

THE TRIVIA GUYS

Example from Canadian Music Fast Facts

Five Man Electrical Band

Background:

First known as the Staccatos, the group formed in Ottawa in 1963, headed by local DJ Dean Hagopian, with Brian Rading on bass, Les Emmerson and Vern Craig on guitars and drummer Rick Belanger. Hagopian and Craig later left and drummer Mike Belanger (Rick's brother) and keyboard player Ted Gerow joined. In 1969 the name was changed to The Five Man Electrical Band. Some early difficulties put the band on the verge of breaking up. They were in the middle of a softball game in Ottawa when they got word that one of their singles was on its way up the chart. The group set up base in Los Angeles, and enjoyed great popular success until it folded in 1972-73.

Claims to Fame:

The band cut six LPs and a stack of 45s, including *Half Past Midnight*, *Moonshine*, *Werewolf*, *I'm A Stranger Here* and *Absolutely Right*. Their biggest hit was *Signs*, (the song they heard about at the softball game) which sold 1.5-million copies, and became a North American anti-establishment anthem and went Top 5 in the U.S. Their other singles did well on North American charts. The band also played for the Queen in Ottawa in 1967.

Musical Style:

Rock and roll with strong vocals and a hint of country.

When Last Heard From:

After the band split, Emmerson stayed in L.A. where he released singles *Control Of Me* and *Cry Your Eyes Out*. He lives in Ottawa where he's a partner in a music production company. Gerow was U.S. singer Bobby Vee's music director before settling in Ottawa as a freelance record producer, working with artists such as Canadian Carroll Baker. Rading was renovating houses and playing with two local groups in Ottawa. Rick Belanger went solo in L.A. with little success and was installing computer cable systems in Toronto, Mike played with an Ottawa band for 14 years before joining a courier company. The Five Man

Electrical Band has reunited on several occasions for concerts. In 1991, the song *Signs* was a big hit for America heavy metal band Tesla, which released the song as a single from its album *Five Man Acoustical Jam*.

Quotable Quote:

Emmerson on writing *Signs*: ``We were driving along a highway in the U.S. and there were advertising signs everywhere. I thought, `what a shame to cover up this lovely country.' "

Rading on hearing about *Signs* doing well on the charts: "I had gone to get beer to toast the fact the ball game was over and so was the band. Then we got a call from one of our people. He said the record was on its way and we'd better get going."

Fabulous Fact:

Lack of of U.S. success that led the band to almost splitting in 1971. *Signs*, which was earlier released almost unnoticed by Bobby Vee and as flip side of another Five Man record, changed all that, making the band one of Canada's most popular in the early 70s.

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