



Jeff Wayne was in New Zealand to promote his quasi-musical version of H.G. Wells' novel *The War of the Worlds*. *Rip It Up* were to be given an interview—as it turned out so were the daily papers, T.V. news (both channels), *Radio With Pictures*, *Spot On* and the private radio stations. A press conference would have been faster but Wayne is concerned that all news avenues be given a chance for an individualised story.

In appearance Wayne resembles more a gentle lumberjack than musical entrepreneur: short yet solidly built, tanned, dressed in check shirt and suede boots. He is friendly and offers me a drink. We relax. There is no sign that for the last umpteen days, all around the world, he has been repeatedly dealing with similar queries about his work. Except, that is, for his adeptness at handling questions which might pursue views he'd rather not discuss. He speaks quietly yet volubly and, with imperceptible shifts, leads the conversation back to the important aspects of his project.

His project? Well of course it began with Wells—although through some oversight the novelist's name was omitted from the album—and Wayne emphasizes how concerned he was to ensure that the script and music remain faithful to Wells' original.

Wayne's stepmother wrote the condensed narrative and she has indeed retained much of Wells' central concerns: man's naive assumption of his cosmic supremacy, war's destructiveness, the erosion of conventional value systems. She has also developed the book's concluding hint that mankind's reprieve from alien invasion may be only temporary.

In discussing Richard Burton's vocal delivery Wayne stresses—imperceptible shift—that the narration basically serves as a catalyst for his music.

Ah yes, the music. I've been readying to suggest to this polite affable man that his music is rather bland for a tale about earth's invasion and the destruction of civilisation. I hint by suggesting that Philip Lynott's performance as the parson is the most dramatic point on the album. Wayne smiles and begins to explain how he chose the singers specifically for the type of role required.

I shall have to be more explicit. A deep breath and... the phone rings. Fate? T.V.1 are calling to discuss accessories marketing. After the phone call Wayne comments that he owns merchandising rights on the T-shirts, toys and posters which will proliferate from the album's burgeoning success. Film rights are more involved. Paramount own them and made a *War of the Worlds* in '53, but now with Wayne's hit album they're considering a remake using his music. Negotiations are under way.

Can we return to the music? Wayne's wife enters with gurgling baby in arms. Disarming fate. My moment has passed. Wayne chats about the album's production for a while. Some polite questions and I take my leave—someone else is waiting for an interview.

Wayne is covering all the commercial media and now Radio N.Z.'s national programme is running a B.B.C. dramatised serialization of the novel. Coincidence surely.

The gods—or is it the martians?—must smile upon a successful entrepreneur.
Peter Thomson

Last Stand for Ned Kellys



Members of Australia's Little River Band admit to staging a last-ditch stand. They are, they say, indulging themselves in their final effort to earn a crust in a working band. When The Little River Band folds the boys will go their separate ways, disappearing into the bowels of Australia's recording studios and entertainment industry.

But, as final efforts go, Little River Bands is a remarkably productive one. At present they hold the record as Australasia's most successful rock and roll export; at last count the band had sold over a million and a half albums, had four singles reaching the Billboard top forty and had made three full American tours. The latest LRB album *Sleeper Catcher* has sold 650,000 copies in the States and is shifting fast enough for Capitol to withhold its due gold award in anticipation of the million sales mark and a platinum disc. The second single from the record "Reminiscing" is positioned at fifteen on the American Top 40 and continues to make progress.

The success of this Melbourne band is responsible for their interest which is more commercial than musical. LRB provides another example of the process Aussie filmmakers have already mastered, tailoring product for a consumer market. Their style, a studio-polished, hybrid of California pop and boogie, is accomplished, but never innovative. During their first, 1976 American tour LRB were criticised as a poorman's Eagles, a not unfounded contention. Guitarist/songwriter Graham Goble admits they keep an ear to popular formulas, but denies that they have become as stylised as bands like the Bee Gees. He adds that they haven't heard the Eagles comparison for some time.

Nevertheless local musicians could learn more from LRB's tactical approach to international fame than from their musical approach. LRB hold one or two lessons. They are adamant that essential factors in their success have been patience, luck and good management. The rigours of the American scene are stressed. "You can't be naive," says lead singer Glenn Shorrock. "The States are like nowhere in the world. We're only just becoming a part of it. It's such a big machine."

Not being naive adds up to being prepared to work hard and to lose money on tours. The band pay tribute to Glenn Wheatley, their manager who ensured they were working for exposure from the onset of their first American excursion. Each year since 1976 has seen a major tour for them. On their first they ran to a \$60,000 deficit, on their second they broke even. The accounting has still to be done for the three month tour that ended in Auckland on September 7th, but this time a profit is expected. That, in the terms of U.S. touring economics is good progress; a daunting reflection.

If nothing else, Little River band's American acceptance is return for a hard slog, not merely with LRB, but in 34 year old Shorrock's case with countless earlier bands. (He visited N.Z. once previously in 1967 with the Twilights). The undoubted slickness they showed in their Auckland

land gig is born of long service as is, I suspect, their certain tendency to blandness.

Nowhere is the proficiency of LRB more obvious than in the opening of their set. House and stage lights cut, the three vocalists, Shorrock, Goble and guitarist Beeb Birtles sing three part *acapella* harmonies—strong, confident harmonies that stretch out in the darkness with stunning effect. In Auckland, after Rick Steele's shoddy support set, it seemed an act of dazzling competence. If Steele was embarrassing, the show promised instantly to redeem itself and even if it never fulfilled the promise, the contrast was a timely blow for professional standards.

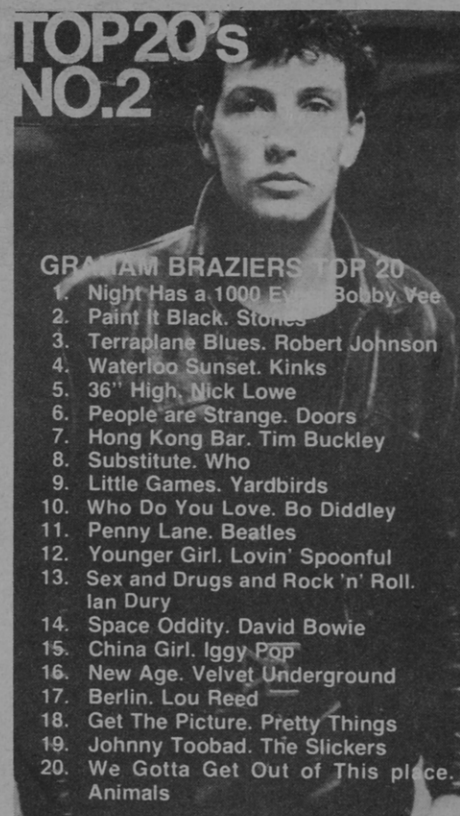
The undistinguished series of boogie numbers which followed were frankly a disappointment of early hopes. Not until the wind up, when LRB strung together half a dozen of their more immediate pop songs, did the image of a good-time band start to suit. And not before they had displayed that three guitars, however well played, cannot do all the things LRB use keyboards and strings for in the studio. However, rarely ones to despise a decent tune, the Town Hall and I warmed to "Reminiscing", "Shut Down, Turn Off", and an encore of the old "Return to Sender". Meanwhile there was that comforting if predictable feeling that Auckland had been treated with a scrupulous similarity to each of the other 66 venues on Little River Band's tour. Which pretty much typifies this sample of Ocker rock.

Bruce Belsham

TOP 20's NO.2

GRAMAM BRAZIER'S TOP 20

1. Night Has a 1000 Eyes Bobby Vee
2. Paint It Black. Stones
3. Terraplane Blues. Robert Johnson
4. Waterloo Sunset. Kinks
5. 36" High. Nick Lowe
6. People are Strange. Doors
7. Hong Kong Bar. Tim Buckley
8. Substitute. Who
9. Little Games. Yardbirds
10. Who Do You Love. Bo Diddley
11. Penny Lane. Beatles
12. Younger Girl. Lovin' Spoonful
13. Sex and Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll. Ian Dury
14. Space Oddity. David Bowie
15. China Girl. Iggy Pop
16. New Age. Velvet Underground
17. Berlin. Lou Reed
18. Get The Picture. Pretty Things
19. Johnny Toobad. The Slickers
20. We Gotta Get Out of This place. Animals





The Music Studio

just for the Record...

NZ Top 40 Album Chart

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grease Various Artists 2. Bat Out of Hell Meatloaf 3. War of the Worlds Various Artists 4. Night Flight to Venus Boney M 5. Saturday Night Fever Bee Gees/VA 6. This Is My Life John Rowles 7. The Sound of Bread Bread 8. Natural High Commodores 9. Some Girls Rolling Stones 10. The Last Waltz The Band/VA 11. Street Legal Bob Dylan 12. City to City Gerry Rafferty 13. The Stranger Billy Joel 14. Kaya Bob Marley 15. Pyramid Alan Parsons Project 16. Stranger in Town Bob Seger 17. Sleeper Catcher Little River Band 18. Thank God It's Friday Various Artists 19. 20 Hits Diana Ross and Supremes 20. F.M. Various Artists 21. Elvis in Hollywood Elvis Presley 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. David Gilmour David Gilmour 23. Me Poems and Songs Pam Ayres 24. Peter Gabriel 2 Peter Gabriel 25. Tonic for the Troops Boomtown Rats 26. The Cars The Cars 27. Luxury You Can Afford Joe Cocker 28. Leo Sayer Leo Sayer 29. Citizen Band Citizen Band 30. Rumours Fleetwood Mac 31. I Robot Alan Parsons 32. Darkness on the Edge of Town Bruce Springsteen 33. You Gonna Get It Tom Petty 34. Greatest Hits Irish Rovers 35. Running On Empty Jackson Browne 36. Diamantina Cocktail Little River Band 37. Hits II Olivia Newton-John 38. Darkside of the Moon Pink Floyd 39. And Then There Were Three Genesis 40. Will Anybody Marry Me Pam Ayres (Nat. Sales Chart No. 159 October 1, 1978)
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St. Lukes Square

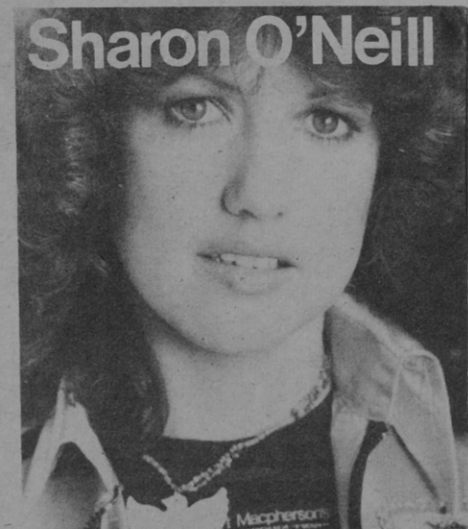
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Shore City

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Henderson Square

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In the last 18 months, a self managed, Sharon O'Neill has directed her energy successfully towards writing performing and recording her own songs.

Prior to 1977, Sharon was singing other people's material in touring bands. On her own in 1977, with guitarist Brent Thomas, Sharon

joined Mark Williams and Rocking Horse on Mark's last tour and recorded the track "If There's Still A Little Love" with him.

Though having recorded three of her own songs (including her current CBS single "Luck's On Your Table") as demos for EMI in 1977, it was not until the Leo Sayer tour in May 1978 that Sharon first performed her own compositions on stage.

Reflecting on 1977, Sharon speaks of the frustration of being "so close to being able to record and yet nothing happening." Before Williams or his manager/producer Alan Galbraith left EMI and moved to Australia, Sharon O'Neill was already there.

"I went to Melbourne on my own, with just my little bag and my songs (laughter), to try and get something happening," explains Sharon O'Neill. But record companies were interested only if she had the resources to work live in Australia.

Sharon is completing work on her album for CBS Records. On the album she has written all the songs, arranged and performed all the vocals, arranged the music and played keyboards.

What next? — Sharon is now looking forward to returning to live work and playing with some really good musicians.

Murray Cammick