GRASS ROOTS

Title: Live At Fillmore '67

Label: GFRR

Release Date: 2000

Medium: CD

Availability: Rare

Venue: Fillmore West, San Francisco, CA

Recording Date: October, 1967

Lineup: Warren Entner - Guitar, keyboards, vocals
Rob Grill - Vocals, bass
Creed Bratton - Guitar, vocals
Ricky Coonce - Drums

Set List: Where Were You When I Needed You
I Got My Mojo Working
Beatin' Around The Bush
Let's Live For Today
This Precious Time
You Don't Love Me Anymore
Things I Should Have Said
Night Time Is The Right Time
Feelings
Look Out Girl
Instrumental
You Got To Have A Love
Let's Live For Today

The story behind the Grass Roots is one of the more interesting in rock history. This band, as much as any other, showcases the power of a name over individual group members. There were three separate incarnations of the band before they hit it big, then they went through a dizzying amount of musicians through the various parts of their career, with 48 musicians passing through their ranks. The one unifying thing through all of this was the name, the Grass Roots.

During their heyday, the band competed other light pop/rock groups like the Association, Gary Puckett and the Union Gap, The Turtles, The Monkees, and the Buckinghams. Like them, they released a slew of chart singles and the occasional hit album. While they shared many common elements with these artists, the Grass Roots were more nuanced, with an ability to combine British Beat music, soul, r&b, folk, and rock their own unique hybrid. They were also one of the first rock bands to incorporate the use of horns into their songs, predating groups like Chicago, Blood Sweat and Tears, and the Ides Of March by a year. Without question, they wound being one of the most consistent hitmakers of the late sixties and early seventies.

In total, the Grass Roots placed 21 singles on the U.S. pop singles chart, with fourteen of them cracking the top forty. One of them, "Midnight Confessions", may be one of the best songs of the sixties, no matter who the artist. They also placed 7 albums on the American pop albums chart, with two of them certified gold. They sold 20 million records during their career and were constant fixtures on network television, appearing on over 50 nationally distributed shows. The band is still active to this day.

The start of the Grass Roots was tied to singer/songwriter/producers P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri. Sloan was born Philip Gary Schlein on September 18, 1945 in NYC. His family moved to West Hollywood, CA when Philip was 12 years old. His father was a pharmacist. He changed the family name to Sloan after experiencing racial bias towards him after arriving in Los Angeles. Philip got his first guitar when he was 13 years old and released a single, "All I Want Is Loving" backed by "Little Girl In The Cabin" in 1959.

The single was released on LA based r&b label, Aladdin Records. A couple of years later, Sloan landed a songwriting job at Screen Gems, which was the largest music publisher on the West Coast.

Meanwhile, Barri was born Steven Barry Lipkin on February 23, 1942 in NYC. Like Sloan, his family moved to Los Angeles when Steven was a young boy. Once there, he became interested in music and was writing songs by his mid teens. He joined Screen Gems a couple of years before Sloan and had already gotten the attention of Lou Adler before his future partner arrived. His first successful song was "Suzie Jones, which was recorded by the Nortones in 1959. During the early sixties, Barri was a member of a trio, the Storytellers, with Carol and Cheryl Connors. They released a single, "When Two People (Are In Love)" on Screen Gems recording subsidiary, Dimension Records. Adler produced the record.

While the single went nowhere, Adler came up with the idea of teaming Sloan and Barri in a new recording act. They recorded a series of unsuccessful singles under the names Philip and Stephan, The Rally-Packs, The Wildcats, The Street Cleaners, Themes Inc., and The Lifeguards in the early sixties. By this point, Sloan was playing lead guitar as well as singing and Barri was a percussionist. In 1963, they played on records by Jan and Dean, and got further exposure. Their first songwriting breakthrough came one year later, when they wrote the theme music for the movie, *T.A.M.I. Show* (1964), which was performed by Jan and Dean.

The duo played and sang on Jan and Dean's three albums in 1964 and their first live album in 1965. It was Sloan who sang the memorable high falsetto on "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena" (#3-1964). Sloan and Barri also wrote their first Billboard top one hundred song, "Kick That Little Foot Sally Ann" (#61-1964) for Round Robin around the same time. That led to other appearances and songwriting assignments on surf records by Bruce & Terry, including "Summer Means Fun" (#72-1964), and their own recordings as The Fantastic Baggys.

When Adler left Screen Gems to form Dunhill Records, he took the two musicians with him. They continued to write hit songs for a variety of other artists, including "Eve Of Destruction" (#1-1965) for Barry McQuire, "Let Me Be" (#29-1965) for The Turtles, " Must To Avoid" (#8-1965) for Herman's Hermits, "Take Me For What I'm Worth" (#76-1965 for the Searchers, "Secret Agent Man" (#3-1966) for Johnny Rivers, and "You Baby": (#20-1966) for the Turtles. Sloan was also a member of the famed studio recording group, the Wrecking Crew, playing guitar. The two also continued to perform as a duo, releasing Dunhill's first album under the moniker, Rincon Surfside Band. Sloan also ventured into folk rock, releasing two independent albums and a chart single, "Sins Of A Family" (#87-1965).

In 1965, the two wrote a new song, "Where Were You When I Needed You", for Herman's Hermits but they decided not to use it. They believed so much in the song that they pushed Adler agreed to let them record their own version with the Wrecking Crew. The demo generated some buzz and it became clear that it had hit potential. However, the duo were much too valuable to Dunhill as songwriters and backup musicians to promote it so Adler insisted that they find a real band that could perform concerts and appear on television and release it under a new name.

They discovered The Bedouins, a San Francisco based group that had won a battle of the bands in San Mateo, California. The group included singer/guitarist Willie Fulton, guitarist/vocalist Denny Ellis, bassist/vocalist David Stenson, and drummer Joel Larson. Sloan and Barri named them The Grass Roots and they quickly landed a series of gigs, includng a residency at the Los Angeles club, The Trip. They also began to back other Dunhill artists during their live shows. For the next eighteen months, The Grass Roots continued to play live while Sloan and Barri released songs under the same moniker. Only Fuller and

Larson typically played on the studio tracks, with Sloan and Barri handling vocals and various session musicians providing backup.

The first single was a cover of Bob Dylan's "Ballad Of A Thin Man" (1965), which was released in late 1965. It did not crack the pop singles top one hundred. They followed with a re-recorded version of "Where Were You When I Needed You" (#28-1966), which featured Fuller on lead vocals. It was released in June, 1966 and climbed into the U.S. pop singles top forty, peaking at number 28. Unfortunately, by that point, the Grass Roots were gone. All the band members except Larson had left in early 1966, frustrated that Dunhill would not let them record as a band.

Fuller would wind up in Tower Of Power, when he appeared on four albums. Larson stayed in LA and would play with Gene Clark, The Merry-Go-Round, The Turtles, and Lee Michaels over the next few years. He would wind up back in The Grass Roots in 1971. Ellis and Stenson resurfaced in The Serpent Power, who released a self titled album in 1967.

In October, 1966, Dunhill released the debut Grass Roots album, *Where Were You When I Needed You* (1966). As was the case with the two singles, only Fuller and Larson played on the album. Fuller sang lead on three of the twelve tracks, with Sloan on lead vocals on the rest. The record included seven Sloan/Barri original compositions along with five covers. It did not chart but did yield a second U.S. pop chart single, "Only When You're Lonely" (#96-1966).

Once again with no band members, Sloan and Barri closed out the year with a new single, "Tip Of My Tongue" (1966), but it did not chart. They also began a new search for another band that would become the Grass Roots. They settled on a Wisconsin based group called The Robbs, which consisted of David Donaldson, Robert Donaldson, George Donaldson, and Craig Krampf. When Sloan and Barri approached them with the offer, they were the house band on the television show, *Where The Action Is*. Believing that they had a better chance at success by remaining on their own, they turned Sloan and Barri down. While they would release a number of singles and one album with limited success.

The two producers continued their search and wound up finally finding the answer with a LA based band called The 13th Floor (not to be confused with the 13th Floor Elevators). The band included Creed Bratton, Rick Coonce, Warren Entner, and Kenny Fukomoto. Bratton was born William Charles Schneider on February 8, 1943 in Los Angeles, CA. He lost his father when he was killed during WWII while working on an airplane. At the time, William was only two years old. His mother later remarried and he was raised in a rural setting by his mother and his stepfather, Sam Ertmoed.

His parents and grandparents all had musical backgrounds. His grandparents were in a semi professional country and western band called The Happy Timers. His grandmother played drums while his grandfather played guitar. His mother played mandolin and his birth father played so William was exposed to music at an early age. He first learned to play the trumpet, which he stuck with for many years. He bought his first electric guitar when he was 13 years old and was playing professionally while in high school and college, where he was a drama major.

After leaving college, William was traveling through Europe, Africa, and the Middle East with a trio that he named The Young Californians. He changed his name to Creed Bratton after discovering a written note with the name circled that he left behind after a drunken night with a couple he had just met. While in Israel at a folk festival, Bratton met fellow American Warren Entner (born July 7, 1944 in Boston, MA). Entner grew up in Boston and was part of the late fifties rock and roll scene. By the early sixties, he was

playing guitar and singing. After meeting Bratton at the music festival, he asked him to get in contact with him once he returned to the States. He did and the foundation of The 13th Floor was set.

While watching a battle of the bands in Hollywood, Bratton and Entner met drummer Rick Coonce. Coonce was born Erik Michael Coonce on August 1, 1946 in Los Angeles, CA. He father played the fiddle, his mother sang, and his older brother played the guitar so Rick grew up with music all around him. He learned to play the accordion at a young age then switched to drums when he was 12 years old. By the time he turned 16, he was good enough to give drum lessons at a local music store. He started to play in bands in high school.

One of Coonce's early bands was The Beethovens. He was the only non Mexican-American in the band, which also included guitarist Freddie Trujillo, bassist John Sepulvada, guitarist Ruben Arvizo, and saxophonist Mike Vasquez. They covered Beatles songs, Mexican folk music, and Ritchie Valens. In 1966, the Beethovens were at the Hollywood battle of the bands, where they took second place. Ironically, future Grass Root Rob Grill was playing with another group at the same battle. Bratton and Entner were so impressed with Coonce that they offered him the drum seat in their new band and he accepted on the spot.

The 13th Floor filled out their lineup with bassist Kenny Fukomoto, who also sang. With the support of music store owner Herb Wall, they played whenever and wherever they could and recorded a demo tape. The tape found its way to Dunhill Records, where it caught the attention of Sloan and Barri. Just as they were about to sign a record contract, Fukomoto was drafted. Needing a new bass player, they checked out postings at the local musician union hall and discovered Rob Grill.

Grill was born Robert Frank Grill on November 30, 1943 in Los Angeles. He grew up in Hollywood, where he attended Hollywood High School, then got a job at American Recording Studios, which would play a huge role in the formation of Steppenwolf and Three Dog Night. He was a gifted singer and bassist, joining various bands, including the one that performed in the battle of the bands. In fact, his band beat The Beethovens but were disqualified because one of the members had played professionally.

After auditioning, Sloan and Barri hired Grill and the new Grass Roots lineup was set. Like the previous two versions, they recorded their own version of "Where Were You When I Needed You". They followed with "Let's Live For Today" on May 13, 1967. The song was originally written by David Shapiro and Mogo for the Rokes, an English beat group that included Shapiro and was based in Italy. It was orginally recorded in Italian under the name "Piangi Con Me". Plans were made to record the song in English to release in England but Dick James Music did not like the lyrics. They had one of the staff songwriters, Michael Julian, rewrite the lyrics. When it was released by the Rokes, it did not chart.

However, the Rokes English version of the song made it's way to Dunhill. Sloan and Barri thought it was perfect for the Grass Roots and they had the new version of the band record it. As in the past, Sloan played lead guitar and a number of session players were used in the recording process. Grill sang lead with Entner singing backup. The song was quickly adopted by American servicemen in Vietnam. It entered the U.S. pop singles top forty in early June and stayed there for nine weeks, eventually reaching number 8. Just like that, the new version of the Grass Roots were stars.

They followed with "Things I Should Have Said" (#23-1967) in late summer. It also scored, reaching the U.S. top forty in early September and peaking at number 23. Both songs were featured on their new studio album, *Let's Live For Today* (#75-1967), which was released in July, 1967. It made the American pop albums chart, peaking at number 75. Having learned from their previous experience, Dunhill allowed the

band members to write four songs and had them play on the album. While Grill remained the primary lead singer, Entner and Bratton also had feature lead spots. The album also generated a third pop chart single, "Wake Up, Wake Up" (#68-1967), which was released in late 1967.

During the summer of 1967, the Grass Roots played at the Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival held on June 10 and Jule 11. The festival took place at the Sidney B. Cuhing Memorial Amphitheatre high on the south face of Mount Tamalpais in Marin County, CA. 36,000 people attended the festival, which included performances by The Doors, Canned Heat, The Seeds, Country Joe and the Fish, Captain Beefheart, The Byrds, Tim Buckley, The Sparrows, the 5th Dimension, Jefferson Airplane, Dionne Warwick, Every Mother's Son, The Merry-Go-Round, The Mojo Men, Kaleidoscope, The Chocolate Watchband, The Charlatans, Mount Rushmore, Rodger Collins, Jim Kweskin Jug Band, Spanky and Our Gang, Blackburn & Snow, The Steve Miller Blues Band, Sons of Champlin, The Mystery Trend, Penny Nichols, the New Salvation Army Band, and The Loading Zone. P.F. Sloan also performed as a solo artist.

By the end of 1967, Sloan had had a falling out with Dunhill and Barri. He left the label and would soon leave music by the early seventies. He resurfaced in the new millennium but never achieved the success he had at Dunhill. He passed away from pancreatic cancer on November 15, 2015 at his home in LA.

With his partner gone, Barri took over as the Grass Roots producer. His first solo outing as the band's producer was on their next studio album, Feelings (1968), which was released in February, 1968. It was mostly a band effort, with Sloan only writing two songs and Barri penning one. The album had a psychedelic feel that did not catch on with audiences. It did not chart and yield no chart singles. However, things would quickly change.

In June, 1968, the Grass Roots released their signature song, "Midnight Confessions". The original recording of the song was a demo by the Evergreen Blues Band, who's manager, Lou Josie, wrote the song. The demo caught the attention of Barri, who wanted the Grass Roots to pursue a more Motown like sound on their next record. He hired Jimmie Haskell to work out an horn arrangement and recorded the song with the Wrecking Crew. Grill and Entner sang lead vocals. "Midnight Confessions" (#5-1968) was the group's first single to have a horn section. It took a little while to crack the U.S. pop singles top forty (September, 1968) but when it did, it took off.

The single stayed within the top forty for 12 weeks and climbed all the way to number 5. By December, it had generated American sales of over one million copies and was certified gold. The song was also a hit in Canada, where it peaked at number 4 and Australia, where it reached number 18. It remains one of the signature songs of the late sixties. While it was on the charts, the group appeared at the San Francisco Pop Festival. They followed that up with appearances at the Los Angeles Pop Festival and the Miami Pop Festival in December, 1968.

That same month, they recorded their next single, "Bella Linda" (#28-1968). It was another U.S. pop singles hit, cracking the top forty in January, 1969 and reaching number 28 during a two week top forty stay. Both songs were featured on the band's new studio album, *Golden Grass* (#25-1968), which was released in November, 1968. The album was part compilation, part new release and remained on the American pop albums chart for 43 weeks, peaking at number 25. It was certified gold in 1970.

The Grass Roots had another blockbuster year in 1969. While their career had reached unimaginable heights, Bratton was growing restless. He was frustrated that Dunhill would still supplement their singles with studio musicians and the label's continued reluctance to record material written by the band. Their

first single in 1969, "Melody For You" (1969), did not chart but they scored again with "Lovin' Things" (#49-1969) in February, 1969. "The River Is Wide" (#31-1969) cracked the top forty in May, 1969.

Meanwhile, their new studio album, *Lovin' Things* (#73-1969), had hit the stores in March, 1969. It included the two chart singles but was notable for moving the band into a more soulful direction. Only two songs were written by band members, which frustrated Bratton even more. Once again, the Wrecking Crew recorded most of the music. The band played a disastrous show at the Fillmore West in April in support. Bratton was drunk during the show and was fired afterwards. He was replaced by Dennis Provisor (born November 9, 1943 in Los Angeles).

Bratton would struggle over the next several years, working day jobs while landing occasional acting assignments or music gigs. His acting career began to get some traction in the late seventies but he did not break through as an actor until he landed a recurring role playing himself on the hit television series, The Office. He appeared on the show from 2005 through 2013 and was one of the show's most popular characters. Since then, he has resurrected his music career and has released several solo albums.

Provisor was playing in a group called Blue Rose when members of the Grass Roots and their management team went to see the band play live. At the time, they wanted to check out guitarist Terry Furlong but were captivated by Provisor, who was a powerful singer and talented keyboardist. In the end, Provisor joined the band on a full time basis and Furlong was hired as a touring guitarist.

Provisor's first album with the group was *Leaving It All Behind* (#36-1969), which was released in November, 1969. In advance of the album, the group released a hit single, "I'd Wait A Million Years (#15-1969) in June, 1969. It cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in August and remained in the top forty for ten week, reaching number 15. . A second song from the album, "Heaven Knows" (#24-1969) followed when the album was released. It also was a top forty U.S. pop singles hit, peaking at number 24. A third single, "Walking Through The Country" (#44-1970), just missed the top forty in early 1970.

The band continued to play high profile shows during 1969. They appeared at the Newport Pop Festival on June 22, then played the Vancouver Pop Festival in August. They were also constant fixtures on television, including an appearance on *Ed Sullivan*. In September, 1970, the band released their second part new, part old record, *More Golden G*rass (#152-1970). It included three new chart singles, "Baby Hold On" (#35-1970), "Come And Say It" (#61-1970), and "Temptation Eyes" (#15-1971). The first cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in June and peaked at number 35 during a three week top forty stay.

The last cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty in February, 1971 and reached number 15 during an eleven week top forty chart stay. In June, 1971, the band hit the top forty once again with "Sooner Or Later" (#9-1971). It was their last American top ten hit single, reaching number 9 during a nine week top forty chart stay. Once again, Dunhill included as the one new track on yet another compilation, *Their 16 Greatest Hits* (#58-1971), which was released in September, 1971. It cracked the American pop albums chart in October, 1971 and stayed on the chart for twenty weeks. It was their second gold album.

In late 1971/early 1972, the band went through some significant lineup changes. The first member to leave was Furlong, who was replaced by Brian Naughton in the touring band. Coonce then left in early 1972. He was initially replaced by Joe Pollard. Provisor quickly followed, taking Pollard with him. He was replaced by Virgil Weber and Coonce briefly rejoined on drums until they could find a permanent replacement. That turned out to be their original drummer, Joel Larson. Naughton then left and was

eventually replaced by Reed Kailing after an interim period when they tried unsuccessfully tried a new guitarist only known as Terry.

The new lineup of Grill, Entner, Kailing, Weber, and Larson hit the ground running with three more hit singles. The first, "Two Divided By Love" (#16-1971), was released in October, 1971. It quickly cracked the U.S. pop singles top forty and rose to number 16 during a nine week top forty chart stay. The second, "Glory Bound" (#34-192), cracked the top forty in March, 1972. It peaked at number 34 during a three week top forty chart stay. The last, "The Runaway" (#39-1972), cracked the top forty in late July, 1972 and reached number 39 during a two week top forty chart stay.

All three singles were featured on their new studio album, *Move Along* (#86-1972), which was released during the summer of 1972. It reached number 86 on the American pop albums chart during a fourteen week chart stay. It was later revealed that Provisor played on parts of the album but was not credited. When the lat single, "Anyway The Winds Blows", failed to crack the U.S. pop singles top one hundred chart in late 1972, the band's incredible run of 307 successive weeks on a billboard chart ended.

The band's next studio album, *Alotta Mileage* (1973), was their first album in many years to not make the American pop albums chart. It also only yielded one minor U.S. pop chart single, "Love Is What You Make It" (#55-1973). In late 1973, the band released two non album singles, "We Can't Dance To Your Music" (1973) and "Stealin' Love (In The Night)" (1973). Neither charted and were their last recordings for Dunhill.

By early 1974, Entner, Kailing, and Weber had left the group. Grill kept the band going, replacing them with Furlong, who returned to the lineup on a temporary basis, and Provisor. In the middle of 1974, Furlong was replaced by Gene Barkin for a brief period before new lead guitarist Reggie Knighton (born November 3, 1953 in Biloxi, Mississippi) joined the group. The new lineup signed an one shot deal with Haven Records, which was owned by Dennis Lambert and Brian Potter, who had written a number of previous hits for the the band.

They released one new album, *The Grass Roots* (1975), while with the label. It did not chart but did yield their last U.S. pop chart single, "Mamacita" (#71-1975). After it's release, Knighton left in 1976 and was replaced by Alan Deane, who was replaced by Glen Shulfer in 1977. Dunhill (now ABC Records) released a final compilation, *ABC Collection* (1976), in 1976 but it did not chart. In 1977, Grill and Provisor left the group but Grill did not give up rights to the band's name. The two re-recorded the old Grass Roots hits in 1978 and released it as 14 Greats (1978) on Gusto Records.

Meanwhile, Grill continued to manage the band, building a new lineup around Larson. The first included Mark Miller (vocals/guitar), Brian Carlyss (bass, vocals), Lonnie Price (vocals, keyboards), and Randy Ruff (organ, vocals). This group toured and made television appearances through November, 1978. At that point, the lineup was overhauled, with Larson complimented by Scott Hoyt (vocals, guitar), David Nagy (vocals, bass), and Gene Wall (keyboards). Nagy and Larson left in 1979 and were replaced by Carlyss and new drummer Reagan McKinley. This version of the band appeared on an HBO television special, 60's Rock Scrapbook, which was filmed at Magic Mountain amusement park in October, 1979. Grill and Provisor joined the band for the show.

In 1979, Grill was persuaded by John McVie of Fleetwood Mac to release a solo album, *Uprooted*. Despite appearances by Mick Fleetwood and Lindsay Buckingham, it did not chart but Grill tour in support, with a new solo band leed by guitarist Rick Alexander. The experience whetted Grill appetite for

performing and he decided to pull together a new version of the Grass Roots in 1980. He looked up Provisor and guitarist Glen Shulfer, then filled the lineup with bassist Steve Berendt and drummer Luke Meurett. They toured the States and Japan.

In 1982, Grill decided to record a new album. He recruited Terry Oubre (guitar, vocals), Ralph Gilmore (drums, vocals), and Charles Judge (keyboards, vocals) and recorded a new album for MCA Records in 1982 called *Powers Of The Night*. Unfortunately, it did not chart but the group did tour in support, with keyboardist Bob Luna playing a few live shows when Judge was not available. On July 4, 1982, the Grass Roots performed at a concert on the National Mall in Washington DC that was attended by 600,000 people.

The band became an extremely successful touring act after the failure of the album. The lineup constantly changed with Grill the only constant. Dave Rodgers (keyboards, vocals) replaced Judge in 1984. Oubre and Gilmore left also and were replaced with George Spellman (guitar, vocals) and Coy Fuller (drums). They toured in Europe in the summer of 1984.

In late 1984, overhauled the lineup with Dusty Hanvey (guitars, vocals), Larry Nelson (keyboards, vocals), and David Page (drums) touring the U.S. as part of the *Happy Together* 85 tour. Like the other acts that participated in that tour, Grill found the nostalgia circuit to be highly lucrative. The Grill, Hanvey, Nelson, Page lineup stayed intact for the next couple of years. In 1986, Mark Clarke joined on bass and Grill added a horn section for a tour with the Monkees, Gary Puckett, and Herman's Hermits. The Grass Roots played their own set and also backed up the Monkees and Puckett during their sets.

In 1987, Hanvey and Nelson joined the Monkees backing band on a full time basis and were replaced by Mark Tamorsky (guitar) and Michael Lewis (keyboards). Terry Danauer also was added on bass. Lewis was soon replaced by Robbie Barker on keyboards. Hanvey and Nelson returned in late 1987. In 1989, Page left and was replaced by drummer Joe Dougherty. With the exception of a bassist change in 1992 when Mike Stec replaced Danauer for one year, this lineup was stable through 2008. During these years, various musicians would temporarily replace the permanent members when necessary.

For example, Sonny Geraci sat for Grill during the first half of 2002. Scott Sechman filled in for Hanvey in 1998 while Chris Merrell filled in for the guitarist when needed between 2000 and 2006. Hal Ratliff filled in for Nelson when the keyboardist had other commitments from 2000 through the present.

In 2000, the band released their first live album, *Live At Last* (2000) on RFG Records. In 2001, Cleopatra released a new album recorded with a symphonic quartet called *Symphonic Hits* (2001). Another live set, *Live Gold* (2008), followed on RFG in 2008. During that same year, Grill's health had declined to the point that he hired Mark Dawson to replace him as needed on bass and vocals.

For several years, it was increasingly clear that Grill was sick, often performing in a chair. In fact, he suffered from a degenerative bone disorder that led to several hip replacements. While he did not officially leave the band, he was replaced on stage by Mark Dawson as early as 2008. In the spring of 2011, Grill suffered a stroke. He lapsed into a coma and passed away on July 11, 2011 in the arms of his wife. Grill owned the rights to the band's name up until his death, when they became part of his estate.

Since Grill's death, Hanvey, Nelson, Dougherty, and Dawson have continued to tour and remain as popular as ever. They continued to tour as part of the Happy Together tours and often team with other classic rock acts like John Kay and Steppenwolf, The Buckinghams, The Cowsills, The Turtles, The Association, Gary Puckett, Mark Lindsay, and Herman's Hermits in package tour or as touring partners. In

2016, the band was inducted into the American Pop Music Hall Of Fame. As of May, 2019, they have shows booked into 2020.

After leaving the Grass Roots, the various members had interesting careers. Coonce relocated to Vancouver, Canada and worked in social services with troubled children and families for 27 years. He continued to write and perform music up until his death from heart failure on February 25, 2011.

Entner started a highly successful artist management company. He wound managing Angel, Quiet Riot, Faith No More, Rage Against the Machine, the Deftones, The Grays, Failure, Nada Surf, and Billy Clyro. Provisor joined a band called The Hits in 1984 and remained with them for twenty years. He then formed DPX with guitarist Billy Grisack and his son, drummer Wil Grisack. As of May, 2019, they are still active and plan to release a new album.

Larson worked as a dance night promoter in LA, was involved in property management and real estate investment, and continued to perform with various bands. Since the new millennium, he has worked in the movie and television industry, handling logistics on numerous hit movies and television series. Finally, Barri had continued to work within the industry, as both a producer and label executive.

The Grass Roots are featured on numerous compilations but I would stick with these. Rhino's 1991 set, *Anthology: 1965-1975*, is the most extensive, with 36 tracks. MCA's 1986 release, *All-Time Greatest Hits*, contains 16 chart singles. MCA's 2001 set, *20th Century Masters - The Millennium Collection: The Best Of The Grass Roots*, includes 12 tracks. Real Gone Music's 2014 release, The Complete Original Dunhill/ABC Hit Singles, contains 24 tracks.

The group has also released two live albums. RFG's 2000 set, *Live At Last*, includes 12 tracks recorded in 1999. RFG's 2008 release, *Live Gold*, contains 13 tracks, including a two song medley from a September 2006 concert in Newton, MA. The lineup included Grill, Hanvey, Nelson, Dougherty, Halopoff, Kaye, Baker, Wayne, and Porter.

My earliest live recording of the Grass Roots is a remarkable bootleg called *Live at Fillmore '67*. I must admit that when I first discovered this record on the internet, I doubted whether it was authentic. The listing did not contain a set list, leaving me with no way of knowing whether I was dealing with the Grill, Entner, Bratton, Coonce lineup or some other band entirely. Then, the distributor had trouble finding the set, which caused me even more anxiety. However, when it finally showed up, it was the real thing.

The set was taken from an October, 1967 show at the Fillmore West in San Francisco. By this point, the group had released their first album and scored a huge hit single with "Let's Live For Today". As such, the set list is populated with songs from their debut. In addition to the five songs from their debut album, the Grass Roots perform a series of covers that probably date back to their days as The 13th Floor. The set includes two versions of their hit single, "Live For Today", as well as a twelve minute plus instrumental jam. Amazingly, recording quality is pretty good. The recording has a few flaws but for the most part, you can clearly hear the vocals and the individual instrumentation.

For those of you who vividly remember the Grass Roots as a smooth, hit making machine, you will be shocked by the roughness of this recording. Songs like "I Got My Mojo Workin'", "You Don't Love Me Anymore", and "Night Time Is The Right Time" are wild and unrestrained. The vocal work on all three is an example of why most white boys should not tackle these kinds of songs. However, the instrumentation is vintage psychedelia, with highly distorted guitars and driving rhythms.

There is even a brief drum solo in the former and if you want to hear pure blues, listen to the later. The instrumental jam is also raw, with plenty of distorted guitar work, a bass solo and drum solo. These four songs are about as far from "Midnight Confessions" as you can get, but they do showcase the group's roots and surprisingly good playing. In particular, the twin guitar work of Entner and Bratton is pretty impressive and the Grill/Coonce rhythm section proves to be very solid.

The band shows it's rock and roll roots during a rollicking version of "You Got To Have A Love", which sounds like vintage Buddy Holly, and "Look Out Girl", which is a typical early sixties rocker. The remainder of the set is devoted to their new songs.

Most of them feature the harmony vocals of Grill and Entner, the two principal singers in the band. The songs show the true range of the band. "Beatin' Round The Bush" and "Things I Should Have Said" are an early form of country rock, not unlike Buffalo Springfield and the Youngbloods. "This Precious Time" is folk rock with a country feel, similar in style to the set opener, "Where Were You When I Needed You". Both of these songs would have been right at home in an Everly Brothers' concert.

Finally, "Let's Live For Today" is a pop classic. The guitar lines, the tradeoff vocals, the dual harmonies are exactly the things that made the band stars. The first version of the song is relatively tight, an impressive accomplishment considering the live setting. The second version is a little weaker but close in quality to the first. It was probably recorded at an earlier or later show, since the Fillmore almost always required their acts to play two sets a day.

This bootleg proves that all bands, no matter how smooth, have common roots. The Grass Roots were, at heart, four young musicians who grew up listening to early rock and roll, the blues, and sixties pop. They were solid, if not spectacular, players and they were clearly willing to experiment with their sound. In truth, they were much more than any of else gave them credit for being.

While the set does add to our understanding of the band and it is a thrill to hear their early hits in a live setting, it is not an essential recording in their catalog. The Grass Roots will always be defined by their studio work. It's nice to know that they could play, but this set will be too difficult to find to justify the time and money. If you run across it, pick it up as an oddity. Otherwise, don't bother looking.

Title: Live At Last

Label: Paradise Musicwerks

Release Date: 2005

Medium: CD

Availability: Very Good

Venue: Unknown

Recording Date: 1999

Lineup: Rob Grill - Vocals, bass
Dusty Hanvey - Guitar, vocals
Jose Silva - Bass
Bill Baker - Sax
Jeff Kaye - Trumpet
Joe Dougherty - Drums
Larry Nelson - Keyboards, vocals
Kevin Porter - Trombone
Gary Halopoff - Trumpet

Set List: Temptation Eyes

Sooner Or Later

Where Were You When I Needed You
I'd Wait A Million Years
Mr. Jones (Ballad Of A Thin Man)
Two Divided By Love
Don't Pull Your Love Out On Me
Let's Live For Today
Heaven Knows
Things I Should Have Said
Love Grows (Where My Rosemary Goes)
Midnight Confessions

In 1988, Rob Grill overhauled the Grass Roots, adding Dusty Hanvey, Larry Nelson, and Joe Dougherty. This lineup remained intact for twenty years and thrived as a live nostaglia band. The fourseome released two albums, including this live set which was recorded in 1999, complete with a horn section.

The fast flowing set includes nine of the group's fourteen top forty hits. In addition, they cover two songs that were written for them but never recorded because they turned them down . The first, "Don't Pull Your Love", was a million selling top five hit for Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds. The second, "Love Grows (Where My Rosemary Goes)", was a million selling top five hit for Edison Lighthouse. Recording quality is excellent.

This version of the band accurately reproduces all the songs the Grass Roots are most known for with studio like quality. They even make the two covers sound their own, surpassing the original versions. The triple vocals of Grill, Nelson, and Hanvey are excellent, capturing all the harmonies perfectly. Grill sounds as good on lead vocals as he did in his prime, adding a familiarity to the concert that will bring back memories of just how good a pop rock band the Grass Roots really were.

The group also includes a bluesy version of their first single, a cover of Bob Dylan's "Ballad Of A Thin Man". They also add a hard rock vibe to several songs through Hanvey's decidedly updated heavy metal like guitar work. All in all, there's nothing to dislike. *Live At Last* may be a guilty pleasure, but it is a pleasure none the less. The original album, which was released on Rob Grill's label, has been reissued by Paradise Musicwerks and is also available for download on Itunes and Amazon.