

# Words <sup>and</sup> Music

IND

March \$1.

**10 GREAT NEW SONGS  
MUSIC INSIDE!**

The 5th Dimension  
**NEVER MY LOVE**

Joan Baez  
**THE NIGHT THEY DROVE  
OLD DIXIE DOWN**

Cher  
**GYPSYS, TRAMPS AND THIEVES**

Delaney & Bonnie  
**ONLY YOU KNOW AND I KNOW**

Van Morrison  
**WILD NIGHT**

Sly And The  
Family Stone  
**FAMILY AFFAIR**

Peter Nero  
**SUMMER OF '42**

Three Dog Night  
**OLD-FASHIONED LOVE SONG**

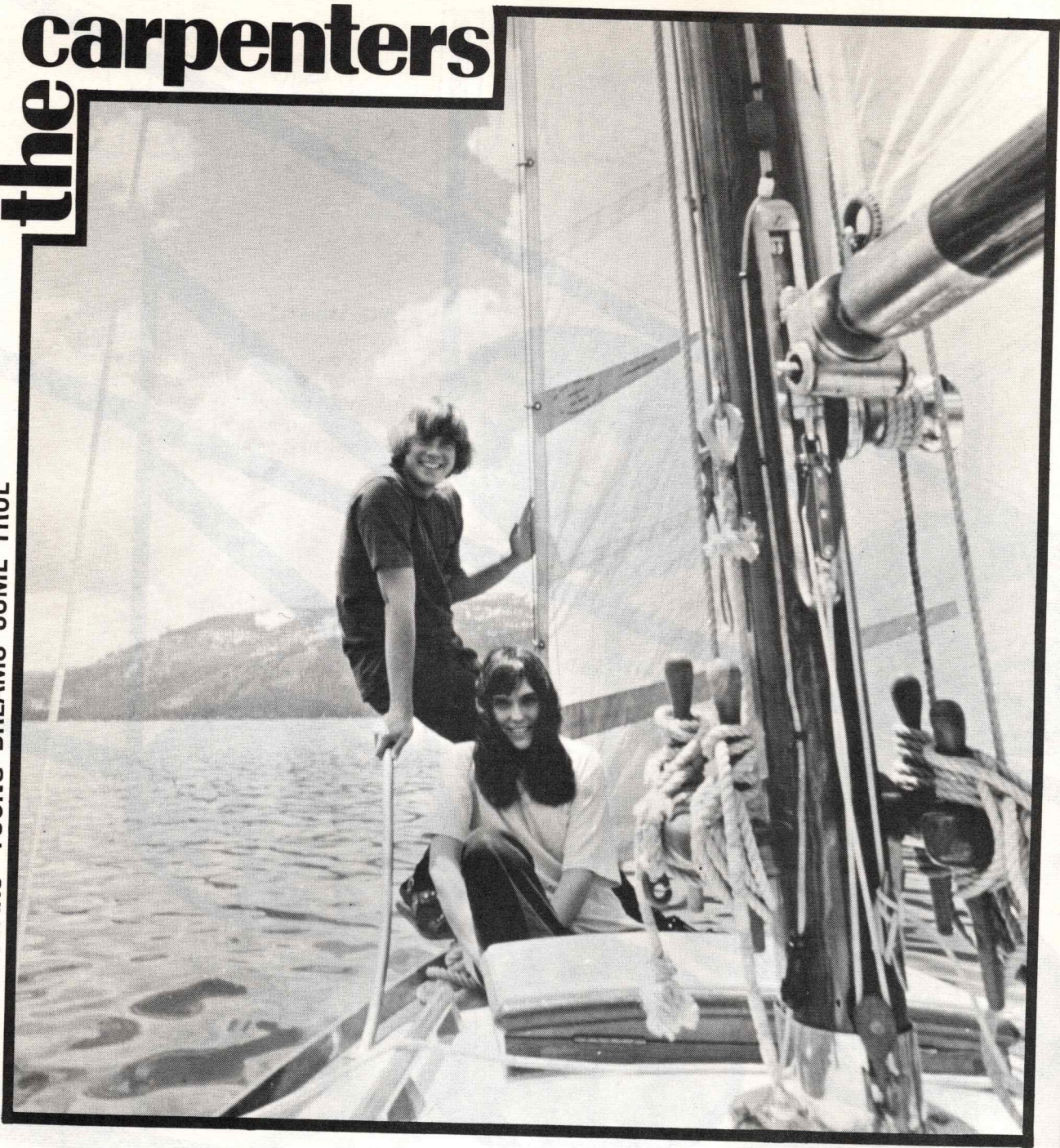
Cat Stevens  
**PEACE TRAIN**

*How  
The Carpenters'  
"SUPERSTAR"  
Dream Came True*



# the carpenters

TWO SUPERSTARS' YOUNG DREAMS COME TRUE



□ Karen Carpenter singing a groupie's lament to the rock star who was just passing through? Sweet, wholesome Karen Carpenter charged with emotion plaintively vocalizing "Don't you remember you told me you loved me baby, said you'd be coming back again baby . . . I can't wait to be with you again"? . . . The choice of material was offbeat for the duo that has had top sellers with more romanticized views of love than the tough matter-of-fact world of groupie and rock musician; but it worked. The Carpenters' recording of

Leon Russell and Bonnie Bramlett's "Superstar" with Karen on lead vocal became one of their biggest selling records. . . . How did she do such a convincing job with the song? . . . "I've seen enough groupies hanging around," she explains, "to sense their loneliness, even though they usually don't show it. I can't really understand them, but I just tried to feel empathy and I guess that's what came across in the song." . . . Empathy is only one of the things Karen has going for her now that it seems The Carpenters



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can do no wrong. Talent, an easy sense of humor and boundless energy are just a few of the traits she shares with her older brother and musical partner, Richard.

Sister and brother acts are a rarity today in show business and families who show the closeness that this pair (and their parents) display are a rarity anywhere. Sibling rivalry? They've never heard of it!

The generation gap is virtually nonexistent in their home, too. Richard and Karen still live with their parents and neither has any desire to move out.

Rich comments, "Our parents are crazy about us being in show business, so there's no problem about it. We're on the road so much, too, it would be silly to move out.

"Anyway, we bought this beautiful, new split level home in Downey and it's got everything we want. With five bedrooms there's plenty of room for all of us including our dogs—Lady, who's a German Shepherd, and a white Husky named Mush."

Karen smiling brightly adds, "We all designed the house together. You could say it was a family project. An interior decorator helped us get it all together. We've got this elegant living room with crystal chandeliers, one wall is all glass and just about everything is upholstered in velvet. It's all done in cool colors—white, blue and green. It's a gas.

"The den is pretty great, too. It's Spanish style with a pool table and bar—even though neither Rich nor I drinks very much. We all decided on warm colors—black, red and ocelot print."

Another fun place for the entire family is the big swimming pool area which gets a lot of use when Karen and Richard are at home.

Karen enjoys cooking in what little spare time she has and their beautiful modern kitchen gives her the opportunity to come up with

gourmet delights as well as simple dishes.

The Carpenters' kitchen boasts the latest in gadgetry including an automatic trashmaster.

Just about every room in the house is equipped with stereo equipment, ample testimony to the entire family's love of music.

"I couldn't even begin to count how many records we have," Rich says, "but they're all over the house. Everywhere you look we've got records. We all like to listen to music and we do a lot of it when we're home."

"We don't just stick to one kind of music, either," Karen explains. "We like all kinds—the Beatles are our all time favorite group, but we dig Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, The Bee Gees, Bread . . ."

Rich interjects, "Don't forget the Mothers of Invention, Burt Bacharach and classics, too."

When they were designing their home, one of Richard's main concerns was the garage. "We needed a big garage," he says, "to accommodate my cars. I hope to race myself someday, but meanwhile one of my high school buddies races for me. Right now about all I can do is watch when I get some time. But, I've got an eight-cylinder Barracuda, a red Maserati that can gun up to 160 miles an hour and cruises like a dream at 130; and a Mark III for all-around driving. The other car I've got is a 1969 Road Runner. It's my good luck piece because everything started happening for us right after I got the car. I'd never part with that one," he adds.

For believers in ESP it will probably not come as a surprise that the Carpenters are in tune with each other—and not just musically.

"I believe in ESP," Karen confides, "because some awfully strange things have happened. A lot of times Richard will be thinking of something and in that split second I'll say what he's thinking. It happens all the time. Really weird. Or we'll just be walking along and we'll start singing the same tune in the same key, at the same time."

Astrology, however, holds no in-

terest for either of them. "I'm not saying that there isn't something to it," Karen explains, "but we've just never gotten into astrology."

Karen was born March 2, 1950 (Pisces) and Richard's birthdate is October 15th (Libra) three years earlier. Their hometown is New Haven, Conn. where they both attended Nathan Hale Elementary School and Rich went to Wilbur Cross High.

He began his serious interest in music at 13 with piano lessons. Within a few years, Rich had mastered all his teacher could show him and he went on to studies at the Yale Conservatory of Music while he was still in high school.

Although he was only 16, he began playing jazz piano in local clubs. He looked much older then because he wore glasses and a different hair style and passed for 21. Nobody questioned his age because of his musical skill.

As he was immersed in music and wanted to make a career of it, the Carpenter family moved from New Haven to Downey, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, because of the abundant music scene on the West Coast.

Karen was 16 when music came into her life, but it entered through the back door. "I didn't want to take gym and do all those weird things," she laughs, "so Richard said I should try out for the band. I could take band instead of phys-ed. Well, I couldn't play any instrument, but since Richard knew the band master he talked him into letting me play glockenspiel. Of course all the other kids in the band were really interested in music and since I was around them so much, pretty soon I started digging drums.

"My folks got me a drum set and gave me lessons and that was the start of it."

While Karen moved from glockenspiel to drums, Richard took extra piano courses at USC, then entered Cal State after graduating from Downey High.

It wasn't long before Richard began putting together his own group, and when he listened to the drum-

ming talent around, he realized there wasn't anybody better qualified for the job than his little sister, who had also begun singing as well.

"It was rough, though, because Karen was so young we couldn't play any clubs," Richard says.

The Carpenter Trio (a talented friend, Wes Jacobs, played tuba and bass) entered the Hollywood Bowl Battle of the Bands and won nine trophies including the sweepstakes.

Although RCA signed them, the two instrumentals they recorded were never released. "I kept telling them Karen could sing, but they weren't interested. Hard rock was the big thing then," Richard recalls shaking his head.

RCA released them from their contract and Wes went into classical music. Richard got a new group called Spectrum together and they began playing places like The Troubador, Disneyland and Whiskey-A-Go-Go. At the Whiskey, which usually presents the hardest of hard rock, the audience actually stopped dancing to listen. For their trouble, Spectrum was fired and subsequently disbanded.

"Then Karen and I started going it ourselves," Richard asserts. "We really always kind of thought something was going to happen, we never let ourselves get too down. We started experimenting with overdubbing and pretty soon we developed the sound we have today."

Nothing much happened for quite awhile, it was rough going bucking the hard rock trend. Finally producer Jack Daugherty heard the Carpenters and thought enough of them to call in Herb Alpert. Alpert flipped over their sound, signed them to an immediate contract on his A&M Records and the Carpenters were on their way.

Although their first album *Offering* wasn't really a chart-buster, Alpert had faith in them and released a single from the LP, Lennon-McCartney's "Ticket To Ride." The record was a modest success as a single, and the Carpenters were no longer unknown.

But it was their second album with its title song "Close To You"

that really launched them. Success followed success at that point. "We've Only Just Begun," "For All We Know" and of course "Superstar" have all become million sellers. Their third album, *Carpenters*, hit the million-selling mark within weeks of its release.

"One of our biggest thrills was winning the Grammy Awards last year," Richard smiles, "we really didn't expect to win."

Karen adds, "Of course, we were hoping. But just being nominated was fantastic."

The Carpenters, with their soft, pleasant yet musically intricate middle-of-the-road pop sound are at home with all kinds of audiences, from the Las Vegas gambling crowd to the college campus.

It was at one such campus, Merrimac College outside St. Louis, that one of their stunt-rituals originated. The Carpenters, who love horseplay and are now augmented by sidemen Gary Sims on guitar, Bob Messenger on electric bass, sax and flute, Danny Woodams on bass and Doug Strawn on clarinet and marimba, all get into a standard football huddle for a pre-show pep talk.

"It was Doug's idea," Richard explains, "he's the craziest one of us. At Merrimac we fell into this huddle because the setting was appropriate. Since then, it's become a ritual. We do it everywhere, dressing rooms, gyms, lobbies. It's gotten so we don't believe we can really give a super performance without it."

The augmented duo has toured the United States, Europe and Australia, had their own TV show (last summer's *Make Your Own Kind Of Music*) and done the soundtrack for several films (the Academy Award winning "For All We Know" from *Lovers And Other Strangers* and the title song from *Bless The Beasts And Children*).

They've accomplished feats they couldn't have even dreamed of just a short time ago. How has it changed them?

"I don't think we've changed very much," Karen says. "We're

still about the same as we've always been. It's hard for us to say 'no' to anybody, but we have been learning that we have to."

Ask Karen what she most admires about Richard and she replies, "It's his talent. Richard has an inborn talent for anything pertaining to music. He's damn good, altogether."

Ask Richard About Karen and he replies, (are you surprised?), "It's her fantastic talent. She has a great ear, a good head on her shoulders and a sense of humor, too."

This young, attractive brother and sister realize that marriage for each of them is probably in the offing sometime in the future, but not anytime soon as far as either of them is concerned.

"We're too busy to do much dating," Richard says "but we each know what we want in a mate when the time comes. For myself I'd like a super good looking girl with a natural kind of beauty; I hate lots of make-up. She's got to have a great figure—very slim. I usually go for girls with long hair, and I'm kind of partial to blonds."

However, he observes, "Looks just go so far. I want a girl with a definite personality, talkative, sharp, friendly, one who has a great sense of humor. A girl who enjoys life. She'll have to love music and cars and not be jealous of my career. Also, she'll have to be a fantastic cook. Not that I wouldn't be taking her out to dinner, but man, after I eat 31 crummy, rushed coffee shop meals on a concert tour, I want to be able to come home and relax over a leisurely, delicious, home-cooked dinner."

Karen muses on her future husband. "I'd like him to be good-looking in a rugged sort of way, and taller than me. Self-assurance is essential; I have a lot of respect for people who know what they're doing and are good at it. I'd want a man who was good in his field. I guess he'd really have to be in some facet of the music industry. Otherwise he could never understand and share the importance of music in my life."

—JAN GAUTSCHY