

Inside Sounds

Marshall Rubinoff

1967

The Spikedrivers were the first psychedelic rock group that existed in Detroit.

Their sound wasn't super hard, yet it was able to take you off into the freedom of your sub-consciousness. That was a year ago and they weren't hip to the new obvious fact that music doesn't happen on 45 records. All they knew was, if you wanted to make music you needed the big money of a record company to pay for the studio time to put something out in order to reach a large enough audience.

Once you proved yourself with a strong 45, you'd be rewarded with the opportunity to make the coveted album. If they'd been in San Francisco, where there is a large receptive audience, their heads might never have gotten so sidetracked.

So they ran off to NYC to try and sell their then unusual sound to the greasy record money mongers. Only the big money guys couldn't hear their music. They got a headless manager who signed them to a binding record contract and put them through the amphetamine disc jockey teeny-bop-hop record scene.

The Spikedrivers stopped creating further out new sounds and started trying to shape their music for the popular record market. However, their music wasn't teeny-bop stuff. They didn't have the physical appearance or the vacant minds to appeal to that kind of audience. In a futile attempt they hired a big "hit-maker" producer to manufacture for them a "hit" sound.

In this kind of recording session there are about 30 musicians able to do their one specialty. The "artist" maybe gets the chance to sing; and the producer mixes and tosses what was once a personal experience into a plastic 2 minute mold. In the process a unique sound becomes diluted to the point of losing all the excitement it once had.

As degrading as all this seems to be, its even worse when it doesn't work. The Spikedrivers knocked their heads against the wall till they were practically unconscious. Then they suddenly looked up and heard what they were playing.

They realized that their music was no longer in front, but that they were stale and behind in their own heads. Each group member didn't react the same to the situation however.

Sid, Marycarol and Larry still wanted to try and get back into making music. Ted and Dick wanted to try and still have the disastrous NY trip work for them by finally making it. Three fifths no longer wanted to sell out a little bit to gain a lot because they knew it was a loser's rationale.

Ted and Dick insisted on looking further ahead (or behind) than just their music. So, Ted dropped out of the group and Dick followed. The two of them went to NY and arranged with their manager to record plastic music with studio hack musicians.

Then, they offered Mary, Larry and Sid the ultimatum of doing exactly as the two of them dictated or dropping out of the group. Sid, Mary and Larry decided it was about time to drop out. There's still a lot of shit to be made clear; who gets the group's name, bills for equipment, back recording costs, a legal suit against the manager, lawyers fees, etc.

Ted and Dick are in NY whacking away for that “hit.” They’re in the studios trying to turn their backs on themselves and the psychedelic experience that once created beautiful sounds. Sid, Larry and Marycarol seem to be at last free.

They have a new group together and are producing a show that will bring together two other bands, five poets, lights, astrology, drama, and interpretive dancing. The entire production is called United Magalopolitan Peace Pow-Wow and will make its debut at Community Arts Auditorium, on the Wayne campus, June 8th. More details next issue.

Money to the group is secondary now. They are smiling again and vibrating spring.

Late flashes — Carl Wilson of the Beachboys has refused induction into the Army. No word on his present legal status. Reader Vince Stuart informs us that Radio Station WJLB plays the MC-5’s record after 10 p.m.

fifth Estate

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