

REPLAYING EVERTON'S 'UNSUNG' FA CUP FINAL SONG OF THE '80S

Words // Rob Sawyer

One of numerous sports-related songs recorded at Stockport's Strawberry Studios in 1972, *Forever Everton*, was penned by Graham Gouldman of 10CC fame. This enduring Everton matchday anthem is not the end of the story, as far as Strawberry and the Toffees are concerned.

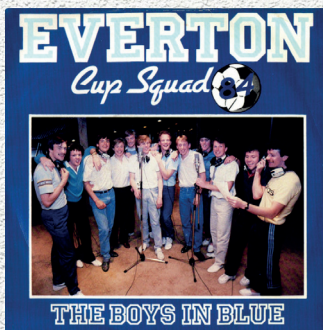
The official 1984 FA Cup final song, *The Boys in Blue*, was another one recorded at Strawberry – although it has been well and truly usurped over time by the unofficial release *Spirit of the Blues*, which bounces around Hill Dickinson Stadium to this day, having had a massive new lease of life in recent years.

Londoner Geoff Morrow – who with his co-writers had penned numbers for stars like Elvis Presley and Barry Manilow – was tasked with coaxing musicality from a squad of Merseyside-based footballers when he put *The Boys in Blue* together.

"I was extremely good friends with Bill Kenwright. He 'adopted' me for many years as the unofficial and unpaid Everton Music Consultant," said Geoff. "In practice, this meant when the Club got into a final, I had to quickly write an appropriate song, get the team together, book a studio and produce the record. Such an example was *The Boys in Blue*."

Most of the Toffees squad, including our current assistant manager Alan Irvine, convened at the celebrated Strawberry recording studio, where the presence of a local TV news crew prompted one of Geoff's most vivid memories of the day.

"A BBC camera crew had come down to the studio



Hit squad: But the 1984 release didn't reach the heights of the charts despite Andy Gray's performance on piano



for an exclusive," he recalls. "They were filming the band when suddenly I had an idea. Andy Gray had a great sense of humour, so being an okay pianist, I recorded a rather difficult classical piece, and it was played back, with Andy sitting at the grand piano pretending he was playing it. He made it look very, very real. The piece went out several times on the news over the following 24 hours. Commentators and people who phoned in asked why Andy hadn't pursued a career as a concert pianist!"

As a song, *The Boys in Blue* was very much of its time; the synth-heavy intro feeling quite reminiscent of the theme from the TV show, *Fame*. On release, the single had precious little promotion – not even warranting a mention in the Everton matchday programme or local press. Unsurprisingly, it stalled at number 82 in the charts.

The following year, *Here We Go*, based on the tune of John Philip

Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, was recorded at London's Abbey Road Studios. This musical offering would benefit from being released during the Toffees' greatest-ever season and featured on the Wogan TV show. *The Boys in Blue*, meanwhile, faded into obscurity – although it can still be listened to on music streaming sites and YouTube.

Further reading: *Strawberry Studios Forever* by Peter Tattershall and Peter Wadsworth.