



# CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

**BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS**  
1967

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**A** multi talented and overlooked figure in rock, Al Kooper evolved from his Blues Project outfit to co-found Blood Sweat & Tears. With this album, Kooper scooped up a heap of psychedelia, a bucket full of R&B and even pinches of classical arrangements mixed with an experimental essence that has meant that this debut album by the band has often defied classification, confused the critics and even befuddled Kooper's fellow band members. To such an extent that, realising that they were not going to extract hits, receive fame or lots of money from the record's release, later sacked Al Kooper and sent him on his way.

In the short term and monetarily, it was the right thing to do because the band's next, self-titled, album was multi-award winning and presented a hatful of hits. In the long term, sacking Kooper was definitely the wrong thing to do because the band quickly burned out and became a puffed up 'circuit' outfit, endlessly punching out their hits to order, leaving any credibility at the door. This release was unique, powerful and daring: from the psychedelic reworking of Tim Buckley's 'Morning Glory', through the soul-drenched strength of 'I'll Love You More Than You'll Ever Know' to the wacked out classical adventure of 'Overture'.

Now lovingly re-released by German specialists Speakers Corner, 'Child is Father to the Man' is significant for, if no one else, the MD of the company, Kai Seemann. "I have been listening to this album since

my early teens, it's one of my Desert Island Discs." So why wait until now to release a much loved album? It appears the fault for that lies at Sony's door...

"I was in negotiation with Sony for this album for two or three years. Like EMI and Warner, they are not really interested. Our request creates a lot of extra work for them and the subsequent profit does not cover that extra work, in Sony's eyes. We press only 1,200 vinyl copies initially, which isn't of significant interest to the major labels. Also, we don't accept a standard, flat CD-ROM source copy of the project's master tape, we need analogue tape copies. The latter are difficult to create, the process is expensive and administratively, it involves 'special orders' which are out of Sony's normal order system. Because no one is producing LPs on a regular basis, this is done parallel to their normal computerised system. However, if you have someone in the organisation who takes a personal interest and is passionate about vinyl then that helps. We have one such person in Universal, another in BMG. Hence, when I heard that BMG had bought Sony Music I was very happy."

Then, as if by magic, the two to three year negotiations were suddenly resolved, almost overnight. Because of the rarity value of the master tapes, Sony/BMG will not ship an original master. Hence, Speakers Corner has to send a new reel of master tape to Sony/BMG. The latter then transfers a flat copy to

the new tape. That copy is returned to Speakers Corner for processing. Master tape itself is a moot point as no one now manufactures it – there is a world shortage. Before production ceased, Kai Seemann bought a quantity of both BASF and Quantegy master tapes, to stock up, which he reckons, will last him for around fifteen years. Unfortunately, he cannot re-use his masters. He is a victim of his own perfection. Seemann actually sticks a piece of blank master tape in between each track to minimise the pre-echo effect, which you often hear during the pause between tracks. This means his tapes are 'one shot' reels.

In addition, when transferring tape, because Seemann demands that the transfer occurs at high speed to maintain sound quality, one album will require at least three master reels. If an album has been the subject of remixes or other reworkings, then Seemann will demand copies of all the studio tapes. This means that he might receive nine or more reels of master tape for a single album, all taken from his precious, depleting, stockpile.

However, the result is a superb reissue, worthy of the original itself – surely a result of being processed through an all-analogue chain. The standard CD version is still currently available but it goes without saying that this release is definitely the one to go for if you're a vinyl buff or have access to a turntable. Even if you don't – here's the perfect excuse to go and buy one! **PR**