



Robbie Lane And The Disciples

BIOGRAPHY



Robbie Lane was leader of one of Toronto's most popular bands Robbie Lane & The Disciples which was made up of members from various Toronto suburban bands in the dawn of the early 60's. Robbie Lane And The Disciples received their big break in December 1963 when Ronnie Hawkins hired them as insurance for the soon to be defecting Hawks (who indeed did quit Hawkins' side to become The Band).

Hawkins would have the Disciples playing upstairs at the Hawks' Nest while the Hawks themselves played downstairs at the Le Coq d'Or with Hawkins himself running sets between the two floors.

With the departure of The Band, Robbie Lane And The Disciples ran double shift as Ronnie Hawkins And The Hawks while also maintaining their own name sake for recording purposes (though they did record three singles with Hawkins as The Hawks).

Their first Disciples recording was on Hawkins' Hawk Records label called "Fannie Mae" and was produced by Scott 'Professor Piano' Cushnie. The flipside, "She's The One", was a Troiano tune, but he would soon leave the group to form Mandala (and eventually move onto Bush, The James Gang and The Guess Who). He was replaced by Terry Bush (Dianne Brooks, Jack Hardin & The Silhouettes).

The follow-up single in 1964 was "Ain't Love A Funny Thing" and was produced by Hawkins alumnus Fred Carter and made the song a nominal hit.

By June 1965 Robbie Lane And The Disciples parted company with Ronnie Hawkins (who would soon replace the band with musicians known better as Crowbar). They hit a slow year following this but came back publicly as house band for CTV-TV's µlt's Happening' show.

Capitol Records saw them and soon signed them for an album and several singles of material. The first of these singles was the Dion (DiMucci) song "Sandy" in 1965 followed by "What Am I Gonna Do?" and finally the band's first original song released as an A-side, "You Gotta Have Love", both from 1966. The band would also take to recording the theme song "It's Happening" as a single in 1967.





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The music director for the TV show was none other than Dr. Music himself, Doug Riley, who helped the Disciples land a television advertisement jingle for Baby Ruth chocolate bars. The song was so catchy that Lane, Bush, Trach, Shearer and Riley recorded the song and released the song "Baby Ruth" under the pseudonym The Butterfingers.

By the end of 60's, Robbie Lane And The Disciples had become out of step with musical trends and the band split up. Lane, himself, continued on with 'It's Happening' before embarking on a moderately successful solo career.

He recorded a solo album in Nashville in 1968 but the material never materialized until the 'Backtrax - Best Of Robbie Lane & The Disciples' package by Pacemaker Records in 1996. His true solo career hit its stride in 1974 with the single "M'Lady" which was written by Brian Allen (of the group Toronto and Attic Records executive). The song was actually just Lane singing over the backing tracks of Allen's old band Rose who had recorded the material but never released the song.

His next outing was the Joey Miller song "Missing You" featuring full orchestration and vocal accompaniment by Dianne Brooks and Rhonda Silver.

In the 1980's the original version of Robbie Lane And The Disciples reunited and in the 90's Lane, Bush and Trach continue on with new members to entertain at Toronto clubs frequently. The band released a live album in 1996 called 'Ain't Dead Yet'.

