

more time putting the group together and becoming part of the group, rather than just a musician who's playing with the group. Find a better role within the group. Steve's so good, such an incredible singer. It's the kind of thing where you say, "He's so good that I can't sing with him, but when we get to the night, on stage, I'll have a go." And when it does come to the night, on stage . . . you're even further away from him. If we had spent more time together it could have been a lot better.

*At the end of Blind Faith, you were only writing sporadically and now you've become very prolific.*

Not very! Take it easy! Stevie Winwood does five songs a day, and I get one finished a week. But it's getting better all the time. I only wish that I wasn't so old, that I'd started younger, that I could have discovered all these things earlier. I feel like it's already too late for me now.

*The one question that's never been answered, what happened to Blind Faith?*

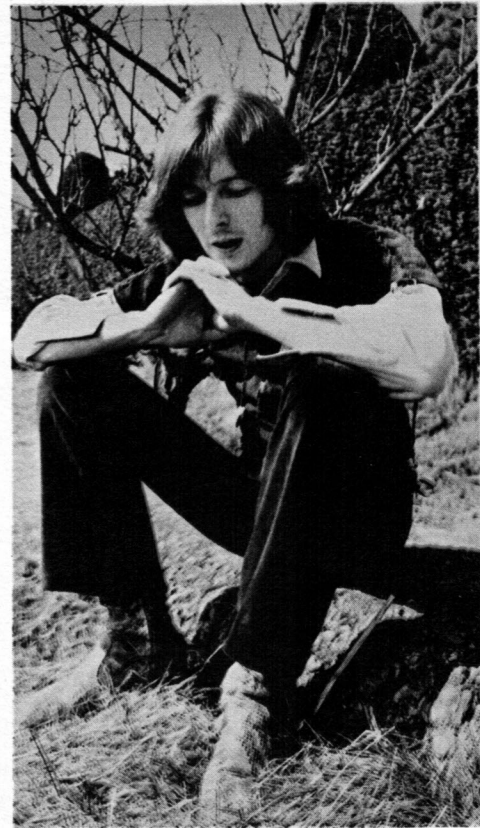
It broke up on the tour itself. I think up to a point we were quite happy with what we were doing, like the Madison Square Garden gig was shaky, but we were still quite enthusiastic about the future of the group at the time. Then after that, and being in New York, and everyone else in the group decided they wanted to go home, you see. And I wanted to get into this tour. So I stayed in New York, and as a result I started hanging out with Delaney, because there was no one else there. All our group had gone home. By the time they had come back, I was already one step away from them.

And from that point on I was making very childish comparisons with our group and their group. And there was actually no comparison, but on certain nights I'd get up there and play tambourine with Delaney's group and enjoy it more than playing with the Blind Faith, because the Blind Faith was already a thing to worry about. And I was worried about it. And by then I kind of got this crusade going for Delaney's group. I wanted to bring him over to England.

I knew that Steve was kind of disillusioned with the group and I thought, well, when he gets back to England he's probably going to reform Traffic, and forget the whole thing. So I kind of took that for granted. And as for Ginger and Rick, well, I didn't count them in my plans at all. I think they were the people that were most disappointed by the break-up, because they expected it to go on and I don't think they had any kind of awareness of the fact that it was on its last legs.

This group we've got here now, you see, I won't put on any gigs like Madison Square Garden: the nearest we'll get to that is probably somewhere like Fairfield Hall (Croydon) which we could book sooner or later, but it's better for us at this point to do clubs under the pseudonym of Derek and the Dominoes so that we can get back into it without too much straining.

The music we've got right now deserves to flourish from playing clubs. You know, it'll get itself together through that medium. Whereas if we took it up on to the concert stage right now, at this point, it would just suffocate. And we'd get panicky and lose touch with what we were trying to do. Whereas in clubs we can get up. . . . I can sing whatever I fucking feel like singing. . . . sing the blues, or a rock number or just. . . . stick numbers in. We can play as long as we like, or as short as we like and there's much



more. . . more freedom to it.

*Are you financially well off enough to play these clubs at a pound top?*

No! Not in the least. My manager's always telling me that I'll be all right for the rest of my life, but I can't see that being true. If I play clubs now for the rest of the year, I'll probably go bust! But I think actually I could probably exist off record royalties.

*You seem so much happier and more extroverted and like know what you're doing now. Why is that?*

I've started to find myself, started to face myself, in a way. I mean with Blind Faith it was very easy for me, once again, to tuck myself into a little notch and. . . and hide. I still hide a lot, but for the most part it's easier for me to face myself, to listen to my own records now, than it used to be. Or to enjoy someone's enjoying me, y'know, it's easier than it ever was before.

*Well, what brought about this change?*

Making that album really was quite a big step. It was something I'd committed myself to do and I had to go through with it. Right up until the very last second I was scared to death. I was really scared that I wouldn't live up to other people's expectations. Probably didn't, you know, but at least I *did* it and in a way I faced myself.

*There must have been something that got you into the point where you were going to do it anyway?*

Well, yeah. You see, meeting Delaney was like, you know, a very freaky thing. Because there was this man who'd been singing all his life, he was like a mountain hillbilly. He'd shout from here and people over there would hear it. And he'd been listening to all the same kinds of music I'd been listening to all my life, and his ideas were the same. He dug the way I played guitar, and I dug the way he played guitar, and if I wanted to. . . . I wanted to sing and accompany myself I'd do it the same way as he does. And I couldn't understand why he was so positive about what