

## **LOLA VERSUS POWERMAN & THE MONEY-GO-ROUND, PART ONE (1970)**

The Kinks spent most of 1969 suffering as many setbacks as there were successes: *Arthur*'s surprise success was met immediately with a disastrous tour of the United States, marred by Dave's depression and drug use. The following year saw a complete reversal of fortune for the band, due at least in part to constantly touring, which in turn resulted in Ray's development into a true showman. However, the main source of the band's success was a single that contains one of Ray's finest tunes and lyrics: "Lola." The album that followed, *Lola Versus Powerman & The Money-Go-Round, Part One*, only helped to bolster the group's renewed success and relevance in the United States.

The band's North American tour was abruptly cut short after only nine dates as Mick Avory had been stricken with hepatitis. In spite of the brevity of this tour, one particular event took place that would become a staple of The Kinks' live show. During a concert in Montreal on February 5th,<sup>1</sup> Ray was so angered by the audience's lack of enthusiasm that he sprayed them with beer. Much like Pete Townshend smashing his guitar, what had occurred purely by accident evolved into something that was expected, if not demanded, by future audiences. Ray is depicted in a photo some ten years after its origins on the cover of Thomas Kitts' book, *Not Like Everybody Else*. This incident marked the beginnings of Ray's shift from being a mere lead singer into a flamboyant showman who would both feed and play off of his audience.

Ray spent most of March filming for a television play for the BBC entitled *The Long Distance Piano Player*, his first foray into acting. At the same time, Dave once again embarked on recording solo material. Sadly, other than a proposed release date of July 1970 and a brief mention in the May 1971 Kinks newsletter, nothing came of it. Upon Avory's recovery, the band

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<sup>1</sup> Doug Hinman, *All Day And All Of The Night: Day By Day Recordings, Concerts, And Broadcasts, 1961-1996* (London: Backbeat Books, 2004), 138.

returned to the studio in April. The following month, after Grenville Collins made the suggestion, the band had a call-out for keyboard players to audition. The first and only one to audition was John Gosling, a classically-trained pianist who at the time was attending the Royal Academy of Music. His sight-read audition piece wound up being the piano track for “Lola.” By the end of the month, Gosling would be fully integrated with the band. He and Dave would form a good friendship during his tenure in the band.<sup>2</sup> Due to his long hair and scruffy beard, he quickly earned the nickname “Baptist.” His personality, described by Ray as “a strange mixture of [John the Baptist] and the comedian John Cleese,” meshed well with the band.<sup>3</sup> Gosling’s first public appearance with the band was a *Top Of The Pops* taping for “Lola,” two days later embarking on another US tour, during which their new single would be released to rave reviews.<sup>4</sup>

“Lola” itself was a labor of love. The recording of the song was taken very seriously, as Ray later described he wanted a song that would “sell in the first five seconds.”<sup>5</sup> Before its final form, the song went through several incarnations in different keys, with different instrumentation, and several different introductions. The intro riff of the song is catchy enough, in its final version it was rendered even more distinctive by the incorporation of a thirty-two year old Dobro resonator Ray had picked up specifically for the song. Since the BBC objected to advertisements within songs, the line describing champagne as tasting like Coca-Cola had to be changed for its radio and single releases. While on tour, Ray had to fly back to London to overdub the line with “cherry cola.” Unfortunately, none of the takes were to Ray’s liking, but with his tight schedule he was forced to fly back to the States to perform two dates in Chicago.

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<sup>2</sup> Dave Davies, *Kink* (New York: Hyperion, 1996), 184.

<sup>3</sup> Ray Davies, *X-Ray: The Unauthorized Autobiography* (Woodstock: Overlook, 2007), 324.

<sup>4</sup> Hinman, 140.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

Once again, Ray flew back to London, where he successfully recorded and edited the “cherry cola” line. The Kinks’ new publicist, Marion Rainford of the Tony Barrow International Agency, played up in a press release that Ray had to make two attempts to re-record a “banned” line. This same press release formally announced John Gosling as a member of The Kinks.

Based on separate real-life experiences of Ray’s<sup>6</sup> and manager Robert Wace’s<sup>7</sup> back in 1965, “Lola” tells the tale of a young man’s encounter with the song’s titular character in a bar. She, or rather “she,” greets him in “a dark brown voice.” The song’s final line, “I’m glad I’m a man, and so is Lola,” is one of the most ambiguously worded lyrics, ever. Is Lola glad? A man? Both? This very debate is condemned by Marten and Hudson in *Well Respected Men* a bit too crudely, saying it “consumes the superficial Kinks fan – the one who knows all about *Village Green* but has yet to hear it.”<sup>8</sup> That one line is a shining example of Ray’s penchant for clever lyrics, though it is hardly the one most crucial to the song’s true meaning. The song’s protagonist is a newly liberated young man, one who had “left home just a week before,” and one who had “never ever kissed a woman before.” His meekness is conveyed by Ray’s delivery early in the song, with an aura of nervousness not unfamiliar to a young man being asked to dance by a woman. The bridge beginning with “Well, we drank champagne...” deftly captures the excitement of our hero’s night out. Ray’s vocals become more assertive as he belts out that he “almost” fell for “my Lola.”

The middle section, which kicks into double time, sees the protagonist shying away from these emotions, fleeing from Lola and leaving the nightclub. On his knees outside, Lola rejoins him, and they lock eyes. Returning to his more passive voice, Ray sings “that’s the way that I

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>8</sup> Neville Marten and Jeff Hudson, *The Kinks* (London: Sanctuary, 2001), 106.

want it to stay, and I always want it to be that way for my Lola,” indicating the protagonist’s realization of his feelings for Lola. The next line concludes with the observation that “It’s a mixed-up, muddled-up, shook-up world except for Lola.” Kitts points out this shows Lola’s confidence in her/his identity; I can only add to that by suggesting the protagonist sees Lola as a point of stability in an unstable world. In short, he has fallen in love, exclaiming he’s glad he is a man with gusto. Whether this means he is satisfied with Lola in a heterosexual or homosexual manner is immaterial at this point. What matters is he has found bliss. The very subject of love is dealt with in many of Ray’s songs, but seldom with a satisfying conclusion.<sup>9</sup>

The b-side of “Lola” was “Berkeley Mews,” at least in the UK. In the US, “Mindless Child Of Motherhood,” the UK flipside of “Drivin’” in June 1969, was used. Oddly enough, “Berkeley Mews” had appeared in the US on an obscure Reprise promotional compilation entitled *Then, Now, And Inbetween* [sic].<sup>10</sup> Recorded sometime between January and March 1968, as indicated by the *Village Green*-era Mellotron, “Berkeley Mews” starts with a tinkling honky-tonk piano, with Ray’s voice ushering in Avory’s bouncy drum track and a walking bassline from Pete Quaife. The lyrics tell a tale of jilted love as a woman posing as an intellectual gets the narrator drunk on champagne, only to leave him “looking at the ceiling.” The song musically concludes on an odd note, shifting to a 12-beat jazz feel augmented by a saxophone. John Mendelssohn points out in his liner notes for *The Kink Kronikles*<sup>11</sup> the mondegreen when Ray sings “I staggered through your chilly dining room,” mistaking “chilly”

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<sup>9</sup> Only a few other songs, such as the raucous “She’s Got Everything,” earn such a rare distinction, while other songs like “The First Time We Fall In Love,” “Something Better Beginning,” and “Days” – all gorgeous and brilliant songs, musically and lyrically – permeate The Kinks’ catalog, portraying love in a manner perhaps a bit too realistic and bittersweet for the romantic idealist.

<sup>10</sup> Hinman, 130.

<sup>11</sup> *The Kink Kronikles* would mark the song’s first proper release in the United States.

for “shitty.”<sup>12</sup> Nearly any song released as the flip of a powerhouse track such as “Lola” would sound markedly inferior,<sup>13</sup> and although “Berkeley Mews” could not have been a hit on its own, it is still a memorable, if oft-overlooked, tune.

Upon its release in June in the UK and July in the US, “Lola” was an instant smash hit, reaching #2 in the *Melody Maker* and #1 in the *New Musical Express* in England; in the US, it peaked at #9, giving the band their first big hit in the States since “Sunny Afternoon” some four years earlier.<sup>14</sup> The renewed mainstream success that came with “Lola” didn’t just revive the band. According to Tom Kitts, it kept the band alive: “[Ray] knew that if it weren’t a hit or if the next album did not place better than #105,<sup>15</sup> the Kinks would be done.”<sup>16</sup> This was in an era where an artist had to constantly maintain visibility; when The Beatles decided to stop touring in 1966, it was widely speculated the band had called it quits. In modern times, however, artists can have gaps years in length before spending months on end in the studio. It was unacceptable for The Kinks, and specifically for Ray Davies, to put out an album that earned more critical acclaim than commercial success, with both *Village Green* and *Arthur* being prime examples. Simply put, it just wasn’t enough. In an interview with the *NME* from July 1970, Dave said that on their recent US tours the audiences had forgotten The Kinks were still around, underlining the effect that four years out of the limelight had on the band in a large market.<sup>17</sup>

*Lola* introduces a new topic that would become a staple of Ray’s lyrics: the music industry. It is widely agreed upon that Ray’s songwriting is the art of storytelling, be it his own

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<sup>12</sup> John Mendelssohn, *The Kink Kronikles* liner notes, Reprise LP.

<sup>13</sup> “Top Of The Pops” notwithstanding!

<sup>14</sup> “The Kinks’ Chart Positions,” Dave Emlen’s Unofficial Kinks Website, <http://www.kindakinks.net> (accessed March 15th, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> This was *Arthur*’s peak position in the United States. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Kitts, *Ray Davies: Not Like Everybody Else* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 150.

<sup>17</sup> Hinman, 143.

story or those of others. While he'd had plenty to say about the struggle of the working class,<sup>18</sup> a longing for simpler times,<sup>19</sup> and the well-respected followers of fashion he so scathingly satirized, these are all topics that in various shapes and forms can be found throughout history. It should be clearly stated, however, that in spite of these characteristics, Ray Davies' lyrics are memorable, original, and thought-provoking, the works of a true genius. Regardless, waging an assault on the rock world was a new, contemporary subject. It was one that simply did not exist in the mainstream two decades prior, when the same music that would later be called rock and roll was almost exclusively being performed by and marketed to African-Americans as blues music.

It would become a target for other artists as well: David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust* metaphorically dealt with the struggles of fame, while Frank Zappa dogged on music bigwigs and, among other things, their attempts to commercialize punk music.<sup>20</sup> However, *Ziggy Stardust* centered on the star's decline due to his own excesses, and Zappa's case against punk was misinformed: not entirely wrong, but certainly not correct; he had accurately made similar assumptions about the hippie subculture on *We're Only In It For The Money*, an album Dave praises in *Kink* as "compulsory listening."<sup>21</sup> Ray, as Jason Gross' "The Golden Age Of The Kinks" webpage delicately phrases it, "dump[s] his bile all over the music industry."<sup>22</sup> His lyrics are more personal than ever, dealing with his struggles as an artist who places his integrity above all else, even fame. The Kinks would feel the effects of this throughout their career, and Kitts

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<sup>18</sup> "Dead End Street," 1966.

<sup>19</sup> *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society*, 1968.

<sup>20</sup> "Packard Goose" from *Joe's Garage, Acts II & III* (1979) and the title track from 1981's *Tinsel Town Rebellion* both assert this position.

<sup>21</sup> *Kink*, 172.

<sup>22</sup> Jeff Gross' "Golden Age of the Kinks" webpage, <http://www.furious.com/perfect/kinks.html> (accessed June 28th, 2008).

speculates that Ray's refusal to be anything less than an individual is what kept the band from achieving fame on the same par as The Rolling Stones or The Who.<sup>23</sup>

The album opens with a forty-second country-folk tune, marked only as a separate track on the 1988 CD issue, titled "Introduction." Its lyrics are only four lines, where the narrator urges his "mammy" not to cry, as he's "got to see what it's like on the world outside." The proclamation of "Gotta be free, gotta be free now" will be revisited on the album's final track, albeit with a dose of irony. In this opening song, the narrator is running away from home, thinking freedom rests in becoming a musician. As the ensuing tracks indicate, it is not a world of freedom, but one filled with bullies, fair-weather fans, and criminals, eventually driving those caught up in the middle of it to madness.

Before the strings of the acoustic guitars on the "Introduction" have fully decayed, a startling drum, bass, piano, and harmonica, followed immediately by lead guitar, usher in "The Contenders." (Every other issue of *Lola* includes the "Introduction" as part of this track.) Gosling's barroom piano and Avory's drumming drive the song as Ray lists off a number of jobs he cannot find himself doing: "a constructor of highways", "A sweeper of sidewalks...", and that he's "too ill-equipped for a mathematician." The reference to not wanting to be a "fascist dictator" anticipates the *Preservation* LP's, while proclaiming "I want to be a winner" could be one of the few lyrical insights into a man who is, by all accounts, extremely competitive. With the nature of the band's story in mind, 1970 was a significant year for The Kinks, with the recent return to America. It was an important year for their peers, too: various Beatles released solo albums<sup>24</sup> as their "cardboard tombstone"<sup>25</sup> *Let It Be* was unleashed on an unsuspecting public.

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<sup>23</sup> Kitts, 156.

<sup>24</sup> In this order: *McCartney*, *Sentimental Journey*, *All Things Must Pass*, and *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*.

The Rolling Stones, meanwhile, kept a low profile after the debacle at Altamont in December 1969, eventually moving to France to evade England's steep taxes. With this in mind, Ray professing that he wants to be a winner is an apt summation of both his and The Kinks' mentalities.

The next track is an acoustic ballad by Dave entitled "Strangers." The instrumentation is only five men – bass, drums, piano, organ, and Dave on vocals and guitar – but it is a powerful arrangement, due in no small part to Dave singing such potent lines as "If I live too long, I'm afraid I'll die." Lyrically, it can seem puzzling. Thankfully, Dave explains it in *Kink*, saying it's "about friendship, reconciliation, and unconditional love. A realization that we...have to give up a part of ourselves for the benefit of something greater."<sup>26</sup> This is the first of several songs written by Dave that are veiled messages to or about his brother, all of which bear a tone of some past injury. Other songs with this tone include "You Don't Know My Name" from *Everybody's In Showbiz* (1972) and "Trust Your Heart" from 1978's *Misfits*.

In the former, Dave vents his frustration that in spite of the grueling nature of life on the road, nobody knows who he is. In *Kink*, Dave talks about Ray's derisive manner of introducing him on stage, confessing "I would seethe inside when he'd pull this kind of stunt, the bitch."<sup>27</sup> An example of this can be heard on the live disc from *Everybody's In Showbiz*, at the start of side four: "On lead guitar, my brother, Mr. Dave 'Death Of A Clown' Davies," referring to his 1967 hit single as a solo artist. Dave felt washed-up, with constant attempts to record a solo album never quite getting off of the ground until 1980's *AFL1-3603*, never mind the offense taken that

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<sup>25</sup> Alan Smith, "New LP Shows They Couldn't Care Less," originally published in the *New Musical Express*, May 23rd, 1970. Quoted in Keith Badman, *The Beatles After The Break-Up, 1970-2000* (London: Omnibus, 1999), 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Kink*, 132-133.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-160.

he would be forever known for his seemingly one-off success. On “Trust Your Heart,” which Dave recorded in September of 1977 for what he was hoping would be a solo album, he speaks directly to Ray, telling his “darling fool” of a brother that he’s stuck with him through much strife and struggle, and isn’t going anyway in spite of – maybe because of – everything they’ve endured together. It’s an overt plea for unity, written around the same time Ray penned “A Rock ‘N’ Roll Fantasy,” which bears a shockingly similar message.

In “Strangers,” the plea for unity is only hinted at: “If your offered hand is still open to me,” Dave sings, he will follow wherever Ray – or whoever the “you” is – goes. Dave initially asks, “Where are you going to?” Before the listener can even anticipate a response, Dave interrupts with “I don’t mind. / I’ve killed my world and I’ve killed my time.” This period in the band’s career is well-illustrated as one of deep depression for the younger Davies, who was additionally experimenting with hallucinogens. Him asking his brother where he’s going is almost a formality. He doesn’t care where they’re going, so long as it’s somewhere. In Dave’s mind at this point, the only direction he can go is upwards. When promises to “follow you wherever you go,” his voice wavers ever so slightly, showing his solemn state.

His plan to share his possessions with the “you” of this song, illustrated in the second verse, is reminiscent of George Harrison’s collaboration with Bob Dylan, “I’d Have You Anytime.”<sup>28</sup> A pointed jab is made at Ray in the third verse: “Soon I feel you’re gonna carry us away / In a promised lie you made us believe...” showing at least some internal reluctance toward the unconditional love and devotion expressed in the first two verses. This oddly predicts the next few years, as Ray would be metaphorically carried away writing rock operas, which he would then use The Kinks as a backing ensemble to bring his stories to life. He concludes, “My

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<sup>28</sup> The likelihood of one track influencing the other is extremely remote in this instance, as *Lola* and *All Things Must Pass* shared the same release date in the UK.

mind is proud, but it aches with rage,” a display of his mixed feelings towards the band and all of his past and present accomplishments with it, feelings he would maintain for the rest of The Kinks’ existence, and feelings he still has to this day.

John Gosling’s piano playing once again is brought to the fore on “Denmark Street,” a song skewering the music publishers who populate the London street of the title, known since the 1920’s as Britain’s version of Tin Pan Alley. For the hero of the album’s story, it is only logical for the central headquarters of the music publishing industry to be a haven open to all artists from all walks of life. Pairing a light, show tune melody with a walloping rock backbeat, “Denmark Street” spells out the grim reality that publishers are in it for the money and nothing else, certainly not a love of music.

Ray introduces the scene with affected tone of voice somewhere between a carnival barker and Mick Jagger as “shakin’ from the tapping of toes,” benevolently adding it is a street constantly swirling with music “anytime on any day / Every rhythm, every way.” Adopting a more menacing tone, he describes the procedure of pitching a song. The publisher, he warns, will hate the song and find his long hair objectionable, but he will “sign you up because I’d hate to be wrong.” The shift to a double-time beat in the bridge, where Avory drops out except for hi-hat clicks on the upbeat, gives the song a music hall feel as Ray reiterates the message of the verse: publishers are businessmen first and foremost, on the “business” half of the phrase “music business.”

For all of its bitter cynicism, “Denmark Street” is a lighthearted romp in comparison with its two surrounding songs, “Strangers” and the following track, “Get Back In Line.” Dave writes that it serves as an anthem of hope for the working class, and its “obvious, melancholic

simplicity” is what makes it “a great song.”<sup>29</sup> It is a harrowing portrait of poverty, not as desperate as “Dead End Street” but just as sad, and certainly more sympathetic. After his trip down Denmark Street, the hero returns to the working world, where he finds himself “standing at the corner waiting / Watching time go by,” in a line with others hoping just as much to find work. The bare instrumentation of an acoustic and electric guitar is augmented by the rest of the band, led in by Avory’s cymbal roll, as the lyrics express the narrator’s optimism as the “union man” comes his way. For the hero, “the sun begins to shine” as the union man walks toward him, only to keep going. Deflated, the instrumentation backs out when he realizes he must remain where he is, once again without work.

The song’s second verse references two women in the main character’s life: his mother and his lover. The same “mammy” from the album’s “Introduction” had warned her son that this way of life would not yield money, “that it would never ever work out.” Just the same, the hero only wants to earn enough money to buy a bottle of wine for himself and his lover. Once again, the song is addressed to “you,” as the narrator wishes to bring “you” home some wine. At the same time, he is too proud to admit he is living on the dole, as he sings, “I don’t want you ever to see me / Standing in that line.” Returning to the chorus, this time he doesn’t express optimism of the union man coming his way. Instead, he laments the “hold” that the union man has over him, and he is again passed over. Before fading out, the song slows to a defeated tempo.

The next track on the album is “Lola,” which in the context of the record is a prime example of art imitating life: “Lola,” the hit song for The Kinks, is also the hit record for the main character. This notion, where “Lola” is thought of as the name of a song rather than a person, gives more meaning to the album’s title, as the hit song is in competition against both the

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<sup>29</sup> *Kink*, 134.

“Money-Go-Round” of publishers and the corrupt multimillionaire “Powerman;” both are yet to be encountered at this point on the record. Furthermore, the *Part One* of the title is the result of the album originally intended for release as a 2-LP set, which was in the end agreed upon to be released in separate halves. No session for *Part Two* went beyond the stage of backing tracks between work on *Percy* and being on the road.<sup>30</sup> By the time The Kinks’ next proper album, *Muswell Hillbillies*, came out in November 1971, no one really seemed to notice that it wasn’t *Lola Versus Powerman And The Money-Go-Round, Part Two*.

A drum-roll, followed by a chipper announcement of “Yes! It’s number one, it’s Top of the Pops!” introduces “Top Of The Pops,” a song sardonically named after the BBC music program. A true hard rock song, driven by Dave’s heavy riff and Mick’s fill-laden playing, the hero deals with his gradual rise to the top. Spotted originally at #25 on the charts, Ray smugly sings, “Life is so easy when your record’s hot,” no doubt a reflection of the runaway success of “Lola” on both sides of the Atlantic. The cockiness of the main character intensifies as he muses, “I might even end up a rock and roll god./Might turn into a steady job.” Once the hit single is at “number eleven on the BBC/But number seven on the *NME*,” he is tapped for an interview to discuss the topics of politics and religion. During the instrumental break, a barrage of spoken voices are heard: “I’d like to ask you about your influences...”, “It’s gonna be the show of a lifetime...”, the very material that rock journalism is made from. Upon the return from the middle section, it is revealed the record is at number three now, and the main character’s star power is such that female fans scream when they see him on the street.

To the main character, it’s a dream come true, though he notes “Now I’ve got friends I thought I’d never had before...” before Dave’s searing guitar solo. Ray finishes his thought,

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<sup>30</sup> Hinman, 150, 154.

adding that “people want you when your record’s high / But when it drops down they just pass you by.” Keeping in mind their four-year absence and less-than-triumphant return in 1969, the superstar status they attained with “Lola” could quite possibly have inspired both this lyric and Ray’s disdain for the record industry. It is certainly a testament to the band’s up and down brushes with success and the adulation that comes with it, as well as commercial failure, specifically in connection with the fact that The Kinks were all but gone and forgotten in the United States once “Sunny Afternoon” slipped out of the charts. That grim thought is kicked to the wayside, as the hero’s manager – the one who hates his music and his haircut – greets him with the news that his single is now number one. As Ray’s humorously voiced manager states over Gosling’s organ, “now you can earn some REAL money!”, rolling his r’s on “real,” a full seven years before Johnny Rotten.

Musically, this is The Kinks in one of their finest moments as an ensemble. Not counting the hard-rocking bridge on “Brainwashed,” this is the first time Dave has laid out a heavy riff since his song “Love Me Till The Sun Shines,” way back on 1967’s *Something Else By The Kinks*. John Dalton’s bassline during the break, consisting of straight eighths on a single note, adds a touch of sinister tension. John Gosling lends an atmosphere of decadence to the song with his playing. Much praise should also go to drummer Mick Avory, as he deftly pounds out the same rhythm as the instruments during the turnaround before the verse, while throughout the rest of the song he fills up space in an already loaded musical atmosphere. The scorching version on *Everybody’s In Showbiz*’s live disc shows this song was only better on stage, with a grooving Mick Avory intro, a bit of plugging-in and tuning-up feedback from the guitars, and some improvised vocals over the middle break.

Side A ends with “The Money-Go-Round,” taking the music hall feel hinted at in “Denmark Street” and running with it, abruptly shifting the mood after the one-two punch of “Lola” and “Top Of The Pops”. Arguably the most bitter moment on the album – and that is saying a lot – Ray names off, one by one, Robert Wace, Grenville Collins, and Larry Page, their two present and one former managers, respectively, as contributors to this rip-off machine called the Money-Go-Round. He asks if those siphoning all the money before he gets his earnings deserve it, as “they don’t know the tune, and they don’t know the words/But they don’t give a damn.” A passing reference is made in the second verse about the soon-to-be-resolved conflict with Kassner Music, which had been going on for five years by this point.

“If I ever get my money, I’ll be too grey and old to spend it,” Ray sings on a song recorded at some point in August or September of 1970, when in fact the following month while at work on the *Percy* soundtrack it was decided an out-of-court settlement with Kassner would be made. Ray made a small payment and would from then onward receive a lower royalty payment for the Kinks tunes published by Kassner. Still, the money he feared he would be “too old and grey” to enjoy, the frozen escrow account, was finally released to Ray that October. Given the five-year long legal battle and the four-year ban from the United States, Ray’s harsh lyrics toward both the music business and the nature of celebrity are completely understandable as opposed to being too cynical or bitter, a complaint made by Dave in *Kink*, which he said “disturbed me a little.”<sup>31</sup>

“This Time Tomorrow” opened side B of the original vinyl with fifteen seconds of roaring airplane engines before the acoustic guitar leads in the rest of the song. The song is marked by the gradual build-up in the music, most notably in the dual pianos, one in each

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<sup>31</sup> *Kink*, 135.

channel, shifting throughout the course of the song from a subtle, barely noticeable arrangement at the track's introduction to its jubilant fortissimo at the coda. Similarly, Mick Avory's playing goes from simple beat-keeping to rigorously pounding out fills, matching the ascent in the band's rigor. As a back-up singer, Dave's voice is a distinct instrument all of its own, always singing the high notes in harmony with Ray, perhaps a fraction of a second too slow. The result is as characteristic a trait of The Kinks' music from 1970 onwards as the crunching guitars and simple riffs were for the band's early years.

Lyrically, the song deals with life on the road as a musician, at least on its surface. Ray would address touring several more times on *Everybody's In Showbiz*,<sup>32</sup> *Sleepwalker*,<sup>33</sup> and the title track from *The Road*. In the case of "This Time Tomorrow," the song has our hero questioning where he will be the following day a question no doubt constantly asked by musicians concerning their tour itineraries. An underlying motif of uncertainty is obvious, with the hero questioning not just the next stop on tour, but also his own destination in life. The bridge features one of Ray's many puzzling contradictions: "I don't know where I'm going / I don't want to see," suggesting that his own hang-ups over where he is heading in music or in life is by choice. He could easily see where he's headed, but chooses not to. A notion of time squandered is hinted at with the line "I watch the clouds as they sadly pass me by." Furthermore, the "rock and roll god" of "Top Of The Pops" is brought to mind as the main character rides seven miles above the planet. From where he sits, feeling "the world below me looking up at me," he realizes the world "ain't so big at all."

For all of the hefty pomposity in "This Time Tomorrow," the confrontation of "A Long Way From Home" is a wistful, sober reminder to the hero of his roots as a "runny-nosed and

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<sup>32</sup> "Here Comes Yet Another Day," "Sitting In My Hotel."

<sup>33</sup> "Life On The Road."

scruffy kid.” When the author saw Ray live in 2006, he performed this song, introducing it as a song about Dave, who by this point in the band’s history was compensating “for lost time spent away in England during the ban” and “becoming a slave to my excesses.”<sup>34</sup> As a gorgeous ballad replete with slide guitar, delicate piano work, and beautiful harmonies, it also bears the misfortune of being one of the shorter tracks on the album, clocking in at less than two and a half minutes. More importantly, it is sandwiched between two harder-hitting songs, weakening its impact on the listener. On its own, “A Long Way From Home” stands as a forgotten gem in Ray’s catalog, mercifully dusted off for his live show in more recent times.

Dave’s other song for the album, “Rats,” follows. As the antithesis, both musically and lyrically to “Strangers,” Dave proves successful as both a sensitive songwriter and as a scribe of what can only be described as early heavy metal in the same vein as Black Sabbath. Dave lays down a fantastic riff, coupled with some guitar leads buried in the left channel of the mix. Dalton provides a solid performance as a bassist, performing a walking bassline during the second verse and final chorus, while Avory once more flexes his chops as a dexterous powerhouse of a drummer.

The lyrics deal with themes of alienation, as the singer finds himself in the city, being pushed around by passersby, prompting his thought that “hate spreads just like infection.” The “rats” of the title are corrupt businessmen, “breeding anger and spite” among the people. A theme of betrayal can be found in reference to the “rat-face man” who at some point “was warm and was kind / Now all he’s got is a pinstripe mind.” As vague and perplexing as “Strangers,” though delivered in an entirely different manner, “Rats” shows off what could have been with a

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<sup>34</sup> *Kink*, 125.

Dave Davies solo record from this era, and that at his best he is just as clever and passionate of a songwriter as his brother.

The sounds of man-made machines again open a track on this side of the record, this time the screeching of tires and honking of car horns, on “Apeman,” which was released as the follow-up single to “Lola.” Advancing the idea of “Animal Farm” from *Village Green* and taking it to an extreme, the protagonist is driven to madness by the modern world, wishing to get away. Unlike “Animal Farm,” which presents the rational solution of moving to the country and raising animals, “Apeman” sees the hero wanting to “sit in the trees and eat bananas all day.” The lyrics are flimsy, awkwardly phrased and delivered, an attempt to be out-and-out funny that somehow fails to deliver. There are more than a few instances of The Kinks following up a hit with something awfully similar, with “All Day And All Of The Night” after “You Really Got Me” and “Set Me Free” on the heels of “Tired Of Waiting For You,” but those tunes have enough variation that they can be considered successful.

With “Apeman,” however, it’s more along the lines of self-plagiarism. After first calling it “over-ambitious” and “a dud,” Paul Gambaccini wrote in *Rolling Stone* that “the initial reaction to hearing ‘Apeman’ is outrage that Davies would issue the same single two straight times, but at about 20 seconds in it becomes apparent that there is at least lyrically something quite different going on.”<sup>35</sup> One interesting side note about this song is that this, too, had a re-recorded lyric prior to being released as a single: at 2:20 in the song, Ray sings, “the air pollution is a-foggin’ up my eyes,” at least according to the lyrics accompanying it in the sleeve of the *Lola* LP. Reprise heard the lyric as “a-fuckin’ up my eyes,” a line far less appropriate than name-dropping a brand of cola. Their *Top Of The Pops* appearance filmed in November featured

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<sup>35</sup> Hinman, 148.

Ray singing the revised lyric, as well as Gosling wearing a gorilla outfit while sitting behind his keyboards.<sup>36</sup> One of the author's least-favorite Kinks songs, it did well in the UK, reaching #6, while in the US it peaked at #45.<sup>37</sup> (EMLEN)

The penultimate track, "Powerman," was also considered for selection as a single before "Lola" and again in early 1971. (Hinman 150-151) Introducing the proposed enemy for the unreleased *Part Two*, "Powerman" was inspired by Ray's meeting with someone not in the music industry, but rather a theatrical producer he had dinner with while filming *The Long Distance Piano Player* back in March of 1970. (Hinman 139) It paints an ugly portrait, hinting at his innocent beginnings with "the same old story...the same old dream" turning the song's subject into the corrupt businessman he is today. The Powerman is so rich and powerful that his pocketbook could invariably cause more damage than an army, as Dave soulfully sings in the song's middle section that "Powerman don't need no guns/Powerman got money on his side."

Ray concludes that he can stay sane due to his girl – the same girl from "Get Back In Line," the girl he invited to be the Jane to his Tarzan in "Apeman" – and that he doesn't have to be rich to enjoy love. In fact, while the narrator is able to celebrate his girl, all Powerman has is his money. Whether this song would have been a hit had it been released is unclear; it possesses the same heavy edge as "Top Of The Pops" and "Rats," though it is neither a catchy tune nor is its subject matter one that too many record company executives would want playing on the radio or television. More important, this song was one of three successful forays into hard rock on the same album, showing that The Kinks were fully capable of keeping up with the times. This fact

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<sup>36</sup> *Kink*, 135. The band also shot a promo film for "Apeman," again featuring Gosling in costume.

<sup>37</sup> "The Kinks' Chart Positions," Dave Emlen's Unofficial Kinks Website, <http://www.kindakinks.net> (accessed June 28th, 2008).

would be their saving grace in the late 1970's when other artists from their generation were blown off as dinosaurs, earning respect as makers of punk, new wave, metal, and disco.

“Got To Be Free” rounds out the album, starting with the same motif as the album’s “Introduction.” This time, the narrator urges his “baby” not to cry – his girl – and offering encouragement that they will soon be free. As one of the first songs recorded, Ray had already performed the song in character for *The Long Distance Piano Player*. The main character had more freedom before he ventured out into the music business, where he just wanted to get out of “this life.” At the start of the album, his dissatisfaction was simple youthful angst; as expressed in “Got To Be Free,” he now has “to get out of this world somehow,” professing that he has got to be free to say, sing, and play what he wants. He also proclaims he’s got to be free to “swear if I like,” ironic in light of the re-recording of lyrics for “Apeman.” Declaring his independence “before it’s too late,” the hero breaks from the system and proving he is nobody’s slave. We, the listeners, may only be hearing half of Ray’s original story, but “Got To Be Free” is a satisfying conclusion to both the concept and the album.

Taken as a whole, *Lola Versus Powerman And The Money-Go-Round, Part One* is a strong album, boasting musical variety from folk to music hall to proto-metal, while Ray and Dave provide some of their most mature and clever lyrics to date. In the United States, *Lola* hit #35 in the charts, with mainly positive reviews.<sup>38</sup> The album’s success may have kept the band together, but the album itself – their first recorded on 16-track – brought the band into the new decade with a bang. Though mainstream commercial success would prove elusive over the next few years, *Lola* set a blueprint for The Kinks’ music for the rest of the 1970’s, combining new

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

lyrical themes such as fame,<sup>39</sup> the media,<sup>40</sup> corruption,<sup>41</sup> and betrayal<sup>42</sup> with older topics like madness, class struggles, and alienation from the outside world,<sup>43</sup> all set to a unique brand of modern rock. A new era was beginning for the band, marked by their transition from Pye Records<sup>44</sup> to RCA in 1971 as well as Ray's steadily growing ambitions for The Kinks. He wanted the group to become something more than just a band, but rather an ensemble that delved in film and theater as well as music. Needless to say, it would be a bumpy ride for the group, but it would yield their most innovative work.

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<sup>39</sup> *Everybody's In Showbiz*.

<sup>40</sup> *Preservation Act Two* (1974).

<sup>41</sup> *Preservation Act One* (1973) and *Preservation Act Two* (1974).

<sup>42</sup> *Preservation Act Two*, *Schoolboys In Disgrace* (1975), and *Sleepwalker* (1977).

<sup>43</sup> *Muswell Hillbillies* (1971).

<sup>44</sup> Reprise Records in the United States.