

# Somewhere after the Rainbow, band's fans find pot of gold

By JEFF PIORKOWSKI  
Staff Writer

The year was 1972 and the local rock'n'roll band Rainbow Canyon seemed poised for big things.

It had just spent time at Colorado's Caribou Ranch recording compound turning out its Capitol Records debut album, "Rollin' In The Rockies," a record that received a favorable review in *Billboard*. "Hot To Hold You," a single from the album, was getting positive re-

sponse as well.

"All five of us were lead vocalists," recalls Rainbow Canyon drummer Buddy Maver. "It was kind of a Three Dog Night thing, only they didn't play their instruments, and we did."

The group was rock'n'roll with a funky backbeat singing soulful harmonies. It was a local supergroup, of sorts, bringing together some of the finest musicians from Cleveland's best bands.

As is the case in so many music industry stories, however,

things didn't work out for Rainbow Canyon as its members would have liked, but the ride sounds like it was a fun one.

Consisting of Maver, guitarists Gregg Grandillo and Billy Hanna, bassist Chester "Chet" Florence, and keyboard player Norm Cotone, Rainbow Canyon's recorded efforts are now again available. In a new, three-CD collection, titled "Rainbow Canyon Anthology," are collected "Rollin' In The Rockies," a second album never released by Capitol, outtakes and the band's first demos that got them signed to the major label, and a full CD of live material culled from two shows (Dec. 3, 1972 and June 10, 1973) at the Cleveland Agora.

"We came together in the spring of 1972," Maver says of the band's beginnings. "We took about a month to work up songs — about 35-40 — which is pretty fast. And these weren't just simple (three-chord) songs, there were some nice arrangements. Then we played our first gig at the Chesterland Hullaballoo."

Shortly after, the group began writing songs and, six months into its existence, recorded a demo, produced by Tom Baker, that led to the Capitol contract.

"The whole idea behind the band was to make records," Maver says.

Rainbow Canyon members experienced the lives of rock stars first hand when they went to the newly opened (by the band's Chicago's producer, James Guercio) Caribou Ranch to record its debut. The setting



Buddy Maver, center, has just released "Rainbow Canyon Anthology," a three-CD set encompassing the 1970s band's complete recordings. This photo is a 1972 Capitol Records publicity shot.

included beautiful cabins, horseback riding and a gourmet chef. "It was really culture shock for five funk bums from Cleveland," Maver says.

Elton John, followed Rainbow Canyon to the ranch to record two albums, "Rock Of The Westies" and "Caribou."

"We were just called Rainbow then, but a group from Nashville already had that name. We were driving one day and saw a road sign pointing to Rainbow Canyon, and we said, 'That's our new name.'"

A problem with communication between Capitol and the group's then-manager, who Maver says "shall remain nameless," led to a Capitol rep-

resentative stating that the label would not get behind promoting "Rollin' In The Rockies," an album produced by Jim Fox, drummer for the James Gang. "It sold well in Cleveland, of course, but not around the rest of the country." The resulting lack of radio play led to the group's second album never being released and the band's subsequent demise in 1975.

Maver went on to team with Agora head Hank LoConti to the point where he was booking bands for each of the Agora's 10 locations throughout the country. He now lives in Russell Township and has worked as a real estate investor for the past 15 years. "It's not rock'n'roll, but I'm doing all right with it," Maver says.

Maver also operates Russell Promotions out of Chagrin Falls, which is selling the "Rainbow Canyon Anthology" via the Internet only, at [www.rainbowcanyon.net](http://www.rainbowcanyon.net). He is

also looking forward to the inclusion of three Rainbow Canyon songs in a locally produced movie to be released soon, "Night Owls of Coventry."

The movie is set in the 1970s and revolves around Coventry's Irv's Deli and the many characters that hung out there 30 years ago. The Rainbow Canyon song "Suzy" will be used as the movie's theme.

A fond memory to those who used to come see the band during its regular performances at the Agora, the release of the anthology gives Rainbow Canyon another chance to shine.

"We wanted to put this out for the fans who never got to hear the second album, and because it's the 30th anniversary of our coming together," says Maver, who says he still sees most of his former band mates fairly often. Memories brought on by this latest release show that there is still life over the Rainbow.