

Musician's goal: Another gold hit

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If it's true that 90 percent of pop musicians are struggling, at least Jim Gold can say he has spent some time near the top.

Gold's group, Gallery, hit No. 1 in Detroit (and No. 4 nationally on the Billboard magazine chart) with his 1972 song, "Nice to Be With You." That tune won a Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) award for being one of the most-played radio songs of the year, while Record World magazine voted Gallery the second most popular vocal group of 1972.

"It's 100 times harder now to be a success," said Gold, 38. "Today there is too much attention being paid to studio effects and trends. Warner-Atlantic (Records) showed me a whole room of (audition) tapes that they said would be burned; they don't have the time or the manpower to listen to them all."

AFTER GALLERY broke up in 1974, Gold cut two solo albums. Today, the singer-writer-guitarist lives in Sterling Heights and performs locally. His band includes lead guitarist Mike Novak, bassist Kevin Bliss and drummer Ken Thomason. They play Gold's material, as well as country-tinged rock staples.

Perhaps Gold's most amusing story about Gallery concerns its second hit, a remake of Mac Davis' "I Believe in Music."



Free Press Photo by JOHN A. STANO

Jim Gold, center, is trying for the big time again with his new band. The group includes Mike Novak, left, and Kevin Bliss.

"I learned it from B.J. Thomas' version," Gold said, "and for some reason, I couldn't decipher one line — even at a slower speed. It was supposed to be, 'God loves you when you sing.' I rewrote it to be something like, 'look up to the sky/tell me what you see,' and we took the song into the Top 10.

"Anyway, Davis was on the 'Tonight Show'; I think Bill Cosby was hosting. Cosby ... asked him if lesser-known artists had hits with any (of his songs). I thought, 'here it comes,' and sure enough, Davis said, 'this band from Detroit ... they changed my favorite line in the

said Broadway Recording Studio owner David Thompson is taking the tapes around the country in hopes of a record deal.

"These people paid all my costs to go down there — I have to look at that alone as a blessing. Their encouragement was refreshing; they gave suggestions, but I knew I had my own style and that I wasn't trying to sound like anyone (else)," Gold said.

Gold, married for 20 years with two children, said he still loves performing. "It's magic when everything clicks and you see faces acknowledging what you're doing."

song! But Davis didn't really have a reason to be angry. He released that song himself three different times — and all three stiffed."

GOLD MAY HAVE found a new lease on life commercially through recent demos he recorded with the Muscle Shoals (Ala.) musicians. These session players have backed Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Paul Simon and Bob Seger on numerous hits, he said. Detroit producer Johnny Powers put Gold in touch with the band.

Gold described his latest tunes as "a cross between country, rhythm-and-blues and southern rock." He