

# The Credibility Gap



New Years Day Pasadena, California

Guitars: Michael McKean, Lowell George and Ron Elliott. Drums: Richard Hayward. Percussion: Harvey Mason, Milt Holland and Joe Porcaro. Bass: Kenny Gradney, Ray Pohlman and David Herscher. Pianos: Harry Shearer, Mark Levine and Nick DeCaro. Harmonica: Tommy Morgan. Strings Arranged and Conducted by Nick DeCaro. Vocals by The Credibility Gap and Penny

Disk Mastering by Bruce Leek. Cover photo by Bob Webber. Special thanks to Jim Bickhart, David Bergman, Mickey Kapp, Mark Leviton, Andrew Jensen III, Kurt Ingham and Heather Harris. Licorice courtesy of Licorice Pizza.

## SIDE ONE

# **KINGPIN (3:30)**

(Announcer, Bus Driver, Congressman Muldoon: David L. Lander. Dr. George Stevens, Kingpin's Wife, Announcer: Harry Shearer. Kingpin: Michael McKean.)

## A DATE WITH DANGER (8:29)

(Announcer, Stinky: Michael McKean, Dr. Ranchman: Richard Beebe. Gary: David L. Lander. Barbara: Harry

## YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS HAIR (1:47)

(Denny Asthma: Michael McKean)

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (1:44)** 

(Freddy Herbie: David L. Lander)

#### LANCE LEARNES TO BOX (7:41)

(Lance Peebles: David L. Lander. Brad: Richard Beebe. Madge: Harry Shearer. Bix Baker: Michael McKean.)

## I'M A FELLA (:18)

(Tony LaMone: Michael McKean)

#### SIDE TWO

## 16 GOLDEN BITS (2:05)

(Announcer: Harry Shearer, Jose Jimenez, Vaughn Meader: David L. Lander. Bob Newhart, Mort Sahl: Richard Beebe. Shelley Berman: Michael McKean. The Goons, Nichols & May: McKean and Shearer.)

## AN EVENING WITH SLY STONE (5:17)

(Announcer, Sister Cynthia, William F. Buckley: Harry Shearer. Sly Stone: Richard Beebe. George Kirby: David L. Lander. Brother Freddy: Michael McKean.)

# IN SOMEONE'S SNEAKERS (2:42)

(Rod McPoem: Michael McKean)

#### WHERE'S JOHNNY? (14:45)

(Ed McMahon, Lt. Frazier Timmons: Richard Beebe, Johnny Carson, Network Announcer: Harry Shearer. Dr. William Gielgud: David L. Lander. Oona von Oona, Don Rickles: Michael McKean.)

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SRS-8704

# HARRY SHEARER TALKS ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY GAP

In the period from 1966 to 1968, nice people didn't publicly talk about presidential lies — they talked about the "credibility gap."

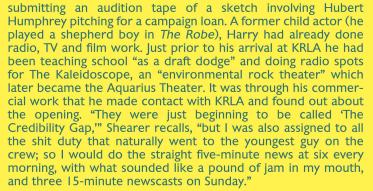
— Robert Sherrill,

Why They Call It Politics

Sound familiar? Perhaps you'd rather have forgotten that classic "doublespeak" phrase of the 1960's. But if you have ever been a listener of Southern California rock radio, that phrase may conjure up fonder memories. On May 31, 1968 the AM pop station KRLA ("the land of III0") launched a satirical news presentation called "The Credibility Gap." The brainchild of news director Lew Irwin, the original Gap evolved - according to Harry Shearer, who joined later on in 1968 – "from newsmen who sat around smoking dope, saying, 'Why don't we do something more interesting?"

The original Gap was comprised of Lew Irwin, Richard Beebe, Thom Beck, John Gilliland, and Len Chandler; with the exception of singer/songwriter Chandler, all were KRLA newsmen. This lineup lasted just long enough to put out an LP for Blue Thumb, An Album of Political Pornography, which was a sort of psychedelic documentary on the late '60's, gleaned from snippets of various Gap programs aired on KRLA, and bearing the strong

By October, 1968, however, signs of strain were showing. Thom Beck left for safer pursuits, and Shearer was hired after



A few months later, Lew Irwin departed, citing a combination of personal and professional reasons. After a brief try at a Gap-clone called "The Fifth Estate" for KLAC, he eventually hit on the idea of a syndicated counter-culture news program called "Earth News," which he still produces for stations around the country. "To give him credit," Shearer says, "Lew was a very good promoter. The only awards the show ever won were when Lew was there, because he submitted them for every possible

One of the things Lew did before he left around February, 1969 was to hire another member. David L. Lander was a transplanted New York actor who had come to L.A. looking for work, and was "discovered" doing his funny voices on the answering service of a Gap performer. Shearer remembers, "David came in, immediately clicked, and became a permanent member as

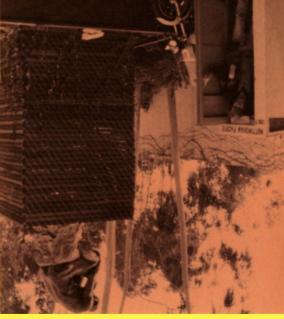


Joel Bellman

comedy, Sierra/Briar hopes to remedy the situation. With this release of both new and vintage Credibility Gap

thing when they're not listening to it?" the reason for not doing it. You know, Why give them somethem any reason to do that anymore; and that, in turn, becomes attention to what was on the radio. Certainly radio isn't giving — people were interested in sitting around and actually paying good dope was, or how good sound equipment was becoming like — whether it was how bad television was, or how good highly prized in this era. I think there was a time when it seemed we're living in the 70's, and eccentricity and individuality are not radio now is to make one hour indistinguished from another; and at this time — a counter-trend idea. I mean, the idea in have somewhat more individual ideas, which was at the time be. I just thought there should be a place where people can would let me put together my idea of what a radio show should explains, "I've always tended to gravitate toward stations that ing in a highly polished aural comedy presentation. Harry ventions of classic radio programming — a combination resultirreverence and a very genuine affection for the traditional con-At its best, the Gap represented the blissful union of 60's

Might Live beginning in the fall.) has also been signed to write and appear regularly on Saturday (Addendum: Since these notes were submitted, Harry Shearer upcoming films The Serial and The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh. summer, has appeared in TV guest shots and will be in the helped write and produce a special, The TV Show, that aired this



written by Shearer, was released this spring. In addition, he Brooks; Real Life, a feature film directed by Brooks and co-Violins LP. He has also resumed working with Albert America 2 Night and surfaced on Martin Mull's Sex and tant and occasional guest on TV's Fernwood Tonight and In the past few years, Shearer has been a creative consu Lenny & the Squigtones, on Casablanca a few months ago. relevision's "Lenny and Squiggy," releasing their own album, "Earth News;" Lander and McKean have gone on to become back to radio, currently working again with Lew Irwin on turned their attentions elsewhere. Richard Beebe went nistory, the various Gap members eventually drifted off and As their interest waned and the '60's receded into

memorable sketches from the KPPC and post-KPPC era. discovered them when he was at Capitol), it contains some a small Oakland-based company run by Michael Sunday (who of Radio, came out in 1977. Released on Waterhouse Records, The last Credibility Gap album to be issued, The Bronze Age and "Hello World" appeared on Rhino's album Rhino Royale. The two songs wound up as a single for Khino Records in 1978, the CB craze called "Hello World, This Here's Wrong Number." "The Night the Lights Stayed On in Pittsburgh" and a tribute to send-up of "The Might the Lights Went Out in Georgia" called In 1977, the Gap recorded a couple of song parodies, a

Theatre album How Time Flys, a 1973 Columbia release.) Asylum in 1975. He also turned up on the David Ossman - Firesign a second Brooks record, the excellent A Star Is Bought for One for ABC, and co-produced and co-wrote and appeared on Thom Beck faded away. Thom got really scared about doing any more of this; he was of the opinion that the FBI was always listening, always taking notes..." Soon after Irwin and Beck had left, another founder-member, John Gilliland, began to drift back into the news mainstream again. He eventually moved up to San Francisco and landed a spot as a night-time disc-jockey on KSFO doing music, comedy and interviews.

From early 1969 to early 1970, the new lineup was Harry Shearer, Richard Beebe, David L. Lander and Bob Goodwin. Len Chandler had departed by this time to pursue a folk music career. Goodwin, an ex-television comedy writer, left in March, 1970 freeing a slot which was filled on a day-to-day basis by friends from L.A.'s performing community. One of the semiregular fill-ins was Michael McKean, a classmate of Lander's from New York. McKean became a permanent member, Shearer recalls, "just in time for us to be fired by KRLA in June, 1970."

Problems had been building at KRLA for months. The original Gap time-slot had been pared down from 15 to three minutes. "I remember one legendary show," Harry says, "when we did one that was 3:12, and the program director ordered the D.J. on duty to fade the show at 3:00, so the punchline was never heard." The Gap's revenge was to start running their programs through a machine Shearer calls "a Q-bomb. It was a tape-processing machine that could change the speed without altering the pitch of your voice. They used it to speed up the records and the music sounded like it was coming from under water. Then we got hold of it and began writing our sketches specifically for the machine. They all lasted exactly three minutes...at vaudeville speed." While the death struggle was going on at KRLA, however, Shearer was invited to do a record show Sunday afternoons on KPPC-FM, one of the pioneer "underground" progressive outlets in the LA. market. By



album as a guest star. He was on Albert Brooks' Comedy Minus (Periodically, Shearer would pop up on somebody's comedy had yet to get off the ground), so the Gap kept working at it. career (optimistic as they were, since their recording career they played. Tours were considered essential to a recording college campuses, garnering enthusiastic reviews wherever legitimacy." So they gigged all over California, at clubs and tical standpoint, for a while we felt a need to establish our own to is that you have no chin and weigh 350 pounds. From a pracin radio. If you work in radio, the first conclusion people jump an entertainment commodity, we were sugmatized by working aware of certain obstacles. Harry explains, "We knew that as When the Gap made their jump to a live act, they were

a legal malfunction. That record had a doom of its own." that the record came out after our contract had expired, due to for Christmas. "The biggest problem, though," Shearer says, "was out on Reprise in January, 1974... just in time to be a month late Gap album were no joke at all. A Great Gift Idea originally came problems accompanying the initial release of the real Credibility man out. We recorded it in an hour. It was a joke." But the with the birth of Jesus from the point of view of Joseph, the odd wrote a take-off on rock operas, 'Something for Mary, It dealt going to be a ringer, and this was to be excerpts from it. So we they were going to release four new albums and the fifth was record for one of their conventions," Harry says. "The idea was, for Warner Bros. in 1973. "They had hired us to do a promotional The Gap returned the favor by doing an odd little recording

here's a company we'd like to be associated with. were really being very nice to us. And we thought, 'Whoa, saying, If you like this, go buy their record on Capitol; so they put it out as a little flexi-disk inside their magazine, Circular, the length of shows; the format, the pacing, was all up to us. Language was never a problem, either, because the station reached such a specific audience. Nobody seemed to listen unless they wanted to, so there was never a problem of an old lady absently dialing by and getting outraged." (KPPC's frequency was next to the last at the top of the FM dial.) Their stint at KPPC was inaugurated with a masterpiece of

"KPPC was totally different from KRLA," Harry remembers

January, 1971 the rest of the members had joined Shearer at

fondly. "There was total freedom. They never bothered us about

KPPC, and "The Credibility Gap" was back in business.

lunatic radio programming: on New Year's morning, Shearer, Les Carter, Susan Carter, Penny Nichols, Jeff Gonzer and Richard Beebe, apparently fortified with the type of breakfast "Doonesbury's" Uncle Duke might envy, covered the Pasadena Rose Parade in a 2½-hour running commentary. There were funny interviews, insane descriptions of the floats, stream-ofconsciousness rambling — in all, an exquisite performance. The idea proved such a hit that they later revived it and made it a semi-regular New Year's Day tradition on KMET. Highlights from these historic KMET broadcasts have been preserved for posterity here on one disc in this record package.

Having had their fill of station politics at KRLA, the Gap steered clear at KPPC. "Our policy was, 'we're going to stay out of it this time around," Shearer says. "We wouldn't even work in the same building. We rented an office in Pasadena and got together there to write and kibitz, and went to the station only to produce the show." Harry confesses to being something of a radio station freak, and did hang around to "do some editing if the shows needed to be updated. But there really was very little overall contact between us and them." A suprising admission. since Gap connoisseurs would probably agree that their ten-

a fan of ours. We did a piece lampooning the Grammies and they show was sponsored by Warner Bros. Somebody over there was "During the days when we were on KPPC, our 11:00 p.m. news Bros. was wooing us while we were on Capitol," he continues. Mevertheless, the Gap soon found another label. "Warner

ruefully, "That was probably the last nail in our coffin at Capitol." ticularly lacerating review in Rolling Stone. Harry comments company." The album, Woodschtick and More, received a parcorner. There was absolutely no push for the record inside the our corner meant that everybody above him was not in our business. "We didn't realize that having an A&R staff producer in Harry admits they had a certain naivete about the record radio in Berkeley, and he came to us. He wanted to sign us." Sunday, who was on the A&R staff at Capitol, who had been in also disorienting. Harry explains, "There was this guy, Michael Yet the experience of that LP (the first for all but Beebe) was Gap felt a bit more comfortable in their move away from radio. Having released an album in 1971, this time for Capitol, the

be suicidal to. There was a lot of listener resentment about what management) wanted us to continue there, but we felt it would been two very disheartening experiences for us. They (the KPPC had just had it with radio, you know?" Harry explains. "There had longer lay exclusively in radio and they began to branch out. "We several of the ex-KPPC D.J.s.), the Gap realized their fortunes no

reasons that are still somewhat unclear Doug Cox fired 26 out of 29 employees, including the Gap, for 1971. In the infamous "Sunday Might Massacre," general manager everyone's career at KPPC went up in smoke on October 23, month stint at KPPC was their creative high point. Unfortunately,

Later, doing several guest shots on KMET (which had hired

Technical Mote: The sound on this album reflects the live nature of its recording from radio air-

orosecution.

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> PARADE THEME CURT'S CLOSING THOUGHTS (:31)

MAYOR OF PALMDALE (3:47) (Woody Hayes: Michael McKean)

(Mayor Marshall Sitcomb: David L. Lander)

DAVE SWARTS (1:35) PAKADE

(Tony LaMone: Michael McKean)

PASADENA (2:05) (Garner Led Armstrong: Harry Shearer)

> PARADE Lander.)

(Barry Christworthy: Harry Shearer. Rabbi Korff: David L. RABBI KORFF (2:41)

PARADE

SIDE TWO

(Announcer: David L. Lander. Queen Dianne: Harry A QUEEN'S DIARY (3:15)

PARADE

(Jason Palmer: Michael McKean)

CURT (:32) (John Simon: Michael McKean)

PARADE

(Dave Swarts: David L. Lander) DAVE SWARTS (2:32)

PARADE

Lander.) (Robert Shapiro: Harry Shearer, Fred Cadaver: David L.

FRED CADAVER (2:44) (Mr. Blackwell: Harry Shearer)

PARADE

(Curt Gowdy: Harry Shearer, Barbara Tober: David L.

CURT (:55) (Denver Devereaux, Jr.: Michael McKean)

> PARADE (Narrator: Michael McKean)

> > **WINIDOC (5:28)** PARADE THEME

> > > SIDE ONE

S.D. Ashley and KMET. Leek. Special thanks to Gus Krueger, Joel Bellman, Bruce Leek, Cover painting by Lucky Lockhart. Disk mastering by Bruce Executive producers: Marsha Necheles and Vicki Nadsady.

Sounds (BMI). Tony LaMone appears courtesy of Vendetta 1977 and 1979. All selections Copyright, 1979, Zounds! What nally aired on KMET-FM, Los Angeles on January 1, 1975, 1976, produced for record by Harry Shearer, from broadcasts origi-Santa Monica; engineer was Harry Shearer. Assembled and Krueger. Portions were pre-recorded at Ocean Park Sound, Pasadena, California. The engineers were Bob Griffin and Gus corner of Colorado Boulevard and Orange Grove Avenue in FLOATS was recorded live on location at The Rose Parade, the

# A GREAT GIFT IDEA! THE CREDIBILITY GAP



- 1. KINGPIN 3:30
- 2. A DATE WITH DANGER 8:29
- 3. YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS HAIR 1:47
- 4. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT 1:44
- 5. LANCE LEARNS TO BOX 7:41



SIDE 1 SRS-8704

All selections written by Harry Shearer, David L. Lander, Richard Beebe, Michael McKean (Zounds! What Sounds - BMI)

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(P) 1974, Warner Bros. Record

# A GREAT GIFT IDEA! THE CREDIBILITY GAP



- 1. 16 GOLDEN BITS 2:05
- 2. AN EVENING WITH SLY **STONE 5:17**
- 3. IN SOMEONE'S SNEAKERS
- 4. WHERE'S JOHNNY? 14:45



SIDE 2 SRS-8704

All selections written by Harry Shearer, David L. Lander, Richard Beebe, Michael McKean (Zounds! What Sounds - BMI)

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### **FLOATS**

#### THE CREDIBILITY GAP



- 2. MINIDOC (2:58)
- 3. PARADE
- 4. CURT (0:55)
- 5. PARADE
- 6. FRED CADAVER (2:44)
- 7. PARADE
- 8. DAVE SWARTS (2:32)



Cierro

SIDE 3 SRS-8704

9. PARADE

- 10. CURT (0:32)
- 11. PARADE
- 12. A QUEEN'S DIARY (3:15)

All selections written by Harry Shearer, David L. Lander and Michael Produced by Harry Shearer

(P) 1979, Sierra Records

(P) 1979, Sierra Records

(P) 1979, Sierra Records

(P) 1979, Sierra Records

# **FLOATS**

## THE CREDIBILITY GAP



- 1. PARADE
- 2. RABBI KORFF (2:41)
- 3. PARADE
- 4. PASADENA (2:05)
- 5. PARADE
- 6. DAVE SWARTS (1:35)
- 7. PARADE
- 8. MAYOR OF PALMDALE (3:47)



SRS-8704

9. PARADE

10. CURT'S CLOSING THOUGHTS (0:31)

SIDE 4

11. PARADE THEME

All selections written by Harry McKean (Zounds! What Sounds - BMI)

Produced by Harry Shearer

P 1979, Sierra Records

PASADENA-LOS ANGELES, CA. \* MADE MUSA\* ALL HOLDS AN