A Journey to ‘A Horse With No Name’

IN JANUARY 1972, the 5th rock band America released “A Horse With No Name,” a song built on the idea that many people mistakenly attributed to Bob Dylan. The rollicking introspective song, by lead singer and guitarist Dewey Bunell, would go on to become a hit among folk-rock enthusiasts and be a staple of music charts around the world. However, the song’s origin story is a bit more complex than originally thought.

The band America—born left, Gerry Beckley, Dan Peek and Dewey Bunell—plays in 1973.

Bunell told The Wall Street Journal that he had heard a song by Neil Young called “Under the Sky” while he was camping with his friends. Young’s song was about a horse that had no name, and this inspired Bunell to write his own version. He began writing the song in his father’s old garage in northwest of London.

Dewey Bunell

Bunell was born in 1942. He was an American living in my family in England. My father was in the U.S. Air Force and stationed at an RAF base northwest of London. I was 15 at the time and friends with Gerry Beckley and Dan Peek, whose fathers were stationed there.

The three of us formed a folk-tro beat band called the Dons. After graduation, we went our separate ways for about a year. When we returned in early 1970, we formed an acoustic folk-rock band.

We spent a lot of time in the States borrowing listening to the jockeys. That’s when we decided to call our new trio America. The band’s name was inspired by Chicago, Yves Truffaut and Genaissance, an old classmate of his parents’ home. One afternoon, when everyone was out, I was on my bed with my friend Bob Welch. We were playing the band’s music with alternative tunings. With the band member’s help, I began a chord progression that I liked. The song’s title was the result.

Playing on the beat, I was home- sick for the U.S. I wanted to be part of the evolving folk-rock scene there and I needed a warmer, drier weather. I also thought about my parents up in Yorkshire and felt alone. As I strummed, I thought back to a drive my family had taken through the American Southwest. I began to visualize the sights and sound of the desert. I realized I needed a good opening to set up the narrative: “On the first part of the journey, I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.”

As I wrote, I asked myself, “How did I wind up in the desert?” I began to visualize the sights and sounds of the desert. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.

Playing the beat, I was home- sick for the U.S. I needed to be part of the evolving folk-rock scene there and I needed a warmer, drier weather. I also thought about my parents up in Yorkshire and felt alone. As I strummed, I thought back to a drive my family had taken through the American Southwest. I began to visualize the sights and sound of the desert. I realized I needed a good opening to set up the narrative: “On the first part of the journey, I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.”

Dewey Bunell

Bunell told The Wall Street Journal that he had heard a song by Neil Young called “Under the Sky” while he was camping with his friends. Young’s song was about a horse that had no name, and this inspired Bunell to write his own version. He began writing the song in his father’s old garage in northwest of London.

Dewey Bunell

Bunell was born in 1942. He was an American living in my family in England. My father was in the U.S. Air Force and stationed at an RAF base northwest of London. I was 15 at the time and friends with Gerry Beckley and Dan Peek, whose fathers were stationed there.

The three of us formed a folk-tro beat band called the Dons. After graduation, we went our separate ways for about a year. When we returned in early 1970, we formed an acoustic folk-rock band.

We spent a lot of time in the States borrowing listening to the jockeys. That’s when we decided to call our new trio America. The band’s name was inspired by Chicago, Yves Truffaut and Genaissance, an old classmate of his parents’ home. One afternoon, when everyone was out, I was on my bed with my friend Bob Welch. We were playing the band’s music with alternative tunings. With the band member’s help, I began a chord progression that I liked. The song’s title was the result.

Playing on the beat, I was home- sick for the U.S. I wanted to be part of the evolving folk-rock scene there and I needed a warmer, drier weather. I also thought about my parents up in Yorkshire and felt alone. As I strummed, I thought back to a drive my family had taken through the American Southwest. I began to visualize the sights and sound of the desert. I realized I needed a good opening to set up the narrative: “On the first part of the journey, I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.”

As I wrote, I asked myself, “How did I wind up in the desert?” I began to visualize the sights and sounds of the desert. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.

Playing the beat, I was home- sick for the U.S. I wanted to be part of the evolving folk-rock scene there and I needed a warmer, drier weather. I also thought about my parents up in Yorkshire and felt alone. As I strummed, I thought back to a drive my family had taken through the American Southwest. I began to visualize the sights and sound of the desert. I realized I needed a good opening to set up the narrative: “On the first part of the journey, I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.”

As I wrote, I asked myself, “How did I wind up in the desert?” I began to visualize the sights and sounds of the desert. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids. I was looking at all the sky. There were plants and birds and rocks and things. I was there with kids and kids.