

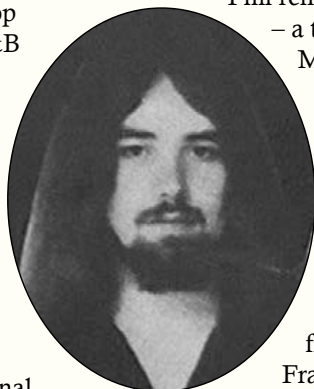
RAW MATERIAL

Minimal press coverage or record sales have helped create a mystique that's at odds with Raw Material's roots as a hard-working East London R&B band. Drawing on their first interviews since their split, **AUSTIN MATTHEWS** tells their story in full...



1

Bassist / acoustic guitarist Phil Gunn and singer / keyboardist Colin Catt were born in the same hospital in October 1948, and had known each other since infant school. "I was born and brought up in Peckham," says Phil. "I mainly played bass, and was self-taught." According to a 1971 RCA press release, 'Colin's earliest musical experiences consisted of piano lessons starting from when he was 4. He was tired of left-hand exercises and *Five Easy Pieces For Beginners*, and gave it up when he was 13, only to take it up again – playing a different style of music – when he was 16.' By the mid-60s, both teenagers were pop enthusiasts. "About 1965, we were in a little R&B band called Everybody Else, playing Manfred Mann-style stuff," continues Phil. "We earned very little money, playing dances and weddings." Both went on to nearby Norwood Technical College in 1967 (Phil hoping to improve his exam results with a view to studying medicine), and it was there that Raw Material began life (also as a functions band) in early 1968. Phil: "After Everybody Else we just decided to go for it. Raw Material was originally covers, then progressed into original material. The people in the band gradually changed – we put an ad for a guitarist into *Melody Maker*, and John Brockhurst came in through that. He was a good player and also a good mechanic, a bit of an oddball in some ways – but he'd probably have said the same of me! Then Adrian the drummer left to work for Customs & Excise, and Paul Young came in to replace him."



Phil

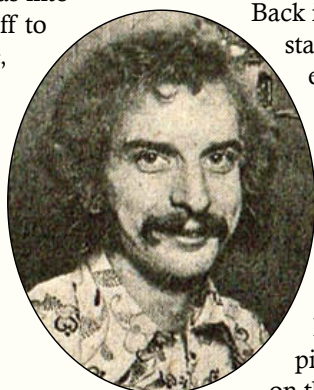
"I was born in the East End of London in 1950," says Paul. "My dad played the piano and I wanted to be a pianist too, but he was always away trucking, and there was never the money for me to learn. My eldest brother was into rock'n'roll, and he bought a kit. Then he went off to the Merchant Navy, the kit was just sitting there, and I was on it and absolutely loved it. That's how I learnt to play. I played in pubs and clubs with my father on piano when I was 13 or 14¹. I was never taught – I couldn't afford a teacher – but you could lock yourself away and just play, and there were umpteen brilliant drummers you could listen to. I joined bands and played gigs, as well as being an apprentice carpenter, and eventually answered an ad for a band in South London. I was just coming up to 18 years old when I gave up my apprenticeship and took the job with Raw Material. They were a working band before I joined – they did a lot of soul covers, playing in youth clubs and places like that. Their idea was to write their own stuff, and we got pulled along with the whole progressive scene." In terms of influences, Phil says "Obviously the Beatles and Hendrix, and also Fairport and the Incredible String Band. I listened to a lot of American music (Buffalo Springfield, the Band), a lot of blues (Ten Years After, Clapton, Mayall), and was definitely getting

into early progressive rock – so a wide spectrum, really." For Paul, "My eldest brother loved Elvis and rock'n'roll, so I listened to that too, as well as the Beatles, blues standards (Big Bill Broonzy) and soul."

With the nucleus of the band together in 1968, they began to develop ambitions beyond playing covers at functions. "We started writing pretty soon after I joined," recalls Paul. "Colin and Phil wrote in the early days." A management team, Bob Holmes and John (surname forgotten) soon entered the set-up, working as B&J Management. "As I recall, they were a more into cabaret management, but wanted to branch into the rock area," ventures Paul, while

Phil remembers Holmes as "older than us and bald – a typical behind-the-desk-type manager" and Mick says "Bob was a pretty laid-back sort of dude." As for the mysterious John, Mick can only say: "He reminded me of Frank Muir, the comedian." In 1969 the duo found the quartet work in Germany, where there was a hunger for British bands, and they refined their pulsing, jamming jazz-rock sound, with Mick's flute to the fore. Phil recalls them covering many of the key cities on their first tour, including Hamburg, Munich and Frankfurt. "Germany kept us going," continues Paul. "It was very difficult to break in the UK, so tons of bands would go to Germany to work. You could play bigger gigs with a good atmosphere. We did some good stuff over there, though you were never sure of the promoters – you might be booked in for 2 days rather than 7." German tours would continue to provide the band with vital income over the next four years, and they spent a considerable amount of time there.

2



Ed Welch

Back in the UK in the summer of 1969, the band started looking for a deal and found a sympathetic ear in Ed Welch, who was working as an all-round utility man at United Artists Music, which he'd joined fresh from college. Paul: "We'd written a bunch of songs and were taking them around to different places. Lots of people said they weren't interested, but we played them to Ed and what he did was to listen and say, 'I love the idea of this song...' He looked beyond the songs. He was a cracking pianist, and played piano on a couple of tracks on the first album. He was a really good influence on us." Ed explains that "I was born in Oxford, and was a cathedral choirboy. I went to Trinity College, London to study composing, and while I was there I met a guy called Pierre Tubbs, who was the artistic director for UA Records. He saw me as a useful talented musician who could get string sections from my friends, and said, 'When you leave college, give me a ring and I'll get you into the music business.' I was 20 when I started at UA in 1967, as a dogsbody going round the BBC with the stuff we published. I was also writing B-sides and doing arranging and a little production. Somehow I got involved with producing Raw Material, which wasn't really my scene. I was into, and wrote, pop music – but they were very nice guys.

¹ The aforementioned press release quotes Paul as saying "I used to be a skinhead. When I was at school I thought Colin and Phil were a couple of bloody hippies," but Paul was never a skinhead, nor did he go to school with Phil and Colin. So much for press releases.



Hairy, but very nice. They helped me move house once, and I remember the neighbours locking their door when they saw them!"

Despite Ed's support, United Artists passed on the band, so he set up a meeting with one Mohamed Zackariya, proprietor of the tiny Evolution label, which – alongside Raw Material – is remembered today for issuing the highly regarded LP by Arzachel in the summer of 1969. "Although we were signed to UA for publishing, it wasn't really their sort of stuff," says Paul, "so Ed looked around and found Evolution." Zackariya (Known as 'Zacky') had started working in the music business in the early 60s, recording covers of hit songs to sell cheaply in Woolworth's, WHSmiths and other chains via his Zel label, which – according to *Billboard* in May 1968 – 'specialized in mini-LP monthly covers of current hits', and was 'planning a racking operation in sweet shops'. It wasn't the cutting edge of the industry, but the band were happy to take whatever came their way. "Eventually decent musicians who'd been turned down by EMI or other labels started coming to see me, and I thought maybe I could give them a go, so I decided to start a new label," explains Zacky, in his first ever interview. "It was great fun – not just a business, but a hobby too." Ed Welch remembers Zacky as "a very nice guy. I think he was Sri Lankan. He was rather wealthy and lived in a nice place in Edgware Road. He must have come to United Artists Music, looking for bands. He was sensibly accommodating, and well worth tapping into."

"Ed Welch was a very talented arranger and a nice, down-to-earth guy," says Zacky. "He or an agent suggested I go to a Raw Material concert. They were a hard rock band, but I thought their sound was unique, if not very commercial. I thought they had talent that deserved to be developed." As such, a meeting was set up with the band. "I think Mr. Zackariya was in his 30s," says Paul. "He had lots of money, and his wife was a very attractive blonde, upper-middle class lady who wanted to get involved in the scene, but didn't seem to know much about music. He was older than her. Evolution was chaos, but pleasant." Phil adds, "We went to his house – he was a bit vague, but seemed to have a lot of confidence in us. It was the first time I ever ate curry, and I remember my mouth burning all of a sudden!" Ed also recalls a culinary snafu chez Zackariya: "I remember having dinner there as naïve lads, and there were lobster claws, which we didn't know how to eat." Zacky adds "I used to

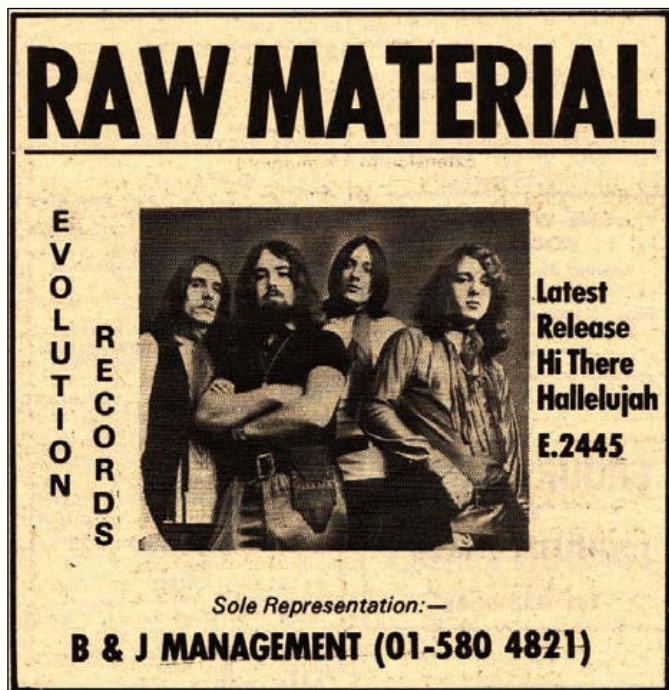
give a lot of parties at my house in Gloucester Place – but I never touched drugs, and never allowed others to take them when they were around me."

Having signed to Evolution, Raw Material's first single – Time & Illusion / Bobo's Party – duly crept out in September 1969 (pressed by Pye and distributed by RCA). Its A-side was penned by producer / engineer Vic Smith (who'd worked with Skip Bifferty, Sunforest, Tinkerbells Fairydust and others), and invites the listener to 'imagine you're a goblin in the sky', while its B-side was by Melanie Safka. Ed: "It's likely I would have found songs in the UA catalogue and said, 'Have a go at this'. In the nicest possible way, we would have wanted them to do as many songs that we published as possible." The single was pressed in tiny numbers (judging from its scarcity today) and was far from a hit, leaving the band at liberty to return to mainland Europe in December 1969. This visit included a residency in the nightclub of the Hotel Hirschen in Zurich, which frequently booked British bands, Black Sabbath and Killing Floor having played there in the weeks before Raw Material. Phil remembers it as "an old, creaky castle-type of place. We would play five 45-minute sets with 15-minute breaks." Adds Colin, "It was very hard work. There were to be 'no drum solos,' according to the management!"

Also on the bill was a band from Folkestone called Daniel, which featured Mick Fletcher (sax, flute, vocals) and Cliff Homewood (guitar). "I started off playing the piano, as many kids do," says Mick, who was also born in 1948. "When I was a nipper I used to listen to my parents' Cab Calloway and Champion Jack Dupree records on a radiogram, and that really got me going, so I moved over to learn the sax. When I was 16 I was working as an apprentice by day and playing with a band called Steam at night. At 18 I chucked in the apprenticeship, went professional as a musician, and started becoming poorer! I went to the US with a band called Abject Blues in 1966, did a 30-day tour over there and got better. Later I was influenced by all those late 60s bands like East of Eden, and became a singer. I was in other bands before Daniel, but none of them recorded anything. The drummer in Daniel was Les Sampson, who was later in Road with



2 No trace of these can be located, though a covers album entitled *Lovin' Things Etc* did appear in 1968, credited to one Douglas Robinson (Uni-Zel UZ001).



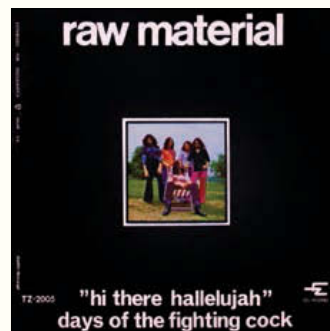
Noel Redding. We went over to Zurich, and that's when Raw Material rolled up. When I had a bit of spare time, I went to another Swiss town with Raw Material, played a couple of nights down there and decided to leave Daniel and join up with them." As Paul puts it, "Mick was a decent flute and sax player, but an incredible harmonica player, though we didn't do much that lent itself to that."

3

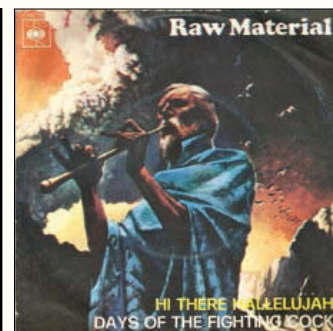
Back in the UK, the revised quintet continued to play gigs. "One night we were playing at the Speakeasy in London," says Mick. "Having only just joined, I thought Time & Illusion had been written by Phil, so I announced, 'Here's a song written by our bass player,' and a voice bawled out from the crowd, 'No it bloody wasn't, it was written by me!'" Evolution, meanwhile, seemed to have little idea what they were doing. "I phoned up to ask if our single was selling, and the secretary said, 'What are you doing? You're supposed to be on television in Spain!' It was utter chaos," chuckles Colin. Paul adds, "I remember being in the office in Old Compton Street one day, and we brought in a Marshall stack and put on the single, Time & Illusion. It was blaring out all over the street for about 20 seconds before the police came in. Another day we went up there and Zackariya's wife said, 'Let's play charades!' It was absolutely surreal."

In March 1970, the quintet released a second single, Hi There Hallelujah / Days Of The Fighting Cock. Its A-side was penned by Ed Welch and future ELO bassist Mike Albuquerque, while the B-side was Welch's alone. Paul describes it as "a sort of gospel-rocky number. The backing singers were the Ladybirds, who were amazing and performed for many bands." Like its predecessor, the disc attracted next-to-no attention, and with gigs and income in short supply, the band were in no position to reject an unappealing suggestion made by co-manager Bob Holmes: "We were offered a pittance to go into the studio for a day just to do covers of other people's stuff," sighs Colin. As Holmes was to write on the back cover, 'In the late 60s

Spain



Italy



the emergence of progressive music was to make itself felt in the British Hit Parade, and through this I felt the need arose for an album of the major titles to score in Britain during this period.' As such, the band – who'd already backed a few other singers on demos for Evolution – went into R.G. Jones's studio in Wimbledon around April, and banged out versions of Jethro Tull's Living In The Past, Gun's Race With The Devil, Fleetwood Mac's Man Of The World and others.

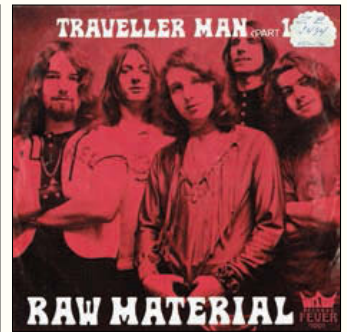
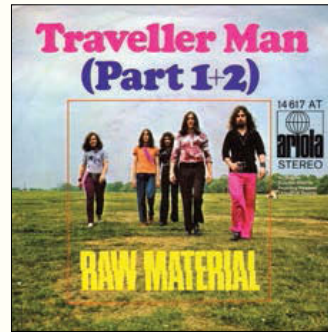
Adding insult to injury, Holmes then augmented the recordings with spoken links from youthful DJ Kid Jensen, who was apparently unaware what he was putting his name to. Phil: "Kid Jensen did the lead-ins, but never got to listen to the album. I remember it was in the press that he didn't like it. He said he was annoyed about it, but I was annoyed with him!" Adds Paul, "The Kid Jensen album was a bit of a laugh. I don't think any of us thought they'd release it." However, as Colin puts it, "We did as best we could, went away, and next thing we know they'd stuck it out." *Kid Jensen Introduces Sounds Progressive* duly appeared on the tiny Eyemark label, with artwork by Mark Hanau (who also designed albums by Curved Air, Jody Grind and Saturnalia)³. Its reputation is not high among the few who have heard it, but in fact it's not at all bad, with highlights including a belting rendition of Who Do You Love (Juicy Lucy), a beefy I'm A Man (Chicago) and a spirited Let's Work Together (Canned Heat), all with searing, distorted guitar leads from John Brockhurst. However, it also displays

³ Bizarrely, four tracks from it were also released as an EP on the Electrecord label in Romania in 1970.



clear traces of haste, with a nadir reached on an apathetic rendition of Sympathy (Rare Bird), which abruptly fades just as Colin embarks on an off-key solo on his distinctive-sounding Lowrey organ. Nonetheless, the LP is clearly the work of Raw Material, and gives a clear idea of what they sounded like live at the time.

Shortly after that debacle, recording began on a Raw Material album proper, with Ed Welch at the helm. "We ended up doing it at Tangerine Studios, which was run by a guy named Stuart Taylor and was above a bingo hall in Dalston," Ed recalls. "I remember you could sometimes hear the bingo caller on the back of the tapes! It wasn't the world's greatest studio, but it was a big room and terribly cheap. We did our best with it." The material chiefly comprised songs either written by Ed or brought in by him, with the only band composition being Phil and Colin's Future Recollections (featuring a notable vibraphone part from British jazz prodigy Frank Ricotti). It opens with a new – and considerably longer – rendition of Time & Illusion, which exemplifies the band's superb chops, and also includes a cameo on vibes from Ricotti. Elsewhere, Pear On An Apple Tree was co-written by Welch and former Spencer Davis Group guitarist Phil Sawyer, and – along with I'd Be Delighted – hints at a pounding, proto-glam sound. By contrast, the closing number, Destruction Of America, is a strange piece with spoken words, sound effects and Mellotron, credited to Phil, Colin and one Peter Flowers and (according to Phil) declaimed by Mike d'Albuquerque. "That was one of Ed's ideas," explains Phil. "He came up with quite a few good ideas."



Ed also brought in Traveller Man, co-written by an unknown guitarist named Dave Greene. "My wife was working for Ed Welch at United Artists Music," says Dave. "I met him socially, and he was interested in songs. I was writing songs, so he said, 'I've got bunch of yobboes called Raw Material who are making their first album, and I'd like them to record Traveller Man and use it as a single'. So I was co-writer of that." Not only that, Dave also played guitar on Pear On An Apple Tree: "Ed said he wasn't happy with the guitar on that track, and asked me to do it instead – John Brockhurst didn't have the right bluesy style, and I'd already played on a recording of it by Phil Sawyer, which was another Ed Welch production." With the album in the can, a third 45 was released in May, splitting Traveller Man over two sides, with a long, piercing distorted guitar solo from John Brockhurst. Evolution's press release described it as 'a good hard beaty record with some exciting instrumental sounds behind a tight, clear vocal' – but the band were not enamoured of it. "Traveller Man was a horrible song," offers Mick. "It was just me rambling about on a mouth organ."

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London group RAW MATERIAL'S third release is Evolution's first stereo single and a tremendous value-for-money package. Each side of this "maxi-single" is of above average length.

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"Traveller Man" is a Greene Page Klodzinski composition.

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BIOG →

BIOG

The two founder-members of RAW MATERIAL, Colin Catt (organ) and Philip Gunn (bass) were born in London within 10 days of each other in October, 1948.

Their group experience goes back to their days in college and, after leaving, some 3 years ago they formed RAW MATERIAL with John Brockhurst (also London-born four months before them) as their very competent guitarist and, later, with Paul Young (yet another Londoner born in August 1950) on drums.

Evolution heard some tapes of the group and released two singles, "Time and Illusion" and subsequently "Hey There Hallelujah" which brought them increasing popularity at venues here and abroad.

On one of their continental tours they met 21-year old Mick Fletcher, from Gillingham who "sat in" with them while playing in Switzerland with a band called Daniel. Mick, who started on piano at the age of six and turned to sax a year ago, had previously been pianist with the Mobile Vulgars, a progressive group and, more recently, was lead singer and flautist with Steam.

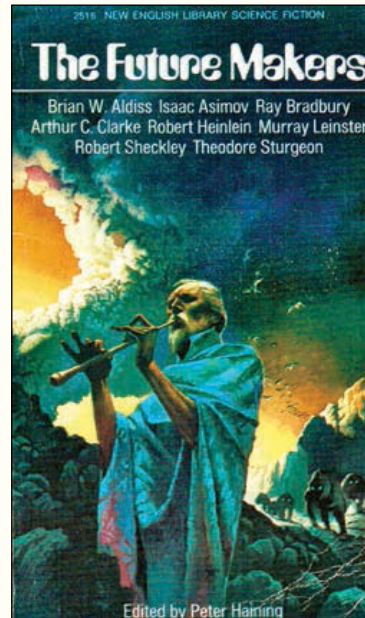
When RAW MATERIAL returned from Switzerland, Mick joined them full-time as lead vocalist and his addition has certainly fired the group with a new enthusiasm. They are now playing better than ever. Listen to their new stereo single "Traveller Man" and you'll agree.



Soon after its release the band again visited Germany, on a touring package with Brian Auger's Oblivion Express and Warm Dust. "We hotelled together, and became really good friends," says Paul. "We played some really big venues, but it didn't feed back into the UK, so it would be back to play to one man and his dog in a pub. That was very difficult." Adds Mick, "We spent most of our time in the south of Germany, and were sometimes based there. They loved the British bands over there, and we got some good crowds." One band Phil does not remember fondly, however, are Deep Purple: "We were supposed to play several gigs with Deep Purple, but they never turned up. The promoter would ask us to play another set, and that was never great. That's embarrassing." In their early tours the band was assisted by their roadies Alan May and Ken Monet, both old mates of Colin and Phil, but they both departed during 1970, leaving the band to fend for themselves for a time.

A notable Raw Material appearance occurred on Sunday, July 12th 1970 at the Aachen Open Air Pop Festival, held in an equestrian stadium near the Dutch border. The bill boasted Deep Purple, Pink Floyd, T. Rex and Free, as well as local heroes Can, Krokodil and Amon Düül II, and the crowd was estimated at 50,000. "It was a fantastic experience for us," comments Paul – but the gig also marked John Brockhurst's final date with the band, who returned to the UK straight afterwards. "There were thousands of people at Aachen," says Mick, "then we came back to England and played to about 50 people at an open air festival in Cambridge!"

The band was in urgent need of a new guitarist, and the obvious candidate was Dave Greene. "I was away on holiday and got a call saying that they weren't very happy with their guitarist," Dave recalls. "They'd already been in Germany, which is why I said I'd join – they had work, and

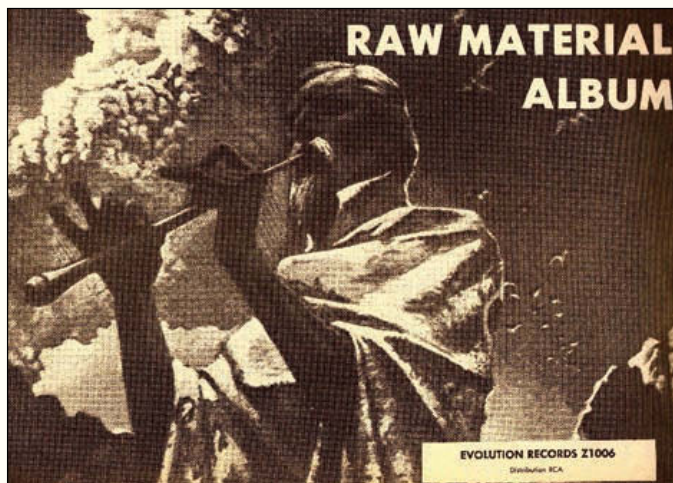


it got me out of the rut of going to the office every day." As to his background, he says "I was born in London, but brought up on the West Sussex coast. I got into music as soon as I heard American rock'n'roll in my pre-teens. I was about 11 when I pestered my folks to buy a guitar. It was a horrible one, but I shut myself away for five years and struggled with it. My first band was called the Teenbeats, in about 1964. We played R&B and Beatles / Stones / Dylan stuff.

After about a year we decided our name wasn't very hip, so we changed it to Mo Henry. Although we were still at school and were only kids, we got to support people like Them, the Byrds, the Who, the Kinks and the Yardbirds. We were very lucky to be playing then. Our singer went to London in 1965, and as I wanted to make it big as a guitarist I left home in 1966 and moved into a bedsit in the Marylebone Road with him. We had jobs, but we were also writing songs. I was a big fan of Cream and Jeff Beck, and saw Hendrix quite a lot." As for his new bandmates, Paul simply states: "Dave was very reserved and mysterious – you could never get to the bottom of him."

Raw Material's self-titled album was released in October 1970, housed in a striking sleeve showing a Bruce Pennington painting that had originally graced an American anthology of sci-fi writing named *The Future Makers*, published by the New English Library. "I always thought of the image as like the piper at the gates of dawn," muses Phil. "I think Mohamed Zackariya





got together the money for the pressing, and hoped it would take off.” Though John Brockhurst’s photo does not appear on the back cover, and his only credit is a mention in the ‘thanks’ section, he does in fact play lead guitar on everything except Pear On An Apple Tree. An advert for the LP appeared in *Melody Maker*, and the members recall a modicum of radio play, but it generated little buzz, and would mark the end of their association with Evolution Records. As Paul puts it, “I think Mohamed Zackariya was prepared to put in enough money for the band to record, but it probably got to a point where he didn’t want to throw any more money at it.” As for Zackariya, he says: “I have moved on from the music business and now work in currency exchange with about 100 offices globally, from California to Australia. We operate quite a few of the units in airports, seaports and high streets, and you will see us in Oxford Street, Piccadilly, Leicester Square, Champs Elysees etc. But looking at the photos and the press releases takes me back to a very happy time...”

5

With no income from record sales, as 1970 drew to a close the band were obliged to hit the road again, with Germany being the obvious destination. Their travel arrangements were hardly luxurious, however. Mick: “We used to go around in a old Air



Spain

India bus. There was tons of gear in there. It was ridiculous – four Marshall stacks and a P.A. and all sorts of stuff.” Dave shudders at the memory: “Going to Germany was always a disaster – the two or three tours I did with them were, anyway. If my wife hadn’t been working for Ed Welch, the two of us wouldn’t have had any money – I was always disappearing off to Germany on the promise that I’d come back with some, but then the engine on the van would blow up and we’d come back with nothing, or a promoter wouldn’t have got us any gigs, so we’d be on someone’s floor with just a bar of chocolate a day to eat. I thought being in a band on a bus would be great, but none of them drove except me, so I might be driving for five hours after a gig. The van with all the gear in it would barely go above 30 miles an hour – one time we were pulled over by the police and escorted off the motorway for going too slow! At gigs we’d be lugging Marshall stacks up and down three flights of stairs. The crowds were good, but apart from that it was horrendous.”

One advantage of touring, however, was that it gave the band the chance to develop their own material, which was evolving in a progressive direction, with Dave emerging as the chief writer. Nonetheless, he comments “It really wasn’t my type of music. It wasn’t like the sort of stuff I was writing before I joined, and wasn’t what I would listen to at home.” Despite its relative complexity, he also states: “It wasn’t that hard to write.” Onstage the band were also stretching out, with Phil citing King Crimson and Pink Floyd as big influences. “We would start with covers, and then we would play long, long versions of classical music – it was the days of the solo! I wasn’t really into classical music, but live we did do a long version of Mussorgsky’s *Pictures From An Exhibition*,” he says. For Mick, “King Crimson blew me away at the Marquee – those long structured songs. Their style of music was way beyond anything we were doing. Raw Material was basically a university band. All our songs were 12 or 15-minute marathons.”

While they were in Germany, Vogue issued their album in a cover depicting five young musicians standing in a field on a summer’s day. Unfortunately, the quintet in question was not Raw Material, but another British outfit called Information,



Germany

RAW MATERIAL

SATURDAY at London's Temple seemed set to be an occasion best forgotten but in fact turned out to stage one of the most hopeful indications of a revival of inventiveness in "progressive" music.

War Horse and Peckham Rye stood in for Funkadelic and played with faultless precision but to have two such heavy bands on, one after the other, overwhelmed the enthusiasm of the audience, which is not over prove to giving ecstatic receptions to even the most favoured few.

Certainly War Horse was greeted with mild enthusiasm which grew as they played what must surely have been one of their tightest and most exciting sets. But by the end the repetitive solidness of their rock and their inability to provide sufficient variation to their music had reduced real enjoyment to dazzled appreciation. Perhaps they should think more in terms of the entertainment of ticket holders than displaying the talents of Mack Poole the drummer.

Raw Material however, revived things with their original interpretation of form. They presented tight, controlled music which simultaneously gave a feeling of spontaneous growth and an over all sense of direction so often found lacking among more inventive bands. But it is the economy with which Raw Material achieved their musical ends that set them apart from the other bands.

Perhaps the main criticism that should be made of the playing of Raw Material is that it might have become so intent upon finding new themes within a piece of music that it doesn't explore the possibilities of those already found. This makes their style seem "jerky" at times. It will be interesting to hear how they react to the confinement of a recording studio and I shall look forward to hearing their LP in July and that I suppose is the proof of their gig. — PETER HAMILTON.

who'd released a 45 on *Evolution* in June 1970⁵, which had also been licensed to *Vogue* (who evidently couldn't tell one hirsute band from another). At much the same time, the LP appeared on *Zel* in Spain (also with revised artwork) and on CBS in Italy. Hi There Hallelujah 45 also appeared in both countries, thought the band were unaware of any of these releases. Back in the UK, they faced the unenviable task of finding another record deal, and found themselves recording some demos with Dick Taylor, who was on a hiatus from playing with the *Pretty Things* and had recently produced albums for *Hawkwind*, *Cochise* and *Skin Alley*, as well as a 45 for the enigmatic *Dr. Z*. The introduction was apparently made through *Ed Welch*, and though *Dick* has no memory of *Raw Material*, the demos (alas, seemingly lost) were strong enough to score the band a publishing deal with *Chappell & Co.*

From there the disgraced DJ and A&R man *Barry Bethell*⁶ obtained the band a deal with *RCA*, who were trying to crack the prog market with the short-lived *Neon* imprint and, it appears, had some sort of tie-up with *Chappell* at the time.

"When we went into *RCA*, we said, 'we want *Dick* to produce the album, because he really knows what we want'," says *Paul*. "They agreed until about a week before we went into the studio, when they just laid this guy on us called *Mickey Clarke*." *Clarke* was a boss at *Chappell*, had recently produced the sole album by *Room*, and was also working with *Stonehouse* for *RCA*. "We did a couple of practices, which *Mickey* came along to in order to get an idea of our sound," remembers *Paul*. "He was very forthright and didn't really listen to anything we had to say. We tried everything to say, 'No – we want *Dick*

Taylor!' But *Dick* understood – this is what used to happen. They convinced us that *Mickey* was a good producer, but I got talking to him over a cup of coffee and asked what he'd produced before, and he said, 'Two Little Boys by *Rolf Harris*', which really made my heart sink." For *Colin*, "Mickey could never live *Rolf Harris* down. Every time you wanted to upset him, you'd just walk past whistling *Two Little Boys*."

The sessions for *Time Is* took place at *Command Studios* in *Piccadilly*, which *Paul* remembers as "a brilliant studio – the *Tremeloes* were in at the same time." *Raw Material* were presumably allowed far less studio time, though. "The album was done in 40 hours – that's nothing," says *Paul*. "There was a day of backing tracks, a day of overdubs, and then some production stuff. We weren't expecting 6 months, but we thought we'd get more than 40 hours! We were young and naïve. They said, 'Just go through your stuff, don't stop if you make mistakes, loosen up and then we'll get to the real thing!' We made mistakes, and of course they wouldn't let us do it again." For *Dave*, "Mickey *Clarke* did nothing, really – he just let us get on with it. We knew what to do, as we'd been playing the songs live, so it was more down to the engineer. We didn't get in any session players bar the hire of a string synth." *Paul* concludes that "The production wasn't anywhere near as good as *Dick Taylor* would have made it. In those days you didn't have much say, and I'd love to be able to get hold of the masters and change a few things – but it is what it is. Strangely enough, it's caught the imagination over the years, but when you consider what was around at the time, I don't think it's a seminal work." *Mick*, meanwhile reflects that "There were some great songs on it, but they were difficult to play onstage. *Sun God* was difficult even when we recorded it, and the sections had to be joined together on tape. Onstage, *Phil* had to leap from acoustic to bass in a couple of seconds. Those songs sounded like shit if we didn't get them absolutely spot-on – and fortunately we managed to most nights. I think we were better live than on record, to be honest."

6

With the album in the can, the decision was taken to invite *Cliff Homewood*, *Mick's* former bandmate in *Daniel*, to become *Raw Material's* sixth member. Born in 1950, he'd grown up in *Kent*. "I left school at 16 and went straight into playing in a variety of local rock bands," he says. "One was called *Marshmallow Tree*, one was called *Grunt* (formerly *Vivian Stanshall's Big Grunt*), and another was called *Welcome*." In terms of influences, he cites "Eric *Clapton*, *Kim Simmons*, *Peter Green*. All incredible musicians. It was particularly magical playing in *London* in those days, because the crowds were so enthusiastic." As with *Mick Fletcher*, *Noel Redding's* success provided an extra impetus: "When I was a kid I'd go to watch bands at the local places. *Noel* was a local guy who we knew before he joined *Jimi Hendrix*. When *Jimi* came out, it was so exciting – he was playing with the guy from down the street!" At the tail-end of the 60s, he continues, "Mick was playing in another band, so I approached him and asked if they were interested in forming



Mickey Clarke

⁵ *Lovely To See You / Face To The Sun* (*Evolution* E 2461 S, June 1970)

⁶ In 2009 he was convicted of sex offences involving children.

GLEN BALLROOM, LLANELLI
 Saturday, 30 December 7 pm-midnight
RAW MATERIAL
 + **QUICKSAND**
 Admission 60p

HUNTER'S CLUB
HORN HOTEL, BRAINTREE
 Sunday, October 17th
RAW MATERIAL
 + **WILLA**

RAW MATERIAL
CHAPPELL'S POP DIV.
 Tel. 01-629 7600, Ext. 14

RAW MATERIAL
READING UNIVERSITY SAT., APRIL 25th

CHELSEA COLLEGE (MANRESA ROAD off Kings Road, S.W.3)
 Wednesday, March 8th All profits to charity Adm. 40p
DUSTER BENNETT
 plus **BRETT MARVIN**
 Saturday, March 11th, 8 till late 50p adv., 60p on door
EAST OF EDEN
RAW MATERIAL + SILVER HEAD
 Wednesday, March 15th, 8 till late Adm. FREE
KEVIN AYERS + PAUL ROBERTS BAND
 Saturday, March 18th **STONE THE CROWS** Tickets 60p
 Tickets in advance s.a.e. to College (S.U. cards)

Friday, 8th October 50p
BIG NIGHT OUT
 Direct from **LONDON**
The Dynamic RAW 'MATERIAL'
 and **Mike Wheeler**
 Hat Night - Prize for your HAT...Top Records from Hit Parade

Saturday, 9th October 60p
MIKE WHEELER 'Raw Material'
 *** Plus Plus Plus
Dragon Beats' own Mind Bending
Light Show by "CROMA"

CHELSEA COLLEGE (Manresa Road, SW3 off King's Road)
 * Saturday, Feb. 26th, 8 till late. Adm. 25p adv., 30p on door
MAX MERRITT & THE METEORS
 Wednesday, March 1st, 8 till late. Adm. FREE
GALLAGHER & LYLE
THIRD EAR BAND
 Saturday, March 4th, 8 till late. 60p adv., 75p on door
 First appearance since re-forming
SOFT MACHINE
THE PEELERS
 Saturday, March 11th, 8 till late. 50p adv., 60p on door
EAST OF EDEN
RAW MATERIAL + SILVER HEAD
 Wednesday, March 15th, 8 till late. Adm. FREE
KEVIN AYERS + PAUL ROBERTS BAND
 Saturday, March 18th. **STONE THE CROWS** Tickets 60p
 Tickets in advance s.a.e. to College (S.U. cards)

THE GREYHOUND
175 FULHAM PALACE RD., W.6

THURS., FEB. 17	STUD
FRI., FEB. 18	RAW MATERIAL
SAT., FEB. 19	PAHANA
SUN., FEB. 20	JOHN MARTYN
MON., FEB. 21	KHAVAS JUTE
TUES., FEB. 22	GRAPHITE
WED., FEB. 23	MASTERS APPRENTICE

ADMISSION FREE

HOUNDS CLUB, GREEN MAN, PLASHET GROVE. WELCOME ALL HAIR.
RAW MATERIAL
GROMIT LIGHTS, SOUNDS CUSH. LICENSED - STUDENTS WELCOME.

on german tour
raw material
IN CONCERT

Waldbühne
 1 Berlin 19, Am Glockenturm (Telefon 304 49 65)
 Fahrverbindungen: S-Bahnhof Pichelsberg, Bus 92, 94
 U-Bahnhof Olympiastadion, von dort Sonderbusse

gerhardt production presents
Freitag, den 9. Juni '72, 20.00 Uhr

Rory Gallagher
 (Ex-Taste)

Warm Dust

Eintritt: 6,50 DM

Sonnabend, den 10. Juni '72, 20.00 Uhr

Raw Material
Karthago

Eintritt: 3,50 DM

Vorankündigung: II. Super-Pop-Festival, Waldbühne, am 1. und 2. Juli '72 (Bei schlechtem Wetter in der Deutschlandhalle)

FARX POTTERS BAR
 BLAN COURT YOUTH CENTRE, MUTTON LANE
 POTTERS BAR, HERTS.
 MUTTON BAR, POTTERS BAR. BUSSES: 290, 300, 301, 311, 390.
 290A, 300A, 301A, 311A, 390A
SATURDAY, MAY 2nd, 5 p.m.-MIDNIGHT
SEVEN HOURS OF NON-STOP ROCK AND GOOD VIBES
 Admission 8/-
 Club debut of the
HENRY LOWTHER BAND
MARSUPIAMI
 Ex-Colosseum
JAMES LITHERLAND
BROTHERHOOD
RAW MATERIAL
 FILMS / LIGHTS / SOUNDS
 STALL / MAGS / FOOD

THE GREYHOUND
175 FULHAM PALACE ROAD, W.6

Thurs., Dec. 7th	ALEX HARVEY BAND
Fri., Dec. 8th	BLITZKRIEG + GREENMANTLE
Sat., Dec. 9th	HOCUS POKE
Sun., Dec. 10th	BRINSLEY SCHWARZ
Mon., Dec. 11th	JONESY
Tues., Dec. 12th	RAW MATERIAL
Wed., Dec. 13th	SARAH GORDON + LITTLE

FREE ROCK
ADMISSION FREE

WARHORSE
BLONDE AT ELECTRIC MOTHERS EARTH
ST THOMAS HALL, BURGATE, CANTERBURY, KENT.
RAW MATERIAL
SOUNDS & LIGHTS
UNCLE MARYS LAST FREAKOUT
SAT 23 OCT 7 P.M. 50p

marquee

90 Wardour St., W.1 01-437 2375

Thurs., 27th May (7.30-11.0)
SOUNDS OF THE 70s
★ D.J.s Bob Harris/Alan Black
★ ARTHUR BROWN
★ BUBASTIS

Friday, 28th May (7.30-11.0)
★ ANNO DOMINI
★ FEATHER

Sat., 29th May (7.30-midnight)
DISCO/DANCE NIGHT
★ HALF BREED
★ D.J. KEIRAN TRAVERS

Sun., 30th May (5.00-11.00)
★ SANDHAMS VILLAGE
★ MAX MERRITT & THE METEORS
★ NIGGER ★ GOLLUM

Mon., 31st May (7.30-11.0)
★ **STUD**
★ FEATHER

Tues., 1st June (7.30-11.0)
★ **STRAY**
★ RAW MATERIAL

Wed., 2nd June (7.30-11.30)
NEW DISCO/DANCE NIGHT
Pearl Connor presents
★ THE MAGAZINE

Thurs., 3rd June (7.30-11.0)
★ DIABLE COYHILL AND THE MILLER BROS. PLUS THE COMPANY ROAD SHOW

THE TEMPLE

33-37 WARDOUR STREET W1

Christmas Eve
Friday, Dec. 24,
7.30-11.30 p.m. Members 40p
Guests welcome

T.2
CRIMSON
EARTH

Saturday, Dec. 25 - CLOSED
Monday, Dec. 27, All-nighter
9 p.m.-6 a.m. Members 50p
Guests welcome

RAW MATERIAL
BLUNDERPUSS
ANNAPURNA

D.J. JERRY FLOYD — CHRYSTALEUM LIGHTS

THE GREYHOUND

175 FULHAM PALACE RD., W.6

THURS., MAR. 23: **WARM DUST**
FRI., MAR. 24: **ZEUS**
SAT., MAR. 25: **SCARECROW**
SUN., MAR. 26: **MEDICINE HEAD**
MON., MAR. 27: **SWASTIKA**
TUES., MAR. 28: **MR. MOSES SCHOOLBAND**
WED., MAR. 29: **RAW MATERIAL**

ADMISSION FREE

THE GREYHOUND

175 FULHAM PALACE RD., W.6

THURS., DEC. 2: **SUTHERLAND BROTHERS**
FRI., DEC. 3: **RAW MATERIAL**
SAT., DEC. 4: **HCCUS POKE**
SUN., DEC. 5: **HELP YOURSELF**
MON., DEC. 6: **KHAVAS JUTE**
TUES., DEC. 7: **BARABBAS**
WED., DEC. 8: **MASTERS APPRENTICE**
THURS., DEC. 9: **WRITING ON THE WALL**

ADMISSION FREE

Make it. At Top Rank.

April 2nd "Jonesy" Current album 'No alternative'. Current single 'Ricochet'. Why not keep up with Jonesy?

April 9th "Warhorse". The Group includes Nick Simpler (Founder member of Deep Purple) and Ashley Holt who sang with Rick Wakeman of 'Yes'.

April 16th "Clear Blue Sky". "Funky Rock" with two lead guitarists. Music and style similar to "Wishbone Ash".

April 23rd Easter Bank Holiday. "Raw Material". Recently returned from a successful tour in Germany which included appearing at the 'ZOOM' Club Frankfurt + "Garrison Jones". Chriss Garfield founder member of "Farm" gives you a new exciting working class band producing 100% original material which is raw and hard but at times sensitive.

April 30th "Fruupp". Yet another return of the incubus demons.

Admission **33p**
7.30 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

Top Rank, Silver Street, Doncaster.
Tel: Doncaster 4166.



marquee

90 Wardour St., W.1 01-437 2375

Thurs., 2nd Dec (7.30-11.0)
★ MAX MERRITT & THE METEORS + Guests
Fri., 3rd Dec (7.30-11.0)
★ **BRINSLEY SCHWARZ**
★ SUTHERLAND BROTHERS

Sat., 4th Dec (7.30-midnight)
DISCO/DANCE NIGHT
★ **WOODFALL**
★ D.J. PHIL JAY

Sun., 6th Dec (7.30-11.0)
Nucleus Present
★ **JELLYBREAD**
★ **PUGMA-HO**
★ **JERRY FLOYD**
(20p reduction with this ad.)

Mon., 6th Dec (7.30-11.0)
★ **SKID ROW**
★ **BARABBAS**
★ **MANFRED MANN'S EARTHBAND**
★ **VINEGAR JOE**

Tues., 7th Dec (7.30-11.0)
RAY RUSSELL'S
★ **RUNNING MAN**
★ **RAW MATERIAL**
(Free admission with this ad.)

Thurs., 9th Dec (7.30-11.0)
★ **BEGGAR'S OPERA**

MONDAY cont.

KINGS HEAD, Stanford-le-Hope,
Essex, 8 p.m.

RAW MATERIAL

Lightshow and Disco 30p.

CHEZ CLUB

CHESTNUT TREE
LEA BRIDGE ROAD,
WALTHAMSTOW

RAW MATERIAL

LIGHTS AND BAR MEMBERS 6/6
NEXT FRIDAY ATOMIC ROOSTER

Super-POP-Festival

WALDBÜHNE BERLIN

722 *

Auslaßkarte **20.5.**

YOUTHFUL ENTERPRISE

RAW MATERIAL
plus
RICKY HESTER

STAPLEFORD RECREATION GROUND

FRIDAY 20th JULY

7.30 - 11.30 50p

RAW MATERIAL

IN CONCERT

THE MARQUEE

Wardour Street, W.1

WEDNESDAY, 8th DECEMBER, 1971

(free tickets available at the door)

marquee

90 Wardour St., W.1 01-437 2375

Thurs., 28th Oct. (7.30-11.0)
★ **ARMADA**
★ **BURNT OAK**
★ D.J.s JERRY FLOYD UMA LIGHTS

Fri., 29th Oct. (7.30-11.0)
An Evening of Blues with
★ **KING BISCUIT BOY**
★ **BREWERS DROOP**

Sat., 30th Oct. (7.30-12.0)
DISCO/DANCE NIGHT
D.J. Rocky Rivers
Guest Group Sunday
(cheaper admission before 8.30)
Sun., 31st Oct. (7.30-11.0)
Nucleus Present
★ **WRITING ON THE WALL**
★ **MR. MOSES SCHOOLBAND**
(20p reduction with this ad.)

Mon., 1st Nov. (7.30-11.0)
★ **SKID ROW**
★ **NICK PICKET**

Tues., 2nd Nov. (7.30-11.0)
★ **STUD**
★ **ANNO DOMINI**
R.C.A. presents

Wed., 3rd Nov. (7.30-11.0)
★ **GNIDROLOG**
★ **RAW MATERIAL**
(free admission, come early, strictly limited accommodation)

Thurs., 4th Nov. (7.30-11.0)
★ **MORGAN** + Guests

THE GREYHOUND

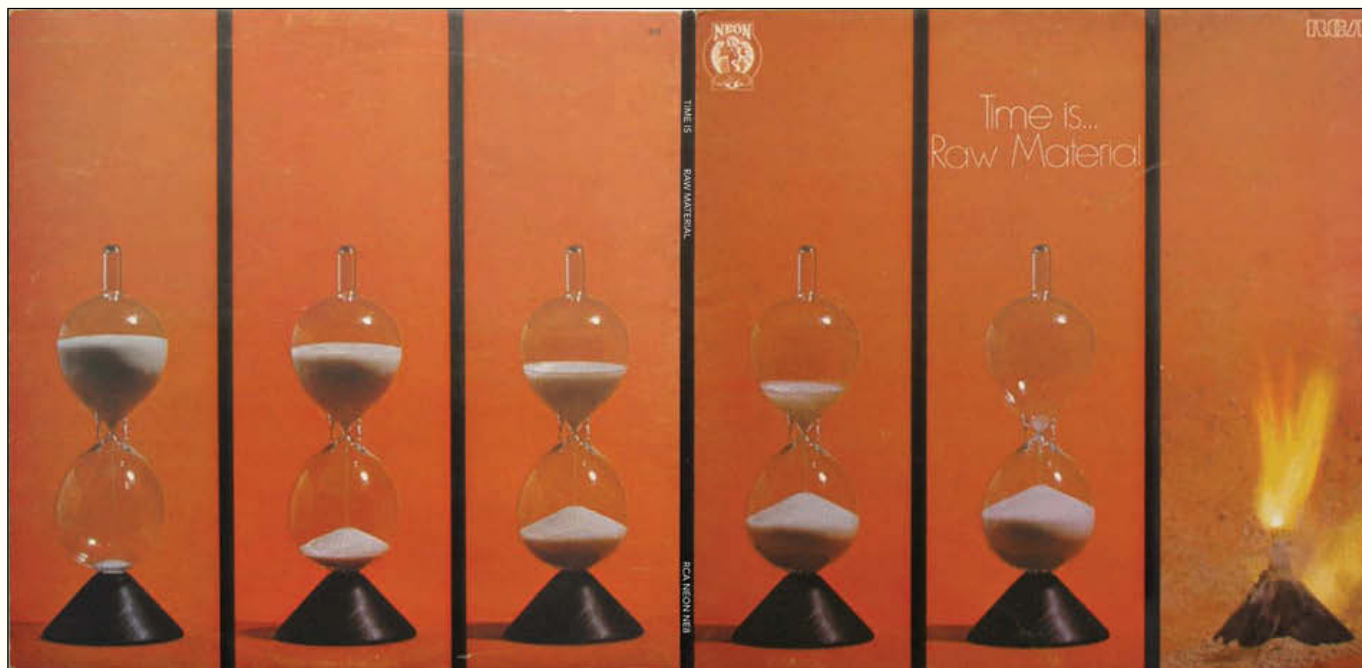
175 FULHAM PALACE RD., W.6

THURS., MAR. 23: **WARM DUST**
FRI., MAR. 24: **ZEUS**
SAT., MAR. 25: **SCARECROW**
SUN., MAR. 26: **MEDICINE HEAD**
MON., MAR. 27: **SWASTIKA**
TUES., MAR. 28: **MR. MOSES SCHOOLBAND**
WED., MAR. 29: **RAW MATERIAL**

ADMISSION FREE

RAW MATERIAL

READING UNIVERSITY SAT., APRIL 25th



Time is right for Raw Material

Raw Material is a six-piece band that has been evolving since Colin Catt and Phil Gunn started to play at the college where they were both studying six years ago. Colin and Phil are both Londoners, as are Dave Greene and Paul Young; Mike Fletcher, however, was born in Chatham, and played piano for Steam before joining Raw Material in early 1970. Clifford joined the group most recently, before which he was playing lead with Welcome.



Their first album
on RCA

Time is...

NE 8




RAW MATERIAL

RCA

Phil, Cliff, Mike, Dave, Paul and Colin

BIOGRAPHY

ARTIST: RAW MATERIAL

LABEL: RCA Neon

DATE: September, 1971.

RAW MATERIAL is a six-piece band that has been evolving since Colin Catt and Phil Gunn started to play together six years ago, when they were still both at Norwood Technical College. The first person added to the duo was their present drummer Paul Young; and Colin and Phil, with the episodic addition of Paul, have been the nucleus of the band ever since.

The three added a lead guitarist, and after leaving the college, had got going as a soul band. They were doing pretty well at this when the advent of Messrs. Clapton, Bruce and Baker turned the English group scene on its head, opening up new musical directions for many groups, including RAW MATERIAL. The originality of CREAM was the influence that first started Colin and Phil writing, since CREAM's message was that there was more to the group scene than just aping the latest developments from the States.

But for Raw Material, the Cream bandwagon soon became combined with R&B, and then with the blues; and finally strong jazz influences were added to their evolving style of music.

These various developments were usually tied in with the fairly frequent changes of drummer and guitarist: either a new member brought new music with him, or a changing approach on Phil and Colin's part made them look elsewhere for somebody new to fit the bill.

By this time they were well into their own material: which, Phil asserts could make life pretty difficult: "All the audiences want to hear on the club circuit is other people's songs: all the stuff in the charts, and off the current top albums".

They had been to Germany once already - in '69, at their R&B/jazz-blues stage; when they went back however, they took their own material with them. The first trip had been successful enough -- they had had no shortage of gigs, and had made enough money to make it worthwhile. But the success of the second trip was enormous: top of the bill everywhere they played, their dates announced on German radio, the full star treatment.

The end of this trip to Germany saw the biggest of the changes that was to bring about what RAW MATERIAL are now, in that during the tour, realisation dawned on Colin and Phil that their lead guitarist at the time was fitting less and less into the way the band was developing -- something that everyone else had told them, but which they hadn't previously been able to see themselves. So things finally came to a head in Aachen, where the band and the guitarist finally parted company, and Colin and Phil had to face the task of finding a replacement who believed, like them, that their kind of music was worth working for, and worth not compromising just for the sake of a fast buck.

It was also on this tour that the band had met another group called DANIEL, for whom both Mike Fletcher and Cliff Wood were playing. Both bands were in Switzerland at the time, and when DANIEL's tour was over, they split up; Colin and Phil immediately adopted Mike, who returned to England with them (although Cliff had to wait another year before joining them).

Soon after they were back, Dave Greene joined as lead guitarist; and Cliff finally came in as joint lead in July, 1971.

RAW MATERIAL's first record issued by RCA is a single on Neon called "Riding On A Pony", for release on October 1; the LP, "Time Is", is already recorded and will follow the single on October 15.

From the Press Office:
RCA Limited, Record Division,
RCA House,
50 Curzon St.,
London, W1
Phone: 01-499 3901

RCA

BIOGRAPHY

ARTIST: RAW MATERIAL
LABEL: RCA Neon
DATE: September, 1971.

COLIN CATT Born 2/10/48 in Dulwich, where he has lived all his life. Colin went to Alleyn's School, and from there onto Norwood Technical College. He has known Phil all his life: they were born in the same hospital and have always lived near each other. Colin's earliest musical experiences consisted of piano-lessons starting from when he was four. He was tired of left-hand exercises and 'five easy pieces for beginners', and gave it up when he was thirteen, only to take it up again - playing a different style of music - when he was sixteen. He has been married for a year and a half.

PHIL GUNN Born in S.E. London on October 12, 1948, where he has lived all his life. He was at Norwood Technical College studying for 'A' levels when he and Colin first started getting together with the idea of forming a group. He has played both bass and acoustic six-string guitar for about six years.

PAUL YOUNG Born on August 6, 1950 in London's East End Stepney. Has now been playing drums for six years. When asked if there's anything else he considers relevant in his life, he replies: "Yes, I used to be a skinhead. When I was at school I thought Colin and Phil were a couple of bloody hippies".

DAVE GREENE Born a Londoner in Mill Hill, where he lived for five years until his family moved to Worthing. Dave himself moved back to London five years ago "to seek his fame and fortune". Has played the guitar for 13½ years, and that takes him back to Duane Eddy! Left school when he was 18, and started working "in offices", as an articled accountant clerk. He kept up his accountant's training for about two years, during which time he was also playing semi-professionally with a group in Worthing. Then he tired both of learning to be an accountant, and of the group scene as it then was and gave up both -- although he still continued working as an accounts clerk.

MIKE FLETCHER 23-years-old, was born in Chatham and lived there until coming to London 2 years ago. His first contact with music from the playing end was ritual piano lessons when young. His interest in this was not great, and he didn't keep them up for long; (long enough to have played in the school band, though). Has now been playing sax for over three years, and flute for about a year. Whilst still in Chatham, was a member of three groups, altogether; the first was Riot Squad, who were fully professional, and who enjoyed Mike's services for about a year. Then came a group called the Earl Guthridge Explosion, soon followed by Steam - which Mike founded. Finally Mike joined Daniel, went to Switzerland with them, and the rest, as they say, is history.

CLIFF WOOD Born 15/1/50 near Folkestone, but lived variously in Devon, Cornwall and Sussex. Has played the guitar for about five years - from leaving school. Played in a semi-pro group with ex-schoolmates for about 2 years, then came Daniel, and Switzerland. After Daniel split up, Cliff was inactive groupwise for about a year, until joining RAW MATERIAL.

end

From the Press Office
RCA Limited Record Division
RCA House
50 Curzon St.
London, W1
Phone 01-499 3901

RCA

INFORMATION

NEWS



SINGLE

LABEL: NEON

No: NE 1002

RELEASED: December 10, 1971.

ARTIST: RAW MATERIAL

TITLE: "RIDE ON PONY" c/w "RELIGION"

PRODUCER: C & M PRODUCTIONS

PUBLISHER: BLUE MOUNTAIN MUSIC

THE RAW MATERIAL OF A HIT

RAW MATERIAL, RCA's six-strong band of Londoners whose first Neon LP "Time Is" appeared in the shops just over a month ago, have now recorded their first single, "Ride On Pony", set for release on December 10th.

"Ride On Pony" was discovered by the band on an album by Free, and the song came as an answer to their prayers. The band had been searching for a single for some time with little success, and in "Ride On Pony" they knew they had found exactly what they wanted.

So they took the song to Command Studios, up-tempo'd it, added some punching brass, and built the entire treatment around the heavy guitar riff that runs throughout the track. The six of them hadn't much thought of their music in terms of "single material" before, but when they heard the playback, even their worst apprehensions fled, and they realised they were onto a likely winner.

The flipside, "Religion", was penned by four of the group, Colin Catt, Phil Gunn, Mick Fletcher and Paul Young, who between them are responsible for most of Raw Material's raw material; through them, and with a little help from Free, and from the band's guitarists Dave Greene and Cliff Wood, Raw Material could well have a success on their hands.

end

Contacts: Rodney Burbeck
Alan Sizer
(Press)

Tommy Loftus
Lyndon Holloway
Barry Holt
(Radio & TV)

RCA Limited, Record Division
Public Affairs
RCA House,
50 Curzon St.
London W1
Phone: 01-499 3901

RCA

the band that became Daniel. We kept in touch after he joined Raw Material, and in July 1971 he contacted me to ask me to join them as a second lead guitarist. I had a very different style to Dave Greene – I was more of a rock player, more ‘out there’, and they said they wanted to develop their sound, add a bit of crunch to it. Dave was subtler, but I could make the guitar scream.” According to Phil, Cliff, was “a bit more commercial-sounding, but still basically a progressive-type player. Dave was a little staid in comparison, but it was nothing personal.” He also adds that Cliff was “a magnet for females.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Cliff’s addition did not sit well with Dave. “They mysteriously told me they wanted an extra guitar player, and I smelt a rat. All of a sudden they came up with this guitarist we hadn’t needed when we made the album – and we didn’t have enough money from our few gigs to split with another person.” With tension simmering in the ranks, *Time Is* was released in November, its title inspired by an Einstein quote to the effect that ‘time is the only true raw material’. Its gatefold sleeve was designed by Keith MacMillan (aka Keef), who’d come up with many memorable designs for the Vertigo label. The triptych of exploding hourglass photos that he produced for Raw Material isn’t regarded as his finest hour, though. “The concept was great, but it just looks like a Roman candle going off,” sighs Paul. “We thought it was going to be a slow-motion explosion of glass.” Colin concurs, lamenting that “the explosion at the end could have been a lot better,” while Mick says “I think they put sugar in the glass and some guy wired something up to it, but it didn’t go right.” The photos inside the gatefold were taken on Windmill Hill, next to Hampstead Heath in North London, and though Cliff is credited on the sleeve (as Cliff Harewood), he didn’t play a note on it.

The sole review that seems to have appeared was in *Melody Maker* of December 4th. In it Roy Hollingsworth commented that the band had ‘copped off a Van der Graaf riff (figured on Ice Queen on side one) and actually attempted a Van der Graaf feel... fine until it resembles a weak Van der Graaf. Sorry, but it does.” Incensed, Phil and Colin fired off a riposte, which was printed in the December 18th edition. ‘We wrote Ice Queen in October of last year, although we were



Back row: Phil, Colin & Mick, middle - Paul, bottom - Dave

unable to put it down on record for some months afterwards,’ they fumed. ‘There was no attempt to lift anyone’s work during the preparation of *Time Is*.’ Still aggrieved by the suggestion, Mick states “We’d never even heard of Van der Graaf Generator at that point.” (Incidentally, the VDGG song in question is Killer, from 1970’s *H to He, Who Am the Only One*.)



December also saw the release of the band’s fourth and final single. With just six long album tracks at their disposal, RCA prevailed on the band to cover Free’s Ride On Pony (from their 1970 *Highway* LP). The accompanying press release claimed ‘the song came as an answer to their prayers,’ as the band had been ‘searching for a single for some time with little success’, but Paul begs to differ. “RCA wanted us to cover a Free number as a single. We said we didn’t want to do covers, but they said, ‘We’re not asking you, we’re telling you,’ so we decided to keep them sweet and do it.” The disc was issued on December 10th, and found Cliff playing alongside Dave, though RCA again misnamed him, referring to him as ‘Cliff Wood’ in their press release. The following day *Melody Maker* equivocated ‘This is very typical of an English sound, sort of there and not there. I don’t know, really – it had its moments.’ *Disc* briefly commented on its ‘hard, solid sound’, but the *NME* was more enthusiastic, stating ‘the group belies their name here, because you certainly couldn’t describe this as raw material. The sextet have upped the tempo, added a searing brass section and built the treatment around the fervent solo vocal and pungent guitar riff. The outcome is effective and different from what we’ve heard before.’ Nonetheless, as Paul continues, ‘It got good reviews, but RCA didn’t take it further, which makes me wonder why they wanted us to do it in the first place.’ For Colin, “RCA were just playing at it – they weren’t pushing it. They also wanted us to play the US, but they wouldn’t underwrite it, so we couldn’t.”

Nonetheless, the label did make a promotional video to promote the 45. As *Billboard* of December 4th explained, it was part of ‘an experimental program developed for RCA by Video Supplement, a newly established video publishing organization based in London, for such acts as Dando Shaft, Raw Material and Shape Of The Rain. The programs, designated ‘Video Browser’, and designed as a special in-store promotion for acts, will be installed in an estimated 500 British music shops early next year.’ Paul recalls “We and Indian Summer (also on RCA Neon) did this video thing to promote the album. Chappell & Co had a shop / office in New Bond Street and they played it all day long in the windows to promote our albums.” Cliff also recalls a third RCA band, Gnidrolog, being filmed (the recording taking place in the ITN studios), but efforts to locate the tapes have come to nothing.



By the close of the year it was clear that *Time Is* was not taking off, and Dave decided to leave. “I got the feeling that they weren’t happy with me,” he says. “I’d given it two years, and thought that if they were trying to push me, then I’d

RAW MATERIAL



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rather jump." With Cliff having replaced him as sole lead guitarist, the band developed a more pronounced hard rock sound. "The material we did after Dave left was still what you would call 'progressive rock', and we still did stuff from *Time Is* when we played live – but we made it a little heavier, a little more rocky," says Cliff. "There were more Jeff Beck-style guitar solos – I was good at making the right sounds with the vibrato." The band didn't freak out on stage, however: "We were pretty good at keeping straight – we weren't really into drugs. The guys may have smoked a bit, but we didn't take acid. We didn't believe in going on stage when you couldn't perform."

The band's trip to Germany in the summer of 1972 was to prove their most productive and enjoyable. In July they played at the two-day Würzburg Pop festival, headlined by Joe Cocker, Jeff Beck and King Crimson, with many GIs in the audience. "There were at least 20,000 people there," says Cliff. "You could see people forever. It was a little daunting, but we

were used to playing together. There was a lot of chemistry." Following their performance, Raw Material stayed for a time on a commune near Mannheim in south-west Germany, giving them the chance to prepare new material. "There was a massive studio with farmland all around, and we were rehearsing outdoors," recalls Phil, "though when we toured we often stayed in the clubs themselves – sleeping on the floors." Cliff confirms their ascetic circumstances: "When we were touring, we didn't really have enough money for food, so we'd have one meal a day. We were Buddhist in our outlook – we lived very much in the moment."

Following their rural sojourn, the German BASF label expressed an interest in signing the band. "There was definitely going to be another album," says Cliff. "They gave us an advance, but never asked us to go on and record." Adds Colin, "We didn't record anything, they just paid us – which was absolutely wonderful." In September the band played a residency at Munich's PN Club, where Santana's rhythm section jammed with them one evening. On another, Cliff says, "Marty Feldman came up to us and said, 'I can play drums!' We said, 'OK', and he played one song – perhaps a blues jam – somersaulted over the drums and disappeared!" The band were in Munich at the same time as the Black September attack at the Olympic Games, and returned to the UK shortly afterwards.

RAW MATERIAL

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Their first action upon getting home was to advertise for new management, having long since tired of the ineffective efforts of Bob Holmes and his partner. "In a lot of ways we suffered from not-too-strong a management," sighs Phil. "They could have been stronger, and we could have been promoted better." They signed to Stateside Management, run by one John Tanner and based in Nuneaton, but without a record deal and faced with a rapidly changing music scene, times were tough as 1972 drew to a close. "I decided to leave the band," says Mick, "and then they got in the singer from Warm Dust, who we knew from touring in Germany."

The singer in question, the late Les Walker, was with the band for almost a year, during which they played gigs in the UK, France and Germany (including a residency at Frankfurt's Zoom club and gigs with Nazareth and Kraftwerk), as well as establishing a useful connection with the BBC's Maida Vale studios, which allowed them to rehearse for free in return for trainee engineers being allowed to experiment with equipment as they played. According to Cliff, "After *Time Is* we wrote so much incredible music – unbelievable stuff. We had come up with a whole new repertoire, but it was never properly recorded." However, a tape from July 1973 does survive, on which the band perform five originals (All You Want To Do Is Boogie, Back Home, Barracuda, Big Leg Woman and It's Alright) as well as a cover of the Beatles' Blackbird. Although the levels on the tape fluctuate (as the engineers experimented, one assumes) there is certainly enough substance to suggest that they were capable of another album. Paul agrees, stating "We had enough stuff for another album that would have been better than the two we'd already done."

It was not to be however, with childhood friends Phil and Colin deciding to jump ship in October 1973. "It just sort of petered out," says Colin. "There was talk of a tour of Holland, but there was no guarantee of any return, and you can't go out and work for 4 pence and find out you've spent 300 quid. People wanted us to do tours, but wouldn't underwrite them, and the road crew needed to be paid regardless." For Phil, "We were getting older, but still running around in the van doing gigs, and going up and down motorways becomes wearing. We'd left reality behind for a few years, and one day there was a realisation. Colin and I were talking about electrical engineering, and it wasn't long before we started to corner the market as hairy electricians! Medicine or engineering was what I really wanted to do, so after five years of music, it was back to engineering. It's only recently that I've picked up a guitar again." Cliff adds that

"Colin was married and he at least needed a sensible income – and a lot of time we didn't have it. There were no parents or record companies backing us, and we just wanted to play to earn money."

Colin and Phil would build a series of successful companies over the next 40 years, while Mick spent time in the US before settling in New Zealand, where he continues to perform and develop his expertise in blues harmonica. "When RCA thought they would do a re-release at one stage, they told the other guys that I had died in a motorcycle accident a few years previously – so you can imagine the stunned silence when I turned up in the UK and got back in touch many years later!" Cliff settled in Canada, where he has found success as a lawyer, new-age musician and web designer. Paul joined Blanch Carter & the Lounge Lizards, then became a London cabbie before returning to music in recent years. Dave Greene joined Shoot, fronted by ex-Yardbird Jim McCarty, recording the *On The Frontier* album for EMI in 1973. He then moved away from the music industry, and now spends most of the year travelling around the UK and Europe in a caravan. Ed Welch, meanwhile, went on to a successful career in music, writing theme music for TV shows including the popular quiz show *Blockbusters*. John Brockhurst could not be traced. Asked to reflect on the ongoing interest in Raw Material, and the high prices that their records fetch, the members have a varied response. "I can't imagine why anyone would be interested in our old band," says Mick, while Dave concedes that "Given the time we had to record the albums, I think they're pretty good." Colin is the most enthusiastic: "I loved every minute of it," he says. "Apart from when we were sitting in the middle of Germany in a van that had just ran out of diesel, that is." 🍷

With thanks to Chris Noble, John Coates, Mark Wilson and Jean Jobses.



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