

Would You "Believe" After 25 Years?

By Michael C. Molter
Assistant Editor

On March 23, 1974, Cher ascended to #1 with "Dark Lady," her fourth #1 single following "I Got You Babe" (with Sonny in 1965), "Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves" (in 1971), and "Half-Breed" (in 1973). While appearing to be just the continuation of her early-seventies success, it actually stood as a demarcation line between that success and the dark times (musically) yet to come. While Cher enjoyed success on variety shows and began establishing the acting part of her career, her music lay virtually dormant until 1988, when she made a comeback. "I Found Someone" reached the Top 10, and the follow-up, "We All Sleep Alone" reached a respectable #14.

Cher's next set would determine if she would sustain her comeback. Cher garnered three top 10 hits from her album "Heart of Stone": "After All" (a duet with Peter Cetera), "If I Could Turn Back Time" (#3 in 1989, her biggest since "Dark Lady"), and "Just Like Jesse James" (#8 in 1990, her most recent Top 10 before this year). The ride did not last long, however, as her new album's lead single, "Love & Understanding," barely scratched the top 20, and the album bombed.

It wasn't until 1998 when Cher's next comeback began. She was signed by Warner Bros. U. K. in England and started work on a new album. The album and its lead single share the same title, "Believe." In late 1998/early 1999, "Believe" climbed the British charts and spent seven weeks at #1 there, and success followed throughout Europe. In her own country, the single sped its way to #1 on the Dance charts, but not on the Hot 100, where it debuted at #99, about as far from a #1 as possible. After about seven weeks of bobbing up and down the lower extremities of the Hot 100, "Believe" caught fire at radio, and within four weeks, it had jumped to #4, making it her first Top 10 hit in nine years. Cher matched the peak of "If I Could Turn Back Time" the next week, and reached #1 momentarily three weeks later.

When Cher reached the top, she set a number of records due to her age and the long time over which she has been charting. At 52, Cher is the oldest female singer to reach #1, and second oldest artist overall, trailing only Louis Armstrong, who was 63 when "Hello, Dolly!" hit #1 in 1964. (Incidentally, after Cher became the oldest in Britain with a #1, "Believe" was deposed

by "Maria" by Blondie, featuring 53-year-old Debbie Harry).

The span from "Dark Lady" to "Believe" is also a record, 25 years minus ten days, topping the 21-year, 11-month span between "Good Vibrations" and "Kokomo" for the Beach Boys. The span from her first to her latest #1 hits is likewise a record. Michael Jackson held that record with 25 years and seven months from "I Want You Back" (Jackson 5) to "You Are Not Alone." Cher obliterated that one, as the time from "I Got You Babe" to "Believe" is 33 years, seven months.

In a related development, "Believe" is the fourth consecutive #1 by a solo female artist, following "Have You Ever?" by Brandy, "...Baby One More Time" by Britney Spears, and "Angel of Mine" by Monica, breaking the record of three in a row set in 1990. Back then, "Escapade" by Janet Jackson, "Black Velvet" by Alannah Myles, and "Love Will Lead You Back" by Taylor Dayne had accomplished that feat. With "Heartbreak Hotel" by Whitney Houston and "I Still Believe" by Mariah Carey waiting in the wings, the trend is likely to continue throughout the spring.

Symphony To Perform At Reeves

The 1998-99 North Carolina Symphony Cumberland County concert series will conclude with a performance in Fayetteville on Thursday, April 8. The concert will be held in Reeves Auditorium on the campus of Methodist College and will begin at 8 p.m. The performance will be sponsored by *The Fayetteville Observer-Times*. Associate Conductor William Henry Curry will lead The Symphony in the performance featuring bass-baritone soloist Dan Boye and works from an international assortment of composers.

The concert opener will be French composer Ambroise Thomas' Overture to *Raymond, Ou Le Secret de la reine*. This overture is from the opera *Raymond* and is the only selection from the opera that is still performed by contemporary orchestras. Two works from another French composer, Claude Debussy, will also be on the program: the well-known piano classic "*Clair de Lune*" from *Suite Bergamasque* and Goliwog's "Cakewalk" from *Children's Corner*.

Eastern European composers Antonin Dvorak and Aram Khachaturian will be represented with Dvorak's "Slavonic Dance, Op. 72, No. 1" and Khachaturian's "Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia" from the ballet *Spartacus*. Soloist Dan Boye will join The Symphony on stage to close out

the first half of the concert. Boye will perform three Richard Rodgers selections, two from the musical *Oklahoma*.

As part of The Symphony's yearlong celebration of George Gershwin's 100th birthday, the orchestra will begin the second half of the concert with Gershwin's "Strike Up the Band" and "Prelude in C-sharp minor." Dan Boye will again join the orchestra, performing selections by Sigmund Romburg and Jerome Kern. The concert will conclude with Gershwin protege Ferde Grofe's "On the Trail" from *Grand Canyon Suite* and John Williams' *The Cowboys Overture*.

Dan Boye is no stranger to North Carolina audiences; he appeared in The North Carolina Symphony's production of *The Impresario* in the fall. Boye has also been featured in performances as an oratorio vocalist and in musical theater productions. Outside of North Carolina, he has been a guest artist with The Canton Symphony, at the Breckenridge Music Festival, and with the National Repertory Orchestra. When he is not performing on stage, Boye performs in the classroom as an Associate Professor of Physics at Davidson College. He teaches a wide range of physics classes, including a course entitled "Musical Technology." He is also well-known for his traveling lecture, "The Science of Singing."

This concert will conclude the 1998-99 North Carolina Symphony Cumberland County Concert Series. The 1999-2000 Cumberland County season will begin on October 22 with an all-orchestral concert. Other performances next year will include a Holiday Festival concert on December 9, and Classical concerts on January 14 and March 21.

TICKETS: General admission tickets for the April 8 performance are still available. Prices are \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, and \$5 for students. For more information, or to order tickets, call Carol Ivey at (910) 868-3213.

Want To Review Music Yourself?

While we make every effort to be more representative in the musical areas we cover on the Entertainment Page, it can be a daunting task. If you would like to review a single, CD, movie, or other entertainment form that you would like to see appear here, just e-mail us at music_trivia@yahoo.com. It's that easy!

Music Trivia

Angel vs. Devil: It is interesting to note, particularly at a religious college, that "angels" are no stranger to the #1 spot on *The Billboard Hot 100*. Several #1 hits have had the word "Angel" in the title, from "Johnny Angel" by Shelley Fabares to "Angel of Mine" by Monica. To this date, however, the Devil has not had his due. No song with the word "devil" in the title has ever reached #1. This issue's question: What is the highest-peaking song which does mention "devil" in the title?

Hints: The song spent two weeks at #2 in 1988. It was by a group whose lead singer died of a heroin overdose in 1997. Would it help to mention they're Australian?

Please e-mail your answer to music_trivia@yahoo.com. The first correct reply will receive a gift certificate for a free CD from **DiscGoRound!**



433 Westwood Shopping Center
(910) 868-9611

Movie Trivia

Jake Lloyd is the child actor who will appear as Anakin Skywalker in *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* (AKA *Episode I*). It will not be his first appearance in a hit movie. He also had a principal role as the son of the character played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in what movie?

Please e-mail your answer to music_trivia@yahoo.com. The first correct reply will receive a free pass for two to the **Carmike 12** or **Wynnsong 7** Movie Theaters!

Carmike 12 Theatre: Westwood Shopping Center

Wynnsong 7 Theatre: behind the Holiday Inn Bordeaux

The music trivia and movie trivia contests are open to all Methodist College students, day or evening, except for Methodist College *Pride* Staff!

Congrats

To Francine Hunt, who won a free CD from **DiscGoRound** for correctly identifying Tiffany as the first artist born in the 1970s to reach #1. She did it November 7, 1987 with "I Think We're Alone Now." Like "Mony Mony" by Billy Idol which succeeded it at #1, it was a remake of Tommy James & The Shondells. As I mentioned in the hints, her other hits included a Beatles remake: "I Saw Him Standing There" which trans-generated the Beatles' "I Saw Her Standing There."

To Steven Salisbury, who won a free pass for two to **Carmike 12 Theatre** for identifying "transparent aluminum," the formula for which Mr. Scot gives the head of PlexiCorp in exchange for the Plexiglas he needs in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.