

## FROM NORFOLK TO NASHVILLE

Gene Vincent's meteoric rise to Rock'n'Roll stardom in 1956 is the classic rags-to-riches tale ... "such stuff as dreams are made on"\* ... for aspiring young rock singers. Born Eugene Vincent Craddock on February 11th 1935 in Norfolk, Virginia, his well documented story still makes compelling reading today. It also stands as a warning of the unforeseen pitfalls that can quickly turn those very dreams into nightmares! Bad management, dishonest promoters and alcoholism, all part of the Gene Vincent saga, are the ingredients which have torn apart the souls of many talented innocents as they battle their way along the rocky road of media establishment.

\* Shakespeare „The Tempest“

Like so many of his contemporaries in the American music business, the young Gene Vincent served an apprenticeship amidst a poor community in the deep South, integrating his country music roots with the rhythms of black R 'n' B. Gene showed his first real interest in music whilst his family lived in Munden Point near the South Carolina line where they ran an old country store. Passers-by would sit on the porch with a teenage Vincent and play the blues, gospel and country tunes of the day. His father (Ezekiah Jackson Craddock) and mother (Mary Louise) eventually gave up the store and moved back to Norfolk where, just after his seventeenth birthday in 1952, Gene signed up with the U.S. Navy as a boilerman. He would never see any military action but subsequently led many of his interviewers into believing that he sustained his severe leg injuries whilst on active duty in the Korean War.

The reality of that injury, which was to plague him for the rest of his life, was down to his passion for motorcycles. Gene came to grief whilst riding his huge Triumph around the Norfolk naval base. A woman in a Chrysler jumped a red light, hit Gene and put him into the naval hospital with a severely smashed left leg. By all accounts Gene's doctors were considering amputation but he begged his mother not to allow the operation. He was invalided out of the navy and was to spend the rest of 1955 in and out of hospital. In September 1955 Gene was, however, well enough to attend Hank Snow's All Star Jamboree in Norfolk brought into the town by the local country radio station WCMS. The show featured country stars like Cowboy

Copas, the Louvin Brothers and Jimmy Rogers Snow (before he got religion) as well as a young hillbilly cat from Tupelo, Mississippi, Elvis Presley. To say that Gene was impressed by Elvis' performance is an understatement.

By early 1956, his leg still in plaster. Gene began hanging around the radio station and occasionally singing with the staff band. The Virginians. He regularly appeared on WCMS's 'Country Showtime' and would perform a song he co-wrote with fellow hospital patient Donald Graves. The song was, of course, 'Be-Bop-A-Lula'\* - based on a comic strip heroine called Little Lulu. Sheriff Tex Davis, a local d.j., realized the potential of this skinny white ex-sailor and of the weird song he sang Davis cut himself into the writing credits by buying Graves' rights to it for a mere \$25 and signed a bewildered Vincent to a management deal. Out of the Virginians a new band was formed for Gene featuring Cliff Gallup on lead guitar Willie Williams on rhythm. Jack Neal on upright bass and 15 year old Dickie Harrell on drums Gallup at the ripe old age of 26, was the group's elder statesman and, although steeped in the traditions of country music and mainstream jazz, could rock his Gretsch Black Duo Jet single cutaway guitar like crazy. His lead licks on Gene's early recordings have become the 'bible' for hundreds of rock 'n' roll guitarists since.

The previous year Sheriff Tex had met top Capitol producer, Ken Nelson, at a d.j. convention in Nashville and became aware of Capitol's desire to sign their own rival to Elvis Presley who had now left Sun Records to join RCA. Tex took Gene and his band into WCMS studios on April 9th 1956 where they recorded 'Be-Bop-A-Lula', 'Race With The Devil' and the country ballad 'I Sure Miss You'. After sending demos of these to Ken Nelson at Capitol it was a long three weeks before Ken Nelson contacted Tex Davis with the message to get Gene Vincent and his band to Nashville pronto for a recording session at Owen Bradley's studio.

Bradley had previously recorded both Buddy Holly and Johnny Carroll and it was Carroll's constructive criticism of the echo utilized on their recordings that resulted in the modified sound devised by engineer Mod Thomasson used to enhance Gene's early recordings. On May 4th 1956 Gene and his band, to be renamed The Blue Caps, assembled for their historic first session at Bradley's. Nelson, being unsure of the

band's abilities, had assembled stand-by, top-line session musicians Grady Martin, Hank 'Sugarfoot' Garland Buddy Harman and Bob Moore, for the recordings but not long after Cliff Gallup had broken into the manic lead intro of 'Race With The Devil' the session men beat a hasty retreat. No improvements could be made on that!

Gene and the Caps recut the three numbers that had been sent to Nelson as demos plus a Jack Rhodes song previously recorded by Jimmy Johnson on Star day. This song 'Woman Love' (at first promoted as the A-side) was coupled with 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' and released on June 2nd as Gene's first single. By the end of the month with d.j.'s giving the airplay to 'Lula', the record had already sold over 200,000 copies. Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps had certainly arrived!!

## NASHVILLE TO HOLLYWOOD

With 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' selling like hot cakes, Ken Nelson wanted Gene Vincent and The Blue Caps back in the studio to record enough material for an album and another hit single. He got both. During the four day session (24th - 27th June 1956.) Gene cut a further sixteen tracks including 'Bluejean Bop' which became not only the title of his first album but also the A-side of his third single and which, like 'Be-Bop-A-Lula', also went Gold.

Because events had occurred so fast. Nelson was unable to come up with a whole album of new rock 'n' roll songs so he had to rely on a selection of old standards to fill up the gaps. Numbers like 'Jezebel'. 'Peg O' My Heart' and 'Up A Lazy River' were hardly rock 'n' roll but, by combining Gene's unique vocal range with Cliff Gallup's intricate guitar work. Nelson was able to nurture Vincent's distinctive ballad style which contrasted effectively with the raw aggression of his up-tempo rockers.

Gene and The Caps themselves contributed some pretty wild numbers for the session.

'Who Slapped John?' and 'Jumps, Giggles And Shouts' were indicative of the somewhat hastily composed rockers included on the 'Bluejean Bop' album. The spontaneous 'whoops' and 'yells' of various band members became the trademark of those early Blue Caps sessions which were recorded under near 'live' studio conditions. Ken Nelson did come up with some new material for the session, including a tailor made Jerry Reed song 'Crazy Legs' and two Bobbie Carroll

numbers 'I Flipped' and 'Well I Knocked Bim Bam' which all suited Gene's rocking style. One of Gene's best loved numbers, 'Gonna Back Up Baby' came from the pen of Texan, Danny Wolfe - clearly one of the most underrated pieces of rock 'n' roll genius ever recorded!

Throughout the Summer of 1956 Gene was able to capitalize on the success of \* 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' to the extent that the failure of his second single 'Race With The Devil' was of little consequence. But towards the end of the Summer, the near constant touring proved too much for Willie Williams and Cliff Gallup who both decided to quit the Blue Caps. In Gene's famed but brief appearance in the epic rock 'n' roll movie 'The Girl Can't Help It' the 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' sequence revealed a cool, young Russell Wilaford taking over Gallup's lead guitar role whilst the rhythm guitar vacancy had been filled by an eager Paul Peek. Though Wilaford was also heavily featured in a series of Capitol publicity shots his spell with Gene was short-lived and he never got to play on any Blue Cap recording sessions.

October 1956 - Russell Wilaford replaces Cliff Gallup and Paul Peek replaces Willie Williams.

By October '56, with 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' finally fading from the charts after a massive twenty week run, it was time for more studio work. As an album 'Bluejean Bop' had sold well so Ken Nelson was obviously keen to retain its successful formula. In order to do this. Cliff Gallup accepted an invitation to return for the October sessions in Nashville.

This time more original numbers were recorded and the Blue Caps were wilder than ever. Titles that included the sinister 'Cat Man', 'Pink Thunderbird', 'Crusin', 'Hold Me Hug Me Rock Me' all echoed the sentiments of America's rebellious working-class youth. Only two 'standards' were used this time but both the Delmore Brothers' 'Blues Stay Away From Me' and Al Hibbler's 'Unchained Melody' were given that exceptional Vincent treatment.

On the final day of the October sessions The Jordanares were brought in to add backing vocals to 'Important Words', 'You Better Believe' and 'Five Days Five Days'. Twelve of the fifteen numbers cut were issued in March of the following year as Gene's second album simply entitled 'Gene Vincent And The Blue Caps'.

Gene rounded off 1956 with a long stint at the

Sands Hotel in Las Vegas where his unusually wild stage act backfired on the management as the gamblers left their tables to watch the show rather than helping to swell the Sands coffers! But the strain on Gene's damaged leg was beginning to take its toll. Still in a plaster cast from previous hospitalisation the leg began to bleed regularly and cause Gene considerable pain. Before the end of the year it was clear that Gene needed a long rest.

Coupled with this, a third original Blue Cap, bassist Jack Neal, decided to quit and Sheriff Tex also parted company with Gene at about the same time.

Though 1956 had obviously been a great year for Gene, having seen the launch of his rock 'n' roll career, it had not been without its problems. In a matter of months Gene found himself managerless, without a complete band and in desperate need of medical treatment to his injured leg. In many ways it was a godsend that Gene and The Blue Caps were ordered off the road until a legal dispute over their management had been resolved. Reluctantly returning to naval hospital at least gave him much needed rest as well as giving him time to contemplate what 1957 might have in store.

## DALLAS DAYS

Early 1957 saw Gene badly in need of a new manager and a new band as only Dickie Harrell had remained from the original Blue Caps. It was 'newcomer' Paul Peek who was 'instrumental' in helping Gene shape the second Blue Cap line-up. Paul had played pedal steel with a South Carolina outfit, Country Earl and The Circle E Ranch Gang and was keen for Gene to hear their lead guitarist Johnny Meeks. Gene, still reeling from the loss of Cliff Gallup, was more than impressed with Meeks and quickly signed him up alongside fellow South Carolinian Bill Mack on bass. Peek switched to backing vocals and became one half of the famous Blue Cap 'Clapper-boys' - the other half being taken up by Tommy „Bubba“ Facenda, a neighbor and old pal of Dickie Harrell's. Facenda was a good looking kid of Italian decent who quit school to go on the road with Gene.

After a short tour of Ohio with Sandford dark, Carl Perkins and Roy Orbison, Gene and the Caps found themselves on a week long series of shows in Philadelphia with Eddie Cochran. It was about this time that Bill Mack, after a disagreement with

Gene, was replaced by bassist Bobby Lee Jones. Soon after. Ken Nelson signed an agency deal for Gene with the Dallas based McLemore Artist & Services Bureau. Ed McLemore already handled Sonny James, Buddy Knox and Johnny Carroll. Both Knox and Carroll became close friends with Gene with Carroll even adopting many of Gene's vocal and stage mannerisms as did many of the Dallas based rock 'n' roll bands (for example 'My Little Mama' by Gene Rambo and The Flames is about as close to the Blue Cap sound as any band was or is likely to get!). So Gene Vincent had a new and wilder band and new more efficient management...but what he needed most was a new hit record. Both 'Crazy Legs' and 'Five Days' had surprisingly failed to register as singles but Ken Nelson, undaunted, booked Gene and his Blue Caps into the Capitol Tower in June 1957 to cut some new tracks. During the 19th and 20th of that month Gene cut, alongside other classics such as the menacing 'Rollin' Danny', both sides of each of his next two hit singles. Bernice Bedwell's wonderful rocker 'Lotta Lovin' was coupled with the Bobby Darin ballad 'Wear My Ring' and this strong combination took Gene back into the American Top 10. A tour of Australia in the late summer of '57 with Little Richard and Eddie Cochran was followed by the release of 'Dance To The Bop' which, partly on the strength of being performed live on the Ed. Sullivan Show, gave Gene another hit record.

Despite the success, the burden of heavy touring had forced Dickie Harrell to quit the Blue Caps before the Ed. Sullivan appearance but at Gene's request he reappeared for the performance and can be seen, as a recently discovered clip reveals, standing behind his drums frantically keeping the beat to a wild stage version of this last Stateside hit by Gene Vincent.

December 1957 saw the group back in the studio again recording further material for an album to capitalize on the last two hit records. Fifteen tracks were cut during the sessions with most finding their way on to Gene's third album, 'Gene Vincent Rocks And The Blue Caps Roll' released in March of the following year. For the first time piano was used on a Blue Cap session, being played by Max Lipscomb (later known as Scotty McKay) who had joined Gene principally as a rhythm guitarist just prior to the Ed. Sullivan Show appearance.

By the turn of 1957 changes in the Blue Caps

line-up became commonplace with Gene being unable to keep the same personnel together for more than a few weeks at a time. Shortly after the December sessions Lipscomb, Peek and Facenda left to pursue solo careers. Gene was concerned because he had a new movie (Hot Rod Gang) coming up in which four of his songs were to be featured. He enlisted Grady Owen on rhythm guitar and a 15 year old Juvey Gomez as a replacement for Dickie Harrell who this time quit for good. Peek and Facenda were persuaded to return for the film as their 'Clapper-boy' routine was an indispensable ingredient of the Blue Cap's stage act. Their close-up role flanking Gene on the superb 'Baby Blue' in 'Hot Rod Gang' is a magnificent illustration of the Caps in action at the height of Gene's career.

Just prior to the filming for 'Hot Rod Gang' Gene had once again completed a recording session which subsequently would become regarded as one of the most historic in rock 'n' roll, not because it produced any major hit records, but because Eddie Cochran decided to sit in anonymously and provide backing bass vocals to complement those of Peek and Facenda. This resulted in some of the most exquisite harmonies in rock 'n' roll as they laid down tracks like 'Git It', 'Peace Of Mind', 'The Wayward Wind' and the beautiful 'Now Is The Hour'. Cochran's distinct bass vocals are clearly audible on some eight numbers. Gene also cut, without Eddie's assistance, further epic tracks like 'Rocky Road Blues', 'Dance In The Street' and an imaginative adaption of Gershwin & Heyward's 'Summertime' from Porgy & Bess. Most of these cuts found their way on to what has been considered by many to be the definitive post-Cliff Gallup album, 'A Gene Vincent Record Date'.

Following the 'Record Date' sessions and the filming of 'Hot Rod Gang' the band hit the road again to tour extensively but further line-up changes were inevitable. The strain of touring with the wildest rock 'n' roll outfit whilst at the same time enjoying little or no chart success proved too much for some members of the Blue Caps. As 1958 progressed Blue Caps came and went. By October and Gene's next visit to the Capitol Tower the Caps were nearing their end as a working unit. It was, in fact, the last Blue Caps recording session. Johnny Meeks, now Gene's longest serving Blue Cap, remained on lead guitar but sax session men Jackie Kelso (tenor) and Plas Johnson (baritone) were brought in to

augment the backing options. Gene sounded in as good voice as ever and cut a number of classic recordings, including the evocative ballad, 'The Night Is So Lonely', the equally impressive 'Important Words' and the moving 'Over The Rainbow'. On the rocking side, the highlight of the session was the Johnny Meeks composition 'Say Mama' which is surely the most perfect rock 'n' roll record of all time. Add to this, two brilliant Johnny Burnette songs, 'My Heart' and 'I Got To Get To You Yet' as well as several other very strong originals and the resultant combination seemed full of potential successes.

Sadly, Gene appeared to have lost favor with the d.j.'s and little airplay was given to his future releases. By the end of 1958 the Blue Caps finally fell apart and Gene quit the Dallas based McLemore agency. Another phase of Gene's career had ended and the future seemed bleak.

#### CRAZY TIMES IN TOKYO

Despite the final split of the Blue Caps and a 'lapsed' contract with the McLemore agency, Gene continued to tour extensively. He would either use pick-up bands or The Silhouettes whose drummer, Clayton Watson, introduced Gene to guitarist Jerry Merritt. Merritt became a close friend to Gene and the pair began to tour California and the north-west States. In the summer of 1959 Gene and Jerry took on a three week tour of Japan. Their arrival at Tokyo airport was greeted by over 10,000 ecstatic fans and similar frenzied scenes accompanied each sell-out house throughout the tour.

Following their return from Japan, recording dates were arranged at the Capitol Tower for early August. Fourteen titles were cut between the 3rd and 6th. Apart from Jerry Merritt on lead guitar, the session musicians included jazz bassist Red Callender, Jackie Kelso, once again on sax. Jimmy Johnson on piano and Sandy „Let There Be Drums“ Nelson on percussion. Vocal backing was provided by The Eligibles and the resultant album 'Crazy Times' proved to be one of Gene's most commercial to date.

Rockabilly artist Whitey Pullen was acting as Gene's manager at the time and he and Jerry Merritt wrote 'She She Little Sheila' - a number that would give Gene chart success in the U.K. some two years later. Pullen also wrote 'Everybody's Got A Date But Me' whilst Gene

contributed the tongue-in-cheek 'Darlene' (the lyrics supposedly referring to his current wife), 'Pretty Pearly' and an adaption of the old traditional song 'Green Back Dollar'. Other songs recorded at the August sessions included Bing Crosby's 'Accentuate The Positive' and Fred Rose's 'Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain' alongside hot sax and guitar based rockers like 'Why Don't You People Learn To Drive', 'Hot Dollar', 'Big Fat Saturday Night' and an inspired 'Mitchiko From Tokyo'. The two songs 'Wild Cat' and 'Right Here On Earth' were chosen from the fourteen to make up Gene's next single release. Although a strong pairing in any terms, the single failed to make any impact in the States and likewise the 'Crazy Times' album (Gene's last Stateside Capitol L.P. release) would contribute little towards reviving a fading career in America.

It was time for Gene to move into fresh pastures. In December of 1959 he arrived in London having been invited to headline a host of TV dates on the popular 'Boy Meets Girls' show. Gene's decision to tour the U.K. and appear on British T.V. was crucial. It not only saved him from impending obscurity but opened up his career to a whole new, expectant and adoring European audience.

#### TO BRITAIN AND EUROPE: A NEW ERA

Gene Vincent arrived on British soil on December 6th 1959 to a heroes welcome. Although he had not enjoyed a major hit for over three years, a cult following had grown in Britain based largely on the images conjured up by his many Capitol album and E.P. releases all superbly packaged with threatening and mysterious cover photographs depicting a wild and tortured American rocker. Jack Good, the British impresario who had booked Gene for his 'Boy Meets Girls' TV shows, was less than impressed upon meeting Gene for the first time. Contrary to the wild man image created by the stories of wrecked motel rooms across America, Gene came across as an extremely polite Southern country gentleman, addressing Good as „Sir”.

Good set about changing Gene's image, dressing him from head to toe in black leather and draping a silver chained medallion around his neck. Combined with an exaggerated limp. Gene looked like a latter day personification of Richard 111. Need less to say, not too many of Gene's followers would have realized the Shakespearean

connotations but they did identify with the black leather 'biker' image and Gene's popularity duly soared. Even more so after his demonic appearance on his first 'Boy Meets Girls' show - a TV image that, for those who witnessed it, has failed to diminish even thirty years later!

Gene's early live shows in Britain were equally impressive commencing on December 7th at the Tooting Granada with 'Boy Meets Girls' host Marty Wilde. Later Gene caused a sensation at the Paris Olympia before beginning a long series of one night stands promoting his new U.K. single 'Wild Cat' which reached the British Top 30 in January 1960. To add to the charisma. Gene was joined that month by his old pal Eddie Cochran for a famed but fateful Anglo-American Beat Show put together by Larry Parnes. This eventful tour which culminated tragically with the death of Eddie Cochran in a road accident has been well chronicled over the years - most recently by the Liverpool Empire production of the successful stage musical 'Be-Bop-A-Lula'.

In March 1960 Gene's next U.K. single 'My Heart' followed 'Wild Cat' into the charts going on to peak at No. 16 equaling 'Be-Bop-A-Lula's highest U.K. placing some 3 years earlier. Whilst on tour at about this time Gene and Eddie were working on an arrangement of the old Al Dexter country novelty, 'Pistol Packin' Mama' and plans were made to record the song together. Regrettably Eddie's untimely death prevented the fruition of those plans but Gene did return to the U.K. after Eddie's funeral and cut the song at EMI's Abbey Road Studios on 11th May 1960. Backing was provided by The Beat Boys featuring a young Georgie Fame, who was also touring with Gene, on piano. At the same session Gene also recorded a beautiful ballad, 'Weeping Willow' along with the Norrie Paramor Orchestra. The song was credited to Debbie Lynn but was almost certainly written by Gene (Debbie being his step-daughter by Darlene and Lynn was his sister). 'Pistol Packin' Mama' was released almost immediately, broke into the charts in mid-June and went on to give Gene his, 9. biggest U.K. hit at No. 15.

Gene returned to the States on the strength of a hoax telegram informing him of the death of his daughter Melody. While away, U.K. Capitol attempted to keep Gene's chart successes going by releasing 'Anna-Annabelle' (recorded in 1958) and 'Jezebel' (recorded in 1956). Neither hit big.

The music press quite rightly criticized the release of 'Jezebel' - claiming it to be a retrograde step issuing a song some 3 years after its original recording.

Gene returned to Britain in the early Spring of 1961 armed with a double-sider he had recorded with the Jimmie Haskell Orchestra during his last major session at the Capitol Tower in January 1961. Both 'Mister Lonliness' and 'If You Want My Lovin' were very commercial but neither failed to register.

It wasn't until Capitol decided to delve in the back-catalogue again that Gene found himself back in the U.K. Top 30 chart with 'She She Little Sheila' recorded back in 1959 at the 'Crazy Times' sessions with Jerry Merritt. During this period Gene was touring with a brand new British band, the celebrated Sounds Incorporated. In late July Gene went into the Abbey Road Studios again and cut his last great rocker 'I'm Going Home' with Sounds Incorporated providing a driving sax based backing. It deserved a higher placing in the charts than No. 36 but this powerful release was significant in that it provided Gene with his last chart success on either side of the Atlantic.

Gene was now nearing the end of his spell with Capitol. His last session at the Tower in Hollywood produced his final U.S. single 'Lucky Star' recorded with the Dave Burgess Band. Now a frequent visitor to Britain, Gene returned again towards the end of 1961 to tour and also to appear in the Pop/Trad. movie 'It's Trad. Dad'. Gene recorded the frantic 'Spaceship To Mars' with Sounds Incorporated for the film and also cut a slightly different version with the possible intention of a single release. Although Gene gave an exciting performance (dressed all in white) Capitol saw fit to withhold 'Spaceship To Mars' choosing instead to promote the earlier recorded 'Lucky Star'.

A tour with Brenda Lee in early 1962, hailed as the 'King And Queen Of Rock' tour, continued to give Gene plenty of exposure in Britain where he had by now established an incredibly loyal following amongst rock 'n' roll fans. In July of 1962 Capitol teamed Gene up with producer Bob Barratt to record four songs in a very commercial vein. The first two, 'King Of Fools' (written by Barratt) and a re-worked Twist version of 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' were released in September. Both sides received a fair amount of airplay but Gene's expired work permit prevented him from getting on the road to promote the record despite now

having applied for British citizenship. He did manage to perform the follow-up 'Held For Questioning' on 'Thank Your Lucky Stars' but unfortunately this was some three months after the record's release. Consequently another terrific recording by Gene failed to register.

These failures were not all down to Gene nor his record company, Capitol. Four young lads from Liverpool were beginning to make an impact and by the time Capitol released 'Crazy Beat' in 1963, the Beatles had already chalked up three No. 1 hit singles. Rock 'n' roll and popular music in general would never be quite the same again.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Although Gene's contract with Capitol expired in 1963, E.M.I, did not turn their back on their rock 'n' roll hero. Late in that year he was signed to Columbia for whom he cut four singles and an album.

The first of these was an immaculate version of Arthur Alexander's 'Where Have You Been'. It was bang up to date and was certainly one of the most beautiful songs he ever recorded. Gene also appeared in the Joe Meek movie 'Live It Up' singing 'Temptation Baby', the flip-side to 'Where Have You Been'. Despite an enormous amount of radio and TV promotion 'Where Have You Been' failed to make the charts but the song had improved Gene's credibility no end and had set the scene for a hit making follow-up.

Unfortunately this was not to be the case for the follow-up, a novelty nursery rhyme song performed to a Twist beat, was probably the worst number that Gene ever recorded. 'Humpity Dumpity' shattered his new found credibility. By the time Columbia released 'La-Den-Da-Den-Da-Da' (an adaption of an old Dale Hawkins song) it really was, as the B-side suggested, 'The Beginning Of The End'.

But on the ballroom circuit Gene was still king. The menacing black leather stage act continued to thrill audiences up and down the country and also in France where Gene was tremendously popular. Few people who saw Gene perform at this time have ever forgotten the experience....eyes fixed skyward as though in a trance; face in agonized contortion: gloved hands gripping a defenseless mike stand; left leg slung out behind - it was indeed one of the most

powerful of all rock 'n' roll images.

By 1964 Gene had a new backing band behind him. The Shouts. The album 'Shakin' Up A Storm' which they recorded together in the Spring of 1964 was critically acclaimed. 'Shakin' Up A Storm' found Gene firmly back in the rock 'n' roll mould with several Little Richard covers and a strong re-working of his classic 'Baby Blue'. Along with The Shouts Gene appeared on the highly rated 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On' Granada TV spectacular produced by Johnny Hamp. Gene's stunning performance of 'Say Mama', 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' and a Ray Charles' influenced 'You Are My Sunshine' confirmed, to those who might have doubted it, that rock 'n' roll in the mid-'60's was still alive and well'.

Offstage and away from the recording studio, Gene's private life was becoming a mess. Unpredictable behavior, heavy drinking and continued problems with his bad leg were all conspiring to create enormous difficulties that Gene found hard, if not impossible, to cope with. There were happier moments but the path was never smooth for long. His marriage to an English girl, Margaret Russell, and the birth of daughter Sheri Ann, might have saved the day but sadly, that went wrong too. Following a Summer season at Blackpool in 1965 Gene returned to the States after having been resident here for a number of years.

After a year's silence Gene emerged with a newly cut album on the Hollywood based Challenge label. It featured top session men Glen Campbell, David Gates, Al Casey, Jimmy Seals and Dash Crofts. Released here on Decca's London American label it revealed Gene in excellent form mellowing slightly to include a hint of Country Rock material as well as two numbers composed by his old buddy Jerry Merritt, 'Hurtin' For You Baby' and the biographical 'Born To Be A Rolling Stone'. A couple of singles, 'Bird Doggin' and 'Lonely Street' were taken from the album but, once again, despite a lot of interest from the media neither sold in any great quantity.

In 1969 Gene recorded for John Peel's Dandelion label - a raunchy album entitled 'I'm Back And I'm Proud' on which his former Blue Cap friend Johnny Meeks played lead guitar. In the same year Gene returned to Britain to tour with The Wild Angels completing his visit with a full-house at the London Palladium.

Gene was still very much a 'live' attraction capable of pulling in the crowds to watch his stage act which was still largely dominated by dynamic performances of his old rock 'n' roll material. But behind the scenes, his problems were mounting. He recorded a couple of albums for the L.A. based Kama Sutra label in 1970 and once again returned to Britain for „come-back' tours in '70 and '71. Following his final shambolic visit in September 1971 Gene fled the country an ill and broken man. A week later he was dead. At just 36 years of age Gene had finally succumbed to the consequences of a life on the road fuelled by a never-ending need for alcohol.

Almost two decades later, the music of Gene Vincent is still as popular and influential as ever. This CD compilation of his entire E.M.I. recorded output stands as a testament to a man once known as „THE SCREAMING END“. „THE BLACK LEATHER REBEL“ - “THE ROCK N ROLL IDOL OF MILLIONS“.

STEVE AYNSLEY and ROGER NUNN

Editors of 'Git It' (The magazine of the International GENE VINCENT & EDDIE COCHRAN Fan Club)

**DISCOGRAPHY OF REGULAR ISSUED  
STUDIO RECORDINGS**

**OWEN BRADLEY'S STUDIO,  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4270: 4th MAY 1956

15229 Race With The Devil  
15230 Be-Bop-A-Lula (TK 12 master)  
15231 Woman Love (TK 12 master)  
15232 I Sure Miss You

Personnel: Cliff Gallup - Lead guitar  
Willie Williams - Rhythm guitar  
Jack Neal - Upright bass  
Dickie Harrell - Drums

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4404: 24th JUNE 1956

15547 Jezebel  
15548 Crazy Legs (TK 8 master)  
15547 Peg O' My Heart  
15550 Wedding Bells

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4405: 25th JUNE 1956

15551 Waltz Of The Wind  
15552 Up A Lazy River  
15553 Ain't She Sweet  
15554 Gonna Back Up Baby

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4406: 26th JUNE 1956

15555 Who Slapped John  
15556 Jumps Giggles And Shouts  
15557 BluejeanBop  
15558 I Flipped

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4407: 27th JUNE 1956

15559 Bop Street  
15560 Well I Knocked Bim Bam (TK 8 master)  
15561 You Told A Fib  
15562 Jump Back Honey Jump Back

Personnel: Cliff Gallup - Lead guitar  
Willie Williams - Rhythm guitar  
Jack Neal - Upright bass  
Dickie Harrell - Drums

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4587: 15th OCTOBER  
1956

15978 Teenage Partner (version 1)  
15979 Blues Stay Away From Me  
15980 Five Feet Of Lovin' (version 1)  
15981 Cat Man

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4588: 16th OCTOBER  
1956

15982 Double Talkin ' Baby  
15983 Hold Me Hug Me Rock Me  
15984 Unchained Melody

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4589: 17th OCTOBER  
1956

15986 B-I-Bickey Bi Bo Bo Go (TK 15 master)  
15987 Pink Thunderbird  
15988 Pretty Pretty Baby  
15989 Crusin'

CAPITOL SESSION No. 4590: 18th OCTOBER  
1956

15990 Important Words (version 1)\*  
15991 You Better Believe\*  
15992 Red Bluejeans And A Ponytail  
15993 Five Days Five Days\* (TK 9 master)

Personnel: Cliff Gallup - Lead guitar  
Paul Peek - Rhythm guitar  
Jack Neal - Upright bass  
Dickie Harrell - Drums  
The Jordanaires- Vocal chorus \*

**SELLARS STUDIOS, DALLAS, TEXAS**

MAY 1957

In My Dreams (studio demo)  
Lotta Lovin' (studio demo)

Personnel: unknown

**CAPITOL TOWER, HOLLYWOOD,  
LOS ANGELES**

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6099: 19th JUNE 1957

17207 I Got It  
17208 Wear My Ring (TK 5 master)  
17209 Lotta Lovin' (TK 9 master)  
17210 Rollin' Danny

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6100: 20th JUNE 1957

17220 Time Will Bring You Everything  
17221 True To You (TK 12 master)  
17222 In My Dreams  
17223 Dance To The Bop

Personnel: Johnny Meeks - Lead guitar  
Buck Owens - Rhythm guitar  
Bobby Jones - Bass

Dickie Harrell – Drums  
Tommy Facenda - Clapper  
Boy/Backing vocals  
Paul Peek - Clapper Boy/Backing  
vocals

Personnel: Ronnie Dawson - Lead guitar  
other musicians unknown

CAPITOL TOWER, HOLLYWOOD,  
LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON  
CAPITOL SESSION No. 6368: 6th DECEMBER  
1957  
17820 Your Cheatin' Heart  
17821 Baby Blue (version 1) (TK 7 master)  
17822 Walkin' Home From School (TK 15  
master)  
17823 It's No Lie

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6369: 9th DECEMBER  
1957  
17824 Should I Ever Love Again  
17825 Flea Brain  
17826 Brand New Beat  
17827 Frankie And Johnnie

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6370: 10th DECEMBER  
1957  
17828 You Belong To Me  
17829 Keep It A Secret  
17830 Yes I Love You Baby

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6440: 15th DECEMBER  
1957  
17961 By The Light Of The Silvery Moon  
17979 Right Now  
18035 You'll Never Walk Alone  
18036 I Got A Baby (TK 9 master)

Personnel: Johnny Meeks - Lead guitar  
Max Lipscomb - Rhythm  
guitar/piano  
Bobby Jones - Bass  
Dickie Harrell - Drums  
Paul Peek - Clapper Boy/Backing  
Vocals  
Tommy Facenda - Clapper Boy

SELLARS STUDIOS, DALLAS, TEXAS

JANUAR 1958  
My Love (In Love Again) (studio demo)  
Hey Mama (studio demo)  
Lonesome Boy (studio demo)  
Lady Bug (studio demo)  
The Night Is So Lonely (Version 1) (studio  
demo)  
The Night Is So Lonely (Version 2) (studio  
demo)

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON  
CAPITOL SESSION No. 6687: 25th MARCH  
1958  
18639 Dance In The Street  
18640 Git It\*

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6689: 26th MARCH  
1958  
18650 I Love You  
18651 Teenage Partner (version 2) \*  
18652 Peace Of Mind\*  
18653 Lovely Loretta \*

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6692: 27th MARCH  
1958  
18658 Little Lover  
18659 Rocky Road Blues (TK 24 master)  
18660 Somebody Help Me \*  
18661 Five Feet Of Lovin' (version 2) \*

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6704: 28th MARCH  
1958  
18682 Look What You Gone And Done To Me  
18683 Hey Good Lookin'  
18684 Summertime  
18685 I Can't Help It

CAPITOL SESSION No. 6709: 29th MARCH  
1958  
18708 The Wayward Wind \*  
18709 Now Is The Hour \*

Personnel: Johnny Meeks - Lead guitar  
Grady Owen - Rhythm guitar  
Bobby Jones - Bass  
Clifton Simmons - Piano  
Juvey Gomez - Drums  
Tommy Facenda - Clapper  
Boys/Backing vocals  
Paul Peek - Clapper Boys/Backing  
vocals  
Eddie Cochran - Backing bass  
vocals \*

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON  
CAPITOL SESSION No. 7320: 13th OCTOBER  
1958  
30346 Lonesome Boy (TK 7 master)

30347 You Are The One For Me (TK 9 master)  
30348 Maybe

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7325: 14th OCTOBER  
1958

30364 I I Got To Get To You Yet  
30365 My Heart  
30366 The Night Is So Lonely

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7331: 15th OCTOBER  
1958

30392 Beautiful Brown Eyes (16 TK's / 16  
master)  
30393 Rip It Up (13 TK's / 7 master)  
30394 Maybelline (9 TK's / 9 master)  
30395 High Blood Pressure (10 TK's / 10 master)

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7334: 16th OCTOBER  
1958

30404 In Love Again  
30405 Say Mama  
30406 Be-Bop Boogie Boy  
30407 I Can't Believe You Wanna Leave

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7338: 17th OCTOBER  
1958

30420 Who's Pushing Your Swing  
30421 Anna Annabelle  
30422 Gone Gone Gone

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7346: 20th OCTOBER  
1958

30440 I Might Have Known (10 TK's / 10 master)  
30441 Important Words (version 2) (13 TK's / 10  
master)  
30442 My Baby Don't 'Low  
30443 Over The Rainbow

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7349: 21th OCTOBER  
1958

30454 Ready Teddy  
30455 Vincent's Blues

Personnel: Johnny Meeks - Lead guitar  
Grady Owen - Bass guitar  
Clifton Simmons - Piano  
Clyde Pennington - Drums  
Jackie Kelso - Tenor Sax  
Plas Johnson - Baritone Sax

PRODUCER: KEN NELSON

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7873: 3rd AUGUST  
1959

32153 Pretty Pearly  
32154 Accentuate The Positive

32155 She She Little Sheila  
32156 Darlene (Mono version 1)  
Darlene (Stereo version 2)

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7874: 4th AUGUST  
1959

32157 Why Don't You People Learn To Drive  
32158 Crazy Times  
32159 Greenback Dollar

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7878: 5th AUGUST  
1959

32173 Big Fat Saturday Night  
32174 Wild Cat  
32175 Hot Dollar  
32176 Right Here On Earth (TK 7 master)

CAPITOL SESSION No. 7881: 6th AUGUST  
1959

32187 Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain  
32188 Everybody's Got A Date But Me  
32189 Mitchiko From Tokyo

Personnel: Jerry Merritt - Lead guitar  
Red Callender - Bass  
Sandy Nelson - Drums  
Jimmy Johnson - Piano  
Jackie Kelso - Tenor Sax  
The Eligibles - Backing vocals

EMI STUDIOS, ABBEY ROAD, LONDON

PRODUCER: NORRIE PARAMOR

CAPITOL SESSION No. 9463: 11th MAY 1960  
33863 Pistol Packin' Mama \*  
33864 Weeping Willow \*\*

Personnel: \* The Beat Boys: Georgie Fame -  
Piano  
\* Arrangement: Eddie Cochran  
Colin Green - Lead guitar  
Vince Cooze - Bass  
Red Reece - Drums  
Billy McVay - Tenor Sax  
\*\* The Norrie Paramor Orchestra &  
Chorus

CAPITOL TOWER, HOLLYWOOD,  
LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: KARL ENGERMANN

CAPITOL SESSION No. 9874: 10th JANUARY  
1961

35187 Crazy Beat (9 TK's / 9 master)

35188 I'm Gonna Catch Me A Rat (13 TK's / 13 master)  
35189 It's Been Nice (13 TK's / 13 master)  
35190 That's The Trouble With Love (14 TK's / 14 master)

CAPITOL SESSION No. 9875: 11th JANUARY 1961

35191 Good Lovin' (14 TK's / 14 master)  
35192 Mister Lonliness (5 TK's / 5 master)  
35193 Teardrops (18 TK's / 18 master)  
35194 If You Want My Lovin' (19 TK's / 15 master)

Personnel: The Jimmie Haskell Orchestra and Chorus  
(including Scotty Turner: Lead guitar)

EMI STUDIOS, ABBEY ROAD, LONDON

PRODUCER: NORRIE PARAMOR  
CAPITOL SESSION No. 10482: 27th JULY 1961  
37022 I'm Going Home  
37023 Love Of A Man

Personnel: Sounds Incorporated:  
John St. John - Lead guitar  
Wes Hunter - Bass  
Barrie Cameron -  
Keyboards/Baritone Sax  
Alan Holmes - Tenor Sax  
Tony Newman - Drums  
Griff West - Tenor Sax

CAPITOL TOWER, HOLLYWOOD,  
LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER- NICK VENET  
CAPITOL SESSION No. 10321: 18th OCTOBER 1961  
36590 Baby Don't Believe Him  
36591 Lucky Star

Personnel: The Dave Burgess Band

EMI STUDIOS, ABBEY ROAD, LONDON

PRODUCER: NORRIE PARAMOR  
CAPITOL SESSION (unknown No.): 30th NOVEMBER 1961  
36385 Spaceship To Mars (TK 31/34 master)  
36386 There I Go Again (12 TK's / 8 master)

Personnel: Sounds Incorporated  
(same line-up as 27th July 1961)

N.B.A. soundtrack version of 'Spaceship To Mars' was also recorded at this session - different to the above Master. Recorded for the Columbia picture 'It's Trad, Dad!'

PRODUCER: BOB BARRATT  
CAPITOL SESSION (Unknown No.): 3rd JULY 1962

37947 King Of Fools (TK 7 master)  
37948 You're Still In My Heart  
37949 Held For Questioning (TK 2 master)  
37994 Be-Bop-A-Lula '62 (TK 2 master)

Personnel: The Charles Blackwell Orchestra & Chorus

OLYMPIC SOUND STUDIOS, LONDON

COLUMBIA SESSION: 14th NOVEMBER 1963  
27215 Temptation Baby  
27216 Where Have You Been  
27517 The Beginning Of The End

Personnel: The Bill Shepherd Orchestra

COLUMBIA SESSION: NOVEMBER 1963 (Exact date unknown)  
27514 La Den Da Den Da Da  
27274 Humpity Dumpity  
27275 A Love 'Em And Leave 'Em Kinda Guy

Personnel: The Ivor Raymonde Orchestra

COLUMBIA SESSION: 16th MARCH 1964  
Love Love Love  
Lavender Blue  
26663 You Are My Sunshine

COLUMBIA SESSION: 15th APRIL 1964  
Slippin' & Slidin'  
26662 Private Detective  
Shimmy Shammy Shingle  
Long Tall Sally  
Good Golly Miss Molly

COLUMBIA SESSION: 23rd JUNE 1964  
Send Me Some Lovin'  
Hey Hey Hey Hey  
Another Saturday Night

COLUMBIA SESSION: 24th JUNE 1964  
Someday

Baby Blue  
Suzie-Q

Sessions from 16th March –24th June 1964:  
Personnel: The Shouts: Tim Bates - Lead  
guitar

John Reece - Bass  
Jim Field - Tenor Sax  
Eric Baker - Organ/Piano/Celeste  
Victor Clarke - Drums

CHALLENGE '4 STARS MUSIC CO STUDIO,  
HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: JOE E. JOHNSON and GENE  
VINCENT  
CHALLENGE SESSIONS: JUNI 1966 (Exact date  
unknown)

1406 Hurtin' For You Baby  
I'm a lonesome Fugitive  
1405 Born To Be A Rolling Stone  
Hi Lili, Hi Lo  
Poor Man's Prison  
Words And Music  
1339 Bird Doggin' \*  
1342 I've Got My Eyes On You \*  
Love Is A Bird  
1340 Ain't That Too Much  
1341 Lonely Street \*  
Am I That Easy To Forget  
(\* possibly on 15th June 1966  
A Piece At A Time (studio demo)

Personnel: Arrangement: Dave Gates  
Dave Burgess  
Al Casey  
Glen Campbell (possibly on lead  
guitar)  
Jimmy Seals  
Dash Croft  
David Gates  
and unknown

These are the only known matrix numbers  
available as the tracks showing them were issued  
as singles. It may be assumed that the missing  
numbers fall in the sequence 1339 - 1406.

HOLLYWOOD SOUND STUDIO, LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER : JIM and JUDY PEWTER  
THE PLAYGROUND SESSION: 25th JULY 1967  
A Piece At A Time (studio demo)

Personnel: unknown, most likely:  
Louis Morell - Rhythm guitar  
Joe Osborne - Bass guitar  
Jim Trexel - Drums

R2076 Story Of The Rockers  
R2075 Pickin' Poppies

Personnel: Arrangement : John D'Andrea  
Al Casey - Lead guitar  
Louis Morell - Rhythm guitar  
Joe Osborne - Bass guitar  
Jim Trexel - Drums  
Larry McGuire, Joel Porter, John  
Hammond, Robert Knight - Jackie  
Frisco and Gene Vincent - Backing  
vocals

SALLE DE LA CITE, RENNES, FRANCE

PRODUCER: GENE VINCENT  
BAND REHEARSAL  
23th SEPTEMBER 1967  
I'm Going Home #1  
Hi Lili Hi Lo #1  
Born To Be A Rolling Stone #1  
Good Golly Miss Molly  
Baby Blue  
Rocky Road Blues  
Be-Bop-A-Lula  
Say Mama  
Long Tall Sally  
I'm Going Home #2  
Hi Lili Hi Lo #2  
Born To Be A Rolling Stone #2

Personnel: Le Rock 'N' Roll Band:  
Bruno Pezzali - Lead guitar  
Christian Jamet - Rhythm guitar  
Gilles Vignal - Bass guitar  
Jean Drapier - Drums

G&M STUDIOS, HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: GENE VINCENT  
Early Summer (Exact date unknown)  
Rainy Day Sunshine  
Green Grass  
Mr. Love  
Roll Over Beethoven

Personnel: Jerry Merritt - Lead guitar  
and unknown

ELEKTRA STUDIO, LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: KIM FOWLEY  
THE DANDELION SESSIONS: AUGUST 1969  
(Exact date unknown)  
Rockin' Robin  
In The Pines  
Be-Bop-A-Lula '69  
Rainbow At Midnight  
Black Letter  
White Lightning  
Sexy Ways  
Ruby Baby  
Lotta Lovin'  
Circle Never Broken  
(I Heard That) Lonesome Whistle \*  
Scarlet Ribbons  
(\* 16th August 1969)

Personnel: Arrangement: Skip Battin  
Johnny Meeks - Lead guitar  
Mars Bonfire - Rhythm guitar  
Skip Battin - Bass guitar  
Jim Grant - Piano  
Grant Johnson - Keyboards  
Red Rhodes - Dobro/Steel guitar  
Jimmy Gordon - Drums  
Linda Ronstadt - second voice

THE SOUND FACTORY STUDIO, LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: TOM AYRES  
THE KAMA SUTRA SESSIONS: 5th to 8th  
MARCH 1970  
I Need Woman's Love  
Slow Times Comin'  
Danse Colinda  
Geese  
500 Miles Away From Home  
Listen To The Music  
If Only You Could See Me Today  
A Million Shades Of Blue  
Tush Hog

Personnel: Arrangement : Dave Hassinger  
Skipper Maxfeldt - Lead guitar  
Bob Rafkin - Rhythm guitar  
Harvey Kagan - Bass guitar  
Augie Meyers - Organ/Piano  
Atwood Allen - Piano  
Johnny Perez - Drums  
Todd Everett, Chris Darrow, Scotty  
McKay and Jackie Frisco - Backing

vocals

CRYSTAL SOUND STUDIO, HOLLYWOOD,  
LOS ANGELES

PRODUCER: TOM AYRES  
THE KAMA SUTRA SESSIONS: 17th OCTOBER  
1970  
How I Love Them Old Songs  
High On Life  
North Carolina Line  
You Can Make It If You Try  
There Is Something On Your Mind

THE KAMA SUTRA SESSIONS: 19/20th  
OCTOBER 1970  
Our Souls  
The Day The World  
Turned Blue  
Boppin' The Blues  
Looking Back  
Oh Lonesome Me  
The Woman In Black

Personnel: Arrangement : Dave Hassinger  
Al Casey - Lead guitar  
Richard Bennet - Rhythm guitar  
Mark Dorenson - Guitar  
Larry Knechtal - Piano  
Don Randy - Piano  
unknown - Celeste  
Jack Rin - Drums  
Jackie Frisco - Backing vocals

MORGAN SOUND STUDIO, LONDON

PRODUCER: DONNIE MARCHAND  
THE B & C RECORDS SESSION: FEBRUARY  
1971 (Exact date unknown)  
Say Mama '71  
I'm Movin' On

Personnel: Terry Clemson - Lead guitar  
Jimmy Wallis - Bass guitar  
John Earl 'Hot Pants' Warren -  
Drums