

St. Louis Union started on Blues Kick



The six-piece Union (above) formed in Manchester have been together ever since

The general impression among the pop public is that The St. Louis Union owe everything to a beat group contest.

"It certainly speeded things up a bit", said lead vocalist Tony Cassidy. "But we don't owe everything to the victory! I don't want to seem ungrateful. It's just that before the competition got under way we were signed up by Kennedy Street Enterprises and there was a good chance that we'd get a recording contract anyway."

Things have got rather out of perspective. The St. Louis Union have been together as a group for 18 months, and they made their mark as an outfit with a lot of potential long before the competition even began.

SCHOOLDAYS

The four founder-members of the group are organist Dave Tomlinson, bass player John Nichols, lead guitarist Keith Miller, and Tony. They have all been friends since schooldays in Manchester . . . and little did they know when they were in the upper fifth, that in time, they were to become one of the hottest attractions in that area.

The next member to join the four was a

drummer—Dave Webb. Then came tenor-sax player Alex Kirby. And this original six-piece line-up has remained the same ever since. No personnel changes at all.

"We started off on a blues kick," recalled Tony, "something like Alexis Korner and Long John Baldry, and used to get write-ups in purist magazines, and so on. But we progressed, and have now reached the stage where we specialise in 'Soul' music on stage."

The six now do numbers like "Shake And Fingerpop" by Junior Walker, "Respect" by Otis Redding, "Don't Fight It" by Wilson Pickett, "Everything's Gonna Be Alright" by Willie Mitchell, and "The Duck", a new American dance craze disc recorded originally by Bobby Freeman and Jackie Lee.

The group go all out to please the audiences wherever they play—and these days it's mainly at clubs and ballrooms, so a good, solid dancing beat is first and foremost.

"GIRL" — MISLEADING

So really their first release could never have been more misleading. "Girl" was found for them by their A and R man Peter Sullivan who, of course, heard it on the "Rubber Soul"

long-player (before it was released). It was played to Peter by George Martin.

Before this song appeared, the group had been in the recording studio several times—but were having trouble finding good material.

However, the group will get their opportunity to record some of their "Soul" favourites, soon. Preparation for their first long-player is under way and Tony mentioned that it will contain many of the numbers that are popular with their fans on stage.

Equipment-wise, this is how the boys line-up:—

Tony Cassidy (lead vocalist) uses a Shure microphone through a Vox 100 watt with two cabinets each containing 2 x 12 in. speakers.

Keith Miller (lead guitar) plays a Fender Stratocaster with a Vox 100-watt amp.

John Nichols (bass) plays a Fender Jazz model with a 100 watt Vox amp.

Alex Kirby (tenor saxophone) plays a Selmer Mark 6.

Dave Tomlinson (organ) plays a Hammond with a Leslie speaker unit.

Dave Webb (drums) has a set of Slingerland.

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