

THE FRASER LOVEMAN STORY,



BY JOHN MARS

(Editor's note: Rhythm and blues music played an integral role in the development of rock and roll during the formative stages of the British Invasion. Numerous bands built their repertoires on the songbooks of American artists like Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Sam Cooke, Muddy Waters, etc.)

In Canada, the band most successful with this approach at that time was the paradoxically-named British Modbeats. Their hard-driving musical approach made them quite a successful outfit in their native land.

LEFT TO RIGHT: MIKE GORBICHUK guitar, FRASER, GREIG FOSTER guitar, & JOE COLONNA bass, ROBBY JEFFREY drums

The following interview with British Modbeats lead vocalist Fraser Loveman was conducted by John Mars at Loveman's St. Catharines, Ontario apartment.

BLITZ: What were your first influences in music?

LOVEMAN: My whole family was involved in show business when they were in Britain. I heard a lot of big band music when I was young. I heard Billie Holiday, and even cabaret stuff like Edith Piaf. My father took me to see a lot of stage shows when we lived in Britain.

My sister had always been into rock and roll. When we came to Canada in 1953, when I was seven years old, she was playing records like *Come On A My House* by Rosemary Clooney. A little later on, she was listening to Howlin' Wolf and Big Mama Thornton and rock and roll. She was shoving that stuff down my throat! When you are that young, you can't help but be amazed. The basic thing is the excitement. She bought me my first record player and my first 78. She has as large a record collection as I do. When my family has a gathering or a party and everyone gets drunk, they are all pushing one another out of the way to get to the stage. They all sing and play musical instruments, and try to outdo one another in any way they can!

BLITZ: Which singers generated the excitement in you to inspire you to sing?

LOVEMAN: I liked Judy Garland, but that doesn't have anything to do with rock and roll. In rock and roll, I liked Little Richard. I was really into obscure rock and roll. I liked Wanda Jackson, Etta James, Big Mama Thornton and Ruth Brown. There's nothing like Ruth Brown singing, *Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean*. That is fantastic rock and roll. Nothing comes close to that, the roots of rhythm and blues.

BLITZ: What were the first records you got?

LOVEMAN: The first record I got was Georgia Gibbs doing *I Want You To Be My Baby*, which was a sort of honky-tonk rock and roll thing. That got me enough to find the better stuff. Georgia Gibbs did the big hit version of *Dance With Me Heary*, which was originally by Etta James. So I found Etta James, and thought that I had really discovered something. White kids in Canada didn't really listen to that type of music. I listened to weird radio stations in Buffalo.

18 BLITZ

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IMAGE

Original advertisement for the British Modbeats' *Whatcha Gonna Do About It* single.

I listened to Gale Storm do *I Hear You Knocking*. Then I found out that Fats Domino wrote it. That's probably my favorite song of all those that got me going. I've always sung that song. I did it in practically every band I was in. I must have done that song twenty different ways! I loved *Lewdy Miss Clewdy*, too.

BLITZ: Was your first band the Lintels?

LOVEMAN: Yes, the Lintels. I was with them in 1962 and 1963. Everybody was something "tels" in those days! Some of the guys who were later in the British Modbeats were also in that group. The Lintels were an instrumental band, playing things like *Red River Rock* and *Green Onions*.

BLITZ: So the Lintels asked you to join as a singer?

LOVEMAN: Yes. I knew one of the guys, Robby Jeffrey from school. He had heard that I had done some theatre stuff and that I could sing and dance. The first time I sang with them was at some fraternity or sorority party. We did *Got My Mojo Workin'*, *Hey Mama Keep Your Big Mouth Shut* and simple stuff that you couldn't possibly sing wrong! We did a lot of Bo Diddley songs.

BLITZ: The British Modbeats were formed in 1963, with all the personnel being from the St. Catharines, Ontario area. Did the personnel of the band always remain constant?

LOVEMAN: Yeah. We were all from the same town, but we really didn't know each other. We all went to different high schools. We had all just finished high school. Everybody used to play places like the Teen Town dances.

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Part One:

THE British

MODBEATS



Front cover of the British Modbeats' album on Red Leaf records.

Afterwards, we would all get together to jam. Everybody was playing twist songs when the British Modbeats first got together. I was in that band from 1963 to 1967.

BLITZ: What were the first British Modbeats gigs like?
LOVEMAN: The first gig that we ever played was in a curling rink. Of course, we weren't ready for the sound! When you sang, you heard your voice come back at you about two seconds later! You couldn't tell if you were doing good or not. It got to the point where it was just a lot of noise. The first song we played was *Around And Around* by Chuck Berry. That was the first song we ever learned. We did *Little Queenie*, too. We tried to be really gutsy, but all we heard was echo. After that gig, we didn't know whether the British Modbeats would go anywhere or not. We didn't know if it would be worth it. We started to play around the same time that the Rolling Stones started to play in England. We were playing the same sort of rhythm and blues things that they were playing. We were shocked when we found out that they were playing the same kind of material that we were! They were making it big playing *Around And Around*. But that sort of thing was old hat here. It must have been great in England, because they didn't get all the records that we got over here. They had some of the early rhythm and blues records in England, but those records weren't really popular over there. In England, they liked things like Bill Haley And The Comets when rock and roll first came out. The Rolling Stones sounded new when they did all the Jimmy Reed and Howlin' Wolf songs over there. We were doing that type of stuff in Canada. But we weren't doing as well, because all the kids in Canada in 1963 wanted to hear *Let's Twist Again*.

But as soon as we started to act a little bit weird, grow our hair really long and change our appearance, the people started to come out to see us. We were up there on stage with long hair, t-shirts, jeans and maracas flying. Everyone else had brush cuts, little ties and things.

BLITZ: By 1964, the British Modbeats were unorthodox, in terms of visual style, even on an international level.

LOVEMAN: We were. We made a lot of our own clothes.

One of the guys made a pair of pants out of the old curtains from his parents' recreation room! The whole band was sold on the image. One photograph really did it for us. We got letters from England and all over North America, because no one had seen anything like it. The closest thing to that kind of outrageousness at that time in terms of dress was Sonny And Cher. Sonny wore a big fur vest, and they both wore bell-bottom trousers. We would make our clothes with wild, cut-out parts down the sides. We just tried to be different from the other groups. I don't think we were really different, musically. In 1964 and 1965, there were a lot of groups all over the world playing rhythm and blues music. I think the Ugly Ducklings were the only band in Toronto at that time that played the same kind of music that we did. All of the Toronto bands were playing in the soul style. But there were bands from the outlying area that were playing the British adaptation of rhythm and blues.

The Pretty Things were a pretty big influence on us. A lot of bands outside the Toronto area were influenced by them. I've always thought that Phil May is a much better singer than Mick Jagger is, as far as rhythm and blues goes. May could never be a great pop singer, as he doesn't have the range for it. But he has more guts than someone like Jagger. Phil May singing *Cry To Me* was much better than Jagger singing it.

BLITZ: By 1965, the British Modbeats were playing in a style that was similar to the adaptation of American rhythm and blues and rock and roll that English beat groups were playing.

LOVEMAN: Yes. I think we liked that sound, because it was a lot smoother. I liked to hear a raunchy background. But with the lyrics, I liked a smooth delivery. The Troggs and Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich appealed to me. We got into playing that mod sort of thing, because we liked it. The records that were coming out in Britain weren't always released in Canada. So we either did them, or tried to make up originals that sounded like those records. Nobody else really did that sort of thing here. It was a different sound altogether for Canadian audiences. A lot of people say that the Beatles' sound was just 1950s music rehashed. They did a lot of those songs, but I don't think they were showing the influence that much. They became much smoother and melodic. It became Mod music. I think we also got labeled. Everybody said, "Oh Modbeats. It must be Mod music". But we incorporated all kinds of tunes into our repertoire. Mod to us was just the visual image we were projecting, not really the music we were playing. We were smart enough to realize that we could now sell the North American kids exactly what had been under their noses for ten years. I think the biggest statement that I can make about the British Invasion is that the American kids were buying something they already had, except that it was being recorded better. The English records weren't always better musically, but the recorded sound was an improvement. From all of that activity, the British groups started to come up with original songs, while still playing an American style of music. The current new wave is sort of like that.

BLITZ: When the British Modbeats played shows outside of Canada, did the material change much?

LOVEMAN: Not really. We played in New York state a lot. In those days, you couldn't play anything that was too outrageous. We were playing a lot of songs that were seven or eight years old, like *Hey Mama Keep Your Big Mouth Shut*, like the Ugly Ducklings did. That was out-

rageous in those days. The club owners would pull us apart! We used to have all these women phoning my mother and saying, "What are those guys saying on stage?" She couldn't say, because she didn't really care! She'd heard all those records, and thought that they were quite interesting.

BLITZ: Describe some of the other ways that you were considered outrageous on stage.

LOVEMAN: Well, just by having long hair. In 1964, I had hair a little bit past my shoulders. I got arrested once in St. Catharines for being a derelict! I had \$200 in my wallet, and the police thought I had stolen it. No one looked like that around here. Eventually, they let me go.

Stratford was one of our biggest areas in the beginning. When we did the Welland Fair in 1966, the people went berserk and pulled down fences, rioted and broke up things in the park. All the cities like Welland, Thorold, Stratford, Kitchener and Brantford were just great. You would expect Toronto to be the city to go wild, but it wasn't. Belleville and Brockville were just incredible places in those days. The people there went absolutely crazy! There were two clubs, one in Belleville and one in Brockville, both called the Tiki Club. They held about 1500 people each. It was always very hot, with wall to wall people when we played those places.

My father managed the British Modbeats in those days. One night at the Belleville Tiki Club, my mother was in the audience. It was a hundred and something degrees in there, and she fainted. She fell forward. Nobody caught her, and she smashed her head open. My father took her to the hospital. They asked her, "Where were you?" She said, "I was at a rock concert". Here she is, 59 or 60 years old, and they asked her what she was doing there. She said that she had gone to see a rock band. So they tested her to see if she was on anything!

After our concert, we walked to the hospital to see if she was alright. Some guy came up to me at the end of the concert and said, "Your mother is dead". I thought, "Oh God!" My parents were always weird, but I didn't think it was my mother's destiny to fall, split her head open and die at a rock concert! When we all walked into the hospital with our weird clothes, beads and long hair, the hospital staff was a little bit stunned! Of course it turned out that my mother was all right.

BLITZ: Did the frenzy at your concerts continue outside of Ontario in 1964 and 1965?

LOVEMAN: Yes, especially in New York state and Pennsylvania.

BLITZ: Your first records came out at about the same time as those by the Ugly Ducklings.

LOVEMAN: Ours came out a little bit before theirs. Their records were much better than ours. They were still playing rhythm and blues when they recorded. We passed that. We were playing the Mod sound, and had smoothed out a bit.

BLITZ: Were the first records made available to the fans in New York state, Pennsylvania and Illinois?

LOVEMAN: No, they just saw that one picture. The now-famous publicity shot that showed us with our long hair and strange clothes did it all for us. We didn't wear any shoes onstage. People in America were shocked. The Viet Nam protest was just starting when we began playing there. We were really outrageous as far as American fans were concerned. Part of it was that we were from another country. The British sound was big, and I guess being from Canada meant that we were the next best thing. Of course the name British Modbeats helped us there.

BLITZ: Even before the first record came out, you went to England with your father as your manager to look into the possibilities over there.

LOVEMAN: Yes. We had a fan club in England. It was because of that publicity photo, which had appeared in some of the teen magazines over there. It was in *Mirabel* magazine. We were getting all kinds of letters, so my father and I went over there. The whole band was supposed to go over there, but it never happened. That picture was causing a hysterical interest over there. I couldn't believe it! When I was hanging out in London, I was looking to find out what the next fashion trends would be. But instead I felt that everyone was looking at me! I didn't think that my appearance would be that startling to people over there.

No one had heard our music over there. The image of the band was bigger over there than it was in North America. Our first records came out a little while after I went to England. Wherever we created interest, I think it was because of our image, and not our records. Most of our recordings weren't really our doing, anyway.

BLITZ: Was the scene on Carnaby Street in London all that you expected it to be?

LOVEMAN: No. I expected to find some great little music clubs there, like the ones that the Village in Yorkville in Toronto had. Carnaby Street didn't have any, and I was very depressed. Yorkville was much more exciting. All those artists and people making things, and the street singers and guitarists. All the great people that were performing in the clubs in Yorkville! Yorkville had a much more creative feeling, I thought. No doubt it was happening in England in 1966, but it wasn't at Carnaby Street. I thought that the English were very trendy, but not really progressive in the way that Americans and Canadians were. I don't think that Village type thing was happening in England at all. That type of thing was happening all over North America. That's why all the English groups wanted to come over here. What was happening in England was the sound. All of those groups sounded so good. I don't think that it was a whole art or fashion trend that they brought us. I think that what the English groups really did do was to take American music, record it better and try to inject a little more commercialism and ingenuity into it. They improved on some things, but I don't think they came up with anything that was really new.

BLITZ: Describe some of the British Modbeats' most memorable concerts, like the one at Bingeman Park Arena in Kitchener, Ontario in 1966, where you upstaged the Byrds.

LOVEMAN: It wasn't hard to upstage the Byrds that night, because they were going through internal problems. One of them was leaving the band at that time.

BLITZ: Gene Clark.

LOVEMAN: Yeah. It wasn't that they were bad. It was just that their performance was very disjointed. Everything was very rushed. When you played a gig like that, you had to get off stage fast, and then run out front to see who you were playing with. When you went out front to hear the other band, you didn't really get an idea of what they were like. The sound was often quite bad in gyms and roller rinks.

We played at Expo '67 in Montreal. That was a nice gig. They had bands from all over the world at Expo. We played a concert every day for a full week, representing Canada. The week that we were there, we played with the Merrymen. That was a nice pairing. It was a good contrast, having us play with them. They were a Jamaican-Afro-Cuban group, and they were great! A *Stitch In Time* was another group that played at Expo, representing Canada.

BLITZ: The Staccatos also played at Expo, representing Canada.

LOVEMAN: I think they probably did. It was wild when we played with the Merrymen. A lot of people showed up in very colorful dress, with bandanas on their heads, and



The controversial 1965 promotional picture that won them a substantial following in England.

so on. They were all ready to hear ska music.

A girl came up to us from some Montreal newspaper. She said, "Don't you think that you are just trying to be another Who?" I said that I didn't think that the Who were wearing big bell-bottom pants or playing the same kind of music that we were playing. And I said that the Who were much more violent in their performances and more into original music than we were. There was a point in time, long before we had ever heard of the Who, where we were wrecking stuff onstage. Not intentionally, it was just that we got carried away! We had Mike Gergichuk, who continually played guitars like he couldn't care less about them. He hit the guitar very hard with his hands some nights. I've never seen anyone break so many strings! He used to stretch the strings incredibly. They would just pop out. I was always afraid that they were going to hit me in the eye. He'd also pop out of his pants occasionally. That would always cause quite a furor!

BLITZ: The British Modbeats also shared the bill at concerts with the Young Rascals and the Barbarians.

LOVEMAN: Yeah, and the McCoy's and Hollies. We had a tremendous following that showed up everywhere we played. They dressed in a style that went along with our group. If they danced, they all danced in a certain way. Even when we went to New York City, some of our followers from Canada would show up. They added atmosphere to our concerts.

We went to New York City to perform in 1967. I think we caused a big sensation because of our clothes. I don't think they took our music too seriously. I think we set a trend. And I always said outrageous things onstage. Not intentionally. It just sort of came out! The audience won-

dered, "What the hell is he going to say next?" They thought that if I bothered them with the way I looked, that I was going to bother them a lot more with what I say. We picked up quite a following in New York.

BLITZ: Were the records made available in New York City when you played there?

LOVEMAN: No, Red Leaf records was strictly a Canadian company. Our records were never released in the United States at all.

BLITZ: So whatever following you got in America was a cult following.

LOVEMAN: Yeah, that was the same with all of the bands I was in, unfortunately. It was a cult band. We were also popular in Pennsylvania, Illinois and the area all around the Great Lakes.

BLITZ: Were you the leader of the British Modbeats?

LOVEMAN: I was. With the other groups that I was in, the other people influenced me, and I was just a member who fitted in. In the British Modbeats, I was the mastermind that took the band to the lower depths!

BLITZ: Did the ideas for songs come from the large number of records you were collecting?

LOVEMAN: Yeah, and things that I learned from my parents and other people. Things I picked up while growing up in the 1950s. The British Modbeats were creative musicians. But I don't think they knew what they wanted to play. The Village S.T.O.P. weren't as good as musicians, but they were full of ideas. They were colorful characters, who were always one step ahead of everyone else. I felt like the square in that group! In the British Modbeats, I was outrageous, compared to the other guys in that band. When the British Modbeats fell apart, they

didn't know what to do. Eventually, they all ended up going back to drab and dreary little lives.

BLITZ: Are any of the British Modbeats still playing today?

LOVEMAN: Joe Colonna still plays bass once in a while in a little jazz group. He's become a really good jazz bassist. But he doesn't have any drive, and isn't interested in anything new that's happening. He doesn't keep up to date. He's become like a regular citizen, trying for his second marriage and trying to fit into society. I feel like I don't want to fit into society, because if I do, then I'll lose me. If I have ideas, I don't want them to be affected by what everyone else does, or what they would like to force on me. You can't possibly not be influenced by people somewhat, but don't become humdrum. Just become I'm thirty-five, I'm not going to go out and force myself to get married and play bingo! I'm not ready for that. Not now, at least. My mother is very active politically. In the 1960s, my parents housed I don't know how many bands. Just any bands that came through the area. You could find any group staying at their house: Alice Cooper, Crow, a lot of Canadian bands and groups from all over North America. My parents nearly went bankrupt. I really bled them! My mother would go broke from having to buy groceries for all these people feeding off of her! They sold their house and moved into an apartment building. They had to get away from it, or else all that would still be going on now. That's really the way it was. I feel as if I owe them something for getting them into all that. They never disliked it. They thought that was what everybody did if they were staying up-to-date. If someone passed through town, you didn't let them stay out on the street. You took them in. They had all kinds of bands practicing in their basement full blast!

BLITZ: What is your reaction now to the *Mod Is...The British Modbeats* as a collector's item in America? It's mostly a forgotten disc in Canada, but copies are selling for \$200 to \$300 in collectible shops in New York City.

LOVEMAN: All I know is that I wish I could go out and buy a bunch of them somewhere! Anything that there are few of, people want. After a while, I came to realize that it would happen to that record. We did have a lot of fans, so I knew it would become a collector's item. At the time it came out, I know a lot of people bought several copies to have. Maybe they were anticipating something. Some people bought that album for the cover, to see all the obscenities that were written on the door that we were standing in front of in the cover photo. Everyone had their magnifying glasses out so they could read "Charles fucks Sandy" or whatever.

BLITZ: Do you remember what it cost to produce the album?

LOVEMAN: It was something ridiculous, like \$1800. I don't remember how many were pressed. My father claims that 4800 copies were sold in its first week of release in Toronto alone. It was the top selling Canadian album for a time. A lot of the success of that album had to do with the push that R.P.M. magazine gave us. That was

the only music magazine at the time that was pro-Canadian. Our producer, Stan Klees was one of the major people at R.P.M. The promotion that we got out of that magazine helped a lot in Canada. Canadian bands in the 1960s just didn't get a fair shot in the press. If they did, it was by getting American backing and going to America to record. With the British Modbeats, we did what we did by ourselves. The major radio stations didn't want to play us. The only Canadian bands that did get played were usually the Toronto bands. Just think of all the great groups that came out of Quebec and the West Coast of Canada. Even in the early 1970s, bands like Painter and ScrubbaLee Caine had to really work! If you don't make it on Toronto radio, then you don't make it in Canada.

Nobody on Red Leaf records got played on CHUM in Toronto. They played the Guess Who after they got picked up by RCA Victor and made it in America. Since our records were only released in Canada, CHUM ignored them. Although some of the material on our album was really commercial, we weren't a commercial act.

BLITZ: What success did the British Modbeats have with their singles in terms of chart positions and sales?

LOVEMAN: Like the album, I couldn't tell you what the sales of the singles were. I don't think there was ever anything posted about how many copies were sold. I don't know of any Canadian band of the 1960s that could tell you how many records they sold. That's why we had such a problem when we broke up. We didn't know how many we had sold of anything. Nobody knew what royalties we had coming. There was no way of proving what we had done. As far as Canadian chart success went, *Whatcha Gonna Do About It* went into the top ten. The second record, *Love's Just A Broken Heart* went to number one. *Try To Understand/Sorrow* went top twenty. If I remember correctly, *Somebody Help Me* went to number nine. I thought that *Sorrow* was one of the best.

BLITZ: Are you familiar with Lori Burton's *Breakout* album on Mercury SR61136? It doesn't have *Try To Understand* on it, but it's a great album.

LOVEMAN: No, I don't know it. We got *Try To Understand* from Lulu's recording of it. Lulu had a very gutsy version of it. It was a hit single for her in England on Decca in September, 1965. Lulu had a great version of *I'll Come Runnin'*, which was an R&B thing that the British Modbeats also used to do. She played a tin can on her recording of that. It always amazed me that she could sound like that! Lulu is sort of a cross between Brenda Lee and Janis Joplin.

I thought that our version of *Sorrow* was better than the original version by the Merseys, the McCoy's did it too, but I didn't like their version. They tried to do it as a folk-rock number with harmonica, but it didn't suit the song. *Sorrow* was just a first English wave type of song. *Whatcha Gonna Do About It* did well for us in the Country and Western charts, as well as the pop charts, for some reason. When the Country and Western fans saw our photograph, it just floored them! The music that we recorded didn't always suit what we looked like. There

were a few songs on the album like *L.S.D., No More Love* and *Somebody Help Me* that did suit our visual image. Some of the things on the album weren't things that we usually did on stage, but we had to start doing them once they became hits for us.

BLITZ: *L.S.D.* is an interesting tune, originally recorded by the Pretty Things on Fontana 45-888-UK, with an interesting title. The general assumption is that it is a drug song, but of course that phrase has more than one meaning.

LOVEMAN: Yeah, *L.S.D.* refers to pounds, shillings and pence. "Everybody's talkin' about my L.S.D., I say talkin's easy, money's never free, L.S.D." I don't think that song has anything to do with dope at all.

BLITZ: The concerts that the British Modbeats did in New York City in 1967 were really the beginning of the end for the group.

LOVEMAN: We did quite well in New York. We got some good write-ups in the papers. The headline in *Billboard* was something like, "Modbeats Have Psychedelic Promise". I wasn't sure that I wanted any "psychedelic promise".

We played at Steve Paul's The Scene on West 46th Street. All kinds of characters went there. Members of the elite went there to rub elbows. Barbra Streisand once said, "Everyone's a critic". Everyone at the Scene was. But we did do one thing—we shocked them! Not so much by our musical brilliance, but nobody in New York was doing what we were doing. So our material was noticed. I learned that to make it in New York, you don't have to be outrageous. But you have to be performing at the right place at the right time with the right thing. And you have to be completely different and likeable at the same time.

I was very impressed by all the bands I saw in New York City that year: the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Julie Driscoll, Brian Auger And The Trinity. People in New York thought that we were good, and people in Canada thought we were great. But I realized that in New York, there were people who were truly great. When we came back home, I wanted the British Modbeats to do different stuff. I wanted us to progress. But the other guys were just happy to sit back on their laurels. There's nothing wrong with chasing after the chicks, so to speak, but it got to the point where the band didn't even want to learn any new tunes. The manager of the British Modbeats at that time, Ronn Metcalfe, wanted the group to become very commercial. I wasn't into that. I didn't want to dress the same as everybody else and sing nice little songs. So I left. A little while later, Mike Gorgichuk left the British Modbeats, and he came with me. When the British Modbeats broke up, I wanted the next band to come up to the way I looked and acted. I wanted the music to fit in with the whole visual image. So the next group I had was the first Fraser Loveman Group.

COMING NEXT ISSUE: Fraser Loveman relates the story of the Fraser Loveman Group, the Village S.T.O.P. and his subsequent retirement from performing.

BRITISH MODBEATS DISCOGRAPHY compiled by Fraser Loveman and John Mars.

SINGLES

Whatcha Gonna Do About It/	
The Price Of Love	1966 Red Leaf TTM620
Love's Just A Broken Heart/	
You're My World	1966 Red Leaf TTM625
Try To Understand/Sorrow	1967 Red Leaf TTM638
Somebody Help Me/	
Ain't Nobody Home But Me	1967 Red Leaf TTM 663

ALBUM

MOD IS...THE BRITISH MODBEATS	1967 Red Leaf RED1002
Whatcha Gonna Do About It; Love's Just A Broken Heart; the Price Of Love; Ain't Nobody Home But Me; L.S.D.; Land Of 1000 Dances; Somebody Help Me; Sorrow; No More Love; Try To Understand; Don't Answer Me.	

UNRELEASED MATERIAL

Somebody Help Me (1967 alternate take; slower version with harmony vocals); Frustration; Love Of The Loved.

ADDENDUM:

1. All records listed above were Canadian releases only.
2. Legal action on the part of the Beatles' management prevented *Love Of The Loved* (a John Lennon and Paul McCartney composition) by the British Modbeats from being released at that time. The Beatles had not yet made a decision as to whether or not they would record the song.
3. Both sides of Red Leaf TTM625 were originally performed by Cilla Black.
4. All British Modbeats material was recorded at Hallmark Studios and produced by Stan Klees.
5. Personnel on all British Modbeats recordings is as follows: Fraser Loveman-vocals; Greig Foster-lead guitar; Mike Gorgichuk-rhythm guitar; Joe Colonna-bass; Robbie Jeffrey-drums. The band was together from 1963 to 1967.

THE FRASER LOVEMAN STORY, Part Two:

By John Mars

(Editor's note: Canada's British Modbeats garnered a sizeable following through their use of novel visuals, a concept that would find its way into lead vocalist Fraser Loveman's musical career again, shortly after his departure from that band in 1967. In this second half of the Fraser Loveman story, Loveman discusses with Blitz's John Mars how visual effects played an integral role in the development of both the Village S.T.O.P. and the two Fraser Loveman Groups.)

BLITZ: Discuss the events that immediately followed your departure from the British Modbeats in 1967.

LOVEMAN: The next group I had played in a more progressive style, Mike Gorgichuck and I met some guys from Hamilton, Ontario, who were in a band called the Incredible Sons of Dr. Funk. These guys were Dave Burt on guitar, Doug Carter on bass and Ron Kanappt on drums. They joined us, along with John Ord on organ, to become the first Fraser Loveman group. John Ord was a classically trained keyboard player who could adapt to anything. I tried to get Ord into the British Modbeats at one point, but they didn't want an organist. Anyway, that first Fraser Loveman Group did Jimi Hendrix-Vanilla Fudge-Cream influenced stuff. We did quite a few originals. But the problem is that we didn't record. The group started at the end of 1967, and by the summer of 1968, it had broken up. The guys and I wrote a lot of our own stuff. Dave Burt was an exceptional lead guitarist, probably about the hottest in Canada at that time. A lot of guitarists would come to listen to him, and just stand there with their mouths open. I'm not exaggerating! He was very much into his music. When he played a lick, his mouth and his whole face would move along with the sounds. I used to be in awe of him. He wrote all kinds of neat songs, like *Sunny Day Dreams*, which was a waltz kind of piece that was influenced by the kind of guitar sound that Cream had. Fortunately, I have a recording of that song on a rehearsal tape. I was effective as a singer in the British Modbeats, but I didn't really learn how to sing until that first Fraser Loveman Group. Dave Burt was a pretty good singer, too. Neil Merryweather came up from the United States, heard Dave Burt and offered him the job of lead guitarist in his band.

BLITZ: Burt is currently with Cans, and was also on Merryweather's *Word Of Mouth* album on Capitol STBB-278.

LOVEMAN: Yeah, that is sort of a jam LP. So Burt went with Merryweather, Doug Carter went with King Biscuit Boy, Ron Kanappt got a job drumming with a jazz group from Ottawa and I think that John Ord eventually ended up with the Paupers for a little while.

BLITZ: And your next move was going to New York to join the Village S.T.O.P.?

LOVEMAN: I got a call from George Featherstone, who managed the Village S.T.O.P. He had sometimes booked the British Modbeats for Kiwanis sponsored dances, and so on. The Village S.T.O.P. were recording at Buddha Records in New York. Melanie was there, and they were trying to teach their singer how to sing in a studio. It just wasn't working out. So I went to New York with the Modbeats' old equipment manager, Garnet McKewan. I was hoping that I could get John Ord into the Village S.T.O.P. along with me. But I had never heard the Village S.T.O.P., and I didn't realize that there was no possible way that a classically trained musician like Ord could ever fit into a band like that. The Village S.T.O.P. were just too bizarre. They were hitting notes on their guitars that people didn't know.



The Village S.T.O.P., 1968.

Anyway, when I arrived in New York, I had some time to kill before it was time to go over to the Albert Hotel and meet the Village S.T.O.P. I was in a bar, and a stripper started talking to me. She asked me what I was doing in New York. I told her that I came to audition for the job of singer in a rock band. She said, "What band?" When I told her, she nearly flipped! "The Village S.T.O.P.?!?! Oh no, don't go meet those guys! They're all completely crazy!", she said.

The Village S.T.O.P. were doing their *Freak Out* at the Space Club at that time. During that part of their act, they didn't wear any clothes, just all kinds of body paint. Of course the audience couldn't always tell that they were nude, with all the paint and wild lighting and everything happening really fast. They had reviews in the *New York Times* with headings like, "Rock Reaches All-Time Low". I met up with a black go-go dancer that I knew from the Scene, and she sort of confirmed it all. She said, "Oh, you don't want to join that band. One guy has one blue ball and one green ball!" So I can't say that I wasn't warned.

At the appointed time, I went over to the Albert Hotel and knocked on their door. Sure enough, when the door opened, they were all nude, except for some body paint left over from the night before. They were all chasing a couple of girls around the room! So I thought, "Well, I was warned!" Later that day, I joined the Village S.T.O.P.

BLITZ: What sort of material were they doing when you joined?

LOVEMAN: It was weird. They liked the Jefferson Airplane. And I did too, at that time. So we jammed on stuff like *Somebody To Love* and *Today* in the basement of the Albert Hotel. It was raining outside that day. There were some cockroaches crawling all over those basement walls while we were rehearsing. I learned that the Village S.T.O.P. did a *Freak Out* and that they beat up their rhythm guitarist with a plastic baseball bat onstage, and that they all painted themselves and had a wild light show.

BLITZ: Describe the Village S.T.O.P. *Freak Out*. It was completely enjoyable and ahead of its time.

LOVEMAN: The *Freak Out* usually lasted about half an hour, but sometimes went on much longer than that. We used to do one or two sets of all of our songs, and the last set would include the *Freak Out*. For the first part of the *Freak Out*, I sang. During the second part, I played drums and did little vocal answering parts. I had to learn how to play drums, at least enough to keep me going for the second part, when the drummer came out front.

I didn't really know what I was doing. It was easy to play drums passably, because the band was just playing all over the place during that part of the *Freak Out*. You could play anything, and it sounded all right. Sometimes the guitarists would make notes that weren't good notes musically, but they were always creative!

At the beginning of the *Freak Out*, everyone in the band was in long robes. George Featherstone, the manager, would come out to introduce the *Freak Out*. He always made a big deal out of it. If anyone in the audience was standing, he would say, "You have to sit down to watch this". He had a great way of introducing us. Later on, Alice Cooper's manager used many of the same methods. George would introduce us by babbling a lot of hype and then he would shout, "The greatest psychedelic rock show in the world: The Village S.T.O.P. present *Freak Out*". The black lights would come on just as he said "Freak Out". That would send everyone in the audience crazy! I sang *Free Me* from *Privilege*. That led into the Jefferson Airplane's *Two Heads*. Then we went into *Paint It, Black*.

BLITZ: Your version of *Paint It, Black* was influenced by the version that Eric Burdon And The Animals did on their *Winds Of Change* album.

LOVEMAN: Yes, it was. After *Paint It, Black*, we went into an original number. While I was singing, I opened up my robe. It sort of went into butterfly wings that were painted in fluorescent colors on the inside of it. Of course we weren't wearing any clothes underneath our robes. Everyone will say that we must have predestined the theatrical direction of certain groups that followed us, like Alice Cooper and Kiss. I guess that we did. But we certainly didn't do our make-up as well as Kiss does today. We were a garage band, and we put our make-up

Number 46/May-June, 1983

14 BLITZ

L. to R. ♂
VILLAGES.T.O.P.

STEVE URECH guitar, JIM HALL drums, PAUL MARCOUX guitar, FRASER, NICK URECH bass

on in ten minutes!

One time in New York, somebody bought oil-based paint by mistake. We couldn't get all of it off for a week or so!

Anyway, after *Paint It, Black*, there was an anti-war dialogue. Then I went back and took over the drums, while Jim Hall came out front and stripped his robe off. The rest of us played the riff from *Help I'm A Rock* by the Mothers Of Invention and continued the dialogue, and Jim did a whole thing with Steve Urlich, the rhythm guitarist. Steve was usually dressed in a wedding dress or a ladies' slip. When it was lifted, you could see that he had "Suzy Wedding" painted on his backside. He was supposed to be Suzy Creamcheese. The whole idea was that we were against conformity of any kind, and Suzy and her wedding dress represented conformity. All kinds of obscenities were yelled at Suzy. In the end, "she" was beaten up. Jim would rip off "her" wedding dress, hit "her" with a plastic baseball bat, throw chairs at "her" and throw "her" across the stage. With all the strobe lights going, you could see the effect a chair had flying in slow motion across the stage.

BLITZ: Some of the phraseology was taken from the Mothers Of Invention's *Freak Out* album on Verve V-5005-2, but the Mothers Of Invention never had a stage act like the Village S.T.O.P. Do you think that Alice Cooper ever saw the group perform the *Freak Out*?
LOVEMAN: A couple of the guys in the Village S.T.O.P. met some of the guys in Alice Cooper. But I didn't meet them until a year after the Village S.T.O.P. had broken up. I think they might have seen us.

I can't say that the Village S.T.O.P. was ahead of any other group, musically. The sex that was implicit in our show was certainly not common for a rock band performing in 1968, but the music was more or less common. The *Freak Out* was always evolving. The members of the group did listen to that Mothers Of Invention album over and over again. I don't think that anyone in the Village S.T.O.P. actually saw the Mothers Of Invention perform, because we were too busy doing our own gigs at that time to go out and see anyone else. Most of our stage act came from improvising the ideas that Jim Hall came up with. Jim would start screaming something, and we would elaborate on it. The whole idea was to shock

Romney, 1971. Fraser Loveman is at lower right.



Number 46/May-June, 1983

people. People would get stoned, come and see us and tell us stories about what they thought it meant. The audience always thought, "These guys must be stoned!" Some people would meet us backstage after a concert. They were really shocked when they found out we weren't stoned. But we didn't take drugs. We just got carried away. The guys in that band were absolute characters who didn't need drugs to make them any crazier than they already were. It wasn't really a stage act, because the guys in the Village S.T.O.P. were just as weird offstage. I would hate to think what might have happened had the Village S.T.O.P. ever been on drugs!

BLITZ: The Village S.T.O.P. had many interesting experiences offstage.
LOVEMAN: There are so many stories! There was a woman who lived next to us in the Albert Hotel who did spaghetti commercials. The band got very sick of seeing her on television. So they cooked up a big vat of spaghetti and spread it all over her walls!

One day, I was riding in the elevator with a guy that had electric hair. The second time I glanced over at him, I realized that it was Eric Clapton! I didn't know what to say to him, so I just got off at the next floor. I always felt funny in that place.

The funniest thing that happened, we were all walking around Greenwich Village one day. An equipment man of ours, Spud, was noticing how all the girls in the village were trying desperately to look like Janis Joplin. Well, God bless Janis, but Spud was just getting sick of all these girls with big elephant bell-bottom pants, twenty strands of beads around their necks and trying to look like Babylonian whores. So Spud said, "Oh, there's another broad who thinks she's Janis Joplin!" The girl who was walking a step or two in front of us turned around and smashed him in the mouth! Spud was a big guy, but that punch knocked him over. After she punched him, she walked off into the sunset and let off a little cackle. That girl was Janis Joplin!

That wasn't the only time I saw Janis Joplin smash a guy. One night, we were playing at the Space Club. She was sitting at a table with Jim Morrison and some other people. Apparently, Morrison made some very rude crack to her, because Janis smashed a beer bottle over his head right after he made an aside to her!



BLITZ: Which clubs that you played in New York helped you build a following there?

LOVEMAN: We played the Space Club with Booker T. And The M.G.'s. We were there regularly, and developed quite a following. Some of the other places we played regularly were Harlow's and the Electric Circus. I can't remember some of the other names.

BLITZ: It's been said that the initials S.T.O.P. stood for "Sounds Typical Of People".

LOVEMAN: That's correct. When they moved to Greenwich Village, they added the "Village" in front of S.T.O.P. They thought that what they were doing onstage was actually the opposite of what was typical of people, and that the name was a farce.

BLITZ: Where else did you perform, besides New York?

LOVEMAN: Mostly up and down the east coast. We played all the New England states a lot. We were big in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. We played Newport a lot. We were there for the Newport Pop Festival in 1968.

BLITZ: You upstaged Eric Burdon And The Animals at the Newport Pop Festival.

LOVEMAN: I don't know that we upstaged them musically. But they weren't really appreciated, because the audience was still talking about our *Freak Out*. When Eric Burdon And The Animals were trying to play, everyone was still shocked. They were telling one another, "These guys were naked!"

No matter how good a band was musically, it was hard for them to follow us with all that ridiculousness we were doing. At the Newport Pop festival, we were just one of the little bands that came out before the major acts. But the *Freak Out* startled the crowd that night and got us write-ups in all the newspapers.

BLITZ: You were supposed to play live on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* after the Newport Festival. Do you think that the write-up in the New York Times about your appearing nude on stage had anything to do with the Carson performance getting cancelled?

LOVEMAN: I think maybe that was what did it. There was never anything in writing that said we were supposed to appear on the Carson show. But I know that they wanted us, and they had begun to make special arrangements to try to affect the look of our lighting for television. I don't think that Carson expected us to want to appear on his show without any clothes on. But I guess that the whole thing got canned by the reputation that the article in the New York Times gave us.

BLITZ: Straight Records was reportedly interested in the Village S.T.O.P. at one point. How did that, combined with the effect that manager George Featherstone had on the group, shape your future?

LOVEMAN: We really didn't know too much about management. It was taken over completely by George

Featherstone. George was a weird character who wore Nazi-type boots up to his knees and carried a riding crop. He always had some weird outfit on. George was in charge of everything! He could talk people into anything. He had that sort of charisma. He strolled into the William Morris Agency in New York snapping his riding crop, and he got the group a contract with Buddah Records. One day he came to a rehearsal and said he got us a contract with Straight. Of course this was all impossible for us, as we were under contract to Buddah. We would have liked to do some work for Straight Records, but we already had the Buddah contract. George was obviously raking in all kinds of money, while we were just making peanuts.

Buddah wanted us to be a bubblegum band, like the Ohio Express or the 1910 Fruitgum company. Eventually, Paul Marcoux and I left, rather than get into the bubblegum thing. Jim Hall, Nick Urech and Steve Urech stayed with Buddah and became part of the Kasenetz-Katz Super Circus. They had one very big hit on Buddah, *Quick Joey Small*. But Paul and I felt we had to split from the group in order to break our contract, in the same way some members of the Mamas and Papas felt they had to leave their group to break their contract with Dunhill. All the guys in the Village S.T.O.P. wanted to get with Straight Records. But none of us actually met with Frank Zappa, or anything like that. We felt that Straight would have been a good label for us to be on.

BLITZ: The Village S.T.O.P. managed to release one record, *Vibration/North Country* on the Ruby label, which you put out yourselves and sold at your concerts. *North Country* is a beautiful performance, despite the poorly recorded sound. The vocal and guitar solo are very emotional. And *Vibration* is a lot like *Out Of Focus* by Blue Cheer in its sheer energy.

LOVEMAN: *Vibration* is probably more like out of tune! Paul and I wrote *North Country* one night when we were both depressed. It's a pretty tune. He came up with that freaky, hard rock type of solo for the middle part of *North Country* that was somehow very pretty. Paul could have been one of the most inventive electric guitar players ever.

BLITZ: What studio was the *North Country* single recorded in?

LOVEMAN: It wasn't recorded in a studio. It was recorded in somebody's basement in Hamilton. That is why the sound is not so good. It had nothing to do with Buddah Records. It just came out in Canada. Hallmark Records, where the British Modbeats did their records, really wasn't any better than that basement. I think that the Village S.T.O.P. single came out sounding better than the British Modbeats' records, even if it was recorded in a basement! We did that single in one night. We put a couple of other originals on tape that night, as well. *I'm Tore Down* was another original and a very hard rocking piece. Unfortunately, it was never released. *Vibration* was made up on the spot that night. The recorded performance of the tune speeds up towards the end, because we just got carried away. There is no way

that particular version could ever happen again. We also recorded another original that night, *Summer Rain*.

BLITZ: But you performed *Vibration* in concerts.

LOVEMAN: Yeah. Jim always had a tendency to try and speed it up, while Paul tried to slow it down. That made it sound very weird.

BLITZ: When you played in Canada, you did the *Freak Out*, but most of your first two sets consisted of covers like Erma Franklin's *Piece Of My Heart*, Cream's *Tales Of Brave Ulysses* and other things like *My Little Red Book*. You did some originals, but mostly covers. Did you do more original material at your American gigs?

LOVEMAN: We didn't have a lot of original tunes. But we played more of them in our shows in the States than we did in Canada. People in New York expected to hear things that were different.

It's funny that you mentioned *My Little Red Book*. The Village S.T.O.P. had never heard any other rock groups do that tune. What they heard was a straight piano version of it by Burt Bacharach. They thought it would be really neat as a psychedelic tune, and worked up a version of it. Later on, I told them about the Manfred Mann version. They were really surprised!

BLITZ: Do you feel that the Village S.T.O.P. was influenced by Big Brother And The Holding Company?

LOVEMAN: Not really, but we did like Janis Joplin at the time. The Village S.T.O.P. was more influenced by the Jefferson Airplane. Their *After Bathing At Baxter's* album was the epitome of psychedelia, as far as we were concerned.

BLITZ: What caused the Village S.T.O.P. to dissolve?

LOVEMAN: The Buddah contract, and that Paul and I caught on to the fact that George Featherstone was ripping us off for money. He bought us a Cadillac with a stereo system in it, but we weren't getting any money. All of a sudden, it appeared that he was getting rich. Questions started to appear in our minds. "Where is our money?" we thought. And the commercial ideas that Buddah had didn't appeal to us. They wanted to bring in background singers and choruses. It wasn't what I wanted to do. As a result, nothing by the Village S.T.O.P. came out on Buddah.

We became depressed, because we couldn't find the time to rehearse. We were playing every night of the week. We didn't get any new material going, because we were playing so much. It became very difficult.

BLITZ: So you and Paul left and started the second Fraser Loveman Group.

LOVEMAN: Yeah. That lasted for all of 1970. But it didn't turn out the way we thought it would. That group had two lead guitarists, Paul and Terry Walsh. Nick Urech played bass and Glen Gratto played drums. (Author's Note: The group changed bassists twice. Don Couchie and Peter Constantinides also did stints with the group). Terry Walsh also played with two legendary Ontario groups in the 1960s, the Evil and the Yeomen. Glen Gratto was a member of the legendary St. Catharines, Ontario band, the Kidds in the 1960s.



The Fraser Loveman Group.

After the second Fraser Loveman Group split up, I moved to Toronto to sing with a band called Romney. That became Yenmor Blue. I knew a couple of the guys in the band who were from St. Catharines, and I knew they were good musicians. So I decided to join them. We all lived in a big house that belonged to the drummer, Stu Stuart and his wife. We were at 315 Avenue Road. Next door was Lighthouse and across the street was Ocean. A lot of Toronto bands lived in the area at that time. When Romney started, they were playing very heavy rock. We started off playing the Northern Ontario club circuit.

We realized that we didn't really enjoy the material that we were doing. Most of us were interested in some of the older blues forms. After a while, we packed the heavy stuff, reversed our name to Yenmor and started to play the music of the 1920s in an updated way. By this time, it was 1971. Everything in rock music was in a state of collapse. Some of the big rock stars had died, and the music was changing.

Things were not right with us. We were doing a gig in Northern Ontario. I sang the very common Bessie Smith number, *Ain't Nobody's Business*. It worked out great. Eventually we started to do a few more numbers like that in our show. We found that doing them with electric equipment could really work. So we changed everything in the set to that style of blues. We added some original tunes that had that sort of flavor to them. The only record of that band was a demo of four songs that we put out as a 78 r.p.m. record in 1972. We realized that the blues we liked was the classic blues of the 1920s. But a lot of bands went into the junk that Led Zeppelin was playing.

FRASER LOVEMAN POST-BRITISH MODBEATS DISCOGRAPHY

SINGLES

The Village S.T.O.P. - *North Country*/
Vibration 1969 Ruby T-56194-56195 (Canada)
Unreleased Material: *Somebody To Love* (1969, backing track with no vocals. Recorded at Buddah Studios, New York). *I'm Tore Down*, *Summer Rain* (the latter two songs were written by Loveman, Marcoux, Urech, Urech and Hall. Recorded 1969).

Yenmor Blue *Moanin' Groanin' Blues*; *Aggravatin' Mama*/St. Louis Blues; *Can't Help Lovin' That Gal Of Mine* (78 RPM) 1972 Blue Bird (Canada)

ADDENDA:

1). Personnel of the Fraser Loveman Group (late 1967-mid 1968) was as follows: Fraser Loveman (lead vocals), Dave Burt (lead guitar), Mike Gorgichuk

(rhythm guitar), John Ord (organ), Doug Carter (bass), Ron Kanappt (drums). No recordings by this line-up.

2). Personnel on the Village S.T.O.P. recording was as follows: Fraser Loveman (vocals), Paul Marcoux (lead guitar; organ), Steve Urech (rhythm guitar), Nick Urech (bass), Jim Hall (drums).

3). Personnel of the second Fraser Loveman Group (1970) was as follows: Fraser Loveman (lead vocals), Paul Marcoux (lead guitar), Terry Walsh (lead guitar), Nick Urech (bass, replaced in succession by Peter Constantinides and Don Couchie), Glen Gratto (drums). No recordings by this line-up.

4). Personnel of Yenmor Blue (late 1971-early 1973) was as follows: Fraser Loveman (lead vocals), Jackie Landridge (vocals), Howard Graham (guitar and vocals), Jim Hiscott (keyboards), Ben de Jaede (bass and vocals), Stu Stewart (drums).

5). The Yenmor Blue 78 RPM EP was pressed up as a promotional item only on an imitation Blue Bird label. Only about 1000 copies of the record were made.

Discography compiled by John Mars and Fraser Loveman.

John.

Sorry I took so long in sending back the photo but things have been hectic round here.

I hope you'll be able to arrange for me to get a bunch of copies of the mag when it comes out! Let me know anyway. I seem to remember you calling me but what was said escapes me. I had all kinds of loonies with me & I think I was on my way to either a tupperware? party or an orgy (or both)

Keep in touch.
Fraser.