

## Mp3 Jon Manners - Frankie Said



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cool mix of retro and postmodern...bluesy guitar with sax lead mixed with the post-modern feel of free-range, no rules songwriting. 14 MP3 Songs BLUES: Acoustic Blues, ROCK: Acoustic Details: On a family trip to Florida, the Manners' stopped for gas. There was a guitar hanging on the wall behind the counter and Jonny was interested. The attendant let him hold it! His parents took note. At age 8 Jon got a turquoise Stella with a bucking bronco on it. Weekly lessons with Frank Falcone began. A couple years later a Guild with an f-hole appeared, Christmas morning. It was pure magic with a sunburst and he sure wishes he still had that guitar. In 3rd grade Elvis had a hit with Hounddog. Jonny gathers rock n' roll is kind of cool. 7th grade came and the Stingrays were born, guitar, trumpet, accordion and drums. She Wore Blue Velvet and Deep Purple. (A rather belated thanks to Barry's mom, Mrs. Smith, for putting up with rehearsals and providing a weekly spread of cake, pop and chips!) 8th grade Jon and drummer Barry start The Intruders with Ray Schilcher and bassist Tony Tesauero. Tony, several years older, sells Jon a Fender Jaguar. He then sells Ray a Fender Jazzmaster. There's some question as to where these instruments came from. Maybe they fell off a truck... Influenced by the hit single Green Onions, Jon writes his first couple instrumentals. The Intruders record, cutting an acetate at Blaise Rizzo's. The group then expands, adding Smiley Matthews on organ, his brother Dusty on vocals, eventually Tom Read on bass and Dave Brown, 2nd vocal. They place in a "battle-of-the-bands" and subsequently perform at The World's Fair. 9th grade, here come The Beatles! Jon says "goodbye" to what had become The "Fabulous" Intruders, bossa nova, and The Book of Love and "hello" to the British Invasion. Jonny and drummer extraordinaire, Johnny Dotson take the train into NYC where they buy suede Beatle boots. The Critters are born. The confusion was complete when The Critters release Younger Girl. Jonny and the Critters had been into The Lovin Spoonful, playing that very song at high school dances WAY before it hit the

charts. Naturally everybody assumes The Critters are The Critters. Do they enlighten? Ha! The Critters record in NYC at JAC Studios. They have two sessions; at the 2nd they record 4 originals, two by Jon and two by Tommy Read, the bass player. Jon's songs are influenced by his favorite band, The Zombies. The intro to "It Is Time", which starts out with a rousing 3-2-1! is a direct result of the hit by The Young Rascals, Good Lovin'. Tom's tunes are influenced by the Animals. The Critters go through the normal dance called personnel change. Guitarist Kelly Wright comes on board. Roger Young, with a Hammond and 2 Leslies. The name is now The Sticky Wickets. Jon's mom came up with the name. Jon goes to his first concert at Wilton High School. The Young Rascals are a real eye-opener. The Wickets are now playing all over the area, for high schools, country clubs, teen dances, battles- of-the-bands. Playing tunes by The Animals, The Zombies, The Kinks, The Rascals, The Spoonful, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. The Sticky Wickets most exciting gig? Opening for The Lovin Spoonful. Leaving the show, drummer Johnny Dotson gets his shirt ripped by excited girls! The episode is written up in the Norwalk Hour, "Wickets have Sticky Time, too." It was not to last. Jon leaves for college. But not the end either, the days of psychedelia are here and so is The Glass Eye. Long hair, mustaches, granny glasses, beads even. There is very little left of that experience, no tapes, no band photo. It must've been the marijuana induced haze and it's indeed unfortunate. In retrospect, The Glass Eye was the band with the most chemistry, the most potential. Too bad they never reached it but the bass player was a speed freak and that caused problems. Jon began writing songs in earnest, using a reel-to-reel Roberts tape machine. He was really cranking the tunes out, his grades suffered. Donovan was big and Jon's songs from this period definitely showed that influence. In the spring of '69 he joins Berceuse, replacing their guitarist who hot-foots it to Canada to avoid the draft. Over the summer Berceuse is the house band at The Forefathers Inn, Kennebunkport, Maine. Jon had a motorcycle now, to go with the long hair and beard. He thought he was pretty cool. All of what? 20 years old? Those were wild times. Better believe it. 1971 finds Jon out in the real world, working in a men's clothing store not unlike The Gap. In walks Andrew Loog Oldham, former producer for The Rolling Stones. It does not go unnoticed, Jon takes down the address and phone number from the check. This leads to a very exciting time period, but not without its ups and downs. It's kind of a painful time, too, as eventually things don't work out. Sure was looking good for a while though! Quite the ride! What hap? Oldham was working for The Rare Earth label, a subsidiary of Motown, (the white division). The label was going through some changes, a power shift, and Oldham was on the outs.

Truth is, even if he hadn't been? The demo he produced of Jon just didn't cut it. In the studio, Oldham had employed a gizmo hooked to the recording machine that made it go even faster. It was a real nice 2" recorder and I'm sure would've sounded great without it. The engineer had to root around through the studio to even find this device. It wasn't normally used, it was rattling around in a drawer with a bunch of other unused items. The theory was that more tape per second would result in higher quality sound. Andrew instructed Jon and band to play faster. He said that when it eventually got slowed down, at mixdown, it would sound right. Unfortunately it never did get slowed down; somehow it got speeded up even more. Sounded like Alvin The Chipmunks! Time to move on, Jon picks up and heads for San Francisco. Sure, there were still hippies out there, but the scene is really no more, the Summer of Love was over. Damn! He upgrades his recording gear; he gets himself one of the first 4-channel decks, a TEAC 3340. Subsequently he spends a LOT of time in his room. Before long it's back to Connecticut with his new batch of tunes. His dad books another session at Synchron Studios in Wallingford. Jon tracks down Oldham in NYC. Oldham initially says he'll produce the session but then closer to the date says he can't be there. He promises he will critique the recording. Jon rounds up a stellar group of musicians, Art Sutton, Eric Pearson, Johnny Dotson and Lew Gross and into the studio they go. Left to their own devices, this time they emerge with a great recording. It still sounds good today! But Oldham never heard it. He kind of disappeared. The next door neighbor of Oldham's said he'd gotten divorced and had moved back to England. The tape got sent out and around but nothing ever came of it. Back to California, Santa Cruz, Jon puts up a sign at The Food Bin looking for a roommate. James Simmons is the first and only response. James plays drums, writes songs. He's a natural standup comic. Jon must've been making some money, somehow, but it must've been so slight it has escaped the grasp of history. He certainly had foodstamps. There was an apple orchard down the hill and he somehow had a juicer... Jon next put together Rockaday Jonny with Dave Guynes, Lew Gross and his brother Mike on drums. The band moved to Capitola, a house on the beach, it was pretty cool! Nobody had a job, and, get this, a bar gig paid \$50! For 4 guys! Soon they tapped into something better paying, the military; they played regularly at Fort Ord. Most exciting gig? Opening for local favorites, Snail, at Santa Cruz hotspots. Rockaday Jonny did some recording in that house on the beach, really crude stuff, but fun. Also, a tape exists that was made at Cabrillo College, pretty good quality. As all bands do, Rockaday Jonny soon self-destructed. Jon moved into the practice studio he'd built in a chicken shack on his brother Paul's ranch. Essentially he

was living in a barn. On more than one occasion he'd open the door and find a large animal, like a horse, in his living space. The barn was actually pretty nice, he built a deck off the back, put in a lot of windows, a couple skylights, a loft area for sleeping. He had a refrigerator and an electric hotplate. A sink. A blender! Did I mention mice? He drove for Yellow Cab, 12 hours a day, six days a week. He lasted exactly 6 months. He was pretty burned out. James Simmons moved onto the property, taking up residence in an outbuilding. Boy those were funky times. Jon played briefly in a funk band, No Dice featuring Vince Hogan. After that, he, James and Dave Guynes toyed with putting a band together. Jon got a job at an art supply store, Palace Arts. This is where he met his wife to be. It also was the start of a new level in songwriting, his lyrics finally took shape, they made sense! Short Circuit, Mr. Energy's Answer, Gotta Lotta Love, In the Night. Love romance led Jon away from Santa Cruz, to a place in the Midwest, that place being Minnesota. He was absolutely blinded by love, he'd never liked winter one bit. Now in Northfield, home to Carleton and St Olaf colleges, Jon started yet another band. Flight Time took a dive shortly after takeoff. In the fall of 79, Jon spent 6 weeks in Vermont, at The Guitar Research Design Center. (GRD has since changed its name to The American School of Luthierie and has relocated to CA) At GRD Jon studied with George Morris and Charles Fox. (Over the next 20+ years Jon has made a half-dozen acoustics and a like number of electric guitars. Onstage he plays one he made.) In 1980, Jon and Connie's first son was born. On a trip to Jon's hometown of Norwalk, Connecticut, they went to hear his old friend Tom Schulz play at a honky tonk. He was playing country music! And man, Jon took note that they were really packing them in! They were making good money and it kind of looked like fun. Jon thought, hey, hmmm, and upon return to Northfield he put together The Kitty Younger Band. He bought Tony Lama boots, a cowboy hat, shirts with embroidery. The group was wildly popular at VFW halls, supper clubs. They booked wedding dances by the score. Even did some 5-nighters at The Holiday Inn. They bought bigger and better gear, a truck. Jon even wrote some country-rock songs. Oh-my-God! Personalities grew, personalities clashed, the band went on for a while, but without Jon. His next project was The Hubcaps! (The exclamation mark was part of the name. Just like on the cover of Meet The Beatles!) The Hubcaps! were conceived as a 60's British Invasion cover band. The group did fairly well, they played regularly. Jon was still writing songs and this led to the band being sort of schizoid, Jon was introducing originals at band practice. It soon became a stretch to call The Hubcaps! a '60's band. Beside the originals they were mixing Talking Heads and Elvis Costello into the songlist. In the summer of '88

they released vinyl, recorded at the Salmagundi Studio. The record was favorably received by Tom Surowicz of The Twin Cities Reader, by Rick Mason of The St Paul Pioneer Express as well as by The Grateful Dead fanzine, RELIX. The Hubcaps! expanded to a 4-piece before hanging it up. They had managed to get weeknight bookings in the Twin Cities, at Bunkers, the 400 Bar, and Whiskey Junction, but the more prestigious gigs eluded them. In other words, the one's that would pay. A Wednesday night at Bunkers pays for shit. For their bread and butter they had to get in the van and drive between one and three hours. It got old. Members drifted into easier money-making cover bands. They could have done it as a group, they could've bought Vox Superbeatles, Rickenbachers, plowed back into the British Invasion concept, but they didn't. After a couple years, Jon, being a fairly subversive guy, was kicked out of the refuge he had taken in a wedding band. He hasn't played in a band since. In the late '90's he happened to read a novel by Carl Hiaasen called Striptease. He really dug it. He thought he could maybe write in that vein. Over the next couple years he wrote 2-and-a-half crime fiction novels having a rock'n'roll backdrop and an absurdist bent. Of the many publishing houses that were queried, there were no takers. In the year 2000, two things happened. He bought a Philips CD burner with two trays. This meant he could burn cds off of cds. It also meant he could mix his analog tapes down to cd. It was very exciting, being able to produce product of a higher fidelity than previously possible. It brought about a renewed interest in recording and also revitalized his songwriting which had kind of slacked off. Jon began performing solo in Northfield, at The Tavern Lounge. He began writing new songs. Lo and behold his approach to lyrics had changed! Why? It was those crime fiction novels he'd written! He'd morphed into a storyteller. The first sign of this can be seen on his self-titled cd, a song called Libby John. Jon took a passage from his first novel, Raging Hormones, and set it to music. He established and posted the song on an MP3 site. Here's kind of an amusing story: When posting a song, the poster has to designate what category it falls into, be it rap, country, folk, alternative etc. One of the choices was adult. Jon thought, well, ok, they've got a category for me! He'd been thinking of late that his was music for adults. Ha, ha, ha, adult turns out to be x-rated! The funny thing is, the song zoomed up the charts! It made it to #29 !!! This is out of the zillions of entries. On Jon's follow-up cd, Thanks to the Skunk! There are more examples of the Hiaasen influence. There is another narrative. This one, Juany's Rat, Jon lifted straight out of his novel titled The Deep End. But it was more than just the narratives. Jon was establishing characters in most of his songs now, putting them in strange situations and letting them react. Thanks to the computer and email, he'd also

re-established his friendship with James Simmons. They began to send stuff back and forth, music and lyrics, looking for input. His cd, "Frankie Said", released in 2003, is an acoustic foray. 14 songs on which he plays acoustic guitar, upright bass, saxophones, mandolin and percussion. At the end of September, 2006, Jon released his latest album: SHORT CIRCUIT. This time Jon goes electric, and decidedly back to his rock roots. No saxophones, no upright bass or mandolin. "Short Circuit" features Jon on his primary instrument, guitar. This is not just any old electric guitar, though. Jon takes his acoustic, slaps on a magnetic pickup, feeds it through tubes, distortion, JangleBox compression, Lex 'verb, and then rides that wild little animal, bringing forth something distinct, alive and original.

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