

"Golden oldies": easy road to instant nostalgia

In the late hours of every evening, the weary television viewer is barraged with dozens of commercials advertising the sale of "golden oldies"—the instant nostalgia which today's record companies parcel out by the hundreds of thousands. Not an hour passes without some star from the past reminding viewers of their last opportunity to receive fifty great memories for the unbelievably low price of only \$5.98. Personalities like Ed (Kookie) Byrnes flash on the screen to tell prospective buyers where, when, and how to spend their money.

"Ba-Bar-BarAnn" barrage

In one unique commercial, Byrnes appears in a high school gym where preparations for the Big Dance are being made. In the next sixty seconds, fifty songs blare at the listener; all the greatest hits of the Shangri-las, The Great Pretender, Gladys Knight, not to mention Frankie Avalon's "Venus," are rifled by in rapid succession. The advertisement ends as "Kookie" turns to leave the ghosts of yesteryear and a heart-rending chorus of "Ba-Bar-BarAnn" is played.

This onslaught of memory records has probably been brought about by America's latest craving: nostalgia. People are unsatisfied with today's life styles, so they look back to days they think were better—for many, the Fabulous Fifties. Those were happy days, whose memories can easily be relived with a cheap vinyl disc.

In retrospect

A look in retrospect reveals days that were not so golden—incidents such as the Korean war can remind people that the "good old days" were hardly good as we claim. We still want to forget the traumas of earlier ages, however, and if Chubby Checker, Linda Davis, and the great "Chantilly Lace" can remind others of the joy and innocence of their teens, nostalgia might have some worth after all.

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