

# Ray Davies preserves a Kink controversy

by Alan Blabot  
Features Editor

For a man in the throes of retirement, Ray Davies sure is prolific. Last year at this time, he had made a tear-filled farewell speech to rock music in front of a stunned British concert crowd and an even more stunned band. Since then, in what seems the same off-hand manner as his big announcement, he has written all of the material for and produced two albums, *Preservation Act One* and *Preservation Act Two*, and he has launched another American tour (something which obviously haunts him).

It might sound presumptuous to say that Ray Davies is The Kinks, since there are six other group members. But, it's true, so why not say it. All of their material comes from the mind of the affably cynical Davies (he warned us of his need for wordiness six years ago when he wrote *Too Much on My Mind*). His vaudevillian-stage show vocals are a Kinks trademark. He produces the albums. He writes all the music and words. Somewhere along the way he finds time to play some instruments.

But beware. This album will not appeal to most people who are not already onto Ray Davies' scheme of things. It is a consummate work, a double album reassessing and finalizing the Davies ethic. There will be no hit singles on this album (that's not saying his material is so far over the heads of the "mass," but it is saying that this record is a creative concept piece and nothing of the Kinks in the last six years has received much radio attention anyway so why all of a sudden start now?)

The Kinks have become a word of mouth band, not like the old days when they were synonymous with the three-chord progressions in *You Really Got Me* and *All Day and All of the Night*. A large number of people have heard about them, but very few buy their albums. An overused critical approach is to say what a shame it is nobody appreciates the Kinks, but it's true.

RCA Records is to be congratulated. As they have done with Lou Reed and David Bowie, they have given The Kinks free reign over their music. Lord

knows, the Kinks deserve it. Eleven years is a long time to record and be innovative with rock music.

The Kinks have done minor experiments with different sounds (horns, extra voices, overdubbed strings, etc.), but the overall texture of their music remains unchanged (sort of polished, but unchanged). Leaving well enough alone, Davies has opted for innovation in his lyrics.

*Preservation Act Two* is a unique album. Davies is the only person in rock music who would even think about pulling off (just like Lou Reed is the only person to pull something like *Berlin* off). He has been plodding around with these ideas on every album since his classic *Arthur*. Finally, his ideas have crystallized into wholeness, and we (music starved maniacs) now have something to put under our psychic microscopes for close scrutiny.

Davies has always battled the present day with illusory dreams of yesterday or utopias of tomorrow. His dreams are always much more pleasant for him than reality: "And it's painfully clear that the battle is near/ And I wish I could just disappear." Doctors, I'm sure, have told him he has a problem.

But, inevitably, his problem is our problem. We live in his world of artificial men, scrapheaps, crooked politicians, money lovers, self lovers, jive worshippers and the whole realm of everything else. Immediately, you ask, "Well, what does he expect us to do? He's part of it too."

And there's the rub: Davies isn't preaching; he's as confused as the next guy on the subway.

*Preservation Act Two* offers up every solution to the world's problems. Every solution (capitalism, communism, asceticism, puritanism, hedonism *et al*) in turn is made recognizable (i.e., Davies makes no intellectual pretense of hiding what he's getting at) and is promptly brought under foot to be ground into ashes by Davies.

Oh, how every existential, artsy-craftsy intellectual could twist this album! Ray Davies—the man lost amidst confusion, disillusion, meaninglessness, etc.

But, here is the saving grace of The Kinks and the thing which has vaulted them into lone occupancy of rock's

heavyweight crown: They are hopeless romantics. And, I hate to say it but the connection is making itself obvious to me, they are much like poor old Gatsbys. When Davies sings, "Your love will fade but mine will last forever," the parallels with Gatsby, after his dreams have been shattered, are evident.

Ray Davies makes it deliberately difficult to tell where he stands in relation to the characters on the album, even though his message is clear enough. It's clear that he isn't too happy with the existing world chaos. It's clear that he wants something done about it. But, it is never clear which solution he supports. In the song, *When A Solution Comes*, Mr. Black, one of the characters, sings deviously, "Yeah, I'm gonna change the world, I'm gonna use a little manipulation."

In the very next song, *Flash*, one of the other main characters, sings about his loss of self-pride as a result of his desire for money, reaching an absurd level when he says, "If you're ugly money can improve you." Flash is a bit of a hedonist-capitalist. Mr. Black is a fascist-puritanist (if you can conceive of such a thing). The Tramp, the third character, stands in the middle, helplessly manipulated by whoever gains power. He seems the most aware, and his awareness makes him even more helpless. He sings, "But me, I'm only standing here/ Watching it all go on and watching it all go wrong."

From there, the story line runs its course. Mr. Black eventually takes over the world and has Flash's brain wired, making him the perfect creation. The world is a sterile, mindless, loveless one, but everyone sings the final song happily, "Yes, we'll all walk along/ And we'll all sing a song/ As we walk down Salvation Road." Who's complaining? Everyone is happy...

Davies for one. The song *Nobody Gives*, is sung by the Tramp, "Everybody's guilty and everybody's innocent...The fact of it is nobody gives anymore."

The background of the Kinks' group members is not an uncommon one. They're from working class families. They are Muswell Hillbillies. I'm not pretending to say that this gives them any more right to make pronouncements on the world. But it does give their new work *Preservation Act Two* a certain validity which is lacking in many endeavors by others.

Ray Davies should be able to retire a happy man, and if not, at least somewhat content.



The Artificial Human  
Ray Davies fears that he'll be the next in line.

## TM is relaxing, energizing

by Jim Boyd  
Feature Writer

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a relatively new phenomenon in this country, but its growth has doubled since 1965 and now stands at 350,000. In the fall and spring, 400 to 500 people participate locally in this program to relieve stress. During the summer that figure drops due to absences and graduations of regular students and the lower summer school enrollment.

Currently 30 students of TM are enrolled for instruction from three new teachers in Chapel Hill. Dr. Barry Charles of Family Medicine at Memorial Hospital, Stuart Baesel and Peggy Springsted have just completed extended study of TM in Europe receiving personal instruction from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the personal custodian of the tradition. One assurance given about meditation is that all teachers use the same systematic methods. All graduates of TM may become teachers if they so desire.

Lecture training and a course in the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) are the main prerequisites for teacher instruction. SCI is an accredited course in many universities and will be offered for credit this fall on an experimental basis.

Very little money is earned in teaching TM. Most of the money paid for the course is funneled back into the International Meditation Society for use in developing programs for economically deprived countries.

"Transcendental Meditation is a seven step course," Baesel explained. The first is the introductory lecture lasting about an hour and a half, offering reasons for meditation. The first introductory session was offered last Tuesday in the Student Union.

The second step is preparatory instruction in the mechanics of meditation and is offered at a different time in the Union.

A personal interview with the instructor follows the two initial meetings and allows for a better rapport between teacher and student.

This step is followed by two hours of personalized instruction. The purpose of this step is to receive the "mantra" or meaningless word that harmonizes perfectly with the individual's nervous system.

The last three steps of the TM programming are used to check and validate the meditator's experience. These steps must be done on consecutive days.

Springfield said, "There are three requirements of Transcendental Meditation: financial, time and physiological commitments."

Financial consideration for TM are not excessive. Prices range from \$55 for a high school student, \$65 for college

students, \$125 for an adult and \$200 for families. TM is taught under the auspices of the Students' International Meditation Society (SIMS), a nonprofit educational organization.

Time must be met as a requirement specifically for the last four lessons. According to Dr. Charles, "One can become an expert on TM in four days."

For those who wish to take advantage of them, there are advanced lectures offered that may include video tapes of the Maharishi and other additional information on TM. They are optional at no extra cost and require only the desire and time to attend them.

The physiological commitment is one of the abstinence for 15 days from nonprescribed drugs, excluding coffee and tobacco. This final requirement is to attain the maximum results from the meditating experience. Dr. Charles and Baesel agreed that TM cannot be experienced "until it's tasted." Springsted emphasized that TM is not a drug substitute.

Asked if the individual's lifestyle changed after TM, Baesel replied, "All the negative aspects drop off while the positive ones increase. There is a natural, not forced, change in the person." Scientific research tends to support this theory.

Springsted indicated that in the area of social work, her course of study in the university, there is decreased drug usage among former heavy users, better employee-employer relationships, improved productivity in businesses, and decreased alcoholism among heavy drinkers. Scientific studies, charts and other evidence back these claims. Some of this research has been published in Scientific American and other journals while other studies have been conducted at Stanford University, including followup work.

The SCI course offers an academic reasoning for TM. Baesel said, "SCI is the study of fundamental intelligence and the laws of nature." The fact that it is given for credit at Harvard, Yale and other universities lends credence to the theories behind Transcendental Meditation.

Dr. Charles said, "The research is fascinating. Pilot studies have been conducted and phenomenon noted in the TM practitioner. They do corroborate that something is there," he added. Longer periods on some studies now exist, and IMS is about to publish a new pamphlet with 48 charts, including new information on TM.

All three emphasized that though scientifically verifiable, TM is really a personal phenomenon. Specifically for the student, meditation should increase brain activity and capacity, give finer levels of thought, and eliminate stress and tension with a natural resistance to further buildup. Springsted said, "There is more energy and creative intelligence."

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