

MUSIC

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didn't like us, we had a unique sound and I think people in the media found it very difficult to categorize us and that can be a big disadvantage," Blunstone said.

As it happened, the Zombies' hits would come few and far between, with the plaintive "Tell Her No" as the band's last chart topper for some time. Even so, the group maintained enough popularity to warrant a few international tours – but not enough to ward off the unscrupulous business deals that went with them.

"Somewhere in the managerial and agency world, the money got lost," Blunstone said of a 1966

Far East excursion. "It's disheartening to come back from a really exciting tour and realize that you just didn't make any money and you know someone did."

Against a backdrop of that disillusionment, the Zombies went into London's legendary Abbey Road studios, shortly after the Beatles cut *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* there, to record what would be the final album by the original Zombies.

Like a fine wine, *Odessey and Oracle* would eventually become an acclaimed cult classic with its high bar for melody, odd lyrical ideas and psychedelic pop sensibility.

"When we finished the album, I really did think it was the best

we could do," Blunstone said. "When it wasn't a commercial success, I think all of us started to think maybe it's time we started to look for other projects. It didn't seem like there was a demand for our band or our music."

While Argent formed the harder-edged, more progressively minded group that bore his last name, scoring a major hit with 1972's "Hold Your Head Up," Blunstone took a workaday position in the insurance industry.

"We all had to get jobs," he said. "I wanted to stay in the music business, but I didn't have a choice. It happened to be insurance because they were the first people to offer me a job."

When the Zombies failed to reunite for "Time of the Season," phony versions of the band began to fill the void, each booking themselves under that name, but none having even the slightest connection to the original musicians.

"In one case, I was told that a Zombies fan was very disgruntled and went into the dressing room with a gun. They never played again," Blunstone said.

Eventually, the real Zombies rose from the dead – almost by accident – after Blunstone and Argent began working together again and promoters insisted that the resulting concerts be billed under that more marketable name.

A new album, *Still Got That Hunger*, is slated for release this month, just in time for the Denver date. Although cover designer Quirk was again – somehow – entrusted to design the CD jacket, this time he managed to spell all

the words correctly.

"I went to school with Terry. He's a lovely bloke and a great artist," Blunstone said. "But we went to the same school and I can't spell either."

At the Oct. 19 show at the Paramount, the Zombies, complete with original and newer members, are expected to play new and older material, as well as perform a complete recitation of *Odessey and Oracle*.

Blunstone was so well trained by Argent to sing the album's "Time of the Season" that this columnist suggested the singer might do well to use the song's second verse as a kind of pickup line in a bar:

"What's your name? Who's your daddy? Is he rich like me?"

"I've never done that," Blunstone said with a laugh. "But you having said it, I think I may try that and see how they respond." Contact Peter Jones at pjones@lifeoncaphill.com.

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