

= The Music Machine =

The Music Machine was an American garage rock band formed in Los Angeles , California in 1966 . Fronted by chief songwriter and lead vocalist Sean Bonniwell , the band cultivated a characteristically dark and rebellious image reflected in an untamed musical approach . Sometimes it made use of distorted guitar lines and hallucinogenic organ parts , punctuated by Bonniwell 's distinctively throaty vocals . Although they only briefly managed to attain national chart success with two singles , the Music Machine is today considered by many critics to be a one of the groundbreaking acts of the 1960s . Their style is now recognized as a pioneering force in proto @-@ punk ; yet within a relatively short period of time , they began to employ more complex lyrical and instrumental arrangements that went beyond the typical garage band format .

In 1965 , the band came together as a folk rock trio known as the Raggamuffins , before expanding to the quintet that was later rechristened the Music Machine . The group was known for their style of dress , clothing themselves in all @-@ black attire . In 1966 , the Music Machine was signed to Original Sound , and released its first single " Talk Talk " in the latter half of the year , with it reaching the Top 20 of the Billboard Hot 100 . Their debut album ( Turn On ) The Music Machine and the moderate hit " The People In Me " followed . The band 's original lineup fragmented in late 1967 after managerial and financial disputes . Bonniwell reassembled the group under the name The Bonniwell Music Machine . In 1968 , a second album , The Bonniwell Music Machine appeared , but the group disbanded in early 1969 .

= = History = =

= = = Beginnings ( 1965 ? 1966 ) = = =

The nucleus of the band was formed when Sean Bonniwell ( lead vocals , rhythm guitar ) took part in a jam session with Keith Olsen ( bass guitar ) and Ron Edgar ( drums ) ? both of whom he met in the folk music circuit . Bonniwell , already a practiced " folky , " possessed prior experience as a vocalist with the Wayfarers . The traditional folk combo had already enjoyed some regional success : releasing three albums , and building on the experience of Bonniwell who insisted on the importance of rehearsal . As Bonniwell traveled and recorded with the group , he began penning some material that would later surface with the Music Machine . However , still influenced by acts now considered passé , the Wayfarers ' musical conservatism became stifling to Bonniwell who wanted to explore the type of harder , cutting @-@ edge stylistic possibilities that he eventually would find in rock . Prior to meeting , Olsen had previously performed in Gale Garnett 's backing band , and Edgar was a member of a bohemian folk quintet called the GoldeBriars . With the GoldeBriars , Edgar contributed to their unreleased third album that was originally intended for distribution on Epic Records , but the group disbanded before it could be released .

In 1965 , the three formed their own folk rock group , the Raggamuffins , and began performing in Los Angeles with a repertoire that saw the band embrace a more unorthodox style , and depart from their traditional roots . The group also recorded four songs that went unreleased until the 2000 album , Ignition , which represented the transitional phase before the band developed into the Music Machine . Bonniwell and Olsen were enthusiastically experimenting with musical textures while the band arranged strict rehearsal regimens in Bonniwell 's garage . The Raggamuffins purchased hardware for a homemade fuzz @-@ tone switch . From the onset Bonniwell ensured the group resonated like no other by instructing his bandmates to lower their instruments from the standard E note to D @-@ flat . As a result of the adjustment , the Raggamuffins were given a bottom @-@ heavy and ominous sound . In addition , the group began dressing noire , while sporting dyed @-@ black hair , and the trademark single leather glove that presented an eye @-@ catching and unified band image , which would later become influential with certain 1970s punk acts .

Auditions were held in early 1966 to expand the group , resulting in the recruitment of Mark Landon ( lead guitar ) and Doug Rhodes ( organ ) , previously a session musician for the Association . To

reflect on the revamped line @-@ up , Bonniwell changed the band 's name to the Music Machine . Another purpose for coining the name , Bonniwell explained , was " I seguewayed [ sic ] all the original material with musical segueways [ sic ] . So we would be on stage for like an hour and ten minutes , wall @-@ to @-@ wall music just nonstop , which is why I called us the Music Machine " . The band built a name for itself with its performances in local clubs in Los Angeles . With Bonniwell as the de facto leader and creative force of the band , the Music Machine began to develop a blend of gritty 60s punk and psychedelia , and a repertoire encompassing Bonniwell 's self @-@ penned material along with some cover songs . The band 's sound was highlighted by the authoritative and versatile vocals provided by Bonniwell , with an energized technique that juxtaposed the styles of Mick Jagger and Sky Saxon . Unlike these two contemporaries , Bonniwell possessed unusually good intonation in long @-@ sustained passages , and the ability to breakdown phrases into a series of slow pulsations . The Music Machine 's artistic stance was also highlighted by Landon 's wiry guitar playing , Olsen 's reverberant bass , and Edgar 's cymbal @-@ punctuated drumming , which gave the band a harder @-@ edged sound than many of their contemporaries .

= = = Commercial success ( 1966 ? 1967 ) = = =

Record producer Brian Ross just happened upon the Music Machine at Hollywood Legion Lanes , a bowling alley that was an early stomping ground for the group , and signed them to a recording contract with Original Sound . On July 30 , 1966 , the band entered RCA Studios in Los Angeles to record the Bonniwell originals " Talk Talk " and " Come on In " , which was initially going to be the A @-@ side for the group 's debut single . Bonniwell had composed " Talk Talk " a year prior to forming the band , and the studio time was marked by the Music Machine 's collective input aimed toward tightening the structure of its arrangements , including the two @-@ note fuzz guitar riffs and Edgar 's precise drumming technique . By virtue of the group 's dedication to rehearsal , recording sessions concluded with the Music Machine requiring only three takes to complete the two songs . Though the band was satisfied with the acetate to " Come on In " , the members were convinced " Talk Talk " would propel them into the national charts .

" Talk Talk " was released on September 10 , 1966 on Original Sound , and propelled to number 15 on the Billboard Hot 100 . It also peaked at number 21 on Cashbox and number 18 on Record World . The song 's relatively short time @-@ length ? a mere one minute and 56 seconds ? made " Talk Talk " a favorable stable on Top 40 radio and its competing underground FM stations . The Music Machine 's hit was arguably the most radical single to appear on mainstream broadcasting in 1966 , the phenomenon described by music historian Richie Unterberger as a " rally cry to social alienation with a mixture of sarcasm , rebellion , self @-@ pity , and paranoia " . Indeed , Bonniwell 's progressive lyrics and arrangements have been attributed to influencing the Doors and Iron Butterfly , as well as future punk bands . After the single 's release , the Music Machine embarked on a grueling three @-@ month tour across the U.S. , packaged with the Beach Boys , Question Mark and the Mysterians , and Clyde McPhatter . It concluded with the group receiving a poor response from the more conservative southern crowds , who criticized the band 's black outfits . Nonetheless , for the most part , their unified image served well for the Music Machine 's national recognition , especially as the group made numerous appearances on the television programs Where the Action Is , American Bandstand , and Shindig ! .

After their long national tour , the Music Machine returned to the studio to record their debut album ( Turn On ) The Music Machine . Much to the disapproval of Bonniwell , his original material had to compete with dispensable cover versions of " Cherry , Cherry " , " Taxman " , " See See Rider " , and " 96 Tears " , all chosen by their record label with an expectation that the well @-@ known songs would increase record sales . One interpretation voluntarily selected by the band was a slow , moody , fuzz @-@ laden arrangement of " Hey Joe " which bears a strong resemblance to Jimi Hendrix 's later version . Bonniwell first heard the folk standard in 1962 at a club in Hermosa Beach , and was convinced the tune 's tempo was too fast , as he unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Wayfarers to record a slower version . He revisited the concept with altered lyrics after hearing Tim Rose 's regionally successful rendition in early 1966 . The throaty vocals , most evidently on " Hey

Joe ", Bonniwell blames on recording " the Turn On album after a 30 @-@ day tour . Mark 's fingers were literally bleeding . I could hardly even speak , much less sing " . Despite the album 's shortcomings , ( Turn On ) The Music Machine managed to reach number 75 on the Billboard 200 . On January 21 , 1967 , a song taken from the album , " The People In Me " , was issued as the group 's second single but stalled at number 66 nationally after the band 's management angered radio executives for initially making the song exclusively available to a rival station .

= = = The Bonniwell Music Machine ( 1967 ? 1969 ) = = =

Immediately after ( Turn On ) The Music Machine was released , the band left for another U.S. tour , despite pleas by the group to arrange an appearance at the Monterey Pop Festival . In the small off @-@ periods in their hard @-@ pressed schedule , the Music Machine demoed a new batch of Bonniwell originals at RCA Studios in New York City and Cosimo Matassa 's facility in New Orleans , before polishing the tunes back in Los Angeles . From the sessions emerged the group 's third single " Double Yellow Line " , which was released in April 1967 , and bubbled under the Billboard Hot 100 at number 111 . The subsequent release , " Eagle Never Hunts the Fly " failed to chart , but is often described as Bonniwell 's tour de force ? a tune Ross praised as " sonically compelling works and a lot to listen to , for the time . It was the kind of thing you just didn 't hear , you almost worried about getting those sounds onto a 45 " .

In May 1967 , the original lineup recorded together for the final time , completing " Astrologically Incompatible " , " Talk Me Down " , and " The Day Today " . One problem that lead to the band 's first breakup was the Music Machine name was actually owned by Ross , as a part of their production deal , awarding the group with little to no royalties . Leaving Bonniwell to carry on the project , Olsen , Edgar , and Rhodes went on to join the Millennium , a sunshine pop group conceived by singer @-@ songwriter Curt Boettcher and Olsen . The Millennium recorded the album Begin in 1968 before disbanding . The three former members also took part in Boettcher 's next production , the studio group Sagittarius , releasing Present Tense , coupled with the moderately successful single " My World Fell Down " , before Edgar and Rhodes departed . Olsen stayed on board to record Sagittarius ' second album , The Blue Marble , and subsequently forged a successful career as a record producer in the 1970s .

Undeterred , Bonniwell successfully negotiated his recording contract with Original Sound be transferred to Warner Bros. Records , in hopes of finding a greater degree of independence . The Music Machine 's spell with Original Sound was drawing to a conclusion , though the company did release " Hey Joe " as a single in 1968 in an attempt to cash @-@ in on Hendrix 's success with the song . There was also the Bonniwell solo project in association with producer Paul Buff that resulted in the rare " Nothing Is Too Good for My Car " single being put out under the name the Friendly Torpedoes . Writer Greg Russo , who composed the liner notes for the single 's remastered release , explains the side @-@ project was initiated during a confusing transitional phase for Bonniwell that also generated the tune " Citizen Fear " , which did not receive distribution until the Ignition album in 2000 . Free from company pressure , Bonniwell formed a new band , rechristened The Bonniwell Music Machine , with session musicians Ed Jones on bass guitar , Harry Garfield on organ , Alan Wisdom on lead guitar , and Jerry Harris on drums .

In March 1967 , Bonniwell and Ross ushered in the new lineup at United Western Records to record the second album The Bonniwell Music Machine . The recording and mixing process was painstakingly masterminded almost solely by Bonniwell , who was appreciative of his new bandmates ' efforts to develop the album 's concept , but disillusioned by the project 's lack of cohesion . He further explains that the " Warner Brothers album has such an eclectic approach ; each track is ( was ) a singular , studio invention . Not only was my songwriting divergent , but my approach to recording was exploratory as well " . Six of the album 's tracks were holdovers from the first lineup 's sessions at Cosimo Matassa 's studio and RCA Studios . This resulted in a hodgepodge of musical styles , including exploratory approaches toward psychedelia and soft rock . On February 10 , 1968 , The Bonniwell Music Machine was released with little commercial success . Consequently , the Bonniwell Music Machine was largely forgotten by the general public and the

second lineup fragmented in July 1968 .

= = = Disbandment and aftermath = = =

One final version of the Bonniwell Music Machine was assembled with a revolving door of musicians . Two more singles were released on the Warner Bros. label with little notice , before " Advice and Consent " , the group 's final single , was distributed on Bell Records in March 1969 . Disenchanted by the music industry and having to tour against imitation Music Machine groups , Bonniwell gave up the rights to the band 's name and signed on to Capitol Records as a solo artist . Under the name T.S. Bonniwell , he recorded the album Close , which saw a poetically @-@ inclined Bonniwell explore string and orchestral arrangements . Following the album 's release , Bonniwell departed on what he called his " westernized guru era " ? studying eastern mysticism and practicing meditation and vegetarianism .

The band was all but forgotten after their dissolution , but the Music Machine and their music experienced a revival of interest in the late @-@ 1980s . It began with Rhino Records featuring tracks on the Nuggets compilation albums Nuggets Volume 1 : The Hits and Nuggets , Volume 2 : Punk , before releasing the album The Best of the Music Machine in 1984 . Other compilations such as Beyond the Garage , The Very Best of the Music Machine , and Ignition have added to the Music Machine 's return to the public 's interest . In addition , " Talk Talk " and " Double Yellow Line " appear on the 1998 expanded box @-@ set of Nuggets : Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era , 1965 ? 1968 .

In 2000 , Bonniwell published his autobiography Beyond the Garage , which recalled his experiences with the Music Machine and his life after the group 's disbandment . Aside from a few live performances with the Larksmen and a guest appearance on their 2006 album , Bonniwell never returned to an active music career , though he claimed to have penned over 300 songs after his tenure with the Music Machine . On December 20 , 2011 , Bonniwell died of lung cancer at a medical center in Visalia , California ; he was 71 years @-@ old . Drummer Ronald " Ron " Edgar died on February 23 , 2015 at the age of 68 .

= = Discography = =

#### Studio albums

( Turn On ) The Music Machine ( 1966 )

The Bonniwell Music Machine ( 1968 )

#### Extended plays

Talk Talk ( 1967 )

#### Compilation albums

The Best of the Music Machine ( 1984 )

The Music Machine ( 1994 )

Beyond the Garage ( 1995 )

Rock ' N ' Roll Hits ( 1997 )

Turn On : The Best of the Music Machine ( 1999 )

Ignition ( 2000 )

The Ultimate Turn On ( 2006 )

Rarities , Vol . 1 : Last Singles & Demos ( 2014 )

Rarities , Vol . 2 : Early Mixes & Rehearsals ( 2014 )

Re @-@ Ignition ( 2015 )

#### Singles

" Talk Talk " b / w " Come on In " ( 1966 )

" The People In Me " b / w " Masculine Intuition " ( 1967 )

" Double Yellow Line " b / w " Absolutely Positively " ( 1967 )

" The Eagle Never Hunts the Fly " b / w " I 've Loved You " ( 1967 )

" Hey Joe " b / w " Taxman " ( 1967 )

" Advise and Consent " b / w " Mother Nature , Father Earth " ( 1969 )

As The Bonniwell Music Machine

" Bottom of the Soul " b / w " Astrologically Incompatible " ( 1967 )

" Me , Myself and I " b / w " Soul Love " ( 1968 )

" Tin Can Beach " b / w " Time Out for a Daydream " ( 1968 )

" You 'll Love Me Again " b / w " To the Light " ( 1968 )

" Point of No Return " b / w " King Mixer " ( 1997 )

Other

" Nothing 's Too Good for My Car " b / w " So Long Ago " ( 1968 , as the Friendly Torpedos )