

## 'Presents From Eddie' - The Ed Rambeau Songbook

It was early 1964 when as an impressionable 16 year old in Liverpool I hurried back from the local record shop clutching my copy of 'Dawn' (US Philips 200-146) by the Four Seasons. An album filled with the new sound of the group that had just left Vee-Jay and come up with something different. Great melodies and arrangements that stood up to the Merseybeat sound. Familiar songs with new arrangements and new songs by Crewe and Gaudio.....and on the start of side 2 a great song by a little known duo...'Only Yesterday' - an uptempo song about a lost love. "Seems like only yesterday she held me....Seems like only yesterday she cared" sings Frankie Valli. I loved it and it helped lift the album to its special level. The song was great and the arrangement superb. It helped propel the "Dawn" album to #6 – the highest US chart placing for any 4 Seasons' album.



In the CD era, the Rhino label featured "Only Yesterday" on two compilations of 4 Seasons' rarities, "Rarities – Volume 1" and "Off Seasons: Criminally Ignored Sides From Frankie Valli & The 4 Seasons". In the UK back in 1964, we didn't know the song's composers, Ed Rambeau and Bud Rehak but what a difference 40 years makes. Now we know all their songs, some written for Eddie to perform and others for a wide range of artists. So here we celebrate the songs that this duo wrote in....."Presents from Eddie" a 'Special Edition' of 'Seasons' Connections.

Although Ed had no formal music training he had his first release at 16. Ed told us... *"As a matter of fact my first record "Skin Divin" was released on graduation day from Hazleton High School. Up until that time I performed at record hops and various local TV shows with my pianist/manager Bud Rehak. That was how I got discovered...by a DJ named Jim Ward who was impressed enough to set up an audition with Frank Slay (A&R man) at Swan Records in Philadelphia. The rest is history. Frank Slay heard me audition with a medley of about 30 songs which Bud Rehak and I put together. When I finished, his first comment to co-Swan Record owners Bernie Binnick and Tony Mammarella was, "He's great! But what do we do with a white Johnny Mathis?" That evening they told me to return and put me on a pre-recorded track called "Toni" which ended up being the B-side of "Skin Divin", my first Swan release. I wrote several songs while at Swan Records which Frank Slay heard and had me record. One of them was called: "My Four Leaf Clover Love". Then when Frank left Swan and re-merged with Bob Crewe he asked both Bud Rehak and myself to come to New York and work in his publishing company which we both did for a number of years. Bob's brother, Dan Crewe, called Bob's attention to my writing talent and soon Bob signed both Bud and I as staff songwriters for Genius, Inc (Bob Crewe Productions)."*

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Only recently this very first released composition by Ed turned up on I-Tunes for \$0.99. As Mike Edwards told us.....***"I spent years searching for this elusive song and then it pops up in pristine clean condition when least expected. "I love the sax and the overall Neil Sedaka "Little Devil" type sound."*** It appears that the English company Rollercoaster Records have acquired a large part of the Swan catalogue and are releasing tracks through the internet only.

Other notable releases of Eddie's compositions whilst at Swan include **'Last Night Was My Last Night With You' (Swan 4112)** which was a nice 'cha-cha' laced ballad, and the 'B' side to 'Summertime Guy', a Chuck Barris composition. These early opportunities for Eddie are something he recalls philosophically....***"I never seemed to push for anything. Opportunity just seemed to always fall in my lap (and sometimes out of it). I had several territorial hits with SWAN RECORDS well before Concrete and Clay gave me a big hit. One was a duet with Marcy Jo (of RONNIE fame) called "A Lover's Medley" which turned out to be the number 1 record in Baltimore for several weeks. It got play elsewhere, of course, but never really took off like it did in Baltimore. My biggest disappointment at Swan was a song I recorded called "Summertime Guy" written by Chuck Barris of the Gong Show fame. Chuck also wrote Freddy Cannon's "Palisades Park", but it wasn't until "Summertime Guy" was released that ABC discovered that one of their vice-presidents (Chuck Barris) was using ABC to promote his song writing talents, which ABC considered a conflict of interest. Hence, while I was in Chicago ready to go on the air for an ABC American Bandstand-like TV show, I was called into the control room and told that due to Chuck Barris' affiliation with ABC my record would be pulled from all ABC radio and TV stations. "***



The Eddie Rameau Songbook is a compilation of stereo remixes of the best compositions Eddie penned during the 1960s with Bud Rehak(left) and Bob Crewe (right)

Contact Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons UK Historical Group for track history/sleeve notes



So many of Eddie's early songs were written with his manager Bud Rehak. Ed told us...***"Bud Rehak would be number one on my list of best co-writers because we thought alike and had an easy-going collaborative relationship."***

So let's look at the rest of our selection on...**'Presents From Eddie'**. Another song whilst at Swan in 1962 that the pair wrote and saw released was **'The Push and Kick' (Swan 4121)** by Mark Valentino which bears a close resemblance to 'Twist and Shout'. Ed told us that, ***"Frank Slay came to both Bud and myself and said they needed a song for Mark Valentino so we all sat down and wrote Push and Kick."***

This great dancer reached #27 in the charts in December 1962 and was also released the next year by Dee Dee Sharp on her "All The Hits, Volume 2" LP (Cameo 1032). Ed would write another track for Dee Dee in 1964 ...but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

When Ed and Bud moved to New York in 1963 to sign for Genius Inc, it would be the start of their most prolific and successful period of songwriting. Access to a variety of talented artist and new labels would see Eddie and Bud's catchy songs bubbling into the charts.

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Working with Bob Crewe was a whole new ball game. Crewe was pushing the careers of his young and talented entourage. Tracey Dey and Diane Renay led the girl sound whilst Mathew Reid and Eddie himself led the boys.

Eddie and Bud didn't create many waves in 1963 though with notably Shirley Mathews recording of '**Big Town Boy**' (**Atlantic 2210**) being one of the best productions that year by Bob Crewe. Maybe this was because Bob Gaudio had a big influence on the production. Shirley was a superb talent on what is one of the duo's best songs. Although only a minor hit in the US, "Big Town Boy" peaked at #4 in Shirley's homeland, Canada, in January 1964 and Ed still receives royalty checks from north of the border. The song is featured on the Ace CD, "Where The Girls Are 4" and on the Rhino (hat) boxed set, "One Kiss Led To Another – Girl Group Sounds Lost And Found". They also wrote the song 'Stop the Clock' (Amy 921) for her in 1964 with its punchy and original arrangement.

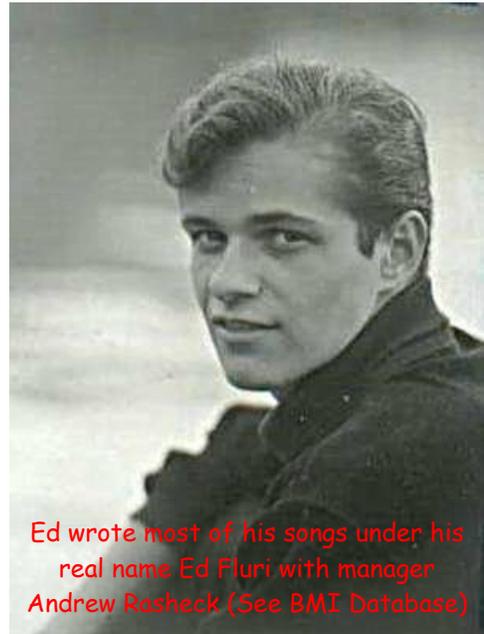
Less notable that year was the almost novelty song "Get Back In De Bed" (Mala 471) by Evan Mitchell. Mike Miller was able to fill in some background on this artist. "Evan Mitchell was otherwise known as Kevin McQuinn (real name Eddie Quinn), and was formerly of the Mello Kings, the groundbreaking doo-wop group from the mid to late 1950's with the big hit, 'Tonight, Tonight'.

Bob Crewe had a habit of changing artists names ...on a whim.... Eddie suffered the same indignity when he was unceremoniously given the name of 'Eddie Hazelton' for the release of 'Good Morning, Starshine' in 1967. So poor guy Eddie Quinn had to change his name too many times. According to Mike, "his family was real upset with Crewe that he went ahead on his own and renamed him "Kevin McQuinn". They must have been thrilled with Evan Mitchell!!". This song didn't help and was not one of Ed and Bud's best!

By contrast to 1963, 1964 would be the year it all happened for Eddie and Bud. Diane Renay would chart at # 6, in early 1964 with the duo's '**Navy Blue**' (**20<sup>th</sup> Century 456**) and at # 29 with '**Kiss Me Sailor**' (**20<sup>th</sup> Century 477**). Ed told us .."**Bob Crewe needed a 4th song for Diane Renay's recording session and came to us (Bud Rehak and myself) about an hour before the session with the song title "Navy Blue" in his head. The three of us sat down in this little writing room with Bud at the piano and Navy Blue was born in about 15 minutes. After Navy Blue, Diane needed a follow-up, so while driving back to NY from Hazleton, both Bud and I came up with "Kiss Me, Sailor" which didn't do quite as well as we expected. When Diane needed an album for "Navy Blue" (20<sup>th</sup> Century 3133), Bob asked all the staff writers to come up with tunes for her and many of them were either written by Bud and myself or Bud, myself and Bob.**"

Other notable songs that appeared on that LP included '**A Present From Eddie**', and '**Soft-Spoken Guy**'. All were good songs and were complemented during that year by the excellent, '**(He Makes Me) Feel So Pretty**' (**Amy 910**) by Shirley Mathews, Hal Miller's Northern Soul flavored, '**On My Own Two Feet**' (**Amy 909**) and a great girl-group stomper, '**He Never Came Back**' (**Philips 40170**) by Hedy Sontag. Plenty of attitude and a honkin' sax on this recording! We asked Ed, "**How come the sax?**" "**That was Charlie (Calelo)**", he replied. Diane Renay returned again later in the year with 'Billy Blue Eyes' and 'Waitin For Joey'.

These songs are today accepted as classics of their time and Ace UK's soul subsidiary, Kent, released a fourth CD in their "Birth Of Soul" series in May 2007 – a very classy set with Hal Miller's 'On My Own Two Feet' included.



Ed wrote most of his songs under his real name Ed Fluri with manager Andrew Rasheck (See BMI Database)

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Eddie's songs had started to reach the UK where hit-paraders, Susan Maughan covered "**Kiss Me Sailor**" (UK Philips 1336) and Kenny Lynch followed with, what is now a firm Northern Soul favorite, '**On My Own Two Feet**' (UK HMV 1367). The lesser known, Miar Davies, weighed-in with a cover of "Navy Blue" (UK Decca 11894).

As if this wasn't enough to demonstrate their songs had the ideal pop sound for the day they also wrote with Bob Crewe a class Northern Soul rocker, '**Deep Dark Secret**' (Cameo 335), (according to Eddie *..in a few minutes*). Although not a hit, "Deep Dark Secret" has been seen on e-bay with bids of around \$300. It was also included in the new Dee Dee Sharp CD as part of Abkco's reissues of material from the legendary Cameo-Parkway catalog.

The Shepherd Sisters charted at # 18 with "Alone" (Lance 125 and later revived by the 4 Seasons) in 1957. Bob Crewe returned them to the charts in 1963 with "Don't Mention My Name" (Atlantic 2176) and they also recorded Ed's song, '**I've Got A Secret**' (20<sup>th</sup> Century 468).

Tracey Dey wasn't to lose out either as she recorded Ed and Bud's '**Hangin' On To My Baby**' (Amy 908) and '**Here Comes The Boy**' (Amy 894) but unfortunately not with the success Diane Renay found. 'Hangin' On To My Baby' is, nevertheless, a terrific girl-group record and along with "I Won't Tell" (Amy 912) helped create a small but top- quality catalog for Ms. Dey.



1965 would be a different story as the placing of songs on local labels was something Bob Crewe outgrew as he started his own label for his aspiring group of writers and artists, Dyno Voice, DynoVox and New Voice were *...the labels that had to happen*...and would run from 1965 to 68 giving Bob Crewe and his talented team a superb run of hits and superb misses.

By this time the writers were rolling. Ed says...: *"I think like all artists we just keep knocking them out in the hopes that one of them (hopefully more than one) will be the one that takes us to the top. The more prolific one is, the better the chance of having something become successful. This is true in any form of the arts...the movie business as well."*

Ed felt that perhaps Bob Crewe couldn't give his male vocalists the same success as he was finding with his girls. Ed recalls...: *"It was his own brother, Dan, who often said that because Bob wanted to be a singer himself and never quite made it, he subconsciously sabotaged any single male singer he produced. "... Ed isn't so sure that is true but what happened in 1965 was to bring Ed Rameau 'the artist' to the fore..." Bob Crewe was as eccentric and flamboyant as he was talented. He had a knack for knowing what the public wanted and knew not only how to write and record it, but how to promote it as well. He had a charisma that everyone in the business seemed to be drawn to and was admired and respected by all. He did, however, have a tendency to overproduce a few of my records. It was for that reason that Dan Crewe suggested that Charlie Calello (Bob's primary arranger) produce and arrange a session for me with a song Bob found in London entitled: "Concrete and Clay" which ended up being my biggest hit to date."*

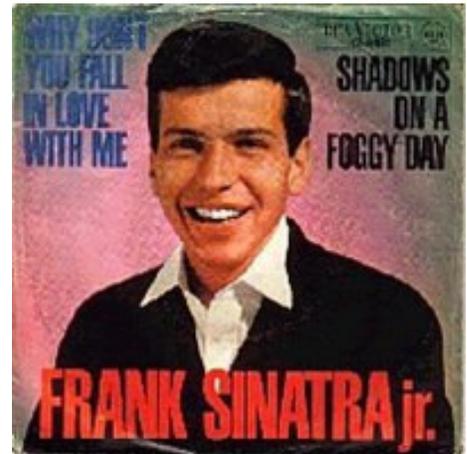
So by now these prolific writers were churning out the songs for both Eddie and their stable mates. The 'B' side of Ed's first hit was a superb song written by the duo with a Four Seasons styled backing by producer Charles Calello. 'Don't Believe Him' (DynoVoice 204), could and should have had more prominence and promotion but with the follow-up Bob Crewe himself joined the two writers to pen, 'My

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Name Is Mud' (DynoVoice 207). The album and singles that followed would include some more compositions with Bud such as 'I Just Need Your Love', and by the start of 1966 songs like 'Yesterdays Newspapers', 'The Train' and 'If I Were You' where still trying to challenge the British invasion without much success. As a body of work these songs are all excellent and many are co-written and produced by Bob Crewe and arranged by Charles Calello with their usual expertise. Over to the UK again and Engelbert Humperdink included the lightly humorous, 'If I Were You' on his "Last Waltz" album in 1967. This album peaked at # 10 in the US with a 60 week chart run. In the UK it went to # 3 on the album charts with a 33 week run.

Other artists were still being served up with good songs too. Diane Renay recorded 'Words' (New Voice 800), one of their very best compositions with Bob Crewe as well as 'Troublemaker' (MGM 13335), which was also recorded by Ronnie Wallis (Decca 31864).

(She was backed on this by Jean Thomas, Ellie Greenwich and Mikie Harris). Another ballad, 'So Much Love In The World' was recorded by George Michel in 1965 (New Voice 802). But no more hits were forthcoming in this period. The music had changed with the power of the Beatles awesome song writing ability and the Holland Dozier Holland powerhouse work at Motown. And then there was Bob Dylan challenging the structure of pop songs as defined in the early part of the decade. None of Crewe's artists apart from the Four Seasons could survive this onslaught. As Rolling Stone writer Mikal Gilmore says...***"Combined, The Beatles and Dylan had a seismic effect on popular music and youth culture. They changed the soundscape and rock'n'roll in thorough and irrevocable ways that still carry tremendous influence.....Consequently, the music started losing its "innocence". Troubled times lay ahead as "Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts club Band" heralded a new direction and the days of the catchy pop songs of NYC were doomed as social and political comment became the stuff of pop."***



Writers like Bud and Eddie had to adapt and their songs still managed to get recorded at this time . In .....Ed wrote a song called "Shadows on a Foggy Day" with Gary Knight which was recorded by Frank Sinatra Jr on RCA 479181 (Backed by Jean Thomas, probably with Ellie Greenwich and Mikie Harris) the song rolls along in a laid back style capturing a nostalgic lyric and melody that could have been a hit.....And in 1968 Ed ended up as lyric writer in an unusual way.

***"Make It Last' (Parrot3020) my song recorded by Los Bravos, has an interesting story connected with it. I was in Cannes, France at the music festival with Dan Crewe and Dan phoned me at the hotel room to meet him at another hotel. When I got there, there was a band who had just written a melody that they needed an English lyric to. They asked me if I would do it. I'd never written a lyric by myself before but I agreed and took a tape of the melody back to my hotel room and within an hour I came up with the lyric. I was scared to work without a collaborator cause I was very young but when I sang the lyric to the band they loved it. So "Make It Last" was the very first lyric I wrote entirely by myself."***



Both songs are worthy of their writers and inclusion in this songbook celebration. Quite a journey for 2 song writers, and you have to admire the breadth and depth of styles which give so much appeal to their songs. There can't be that many writers whose songs were recorded by such a diverse range of artists as Dee Dee Sharp, Engelbert Humperdink, Diane Renay, the 4 Seasons, Frank Sinatra Jr. and Los Bravos! Ed and Bud's legacy leaves us with a set of happy go lucky songs that never cease to entertain and raise the spirits. Maybe some of his 'lost tracks' in the BMI database will surface sometime. We live in hope!

(More sample records can be seen at [http://zrosemarie.50webs.com/Ed\\_web/songs.html](http://zrosemarie.50webs.com/Ed_web/songs.html))