

## Spinning Wheel (1969)

### Blood, Sweat & Tears

#### LISTEN FOR

- Fusion of musical styles
- Prominent horn section (like in big band)
- Sophisticated jazz harmonies, improvisation
- Syncopated R&B bass riffs
- Heavy rock backbeat

#### CREATION

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| <i>Songwriters</i> | David Clayton-Thomas   |
| <i>Album</i>       | <i>Blood, Sweat &amp; Tears</i>  |
| <i>Label</i>       | Columbia 44871   |
| <i>Musicians</i>   | David Clayton-Thoma (vocals), Steve Katz (guitar), Bobby Colomby (drums), Jim Fielder (Bass), Fred Lipsius (alto saxophone), Lew Soloff (trumpet), Alan Rubin (trumpet), Jerry Hyman (trombone), Dick Halligan (piano) |
| <i>Producer</i>    | James William Guercio  |
| <i>Engineer</i>    | Roy Halee, Fred Catero   |
| <i>Recording</i>   | October 1968; stereo   |
| <i>Charts</i>      | Pop 2, Easy 1, R&B 45  |

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#### MUSIC

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| <i>Genre</i> | Jazz rock   |
| <i>Form</i>  | Simple verse with contrasting middle section, improvised solos, complex outro |
| <i>Key</i>   | G major   |
| <i>Meter</i> | 4/4 (alternates with 3/8 in Coda)   |

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## LISTENING GUIDE

| Time | Form  | Lyric Cue            | Listen For   |
|------|-------|----------------------|--|
| 0:00 | Intro |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short intro for horns, with crescendo on sustained note and then riff punctuated by snare.</li> </ul>   |
| 0:07 | A1    | "What goes up"       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocals enter, accompanying texture gradually accumulates, starting with R&amp;B bass/piano riff, then cowbell, drums, tambourine, horns.</li> </ul>   |
| 0:21 |       |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refrain begins with stop time.</li> </ul>   |
| 0:26 | A2    | "You got no money"   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As before, with big-band-inspired horn section punctuating the texture, sometimes with jazzy, swung filler.</li> </ul>  |
| 0:41 |       |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refrain.</li> </ul>   |
| 0:46 | B     | "Did you find"       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive contrasting section.</li> <li>More four-square rhythmic structure with slower harmonic rhythm.</li> <li>Ends with digital distortion of last vocal note.</li> </ul>   |
| 1:16 | Intro |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overlaps with previous section.</li> </ul>  |
| 1:30 | A3    | "Someone is waiting" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As in A2, but with stop time for new stop time for trombone glissando (slide).</li> </ul>   |
| 1:50 | A4    |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instrumental verse for piano solo, breaks off halfway through.</li> </ul>   |
| 2:00 | C     |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trumpet improvises on melody of A in jazz combo sound (piano, bass, drums).</li> <li>"Ride beat" on cymbal is emblematic of jazz, as are the uneven (swung) eighths in this section.</li> <li>Cycles through chord changes of A twice, plus extension, culminating on very high note.</li> </ul>                |
| 2:37 | A5    | "Someone is waiting" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accompanying trumpet riffs higher, louder, jazzier.</li> </ul>  |
| 2:56 | Coda  |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternation of compound meters: 15/8 (5-beat measure) stop time with 12/8 (4-beat measure) calliope-like improvisation that quotes a Viennese folksong (cf. calliope in "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite").</li> <li>At end, band members make casual comments about the quality of the recording.</li> </ul> |

## LYRICS

What goes up, must come down  
Spinning wheel got to go round  
Talkin' 'bout your troubles, it's a cryin' sin  
Ride a painted pony, let the spinning wheel  
spin

You got no money and you, you got no  
home  
Spinning wheel, all alone  
Talkin' 'bout your troubles and you, you  
never learn  
Ride a painted pony, let the spinning wheel  
turn

Did you find a directing sign on the straight  
and narrow highway?

Would you mind a reflecting sign?  
Just let it shine within your mind  
And show you the colors that are real

Someone is waiting just for you  
Spinning wheel spinning through  
Drop all your troubles by the riverside  
Catch a painted pony on the spinning wheel  
ride  
Ha!

Someone's waiting just for you  
Spinning wheel spinning through  
Drop all your troubles by the riverside  
Ride a painted pony, let the spinning wheel  
fly

## SOURCES

- Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 176.
- Roberta Freund Schwartz, Course Notes for MUSC-309 at the University of Kansas.