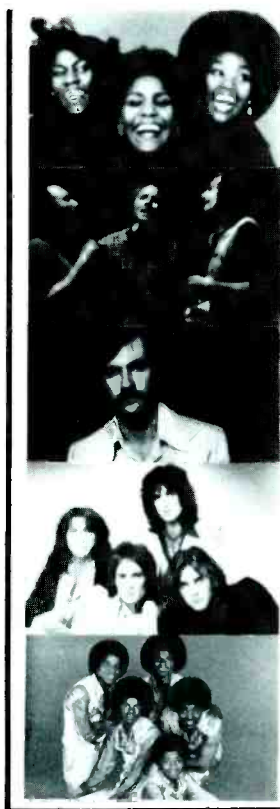


picks of the week



CHICAGO (Columbia 10620)

Baby, What A Big Surprise (3:04) (Polish Prince — ASCAP) (Cetera)

Peter Cetera continues to be the songwriting standard bearer with this pop ballad. Frequent repetition drives the memorable chorus home, while classically influenced strings, brass and vocals lend a stately touch. A strong initial single from "Chicago XI" for pop radio.

THE SYLVERS (Capitol 4493)

Any Way You Want Me (2:40) (Rosy — ASCAP) (Sylvers, Sylvers)

The Sylvers achieved top 20 pop chart status with "High School Dance," in the summertime, no less! Here they've gotten a bit more adventurous by writing and producing their own record, and the result is light bubblegum that would be at home on any pop or R&B playlist.

JEFF LYNNE (Jet/UA 19116)

Doin' That Crazy Thing (3:25) (Unart/Jet — BMI) (Lynne)

ELO apparently doesn't provide enough of an outlet for Jeff Lynne's craziness, evidenced by his first solo single. Using catch phrases from disco and other jive for lyrics, Lynne has tamed a riot of different sounds into a cohesive record that defies categorization. Something new from one of the wildest imaginations heard on top 40.

RAM JAM (Epic 50451)

Keep Your Hands On The Wheel (2:45) (Adbredar — ASCAP) (Millius, Graves)

Ram Jam and producers Katz and Kasanetz became heroes when they broke into top 40 radio with the unusual, hard-rocking interpretation of Leadbelly's "Black Betty." This cut from the subsequently released album is more in the Rolling Stones' type of rock and roll groove, with the same sizzling guitar work that made the last record.

HELEN REDDY (Capitol 4487)

The Happy Girls (3:58) (Almo/Irving/Buggerlugs — ASCAP/BMI) (Reddy, Fowley, Mankey, Henn)

Following up one single success from what has proved to be a fruitful pairing of Reddy and producer Kim Fowley, this "Ear Candy" cut exhibits the influence of co-writer Reddy on the lyric. A series of situations is used to tell a story in the form of a ballad with a haunting chorus.

SANTANA (Columbia 10616)

She's Not There (3:19) (Al Gallico — BMI) (Argent)

The classic Rod Argent/Zombies song retains much of the sense of magic and mystery in this interpretation by Santana. The Latin percussion serves only as a slight embellishment, while the organ and Carlos Santana's screaming, emotive guitar solos dominate. Literally a hot record.

ROGER DALTREY (MCA 40800)

Avenging Anne (3:11) (April — ASCAP) (Pratt)

This well-known Andy Pratt song has been the favorite of FM programmers since the release of Daltrey's solo album "One Of The Boys." Macho Roger didn't choose to sing in the first person as a woman, as was Pratt's novel approach, but it's a great song in an energetic, rocking performance.

CAT STEVENS (A&M 1971)

Sweet Jamaica (3:03) (Colgems-EMI — ASCAP) (Stevens)

Cat Stevens has a way of putting across a hymn to his beloved that no one else can match, and this selection from "Izitso" is a classic example. Shifting from ballad to folk dance moods, he always squeezes emotion from every word. For single and LP-oriented stations.

RUSH (Mercury 73958)

Closer To The Heart (2:52) (Core — ASCAP) (Lee, Lifeson)

English folkly acoustical guitars and chimes open this selection from "Farewell To Kings." Very like a Led Zepelin number in terms of structure, timbres, and the role of the lead vocalist, this is a strong song that could capitalize on Rush's large concert following.

EMOTIONS (Columbia 10622)

Don't Ask My Neighbors (3:33) (Unichappell — BMI) (Scarborough)

Having scored one of the year's most enduring number one records with "Best Of My Love," the Emotions are in the perfect position to expand their following by showing many sides of the album "Rejoice." This cut slows down the tempo for a sultry, almost tropical mood, showcasing the vocals in a cloudy, reverberant environment. Instant crossover.

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH (Atlantic 3432)

Fair Game (2:46) (Gold Hill — ASCAP) (Stills)

Even though they first parted ways about six years ago, the unique combination that was Crosby, Stills & Nash was never replaced, and they proved it by coming back with a top ten single and a platinum album. This second selection combines a snappy Latin rhythm, neatly interlocking harmonies, and layers of Stephen Stills' thoughtful acoustical guitar work.

JAMES TAYLOR (Columbia 10602)

Your Smiling Face (2:43) (Country Road — BMI) (Taylor)

Taylor returned to the upper reaches of the **Cash Box** Top 100 Singles chart with his mellow version of "Handy Man," and he's riding the streak with this second upbeat selection from "JT." Some whimsical vocal gymnastics that add the crucial personal touch, and station adds should flood in.

THE BABYS (Chrysalis 2173)

Isn't It Time (3:23) (Jacon/X-Ray — BMI) (Conrad, Kennedy)

An understated, classic rock piano phrase sets the mood for this first single from the group's second album, "Broken Heart." The frequent shifts from a ballad feeling to surging, orchestral rock are handled with ease by lead vocalist John Waite. Beautiful charts for the horns and strings, and an overall impressive production by Ron Nevison. Already showing lots of top 40 potential.

THE JACKSONS (Epic 50454)

Goin' Places (3:27) (Mighty Three — BMI) (Gamble, Huff)

High-speed travel is one of the highs of which rock songs are often the subject, and this high-stepping song about jet flight has all the thrills of a first takeoff. Gamble & Huff's songwriting and production, combined with the Jackson's performing talent, continue to sound like the perfect formula.

PATTI LaBELLE (Epic 50445)

Joy To Have Your Love (3:15) (Raydio — ASCAP, Polo

Grounds/Gospel Birds — BMI) (Parker, Cohen, Ellison)

This selection from her first solo album proves that Patti LaBelle has a more than powerful enough voice to go it on her own. The chorus of this tune is catchy, but the record's most exciting moments come when Ms. LaBelle stretches out long, sinewy notes of incredible duration. Aimed at pop and R&B stations.

THELMA HOUSTON (Tamla/Motown 54287)

I'm Here Again (3:50) (Jobete — ASCAP, Stone Diamond — BMI) (Wakefield, Sutton, Sutton)

Building from a dreamy, harp-laden melody into a harder disco rhythm, this song from Ms. Houston's album "The Devil In Me" sounds a great deal like the song and arrangement that brought her to recognition early this year, "Don't Leave Me This Way." She sings up a storm, so it's all a question of public acceptance of a fairly obvious follow-up.

THE HUES CORPORATION (Warner/Curb 8454)

Telegram Of Love (3:14) (Jimi Lane/Ensign — BMI) (Holmes)

With the rhythm guitar marking out the beat with Morse code accuracy, this tight singing trio takes off on a variety of harmonic combinations. For disco and R&B airplay at the initial stages. This happy record could cross into other areas.

THE CONTROLLERS (Juana/TK 3414)

Somebody's Gotta Win, Somebody's Gotta Lose (3:49) (Every-Knight — BMI) (Camon)

From the album "In Control," this waltzing ballad belies the mechanistic quality of this group's name. With its clear and relaxed lead vocal, this record presents blues in a big-city style that will catch on with R&B stations.

ROSIE (RCA 11090)

The Words Don't Matter (3:32) (David Lasley/Lana Marrano/Sunbury — ASCAP) (Lasley, Marrano)

An easygoing ballad from a smoothly-blended group of vocalists. The lyric and harmony of the chorus constitute an impressive hook, and the vocal arrangement provides pleasant changes for the record's duration. With pop, easy listening and R&B possibilities, this single could draw attention to the album "Last Dance."

CORYELL/MOUZON (Atlantic 3420)

Rock 'N Roll Lovers (4:02) (Mouzon — ASCAP) (Mouzon)

The guitar/drum pairing that infused energy into the 11th House made a welcome move when they got back together for their latest album. This bluesy shuffle derives melodic interest from the guitar. Mainly for FM stations.

PLEASURE (Fantasy 803)

Let Me Be The One (3:30) (Funky P.O./At-Home — ASCAP) (Brewster, Pleasure)

Built on frequent chorus repetitions, this single exhibits disco potential without being overbearing in terms of bassy rhythms. The best features are improvisations by the lead vocalist and an a capella coda that highlights the chorus in its last statement.

RICHARD HELL & THE VOIDOIDS (Sire/WB 1003)

Blank Generation (2:40) (Automatic — BMI) (Hell)

This title cut from the former Television bassist's new album features his vacantly ravenous vocal and a strong chord progression. Hell's cleverest touch is leaving blank spaces for the word "blank."

IAN TAMBLYN (Cream 7719)

One Of These Days (3:59) (Manda/Butter — BMI) (Tamblyn)

A ballad orchestrated for piano and strings only, reinforcing its bittersweet mood. Tamblyn is a sensitive vocalist, and though his lyrics are a bit heavy on the philosophy, they do a good job of expressing a complex emotion. For varied formats.

WALTER MURPHY (Private Stock 166)

Could It Be The Music (3:28) (RFT — BMI) (Murphy)

Having made his major impact with rearranged classics, Murphy makes a radical departure with this original song, mainly a vocal performance rather than an instrumental. It's a funky tune, sung by a large chorus of vocalists and elaborately orchestrated. Could benefit by Murphy's disco track record in the eventual attainment of airplay.

JIMMY BRISCOE AND THE BEAVERS (Wanderick/TK 70001)

Invitation To The World (3:45) (Sherlyn/Wanderick — BMI) (Kyser)

A call to unity delivered at a frenzied pace by Briscoe. His clear lead vocal is the distinguishing feature, while the lyric and chorus are reminiscent of some of the Isley Brothers' work. For disco and R&B stations.

DANNY KIRWAN (DJM/Amherst 1025)

Let It Be (2:29) (Macien — BMI) (Lennon, McCartney)

Formerly a central guitar figure in Fleetwood Mac, Kirwan has veered in musical directions that are quite different from what that group was and what they have become. This is a reggae version of the familiar Beatle song, vocalized in a relaxed style by Kirwan. Not quite the thing for the American top 40 audience, but an interesting item, especially for FM progressives.

THE CHI-LITES (Mercury 73954)

If I Had A Girl (3:30) (Josiah — BMI) (Hurtt)

From their album "The Fantastic Chi-Lites," this is the kind of syrupy love song that is expected from this Chicago-based singing group. Falsetto harmonies and a melodic string section, along with a plaintive harmonica solo, are the distinctive features of this R&B-oriented single.

DISCO FRITZ AND HIS SAUERKRAUTS (Pausa 705)

The Yodel Thing (I Like Gemutlichkeit) Part 1 (2:45) (Gammarock — BMI) (Kuebler, Evans)

Yodeling and oom-pah are two musical forms indigenous to Switzerland, so they usually sound best echoing against an Alpine ridge. Here's a disco record that uses both motifs, with echo effects provided by the modern studio. Novelty records have to be downright silly to make it, and this one fills the bill.