



BUZZ EXTRA

By Glenn Swift

Jake Hooker is one of those folks most people don't know by name, but they sure as Hell know his music. Remember that tune "I Love Rock n' Roll"? If you say no, you're either too young... or the 70s must have really been rough on you. Billboard and Rolling Stone magazines named it one of rock's all-time greatest hits. Well...just in case you're on a game show, the song's writers were Alan Merrill and ...you guessed it – Jake Hooker.

Now don't think that good ole' Hooker just fell off a barstool one day and happened to help write a great song. He's had a few others...ummm...more than a few. In fact, his songs have sold over 100 million records and grossed a staggering \$1.6 billion in sales. (Yes, that's BILLION with a "B.") But as Paul Harvey says, there's more to the story...

Besides owning and managing several companies that produce records, television shows, movies, videos, and live events, Hooker has also written and produced numerous hits for various soundtracks: Flashdance, Top Gun, Rocky IV, Iron Eagle, Wayne's World, Charlie's Angels (The Movie), Ghost World, and Story Telling...just to name a few.

And it all started in The Bronx.

"I made up my mind that I wanted to be a rock star at 12 before I even picked up an instrument," joked Hooker. "Unfortunately, at our school we didn't have any of the instruments we associate with rock, and I couldn't afford to buy one. So, I picked up a saxophone...that was at least close...and basically taught myself how to play."

Over the next two years, two good things happened: 1) Hooker survived The Bronx; 2) Hooker finally got his hands on a guitar.

"Once I got a guitar, I learned how to play very quickly." Quickly is an understatement. Before his 15th birthday, Hooker was playing in clubs in Manhattan's Greenwich Village with a high school buddy, Alan Merrill.

"It was 1967 and Merrill and I were the only two guys in high school with long hair," cracked Hooker. "We got one of our first gigs at the Café Wha? in the Village. The club was more like an undersized basement than anything else."

The Café Wha? might not have been the Filmore East, but it was the first stepping stone for what would become a remarkable career. Needless to say, there would be a few bumps in the road.

Two years later, Hooker's buddy Merrill moved to Japan. But a mere 10,000

miles wasn't enough to keep the two musicians separated for very long, and Hooker decided one summer to check out the other side of the planet.

Before long the two were performing at US Army bases and a number of clubs in Tokyo. "But nothing really came out of it," said Hooker.

After graduating high school, he ended up in Sweden for a while. "I didn't want to get drafted," laughed Hooker. From Sweden, Hooker decided to go to that island bastion of rock n' roll – Great Britain.

"Alan and I were reunited for a while, but again... nothing happened. I was beginning to worry a bit about my career." Understandable... Hooker was already a ripe old 18.

After running out of money, the two budding stars returned to the U.S., where they formed a hard-core street band, Bengunn.

"We were pretty good and met with five record company agents, but again nothing happened. I couldn't get arrested in New York."

The two then decided to give the UK one more chance. "We took advantage of those \$59 Laker Airways tickets at the time." The money was well spent. After forming the band Streak with a couple Brits, A&M records took an interest and recorded a few singles. Despite a favorable review in Melody Maker, the big contract never came.

"We lived the rock star lifestyle for a while, the townhouse in London and the Bentley to go with it. I mean we lived the life the Rolling Stones pretended to live," cracked Hooker.

Problem was, the band didn't have a manager and lacked direction. "Looking back, I was the manager, but didn't know it."

With money running out, the boys of Streak knew they'd better get their act together...and soon.

At first Barry Krost, manager of Cat Stevens, took a serious look as did Jerry Weintraub, manager of Elvis Presley.

"We were supposed to tour with Elvis," said Hooker.

Again nothing. That is, until Mickey "The Hit Maker" Most called Merrill and Hooker in for an audition. Most had worked with a number of superstars, including Donovan, Jeff Beck, Lulu, and The Animals.

The Hit Maker immediately took a liking to the two kids from The Bronx. On short notice, Paul Varley, the English drummer from Streak was quickly impressed back

Jake Hooker He Still Loves Rock n' Roll



into action and a new group, The Arrows, was formed under The Hit Maker's direction. The band then cut a single on Most's RAK Records label, "Touch Too Much."

The year was 1974... and the song was an overnight sensation, quickly making it to number one on the UK charts. Over the next two years, The Arrows followed up their initial chart success with with five more blockbuster hits: "Toughen Up," "My Last Night With You," "I Love Rock n' Roll," "Hard Hearted," and "Once Upon a Time."

Then came the biggest break of all.

British TV legend, Muriel Young, decided to produce a television series starring you know who – The Arrows. For 28 weeks in '76 and '77, The Arrows Show ran on Britain's ITV network with the band performing their own songs and guest stars performing theirs.

Arrowmania was born.

"It wasn't quite Beatlemania, but it was close," said Hooker.

Bolstered by guests like The Bay City Rollers, The Drifters, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Slade, and other big-time acts, the show enjoyed overwhelming popularity. In truth, The Arrows were worshipped as "rock gods" by young Brits and became mainstays in the UK's teen print media, appearing in interviews and pin-ups in all the glossy fan magazines of the day. The group even had its own weekly cartoon

strip, which ran in Music Star magazine. A book was also written about the band by Bill Harry in 1976.

"We played to screaming crowds all over Britain in many of the same venues that The Beatles had once played, like the Cavern Club in Liverpool," Hooker recalled.

But all glory is fleeting...Punk rock soon took center stage and Britain's teens quickly changed allegiances. By 1978, The Arrows were no more. Nevertheless, the group made an indelible impact upon pop music and all three of its members went on to further their successful careers.

These days, Hooker is president of Los Angeles-based Edge Management, Inc. – one of the nation's leading artist management companies. He has two children, Jesse, 23, and Vanessa, 16, from a former marriage to singer and actress Lorna Luft, half-sister of Liza Minelli and daughter of legendary singer and motion picture megastar, Judy Garland.

In addition to his responsibilities with Edge, Hooker is also a stockbroker. Needless to say, he's pretty busy.

When asked if he was currently working on anything in particular musically, Hooker replied with a touch of his usual humor.

"I don't just sit around making music anymore...I don't have a band."