

## ENDORSEMENTS

**R**eading *any* Ken Mansfield book is an eye-opening experience. As an innovative producer and record company executive during the heat and heart of the sixties through the nineties music scene, his recollections of *the way things were* bring back not only the sights and sounds of the era but reveal the bigger picture of the Creator's purpose for all our lives. Joined by respected biographer/author Marshall Terrill, Ken takes us on a mesmerizing journey traveling alongside some of the greatest musical icons of our time. Within these pages are real life stories of famous men and women who have tasted struggle, fame, fortune, and loss, yet speak today of restoration and renewal.

**Phil Keaggy**

Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame

Seven-time Dove Award recipient and two-time Grammy® Award nominee

**W**here do rock stars go when they've tried everything the world has to offer and yet have continued to come up empty? In *Rock and a Heart Place*, Ken Mansfield provides engaging and perhaps surprising answers. This fascinating and fun-to-read book is loaded with inside stories of some of our favorite music makers. It is a classic reminder that regardless what messes our family or friends might encounter, the Creator is greater; nobody is beyond hope, and there is no need to give up on anyone!

**Ken Abraham**

*New York Times* best-selling author

**R***ock and a Heart Place* is a compelling, fascinating read. Ken Mansfield's relationships throughout his impressive career include many

famous artists, who, along with Ken, came to the conclusion that personal fulfillment cannot be satisfied with money, sex, and drugs, the trifecta of a rock and roller and that life ultimately holds little purpose without a relationship with their Creator.

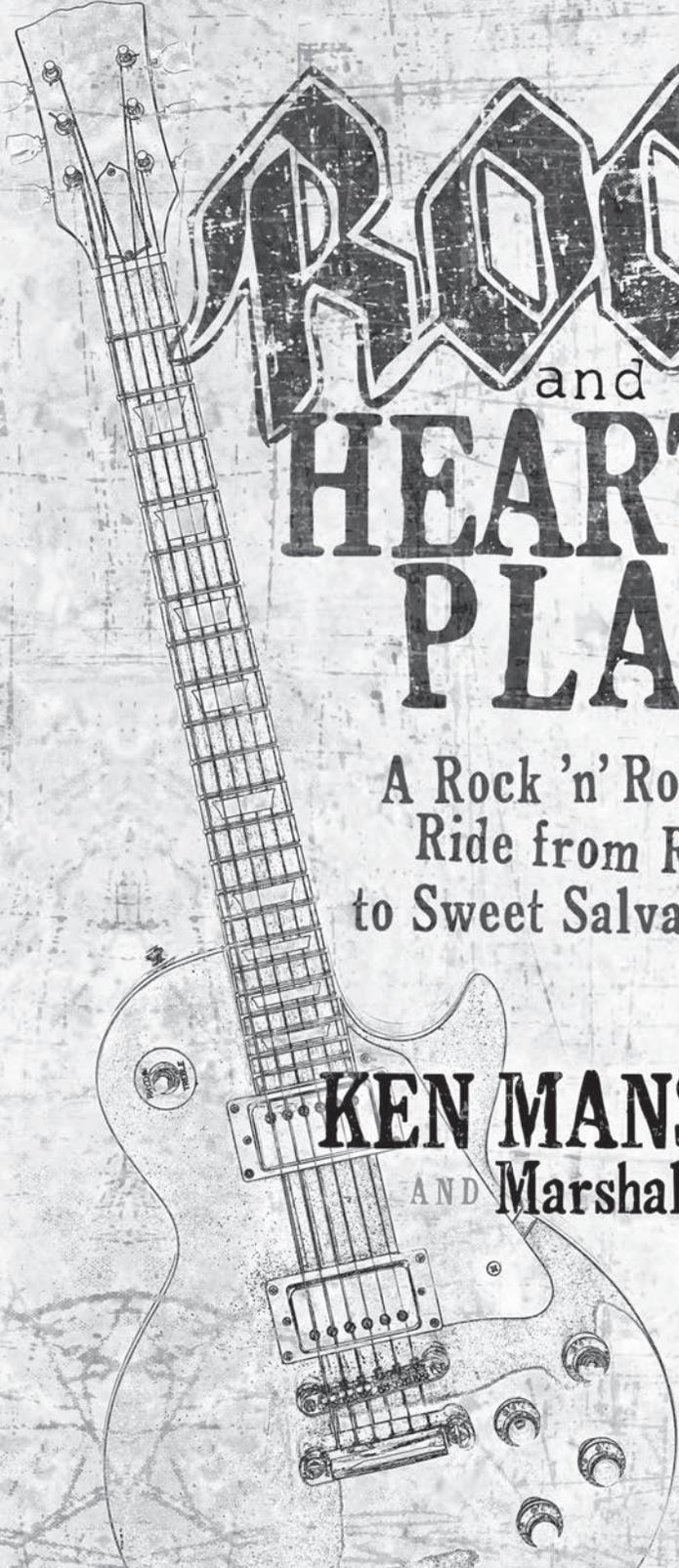
**Michael Omartian**

Multiple Grammy® Award-winning producer, arranger, and musician  
The Recording Academy (NARAS) Keyboard Musician of the Year

**I**n *Rock and a Heart Place* Ken Mansfield and Marshall Terrill present a brave and masterfully written opus of faith that explores the unexpected spiritual rewards of music legends as they share their journey from rock to redemption and who've traded their quest for music charts to winning hearts.

**David Pack**

Former Ambrosia cofounder  
Grammy®-winning recording artist and producer



# **ROCK** and a **HEART PLACE**

A Rock 'n' Roller-coaster  
Ride from Rebellion  
to Sweet Salvation

**KEN MANSFIELD**  
AND **Marshall Terrill**

**BroadStreet**  
PUBLISHING

*Rock and a Heart Place*

*A Rock 'n' Roller-coaster Ride from Rebellion to Sweet Salvation*

© 2015 Ken Mansfield & Marshall Terrill

ISBN: 978-1-4245-4999-3 (hardcover)

ISBN: 978-1-4245-5020-3 (e-book) – *Four additional artist chapters are included exclusively in the ebook for Jerry Naylor, Rick Cua, Chuck Girard, and Ken Hensley.*

Published by BroadStreet Publishing Group

Racine, Wisconsin, USA

[www.broadstreetpublishing.com](http://www.broadstreetpublishing.com)

Published in association with the literary agency, WTA Services LLC, Franklin, TN

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, except for brief quotations in reviews, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Scripture marked TLB is from The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. Scripture marked NKJV is from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Chris Garborg at [www.garborgdesign.com](http://www.garborgdesign.com)

Typesetting and interior design by Katherine Lloyd at [www.TheDESKonline.com](http://www.TheDESKonline.com)

The following artist pictures from their past are used by permission of PHOTO FEST (212-633-6330): Chris Hillman/The Byrds; Mark Farner/Grand Funk Railroad; Mark Volman/The Turtles; Nedra Ross/The Ronettes; Shane Evans/Collective Soul; Richie Furay/Buffalo Springfield.

All other images of artists used by permission.

Stock or custom editions of BroadStreet Publishing titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, ministry, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please e-mail [info@broadstreetpublishing.com](mailto:info@broadstreetpublishing.com).

Printed in China

15 16 17 18 19 20 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## SET LIST

Overture: TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS.....	7
One: HAPPY FOREVER – Mark Volman .....	11
Two: THE SONG OF RUTH – Ruth Pointer.....	31
Three: BRIAN'S SONG – Brian “Head” Welch .....	55
Four: FOLK SCORE AND HEAVEN YEARS AGO – Chris Hillman .....	83
Five: CHASING SHADOWS – John Elefante .....	107
Six: ROCK AND ROLL FANTASY – Rudy Sarzo.....	129
Seven: LOVE IS THE ANSWER – John Ford Coley.....	149
Eight: PARTIES WEREN'T MEANT TO LAST – Dez Dickerson .....	171
Nine: SHINE – Shane Evans.....	195
Ten: THE RIGHT RONETTE – Nedra Ross.....	215
Eleven: STOP, CHILDREN, WHAT'S THAT SOUND? – Richie Furay.....	241
Twelve: CLOSER TO HOME – Mark Farner .....	269
Final Chord.....	293
Applause.....	295
About the Authors.....	297
Other Books by Ken Mansfield.....	299



## OVERTURE

# TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS

**T**o be blunt, the entertainment industry is built on induced fantasy and even less certainty. Long periods of being submerged within its abstraction does leave a person with the mind-bends when finally floating up from its depths. In some odd way, I feel those of us who survived this immersion find our salvation even more precious than some believers—because we paid for it so dearly. It's not because we are more saved or more loved; it just might be because once we emerge from that degenerate mire we are startled by the purity we experience through His unconditional love, mercy, and grace.

The contrast is rather extreme.

I didn't realize it at the time but in some obtuse way, I have been writing this book in the back of my heart for many years. I knew it wasn't going to be easy because I would have to ask some very famous people about very private matters—people who already have the feeling of being overexposed and intruded upon to the point of wanting to crawl inside their amps and pull the plug. Historically, these people tend to hold their cards close to the vest because of this. I feel as if I have circled unknowingly around this subject for a long time, but every time I would get close to it, I felt like I was approaching King Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

The characters we will be climbing inside of are not normal, but after thirty-plus years of deep involvement with the most fascinating musicians and entertainers on the planet, I have gained an understanding of what makes them tick. They are people who are hard to read—like trying to tell time from oddly-shaped clocks with no numbers. They survived the highs of being a part of legendary music, the lows of bottoming out, and finally ended up in a much happier place after the fat lady finally ran out of songs, breath, and in most cases, drugs and booze.

One of the reasons it is hard for them to share their stories is because in order to tell the reader how blessed they are now, they have to deliver the contrast of their past in order to have it make any sense. They have to let it all out about what a mess they were back then ... a time when we all thought we had found the answers through our success. We now discover, in reality, that for the most part we were more lost than Don Ho in Siberia.

Marshall Terrill sensed these stories behind my eyes long before I awakened to the value of gathering a bunch of fellow midnight marauders together to talk about redemption. He was persistent in his vision and finally with his promise to join me in the dance of syllables, sentences, and nuances. I reluctantly accepted the challenge to give it a go. So we sat down with a gang of incredible survivors to talk about the raucous years—me in reflection and Marshall in discovery.

Deep down we knew we needed to share and confess our mistaken quests. We definitely glorified our skewed way of life and, as hard as it is to admit, we did leave a sorry trail of misguided souls in our wake—folks who emulated the actions of the rich and famous and all the wrong things we represented.

But we have something much better than the typical feelings of being ashamed and sorry for what we did—we have forgiveness and restoration. We have a new song to sing, and the testimonies we now share are much better than the back-of-the-tour-bus tales of long ago. We have been given a platform larger than any concert stage we ever appeared

## TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS

on. Elvis left that empty building, and now God lives in our hearts and houses. Today the real Rock is what keeps our lives rolling, and we're taking it to the streets.

Yesterday seems so far away, but eternity is here to stay.

God bless us all,



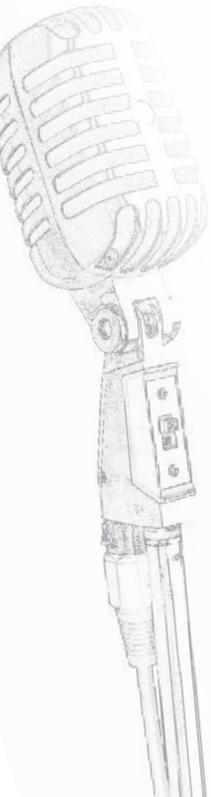
Ken Mansfield



## MARK VOLMAN

*The Turtles / Flo & Eddie*

The Turtles were a 1960s California pop-rock band and have sold more than forty million records. In 1999, BMI named their number-one hit, “Happy Together,” one of the Top 50 songs of the twentieth century, with over five million radio plays. Cofounder Mark Volman was also a core member of Frank Zappa’s The Mothers of Invention and the dynamic duo Flo & Eddie.



## ONE

---

# HAPPY FOREVER

MARK VOLMAN | *The Turtles / Flo & Eddie*

I thought Mark Volman and I had met before. I know we shared the same cramped, dark, funky space at one time—a place where we were chasing identical dreams. We wandered off the same crazy streets into a small Hollywood side-street recording studio in the mid-1960s. We were both making our bones in the exciting adventure of trying to make hit records.

Today as we examine one another across a table at a sidewalk coffee shop in Nashville, we can see nature's time deposits in each other's eyes—eyes that maybe have seen more things than they should have, but still sparkle with the memories of passing years. We said hello, and it only took thirty seconds into the midsummer day before we both knew that because of our similar journeys, we had kindred hearts. Hearts that had been broken, hearts that had been healed, hearts that had been worn on our sleeves, hearts that had danced and sung along with the same elusive tunes—aging hearts that had been filled with muted victories and dashed hopes more times than we both would ever try to remember.

Back in the 1960s, I was producing a band called The Deep Six for Liberty Records around the time The Turtles were recording their

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

first batch of songs. Either Mark or his music partner, Howard Kaylan, dropped by my sessions one night and listened to the playback of our single, “Rising Sun.” He said he wished their recordings were as good as ours or that they sang as good. Of course history puts a fine edge to that comment because, in time, our record never found a spot on *Billboard’s* Hot 100, while “Happy Together” is almost everybody’s favorite song.

I was a street promotion man in Los Angeles along with The Turtle’s managers, Lee Lassiff and Ted Feigin. Another local promo man was a guy named Sonny Bono. We were being paid to be promotion men for record companies, but we considered that our day job. We all had more exciting aspirations. While Lee and Ted were developing The Turtles and Sonny was working with a young girl named Cher, I was doing the same thing with my band. We all know how well Lee, Ted, and Sonny did with their projects. My band faded, and I began working with a more established band—a mop-topped foursome from Liverpool.

The point is there will never be a time like that again—the record business was a raw, no-holds-barred, no-dreams-considered-impossible, no-full-stomachs-guaranteed business. Everything was possible because we didn’t know we were trying to accomplish the impossible. The British were coming, the south was rising, the surf was up, and a wall of sound was washing over everyone. Sometimes we had breakfast before we went to bed; there was so much going on in Hollywood. We hung out at Aldo’s Coffee Shop on Hollywood Boulevard during the day and spent evenings at the bar at Martoni’s Restaurant on North Cahuenga Boulevard. Promo guys, artists, managers, song pluggers, DJs, songwriters, music directors, booking agents, producers, and record company execs, all comingling and shooting for the stars. Martoni’s had become the Hollywood rock and roll version of Manhattan’s famous Algonquin Hotel, where journalists, authors, publicists, and actors hung out during the early decades of the 1900s. It was lyrical lunacy and a time that spawned a fresh creativity that in some ways fed the music industry from those days on, replenishing itself like the bread and oil in Elijah’s story of the poor widow and

## HAPPY FOREVER

her son. This was before logic, accountants, and attorneys took over the helm and made it boring and predictable. Okay, and yes, profitable, but they had to leave out a lot of soul and heart to do that. You put the guys from The Doors alongside the Backstreet Boys, and it is easy to tell that those animals would have never eaten from the same trough.

So here we are, Mark and I, almost a half-century later, in a meeting intended to break the ice before officially beginning this chapter in the book. The fact that we came out of the same incredible era, knew so many of the same people, and had experienced so many similar events and emotions created a flood of thoughts and remembrances. I looked at Mark, and he made me think of everything from Zappa to folk music to the mad professor to crazy rock star—and because of his learned, elder statesman demeanor—to flashbacks of my imagined grandfather. His trademark hair is still out there, his enthusiasm for the music is still smiling and unbridled, and his memory, like mine, shifts in and out. I admit we did share long pauses as we tried to remember things—old associates or current matters such as where we left our car keys. We had just met, but our bygone mutuality made it seem as if we had known each other forever.

While our musical paths were similar at that time, the roads traveled as we made our individual ways to those streets, studios, and fascinating experiences were very different.

Mark's childhood appears much happier and grounded than mine. He was born in 1947 and grew up in Westchester, California, an upper middle-class Los Angeles suburb. Mark describes himself as a happy-go-lucky kid from the 1950s. "Comedy was my first love, and it was a big influence on me and my music partner, Howard Kaylan," Mark says. "We were big fans of Stan Freberg, Louis Prima and Keely Smith, the Smothers Brothers, and their whole comedic style. They were funny and had this traditional approach with a straight man and the clown. I think The Turtles had that format as a live show, but we weren't as up-front about it. We were very subtle, and I think that subtlety came through in our songs

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

and music. There was always some intentional kind of inference, satire, or tongue-in-cheek shtick going on. That all came from our parents, who bought a lot of fun records, and we tuned into them early in our lives.”

Humor is probably what brought Mark’s parents, Joe and Beatrice Volman, together in the first place. On paper they didn’t seem to have much in common, given that Joe, a sheet metal worker, was the son of a Hungarian Jew and Beatrice’s heritage was Spanish and Catholic. They were married close to sixty years and, according to Mark, brought a lot of fire to the union. However, they didn’t allow their views on religion to affect Mark and his brother, Phillip. “I didn’t recognize religion as being a strong part of my childhood by either my mother or father. The real push came from my maternal grandmother, who was a transplant from Mexico and spoke very little English. My grandmother raised me during the school week, and I rode the bus with her to Catholic church for mass on weekends. I also attended all the Jewish seders and celebrated the Jewish holidays even though my father didn’t follow religion. You could even say he was a bit of an atheist. I didn’t have a knee-jerk reaction to religion as a negative or positive. Once my grandmother died, I was floating in a sea of nondescriptness as far as my spiritual life.”

Mark remembers their home was a hub of activity with colorful relatives, gregarious friends, and lots of laughter. “My mom was one of seven kids, and with all of the grandparents, kids, and grandkids, there could be twenty-five to thirty people at our house for a gathering. My mom used to describe our home as a racetrack. It was cool to hang out at our house. My friends loved it.

“I didn’t surf growing up, but I hung out at the beach and became friendly with all of those kids too. I was a natural class clown and teachers liked me. I was like a spinning top. I enjoyed performing in the classroom and making them laugh. Teachers had a terrible time with me because I got more attention than they did.”

Performing was in Mark’s blood, and he gravitated to music in junior high. He took clarinet lessons and later joined the choir at Westchester

## HAPPY FOREVER

High School, where he met his lifetime pal and creative soul mate, the incomparable Howard Kaylan. The two tenors naturally gravitated to each other and spent most of their time clowning, much to the dismay of their choir teacher, Robert Wood, who often dismissed them from practice when they got out of hand. Howard was already in The Crossfires, a guitar-based band influenced by instrumental bands of the late '50s, such as Johnny and the Hurricanes, Duane Eddy, The Ventures, and The Viscounts. Mark thought it would be cool to be in Howard's band. The only problem was, the only instrument he could play—the clarinet—didn't exactly belong in a surf band. That didn't deter him from asking Howard if he could join.

“So I hear you're in a rock and roll band.”

“Yep.”

“Um, do you think I could join it?”

“Well, what do you do?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing?”

“Nope.”

“Sounds good to me.”

I love the humor in this exchange, but more than that I love their wonderful naïveté when putting this band together. If you have ever watched the professional Flo & Eddie (Mark and Howard) on stage, you can easily picture this scene going down between them as young lads. That meeting took place before real life entered the scene. There are so many stories in this book where famous bands were put together and the bass player couldn't play bass when he joined the band—but there is an uncanny sense of knowing that happens with artists. It is more often a study in chemistry than qualifications when the “get together” is decided. Technically Mark was going to bring nothing to The Crossfires, however, a towering presence and charisma like his can make or break a band. In the Mark and Howard case, it was something similar to the day the peanut butter man ran into the chocolate man.

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

The Crossfires were very resourceful. They knew Mark's gregarious nature, dynamic personality, and his popularity with classmates and the surf crowd would bring something to the band, mainly hordes of people showing up at their concerts. At first they put him to work as a roadie, hauling instruments and fetching sodas while they played. However, when Joe Volman discovered Mark wasn't being financially compensated, he demanded that his son be in the band. When it was pointed out to Joe that Mark didn't play an instrument, the situation was immediately remedied. Joe accompanied Mark and Howard to a local music store and purchased a new alto sax. Howard taught Mark how to play sax, and together they worked on choreography—The Crossfires now had a hip horn section. With the final pieces of the puzzle in place, The Crossfires (who eventually morphed into The Turtles) featured Mark on alto sax, Al Nichol on guitar, Chuck Portz on bass, Jim Tucker on rhythm guitar, Don Murray on drums, and Howard on tenor sax and vocals. They were in their teens, and stardom was only a couple of years away.

Armed with cool business cards featuring a burning Iron Cross motif, The Crossfires blazed the Southern California music scene playing at fraternities, teen dances, recreation centers, club houses, military bases, and anywhere there was a stage and screaming girls. At their high school, they developed a rabid fan base called the Chunky Club, based on an instrumental they wrote called "Chunky." Their imaginative followers showed up at concerts in droves with oversized soup spoons and ladles, dancing provocatively, making suggestive gestures toward each other's genitalia, laughing, and lapping up the great music. The Chunky Club grew exponentially, and The Crossfires drew almost five hundred people wherever they went. The band exploded when they answered an advertisement for a battle of the bands at Reb Foster's Revelaire Club in Redondo Beach. With their high-energy show and tremendous fan base, they handily won the contest. Foster, a powerful Los Angeles DJ, gave them a house gig at the Revelaire. "We were a really good band and playing cool songs, like The Righteous Brothers' 'Little Latin Lupe Lu,'

## HAPPY FOREVER

Don and Dewey's 'Justine,' Ray Charles's 'What I'd Say,' and Buddy Holly's 'That'll Be the Day.' Most of the songs that were coming out of bars at that time were traditional songs, but we played stuff that would start fights. In fact, that was always the most successful part of the show."

Can you imagine a band getting away with playing songs that started fights because that was the most successful part of their show? How about featuring that as a marketing tool to promote your concerts? Today no one would come out of the gig alive. A band would need a roadie, a medic, an arsenal manager, and a darn good lawyer. But music was more fun then because life was more fun. Shots at a party back then came from a vodka bottle, not an AK-47.

House gigs at the Revelaire Club and Rendezvous Ballroom in Orange County yielded great fruit and exposure. The Crossfires played three sets a night on Fridays and Saturdays and backed up visiting national artists. They learned these artists' repertoire and performed with several top soul groups and surf bands.

Without realizing it at the time, the band was grooming themselves for stardom by learning different musical styles that eventually led to becoming instinctual players. They learned the best riffs, structures, and textures created by other great musicians and catalogued this information inside their creative guts. When it was time to start expressing their own ideas, they would pull forth amalgamations of this stuff in an assembled form of fresh new arrangements. Many popular entertainers spent years in cover bands and later ended up being covered by other artists.

Stardom is a curious thing, and no two paths are alike, but certain important elements need to be present: preparedness, passion, perseverance, persistence, and opportunity. But the main thing that *must* be present is—you guessed it—luck. I left out another critical element—talent, but to be honest, I worked with more successful lucky bands with limited talent than I did extremely talented bands with no luck.

Back to Ted Feigin and Lee Lassiff, record executives with a new label, White Whale Records, and soon-to-be managers. Ted and Lee

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

happened to catch The Crossfires' act at the Reve-laire. The Crossfires had luck and talent. The two men liked the band, even though they felt surf music died once The Beatles arrived. Reb Foster suggested the band change their name to The Turtles. Mark and Howard almost laughed him out of his office. Turtles were slow, fat, ugly, stupid, and cold. Foster explained anything ending with *-e-s* was trending, and like The Beatles, The Turtles were part of the animal kingdom.

"The public is going to think you're from England, and England is really hot!" Foster explained.

The intent and logic were clear, but it sucked the life out of The Crossfires. So did the lime-green velour shirts with matching caps that Reb picked out for them to wear on stage. "We were actually handing in our resignation to the Reve-laire Club when we were introduced to Lassiff and Feigin, who wanted to sign us to White Whale Records. We immediately tore up that resignation and put together three songs. One of those songs was 'It Ain't Me Babe,' and it would forever change our lives."

After that song received major airplay, the group was picked up by Dick Clark's Caravan of Stars, which included Tom Jones, Peter and Gordon, The Shirelles, Billy Joe Royal, and others. In 1965 they performed almost 280 dates and experienced the seriousness of the music industry by having hit songs. "'Happy Together' is the record people talk about, but 'It Ain't Me Babe' was a million-seller and a top-five record and probably only missed making it to number one because it was distributed by an independent label. Acts like The Beatles, Bob Dylan, and The Beach Boys, who were on bigger labels, sold more records by default. Our people at the record company were hardworking and well meaning, but they were learning the business just like we were."

Mark is correct. It's a known fact in the music business that the major labels had more influence with the radio stations. They had the money to press more records, they controlled their own promotion team, and they had budgets set aside to throw money into advertising and tours when a record began to break. Ironically, the thing that could make an

## HAPPY FOREVER

independent record label go under was having a hit record. It sounds crazy, but here's how it worked: when an independent record took off, the small label was forced to press a lot of records in order to fill orders from music stores and chains. With little time to respond, the company had to go all in and push all their chips onto the table, or watch the record die a fast death. If listener response was strong, then the outlay had to be humungous to match the demand.

Now let's have a reality check. Pressing records in the thousands was very expensive, and pressing plants were not typically gracious to the young scruffs who had just pulled off the impossible, so there were typically no credit terms and very limited financial breathing room for the independents. Also, just because there was a lot of enthusiasm from the public and record stores were clamoring for stock, there was no guarantee that sales would match that exuberance. So the upstart record company had to pony up the scratch by depleting their funds and assets, borrowing to the max, taking extra jobs, and signing away their next ten children. Once they did come up with the money, records were shipped to the distributors and music stores to insure they were covered with necessary stock.

Now we have two possibilities at this point. First, the record is a stiff and the inventory comes back. The records are then worthless, the band remains unknown, the label goes broke, and people jump off bridges. Second, the record is a hit and demand increases. Wow, they are rich, right? Maybe not—in fact, many times . . . not! Distributors were famous for paying late, for poor accounting, or not paying at all. Now our heroes are desperately chasing down their money and hanging on to that illusive gold ring. If they didn't get paid, they were even broker, and not only were they jumping off bridges but their creditors and family members who chipped in were joining them.

So when White Whale hit pay dirt with The Turtles, it took a lot of savvy to ride that dragon, but as Mark said, they were unable to generate major label sales. This educational piece on the mechanics of the

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

record business barely scratches the surface of the myriad of complexities involved in getting a hit record. Fortunately, The Turtles and the label's management team were imaginative and resourceful and pulled off the impossible. It would be hard to imagine what their real sales would have been with a major label, but The Turtles became a huge success and worked hard for every sale.

It was the mid-1960s and The Turtles, teens who had barely entered adulthood, were churning out the hits: "She'd Rather Be With Me," "You Showed Me," "You Know What I Mean," "Elenore," and their biggest hit and signature song, "Happy Together." To give you an idea of how big of a smash the latter was, in 1999, BMI named "Happy Together" one of the top fifty songs of the twentieth century, with more than five million radio plays. The Turtles have sold approximately 40 million records to date, and they are one of the few acts of the 1960s that still has a successful fan base.

The Turtles found an undiscovered niche that appealed to fans who lived just a little off the mark. They were a bit of everything, while there was nothing like them. They were quirky and they were smart. They were bubblegum with a joint hanging out of their mouths. The band had personality; their songs made you happy, and you could dance to them! They were on the money for the times, and it was great to be able to listen to creative, artful music while not being required to take it too seriously. That's why their hits have lasted down through the decades.

The Turtles not only dominated the radio airwaves but also became the darlings of '60s family television as the networks did their best to bring younger viewers to the shows that needed a shot in the arm. They appeared on *Hollywood a Go-Go*, *The Hollywood Palace*, *Shindig!* and *Kraft Music Hall*, and they made multiple appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Their life consisted of beats, babes, Buds, buds, and the road. There wasn't much time for spirituality, and these globe-trotting rock stars certainly didn't feel they were missing out on anything. The eternally sophomoric Turtles loved every minute of it. "We were smoking

## HAPPY FOREVER

pot and doing more psychedelics than the deadly drugs. That's how we allowed ourselves to believe it was okay. We weren't doing as much damage to ourselves as we could have. At that point, there hadn't been a single rock and roll fatality, and everything the Establishment had warned us about hadn't happened. The drugs challenged me to experiment, read, and pursue many different outlooks."

Like millions of others in the Age of Aquarius, Mark was keen on learning more about yogis, New Age mystics, and Eastern philosophies. He found inspiration in Joseph Benner's *The Impersonal Life* and *The Way to the Kingdom* but was particularly impressed by Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. "I enjoyed what that book did in terms of lighting the fire in my heart to seek and also to be a compassionate person. People were finding gurus everywhere. It's not like we were atheists or faithless people. We were spiritually inclined and not closed to the notion of a divine presence. I want to say that Eastern philosophy, even though it didn't stick, was the first form of enlightenment that got me to thinking that I wasn't as big as I thought I was."

Eastern philosophy was cool. So were long hair, bell-bottoms, neck scarves, skinny braless girlfriends, bongos, and saying "far out" and "groovy." The coolest part about being a New Ager was the lifestyle. It had more to do with changing the outside than the inside. You already liked being stoned, you had an excuse for being laid-back and noncommittal about things that required effort, and you definitely were okay with the free love. So you got to stay with all that and wear your chosen religion like a badge, while reveling in the perks of being spiritual. You changed from wearing a tie to tie-dying what you wore. You could say flowery nonsensical things and have the girls go "oooo" and the guys in suits go, "Hey, that's really sublime," pretending that they knew what you were talking about and that they also knew what it was like to feel sublime.

Identifying with The Beatles by saying you had a guru was always impressive, and when you were stoned or just stupid you could always

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

say you were in a meditative state or blissed out from doing your special mantra—one that was brought down out of the ether by your yogi master. It was song and dance without melody or footwear. It was space walking without being able to spell NASA. It was truly turning on, tuning in, and dropping out so that you didn't have to be accountable for anything or to anyone. Reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* and quoting Ram Dass was much more interesting, and no one ever gave you a bad time by calling you a “Bhagavad Gita thumper.” You could have a free pass into hipville simply by presenting a synthesis of the Brahmanical concept of dharma. You were cool as long as you didn't quote Scripture or bring up that guy Jesus.

I spent almost a full decade doing all of the above, and all I got out of it was to be ten years older and more confused than when I started. Oh wait ... and a really cool bead collection.

Looking back, Mark blames the lack of spirituality for the demise of his first marriage to Patricia Hickey. They exchanged vows in January 1967 and eventually had two daughters, Sarina and Hallie. “Pat was just nineteen and I was twenty when we were married. We were high school sweethearts, but we had no spiritual connection in our life or relationship with the church, and that played a big part in causing our problems—divorce was imminent.”

By the end of 1968, other problems began to emerge. White Whale Records demanded another hit (“Give us another ‘Happy Together’”), which infuriated Mark and Howard. So off they went, and a half hour later they came back with “Elenore,” a song dripping with sarcasm and cheesy venom. What was intended as an anti-love letter to White Whale execs had the opposite effect. The label didn't get the joke and loved “Elenore,” which became the group's last top-ten song in the United States and the United Kingdom and went to number one in New Zealand.

Tired of living hand to mouth despite several hits, The Turtles decided to inspect White Whale's books. Mark recalls, “The record company put a lot of money aside because they felt like, ‘Why don't we hold

## HAPPY FOREVER

on to it for them so that they don't spend it wildly. They're a bunch of stupid kids.' By withholding our money, we challenged the record company and they fought back. So what started out as a plan to protect us ended up being the reason why we needed protection. Additionally, one of our managers absconded to Mexico with a large amount of our money."

After an inspection of the books, the group found \$500,000 sitting idly in an account, which amounted to one year's royalties. They filed a \$2.5 million lawsuit against White Whale in 1970 and had them fully audited for the five years they had been with the label. White Whale countersued by responding that they not only owned The Turtles' name, but also owned each band member's individual name. They further put the clamps down on the group by telling them they could no longer perform as The Turtles or professionally use their given birth names under any circumstance.

White Whale thought this legal procedure would force the band to back down, but the boys dug their heels in and waged a legal war that took four years to settle. The Turtles had been done in by the power of the pen and paper. Mark and Howard, both twenty-three at the time, had no future prospects and were wondering how they would put food on the table, feed their kids, and make their mortgage payments. About two weeks later, an offer came in from Frank Zappa, who wanted to revive the Mothers of Invention on an upcoming European tour. Were they interested? Yes!

Inspired once again, they billed themselves as Phlorescent Leech & Eddie, or Flo & Eddie for short. Mark remembers, "Frank came along at a very opportune time. He was very generous with his creativity, availability to us, and allowed us to improvise in our live performances as well as our performances on his records. This motivated us artistically and vocally. The musical content was much more challenging. It was 180 degrees from where The Turtles had been. It was really an exceptional time for us."

The "Mothers" had become the hippest traveling show on the rock

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

circuit; their concerts were a mixture of irreverent playfulness and technical virtuosity. Those early Flo & Eddie shows with Zappa were always sold out and afterward featured a buffet of drugs, groupies, and unimaginable sex activities.

By late 1971, things began taking a darker turn. On December 4 at the Montreux Casino in Switzerland, a crazed fan shot a flare gun into the ceiling during the band's performance and caused the venue's heating system to explode. The fire forced the hotel's evacuation and burned the band's equipment to a crisp. The event inspired Deep Purple's classic song, "Smoke on the Water."

Six days later it became even more bizarre. During the band's encore at the Rainbow Theater, a raging twenty-four-year-old fan pushed Zappa into the venue's concrete orchestra pit, much to the horror of the panicked band and audience. Upon impact, Zappa's neck bent like it was broken; he had a gash in his chin, a hole in the back of his head, a broken rib, and a fractured leg.

While Zappa recovered, Flo & Eddie kept themselves busy by opening on Alice Cooper's Billion Dollar Babies tour and recording as Phlorescent Leech & Eddie on Reprise Records. They hosted a popular radio show on K-Rock in Los Angeles, dabbled in film (*200 Motels*), television, and even children's animation. But their real bread and butter was session work, lending their trademark harmonies to T. Rex, Roger McGuinn, Stephen Stills, Keith Moon, Alice Cooper, David Cassidy, Bruce Springsteen, and John Lennon, on his 1972 album *Sometime In New York City*.

"We did the live jam with Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention at the Fillmore East," Mark says. "John Lennon seemed to be overpowered by drugs at that time. It was a really negative time and he was very distant. We spent a few nights at his place going over the jam, which was the way it ended up on the album. I wish I'd thought more about the fact that John Lennon was not going to be here forever. We don't really

## HAPPY FOREVER

consider mortality like that. We think we're all going to live a long time, and then suddenly someone's gone and it sure wakes you up."

More has been written in total about John Lennon since his death than about all The Beatles together, dead or alive. John was like the greased pig of rock and roll; no one could really get a handle on him outside of maybe Yoko. He was a moving nontarget—one you could never hit because he never settled into one place long enough to nail him down. I am often asked about my relationship and impressions of the four lads because of my time spent with them on both a business and personal level, and I get going real good until it comes to John. Then I have to be honest that I am at a loss for proper words. The problem in analyzing John's stamp on our time is that he never settled into one position long enough for anyone to understand him, beyond adoring the mystique of his persona. Then having him taken away so suddenly made it very hard to figure out where it would have ended up with him had he stayed with us.

The day John died, I was going over pictures from my Apple days to put on the walls of my new office in Hollywood. When I got the phone call telling me he had just been shot and killed, I was looking straight into his face on a picture he had sent to me years before. He was looking right at me; it was one of those pictures that no matter if you moved left or right, it looked like the eyes were following you. It was hard to look away and even harder to know exactly what I was feeling. I knew we all had suffered a great loss, not of a perfect man with perfect ways but a great man who would no longer do great things. I didn't react as an individual but took my place in the universal sadness.

A few years after their encounter with Lennon, The Turtles got new life when the White Whale lawsuit was settled in 1974. The judge ruled in the group's favor, giving them their name back and the masters for all of their albums. The \$2.5 million they originally sought was squandered by White Whale defending themselves, but Mark and Howard were

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

back in business. They signed with Sire Records and released the double album, *The Turtles Greatest Hits: Happy Together Again!*

Because Flo & Eddie had built their own following, they toured as Flo & Eddie with The Turtles during the 1970s. Later in 1984, when the '60s nostalgia boom struck, they flip-flopped the billing to read "The Turtles Featuring Flo & Eddie." That year, Mark and Howard crafted the "Happy Together Tour," featuring Spanky and Our Gang, Gary Puckett, and The Association. The Turtles closed out each show with an all-hands-on-deck encore. The formula was magical, with each act singing their greatest hits. The year 2014 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the tour.

By the early nineties, Mark needed a break from the road. His marriage to Pat had ended in divorce in 1991, and he was ready for a change. Never one for convention, he enrolled in a community college in 1992 at the age of forty-five. The move shocked the rock industry. He recalls, "I guess it was a little bit out of boredom. I'd been a touring musician since I was eighteen and accomplished a lot in the area of music. I felt there were so many other things I could do and contribute."

Mark graduated magna cum laude from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles as the valedictorian speaker of his class in 1999, earning a master's degree in fine arts with an emphasis on screenwriting. After his valedictorian speech, he led graduates in a chorus of "Happy Together."

Another benefit of Mark's higher education learning experience was meeting his current wife, Emily. "I was having a tough time meeting people because Loyola was mainly composed of young people. Emily and I became friends during our junior and senior years and graduated together in '97. We got married in 2000."

It was Emily, raised as a Methodist, who opened the door to Mark's once dormant spirituality. She suggested they seek out a church, and like a piece of fruit ready to fall from the tree, Mark was ripe. "It wasn't like I pulled over on the side of the road and saw a blinding flash of light. I had always been somebody who believed in God, and I always felt Jesus

## HAPPY FOREVER

Christ was a part of my life. I didn't put it into some sort of prophetic new finding. I remember The Turtles had two very close incidents in planes where we spun out of control upon landing and another where we had to land next to a freeway because our landing gear was stuck. I felt the presence of God with me both of those times. I've never felt like I was not born again."

Not content with just sitting on the wooden pews every week, Mark and Emily rolled up their sleeves and became involved with the church. Mark was baptized and became a lay minister, learning how to write and deliver sermons and lead worship services. "I began feeding on Scripture, attending services, understanding more about the Word of God, and finding things out about the religion that I hadn't really opened the door to before. I wanted to demonstrate my love for Jesus Christ and show people He was a true part of my life. Everybody has a different way of saying 'I'm a Christian' and what makes them a Christian. If you do make that commitment, you need to be with Christian people. And you need to learn the Word of God by reading the Bible and talking about it with other Christians."

God rewarded Mark for his faithfulness with an opportunity in the new millennium when he and Emily moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, where he did a stint at Lee University as an "artist in residence," teaching seminars and helping lay foundations for a music business program. He also worked as a substitute teacher at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, for a semester, where he was later offered a job as an adjunct professor, which he accepted.

He is currently an associate professor and coordinator of the Entertainment Industry Studies Program at Belmont University in the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business. He conducts seminars about the music industry for various academic institutions, from junior high to university level. In addition, he offers consulting on music business and entertainment through the website [www.professorflo.com](http://www.professorflo.com). Mark explained his passion for his new career: "The music business

## ROCK AND A HEART PLACE

has changed dramatically since that first contract was signed in 1965 as a member of The Turtles, but many things still remain the same. The incredible amount of stories I have personally heard, telling of lost careers and lost human beings, could fill a very large book. For every successful story, there are many more reflecting the outcomes of battered lives left to fade away in the wake of misguided choices and decisions. Many artists have no idea of a long-range plan for survival, and the idea of having a plan for a career is so far away from their reality that most will find themselves signing one bad deal after another ... over and over again.”

In addition to teaching at Belmont, Mark and Emily serve as youth advisers at Harpeth Presbyterian Church in Brentwood, Tennessee. Mark has a connection with youth, and that’s where he wants to focus his energy. “It’s very important. That’s why my wife and I are working with high school kids at our church every Sunday night, going on mission trips, and being a part of their day-to-day life. I can picture them looking back when they’re married and having kids—and although they might not have known who I was—they’ll go, ‘We had this guy there, and he was in The Turtles, and yet there he was every Sunday night at youth group, teaching the Bible, talking about the parables in Matthew, Mark, and so forth.’ We sometimes talk about stuff I know they’ve never talked to their parents about. My relationship with music is a door opener.”

Mark considers his involvement with the youth group a second chance at parenting, even though he remains on great terms with his two grown daughters, now in their forties. “There’s a healing thing, of being able to be there and talk to them about things I didn’t get to do before because I was touring all the time. My kids were young; I was young. I now feel like I have developed a lot of moral character that I may not have had during my youth—during my halcyon days, but that was in the past. The fishermen weren’t perfect Christians, but God offered them a chance to walk in His shadow. And now, just like those ragtag guys, He’s offered me a second life.”

It did take Mark more than a “second” to finally get it right, but

## HAPPY FOREVER

fortunately the only time clock that God watches is the one that tells eternity. So He had all the time in the world and would have given Mark not only a second chance but also a seven thousandth chance, if necessary. The Father knew His child was worth waiting for. Let's face it—He was dealing with a Turtle here, you know, so there was a good possibility it might go a little slow! But God knew all along how it was going to end because *it was Mark He was looking for (babe)*, and now Mark's life is complete—his church, his family, and God are all *happy together ... happy forever*.