

**DICK
&
DEE DEE
UNCHAINED
MELODY**



and more bears
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Dick St. John and Mary Sperling ran into each other at Santa Monica City College and found they could make sweet music together. Both were songwriters; Dick had recorded a couple of singles for tiny Los Angeles concerns, but something about their highly unusual high-pitched harmonic blend clicked. With the help of pianist/arranger Don Ralke, they cut a couple of songs in Armin Steiner's L.A. studio and released a single on the Wilder brothers' Lama logo that broke big in San Francisco. Only thing was, instead of the presumed A-side *I Want Someone* (a sweet ballad written by the pair), deejays Tom Donahue and Bobby Mitchell flipped it over and jumped on the St. John-penned *The Mountain's High*, powered by Allen Breneman's pounding drums. L.A.-based Liberty Records sensed a national hit in the making and picked up the single, which soared to #2 pop in the summer of 1961.

Lama had christened the duo Dick and Deedee without their knowledge, but they stuck with the billing and scored a second hit for Liberty with *Tell Me* during the spring of '62 (Dick wrote it as well; it too first came out on Lama). An album issued on Liberty proved the pair could ladle their high-end harmonies over a wide range of material, from the stately *Unchained Melody* and *Moon River* to an update on the spiritual *Swing Low* and Dee Dee Sharp's *Mashed Potato Time*. But the duo grew disenchanting with Liberty, demanding their release. They moved over to Warner Bros. before '62 was through and nailed more hits, led by 1963's *Young And In Love* (another St. John composition) and the next year's piercing *Thou Shalt Not Steal*, a John D. Loudermilk composition they found on a Newbeats album.

