

The Rose Garden – Bio

The Rose Garden was Diana De Rose [vocals, acoustic guitar], John Noreen [vocals, lead guitar], James Groshong [vocals, guitar], William Fleming [vocals, bass] and Bruce Bowdin [drums]. Their only album was recorded at Gold Star and Nashville West Studios in Hollywood, California and it was co-produced by Charles Greene, Brian Stone and Pat Pipolo. This late sixties, vocal harmony band was formed in Los Angeles, and consisted of four Californians and a West Virginian. Their debut single "Last Plane To London," penned by Kenny Gist [aka Kenny O'Dell] reached # 17 on the pop charts in late 1967. The band issued a second, non-album single, "Here Today" b/w "If My World Falls Through" in 1968 but it failed to chart. Their only album, a ten song self-titled set included Dylan's "She Belongs To Me," and two Gene Clark songs, "Till Today" and "Long Time." Clark had recently left the Byrds, but there are no known recordings by him of the latter pair of songs. One of the Rose Garden album cuts, "February Sunshine," had been a minor hit for the band, Giant Sunflower. The song had been co-penned by Pat Vegas who later formed Redbone. The Rose Garden album also featured a traditional folk song "Rider," which the Byrds cut as "I Know You Rider."

In 1964 Bowdin, Noreen and Groshong, influenced by the British Pop Invasion, had formed a Beatles cover band called, The Blokes. The following year they recruited a fifteen-year old bass player, William Fleming. By that stage the band was heavily into The Byrds. In Hollywood in late '66 Groshong met Diana De Rose and she joined the band. This was the era of flower power. Dunhill Records had recorded a song with studio musicians titled "February Sunshine" and when it began climbing the charts they needed a band to promote it, so, for about a month, The Blokes became Giant Sunflower.

Through a friend of Diana's, David Hanson, the band met Charles Greene and Brian Stone. The latter pair discovered Sonny & Cher, and had also produced some early Buffalo Springfield recording sessions. Pat Pipolo did their promotion work, and Kenny O'Dell who wrote "Last Plane To London" was a relative of Pat's. Renamed The Rose Garden, the band appeared on "American Bandstand" to promote the "London" single and it promptly charted.

Booked on to a number of package shows, the band performed alongside Neil Diamond, The Box Tops, The Association, Canned Heat and the Stone Poneys. When the second single failed to chart, the band decided to go their separate ways. The band reformed for a short time in 1969 without Diana, and with Ed Fleming [Bill's brother] taking Bruce's place on drums. John Noreen relocated to Nashville, became a session musician and toured with Highway 101 during the eighties. Bruce Bowdin got married and settled in Texas. Jim Groshong performed for a time as a solo act in Southern California's clubs, and William Fleming joined the police force in 1973.

Discography :

"The Rose Garden" [1968/2003] :

Arthur Wood

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