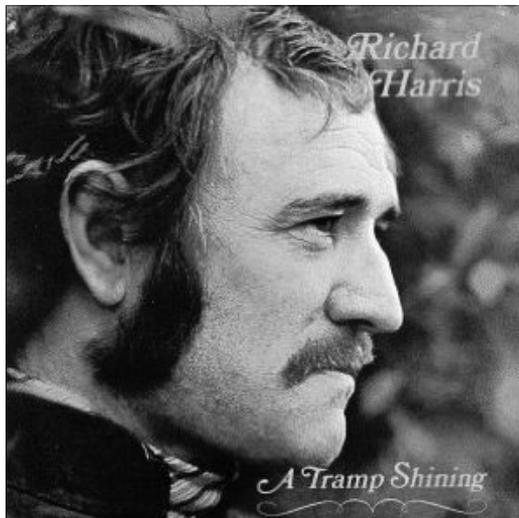




# JUST FOR THE RECORD

by Dennis Barker



## Richard Harris: *MacArthur Park*

*MacArthur Park* is melting in the dark, all the sweet green icing flowing down ... uh oh; I don't think we're in Kansas any more.

In a rock and roll landscape littered with one hit wonders, MacArthur Park stands out as a singular piece of genius, and an unlikely hit record. Composed by 1960's songsmith Jimmy Webb, MacArthur Park's surreal lyrics, rife with metaphor and symbolism can often perplex and amuse listeners. This 7+ minute psychedelic orchestral epic, was offered to, and rejected by every recording artist Webb approached. However, in 1968, the unwanted song with the weird lyrics, was surprisingly resurrected by Webb's friend and actor Richard Harris, for his debut album "*A Tramp Shining*". The songs lyrics, often dismissed as gibberish, are actually Webb's attempt at an autobiographical anthem for lost love. The song laments a time when Webb, living in LA, would spend time with his girlfriend at nearby MacArthur Park. Once you understand that the melting park and cake represent the ending of a love affair, it's not hard to assign Webb's feelings of loss and insecurity to the remaining lyrics. Give the record a listen, you'll get it. Aside from the bizarre, "too clever by twice" lyrics, which are seemingly emblematic of the hip sixties, the music is fabulous, and surprisingly, the musically ungifted Harris turns out to be the ideal choice to interpret it.

MacArthur Park would be a singular hit for Richard Harris, but, it was a home run. The single would claim the number 1 spot in Europe and Australia, and reach number 2 on the American pop charts. Although Harris would never again break into the top 10, his career would to many, be defined as much by a hit record as his acting.

Originally shunned, the songs ultimate redemption would come when Harris's MacArthur Park was covered by more than 30 artists, including the Supremes, Donna Summers, Sammy Davis, Glenn Campbell, Sinatra, Lisa Minnelli, Andy Williams etc., etc., etc.

**PS:** Message to Donna Summers: some songs were never meant to dance to.

### **Richard Harris: A TRAMP SHINING (MacArthur Park)**

**Label: ABC Dunhill #DS50032 (RELEASED MAY 11th 1968)**

Goldmine Record Album price guide, Values original copies of *A Tramp Shining*, in near mint condition, with original cover & sleeve, at \$10.00

**If you want to listen to this record, or read the lyrics, visit our website at:**

<http://newcenturycollector.com/records>