

Since their first single in August 1979, Madness have released a steady flow of material of an unflinching high standard. They were England's top singles band in 1980 — no mean feat, considering the kind of drivel that they had to compete against. It says a lot for the English consumer that bands like Madness, the Beat and the Jam and the other select few can outsell housewife's choices like Abba.

Madness emerged from Camden Town on mid-1979, after a couple of years of sporadic playing at parties and pubs. Initially, they were known as the Invaders, and they found themselves totally out of step with public taste at a time when punk reigned supreme. Ska was still an obscure sixties style, practised only by them and a Coventry band, the Specials A.K.A.

Tastes change, though, and in July 1979 the Specials formed their own label, 2 Tone, and had a hit with their song 'Gangsters'. On the flip was a song by a couple of their mates calling themselves the Selecter (at the time still not a full band).

The second 2 Tone release was Madness's tribute to sixties ska hero, Prince Buster. 'The Prince' was a jubilant update of Buster's sound, showing a strong understanding of mid-sixties Jamaican production techniques and feel. It was backed with their cover of Buster's 1966 hit, 'Madness'. The flip of *that* song had been 'Al Capone' — later adapted by the Specials for 'Gangsters'.

By early October, 'The Prince' had reached the Top 20, earning Madness a 'next big thing' title and a contract with Stiff — a label with an image to match the so-called 'nutty sound'.

The first Stiff release was a single — another Prince Buster song, 'One Step Beyond'. On the seven inch edition it was backed with 'Mistakes', and on the twelve incher with 'Mistakes' and 'The Nutty Theme'. It was the band's first Top 10 hit. About the same time, Madness's debut album was released. It contains re-recordings of both 'The Prince' and 'Madness'. 'Madness' is improved, but 'The Prince' seems to have lost some of its vitality along the way. The second single is the title track, and its rousing call to arms is highly effective — setting the tone for the whole album. Although it was released at around the same time as the Specials' debut, the album

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Mike Barson, Madness tinkler, marries dutch girl Sandra Wilson in London. The couple are pictured here at the wedding reception: sausage, egg and chips for two at George's cafe in Holloway Road.

has a recognisable difference in production. The Specials' record was given a slightly flat and very live sound by Elvis Costello, while Madness benefited from Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley's robust, full sound.

More than that, the Specials' material seems almost staid by comparison with the bounce and vitality of *One Step Beyond*. It is one of the finest dance albums ever released, matched since only by the Beat's debut and the second Madness LP. The message was, and is, no message, just pure pop aimed at the feet.

The second track on the album was the band's third single. 'My Girl' with 'Stepping Into Line' made number three in January 1980, and is the most joyous 'nutty tune' yet, with teen lyrics to match Chuck Berry.

My girl's mad at me,
I didn't want to see the film tonight.
I found it hard to say,
She thought I'd had enough of her.

Why can't she see she's lovely to me?
But I like to stay in and watch TV
on my own every now and then.

The third track, 'Night Boat To Cairo', was on the *Work, Rest and Play* EP that made number six in Britain. The rest of the album maintains the standard right to the final track, 'Chipmunks Are Go', a piss-take of the chants so beloved of the skinheads who support Madness en masse.



Madness hit America in November 1979, with the Specials, and seemed to pull off what has been unsuccessfully attempted so often in the last five years. Perhaps it was the over-the-top eccentricity, but both albums made a reasonable dent in the US album charts, and Madness were sufficiently encouraged to return to America in April 1980.

After an extensive European tour, the band released the schooldays paean, 'Baggy Trousers'. Predictably, and deservedly, it made the Top 5. The song marked a slight change in style for Madness. The dance feel was still predominant, but the production was fuller and more imaginative, with a new percussive edge.



The new maturity was confirmed by the second Madness album, released in late September. *Absolutely* is every bit the equal of *One Step Beyond*. In spite of an obvious loss of innocence and an increased ability to get the most from their instruments, the band still give songs like 'Embarrassment', 'Not Home Today' and 'In The Rain' charm, honesty and spontaneity. The result is another platinum album.

The most recent single is an *Absolutely* track. 'The Return Of The Los Palms 7' is like a Bonzo Dog instrumental with a 1980 twist. Two years on, Madness show no sign of slowing down or slipping in quality. They've made an art form out of great dance music, topped the UK charts, yet managed to remain completely human all the way.

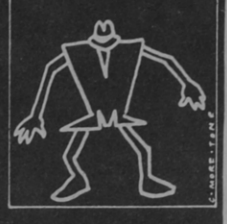

Simon Grigg





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PHOGRAM NZ3798 299894 STIFF G 25/2/81 ATTN:THE RESULTS OF THE 'BRITISH ROCK AND POP AWARDS' FOR 1980 ORGANISED BY THE DAILY MIRROR,BBC RADIO 1 AND BBC TV'S NATIONWIDE, ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT ARE AS FOLLOWS:- BEST BAND OR GROUP 1-THE POLICE 2- MADNESS 3- ADAM AND THE ANTS BEST SINGLE RECORD 1 -GOING UNDERGROUND -THE JAM 2 -DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME-THE POLICE 3-BAGGY TROUSERS - MADNESS BEST ALBUM 1-ZENYATTA MANDATTA-THE POLICE 2-ABSOLUTELY-MADNESS 3- TELEKON-GARY NUMAN WELL DONE MADNESS..... 299894 STIFF BEST WISHES, 299894 STIFF PHOGRAM NZ3798



NAME	Suggs	Chas Smash	Mark Bedford	Lee Jay Thompson	Daniel Woodgate	Christopher Foreman	Mike Barson
BORN	13.1.61	14.1.59	24.8.61	5.10.57	19.10.60	late fifties	21.4.58
HEIGHT	6ft 4inches	5ft 11inches	5ft 9½inches	5ft 5inches	5ft 6½inches	about 5ft 8inches	6ft 2inches
EYES	blue	blue	blue	hazel green	brown	black & blue	grey
SIGN	Capricorn	Capricorn	Virgo	Libra	Libra	Leo	Taurus
FAVS: TEAM	Chelsea	Madness XI	Arsenal	none	Chelsea	none	Madness XI
MDNS SONG	the 2 LPs	Mistakes/You Said	Bed & B'fast Man	Night Boat to Cairo	Night Boat	all of them	Baggy Trousers
TV SHOW	Turtles' Progress	the adverts	Outer Limits	Benny Hill	Chigley	Coronation St	Lou Grant
ACTOR	James Fox	Malcolm McDowell	Diane Keaton	Lee Marvin	Sidney Poitier	Peter Boyle	James Fox, Sophia Loren, Freaks, Performance
FILM	Performance	Clockwork Orange	Eraserhead	Boys In Company C	Close Encounters	The Army v. The Sea Monsters	
BAND	Madness	Tenpole Tudor /Undertones	The Go-Go's	Gary Glitter	original Roxy Music	Los Palmas 7	Specials, the Attractions
FOOD	eats	motorway cafes	trifle	Jellied Eels	Blue Cheeses, Chips, Baked Beans	Roast kaks	Sausage, eggs, chips & beans
COUNTRY	England	England	America/France	Scotland	England	England	England
GIG	Palais, Paris	Hope & Anchor	Lyceum (Bank Holiday '79)	Rome	Supporting Pretenders at Lyceum	Empire Pool Wembley	Hope & Anchor