still one of the finest bands to emerge in recent years. Primarily a success in terms of album sales their one big single was last year's *The Boys are Back in Town*.





Cold Chisel

Responsible for one of the best debut albums by any Australian group Cold Chisel are probably this country's brightest hope for long term international success. The single *Khe Sanh* did well on the charts and could be one of the Australian singles of '78 to stand the test of time.



Ferrets

Both the Ferrets and Supernaut were Countdown discoveries. The Ferrets succeeded in topping national charts with their single, *Don't Fall in Love*. Having failed to repeat that success the band took several weeks off during mid year to restructure their act and have emerged as a four piece, far cry from the day they appeared on Countdown as a seven member group backed by the massed voices of the national boys choir. Likewise Supernaut made a big impact on national charts with their release *I Like it Both Ways* but have also failed to follow up successfully.

Supernaut





Australia's foremost performers of power rock they have long been Countdown favourites and are currently one of the most popular live acts in Britain and the U.S. The band's popularity revolves around the antics of 'schoolboy' guitar whizz Angus Young and the raucous vocals of lead singer Bon Scott. Although the group is now based in London they still return to Australia at least once a year to record and put in guest appearances on Countdown.



Matchbox

One of the few Australian groups to have survived since the early days of Countdown, Matchbox first appeared on the show early in 1975 with their hit single *Wangaratta Wahine*. They have made several appearances in the meantime, most recently in August this year with *Sleeper*, the single from their *Slightly Troppo* album.

The Studs

Originally manufactured to cash in on the rock and roll revival as the Silver Studs, they quickly adapted their style and name to catch the disco wave and although not one of the major names in this country enjoy a steady following.





on English

One of the most durable artists on the Australian scene, English is currently back in national charts and is in fact one of the few local solo performers to enjoy any measure of success this year. The latest hit *Words Are Not Enough* was recorded while English was busy expanding his acting career with one of the lead roles in the forthcoming TV series *Against the Wind*.



Mark
Holden

Since he wore a carnation on his first Countdown appearance to perform *Never Gonna Fall in Love Again* the flower has been as much a part of his image as the tender pop ballads with which he has had considerable chart success. Holden has been relatively quiet on the pop scene for most of 1978 concentrating on his acting career.

Although the band has been through numerous line up change its four year existence it has never lost the ability to produce hit records.

The early formula of reviving 50's material has given way string of successful songs written by guitarist Jimmie Marse

OL55





Marcia
Hines

Marcia came to Australia several years ago from America to star in *Hair* and later went on to perform a leading role in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Since those two shows she has concentrated on building a career as one of the country's top female singers. A succession of top 10 singles and albums

which have reached gold status has been her reward. One of the most popular live performers in the country Marcia tours regularly, performing to sell out audiences around the country. A favourite with *Countdown* viewers she has hosted the show several times.

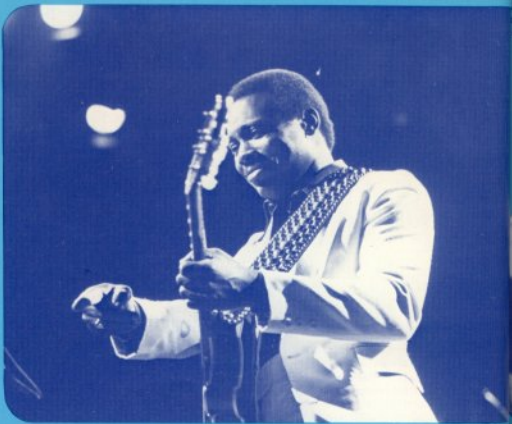
Yvonne Elliman

Yvonne first came to prominence in the early 70s as Mary Magdalene in Jesus Christ Superstar. In April 1974 she joined the Eric Clapton Band and has featured on all Clapton's albums since his comeback with *461 Ocean Boulevard* while touring the world with his band. Although she has released a number of solo albums for RSO it wasn't until 1978 that she hit the charts worldwide.



George Benson

The fusion of jazz with rock has paid off for George Benson who enjoys a strong reputation on both sides of the fence. As record sales forecast Benson's Australian tour was one of the most successful of the year.



Boney M



As among the string of successful disco groups to emerge this year, Boney M's *Rivers of Babylon* was one of the most successful singles of the year holding the top spot on the Countdown chart for several weeks in a row. Raydio's *Jack and Jill* also enjoyed several weeks in the Countdown top 10.

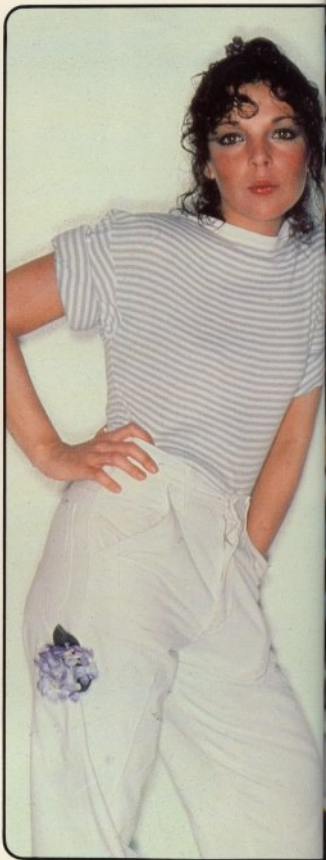
Raydio





Rita Coolidge

Both ladies have been in the business for several years, Rita as a session singer of some repute, Carole as a successful songwriter. Each enjoyed chart success in the past 18 months. Rita with *Higher and Higher*, while Carole's *You're moving out today* made No. 1, on the Countdown top 10.



Carole Bayer Sager



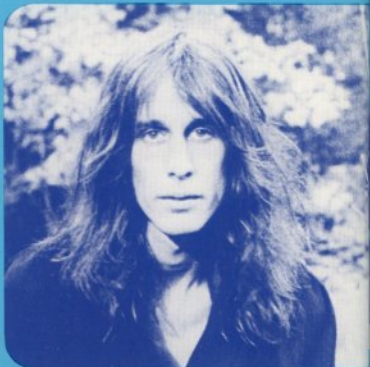
Rod
Stewart

One of the most gratifying moments for Countdown's Molly Meldrum came when Rod Stewart phoned to congratulate him on an interview featured on the show when Meldrum, complete in cricket gear, talked to the star at a press reception at the Sydney Cricket Ground, at the beginning of his Australian tour early last year. Stewart offered Countdown a second

interview during which he expressed his thanks to the Australian public for their support of the tour. Later the same year Meldrum gained an exclusive interview with Stewart in New York following his Madison Square Garden concert and besides being shown on Countdown the interview was sold to pop programs throughout the world.

Todd Rundgren

Rundgren is one of the most versatile artists of the last 10 years. Known for his fierce determination not to compromise he has released a number of critically successful albums over the years though only the latest has achieved commercial success due to the hit single *Can We Still Be Friends*. Rundgren is also renowned for his production skills having produced several major albums in recent years the latest being Meatloaf's *Bat Out of Hell*.



Jefferson Starship

The legendary group from the flower power days of the late 60's when they were known as the Jefferson Airplane their current success is largely due to the return of Marty Balin and the ballads that he contributes to the latest album.

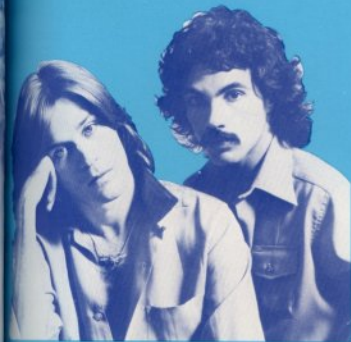


Hall & Oates

It took eight years and numerous albums to establish Hall and Oates in the position they enjoy today as one of the best combinations in rock and roll. Although they'd received limited airplay in Australia with songs such as *She's Gone* and *Sarah Smile* it was *Rich Girl* that finally broke them onto the charts in this country.

Eagles

Perhaps the most successful west coast country rock group of all time the Eagles' following seems to grow annually. Slow starters, it took four albums and a tour of Australia to establish the band in this country but since then it's been all downhill. Perhaps the only disappointment among their fans is the length of time between albums as it is now over 12 months since their last, *Hotel California*, was released. Since the photo was taken Randy Meisner has left the group to be replaced by Poco's Tim Schmidt.





Based around Graham Gouldman and Eric Stewart 10CC are one of the most respected groups currently in existence. They are one of the few bands who have proven capable of extending the rock medium while consistently producing hit singles, of which *I'm Not In Love* is a classic. During their 1977 tour of Australia Gouldman and Stewart co-hosted Countdown.

After two tours of this country Dr Hook are regarded as one of the zaniest bands in existence. Lead singers Ray Sawyer and Dennis Locorriere are, as a result, much sought after as TV guests and have hosted Countdown on both visits. The band has had an erratic career with several hits, including *Sylvia's Mother*, *Cover of the Rolling Stone* and *Only Sixteen*, and a bankruptcy which the band turned to its own advantage by dedicating an album to the experience.

Dr Hook





Alice Cooper



Preparations for Alice's exclusive appearance as host of Countdown last year were among the most elaborate undertaken by the production crew. To fit in with the stars tour schedule the show was taped in Adelaide, where Cooper

underwent his full make-up treatment, drew winners of a Countdown-Alice Cooper competition from a barrel with the help of LRB's Glenn Shorrock and spoke to the winner by phone.

COUNTDOWN

Success Story

In its first four years Countdown has gained an enviable reputation for its ability to launch artists, whether they be from Australia or overseas.

The show has given audiences in every part of the country an unparalleled opportunity to watch their favourite artists in action while giving them the chance to access the ability of new artists, many of whom have since become household names as a result of exposure on Countdown.

Since the first program went to air in early November 1974, Countdown has steadily grown in stature to the point where new artists recognise that the show is the key to any success they may hope to achieve in Australia.

And it is a well established fact that the production of film clips to accompany record releases has become an industry in itself since the inception of Countdown.

Prior to Countdown the Australian film clip was virtually unknown.

As talent co-ordinator Ian 'Molly' Meldrum is only too aware competition to get on the show has brought a sophistication to the production of film clips that wasn't present when Countdown started.

"When we were putting the first shows together we didn't really have much of a choice because there were very few film clips.

Consequently the initial shows featured about 75 percent Australian talent recorded live in the ABC studios with whatever we could find that was suitable in the way of overseas film clips put in to give the show broader interest.

This year in any one week we have as many as 50 or 60 film clips to choose from which is a direct result

of the success the show has had in breaking artists and singles onto Australian market.

The balance between Australian and overseas acts is now about 50/50 with any advantage being toward Australian artists.

So much depends on the initial push made by the song and the clip that some clips cost as much to produce as the record itself.

Clips such as Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* and Kate Bush's *Wuthering Heights* are examples of the high class of production and results it can bring.

Both songs spent several weeks No. 1 on the Countdown top 10.

The list of acts commonly referred to as Countdown discoveries is almost endless.

Skyhooks, John Paul Young, AC/DC, Bonnie Tyler, Graham Gorman, Leif Garrett, Shaun Case, Supertramp, the Ferrrets, Abba - countless others owe much of their continuing success to the support given them by Countdown.

Meldrum said: "It's reached the stage now that many of the record companies are using Australia as a gauge to the potential international success of new artists."

Meatloaf and Johnny Cougar are perfect examples of that - screened their film clips while they were virtually unknown overseas and as a result they have both achieved enormous popularity in Australia.

"That has given their record companies the confidence to go all out and promote them here throughout the rest of the world - the result that they are both as internationally as they are in Australia."

"It's gratifying to see that sort of thing happening because it means Countdown is achieving its aim of stimulating interest in the music scene as a whole."

Countdown has done a similar thing for the local industry, causing interest in Australian artists to increase dramatically in the last few years.



the early days of Countdown we were able to produce a lot of film clips of acts.

The success of clips such as the one we did for John Paul Young's *Hearts and Flowers* gave the company the confidence to support other acts to the full.

In 1974 the most successful Australian albums were those that sold around 20,000 copies.

It was around the same time as Countdown started. Skyhooks first *Live in Living in the 70's* sold 20,000 copies in its first seven weeks of release and lead singer Terry Strachan became a household name because the show was in a format in which he could communicate his personality to a wide audience.

As a result of hosting Countdown, Shirley quickly became a household name for TV talk shows in general, a situation that probably wouldn't have existed prior to Countdown.

One direct result of this success on the part of Countdown in breaking acts is that the show has almost unlimited access to the major artists in the world today.

Meldrum said, 'I knew quite a few people in the industry overseas from when I worked in London years ago. These contacts helped a lot initially, especially in getting support from acts like Elton John who was one of the first international acts we introduced for the show.'

These days the word of mouth about the show is so good there are a few people we haven't been able to talk to.

The 100th Countdown last April is probably the best example.

Not only did Leo Sayer agree to come to the London end, people like Bryan Ferry, Paul and Linda McCartney, Smoke and the Bay City Rollers all made themselves available to us for the event, mainly in recognition of what we had been able to do for them in Australia.

Stewart is another one who went out of his way for Countdown.



Molly, Ted Emery and friends.



Skyhooks in various stages of preparation for filming clip of *All My Friends Are Getting Married*.



Molly and international guest Shaun Cassidy.

I interviewed him at a press reception at the start of his Australian tour last year.

It screened on Countdown on the Sunday.

'On the Monday morning I got a call from Rod congratulating us on a great show.'

He offered to do another interview for us while in Australia.

Later in the same year I was in New York for his Madison Square Garden concert and he gave Countdown the only interview he did for TV anywhere in the world at that time.

The Los Angeles premiere of *Grease* was another example of the high favour in which Countdown is regarded.

Paramount Films were making a TV special on the premiere of the film and consequently all other TV organisations were barred from the premiere with the exception of Countdown.

The success of the show has also meant that record companies are prepared to fly new talent to this country to make publicity appearances, something that was unheard of before the show began.

In the last 18 months the list of international artists who have hosted the show while on promotional trips is long and includes names like Shaun Cassidy, Lef Garret, Bonnie Tyler, Graham Bonner, Johnny Cougar and Hot Chocolate's Errol Brown.

Countdown production standards are such that most artists have no hesitation about appearing live on the show with the result that all of the above named have performed live along with others such as Suzi Quatro, Leo Sayer, Foreigner and Meatloaf.

In fact Johnny Cougar's manager, Billy Gaff, was so impressed with the film clip made by Countdown of Cougar's second single he expressed a desire to use it overseas.

According to Meldrum, Countdown's success has also reflected on those who haven't taken advantage of the exposure it offers.



Status Quo

Status Quo made their third appearance on Countdown in July, performing live prior to the start of another Australian tour. In recent years the band has proven one of the most popular live acts, hence their regular visits.

Blondie

Billed as the first new wave act to tour Australia, Blondie's 1977 visit followed the success of their film clips on Countdown. 1978 has seen them back on the show with Denis Walsh in Sydney. Deborah Harry co-hosted the show with Skyhooks' Shirley Strachan.



Elton John

His involvement goes back to the early days of Countdown when he gave the show an exclusive interview while in Australia to promote the film Tommy. Countdown has since featured two other exclusive interviews with John and the star put in a special guest appearance on the 100th show.

He said: "There are still some acts who for one reason or another don't feel it is worthwhile making clips specifically for the Australian market."

Kiss are one of the most requested groups from viewers yet it is really difficult to get any material on them.

They have an enormous following in this country and their stage act is so visual it is almost made for TV but their management don't seem to recognise that fact.

"If they did I think they could be even bigger than they already are."

Led Zeppelin are another group which won't make film clips and even though they have a massive following I think they could get to a lot more people than they do.

The Rolling Stones are a good example of what can be done. They didn't go in for film clips much until *Black and Blue*.

Those clips and now the new ones from *Some Girls* have opened up a whole new audience to them.

On the other hand I believe Elton John made a big mistake not promoting his more recent material the way that he used to.

He refused to promote *Blue Moves* and its sales suffered as a result.

Carole King's *Hard Rock Cafe* would have been one of the biggest albums of 1977 had she done a film clip.

Meldrum believes some acts make the mistake of bypassing Countdown on the assumption that it is a singles orientated show.

"That's a mistake on the artists part. We'll usually play the single first off but if the artists album is happening we'll follow up with an album track and make the audience visually aware of what the album is about."

"If we concentrated on the commercial side of an artist exclusively then no-one would buy the artist's album and we'd end up killing off more artists than we help build."

Meldrum cites Bob Seger, Todd Rundgren and Jackson Browne as artists who have benefited from this approach.



Bob Hudson and former director Paul Drane during filming of *Newcastle Song*.



All star line up in the ABC canteen. From left: Glyn Mason, Nigel Macara, Mike Rudd, Bill Putt, Jim Keays, Harvey James.



Fans gather outside ABC-TV Countdown studios.

COUNTDOWN

The Format

The three people responsible for devising the format: Melbourne executive producer Michael Shrimpton and producer Robbie Weir did so in an effort to end the dominance of Australian pop on TV.

Shrimpton said: "The ABC was the first interested in devising a program aimed specifically at the teenage audience and Meldrum for some time been looking for someone willing to give exposure to pop artists whom he felt were generally ignored by TV."

The three had what is now a famous meeting in a Melbourne hotel and left with a verbal agreement to proceed at full speed to devise the format for a new show.

The basic idea was to produce a show that would take full advantage of the visual aspects TV presented and to present artists professionally as possible.

Meldrum, Shrimpton and Weir decided the format should be designed to allow the show to reflect exactly what people are listening to at any one time.

Meldrum said: "We determined the show would not be a vehicle for any one particular form of music. The only criteria is one of entertainment."

"If a song entertains either musically or visually or both then it will be played on the show."

From there on it is entirely up to the audience whether they like it or not.

Audience reaction has played a large part in Countdown's development from the beginning.

The weekly studio audience consists of around 120 teenagers and there is a waiting list of 18 months.

The introduction of Countdown Councils in 14 schools around the nation gives the team a regular

valent insight into what is
and of the show

ampton said. "The initial format
extremely fast moving with little
from the hosts apart from what
necessary to introduce artists

the establishment of the
Countdown Councils we've become
of the need to provide more
information on the acts we present.

we have stuck to the fast moving
but for the major part of the
because there is a need to
ent as many acts and as much
try as possible within our allotted
each week but to go some way
satisfying this need for more in-
formation we have broadened the
of Humdrum to cater for this
much as possible.

are still aware that the kids want
know a lot more about the acts
see but to do that job properly
uses an entirely different type of

of that service is being supplied
the other pop shows such as
ands Unlimited and Nightmoves
ch have emerged as a result of
Countdown's success.

Wharm said. "We don't regard the
er shows as competition to
Countdown but as shows which
plement what we're doing.

For instance our format doesn't
allow us to spend half an hour on
an act.

we feel our job is to present acts
the public in as entertaining a light
possible.

the public like what they see then
usually a show like Nightmoves
to follow up with a feature which
fully will show the full range of
act's abilities."

COUNTDOWN

Countdown
Councils

the last 12 months the Countdown
Councils have played a major part in
planning of each show.



Rollermania!



Jim Keays, *Boy From the Stars*.



Air Supply, Love and Other Bruises.



Jeff Duff, *I'm Your Football*.

There are two Countdown Councils
in each state, each with seven mem-
bers within the target audience age
group of 10 to 17. Each council is
based at a school, the schools are
chosen to represent as wide a cross
section of the Australian community
as possible.

Each council member views the
show on Sunday evening, discusses
it with friends on Monday.

Each Tuesday council co-ordinator
Caroline James contacts each council
and receives a report on the
show.

Caroline explains the system: "Each
council has an opinion sheet which
besides asking specific questions on
what they like and don't like about
each show also gives them room to
make general comments about
things such as staging, lighting,
special effects, appearance and so
on.

"For instance they don't like the live
audience to scream.

They don't mind cheering and clap-
ping but hysterical screaming is a
complete no-no.

"Once a song has been No. 1 for
three weeks they don't want to see
it anymore.

If it's No. 1 a fourth week it seems
people would rather see a prediction
than the No. 1 again.

"Our audience doesn't like clips that
don't look real.

They prefer "live" style clips to
anything else.

They like lots of energy and they like
to see exactly what's going on.

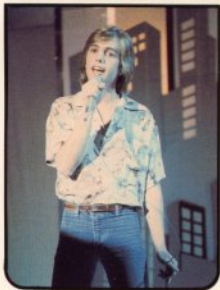
If someone plays a solo then they
want to see the solo being played.

They like to see every member of a
band rather than a clip that con-
centrates only on the lead singer."

The recent introduction of four dates
to accompany film clips is another
result of the councils.

Caroline said. "They asked us to put
them well in advance of the tour so
they can save their money.

"The maturity and perception of kids
today really comes across from the
councils.



Shaun Cassidy

Although he has been concentrating on his acting career in recent months Cassidy remains a firm favourite with Countdown audiences. He made his first appearance on the show in November 1976 and co-hosted with Meldrum while in Australia in April 1977.



first appeared on Countdown last year with the film clip of *Surfin' USA*. He was interviewed in L.A. by Molly Meldrum in October last year then co-hosted Countdown while on a

promotional visit to Australia early in 1978. While on the show he performed two numbers live, *Surfin' USA* and *Put Your Head on My Shoulder*.

"They are more interested in artists they can relate to personally rather than stars on an ego trip."

"They are much more into albums than most people would believe. Even to the extent of asking us to show album covers of the artists featured in the CHARTBUSTERS segments so they know which album a track is from if they're interested in buying it."

"People like Jackson Browne, Boz Scaggs, Warren Zevon have an enormous appeal to even the youngest kids possibly because they come across as real people."

COUNTDOWN

One to
One Eight One

Countdown first went to air on Friday November 6, 1974 at 6:30 p.m.

So far 181 episodes have been televised.

Just thirty minutes of black and white that initial show was hosted by radio DJ Grant Goldman.

Johnny Farnham was the first artist to appear on Countdown, singing *One Minute Every Hour*.

Also on the show were Skyhooks, Sherbet, Linda George, Daryl Braithwaite and the first overseas film clip, Paperlace singing *Black Eyed Boys*. Paperlace also had the honour of being the first act to take No. 1 spot on the Countdown top 10 with *The Night Chicago Died*.

Looking back over the 181 shows is like looking at a resume of recent pop history.

Radio DJ's hosted the next four shows then Countdown policy changed with artists being used as hosts, the first being Suzi Quatro who was touring Australia at the time.

Skyhooks Shirley had the distinction of being the first Australian artist to host Countdown on the Christmas Eve show, also the first Countdown



Grant Goldman, compere of the first episode of Countdown.



Former Skyhook Red Symon framed by original producer Rob Weekes.



Stevie Wright hit big during the show's first year with *Evie*.

colour show as it was used as a transmission before colour offers began, while Sherbet's Daryl Braithwaite hosted the last show of the year on New Years Eve.

The first show of 1975 saw the Australian No. 1 single, Wil Shakespeare's *My Little Angel*.

On March 1, 1975 Shirley had the honour of hosting the first AFS program screened in colour.

That 60 minute show went to air at midnight on Colour Day.

On March 16, 1975 a young lad by the name of John Young made his first appearance on the show with a song titled *Yesterday's Hero*. Mobbed by the studio audience, shirt torn from his back, JPY arrived.

In the succeeding years Young, Sherbet and Skyhooks dominated the show as they dominated Australian music.

Each of these acts has appeared more than 50 times in the last years and JPY, Daryl and Shirley have each hosted Countdown more than 10 times.

There are those who enjoyed a moment of glory before fading. Names like Paperlace and Wil Shakespeare.

Bachman Turner Overdrive on the big names of 74-75 enjoyed a brief spell at No. 1.

Pilot's January was one of the hits which made it to the top 10 due to Countdown exposure. It was the first song to enjoy an extended stay in the No. 1 position.

Freddie Fender, Captain and Tennille, Fox, Pussyfoot, M. MacGregor, Carole Bayer Steffen, Denise Drysdale, Stevie Wright were among others to feature prominently in the Countdown charts and are among those who could sustain success.

And of course there are those who keep re-appearing, the artists with the ability to provide entertainment on a lasting basis.

We've already mentioned Sherbet and Skyhooks.

The Carpenters first appeared at No. 1 on the Countdown charts with *Mr. Postman* on the 10th June.

Like Newton John has enjoyed similar success since her first Countdown hit, *If You Love Me Let Your Heart Know*.

AC/DC made their first Countdown appearance early in 1975 and have appeared as a group Bon Scott and Angus Young have hosted the show regularly ever since.

At their demise last year Hush were another Australian group to enjoy success of a lasting nature.

They dominated the charts in late '75 with Boney Maroney and were always one of the most popular live acts to appear.

The Little River Band made their first appearance on the show with a song called *The Man Inside* on June 15, 1975 and premiered their first hit single *Curiosity Killed The Cat* a month later.

Five weeks later a group named Sherbet appeared with a song called *I Do, I Do* which created some interest but not as much as *Mamma Mia* which was shown a week later.

Five months later Abba knocked AC/DC's *I'm Not In Love* from the top spot and a legend was in the making.

Her second hit, *Fernando* held No. 1 for 10 weeks only being displaced by Sherbet's *Howzat*, the single that was the top 10 in several countries and the world.

Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* premiered on Countdown on the 1st of June 1976 and three weeks later had taken the top position from W McCall's novelty hit *Convoy*, a song which helped boost the CB's sales to a fever point in this country.

Later in the year Abba were back on the charts again with *Dancing Queen* and their final Countdown No. 1, *Money, Money, Money* which was also the last chart-topper of '76.

The first show of the New Year saw a long loss by the name of Donna



Frequent hosts Hush's Keith Lamb and Les Gock.



Early days: Sherbet with original member Clive Shakespeare and Denise Drysdale.



Molly tries his feet at skateboarding under Leif Garrett's watchful eye.



JPY and Renee Geyer join Molly on the 100th Show.

Jones, better known to viewers as Pussycat, at the top of the chart with a catchy song, *The Way That You Do It*.

That song remained at the top for five weeks during which time Pussycat arrived in Australia for a national tour and several appearances on Countdown.

Undoubtedly the highlight of 1977 was the 100th show.

Celebrated in a special 90 minute episode the show went to air at 5.30 p.m. on April 3.

Molly Meldrum hosted in Melbourne with Leo Sayer doing the honours in London.

The line up of artists was a virtual who's who of pop with international stars: Smoke, David Bowie, Bay City Rollers, Bryan Ferry, Paul and Linda McCartney, Suzi Quatro all putting in appearances along with the cream of Australian talent: Renee Geyer, Skyhooks, Daryl Braithwaite, Ol 55, AC/DC, T.M.G. JPY, Supernaut, LRB and Mark Holden.

Smoke, who had made their presence felt since early in the year made it to No. 1 later in April with *Living Next Door To Alice*, the irony being that they replaced Shaun Cassidy at the top spot the week the young American star hosted Countdown.

May '77 was Julie Covington month with her emotionally evocative reading of *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* from the Webber/Rice musical on the life of Eva Peron dominating the charts for six weeks.

Alice Cooper's *You and Me* made it to No. 1 for one week to be displaced by the crazy men of rock, Dr Hook. Their cover of *Walk Right In* stormed up the charts primarily as a result of the reaction to their madcap concert appearances around the country.

New York based Australian Peter Allen was next to reach the top.

Although *I Go To Rio* had been released for several months it wasn't until Countdown screened the film clip on June 12 that the public began to react.



Both bands are among the new breed of supergroup which have enjoyed multi-million album sales with their first albums. Neither was slow to capitalise on their Australian popularity as both toured the country this year. Foreigner performed their hit single, *Cold as Ice* on Countdown and co-hosted the show. Mr Meatloaf himself hosted the show in July, complete with bike entrance and tombstone set.



Meatloaf



Slussyfoot

Slussyfoot topped charts around the country after being covered by Countdown. She repaid the show by appearing as a guest while on tour. Supercharge are another group that topped charts after their equally excellent film clip was premiered by Countdown. Broken band leader Albie Donnelly subsequently joined the show.

Bay City Rollers

Former Melbourne singer Samantha Sang topped charts worldwide earlier this year with the Barry Gibb composition *Emotions*. Samantha hosted Countdown while on a visit to Australia. The Bay City Rollers have made several appearances on Countdown during visits to Australia. Their lineup has changed since the last appearance and the group's future appears uncertain at present.

It took just nine short weeks for the song to go from obscurity to No. 1, a place it held long enough for Allen to arrive in Australia for a concert tour, emcee the show and see Norman Gunston perform an hilarious send up of the song.

The following week Allen's close friend, songwriter Carole Bayer Sager succeeded him with one of the surprise hits of the year, *You're Moving Out Today*.

A week later The Ferrets became only the fifth Australian act to reach No. 1 (William Shakespeare, Skyhooks, Hush and Sherbet being the others).

Lets Fall in Love enjoyed three weeks at the top after an enormous publicity build up developed over the time it took the group to record their first album.

Eighteen months in the making the album was delayed several times and was eventually released in a plain cardboard cover due to holdups in the cover design.

At time of writing they were the last Australian based act to have reached No. 1.

Not that Australia has been left entirely out of the picture as the next big Countdown hit was expatriate Andy Gibbs' *I Just Want To Be Your Everything* which dominated the charts for seven weeks from October 17.

November 13 saw the premiere on Countdown of one of the biggest hits of the last 12 months, Wings' *Mull of Kintyre*.

By the time Countdown broke for Christmas four weeks later Mull had reached the top of the charts and it still held top spot when the show returned more than eight weeks later.

Had Countdown continued weekly over the Christmas period the song would have been at No. 1 for something like 11 weeks.

1978 has been the year for long running hits.

Olivia Newton John returned to be top with the *Grease* hit, *You're The One That I Want* which also



Adam Faith.



Winners of the Saturday Night Fever dance contest, Sue Ellen Regan and Alfonso Falcone.



Dame Edna.



Norman Gunston and fan.

featured her movie co-star Travolta.

The song was No. 1 for only one week but has inspired high charts for several months.

At the time of writing seven acts had reached the top with the *Big Bad* of Time and Gerry Rafferty's *Baker Street* having the next longest stay at two weeks each.

Bonnie Tyler and the Bee Gees enjoyed four weeks at the top, as did Bush with the unique *Woolly Heights* remained for five weeks while Boney M's *By Your Side* outlasted everything else during the year with seven weeks at the top.

Meanwhile international artists continued to make themselves available to Countdown with Graham Fell appearing as host for the first time in September and Alice Cooper doing the honours for the second time on October 1.

Although the show has operated within a tight format during its existence there have been a number of notable exceptions.

The first excursion was the *Starline* special screened in 1975, and around the tour that supported the group's *Life* album it gave remarkable insight into the lives of the members of one of Australia's major groups.

Leo Sayer's manager made a special appearance to host the show, Sayer's first Australian tour. Adam Faith, who restricts himself to behind-the-scenes activities these days.

More recently was the special *Saturday Night Fever* show which focused around the finals of a nationwide disco dance contest. The finals actually being conducted on Countdown with the final competing for a trip to Los Angeles and a meeting with the Bee Gees. Although aimed at a 10 to 17 year old audience it is well known that Countdown attracts a much wider age group and occasionally the show attempts to cater for the audience with guests who appeal to viewers in general.

a result Norman Gunston, Bill and Dame Edna Everage all made successful appearances. Careful planning is well in advance of 1979 with the first show of the year scheduled for screening on early 11.

First Countdown awards are expected to screen on Friday March

logical step for the Countdown as the show is the only one in the world that screens over a full year. It places special emphasis on the talent of Australian talent.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the year will be Countdown's 200th anniversary.

It is intended to top the 100th anniversary which remains to be seen, but one thing is guaranteed. Countdown's production team will have the full support of the international pop community in their efforts to bring you the best night's entertainment available.

COUNTDOWN

The Crew

Executive Producer —

Michael Shrimpton

Michael Shrimpton has overall creative and administrative responsibility for Countdown. The show is his brief and as a result he has the final word on what goes on screen.

Producer/Director —

Grant Rule and Ted Emery

As the producer/directors responsibility to transfer each week's show from ideas on paper to reality. They work closely with talent co-ordinator Ian Meldrum in selecting the artists who will be featured each week and have overall responsibility for what goes on in the studio on the day of taping. Late in 1978 Countdown introduced a system whereby Ted Emery and Grant Rule alternate as producer/director. Previous



Michael Shrimpton, Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, Ted Emery.



Grant Rule, Sharon McPherson.



Peter Walsh.



Stephen Jones.

producer/directors were Robbie Weekes, Paul Drane and John Walker.

Producers Assistant — Sharon McPherson

Responsible for all the paper work involved in putting the show to air from artist contracts, travel and accommodation arrangements, copyright and royalty details to co-ordinating the various ABC departments involved such as wardrobe and staging.

First Assistant Director — Peter Walsh

He is in charge of the studio floor crew, technicians, artists, cameras on the day of taping. During the week he prepares all the video tape inserts and transfers film clips to video.

Second Assistant Director — Stephen Jones

Reports directly to the first assistant. On the day of taping makes sure the artists are on the right stage at the right time. He is also responsible for the studio audience. During the week he prepares the top 10 and makes sure pictures of the artists in the top 10 are available.

Talent Co-Ordinator — Ian Meldrum

Ultimately it is his knowledge of the pop scene that decides what is seen on the show each week. Acts as the major link between Countdown record companies and artists in the preparation of each show and follows through in the same role on the day of taping.

Production Manager — Bob Storey

The executive producer's right hand man he takes care of the business and administrative side of the show, co-ordinating with each member of the team to make sure the show is produced within its budget and that all contractual obligations etc are met.

Council Co Ordinator — Caroline James

Responsible for co-ordinating Countdown Councils and doing basic research for the show.

Bonnie Tyler



Suzi Quatro



Bonnet and Tyler are among the most successful in the long line of international artists who have had hit records in Australia largely due to Countdown's ability to break new records and artists onto the market.

Suzi Quatro has been a firm favourite of Countdown fans since the show started and on her first appearance co-hosted with Johnny Farnham.



Graham Bonnet



Rick Wakeman



Billy Joel

The piano men, all three have enjoyed hit records in Australia over the years that Countdown has existed and each found time to put in a personal appearance on the show while on tour here. Rick Wakeman pictured with Countdown assistant director Tony Vuat.



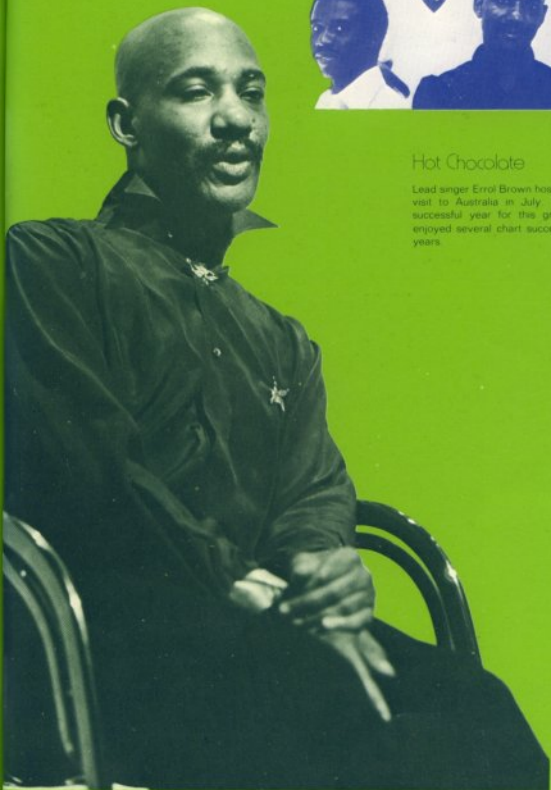
Eruption

Another in the long line of disco bands to achieve success in 1978, *I Can't Stand the Rain* enjoyed a lengthy stay on the Countdown charts.



Village People

The band which scored a major hit in this country with *Macho Man* is made up of some of New York's finest singers and dancers including Victor Willis who starred in the Broadway production of *The Wiz*.



Hot Chocolate

Lead singer Errol Brown hosted Countdown during a visit to Australia in July. 1978 was another successful year for this group which has enjoyed several chart successes over a number of years.



Stars

Stars on the other hand have achieved considerable success with their first album, having paved the way with a lot of hard work over the past two years — countless one night pub stands and numerous appearances on Countdown.

1978 has definitely been the year for these unique Australian acts. It has taken Richard Clapton five years to establish himself through record sales in the position critics have long attributed him — Australia's foremost singer songwriter. Despite having a hit single with *Girls on the Avenue* in 1975 it wasn't until this year's album, *Goodbye Tiger*, that the public finally started paying him the respect he is due.



Richard Clapton



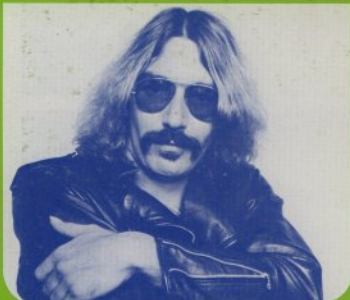
Undoubtedly Australia's most successful group in terms of overseas success. LRB's success is due mainly to a highly experienced creative nucleus of Glenn Shorrock, Beeb Birtles and Graham Goble each of whom has been a leading member of the Australian rock community for several years.

Drummer Derek Pellico is in the same category in terms of experience while guitarist David Briggs and bass player George McArdle are two of the finest players to emerge in this country in recent years.



Daniel

One of the most respected groups in Australia over the past couple of years their debut album, *Last Night in the City* enhanced this reputation gaining favourable reviews around the country.



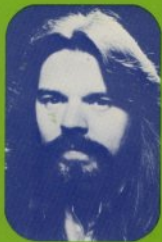
Jeff St John

One of the most dynamic live performers in the country St John first made the Australian charts in 1968 with *Big Time Operator*. He had to wait nearly 10 years for his second major success, last year's hit, *Poof in Love*. In the meantime St John gained his reputation performing in some of the best known local groups and as a solo artist.



Ray Burton

One of the most experienced performers working Australia at present Burton spent a lengthy period overseas during which time he co-wrote the Helen Reddy hit, *I Am Woman*. He returned to Australia 18 months ago and since has released an album of original material and performed extensively around the country.



Bob Seger

Seger is one of the great writer-performers of rock and roll. Unfortunately it has taken eleven albums and as many years to gain that recognition. His last album *Nightmoves* is one of the classic records while his latest release *Stranger in Town* has already produced the hit *Still the Same* and is destined to be one of the major albums of recent years.

Eddie Money

Former New York cop made good. Money hit with *Baby Hold On*, a song well suited to his distinctive phrasing and the typical New York street wise sound of his voice. Like Johnny Cougar, Money was an instant hit with *Countdown* fans and was one of the new stars featured in interviews on the show this year.



Split Enz

Visually two of the most exciting groups to head overseas from Australian shores. Both groups originally came from NZ and the English influence predominant in that country is a key element of their work. Because of their visual eccentricity both groups have developed strong followings from their live concerts and Countdown appearances.



Renee Geyer Since the success, in 1974, of *It's a Man's World* Renee has been regarded as the first lady of Australian soul. Having recorded her last two albums in the U.S. Renee is currently trying to repeat her Australian success on an international level.

Jon Durg

Although he hasn't achieved any measure of commercial success in this country Dury enjoys considerable notoriety for his, to say the least, down-to-earth approach to music. He has a certain style and humour that places him in the top rank of "punk" rockers.



Tom Robinson Band

Widely publicised as pioneers of the gay movement in rock Tom Robinson has been responsible for some of the best music to come from a new band this year. In one of the best interviews screened by Countdown during the year Robinson said that homosexuals were too often treated as outcasts. His music can only help rectify that situation.





Nick Lowe

One of the legends of English power rock Lowe has enjoyed a long and varied career. Currently he is the recognised force behind the emergence of 'new wave' music being co-founder of Stiff Records and producer of albums by Graham Parker and the Rumour, Elvis Costello, The Damned and Dr Feelgood, to name a few. Lowe recently formed a new label, Radar Records on which his album *Jesus of Cool* was released.

Elvis Costello

One of the most successful artists to emerge in the last 12 months Costello enjoyed a moderate hit in Australia with *Watching the Detectives* while his albums *My Aim is True* and *This Year's Model* have achieved considerable success.





The Sports

Two of the best new acts to emerge in recent times each has been categorised as new wave though they are in fact masters of the pop craft no matter what label is applied.

Parker has made his name through dynamic live film clips and brilliant, raw, energetic songs.

The Sports built its reputation largely through live performances in Melbourne gaining their national following with the release of its first album *Reckless* with a mix of strong original material and distinctive cover versions of 60's hits.



Graham Parker



The
Rolling
Stones

The Stones wiped out any doubts that their star may be on the decline with one of the best albums of a lengthy career. *Some Girls* which reached the top 10 around the world. A haphazard tour of the U.S. proved once again that the group is still the biggest drawcard in rock and roll.

Led Zeppelin

After two years inactivity resulting from the broken leg lead singer Robert Plant sustained in a motor accident and more recently the death of his son, Led Zeppelin are reportedly back in the studio recording again.



Teenage Radio Stars
Boys Next Door

Of the artists featured on Suicide Records first release, Lethal Weapons, Boys Next Door and the Teenage Radio Stars seem most likely to find a lasting place on the Australian scene. Both have featured on Countdown and although largely unseen live outside of Melbourne the reaction to their appearances indicated that a national following awaits them.





Lou Reed

Although relatively quiet for most of the year Lou Reed is still regarded the father of punk rock, a position he attained by being one of the few artists to successfully articulate a view of the 70s which audiences throughout the West found sympathetic with their own.

Patti Smith

Like Reed, Patti Smith also lays out a highly personalised view of the world which mass audiences find acceptable. Although her brief career has been somewhat erratic she enjoyed chart success this year with the hit single *Because the Night* co-written with Bruce Springsteen.



Kevin
Borich
Express



Jo Jo Zep

Definitely two of the most popular live bands in Australia. Kevin Borich is generally regarded the guitar king of local rock while Joe Camilleri is one of the most riveting front men in the country. Chart success has so far eluded both acts though each enjoys healthy album sales from a loyal and always growing

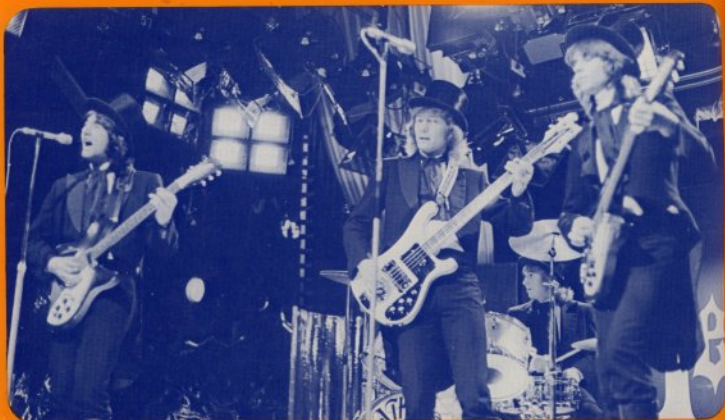
following. KBE is currently in the U.S. laying the groundwork for an international career while Jo Jo Zep have an album compiled from their first two Australian releases on release throughout Europe.



The Skyhooks and Countdown stories are closely intertwined. The groups first single and album, both titled *Living in the 70's*, were released at about the same time as *Countdown* was launched. Largely as a result of the exposure given to this, then, new and exciting group by *Countdown*, Skyhooks



quickly became the biggest selling group in the history of Australian rock. Although the Skyhooks hysteria has levelled off somewhat the band remains one of the most frequent and popular acts featured on the show while Shirley regularly appears as host.



Beethoven

Originally from Tasmania Beethoven released their first single, *Shy Girl* mid year. Although it didn't make a big impact it gained the group a strong following.



Cheek

After a couple of years playing around the country and a name change this Sydney group started to make their mark earlier in the year with *So Much in Love*. The follow up single, *Leave My Heart Alone* enjoyed similar success.



Van Halen Reputedly one of the hardest working bands in the U.S. Van Halen built their reputation working the bars of Los Angeles where over a period of years they gained the support of people like Nils Lofgren, Kiss, Gene Simmons and the powers that be at Warner Brothers Records. As a result the band's first self-titled album was released in December 1977 with their cover of the Kinks You Really Got Me drawing considerable attention.



With their fourth album, *A Night at the Opera*, Queen secured themselves a place in the history of rock as the single *Bohemian Rhapsody* became an instant classic. The film clip that accompanied the single still stands as one of the best produced clips shown on Countdown. Queen's latest album, *News of the World*, has so far produced two hit singles, *We Are The Champions* and *We Will Rock You* which further prove the band's versatility.



Fleetwood Mac

The addition of Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham to this 11 year old group in 1975 provided the catalyst necessary to project Fleetwood Mac to the forefront of modern rock.

The band started in England as a blues influenced rock band and went through a number of changes before arriving at the MOR rock formula that saw their last album *Rumours* hold the number one position on American charts for more than 20 weeks last year.



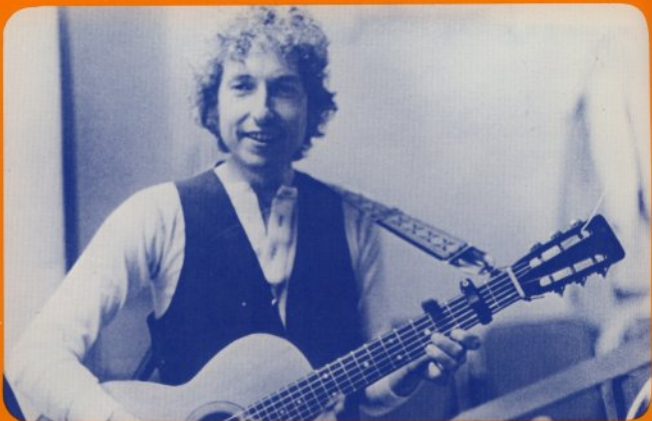
Boz Scaggs



ELO

1977 will be remembered as the year when these two acts achieved worldwide success after several years waiting in the wings. For ELO the breakthrough came with the album *A New World Record* which provided the group with several hits and gave them the financial incentive to produce one of the most lavish stage shows ever mounted, a show which the

band brought to Australia early this year. Scaggs' success with *Silk Degrees* was the result of refinements made over a 10 year period from guitar based blues to the slickly commercial soul rock which catapulted him to the top of the charts. Like ELO, Australian fans had the chance to see Scaggs in action when he toured earlier in the year.



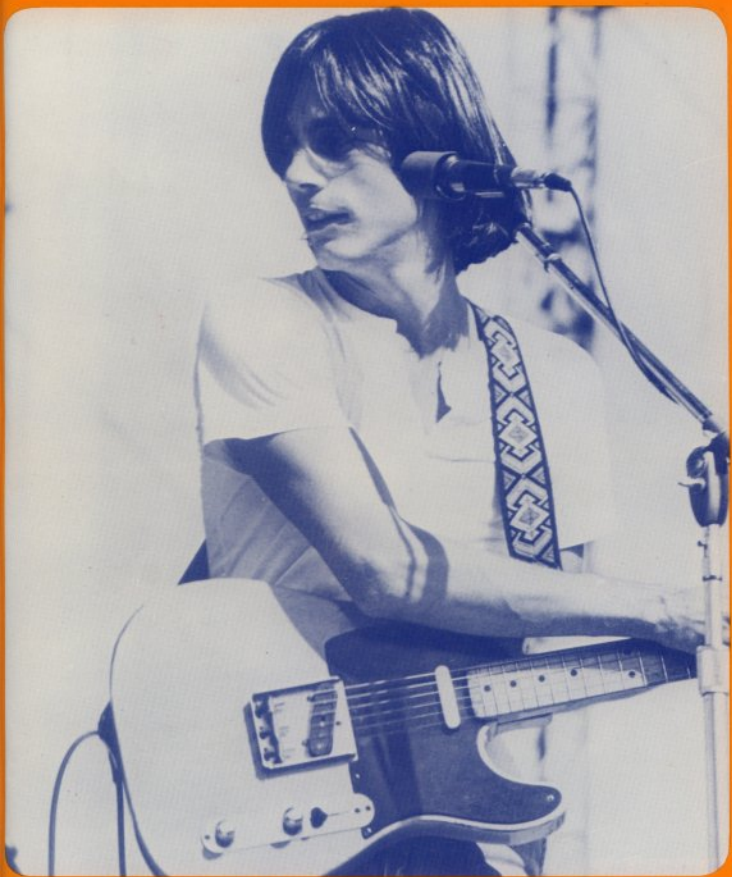
Bob Dylan

What can be said about Dylan except that while still providing some of the best music in the world his Australian concerts were a highlight of 1978.



Springsteen

Often compared with Dylan particularly in his early days, Springsteen first hit the charts in 1975 with *Born to Run*. Legal problems prevented him from following up that record for nearly three years so it is a measure of his brilliance that *Darkness at the Edge of Town* made album charts around the world on release. In fact the only comparison that can be made between Springsteen and Dylan is that each is a distinctive and unique talent in his own right.



Jackson Browne

Despite the lack of a hit single Jackson Browne is established as one of the biggest selling solo artists in this country. Until his Australian tour early last year Browne was probably best known to most people here as the writer of the Eagles first hit, *Take it Easy*. Since the tour, albums *The Pretender* and *Running on Empty* have enjoyed mass sales.



Olivia's rise to the top has taken place over several years. A onetime favourite on Australian TV, Olivia moved to England in the early 70's where she made the charts with songs such as *If Not For You*. She cracked the American market with the Peter Allen composition, *Honestly, I Love You* and has since gone on to become that country's biggest female star with a lead role in the movie *Grease*. The soundtrack of the film is one of the biggest selling albums of the year while *You're the One That I Want* which she sings with co-star John Travolta topped charts world-wide.

Wuthering Heights was without doubt the most unique single success of the year. Like the song itself, the film clip that accompanied it demonstrated the unique talent of Kate Bush while her debut album, the *Kick Inside* was proof of her versatility.



Kate Bush



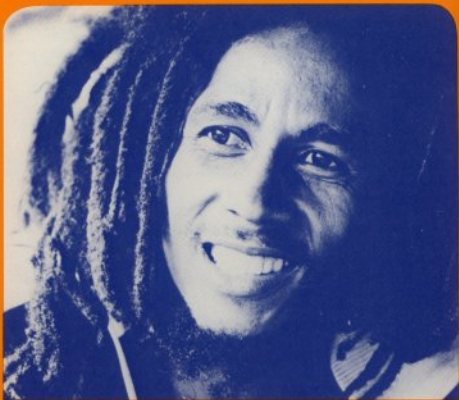
Wings

Paul McCartney remains the only Beatle to have achieved consistent commercial success with a string of hit singles and multi-million selling albums. 1978 was no exception with the album *London Town* and the single *With a Little Luck* climbing

high in the charts all round the world. Late 1977 saw the band produce their most successful single in this country, *Mull of Kintyre*, which featured on the Countdown charts for several weeks in a row over the Christmas period.

Bob Marley

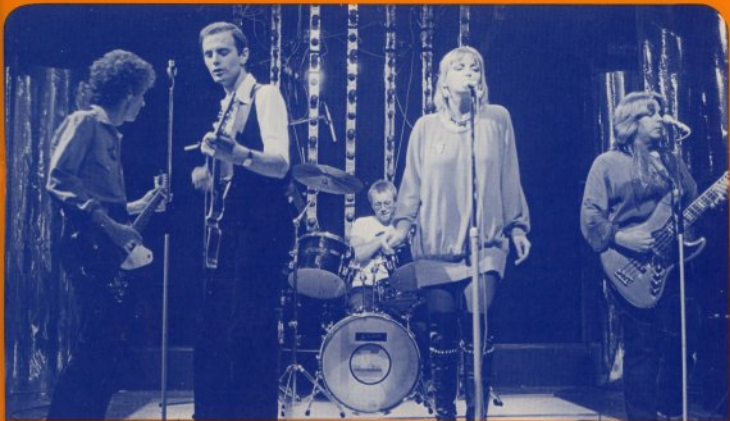
In the past two years Marley has become the foremost exponent of reggae with a series of successful albums including *Rastaman Vibration*, *Exodus* and the latest and most successful, *Kaya*. With each succeeding album Marley has become more accessible a factor that accounts for his increasing popularity in Australia.



Joan Armatrading

In the last couple of years Joan has established a reputation as one of the finest singer-songwriters to come out of England. Although not yet a big seller in commercial terms she has gained a strong following around the world as her sold out Australian tour earlier in the year proved.





Stiletto This female dominated group of hard rockers made their recording debut on last year's *Debutantes* album along with Sports and former Skyhook Red Symons. Their first album was released late in the year.



Red Hot Peppers This band has made something of a breakthrough on the live circuit in Australia being one of the few 'lad back' bands capable of drawing audiences to the pubs. Obviously the voice of Marion Arts and versatility of multi instrumentalist Robbie le Van play a large part in the success of this former New Zealand band who also enjoy healthy album sales. A third album is due for release later this year and it is expected Marion will make her solo debut early next year.



Finch

The latest Australian band to gain international exposure with their *Nothing to Hide* album released in America by the CBS label, Portrait. Because of the existence of another band

named Finch, in America, the group is known to its American fans as Contraband and will gradually phase in that name in Australia as well.



Rose Tattoo

Angry Anderson is one of the stalwarts of Australian rock having been in numerous bands over the years. He now fronts the Tattoos who are one of the most promising new bands to have appeared on *Countdown* during the year.



Dragon enjoy a love-hate relationship with their fans and the media but are undoubtedly the most talented mainstream rock band in the country today. They are one of the few groups to appeal to both teenage fans and older audiences. At the time of writing Dragon were scheduled to begin an American tour late in the year to promote the release of their first album in the U.S.

Sweet

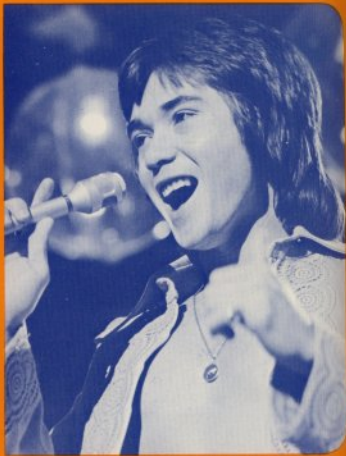
Sweet have enjoyed a long career distinguished by a seeming unending string of hits ranging from early bubblegum material such as *Willy, Willy* to more sophisticated recent songs, *Fox on the Run* and *Love is Like Oxygen*.





Ray Burgess

A regular performer and host in the early days of Countdown, Burgess enjoyed several hits before playing down his role as a singer to concentrate on hosting the popular TV show *Target*. Following the demise of that series he re-entered the studios to record his latest album *Final Mix*.



Marty Rhone

A regular performer on Countdown while his hit *Denim and Lace* climbed the charts not much has been heard from Rhone this year.

John St. Peeters

St. Peeters has been around for a number of years during which time he has recorded a number of singles. His latest effort, *Deep Inside of Me* which he wrote and produced became a favourite with Countdown audiences in the latter half of the year.





Russell Morris

Appeared on the show mid year for the first time since his return from the U.S. where he had lived for the past five years. Currently recording a new album. Morris' *Wings of an Eagle* still ranks as a classic in recent Australian pop while earlier songs such as his first single *The Real Thing* are milestones in the local industry.



Darryl Cotton

Another Australian recently returned from several years in the U.S. Cotton released his first solo single, *Don't Let It Get To You*, in August. Produced by former co-member of Zoot, LRB's Beeb. Birtles the song has already gained Cotton a strong following in this country.

David Bowie

A case of the old and the new. In fact a common link between these two artists is that both had the same manager during the early days of their respective careers.

Bowie has enjoyed a distinguished career noteworthy for his ability to master varying styles of music. He is renowned for never releasing more than two consecutive albums in the same vein while no matter how subjective the style of music his ability to produce hit singles always remains intact.

Cougar is a young American based in London. Countdown was first alerted to his potential by his new manager, Billy Gaff, who also handles Rod Stewart. The film clip of his first single, *I Need a Lover* was an instant success with Countdown viewers. While overseas earlier this year Ian Meldrum taped an interview with Cougar which subsequently appeared on the show.



Johnny Cougar



COUNT DOWN



His Royal Highness, Prince Charles of Wales, appeared on Countdown on November 13, 1977 to launch the *Silver Jubilee* album. His interview with Ian Meldrum was the only interview given during Prince Charles' 1977 visit to Australia. The *Countdown Silver Jubilee* album, featuring the cream of Australian talent has so far raised \$160,000 for the Silver Jubilee Appeal.

