



## P. F. Sloan "**Sailor**" Hightone Records

The press release for "**Sailor**" states that this is *"the folk rocker and street poet's first U.S. release since he famously walked away from the music business 30 years ago"* but if you check Sloan's biography on this web site, you'll discover that an album featuring new [and old] Sloan composed material - "**Serenade Of The Seven Sisters**" - was released in Japan during 1994 and surfaced in the States, albeit on a minor label [and under a different, more commercial name], three years later. The latter recording apart, it is true to say that Sloan's heyday as a singer, songwriter, session musician and recording artist was in the period 1965 –1972 during which time he released four albums of original material.

The sessions for this recording took place in Nashville and were produced by Jon Tiven [Frank Black, Wilson Pickett, B.B. King]. In fact it appears that, former leader of The Pixies, Frank Black, an avid P.F. Sloan fan was the driving force in terms of instigating this project. Five of the fourteen tracks are *"time travelled"* Sloan compositions, including "Where Were You When I Needed You" penned with his writing partner Steve Barri. The latter was a 1966 hit for The Grass Roots, an initially fictional studio band. The "**Sailor**" version features a guest vocal by Felix Cavaliere [The Young Rascals]. This collection opens with the familiar "Sins Of A Family," performed as a duet with Lucinda Williams – it's the tale of an 'every-day' dysfunctional family and the downfall of their daughter, and finds Messrs. Sloan and Williams progressively trying to out-Dylan each other vocally. Released as a solo single during 1965, it also surfaced that September on Sloan's debut album, "**Songs Of Our Times**," as did "Eve Of Destruction" the worldwide solo [and only] hit single for Barry McGuire. Sloan and guests Frank Black and Buddy Miller, verse on verse, take the lead vocal on the latter 1965 hit. Conveyor belt songwriting was rife during the sixties and five months on from the release of "**Songs Of Our Times**," P. F.'s sophomore effort "**Twelve More Times**" hit records stores. Two cuts from that collection appear here, namely "Halloween Mary" featuring Frank Black and the album closer "From A Distance."

As for Sloan's nine new additions, the segue of "If You Knew" and "Soul Of The Woman" - the former meanders melodically as it reflects on life while the latter is a soulful sounding number in praise of the fairer sex - were co-written with poet Steve Kalinich, the only person credited with composing songs, individually, with Brian, Carl and Dennis Wilson. The album title track, all posture and pop stomp, and the bluesy "Love Is 4giving" are credited to Sloan/Tiven, which leaves P. F. with solo credit on five songs. Of those efforts, "Violence" is a testament to mankind becoming, in these troubled times, unfeeling visual voyeurs. "All That Time Allows" subjectively mirrors "If You Knew," and merchandise is marketed in the lines and verses of the ensuing "Hollywood Moon," while both cuts cite mankind's addiction to the media. Moving on from the electrically powered "Love Is 4giving," "Cross The Night," a love song, changes down a few gears to an acoustic folk pace. At the outset Sloan dedicates "PK & The Evil Dr Z" to his fans on *'the distant planet Mirth.'* Mirth rhymes with earth, and the lyric references the alien doctor's attendance at a Dylan show in L.A. Enough is enough.....I've had it.

Considering Sloan's background as a 'professional' songwriter [circa 1965, he was 20 year old], it's difficult to reconcile how this surf music scribe [The Fantastic Baggys] and author of pop hits [Hermans Hermits, The Searchers, The Turtles] could, overnight, become the protesting troubadour sans the, seemingly, endless apprenticeship of open mics. leavened by 'first hand' experience of the scuffling hobo life. This is folk rock from the song booths of the Brill [albeit the L.A. Chapter]. C-o-n-t-r-i-v-e-d.

Folkwax Score 6 out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**

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