

FOR THE ACTIVE MUSICIAN™

M.A.M.

MAGAZINE

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Metheny

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FOR THE ACTIVE MUSICIAN™

M.I. MAGAZINE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

MAR/APR 1980



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Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson have been cranking out solid, honest rock and roll for years, with groups like Mott the Hoople and Spiders From Mars. Steve Caraway interviews the Englishmen in New York.



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One of L.A.'s most respected keyboardists, **Bill Payne**, was a founding member of **Little Feat** and is currently on tour with Linda Ronstadt. Payne discusses his next step with Dave Goggin.

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Tower of Power, the band that put the brass back in rock music. Tim Kaihatsu interviews the horn section, and trumpeter Greg Adams contributes one of his arrangements on page 24.



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Inside: Oberheim. When it comes to polyphonic synthesizers, Oberheim is the company to watch. Tom Oberheim tells Kirk Austin how he got started and what we can look forward to.



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The **Pat Metheny Group** have taken jazz back to street level with their chart-topping LP, *American Garage*. Dan Forte interviews the quartet, and Richard Vandivier analyzes Metheny's unique guitar style, on page 35.



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Veteran bassist **Tim Drummond** has played with just about everyone from James Brown to Bob Dylan—with Ry Cooder, Lonnie Mack, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young dropping in along the way. Drummond retraces his tracks with Dan Forte.

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EDITOR'S

The lead guitarist leaps onto the drum riser as the drummer tosses his sticks into the air. The bassist strums a full chord, and the keyboardist tosses his zesty mane out of his eyes. The sold-out crowd is on its feet before the final chord comes down, and soon they have surpassed the volume of the band. A few raise Bic lighters, and the rest stomp and applaud in unison. One emaciated punk in a Devo T-shirt stands on his chair.

The Doobie Brothers' latest stadium conquest? Journey perhaps? Guess again.

The scene described above is exactly what happened the last time the Pat Metheny Group played San Francisco, and it's a ritual that's repeated wherever the band performs across the country.

Not your typical "jazz" gig, but, then, Metheny & Co. aren't your typical jazz combo. And they obviously appeal to more than just the stereotypical jazz buff.

If you were to videotape a Metheny performance and play it back with the sound turned all the way down, it would be hard, if not impossible, to determine what musical genre was being executed, based upon the group's stage presence and the reaction of the audience. Jazz—you know, that improvisatory music played in smoke-filled rooms for people wearing sunglasses and berets—is probably the last thing one would expect to hear once the volume was turned back up.

Music journalists like myself generally love to split styles of music into neat little departments—jazz, rock, jazz-rock, rock-jazz, fusion, jazz-rock-fusion—but every once in a while an artist like Pat Metheny comes along just to remind us how limited (not to mention meaningless) those distinctions really are. Some of the recent articles I've read on the Metheny Group have used terms like "fusion-mainstream" and "neo-fusion," whatever that is. But while the critics are racking their brains and wearing out the hyphens on their typewriters, groping for a new super-slot, Metheny and his fans couldn't care less about such arbitrary distinctions.

Metheny, as much as any artist I can think of, represents the potential Musician of the Eighties—a 25-year-old media child who grew up on the Beatles, emulated the guitar style of Wes Montgomery, and studied (and taught) music at the university level. Today's musicians are without question better equipped and better educated, and are exposed to a greater variety of music, than ever before. The resultant generation of young phenoms could have turned out to be one collective musical Frankenstein monster, but in Pat Metheny's case the result is a level-headed bandleader, tasteful guitarist and prolific composer.

Seven full pages of this month's **M.I.** are devoted to Metheny, his group, and an analysis of his guitar concepts. Pat's music has something to offer listeners of all tastes—as does the rest of this issue, with the Tower of Power horn section; English rockers Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson; Little Feat keyboardist Bill Payne; Dylan's current bassist, Tim Drummond; and an inside look at how the Oberheim polyphonic synthesizer came into being. Also introduced in this issue, **Pickup Selector**, the first in a series of articles on guitar pickups by the country's foremost expert on the subject, Seymour Duncan; and **Spec Check**, a new department where we lab test special products on the market, this month looking at the Schaffer-Vega and Nady Systems wireless transmitters.

If there are any artists or areas of music or equipment you'd like to see more coverage of, feel free to write and let us know. We'll do our best to fill the bill.

Dan Forte

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Ian Hunter & Mick Ronson

ROCK & ROLL REFLECTIONS

by Steve Caraway

Ian Hunter's music sounds like a condensed history of rock and roll. Both in his work with Mott the Hoople and his solo efforts, the influences have been clear. Hunter has managed to combine the styles of the Who, Bob Dylan, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Lou Reed into a separate contemporary musical identity.

Although Hunter has released five albums (*Ian Hunter*, *All American Alien Boy*, *Overnight Angels*, *Shades of Ian Hunter*, and *You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic*) and one book (*Reflections of a Rock Star*), his best work has been in collaboration with guitarist Mick Ronson. Probably best known for his work with David Bowie and the Spiders From Mars, Ronson is a diverse musical personality. It shocked many of his fans when he joined Bob Dylan for the

Rolling Thunder Review, but as Ronson said in an interview in the December 1976 issue of *Guitar Player Magazine*, "It doesn't matter what the public thinks about my playing, whether it's Dylan or anybody—as long as I'm enjoying myself. Some people will like it, and some won't."

The current Hunter/Ronson band consists of drummer Eric Parker, bassist Martin Briley, George Meyer and Tom Mandel on keyboards, and Tommy Morrongiello on third guitar. After six months on the road the band is back in New York to put some finishing touches on a soon to be released live album.

M.I.: When you were first developing musically who were you listening to?

Hunter: Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, the Stones. Presley really put it together, but he didn't write much—neither did Jerry Lee Lewis or Richard for that matter, but you can see how it came about. Little Richard was leaning over from gospel and R&B, and Jerry Lee Lewis came over from country, but they were both getting into that same area. Elvis just put it all together, same as the Beatles did later on. I also used to like the Everly Brothers and Chuck Berry; it was the same sort of thing, countryish R&B and it worked out to be rock and roll.

Ronson: The Yardbirds, the Beatles later on, the Everly Brothers, the Shadows with Hank Marvin on guitar, the Stones, and I listened to the Ventures a bit too!

M.I.: What was the first instrument you played and why did you pick it up?

Hunter: Guitar was my first instrument. My uncle gave me one when I was young. It was a mess of a guitar, with a bent neck and everything. My father was a policeman and he wouldn't have it in the house, so I had to keep it in the garage outside the house and it got even "benter."

Ronson: Guitar wasn't my first instrument; I played piano and violin. I really didn't want to play violin, I wanted to play cello, but they wouldn't teach me cello. So I played violin first, then viola, and eventually on to cello. Then I wanted to be a drummer. I couldn't become a drummer because I couldn't afford any drums of my own. I couldn't give up violin lessons, and I ended up getting a guitar because that was much cheaper. That's how I became a guitar player.

M.I.: Ian, were you in any other group before Mott The Hoople?

Hunter: I was only in one before Mott, and that was just a pub thing. This guy was like a Jerry Lee Lewis act, and I played bass for him. We went to Germany and played the Star Club. It was after the Beatles were there and the place was winding down a bit, but you could still get a month's work there and you'd make \$8.00 a week. That was good money then, and you could live on it. It was good fun; it was like a holiday. We'd come back to England and do weekends in pubs and local church halls. You'd have to work, too, and you'd have to get a part-time job on the side. In England we'd get \$16 between five of us, so you couldn't really exist on that. If you weren't on the top of the bill you'd get \$12!

I perfected a way of not paying off amps! We used to put \$10 down on the amp and then move [laughs]. Then we'd move again, and move again, and move again, and they'd never catch up with us. It was the only way we could get gear; nobody had any money. I think it was a little different in America, but in England our parents didn't have any money. Most players of that time had to steal, borrow, or do whatever to get their gear. It was good because you had to fight to play; it wasn't just shoved in your hands. So many parents just give their kids guitars, it's not right. The kid's got to fight to do it!

M.I.: Mick, how did you get involved with David Bowie?

Ronson: I was staying at his house one day, I just knew him, and he asked me to do this radio show with him. I didn't know any of his music, and I just played along the best I could. He came to me and said, "Hey, why don't you join the band?" I thought about it for a little while—because every time I got involved with anything it took a lifetime to get out, and I didn't want that. I thought, "Well, Jesus, I might as well give

it another go because if I don't, I'll kick myself in the head." I went for it one more time and it paid off!

M.I.: Can you explain how Mott The Hoople got together?

Hunter: I just answered an audition ad in the paper. They were already together and they just needed a singer/piano player. They wanted somebody who sounded a bit like Bob Dylan and who played piano. They got hold of some demos of mine, and I never went to the audition. They listened to the demos, and asked me to come around, and I got the gig.

M.I.: When you first came to the U.S. with Mott, what was your impression?

Hunter: It was a buzz. I think that English kids think of the United States and American kids think of England. It was pretty frightening since we came into New York. We saw the skyline as we came into the city and thought, "What are we taking on here?" A bit intimidating, really. Everything is bigger in the U.S. and there is a lot more hype. We found the crowds to be pretty much the same, except that certain bands broke in England and never over here. Slade had that problem as well as T. Rex. American kids took to certain bands really and not to others. The Police are doing well in the States now, and even the Clash are getting good reviews. I can't figure out why about the Clash either. I have been a big fan of the band for a long time, and I know them. I don't want to put them down, but when the critics start tossin' Lennon and McCartney around as comparisons—I don't understand it. It's too bad really, because the band might start to believe it.

M.I.: Do you remember what kind of gear you were using with Mott?

Hunter: I can't even remember what I was using in 1973, and that was 1969! We used anything, but mainly Marshall amps. The gear was just there and we used it. We couldn't control it, and some of the gigs were total disasters. Then one day at rehearsal we set up 4x12's instead of stacks, and we found that we could then control the sound much better and it wasn't in control of us.

M.I.: Ian, you had some very strange looking guitars with Mott. Can you explain those instruments?

Hunter: I had a Maltese cross guitar that I bought in San Francisco, and I had one that was shaped like a big "H" that was made in London by a couple of guys.

M.I.: Mick, what were you using with Bowie?

Ronson: I played the same kind of guitars as I do now, Les Pauls. Back then I liked to use Marshall amps, but lately I have been using a small Music Man amp. I don't know if it sounds any different, but it is a really nice amp, especially if you're not playing too loud.

Hunter: We've been getting into playing quieter. I know out front it seems loud, but onstage it's getting quieter. On *You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic* Mick used his Les Pauls and...

Ronson: No, I used a Telecaster on the album except on "Cleveland Rocks" where I used a Stratocaster. Not old ones, just regular Fenders. Back with Bowie I mainly used a nice '59 Les Paul. I don't really care about what I use, whatever sounds right. In fact, on the current album for the studio tracks Harvey Goldberg, who is engineering, said that he had a guitar and asked if I wanted to use it, so I did.

Hunter: I was doing some playing with Leslie West, and Leslie just picked up a guitar and amp at SIR [Studio Instrument Rentals]—neither of

them was what he normally used—but it sounded the same. It's all in your ear, not in what instrument you play.

M.I.: How did you two meet?

Hunter: We were doing *All The Young Dudes* dates with Bowie producing, and Mick arranged a track on that LP. Tony DeFries took Mott over as manager, and Bowie and Ronson were already managed by DeFries; we just kind of fell in with each other. We didn't start playing with each other until later, really. Bowie had "retired," and I ran into a couple of people I knew and they said Mick was just sitting around. I wasn't happy with the way Luther Grosvenor [Ariel Bender] was playing with Mott, so I went down to Mick's one night. I was in trouble because Mott wasn't sounding right—and Mick just never rings you up. So I went down there and asked him to join Mott, and that lasted a short period of time.

M.I.: You two collaborated on Ian's first solo album, Ian Hunter. How did that come about?

Hunter: After I left Mott I moved to New York. There was a lot of flack going down, and I was a bit dodgy as it was. We were all fucked up at the time. So instead of sitting around I felt the best thing we could do was go into the studio and do an album. We had about half of it written when we went in there, and the whole thing was done in six weeks. In fact, "Once Bitten, Twice Shy," which was a hit in England, wasn't written until ten days before the album was finished. We were just writing as we were going.

M.I.: When you write, is there any pattern to your creativity?

Hunter: No, I honestly don't know how the songs come together, and there is no order to my writing. I wish I did know! I can't say that I can't write in certain situations, because I have written in every conceivable situation. I can't say I prefer to write in other situations, because I have tried it. I've tried to put myself in a situation that I felt was ideal and nothing happened. There are times when I just zero in on things. It's like a receiver and a transmitter; you're just playing this song and it comes through. I write some on guitar, but mainly on the piano.

M.I.: How do you two interact as co-producers?

Hunter: As far as our roles are concerned, Mick is strong in certain areas and I am weak in certain areas, and fortunately they coincide—we complement each other. Oh, we get bitchy with each other, but sooner or later we come around to certain ways of thinking.

Ronson: We like being in the studio, but not all the time. It could get a bit boring if it were all

the time. Live gigs are fun.

Hunter: The live gigs are great as long as you're not on the road too long. Last time out it was six months!

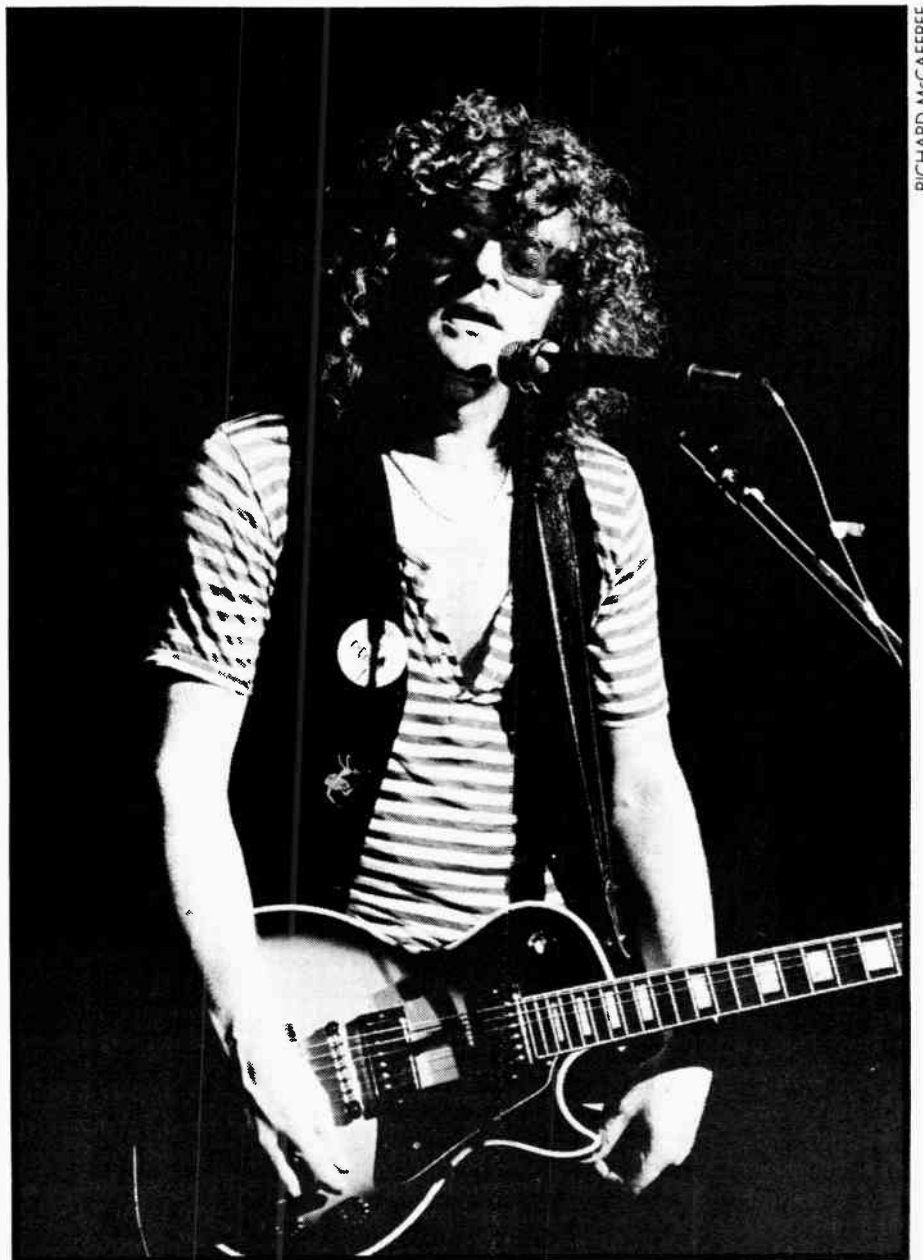
M.I.: What kind of gear are you using on stage these days?

Ronson: We just kind of put all the gear together and went out. We had only five days to rehearse the band before leaving. Next time we'll probably sort out the equipment better.

Hunter: It was a brand new band! Just because I've been around for a while and Mick's been around doesn't mean you're going to get a "happenin'" band. The members of the current band are not that experienced and it was a bit tough on them, but they pulled through it okay. My whole point here is that the potential of the group has nowhere near reached its peak yet. This is a great point because you can see where you've got to go. What is horrible is what happened to Mott, where you couldn't see where you had to go.

M.I.: Is this new LP completely live?

Hunter: Yeah, with three live-in-the-studio tracks. Two of those cuts weren't even written at the time of the live recordings. We went to My Father's Place, in Roslyn, New York, and tried to do those live, too; but at that time we had been off the road for six weeks and the band just didn't gel, so we couldn't use it. The rest of the album was taped live at the Roxy in Los Angeles. We played the Roxy for seven nights and recorded each night. The LP is mainly from the Sunday



RICHARD MCCAFFREE

ROCK & ROLL REFLECTIONS

Ronson: No, because it sounds like a bootleg. I think what we've just done is what we've just done. It has nothing to do with the future. It's just a "diary" of what happened that particular week at that club. That's the way we sounded and that's how we played and that's about it, really. With sweetening it would ruin the roughness of the recording.

M.I.: Do either of you listen to a lot of music out-

stupid as possible about studios—it just gets too technical. I look for a good engineer who is fast. If the engineer's good, then things are happening quick. I hate it when you sit for three days trying to get the "right" drum sound. The song will tell you what it needs, you know.

M.I.: Ian, how has your role changed with the new band as opposed to when you were with Mott The Hoople?

Hunter: Not much, really. I just like to work two-handed, and I think most people do, actually. I got into a position where I was working on my own, when I did a couple of albums without Mick, and it was no good. I don't like working one-handed, and it matters to me who that other hand is. I could count on the fingers of one hand the people who I would like to work with. That makes it difficult. A lot of these people are not available. In fact, Mick was with Dylan for awhile. It's hard for me to get what I want. I can function, but I don't enjoy myself.

M.I.: Mick, how did you get involved with Dylan's Rolling Thunder Review?

Ronson: He just asked me to go, actually, and I said yeah. A few weeks went by and he says, "Well, mate, are you ready to go on Sunday?" And this was a Friday [laughs]! I said, "What?" And I went out!

M.I.: Do you remember what you were using on that tour?

Ronson: I think you're talking to the wrong people about equipment! We just use anything that comes up. I remember my guitar on that tour; the pickups kept falling out [laughs]! It was a hell of a start. Then I bought a new guitar.

Hunter: Ronson will just walk into a shop and ask for a Les Paul. They show him a Les Paul and he says, "Thank you;" and walks out! [Needling Ronson] You don't even check out a half dozen to see which is right! Like that guitar you bought in Maine!

Ronson: That turned out to be a really nice guitar. I like brand-new guitars, but you need to break them in; it takes a lot of work. I have got five or six guitars—three Les Pauls, a Telecaster, and a Stratocaster. All the instruments are stock.

M.I.: Do you carry your own PA system on the road?

Hunter: Yeah, we have this guy who handles all that, and we just get what he wants. He mixes us out front, and he's very good at it. We played a lot of different-sized venues on this last tour and it was hell for him, but he came

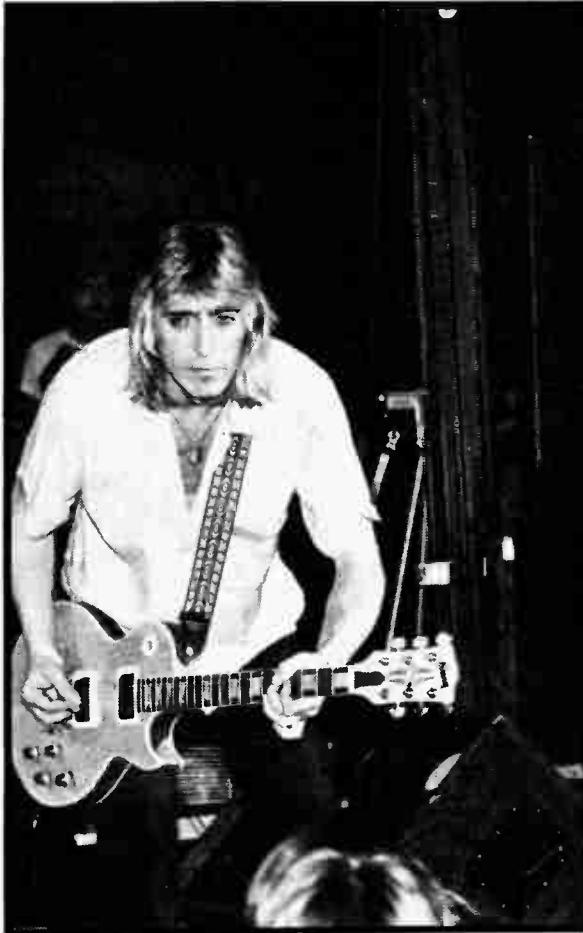
through. I don't think a lot of kids understand that a band can go up and play great, but if the out front sound is bad they go home and say the group was lousy. They ought to put the name of the sound company on that program. A lot of them are jerks, real jive. They can ruin gigs and they don't care! It's the kids that suffer, because they don't get a proper chance to appreciate the music.

M.I.: What is down the road for the Ian Hunter/Mick Ronson collaboration?

Hunter: Haven't got a clue! Never have, really. We're not bothered by that. We think it's funny what goes on in this business, so we really don't have a plan. We'll plan for next week, and from then on just take it as it comes. We're having a good time; in fact, I don't think we would have done it unless we were having a good time. And I don't think we'll continue if we stop having a good time.

M.I.

RICHARD McCAFFREE



JON SEVERT

night show.

Ronson: The album sounds like you're sitting in the audience, and I find that quite exciting. We used the room's ambience a lot on the recording. If you sweeten live recordings too much, you should've just done it in the studio in the first place.

Hunter: It's been edited. It had to be edited, which is a drag, because we could only put live stuff on three sides. What is that about 60 minutes? We had 106 minutes of solid material. We had to take "Standing In My Light" off of there, and that was a real good performance. It was a real pisser taking it off! We also had to take "One Of The Boys" off. There are edits and they are a pain in the ass. It's a continual compromise. Just getting the music on the LP we had to cut a lot of the crowd responses and all.

M.I.: What gear was used for the live/studio cuts?

Ronson: Same stuff as on the road, really. I had my small Music Man.

Hunter: I was using a Twin-Reverb. We've really scaled the stuff down a lot. If we could get an individual sound, I'd love to go out on the road with Music Mans and all small stuff.

Ronson: Though the amp you were using sometimes was too small and the tone would muddy.

Hunter: Well, Mick had my amp and I bought a new one for myself. I mean, after all, he needs a better amp. He has to sound better, because he's the lead guitar player and I am just the rhythm guitar.

M.I.: When you got off the road with the live tapes and you had a chance to sit down and listen to them, did you decide to do any overdubs?

side of the band?

Ronson: I never find myself sitting down and listening to music. I find myself going over to friends' houses and listening to what they have on the player. I never listen to music to duplicate a sound, saying, "I've got to get a drum sound like this, or a guitar sound like this." [Producer] Roy Thomas Baker once told me that Queen sat him down to get the "Mott" sound; for six weeks this went on. I mean, there is no such thing as a "Mott" sound or any other sound; there's just a combination of people going out and playing, and that's what it sounds like.

M.I.: You both must have learned a number of studio techniques from the people you've worked with, like Bowie. What do you look for, and how do you experiment?

Hunter: I, personally, am not interested in the technical aspects of the studio. I only have a layman's knowledge of them, and I try to keep as

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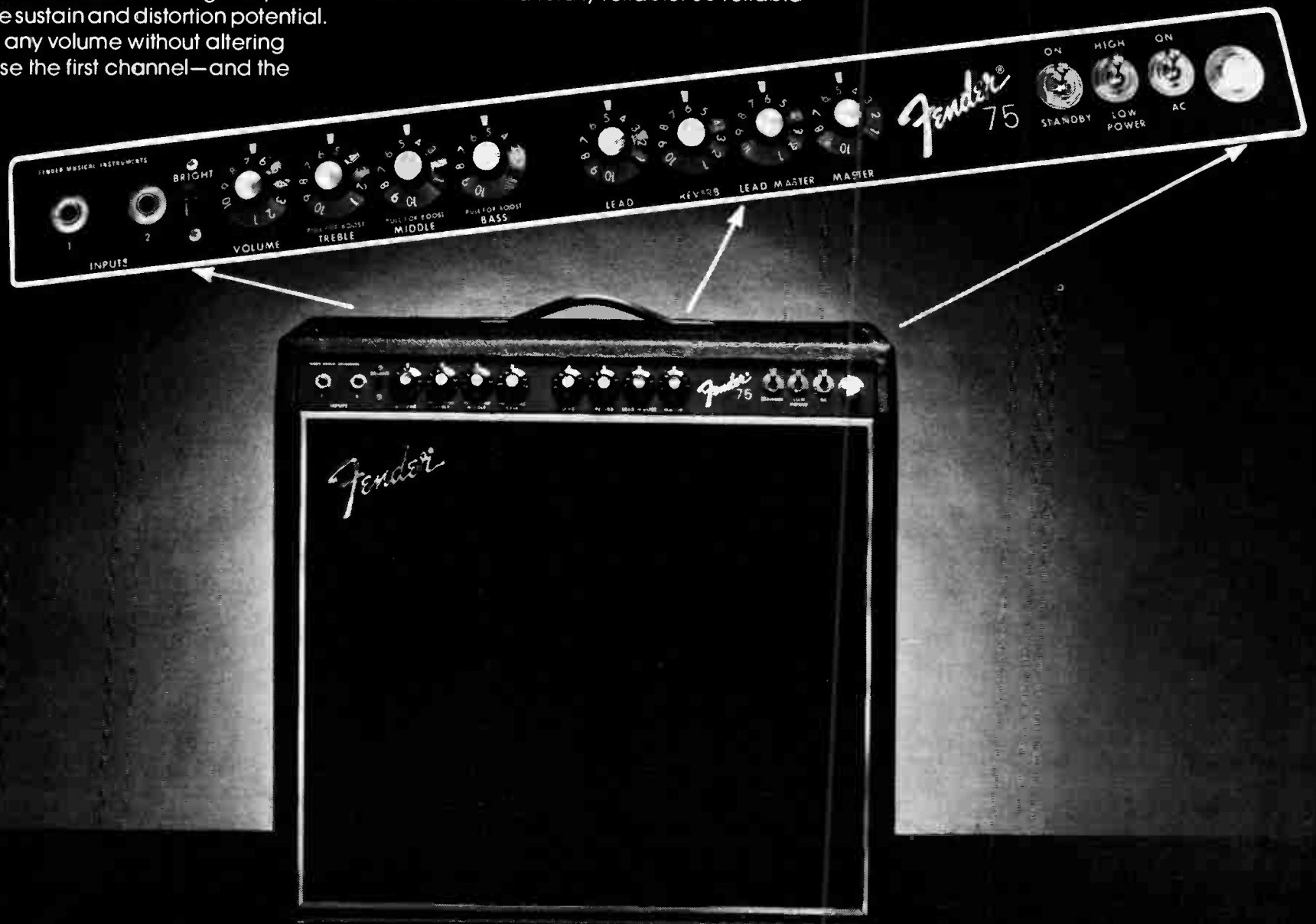
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LITTLE FEAT'S BILL PAYNE



RICHARD McCAFFREE

STEPS OUT

by Dave Goggin

Bill Payne is at Cherokee Studios in Hollywood doing some Hammond B-3 overdubs for the new Firefall album. Kyle Lehning, of England Dan and John Ford Coley fame, is producing.

"It sounds kinda weaselly when I thin it out to one note. I'm trying to get a staggered sort of thing. Generally, I do a chord thing, or I do block solos."

"What I'm hearing is what an organ would do in a situation with minor chords—big, fat, nice minor chords—maybe thinking in terms of a relative minor to the key. Does that make any sense?"

"You don't want a whole lot of movement?"

"Not a whole lot. There's so much rhythm going on. It's got to be some sort of combination between the energy level of the solo and the

notes played. I think the sound of the instrument just about does it. More notes just tends to confuse it."

Another pass at the tune is made and Bill lays down a track.

"I like the first half of the other take and the second half of this one."

"Let me hear the ones you like, and I'll just jot it down and play it."

Bill Payne, 31, is one of the most respected and sought after musicians around. He was a member of the illustrious Little Feat band for ten years, in which time they recorded nine albums for Warner Bros: *Over The Edge*, *Sailin' Shoes*, *Time Loves A Hero*, *Dixie Chicken*, *Last Feat*, *Waiting For Columbus*, *Feats Don't Fail Me Now*, *Last Record Album*, and the recent *Down On The Farm*. Payne has also recorded with the Doobie Brothers, Bonnie Raitt, Emmylou Harris, Nicolette Larson, Jackson Browne, Art Garfunkel and numerous others, and is currently recording and touring with Linda Ronstadt.

M.I.: How did you get started as a keyboardist? What's your first musical memory?

Payne: Probably playing "O Solo Mio" in the basement. We had an upright piano, and my mother knew that song. I was about five.

M.I.: Did you know at that time that this was going to be your life?

Payne: Yeah, I really did. Maybe not at that moment sitting there playing that first song, but I'd say certainly within two or three years after taking piano. Outside of normal things that kids think they're going to be—fireman or that sort of stuff—I really felt that this was it. Although, ironically, with the first band I joined, I auditioned to play drums, as opposed to keyboard. There happened to be a piano in the house, so I sat down and played it and they went, "Wait a

minute, get off the drums. We're gonna start you with this."

M.I.: How did you get started in the business? How did you get to where you are today?

Payne: I've been playing in bands since I was fifteen. I did my first recording session around '67—some psychedelic record. I joined Little Feat in 1969, and my first paying session was with a group called the Fraternity of Man; it was their second album. From there, Lowell George aided me in getting a couple of other recording gigs with, like, the GTO's (Girls Together Outrageously). Frank Zappa produced that. It just kept blossoming. There were several other artists: Nolan Porter, Judy Mahan, some bands that Little Feat and myself were collectively involved in. I guess the first major group I recorded with was the Doobie Brothers, who were not at the time a major act. I played piano on "China Grove" [*The Captain And Me*].

M.I.: What album work have you done that you are especially proud of?

Payne: The Doobie Brothers albums, and certainly Bonnie Raitt—all of her records. There's Emmylou Harris, Nicolette Larson, Jackson Browne, and just recently Linda Ronstadt. I really enjoyed playing on an Art Garfunkel album called *Breakaway*. Bob Segar was another person I really got off playing with—a tune called "Hollywood Nights" [*Stranger In Town*]. It was sort of a Doobie Brothers-sounding track. It's one of those tunes where you're driving along, and you'll be driving 80 before you know it. It's got that type of energy to it.

The Blues Brothers was a recent project that I got to play on—a single of a Spencer Davis-Stevie Winwood song, "Gimme Some Lovin'." Oddly enough, there was a tape going around a few years ago of the Troggs, and that was the song those guys were trying to play. Fortunately, we had a little bit easier time with it. The Blues Brothers guys were neat; I love that band with Steve Cropper and those people.

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M.I.: How does one get to that first stage of session work? Do you do a lot of demos for people, and if one act breaks you're in business?

Payne: Yeah, I think that's an excellent way to start. In fact, I'm doing a demo with [producer] Maurice White tonight. Normally, I wouldn't do demos at this stage, but I really admire Maurice and his work with Earth, Wind and Fire. Also, George Massenburg is the engineer, so it's a top notch team. But I think that's really the best way to do it. Van Dyke Parks once told me, "Talent isn't everything." I'm afraid he's right. You can be the hottest player on the block, but connections have a great deal to do with it.

M.I.: Would quantity of product contribute to a certain extent?

Payne: I think so; people see your name. I suppose it could be detrimental after a while, if you're on every album. I try to get around that. In playing with Linda, I have a chance to go out on the road.

M.I.: So session work hasn't become a nine-to-five job where you just clock in?

Payne: Not at all. In fact, I have been taking lessons again. There's a guy named Jamie Faunt who is basically teaching me some rhythmic charts. I mean to develop my writing chops and my reading ability. That, in turn, is going to help my composing and session work. Like today, I had to write down a couple of things. Well, I could do that before, but I would be the only one who could read it. Now, if somebody else had to come in, they could read what I put down.

M.I.: Is there an average session situation? For instance, do the people you work with give you a pattern to improvise around, or do they rely on you to come up with the ideas?

Payne: It varies. For me, that's what makes it so interesting. There's plenty of dates in town where they say, "Here's the chart," and you play it that way. It requires a certain excellence in musicianship to pull that off, although I don't think it's the most interesting route—which is the reason I like record dates as opposed to TV dates and movie dates, where you're much more

restricted.

M.I.: Do you do many of those dates?

Payne: I really don't. I took the lessons, so just in case I had a couple of calls, I'd be a little more adept at falling into place. But what I really enjoy is being able to play on a date and influence the artist. Like, I had a chance to do some arrangements for Linda; I really enjoy that form of creativity.

M.I.: Have you been doing a lot of composing?

Payne: Not a huge amount. There're times when I'll get together with people, or with my wife, or just by myself and write songs as a songwriter. But I'd really like to get into more composing. On *Down On The Farm* there's a piece called "Front Page News," which has an inkling of what could happen with a little hard work. That's one reason I got into the lessons again. Every composer, or person that wants to attempt it, has to have a system worked out. Lots of people work with tape. I visited with [Isao] Tomita in Tokyo, when Little Feat was there in the summer of '78.

M.I.: He's got a complete studio in his home, doesn't he?

Payne: Yes, but it's not much bigger than this room—a very small room. He does a combination of tape and writing out music, or logging the tapes. He'll have tracks 1,2,3, and 4, which are rhythm tracks, and then tracks 5 through 24 are designated for other slots. He has an incredible system worked out.

M.I.: Do you compose on the synthesizer?

Payne: On just about anything, really. I have a real preference for composing on multi-keyboards, because the textural thing is what I enjoy. It's what I really enjoy about Joe Zawinul's playing, for example. I really think what I'd ultimately like to do is get a solo project, hopefully at Warners, because they're branching out into that type of instrumental music. I don't really consider myself a vocalist, although I'd like to continue writing vocal music; but I'd really like to investigate the other area.

M.I.: What is your basic package of synthesizers, keyboards, and amplifiers when you're on the

road?

Payne: Well, Flagg Systems developed my speaker cabinets. I don't really have the specs on those: There's a tweeter, and two 15" bass speakers, and there's an 8" midrange. I run everything through a Quantum mixer. I use an Oberheim synthesizer, and Denny Densmore, my keyboard tech, built an extension for that which we place on the Yamaha electric piano. To my right would be the Yamaha CS-80 synthesizer, and below that is a Rhodes. We had to modify the top of the Rhodes to accommodate the 200-pound synthesizer. To the left of that equipment is the Oberheim extension and the [Yamaha] electric grand. To the left of that is the [Hammond] B-3, which Keyboard Products cut down. On top of that is an old Wurlitzer, and then the Oberheim, the main unit. Charlie Button, up in San Francisco, modified the Leslie that I have, just gave it more power. I only use one Leslie. We run the B-3 through the speaker on the other side of the stage, along with all of the other instruments. For Linda's album, Peter Asher had me set all that up in the studio and just put some mikes on the speakers, and went at it from that angle. We did do some extensive overdubbing, but a lot of the tracks were from that setup as it was, more or less the way I do it live. So I'll probably continue to use that setup while touring with Linda, with the possible exception of adding a real acoustic piano up front. She has the stage room for it, so I'd go for that. It'd be interesting.

M.I.: Has there been anybody in your development as a musician that really profoundly affected your playing?

Payne: Well, certainly my first teacher, Ruth Newman, up in Ventura. She passed away, I'd say, a month or so after I stopped taking lessons. Lowell was another that really influenced me quite a bit. That similarity kind of bothers me a little bit, in that I had just split Little Feat a month or two before he died. Lowell and I, even at the time of the split, had a pretty good understanding of each other and why it was time to try something else—even though he really wanted to keep the option open to have the band there. We'd had several pretty long talks before making the move. I mean, we split up so many times, it was absurd. But, I really knew what I wanted to do, and I talked it over with the whole band. I spent months setting it up to where I wouldn't appear to be flakey to anybody and just walk out and leave everybody unprepared.

I'd say overall, Lowell and Ruth were the two that had the most inspiration. There are people that indirectly affect you, like George Gershwin, or just rock and roll songs in general. Or maybe I'll hear James Taylor, who I really dig as a



Lowell George

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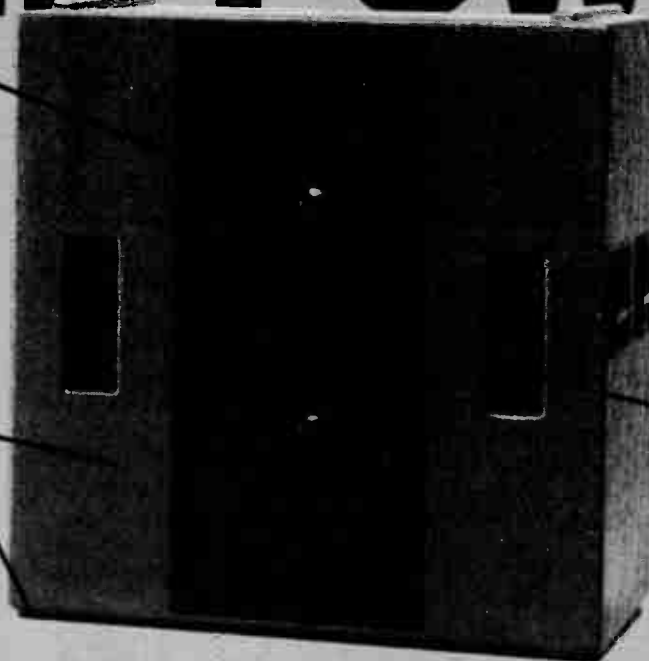
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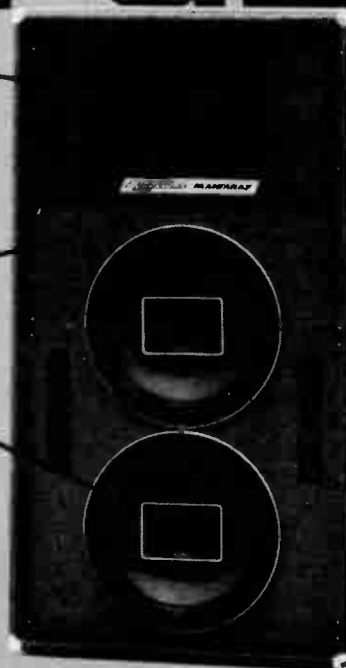
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songwriter. I like music because of the different moods that it creates, whether you do it lyrically or musically.

M.I.: Do you listen to music other than the type of music that you play, say, ethnic or classical music?

Payne: I would like to listen to more of the Japanese music. David Lindley, in Jackson's band, had a cassette of some people up in the northern part of Japan. They do this kind of a Louisiana type of beat almost. It's a triplet type of thing. I listen to a lot of Mexican stations here in town, because I like the relationship between violin or accordion. New Orleans is a prime example of a place that's cut off from the outside world, and they've got their own sound. They could give a shit about anybody else.

M.I.: A strength comes out of it, because you're not dealing with a vast audience.

Payne: That's true, and the thing I enjoyed about Little Feat, and Lowell in particular, was his acute knowledge of that fact, in terms of regionalizing music. As it turned out, a lot of people thought, "Oh, they're a southern band." "No, they're from New York." "They're a California band." I mean, we had so many things together it actually hurt us, because nobody could put their finger on what it was we did. "Six Feet of Snow" has got a country & western type of thing, and I threw in a Louisiana type of accordion thing on top of it, a la Clifton Chenier. That's the type of stuff I like, the blending of things. I know that Bartok and a lot of composers take whatever their regional type of folk trip is and just build it up a little bit. Look at Gershwin: He'd be up in Harlem, checkin' out the stuff. I've heard people say he ripped off the blacks. Personally, I think that music, with the exception of copyright laws and that sort of thing, is open for interpretation. "Dixie Chicken" [*Dixie Chicken*], for example, was a type of mode that people were checking out for the first time. Generally, you play a regular 7th chord, but I used the raised 7th. People went, "What is that?" I know a lot of the Howlin' Wolf records had some references to that, where they would just stick in an E over an A, which is essentially what it was. I didn't sit there and think well, I'm gonna raise it up to a 7th. I'm conscious about it now, only because I'm trying to be a little more conscious of what I do and still have it come from the heart. Examine it later. Let it flow from where it's gonna happen, but know what I did later so I can develop it, if need be.

I really find the toughest part, at times, is having too many choices. Whether you're a musician or you're trying to get ahead in some other line of work, you reach plateaus where you feel like, "God, this is great, I really feel good," and then something will come along and, "Boy, I really don't know anything." And you start over again. It's a growing process.

M.I.: So you take the plateaus as inspiration.

Payne: Well, you have to, because the only other alternative is feeling like you've done all you can do. You don't know where the next signal will be coming from.

M.I.: What's the next chapter in your musical life?

Payne: Well, I hope it's developing as a composer, in regards to doing a solo record. I'm not sure where that's going to lead, because I still want to do stuff like play with Linda. There's always a possibility that I might get together with Paul Barrere, from Little Feat, at some point. I just don't know yet. I'm trying to let Little Feat's thing have the last statement for awhile, then let things develop naturally. **M.I.**

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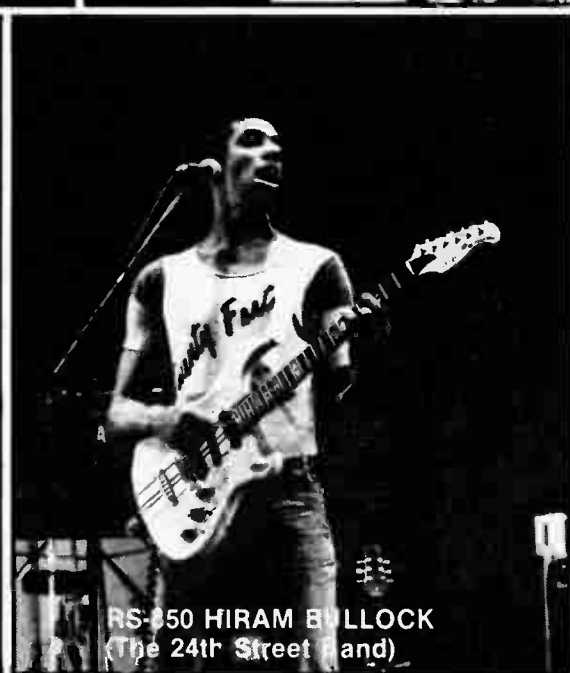
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According to many guests, the most admirable feature of this hotel is the building itself. It doesn't feel like a plastic-and-glass pigeon roost, because it wasn't designed that way. The brick and stone structure, formerly the Graylynn Apartments, was built—and built to last—in 1929. The suites feel like homey apartments, with the only noticeable difference being the lack of a kitchen. In many cases the former kitchen area has been converted to a private sitting room/music room where the guest can hide away with guitar or Rhodes.

Because the walls between suites are solid masonry in most places, the soundproofing is excellent. Late night jams have—with the exception of one involving a very famous Southern rocker—presented no problem at all.

Close Quarters' down-home vibes have obviously affected the attitudes of their sometimes rowdy clientele. "We've had no problems with vandalism whatsoever," says manager Toni Bauer. "A couple of bands told me that this was the first hotel on the tour they didn't trash."

For some touring stars, weary of stamped-out-of-the-mold accommodations, this hotel has become a favorite place for rest and relaxation in mid-tour. Because of the building's limited size, long term stays by whole bands could be a problem. Some individuals have stayed a week or more, though, and Dennis Locorriere of Dr. Hook has practically become a permanent resident during his time off the road.

For the musician, Close Quarters' location is ideal. The hotel is two short blocks from Music Row, with a dozen recording studios—from 4-track demo outfits to hallowed rooms like CBS and Quadrafonic—all within a five minute walk along the tree-lined streets. Incidentally, this proximity is not the origin of the hotel's name; the inspiration was supplied by a former associate of the owner, a certain Mr. Benny Close.

It's a quiet neighborhood. One neighbor, right across the narrow street, is the Disciples Divinity House, a residence hall for future missionaries attending Scarritt College. "We get along great with all the neighbors," says Toni Bauer; "we've had no complaints." But what about the hot tub lounge, clearly visible from the dorm windows? "If anything happens," Toni laughs, "it's late at night and the windows are all steamy—so they'll never know."

The home style accommodations are complemented by family style service reminiscent of the small European *Gasthaus*. "We're real fortunate here in that everybody on the staff is congenial to doing a multitude of things," says owner Steve Bauer—and that seems like a modest understatement. There's a 24-hour "gofer" service, and if they have to send the limo to a 7-11 at 4:00 AM to fetch shampoo and bubble gum, they'll do it. If a guest can't get his laundry down in time for the regular commercial pick-

Cont'd on page 20

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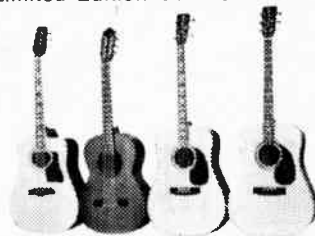
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Cont'd from page 18

up, a staffer will take care of it.

Why Nashville? Well, it probably wouldn't surprise you to learn that the idea first came to mind in Los Angeles. Three years ago, Steve Bauer was running the Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) operation in Hollywood, at that time based in the old Columbia Pictures movie lot. They used the sound stages for rehearsal halls, but they couldn't find any use for the old six-story office building. Bauer had a brainstorm: Since there were no decent accommodations in the area, why not make it into a hotel for musicians?

It never came to pass. The renovation—particularly the plumbing—would have been outrageously expensive. Also, SIR only had a lease on the property; there was no way they could afford to buy the entire movie lot.

Still, the idea stuck with Bauer after he'd moved to the SIR operation in Nashville. He spent a year looking for an appropriate building before finding the Graylynn, which proved to be structurally sound although suffering from serious superficial deterioration. Most interior walls remained in place, but everything else—wiring, bathroom fixtures, paint, wallpaper, ceilings, carpets—had to be completely renovated.

Before the work had been completed, the news had already circulated through the music business grapevine, reaching road mangers and key travel agents in New York and Los Angeles. By the time the doors were officially opened, Close Quarters had the touring rock band business in the bag.

There are slack periods, particularly in winter months, when the "rock hotel" takes in guests outside the music industry—though usually through inside referrals only. "We don't let just anybody in," Steve Bauer cautions. "Otherwise when Foreigner came in, we would've had 16-year-old girls saving up their allowance to take a room."

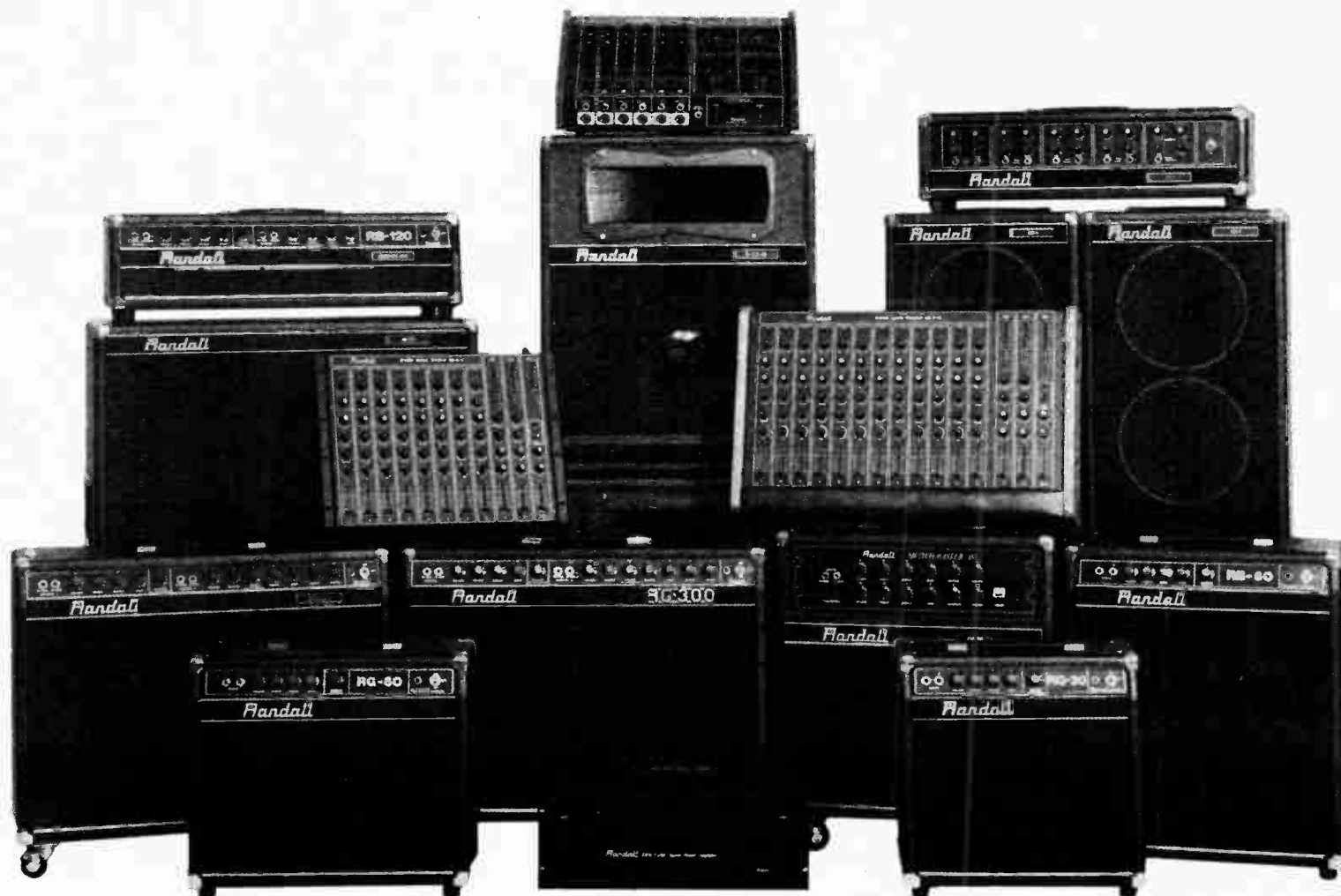
How much does it cost to spend a night like a superstar? More than a Holiday Inn, according to Toni Bauer, but considerably less than a comparable suite at the Hyatt.

The hotel shares its bar and restaurant with a wholly-owned private club, the Backstage Pass. Most of the 600 members are involved in the Nashville music scene, and this gives the touring musician somebody to talk to between gigs without putting up with the problems associated with more notorious public places. "Everybody here is pretty civilized," says Steve. "Billy Joel and Elton John can come into the bar and nobody will hassle them."

It seems that an idea that has worked so well in Nashville might catch on elsewhere. Steve Bauer thinks the same. He's close to clinching a deal on an old hotel in Atlanta, and he's also negotiating on property in Los Angeles, where he intends to build from scratch. Indefinite plans are afoot for similar hostleries in New York, Miami, New Orleans and Chicago. Sooner or later, an idea like this has to catch on.

For the road weary musician, it couldn't be too soon. M.I.

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TOWER of POWER



by Tim Kaiatsu

Down to Brass Tracks

There are unnerving moments during a Tower of Power concert when the five individuals who make up the horn section seem to coalesce, metamorphosing into an astonishingly funky-minded super-organism somehow capable of blowing five horns at once. Since their first album in the early Seventies, their incredibly precise execution of the biting, swooping, syncopated horn lines that are their trademark have attracted a great deal of attention in the music industry—attention that has resulted in an escalating demand for their services both in the studio and on the road. Over the past several years, the list of credits has grown to impressive proportions, including names like Elton John, Rod Stewart, Roy Buchanan, Little Feat, Jefferson Starship, Melissa Manchester, Helen Reddy, Peter Dinklage, Frankie Valli, Sergio Mendes, Alicia Bridges, Heart, and others.

Emilio Castillo (saxophone) founded the band that would evolve into Tower of Power as a teenager growing up in the suburbs across the bay from San Francisco. He remembers, "I loved that rhythm and blues, soul music, whatever you want to call it. For me, it was that Memphis sound, like Otis Redding and also Motown. I loved the sound of horns, so I formed a band with horns. That band became Tower of Power, the only band I've ever played in."

Steve "Funky Doctor" Kupka (baritone sax) joined the group in 1968. He recounts, "My first professional experience in a band was when I joined this one in August, '68. I've been with it ever since." Castillo traces the real beginning of Tower to his meeting Kupka and their subsequent collaboration in writing original material.

Mic Gillette (trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone) began playing with Castillo more than twelve years ago and has stayed with the band for all but one year of that time—a year spent touring with the popular early Seventies rock-soul group, Cold Blood. Gillette recalls, "I got started playing the trumpet when I was four and a half. I picked up the trombone when I was fifteen. Right now, I can play all of the brass instruments, but in this section, with the baritone sax, most of the arrangements call for the trombone. On sessions, I do a lot of high trumpet work."

Greg Adams (trumpet, flugelhorn) joined the horn section in 1970, originally to replace Gillette when he left to tour with Cold Blood. His early training on the trumpet came, interestingly enough, from the Salvation Army. Greg explains, "At least when I was growing up, the Salvation Army had an excellent instruction program for brass musicians. They had these music camps where you would learn to play brass arrangements of classical string pieces. You had to learn to double and triple tongue."

Adams added a vital new dimension to the group when he joined by introducing written arrangements. He had given up a scholarship to the Berklee School of Music in Boston to join Tower with the assurance that he would be able to arrange. The discipline that the horn section has acquired with the addition of the written parts has proven to be invaluable in doing session work.

Lenny Pickett (first tenor sax, alto sax, assorted reeds) completed the section when he

joined in 1972 at the precocious age of seventeen. Growing up in the East Bay, he attained a startling degree of fluency on his instrument at a very early age. As Castillo remembers, "I was at this funky Berkeley club called the Longbranch, and I looked up to the stage to see a frizzy-haired kid playing the tenor sax. This kid in old work clothes started into a solo. It blew my mind. It sounded like Jr. Walker was sitting in. It was just too outrageous that this kid should be playing like that. That's the first time I heard Lenny Pickett."

As a horn section for hire, Tower got its first big break with a session for Elton John in 1974. With that credit behind them, the door opened for them to do more and more session work. Castillo clarifies the situation: "The important thing to understand is that Tower of Power as a band always comes first. If a date comes up that doesn't conflict with band business, we'll do it. Besides the money, we look at session work as a way to broaden our musical scope, a way to find out what other people are doing." Pickett adds, "It's also a way to get our name out in the public eye. When we did those road dates with Rod Stewart, we were playing in front of forty or fifty thousand people every night. The Tower can't reach an audience like that on its own. It can't do anything but help us to do that kind of work."

The horn section has found that working with a wide variety of artists and producers requires a great deal of tact and flexibility. Adams explains, "We don't like to come into a session cold, without having at least talked to the artist or producer to get an idea of what they want. There's a natural fear on the part of the producer that you'll horn in on his creative function. It's really important to set up lines of communication immediately."

Castillo adds, "When we work for other people, we try to make it as clear as possible up front that we are there to please them, to do it their way. If someone is really screwing up, we'll try to tactfully suggest that he's doing it wrong, and if he gets real nasty about his right to keep screwing up, we just ask him to take our names off the album [laughs]."

"Some really weird things can start to happen if you can't communicate," according to Pickett. "A producer will say, 'I want this to sound like a rainbow.' What's that supposed to mean? Van Dyke Parks asked us to make the next notes sound like 'cowpies hitting a barn door.' Sometimes you just have to do something or say something just as weird to humor them along while you try to figure out what's going on."

There are those occasions when they never figure out what's going on. Castillo recalls one such session: "We got a call to do some parts on a very famous rock star's tune. We heard the song; it really sounded to all of us like a hit. Greg had worked up a really dynamite horn arrangement. We nailed that mother down within an hour in the studio. One of the rock star's people is there at the studio and is just raving about how perfect it is. So we're congratulating ourselves as we put our horns away. She calls the rock star. We make the mistake of not vacating the premises immediately. The rock star shows up, hears it, tells us how much he loves it, but can't we stick around to add just a few little things here and there. We break out the horns again...."



(L to R) Greg Adams, Mic Gillette, Steve Kupka, Emilio Castillo, and Lenny Pickett

Man, hours later and about nine arrangements later, we are still there. Greg is scribbling away, tearing out his hair, trying to figure out what the rock star wants. It ended up with horns all over the place, covering up the tune—goodbye hit record."

An important part of the horn section's increasing popularity on recording dates is their reputation for enthusiastic hard work in the studio. Steve Kupka explains, "Man, we care about how it comes out. We've got some real pride on the line. A lot of the guys doing the sessions are fantastic players, but they've gotten into treating it like a nine-to-five job. I mean, when it's time for the union break, they'll cut it off in mid-bar and split. We'll keep working at it until it's done right."

Pickett agrees: "I personally hate making mistakes. I don't like to let anything slide by. If I hear something, I'll tell someone about it. I would feel really bad about walking out of the studio if I knew that there was something wrong on the tape."

"Doctor" adds, "We'll just blow a producer's mind when we point out something that even he didn't catch. It also boggles their minds that they've got some people in there that really care about what they're doing."

"That's how we ended up doing those sessions with Heart," declares Castillo. "They were bummed out by the attitude of the L.A. studio cats. They were amazed to find some people who were really interested in working with them."

Another important factor in the growing demand for their services is simply the fact that the Tower horns have a sound no one else can really duplicate. The years of working together have meshed their playing styles to the point that they function together as one finely tuned instrument.

Adams illustrates: "I was doing an arrangement for a Frankie Valli session in L.A. The Tower horns weren't all available, so the producer went out and hired all the heavy studio horn players. I don't consider my writing to be that difficult, but after hours of working at it, the producer said it just wasn't right. The horn

players were sent home. A little while later, the Tower horns came in and we got the whole thing down in a couple of hours. No one can really do what this section does. That unique sound is the really beautiful thing; it's the reason we're so dedicated to it."

Castillo adds, "But that doesn't mean that people don't try to imitate us. The Emotions had a tune out with these horns that sure sounded a lot like us. People would come up and say, 'Hey, you guys sounded great on that Emotions tune.'"

Kupka continues, "I got a bad feeling a while ago listening to a Roy Buchanan cut on the radio. The tune was moving along when all of a sudden here comes these horns that are blowing some very serious shit. And that baritone player was doing some stuff that was a real bitch. Man, I started getting an angry feeling like I should break out the horn and get to work on those chromatic scales. Then it started to come back to me, 'Hey, wait a minute, Roy Buchanan. We did that tune!' Then I just kicked back and relaxed and just got off on our *bad selves* [laughs]."

Working in unfamiliar situations is never free from anxiety, but sometimes it can begin to assume harrowing proportions. Castillo remembers a concert tour with Rod Stewart: "They called us in a day ahead of time to rehearse. We get to the rehearsal hall, and we're the only ones there. We wait around for maybe an hour and a half. Finally, Rod and Britt Ekland show up and immediately vacate to the next room. We're still waiting. A few of the other guys — Jesse Edwin Davis, Ron Wood — show up, say hi, and they vacate to the next room. After a while, everybody comes out of the next room and they're saying, 'Well, sure is getting late. Let's go home.' Man, we are leaving the very next day on a major concert tour and we don't even have an idea of what songs we're doing!"

Adams interjects, "We didn't even know what keys we would be playing in until the night of the first concert. We just ad-libbed some parts on the spot. We were sure Rod would hate it, but he loved it." Doctor concludes, "Once we got a handle on it, it was real fun. Rod's show is definitely what you would call an action set."

When the subject of a favorite session or tour

as a horn section comes up, there is immediate, unanimous agreement. The album work and touring with Little Feat is remembered with enthusiastic affection. Pickett feels, "We really hit it off with them on a personal, as well as a musical, level. There was no lack of musicianship with those guys—great musicians."

As Castillo puts it, "It was a meeting of two different musical minds. We were the kings of the uptempo, rat-tat-tat funk, and they were the kings of the low, slow groove—something we had never really done that well. People called them a rock band, but they churned out those beautiful, soulful grooves."

Pickett continues, "That song 'Spanish Moon' we did on their live album is one of my favorites of all the things we've ever done. Doing concerts with those guys was just a lot of fun."

Castillo laughs and remembers, "At the end of 'Spanish Moon' at a concert, we'd just start doing a walk off the stage, and the whole band started following us, everybody shakin' it up. That's something else we like to do; we like to dance and move around, do some steps, get a party feeling happening."

Adams concludes, "We really enjoy doing what we do, and we aren't afraid to show it."

In spite of the belt-tightening climate of the music industry today, the outlook for the carefully-crafted, well-polished sound of Tower of Power as a band and as a horn section appears to be very bright. As a band, Tower recently signed a contract with Warner Brothers, after obtaining amicable release from Columbia Records. Recent rhythm section changes in the group have brought in Danny Hoefler on guitar and Vito San Filippo on bass, pairing with longtime mainstays Chester Thompson (keyboards) and Dave Garibaldi (drums). The band is currently in the studio working on their first LP since coming back to Warners.

All of the saxophones played by the Tower horn section are made by Selmer; Greg Adams plays a Bengel trumpet and a Getzen flugelhorn; Mic Gillette plays Martin trumpets and King trombones.

M.I.



GREG ADAMS ON TOWER'S HORN ARRANGEMENTS

Tracks are always important. The number available for the date sets the limits for the manner in which I will score the song. For example, with a five-piece section, a considerable amount of overdubbing is necessary to attain the sound of a big band playing a short chorus or the sound of orchestral instrumentation (flutes, double reeds, etc.).

Every date I work on is a new experience, and the demands are always different. Being able to color the tracks with just the right instrumentation in order to enhance the tune is always a challenge. This does not mean that I dive in, head first, and score lavish strings and lush brass and reeds for everything. The artist's feelings and performance are the most important considerations, and they must not be drowned out by excessive writing. In most cases, *less is more*. Simplicity is very important, if for only one reason: People in general are not going to remember a technically astounding, heavily synopated ensemble accompaniment as much as they will remember a haunting little melody played in unison by four flugels that heightens the performance of the artist in melody and lyrics.

Working with artists like Elton John, Melissa Manchester, Santana, and Dionne Warwick offers a wide musical spectrum of different styles. Each one has unique needs, and achieving what

the artist desires is my main purpose. Sometimes, after writing the chart and hearing it in the studio on playback, the artist or producer may say, "At letter B let's hear more, and at letter E give us less." So the section will take 10, and I will add or subtract from that which has been discussed. When the guys come back we cut it again, hopefully to the liking of the "booth," and move on. (Occasionally, the booth will decide they prefer the original way, so we return to the former pattern.)

Working with each member of the Tower horn section for at least seven years has helped my writing immensely. Someone once told me that he saw the five of us posing for a photograph and we all "breathed at the same time" just standing there. The interpretation of the arrangement is very important, and Mic, Lenny, Mimi and Doctor always provide exactly what is needed for the best performance.

Below is a section of the arrangement for "Below Us, All the City Lights" from the *Back To Oakland* LP by Tower of Power. We cut it live at the soundstage at Warner Bros. in Burbank. Obviously, from the instrumentation on the score, you will notice that we had to augment the band's size considerably. I think we ended up with 37 or 38 people!

Enjoy. I did.

M.I.

Ah, yes...when *M.I.* asked me to write a short article about my arrangement techniques—to go along with the interview with the section—I immediately said yes. Then as the session—excuse me, the deadline—drew closer, I began to realize that I had better have the scores—I mean, this article—finished and ready for the date—I mean, press time. And time was running out.

Ironically, writing an article such as this is very similar to writing an arrangement for an artist who hires me to do an album session. Normally, I will talk with the artist or producer, then receive a cassette of the basic tracks for the songs which I have been asked to arrange. Any suggested ideas given to me by the artist or producer are always greatly appreciated, because this is their project, and I am there to help color it.

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INSIDE



Oberheim

by Kirk Austin

If you ask someone about synthesizers probably two names will come to mind—Moog and ARP. But if you ask about *polyphonic* synthesizers, you're bound to hear the name Oberheim. In 1975 Tom Oberheim presented his polyphonic synthesizer at the summer N.A.M.M. show, and started a trend that is still gaining momentum. The polyphonic synthesizer is finding its way into the hands of more musicians every day, and the few companies that make them are straining to keep up with the orders.

Like the majority of synthesizer designers, Tom Oberheim sort of backed into this business. After all, there were no college courses in synthesizer fifteen years ago, and there weren't too many people who actually believed that it could be a viable instrument.

Tom Oberheim was doing logic design at a computer company while he was attending UCLA as a physics major. He met some people who were interested in electronic music, and started getting requests for custom equipment. One person asked Oberheim to build a ring modulator. Tom researched it, and produced one, and Oberheim Electronics was born. Word of the music modulator got around, and the Maestro company contacted Tom and worked out a deal to market his products. By the early Seventies Oberheim was making four or five different products for Maestro, and he started thinking about marketing products under his own name. He started with the digital sequencer, and then came the expander module. This led to the development of the polyphonic synthesizer, and the rest is history.

M.I.: When did you get into synthesizers?

Oberheim: Around 1971 I became an ARP dealer and for a while I did really quite well considering I was only one person. I sold a bunch of 2600's to people and I got to know synthesizers real well. At that time my company was totally involved with Maestro and if something happened I



would be out in the cold. So, around 1972 I started working on a digital sequencer. I built up a couple prototypes and then I decided I'd market that product [the DS2] under my own name. I discovered that one of the problems with the DS2 was that if you hooked it into a synthesizer you couldn't play the synthesizer, because the sequencer had to play it. So, I came up with the idea for the expander module which would just be a real simple little synthesizer without a keyboard that could be used with the sequencer so you could still play the synthesizer and the sequencer could run the expander module. At this time I became acquainted with Jim Cooper who was working on his masters degree at UCLA, and he designed the expander module in his garage. So, when we got it done it was really a lot more useful than we originally supposed; it was a lot more useful than just being something to hook into sequencers.

M.I.: What got you interested in the polyphonic synthesizer?

Oberheim: One of the things I had done back when I was an ARP dealer was make up a little printed circuit board that you could stick inside the keyboard of a 2600 to make it duophonic; you could play two notes at a time. Of course, later on they upgraded the keyboard to do that, but in those days it was strictly a monophonic keyboard. So we had this little printed circuit board that went underneath the ARP keyboard to make it 2-voice. A friend of mine used to do a sort of keyboard improvisation concert, and for a while I helped him with some electronic music effects. His name was Richard Grayson, and, around '72 or '73, at one of these concerts, I took two 2600's with the 2-voice keyboards and we arranged the keyboards like a dual manual organ. He played some 4-part Well Tempered Clavier music on these 2600's. What we had was long cables on the keyboards; he was in one spot and I was sitting in another spot with the two 2600's, and I would rapidly (as quickly as possible) change the patches in them from one piece to another. That was the first time I'd ever actually

witnessed what we would call a polyphonic synthesizer. It was rather ungainly with the problem of changing patches and the fact that it was two manuals instead of one, plus the 2-voice keyboard thing didn't work that well. But, it was still an example, and it was the first example I had ever heard of the synthesizer playing polyphonically.

M.I.: So that inspired you to start manufacturing them?

Oberheim: Well, I had talked to people at that time about polyphonic synthesizers and they had always said, "The problem is that the voice assignment isn't musical. You can't predict that the soprano voice you play will always go to the soprano module, so the voice is going to switch around and it's not going to sound very good." After the experiment with Richard it became obvious to me that this was a dynamite sound. So, anyway, that was in the back of my mind around '74. Then I met Dave Rossum [M.I. Vol. 1, #3], who had come up with a polyphonic keyboard circuit and we talked to him about using it. In the early part of '75 we got together with him and worked out a royalty agreement; took his design; changed it a little bit for our purposes, and hooked it up to four expander modules. In the summer of '75 we went to the NAMM show with all our products. We had the 4-voice, the 2-voice, the expander module, the digital sequencer, the mini-sequencer separate, plus some recosmetization of some of the Maestro products. Of course no one knew what to make of the 4-voice. "What is this thing?" This thing cost four thousand dollars! In those days there was very little stuff in a music store that cost four thousand dollars—if anything. So the dealers sort of shook their heads and thought I was crazy, or at least I had that feeling. I assumed that since nobody was buying anything they didn't know what to do with it. So, I did the natural thing. I started getting in contact with the obvious people—Stevie Wonder, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul. By the fall I had sold a

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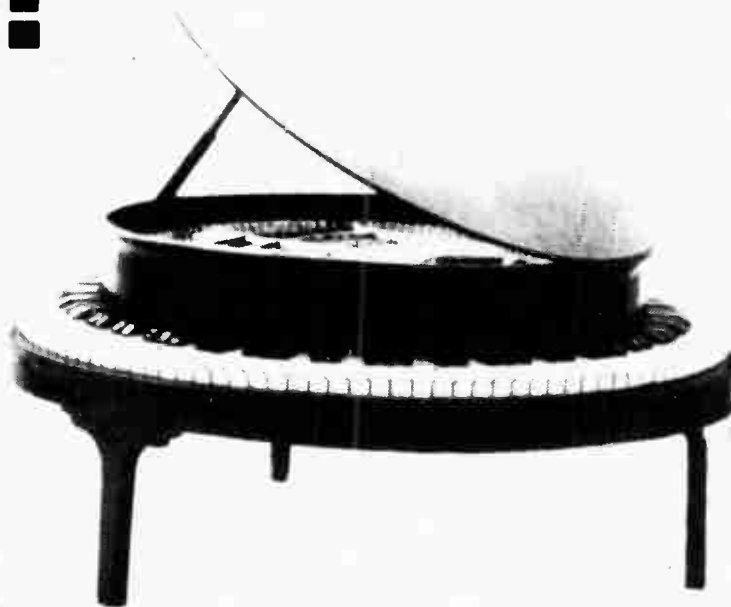
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Programming the OBX

few polyphonic synthesizers, and from then on it was just the natural progression of research, development, and marketing the product. We had the polyphonic sequencer. Then a year later we invented the programmer concept and put that in the 4-voice. That's what really started this thing rolling because now the instrument was a little more operable.

M.I.: Especially in live situations.

Oberheim: Yeah. By then we started to have quite a following and we certainly had a name in the synthesizer business. Then it was just a progression of improvements and new products—the 4-voice, the 2-voice, the programmer, then the OB-1 and then finally the OB-X.

M.I.: It seems odd to me that you got into the polyphonic thing first and then later on brought out a monophonic instrument.

Oberheim: Well the purpose of the OB-1 was to bring out a unit that was completely programmable. The main reason we brought out a monophonic was because there were a lot of people that liked the sound of our equipment and they all recognized that it didn't sound like a Moog and it didn't sound like an ARP. They wanted a smaller lead machine. By then we were very experienced with the programming concept since we had thought it up. In fact we have a patent on it now. A lot of people were asking for a lead machine that was programmable and had our sound, so we brought it out. It hit at a time, though, when people were really starting to get very interested in polyphonic machines and also it was quite expensive. A two thousand dollar machine kind of limits the market. As far as I know the people that have them love them. We had the first programmable machine, but, of course, the 4-voice isn't completely programmable. We also had the first completely programmable machine which was the OB-1. We did a couple of preliminary designs on completely programmable polyphonic machines before we finally arrived at the OB-X, and of course it's been super popular. We're having very good luck with it.

M.I.: Maybe you can tell me a little bit about what the company's philosophy is; the direction you're headed in; what things you have planned for the future.

Oberheim: The overriding philosophy of the company when we started is something I feel we've done a pretty good job of meeting. When I first decided to start the company—ten years,

eleven years ago—the overall philosophy that's sort of our charter was to build equipment that gave the performing musician as much power in a performing situation as we could. Of course, we started off with very modest things. The first thing was the ring modulator, and we were certainly not the first people to develop the ring modulator. The first article I ever found on a ring modulator was by Harold Bode, who's well known, and he published an article in an electronics magazine in '59 or '60 in which he sort of described a modular electronic music system. I don't know if he called it a synthesizer or not. It certainly didn't have any voltage control type things in it. It was more sound modifying things. But in the article he described how one would use a ring modulator in audio; carrier oscillator going into one input and a signal into another. He built some units that were marketed by Moog, I believe. So they existed in the world for eight or nine years before I used them. What I did was put it in a little box that could sit on top of a piano or sit on the floor or whatever. It had the oscillator inside of it; a panpot to pan from the straight sound to the modulated sound, or any mixture; a mike pre-amp; and an oscillator you could control with a foot pedal. It was a complete performance box. As I found out later we were not the first to "invent the phase shifter." It occurred to a number of people, but we were the first to take the phase shifter idea and combine it with the proper stuff to make it useful in a live performance situation. The digital sequencer was kind of a breakthrough in those days because sequencers were around—certainly the original Moog modular system had a sequencer, and there was actually a digital sequencer or two around by then—but they were all pretty hard to use. The thing that made ours different was the fact that it was very easy to load. You just load it from the keyboard. A guy could plug it into a synthesizer; press the button; play a sequence; press another button and it was done. It was very simple. Anyway, all the way through everything we did, it was in terms of how to bring more electronic power to the performer—the performing musician. We never had any interest in building studio equipment or university equipment or classical equipment. It's been for the guy who's performing and needs as much as he can get on stage. Of course, we didn't accomplish all these things overnight. It was an evolutionary process. In the case of, for instance, polyphonic synthesizers, the first thing we did was we brought out a machine which was actually polyphonic and was a true synthesizer. Of course, it was unwieldy, but it was used in performance to some extent. Then we came up with the programmer which made it a lot easier to use. Then we went ahead and made everything programmable and made a computer control, etc.

M.I.: What's in the future for Oberheim?

Oberheim: The things that we're working on are evolutionary. We're not jumping off into a completely digital machine yet, although we know that those machines will have their place. We're very convinced that analog synthesizers are not dead. We think that there will be some more things happening with analog synthesizers yet, despite all the digital hoopla. It will be, again, moving in the direction of giving the guy on stage more control. I think we can generally characterize our company as one that does not change direction drastically and jump from one kind of machine to another, helter skelter. We pretty much build on what we've done in the

past. For instance, the expander module was designed in '74, and after much experience selling many units both individually and as parts of 2-voice and 4-voice machines we knew we had a good synthesizer. The oscillators were very stable and people loved the sound, so we kept the same circuitry when we moved on to the OB-X.

M.I.: As far as the oscillators and filters?

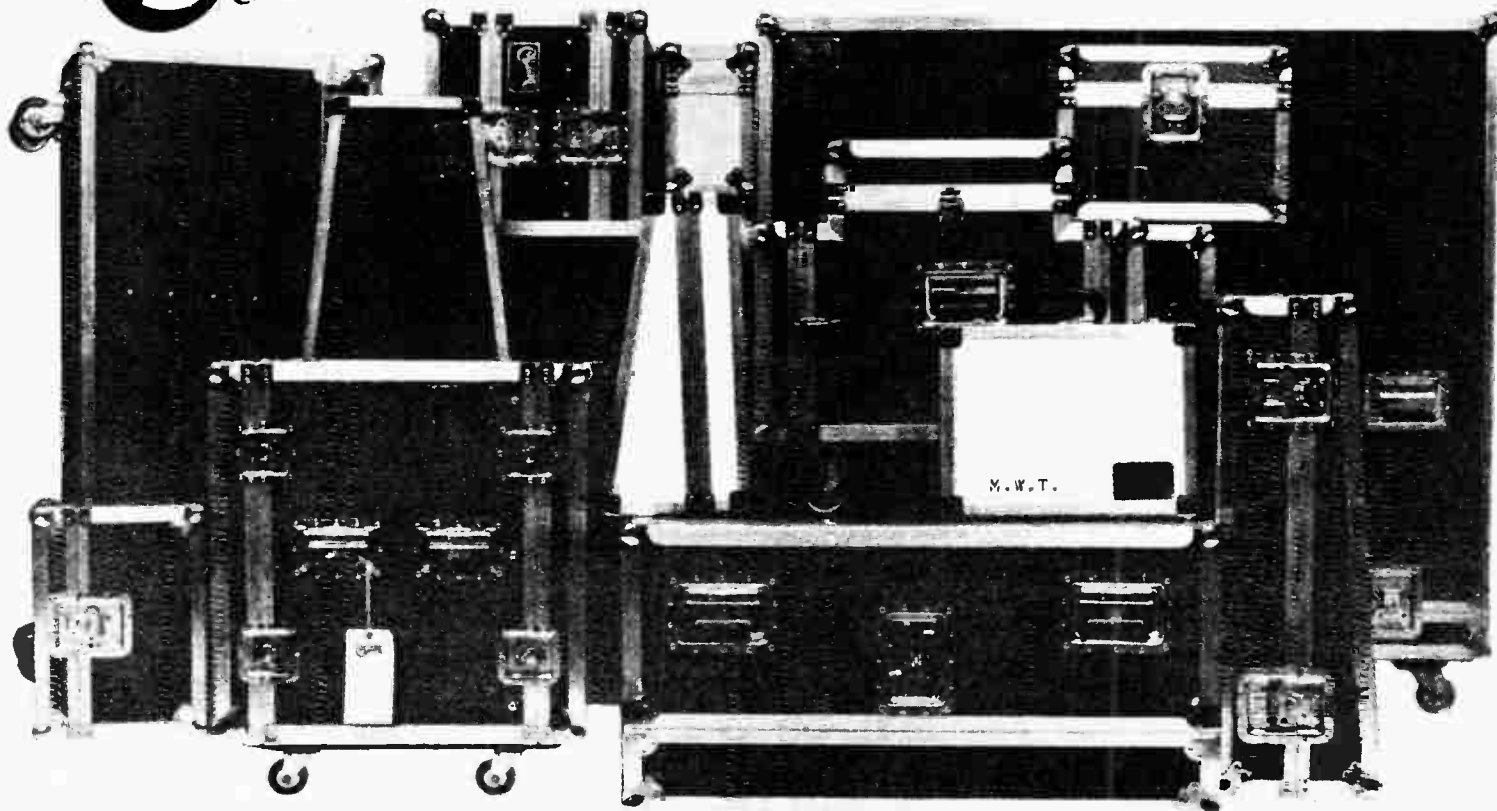
Oberheim: The oscillator in the OB-X is identical to the oscillator in the expander module. The filter is essentially identical. Filters are touchy because they have a lot of unmeasurable qualities, or at least not easily measurable. There was a time when we first started out when people said, "Gee, the expander module doesn't sound like a Moog." And they said, "Why don't you make a 4-pole filter?" The main reason I didn't put a 4-pole filter in the expander module originally was that in those days the ARP 2600, the Odyssey and the Mini-Moog all had 4-pole filters. So I thought there would be an advantage to having a different kind of a sound available, so we made it a 2-pole filter. Then what happened over the period of time was that people came to associate the 2-pole filter sound with our company. At times when we've thought we should do a 4-pole we've talked to people who are owners and they say, "God, don't change that sound." The fact is, there are certain things you can do with a Moog that you can't do with an Oberheim, and there are certain things you can do with an Oberheim you can't do with a Moog. We're sticking by what we do best, and people seem to be happy with it.

M.I.: Could you give us any sneak previews of new products?

Oberheim: Well, the main thing I can say is that in the next year there will be some new products from Oberheim. One of the things that we've always endeavored to do in our company since we've been in the synthesizer business is to make improvements to products that are retrofitable on some basis all the way back. For instance, serial #1 of the 4-voice was designed before the programmer idea occurred to us, and yet by some fortunate luck we had left room in the 4-voice for an extra module. So when the programmer was invented you could go all the way back to serial #1 of the 4-voice and install a programmer—in some cases with a little bit of work; you had to cut a wire here and cut a wire there. Essentially all the way back to serial #1 you could put a programmer in the unit. We will be bringing out at least one really nice product next year that will hook on to an OB-X and it will again be the case that anybody with an OB-X all the way back to #1 can use it. That's the main thing. We have some new products coming out this year and they're evolutionary. They're not earth shattering products that promise a lot and don't deliver. They're just more of the same; moving along; taking advantage of the technology that's available to us, but keeping in mind most importantly that they have to be operated and understood by musicians. You can't expect a guy to have an engineering degree. On the other hand, though, we try to put as much value in a unit as we can, and configure it in a way so it can be used by the guy who is just beginning, or hasn't had the time to really study the complexities. Later on, though, he's not tied down by having something that's very limited. So, we're looking at ways to expand our line on an evolutionary basis with more value and more power in each product. No great inventions under our hat. We're just slowly working our way through the maze.

M.I.

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basic tracks

Demo Tapes

by Hillel Resner

Virtually every successful recording artist or songwriter, before recording his first album or publishing his first song, spent many long and often trying hours in an 8- or 16-track studio recording "demos"—music industry slang for demonstration tapes. Demo tapes are to the music business what an architect's model is to a homebuilder: a means of determining if the proposed project is what the buyer is looking for. Demos have become so important to the industry that recording them has become a virtual industry in itself, with hundreds of studios and probably thousands of musicians devoting almost all of their time to recording demos exclusively.

What makes a good demo tape? The obvious requirements are that the music must be well performed, and the tape itself well recorded. But beyond these things, a successful demo will adhere to certain rules—rules that are determined by the *purpose* that the demo is meant to serve. That is, what kind of demo is it?

Demo tapes can be divided into three general categories: *performance demos*, used by musicians to secure work in clubs and concerts; *recording demos*, used to help land record contracts; and *song demos*, used to interest music publishers in publishing a songwriter's compositions. A demo must meet very different requirements in each of these categories in order to be successful, and it is rare that a tape succeeds completely in more than one category. Here are the basic requirements of each.

Performance demo. This kind of demo has a very narrow and specific purpose—to show a talent booker that an artist is entertaining as a *performer*. Demonstrating this on tape is a matter of emphasizing those talents of the artist that have the most appeal for a live audience. If you have some performing experience, try to record those songs that consistently get a good crowd reaction. Don't worry if those songs happen to be your arrangements of someone else's material.

Generally speaking, with a straight audition tape, *delivery* is the most important factor. A club owner or booker will probably not be as concerned with the content of a song's lyrics as he will be with the amount of vocal talent and excitement. At the same time, with a performance demo it's a good idea to avoid a lot of fancy studio production, since a booker will be more interested in hearing how the artist sounds live, without a lot of multi-tracking, digital delay, and other studio wizardry. In fact, if the group or artist really is talented, the best kind of performance demo just might be a live tape, complete with room sounds and applause.

Recording demo. With this kind of demo, the requirements are practically the opposite. The listener—a producer or label executive—will be judging the performer as a *recording* artist. He will be listening critically to how the artist comes across on tape; that is, in a totally audio environment. If the quality of the recording is poor or only fair, the listener cannot be sure he is getting an accurate reproduction. At the same time, however, a state-of-the-art recording will not make up for deficiencies in the performance; if anything, it will make them more evident.

An effective demo made for the purpose of securing a record contract will show what the artist does *best*—that is, what makes him unique and special. If he is a spectacular instrumental soloist, spotlight his playing. If he is an exciting vocalist, spotlight his singing. If he is a great songwriter as well, so much the better—but, don't include original material just to show he can write. Make sure it's good.

A word here on production. Some people claim that making records has become a producer's art—that slick production is what makes a successful record in today's market. To some extent this may be true; but I think that careful listening reveals that on most successful (i.e., best-selling) records, the production techniques only serve to complement the song and enhance the talent of the artist. The same should hold true for demos.

Song demo. This type of demo is probably the most specialized of all. Everything on the tape should be aimed at fulfilling a single function: that of supporting and enhancing the song itself. If the song to be recorded is a vocal, the selection of the singer is all-important. The vocalist must not only be competent, but be "right" for the song. This means he or she should be able to convincingly express the words and feelings of the composition—that is, be able to "relate" to it.

On a song demo, it is best to keep instrumental solos to a minimum. If a guitar or other solo is deemed necessary, it should be kept to a few bars. Bridges should not be unduly long or complicated. Nothing in a successful song demo will take the listener too far away from the basic melody or "hook."

The most important thing to remember in cutting a song demo is to *keep the vocal out front in the mix*. Remember that the lyrics (in conjunction with the melody) are what the song is all about. If they were worth writing in the first place, they are worth hearing! **M.I.**

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MARK MANDER

THE PAT METHENY GROUP



MARK MANDER

JAZZ'S FOREMOST GARAGE BAND

by Dan Forte

Three years ago, when Pat Metheny formed his own quartet, his name was known mostly to jazz guitarists, through his work with vibraphonist Gary Burton and his two albums under his own name on Manfred Eicher's ECM label. When *The Pat Metheny Group* was released in 1978—featuring Lyle Mays on piano, Mark Egan on bass, and Dan Gottlieb on drums—Metheny's cult following began to reach massive proportions. The band's combination of jazz chops, rock energy, and pop- and folk-flavored melodies apparently struck a chord with jazz and non-jazz consumers alike; the LP has sold more than 150,000 units thus far.

A year later, Metheny's smile was simultaneously adorning the covers of *Downbeat* and *Musician, Player & Listener* magazines—sort of the jazz artist's equivalent of appearing on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* in the same month—shortly before the release of Pat's first entirely solo effort, *New Chautauqua*. A highly personal statement, the album nonetheless hit high on the jazz charts and has sold over 120,000 copies to date.

The Pat Metheny Group: (L to R) Metheny, Lyle Mays, Mark Egan, and Dan Gottlieb

Last summer, after recording PMG's second joint effort, Metheny and Mays went on tour as part of Joni Mitchell's all-star backup band, which included such jazz luminaries as Mike Brecker and Jaco Pastorius (a Metheny colleague from Pat's first solo LP, *Bright Size Life*). By January, Metheny's first self-produced album, *American Garage*, released late last fall, had reached Number 1 on *Billboard's* jazz chart. At present it has sold in excess of 200,000 copies.

In a recent poll conducted by *Musician, Player & Listener* and voted on exclusively by professional musicians and people in the industry, Metheny took top honors in the category of Jazz Guitarist—not of the year, but of the past decade—placing above such giants as John McLaughlin and George Benson. More importantly perhaps, those who voted predicted Pat Metheny to be the jazz artist most likely to assert an influence on the music of the Eighties.

Pat Metheny is without doubt the hottest ticket in jazz today. Not bad for a 25-year-old kid from Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Metheny first took up guitar at age 12 and became entrenched in the study of jazz, particularly Wes Montgomery, at 14. At 15, Pat received a scholarship to attend the summer

music camps sponsored by *Downbeat* magazine. After graduating from high school Metheny entered the University of Miami on a music scholarship. After one semester as a student—in which he got a D in classical guitar—Pat joined the University's faculty as a guitar instructor. While at Miami, Pat met the two musicians who were to later become his rhythm section—bassist Mark Egan and drummer Dan Gottlieb. A year later he moved to Boston, teaching advanced guitar at the Berklee School of Music. Once there he got together with one of his early idols, Gary Burton, whom he'd met years earlier at a jazz festival, and was soon a member of the Gary Burton Quintet, appearing on three albums.

Though his tastes and influences are about as widespread as they come—embracing everything from Keith Jarrett to Cheap Trick, from Leo Kottke to the Art Ensemble of Chicago—the music churned out by Metheny and his group is among the most original being performed today. Egan's lyrical fretless bass lines, Gottlieb's aggressive rhythmic outbursts, Mays' spiraling improvisations, Metheny's shimmering melodies—the whole is not only greater than the sum of its parts, it is something entirely separate—much in the same way that the group's elaborate system of electronic gear sometimes serves

to accentuate the "acoustic" nature of the music.

The musical company of Metheny, Egan, Gottlieb & Mays explain how the pieces all fit together in the following round-table interview.

M.I.: Pat, you went to the University of Miami one semester before you joined their faculty?

Metheny: Sort of. I've still got my report card from my first semester [laughs]; I got a D in Guitar.

M.I.: If you got a D in Guitar, why did they put you on the faculty teaching guitar?

Metheny: Well, the deal was, you could go to the University of Miami and study guitar, but that meant you had to study classical guitar. And I couldn't, and still can't, play anything that even resembles classical guitar. I went to one lesson, and the guy showed me how to hold the guitar—which never felt comfortable. So I completely blew it off, and I never went again. Why he didn't give me an F, I've never been able to figure out.

M.I.: When you began teaching at Berklee, did your age cause any ego conflicts?

Metheny: Yeah, there were definitely ego problems, for other people. Actually, the ego problems were cooled out as soon as we played; then it was clear what the scoop was. But on paper it looked pretty suspicious—because I was 19 and my job, theoretically, was to teach the top 30 of the 800 guitar students. So everybody was older; but it really didn't matter, because I've always been the youngest guy in the bands I've been in—so I didn't really think about it. In fact, it's funny now, because I'm starting to have a lot of contact with players who are considerably younger than I; it feels a little funny.

M.I.: Did any of your Berklee students go on to become famous guitarists?

Metheny: Al DiMeola was really the only one. The best player there—who hasn't really done anything yet, but he will—is a guy named Mike Stern, who's just excellent. He's got a band with my older brother, Mike, who plays the trumpet.

M.I.: Do you and Lyle have any particular method for composing?

Mays: I think every tune has been different. Usually we just get together with piano and guitar, and we have some snatches that we've come up with before. Sometimes just playing through old ideas gives them new life—looking at them off the road. But there's no formula, no set process we go through.

Metheny: Generally, I'll have an A section and Lyle will write a bridge; or Lyle will have a whole tune and I'll try to build on it. I think most good ideas tend to come from individuals, as opposed to committee art, but we seem to have a way of enhancing each other's ideas. Even a couple of notes can make a difference.

M.I.: You each seem to have a remarkable sense of melody. Is that something that developed over time, or did it come naturally?

Mays: It's the Midwest.

Metheny: That's really true.

M.I.: Did you have that knack for melody even as children?

Mays: It's hard to remember. I would probably say no.

Metheny: I remember singing melodies since I was about two or three years old. I was always real melodic. I remember singing "Red Sails in the Sunset" for about two years, till everybody was ready to kill me. I liked those kinds of soupy melodies.

M.I.: It seems that each instrument's role in this group is a little unorthodox, as opposed to a conventional jazz band.

Gottlieb: Right. Pat's always gone for things that are different, that don't sound typical but get the job done. We try to get away from sounding like anything else.

Mays: I think we all have found new ways of approaching everything. The concept of the group demands that.

M.I.: No one instrument seems to be holding down the bottom in this band, yet somehow the bottom is always there.

Metheny: Well, my feeling has been—and I think we're pretty successful at it—that in a good band, if there are four people in the group, three could drop out and you could still be able to tell what tune is being played. I think that's pretty much what happens with us. We all know the tunes thoroughly; and everybody's part—even though it may be sort of skirting around the edges of the essence of the tune—is still very much about that song. We've played these tunes a lot—like "Phase Dance" and "San Lorenzo," which we've been playing every night for almost three years—and there's a certain atmosphere that each one has. So by keeping the feeling of the tune in mind, there's something that happens where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Sometimes I wonder, what's holding it all together, too.

M.I.: Do the tunes you've been playing for a long time still have room for variation or new ideas?

Mays: Not so much change as challenge. I don't think we change them just to change them.

Metheny: To me, in sort of a jazz group category and all that, there are certain songs that I see

very much as songs. There are some tunes that I do feel we should play as songs. For instance, if I were to go hear the Doobie Brothers, I would want to hear some of their songs the way I think they should sound. And we have a few tunes that are like that. In that sense, we're more like a pop group; and that's one area that a lot of jazz critics take exception to. They hear us three or four times, and some of the songs are essentially the same. But, to me, that's the idea—they should be the same.

M.I.: You treat them more as compositions than as sets of changes to solo on.

Metheny: Well, there are other songs that are very much that way, too—for instance, "The Epic," which can be quite different from night to night in the solo sections. Then we do tunes like "Old Folks" that are straight-ahead jazz tunes.

Mays: I think when it comes time to solo on changes we're a jazz group. I don't think there's anything we do differently.

M.I.: Pat, are you responsible for most of the band's creative decisions?

Metheny: You have to keep it in perspective. It is a group, but it's my group. The idea is not for it to be a band where everybody's completely free. I'm of the opinion that that doesn't work. I'm of the opinion that there has to be one person calling the shots and one person that makes creative, business, and all kinds of decisions—as opposed to doing things by committee. I've tried to set up a situation where I'm open to suggestions from everybody, but there's one person who has the final word on everything, and that's me. I think that's been successful. I've had contact with groups that worked by committee where



VERYL OAKLAND



everybody says, "Well, I want to do this" and they try to work it out, and the music always suffers from it. But, I am very much into the idea of having a band where people come to see the group as a group—as opposed to Pat and whoever he's got on the road this time, which is the way a lot of jazz guys work. I did that for awhile, where Lyle and I would rehearse different guys the afternoon of the gig, and then play that night—that was when I was still with Gary and I'd do sideline gigs.

M.I.: Were you doing the same sorts of tunes?

Metheny: A lot of the same songs we do now.

M.I.: What did it sound like?

Metheny: Shit [laughs]. It sounded awful.

Gottlieb: It shows that this can be done, that this type of a group can exist, starting from being totally unknown and just hitting it hard and really working. I talk to people who are either waiting for a break to happen or they say, "We can't do anything without record company support." I mean, Pat has done it.

Metheny: I never wanted to take any money from the record company. We took \$3,000 once for tour support, which I paid back. And we've never done crazy things on the road. It's always been comfortable, everybody's always had his own room—we never had to get four guys in a room—but we never spent money just for no reason. Most groups I see on the road are really into extravagance. This is actually the first tour where we've had hard travel cases for everything. I can remember when we would fly from gig to gig, and I'd just check my amp, check the drums, check the Oberheim.

Gottlieb: Lining up to see how many pieces were coming off the plane!

M.I.: Why does this band tour so much?

Mays: Yeah, why do we tour so much?

M.I.: Obviously, you've reached a position where you can afford to have extra roadies, you can carry your own sound system, your own piano. Couldn't you also afford to take it easy?

Metheny: That's a possibility. I know I, for one, could not do now what we did when we started. We drove something like 50,000 miles in a year, and that was with us packing all our own gear, making virtually no money at all. But it's gone from that level to the point now where every-

body's making really good money, we get to play the same piano night after night, we've got a great PA and monitors, everybody can hear, everybody's getting individual recognition—it's really been worth it. Not to mention the fact that we all take great pride in the music that's come from it.

Mays: Also, judging from the experience I had with Joni this summer, I think both Pat and I felt that it was impossible to get any momentum happening. She'd work one day and have two days off. She was taking it easy, and the music really suffered. We'd have one good night, but it was impossible to sustain that, because with a day or two off in between, everybody'd go take a sauna and get real mellowed out...it was kind of a drag.

M.I.: What did the rehearsals with Joni consist of?

Metheny: It was interesting, in a way. There was no music. Basically, what happened was, we'd show up at the rehearsal, Joni would put on a guitar and start playing one of her songs, and we'd all sort of look at each other and find out what key it was in [laughs], and start playing. In fact, at the first few rehearsals, it was difficult, because every tune sounded the same. There was this kind of strumming part, and then [Mike] Brecker and I would sort of play obligato fills, and Lyle would play a pad—and Jaco wasn't even there till the last day, because he already knew all the tunes. It was hard to make each tune have its own identity. But by the time we got on the road, it was a fun experience. But, like Lyle said, it was so much the complete opposite of our touring philosophy—much too laid back for us. In fact, the more distance I get from it, the more I see how much of a strain it was to be on the road like that and not play. It was great to hear Joni every night; that was the best part.

M.I.: Rock and roll definitely seems to have an influence on the band's stage presence. Do you think it also influences the music itself?

Metheny: Oh yeah. I'm always reluctant to say, "Yes, we are a jazz group," or "Yes, we are a rock group," because I can get equally enthusiastic about a number of different styles. I mean, if we were to start talking about Wes Montgomery, I would be glad to talk for an hour. I'd also be glad to talk about the Beach Boys for

an hour.

M.I.: Who are some of your influences on guitar?
Metheny: I'm still knocked out whenever I hear Wes Montgomery or Jim Hall. Also, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Keith Jarrett. I like a lot of the early Sixties cool jazz—Bill Evans, Art Farmer, Stan Getz, Chet Baker, Steve Swallow. I think probably more so than most young players we're very aware of the traditions that this kind of music we're playing is based on. I mean, I really see my way of playing guitar as an extension of Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery and that whole scene.

M.I.: What about bass influences, Mark?

Egan: I started bass when I was about 16, playing in soul bands. My first influences were people like Chuck Rainey and those cats, playing with Aretha Franklin. Also, Jaco; we hung out a lot. I remember the first time I heard him; we played in this band called Baker's Dozen, in Miami, with [trumpeter] Ira Sullivan and a lot of studio players. Actually, there were three bassists in the band, alternating. Jaco had arranged this tune he'd written for the band, and he played me a tape—I couldn't believe it. It sounded like John McLaughlin on bass!

M.I.: When did you switch to fretless bass?

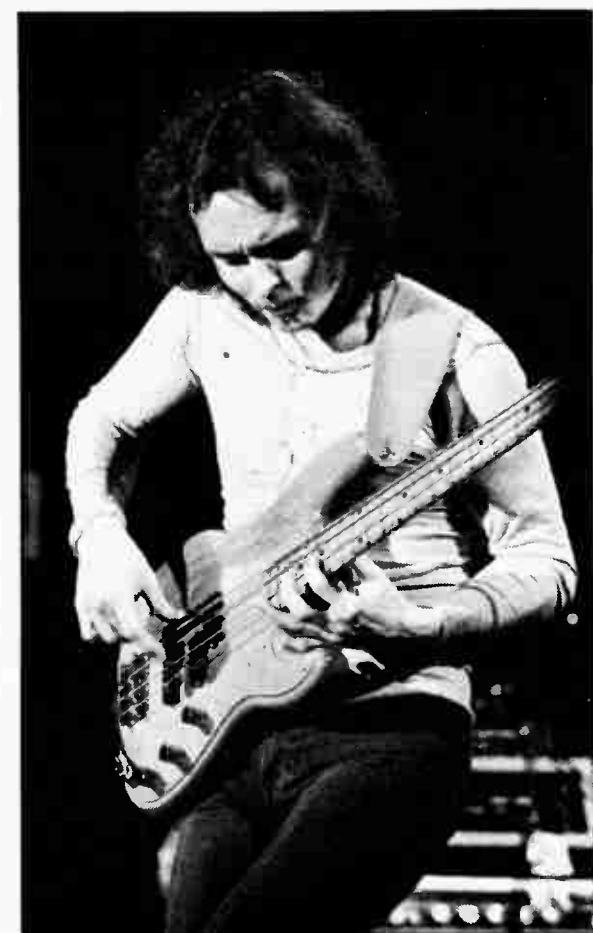
Egan: When I joined the group, when we got together, Pat had a bass that was a fretless which Jaco was working on. It was like an awakening; it definitely fit in with this format.

Metheny: It's a funny thing that I've noticed, as far as my sound and playing goes—it somehow blends better when there's that nebulous intonation. I always enjoyed playing with Steve Swallow, who plays a fretted bass, but he's always sort of slopping it up. I can't get in between the frets, and I rarely bend strings, so if Mark is playing fretless it gives it a little more mystery, which I like.

Egan: A little more expression.

M.I.: Do you think your background on trumpet has any effect on your style of bass soloing?

Egan: Definitely. Chet Baker was the first melodic cat I dug on trumpet. *Cont'd on page 36*



Metheny: All three of us [Metheny, Mays and Egan] played wind instruments before—so did Gary Burton, so did Steve Swallow. All of the best rhythm section players—at least my favorites—seem to have played a horn before. And I've learned that the reason it helps is that you tend to breathe with what you play. Because on a bass or guitar, it's real easy to just go crazy and play all the time.

Gottlieb: I watch Pat sometimes, and he actually breathes in the holes; it's great to watch.

Metheny: I think it's important, because people subconsciously respond to that. When people are listening, they tend to breathe with what you're playing; and if you play too long and there's no space for a breath, they'll lose interest. Gary [Burton] was the one who first pointed that out to me, because he played the trumpet too.

M.I.: Dan, did you play another instrument before you took up drums?

Gottlieb: Actually, I was a cello player first. But there was something about the drums that always got me. For some reason, I could play drums better after two weeks than I could play the cello after eight years. There was a period when I was 14, when I would walk around carrying drum sticks, banging on everything I could find. In the car, I had a drum pad up on the dashboard. I drove everybody nuts. I was lucky, because I had a junior high teacher who'd been a sax player in the big band era, and he used to play Miles Davis albums for detention—so we'd all hang out there and just listen to Miles Davis. The first album I bought was *Round About Midnight* [Miles Davis, Columbia]. Everyone was into big bands in high school; the big rage was the Buddy Rich Big Band, and also Thad Jones and Mel Lewis. We used to go hear Thad Jones and Mel Lewis at the Village Vanguard every Monday night. In fact, I used to hang out with Mel a lot. I think that's one source for my affinity for a lot of different cymbals—that's his main thing, trying to find cymbals that have different textures. Same with Tony Williams.

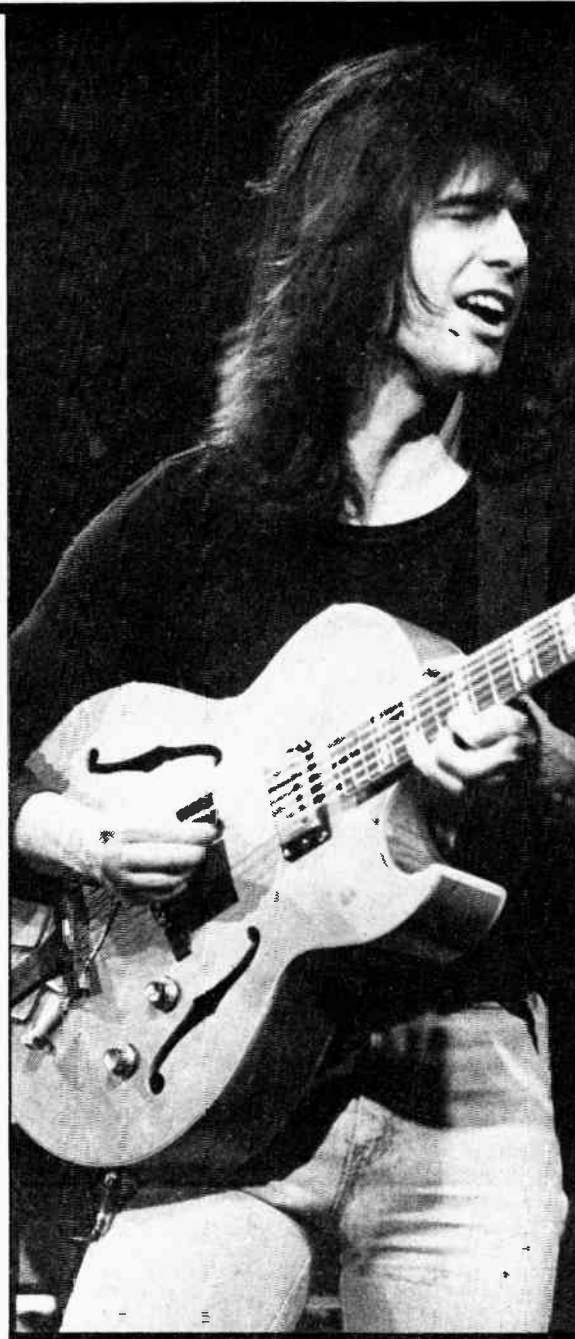
M.I.: Who were the main influences on your drum style?

Gottlieb: I still listen to every Miles album; all of his bands and drummers are real important to me. From Philly Joe Jones to Jimmy Cobb to Tony Williams to Jack DeJohnette. The drummer that's influenced me the most listening to him live is DeJohnette. It does something to me every time I hear him.

M.I.: Your drumming style seems almost like an updated version of Elvin Jones' approach with John Coltrane—where the drums are making a constant commentary on what the soloist is playing.

Metheny: To me, the way the drums work in the group is way up on the list of what makes us sound the way we sound. Stylistically, it's much closer to Elvin's type of playing than to the metronome kind of time-keeping. That's why I really take exception to the term fusion, when people try to put us in the same category with a group like Jan Hammer or someone, because it's nothing like that at all. With those kinds of bands—which is true of virtually every fusion band—the drummer plays some sort of a rock or funk beat and everything else is sort of layered on top of that. In our case, in many tunes, I think the three of us hold the time together more, and Gotts just goes playing over the top of it.

Gottlieb: One thing I'm still trying to work on is trying to create as big a spectrum as possible from very soft to very loud. I think the beauty of



TOM COPI

this group is that we can combine all different kinds of dynamics. That's something that Pat sort of harped on from the beginning of the group—not to play everything at the same volume. I hear a lot of bands, and one or two tunes will just knock me out, but then it's just the same thing I can imagine what some of them could soundlike if they could diversify it. I think I probably play best when I'm playing as hard as I can, mainly because the hardest thing for a drummer to do is play with incredible intensity softly. That's something very few people can do—DeJohnette is a good example. I feel there're a lot of holes in the set where we just let things breathe.

Egan: We approach it orchestrally.

Mays: Those are just standard elements of music. Doesn't say much for the rest of the groups I hear.

Metheny: It's a funny thing about dynamics. You look at the tradition of classical music, and dynamics was very, very important, and it's pretty much been ignored in pop music—meaning jazz, rock and everything else. For some reason, it's just gotten overlooked.

M.I.: Lyle, who were some of your early influences on piano?

Mays: Bill Evans and Oscar Peterson were the first albums I had growing up. Where I came from [Wausaukee, Wisconsin] it was impossible to get jazz albums. The nearest town was so

many miles away, and the only place that had records was like a Woolworth's.

Metheny: Compared to Lyle, I'm like from New York City [laughs].

Mays: Those were the only two albums I had for about three years in high school.

Metheny: You know, that can be good, though. I sort of had a similar experience. But if you absorb everything on a few albums by good players, you can learn a lot—as opposed to having 85,000 records and listening to one cut every now and then. But if you just listen to two records for three years—assuming they're good records...If it was the Ramsey Lewis Trio playing "The 'In' Crowd" or something you might be in trouble.

M.I.: So it was a long time before you were exposed to piano players like McCoy Tyner and Keith Jarrett.

Mays: Oh yeah! I had no idea that those people existed. I mean, I was really in the dark. When I finally got to college, a lot of the other kids had been into all that was out there, and they gradually turned me on. I spent about three years trying to rid myself of bebop cliches, because that was all I could play. I listened to Chick Corea, McCoy Tyner, Cecil Taylor—just everybody. I didn't play with any other musicians all through high school—there weren't any musicians. All I could play were these licks I'd gotten off these two albums, plus the bebop sort of jazz theory that you get from the summer camps—which can be real detrimental; it doesn't give you the whole picture. I'm sure there's still some residue of bebop in my playing, but at this point, what's there is there. Now, I'd say Keith Jarrett is a major influence. I mean, it's impossible not to be influenced by Keith, the guy's so good. He's just miles above anybody else on any instrument.

M.I.: Growing up in such an isolated environment, how did you get attracted to music in the first place?

Mays: I just seemed to gravitate toward it. My family was musical in the sense that we had a piano in the house, and my mother played, like, four-part church harmonies, hymns. She couldn't play a note by ear. And my dad played guitar, and he couldn't read a note of music. So instead of getting the worst of both worlds, I sort of got the best.

M.I.: Were there any high school rock and roll bands to play with?

Mays: No. As a matter of fact, this area was so rural that jazz was considered, like, sinful; it was considered illegitimate. I was sort of a closet jazz player, and I played the trumpet in the high school band, because that was legitimate. I didn't know it was cool to play jazz; I didn't think it was something that you got rewards for.

M.I.: What did your formal music education consist of at North Texas University?

Mays: Very little. I'm a fifth semester sophomore. I've never studied piano from a teacher or university or anything. I started to study composition down at North Texas; I got through a couple of lessons and decided it was kind of bogus, because this guy wanted me to write like he did. So, basically, I just got into the scene down there. I was taking two credit hours a semester and concentrating on playing all I could and running the big band.

M.I.: What's your keyboard setup on stage?

Mays: My main axe is a Steinway grand that we're carrying around, and we're miking that. We all hate the sound of piano pickups; they really destroy dynamics, and they give the piano



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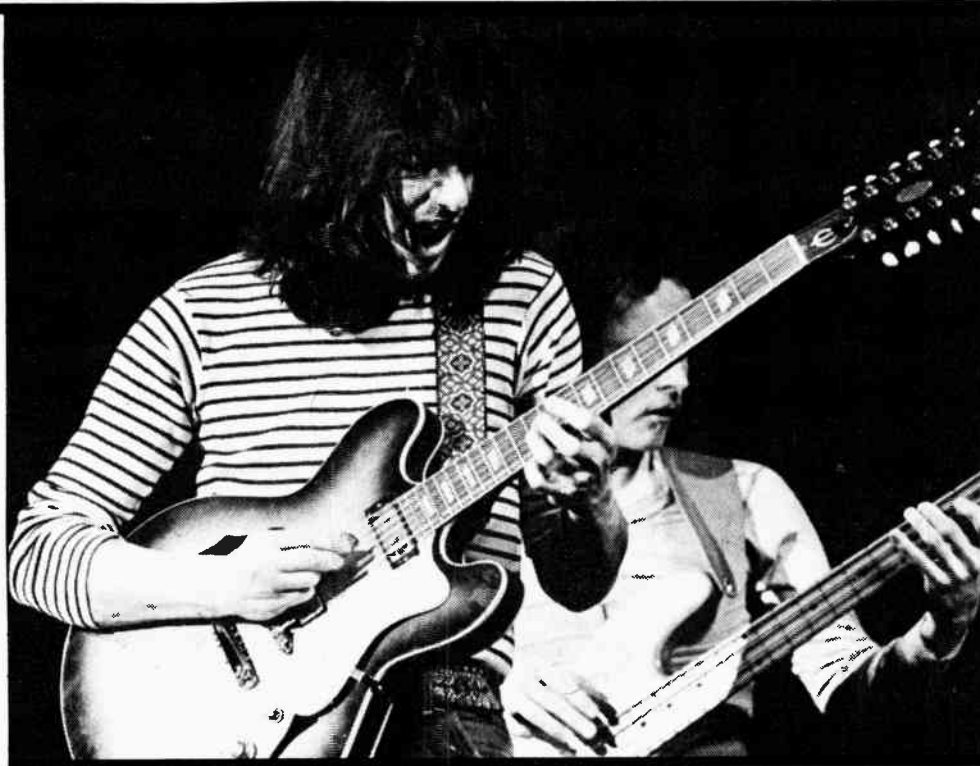
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a real metallic, electronic sound. So we just close-mike the piano and put blankets over it. That's going through the house, and I get that back through the monitors—it has nothing to do with the rest of my speaker setup. As far as electronics, I'm using an Oberheim 4-voice with a programmer—which is the first synthesizer I ever got, one of the early ones—and a Prophet 5-voice, which is a recent addition, then a Yamaha CP-30 electric piano, and a Yamaha YC-20 electric organ. I'm putting it through a little MultiVox Full Roter, which simulates a Leslie. It's a little black box that electronically duplicates a Leslie. Then I'm running all those into a Tangent 12-channel mixer, the 1202-AX. I'm running all of the instruments in mono into the mixer, even though the CP-30 and the Oberheim are both



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stereo. Then I've got two digital delays—one, I'm running through the effects channel of the Tangent, to add quite a beat of repeat echo. It's essential for synthesizers to have lots of echo; otherwise, they sound dry and ugly. Then I take the left output of the stereo outputs of the mixer to another digital delay to add the pitch-bend effect. Plus, I'm tuning all of the instruments out of tune. Each module on the Oberheim has two oscillators; I tune one of them flat and the other one sharp, so they sort of vibrate around the center pitch. I do the same thing with the Prophet and the CP-30. I was trying to duplicate the effect Pat had with his digital delays. And that's also the way a real string section or horn section will play; it's not going to be exactly in tune. Anyway, I'm running the left output of the mixer into a digital delay with pitch-bend, and the right output straight. I'm also running both of those into a Furman stereo crossover, and powering the high-end through a Crest 750-watt stereo power amp and the bottom end through a Peavey 400-watt power amp.

Metheny: Don't you have a compressor or something in there too?

Mays: Yeah, I use a limiter in the Prophet and an Axe Max on the Oberheim, a little box that matches the impedance. I also had a couple of modifications done on the Oberheim to get a cleaner, brighter signal.

M.I.: Whose idea was it to use Autoharp?

Mays: That was Pat's. He called me up on the phone one time and said, "Listen to this!" I have two Autoharps with the bars taken off, tuned to open chords—one is a big open D chord, which I use on "Phase Dance"; the other I use on "San Lorenzo" in conjunction with the tuning Pat has on his 12-string. We put a hockey puck pickup on each one, which I think is like a submarine detector or something.

M.I.: Do you program the Oberheim yourself?

Mays: Oh yeah. I play the Oberheim more than any of the others; it's my favorite.

M.I.: But you still take most solos on acoustic piano.

Mays: All solos. I play the melody to "House of the Rising Sun" on the organ, but other than that I play all solos on piano. As a joke, I wanted to go out and buy the cheapest organ I could find to get that Farfisa effect, and this Yamaha turned out to be great.

M.I.: You're going to be doing a solo album?

Mays: Yes, let's keep the rumor alive [laughs].

M.I.: On a solo project would you take any synthesizer solos?

Mays: No, I'd die first. I'd feel a little uncomfortable doing that. Compared to the acoustic piano, there are just very few possibilities there. I play piano about 90% of the set.

Metheny: It's funny, now we've got all those keyboards up there and it looks real impressive, but the fact is, some of the keyboards he only plays, like, once a night for eight bars.

Mays: Yeah, I play the Yamaha electric piano twice—on "Airstream" and on "Heartland." And on those two tunes it's only for three sections, four bars at a time.

M.I.: Do you think that the growing number of electronic keyboardists has resulted in a decline in the number of young acoustic pianists?

Mays: Oh, it's possible. I can't think of very many young acoustic pianists. I think, in a sense, we're keeping that tradition alive—even though I'm surrounded by all these keyboards—because my focus is on the acoustic. I consider myself an acoustic piano player. I consider the other keyboards as orchestral devices, things to add color.

M.I.: Pat, what's your guitar setup?

Metheny: The guitar is a Gibson ES-175, a '58, with one humbucking pickup. It goes into an MXR DDL [digital delay], used essentially in the same way as you'd use an Echoplex—just barely on. That goes into my main amp, which is an Acoustic 134, my favorite amp in the world. So it goes from the preamp to the Acoustic 134 into a new product, a Lexicon Prime Time digital delay, which I had modified slightly so that it's got a sine wave VCO instead of a triangle VCO. Then that splits that signal into two more signals, which are both delayed—into a Peavey amp on one side of the stage and another Peavey on the other side of the stage. So I essentially have three signals aimed at me—the direct signal, one delay at 14 milliseconds, and another delay at 26.

M.I.: How did you experiment around to come up with such an elaborate setup?

Metheny: In the studio, when we did *Watercolors*, in February of '77, Manfred had the big Lexicon DDL in there, and I'd never even heard of it. I said, "Okay, turn it on," and I loved the way it sounded. We only used it on one tune, which was the last song we were mixing. If I'd

known it was available earlier, I would've put it on every cut. I came back to the States and found out they cost about \$8,000. By this time MXR hadn't come out with their little Blue Nose yet, so I had to wait about six months until they came out with one. I bought that, got real interested in it, figured out all the different ways you could hook it up—by putting it before the guitar, after the guitar, between the preamp and the amp. There's a lot of different ways you can place it to make it sound different. I finally ended up with the setup I've got now, and then Lexicon came out with this one for \$2,000.

M.I.: Are you consciously striving for a unique guitar tone, or is that just a sound that you like?

Metheny: It's a sound that I like, and also, even though we're talking about all this technical junk,

' if you were to hear me play my Gibson acoustically it would sound pretty much the way it sounds amplified. You'd know it was me. In a lot of ways, the DDLs make it sound more like the way it sounds acoustically.

M.I.: So the midrangey sort of tone you get is more a product of the way you pick?

Metheny: Yeah, it's the way I play the guitar. I bang it real hard with my left hand, and I hardly touch it at all with the picking hand. And I use Fender thin picks and hold them sort of backwards, picking with the rounded corner. But it's mainly the guitar that sounds that way. It's just got a sound of its own. It's the first guitar I ever owned—my pride and joy.

M.I.: What type of acoustic guitar do you use on "Phase Dance"?

Metheny: It's a Guild D-40C, in Nashville tuning, with a Bill Lawrence pickup.

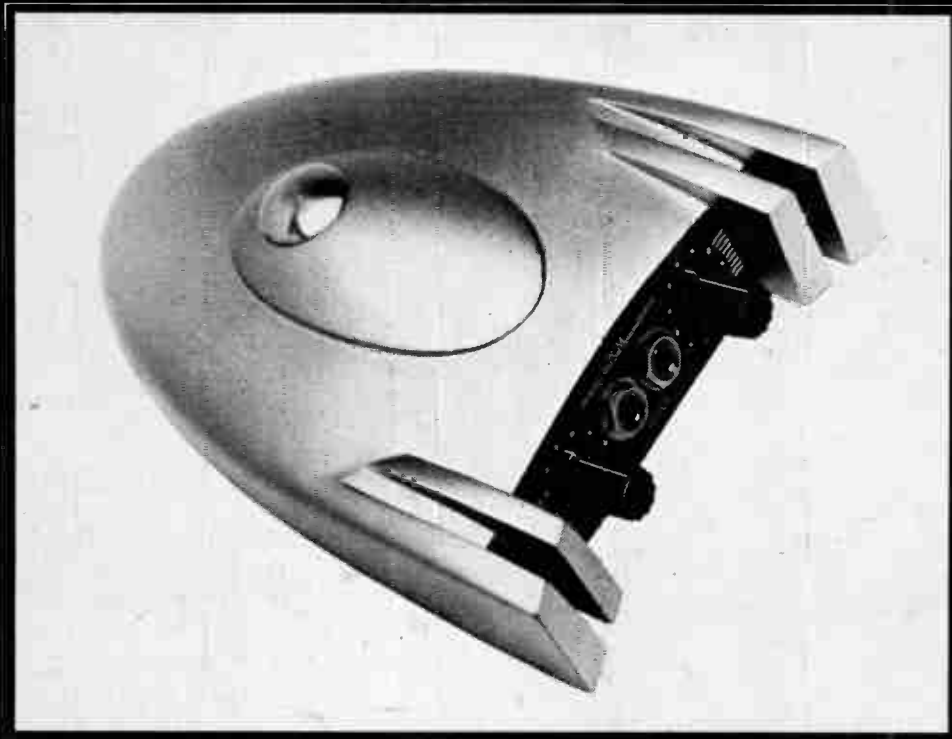
M.I.: What about your 12-string?

Metheny: I've got an Epiphone 12-string, a Fender, a Guild, and an Ibanez. They're all strung up weird ways. For "San Lorenzo," it's basically all E strings tuned to an Eb pentatonic scale in fifths. I'm not into open tunings so much as I'm into redefining the high to low configuration. Sometimes I'll have the highest string in the middle or the lowest string on top to come up with different things. On some tunings you have to order this special string from England that's an .006. Human hair is .005 [laughs]! I actually met a guy in Tulsa who had figured out how to play the harmonics to "San Lorenzo" on a regular 12-string by doing that Lenny Breau, false harmonics thing. I said, "Man, you blew it" [laughs]. Because all I do in "San Lorenzo" is hit harmonics across the 12th and 7th frets. But the tuning makes it sound mysterious.

M.I.: What's the bass setup?

Egan: I'm using a 1958 Fender Precision that was originally fretted, but the frets were taken out and a Jazz Bass pickup was added to it. It's got a really hard finish on the fretboard, like a bowling alley. Actually, it's boat epoxy. It's real resilient, and it gives it a lot more sustain. From the bass I go into a volume pedal; I keep my pots wide open and adjust the volume with the pedal, so I can change the volume without affecting the sound. Plus, I don't have to reach down and do it by hand. I go from that into a custom-made Dennis Electronics amp, made in New Jersey. It's a

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120 watt power amp with a 15" JBL. I also tried out Pat's digital delay, the MXR. I'm bi-amping—so out of the Dennis Electronics preamp I'm going into the MXR at about a 35 millisecond delay, to give it some phasing and slight pitch-bend. That goes over to another amp that's over by Danny, which we use for a drum monitor. And I'm taking two direct—one from the straight bass and one from the delayed bass signal. It's not delayed all the time—I have a footswitch. I use it on certain things when we really want to spread the tone out and make it sound real full.

M.I.: Which setting do you use when you take a solo?

Egan: Wide open [laughs]. There's usually no delay on the solos, just straight bass. I use delay on real mellow things, like "San Lorenzo." I'm real conscious of making a statement and being as lyrical as possible whenever I solo. Also, a lot of times I'll play in different places on the bass, with the right hand, to get a different tone. I'll play closer to the neck to get more of a mellow sound, whereas on "Jaco" I'll play right near the bridge, and pop.

M.I.: What type of strings do you use?

Egan: I'm using D'Addario round-wound strings. They've just come out with a new line that are really good, really live. I like the round-wounds, because they're like piano strings.

M.I.: What kind of acoustic bass guitar is that you play?

Egan: That's a Fyld guitar made for me last summer in England. I love it. It's got a Bill Lawrence pickup on it and really gets an acoustic tone.

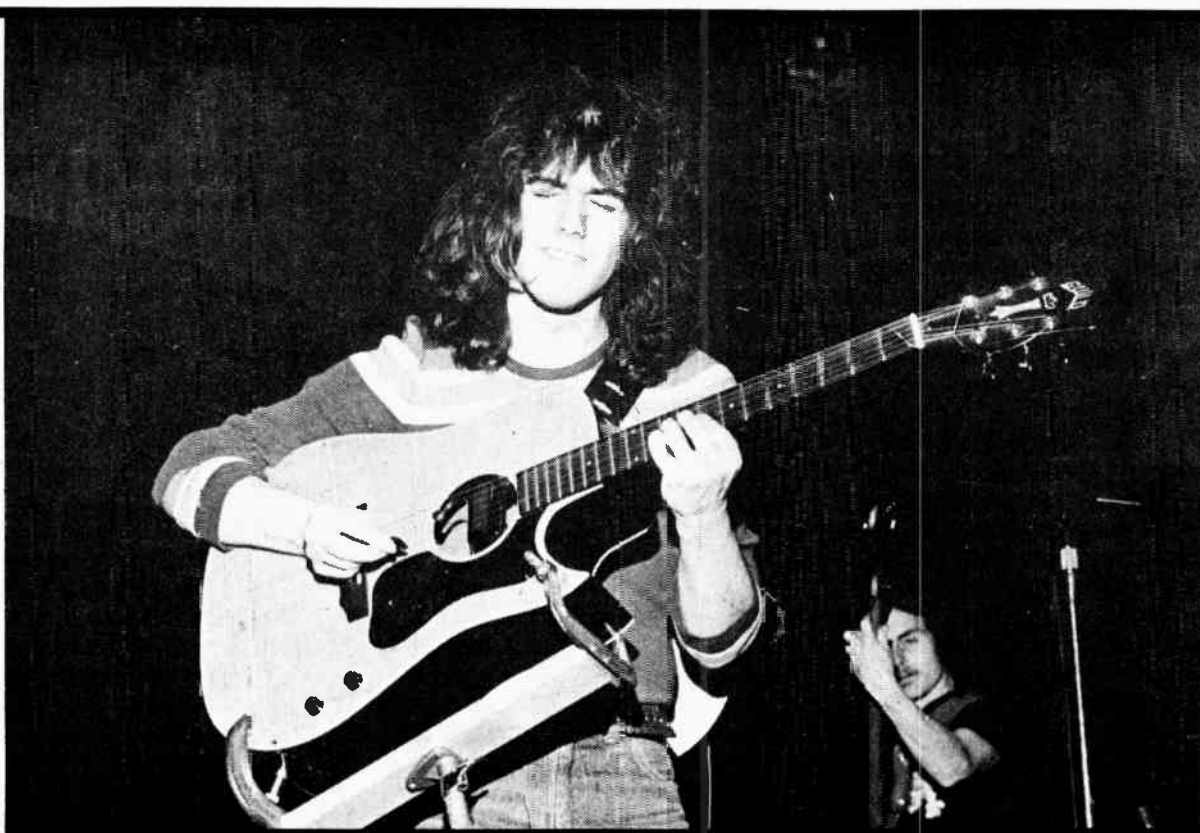
Metheny: I got one of their 12-strings too.

Egan: I'm also using a Walter Woods amp, from California. It's 150 watts, solid-state, real light.

M.I.: What does the drum setup consist of?

Gottlieb: I've got a combination of Ludwig Vista Light drums, which are clear plastic, and some hand-made wood shells made by a small company in Wakefield, Massachusetts, called Ames Drum Company. They make 15-ply wood shells by hand, which is commercially unheard of in this day and age. The biggest metal-ply drum on the market is a 9-ply Sonar. Ames doesn't make their own hardware, so I like the Ludwig hardware a lot and have that all over the drums. I came upon three distinct sounds that I can get out of these particular drums, and it seems to depend a lot on the way they're tuned and the heads that I use. There are certain drum heads that have little pads on them, dotted heads. The three sounds are to use non-dotted heads on top and bottom; dotted heads on the top and clear on the bottom; or clear on top and dotted on the bottom. I came across that from a studio drummer in New York named Steve Jordan. He likes the clear on top and dotted on bottom, because it limits the overtones on the bottom of the drum and gives you a real bright sound to the top. On the other hand, if you put the dots on the top it's a duller, more mellow sound. Consequently, I found with the clear tom-toms the only way they sound good is if they're low in pitch, almost dead, in fact—if you look at them you can see ripples in them—and if the dots are on top. What it does is, it cuts down on the tone a lot and makes it sound real thick. On this tour the whole sound of the entire band is going through a digital reverb unit out at the board, and it can change the sound of the drums. So the sustain of the drums is not that crucial, because that sustain can be created by this other source; but for my immediate sound I like the combination of having all those different sounds. So, I have four of the Ludwig tom-toms, called Paratoms; then I

MARK MANDER



have some of the Ames drum shells, with Ludwig hardware; the snare drum is 7" deep and it's 15-ply birch; all the stands and pedals are Ludwig, because they're real sturdy. I play real hard, so I use the heaviest stands they have; otherwise, they'll topple over.

Metheny: At the board there are things that affect everybody as far as the overall sound of the group—mainly the Lexicon digital reverb, model 224, that I just bought. The drums and piano go through that. It's a computer that's got basically four programs: Symphony Hall in Boston; Carnegie Recital Hall; an EMT plate; and an acoustic chamber. And for various tunes the soundman punches up different programs.

M.I.: Have you ever thought about incorporating two bass drums?

Gottlieb: I was going to try that on this last tour, but I haven't worked on it enough. In a group like this there're so many different types of music being played that stylistically I hear the same types of sounds that a jazz drummer like DeJohnette or Tony Williams would use—very open, powerful, tom-tomish sound for the bass drum—as well as a very padded, flat sound that rock and funk drummers use today. My concept, ultimately, is to have a double-bass drum set with one tuned one way and one tuned radically different, and also two hi-hats. I make do with a lot of toms, but I haven't incorporated the two bass drums yet.

M.I.: What's your cymbal arrangement?

Gottlieb: I've got almost all Paiste cymbals and one Zildjian, which is the main ride cymbal, a Zildjian flat. I found myself gearing more towards the sound of flat cymbals and cymbals that are on the thin side, because they seem to blend the best. Almost all of the cymbals I have are on the thin side except for the crash cymbals, which don't seem to hold up unless they're pretty heavy.

M.I.: Which is the one that's inside out?

Gottlieb: That's called the China type; it's made by Paiste. Mine has a square type of bell, and I have it upside-down just because it gets a brighter sound that way. Most of the other Paiste cymbals up there are their Sound Creation set, a new line they just came out with in the last year or so. The Paiste thing is that they try to find a way to

make cymbals sound very much the same within a tone group, so they're consistent. If you picked up a dark crash cymbal similar to the one I've got it would sound almost the same.

M.I.: Where did you get the idea for the little cymbals?

Gottlieb: The cup chimes? They're also made by Paiste. They're actually bells of cymbals. The first person I saw with them, I think, was Alex Acuna playing with Weather Report. I also have a bell-tree up there.

M.I.: What about sticks?

Gottlieb: I've been getting my sticks from a manufacturer that makes drum sticks for a lot of different companies; it's called Capella Woods, in Icetown, New Jersey. I used to use hickory sticks, but I got some maple sticks from them in a standard 3-A and they actually sound better on the cymbals, because it's a softer wood. But, by the same token, they're not as strong as hickory. I used to break maybe one or two hickory sticks a night, but these maples I've been going through five or six a gig, which gets pretty expensive.

M.I.: What was it like producing American Garage on your own after working with Manfred Eicher on the previous albums?

Metheny: It was really pretty easy, in that we had been playing the music, in some cases, for almost a year. We knew the tunes; it was just a matter of getting versions of the songs that we liked. So there was really not that much to it. It's a little difficult not having someone in the studio as a third ear.

M.I.: Did you adhere to the Manfred Eicher philosophy of trying to get everything down in one take as live as possible?

Metheny: Yes, virtually everything on that album is first, second, or third takes.

Gottlieb: In fact, with "The Epic" we tried piecing it together, and we sort of got one that was okay; then we went back and played it another time in its entirety and that was the keeper.

Metheny: There's almost no overdubs; we overdubbed synthesizer parts only for technical reasons. But no solos on the album were overdubbed; everything was done live. Basically, the entire second side was recorded in as long as it takes to play it.

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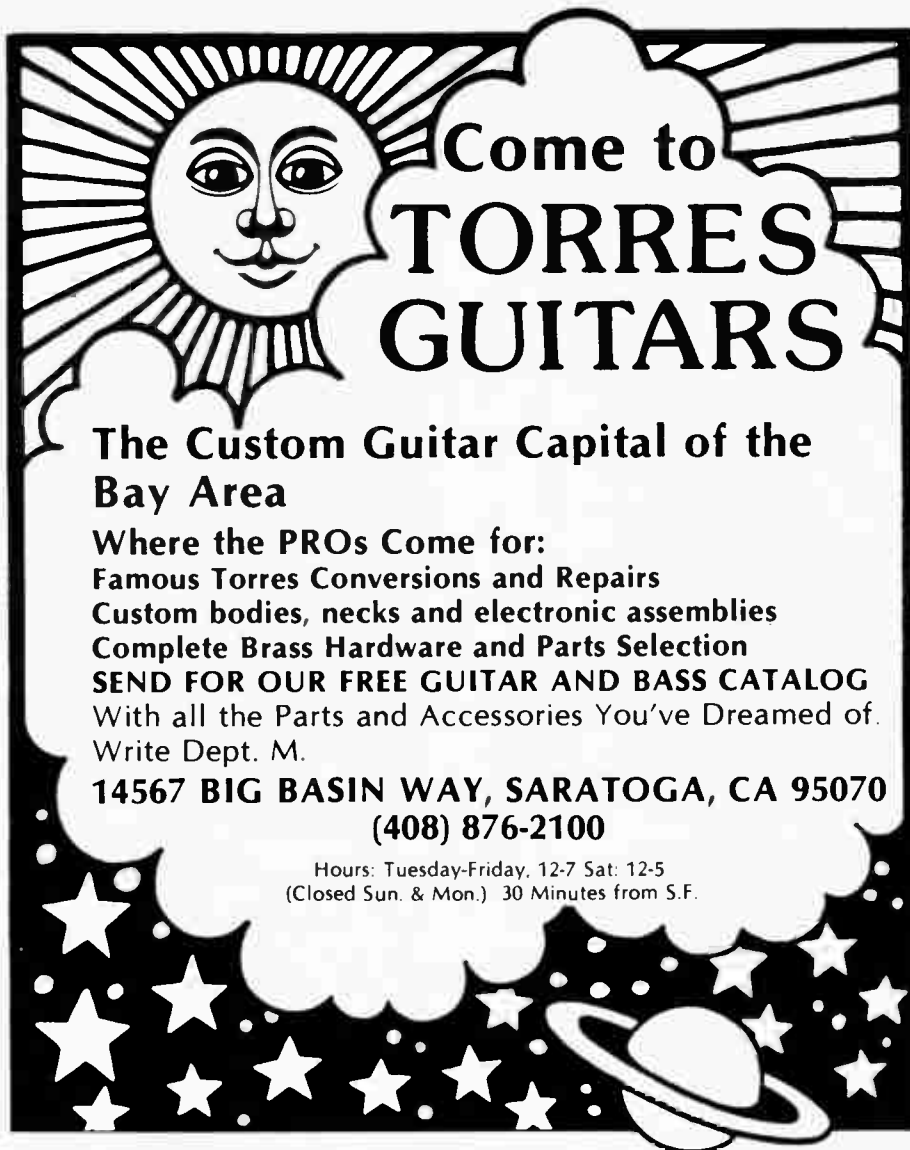
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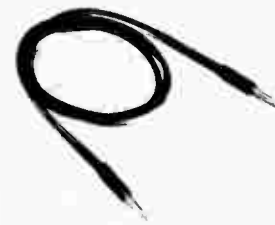
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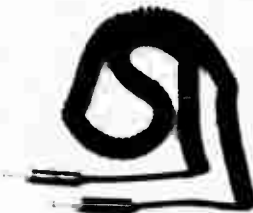
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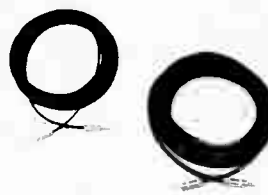
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by Seymour Duncan

When most kids cut school they go to the beach. When Seymour Duncan cut school in New Jersey he would drive to the Gibson factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan! He built his own guitar from scratch when he was 16, and his fascination with guitars has grown ever since. Through his research, he became very knowledgeable about the early electric guitars, and his reputation as a guitar expert began to reach the right ears. Over the years his clients have included Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck (in fact, Beck gave Seymour the Esquire Jeff used on the Yardbirds' Rave Up album), Roy Buchanan, Eddie Van Halen, Rick Nielsen, David Gilmore, and countless others.

Now, as the head of the Seymour Duncan Research Laboratory in Santa Barbara, California, Duncan is producing his pickups and shipping them all over the world. When he makes a vintage pickup he doesn't just produce a pickup that sounds like the old ones; he creates an actual replica of the old pickups that looks and performs exactly like the originals. His attention to detail is remarkable and, in short, this man knows more about the history of pickups than anyone else we know.

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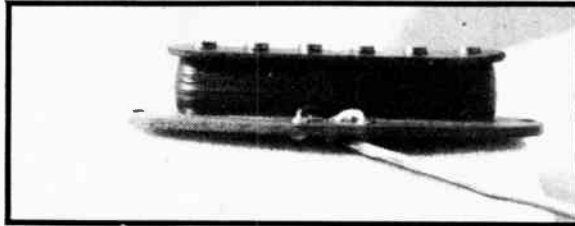
In this column I'd like to talk about the Fender Stratocaster pickup, and point out some of the changes it's gone through. The Stratocaster pickup has a unique sound, but many players don't realize why it sounds the way it does. Some people think it's the number of turns of wire on the coil, but it's mostly the varying lengths of the magnetic pole pieces that give it that sound. The new Stratocaster pickups are using a slightly raised pole piece (.656") and all six poles are the same length, but the vintage pickups have a staggered pole piece arrangement. There is an "inner phasing" of the pole pieces due to the varying magnet lengths that produces the characteristic Strat tone.

To help with the specifics of comparing the new pickups with the old ones here is an outline of the differences.

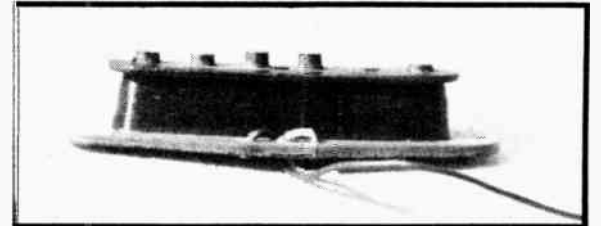
PICKUP SELECTOR

Stratocasters

OLD & NEW



Level pole pieces



Staggered pole pieces

Magnets: Old

Standard pole piece pattern

Sand cast to .192" dia. producing a rough surface

Alnico-V by old manufacturing methods that produced magnets with more cavities than are found in today's material. The magnet rods are not completely solid. You will frequently find air pockets, making the magnet weaker.

Strength—they were originally magnetized to full strength. Although we have heard that Leo Fender's magnetizer was at first a home-made variety that could not magnetize the magnet to its full capacity, he later got a standard model (we do not know the years involved). At any rate these magnets are now 20-25 years old, and due to stresses they have been subjected to, have lost 20% to 50% of their strength. This affects the tone by increasing sustain.

Polarity—early models had either the N or the S pole of the magnet at the top of the pickup. You can see how this would cause phasing problems. It was not a problem in the early days, because people didn't use the two pickup sound.

Coil: Old

Wrapped with 42 awg [American wire gauge] Formvar insulation. All wire is manufactured to NEMA [National Electrical Manufacturers Association] specifications which are the same as the ones in use today. This means that the wire can vary in diameter from .0026" (min) to .0028" (nominal) to .0030" (max). The wire produced back in the Fifties was generally in

New

Level pole pieces

Sand cast to .2" then turned down to .188" producing a smooth surface

Alnico-V by today's standards. You still get air pockets, but they are smaller and fewer.

Strength—full

Polarity—all S poles on top.

New

42 awg plain enamel mostly in the min to nom range. This gives a thinner coil, producing a thinner sound.

Coil: Old

the nom to max range. This is because the equipment used to manufacture the wire was not as developed as it is today. Because most of the wire they were using was in the nom to max range, it produced a physically fatter coil giving the pickup a fuller sound, but without increasing the resistance so much as to lose the high end.

Number of turns: 8,350 (more output)

Coil direction—clockwise

Winding mechanics—machine with traverse and tension control by hand. I talked to Leo Fender and found out some interesting things: 1.) There was one woman who essentially did all the winding for Fender. You can pretty easily wind 30-80 pickups per day, so this satisfied production needs. Leo said that he used her for hand winding, because there weren't any tension-control devices that were designed to adequately control the tension of 42 awg wire. Most bobbin winding in other industries is done on round bobbins, so the tension is even as the bobbin is wound. When winding oblong bobbins as with guitar pickups you get a whipping effect—tight, loose, tight, loose—giving a spongy (microphonic) coil. By using a person who then holds the wire between their thumb and first finger you get a much more even control of tension. 2.) Leo also used people (one woman in particular) to hand guide the traverse—that is, how closely the wire is laid onto the coil. Leo preferred some separation between winds, so that there would be "less capacitance between turns." Most winding machines back then were geared to layer the wire much closer together.

New

Level pole pieces

Sand cast to .2" then turned down to .188" producing a smooth surface

Alnico-V by today's standards. You still get air pockets, but they are smaller and fewer.

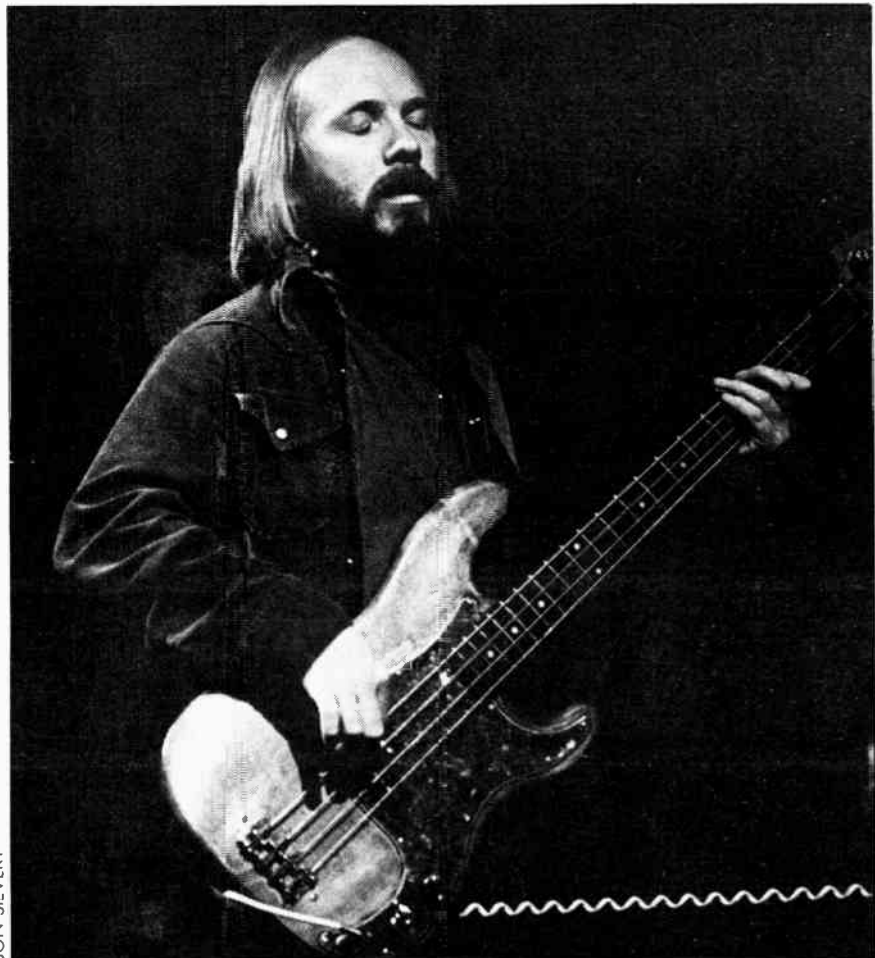
Strength—full

Polarity—all S poles on top.

New

42 awg plain enamel mostly in the min to nom range. This gives a thinner coil, producing a thinner sound.

M.I.



JON SEVERT

DYLAN'S COODER'S CSNY'S

Favorite Bassist Tim Drummond

by Dan Forte

Judging by his recording and touring credits, Tim Drummond must be the most versatile bassist in rock and roll—or maybe just the most universal.

Starting out in Cincinnati, Ohio, Drummond played in country star Conway Twitty's road band before joining James Brown's soul revue, touring Africa and Vietnam for the State Department. After leaving Brown's band, Tim was playing sessions in Nashville when a friend invited him to a jam session with some rock and rollers from California. That jam turned out to be Neil Young's *Harvest* album, and before long Drummond was living in Los Angeles, playing with nearly all of the various configurations of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. It was through Young that Tim later met Bob Dylan, and last year when the Great White Wonder kicked off his *Slow Train Coming* tour in San Francisco—his most controversial performance since his 1965 electric debut at the Newport Folk Festival—Tim Drummond was leading the band from behind his Fender Precision.

According to Drummond, "I just play the same R&B bass I've always played. And I haven't found anyone yet who doesn't like that R&B."

Drummond's philosophy on bass playing can be summed up in one word: Simplicity. "I

learned that from my old buddy Conway Twitty," Tim declares. "Jesse Ed Davis and I were in his band, in around '63. We would travel all through the Midwest, playing skating rinks, with a station wagon pulling a trailer. We'd drive by and see Jerry Lee Lewis going the other way with another trailer. Conway always talked about drummers; he'd hear a drummer playing the backbeat and say, 'Now, there's a singer's drummer.' And it's all simplicity—same with the bass. When I first started out, I was playing a lot of notes and all that—then I found out. There're a lot of guys that play a lot better than I do, and they've taken it much further than I have, but I still retain my style of keeping it simple. I think that's where it's at for a bass player."

Tim Drummond, 39, grew up in Canton, Illinois, near Peoria; he took up guitar at age 19. "I saw a guy playing guitar and said, 'That's for me,'" he recalls. "I was working on the railroad at the time, driving spikes. I bought a guitar the next day and practiced for about six months—went out and joined a band. A guy called me one day and asked if I could play bass; I said, 'Well, let me call you back in thirty minutes.' They had a bass in the little town music store, so I went and played it, called the guy back and said, 'Yeah, I can play one.' I knew where E and A were, so I joined the band. I learned to play bass in two weeks and was playing with this lounge group in Memphis, Tennessee, led by a guy named Eddie Cash. My first night, I had to do choreography

and sing doo-wah and all that—while I was playing!"

Before long Drummond was driving to Chicago to jam with rhythm and blues bands. "I'd go down on the South Side," he remembers, "and jam with [guitarist] Phil Upchurch. He had this great record called 'You Can't Sit Down.' I used to see him playing with the Dells, who did 'Oh What A Night.'"

Tim's bass playing became a familiar element in the regional sound associated with Cincinnati. "There was Lonnie Mack, Troy Seals, JoAnne Campbell," he relates; "there were a bunch of us that just played together. It was a real close-knit group of musicians, and they were all great. They hardly let anybody come in from out of town. Fortunately, they asked me to come and play. There was nothing like that Cincinnati sound." As recently as 1977 Tim was again playing with the legendary Cincinnati guitarist Lonnie Mack, on a fine album called *Lonnie Mack and Pismo* [Capitol], which also featured Troy Seals.

While gigging around Cincinnati, Tim got to know the members of James Brown's Famous Flames, who would record in town for the King/Federal label. "Some of the guys in James' show were cutting their own records," Drummond recounts, "and they said, 'Well, why don't you guys come on over to the studio?' Our band starting cutting records for them, an all-white band, and James heard this record I was playing on and asked me to record with him. When the session was over he asked me to go on the road with him. I said, 'No, forget it.' But then I found out he was going to Vietnam. This was around 1967, and everybody was in an uproar, burning things down and everything. So I told James I'd go over there with him, to show that black and white could get along—just for that purpose. We went over there and it was fabulous!"



(L to R) Fred Tackett, Bob Dylan, and Drummond; San Francisco, 1979



Drummond with Neil Young

MICHAEL ZAGARIS

JOEL BERNSTEIN



Tim Drummond and Lonnie Mack



(L to R) Ry Cooder, David Lindley, and Tim Drummond

BLAIR JACKSON

Drummond (center) with Conway Twitty (foreground)

James Brown's tours for the State Department are among Tim's fondest memories. "We did one place," he recalls enthusiastically, "where Bob Hope had just played, with Raquel Welch and a bunch of ladies. He had 22,000 people, and when they found out we were coming 34,000 came in. I remember that particular day, because it was 126°.

"We stayed in a hotel in downtown Saigon," he continues, "and that was something else. My room was right near the president's palace, and they were shooting rockets in, trying to hit him. There was a sign on my curtains saying, 'Do not open these drapes'—because the snipers would shoot in if they saw a light, you know. I took that sign home as a souvenir. Probably the next guy that stayed there got shot [laughs]."

Brown's tour of Africa can only be described, in Tim's words, as magic. "It was like a New Orleans atmosphere."

After leaving Brown's revue, Drummond was living in Nashville, playing R&B sessions, when his next superstar gig fell into his lap. "I just happened to be walking down the street one day, and a photographer friend of mine, Marshall Fallwell, said, 'Hey, Neil Young and some people are over at the studio jamming, and they're looking for a bass player.' So I went over, and we played. At that time, I didn't know who those guys were, actually, because I wasn't into that

kind of music then. But I guess I was ready for a transition to get into something different, because we hit it off as soon as we started playing. Neil said, 'You want to come back tonight?' I said, 'Shit yes, I'll come back tonight! Let me go home and get my bass.' I was using someone else's bass that I'd borrowed!

"I came back that night—I got there early; I wanted to make a good impression. I was tuning up my bass, and in comes James Taylor, then Linda Ronstadt. I said, 'Holy shit, what's goin' on here?' The first thing we cut was 'Heart Of Gold,' then 'Old Man' and a couple other things on the *Harvest* album [Reprise]. I never heard anything so great in my life as James Taylor and Linda and Neil singing harmony. I was dumbfounded. I mean, they just sat on the couch there in the studio with a microphone and all sang, 'Old man take a look at your life...' After we cut the album, I told Neil, 'Look, I don't really want to go on the road, but if you're going out I'll go to play with you.' So we did the tour in '73, and I met Graham and David and everybody else. And I moved to California that year."

In July 1975 Tim was playing with Young at Bill Graham's SNACK benefit [Students Need Athletics, Culture & Kicks] in San Francisco, and had his first chance to meet and play with Bob Dylan. Since both Dylan and Drummond were living in Malibu, the two musicians soon became friends. "I was living on the beach," the bassist

relates, "and Bob came by a couple of times, and we'd jam a little bit. Of course, some people fall into the thing of going, Oh, Bob Dylan! It's hard not to get caught up in that. He walks into a room, and you know he's there. But he's a musician, you know, and he and I are friends. We're the same thing, basically. We've stayed up nights and told a lot of our own road stories. We both have road stories that no one would believe! He feels comfortable around me, and I think we have a good rapport. I can go up and tell him what I think—and a lot of people hesitate to do that. But I just see him as one of the boys. I mean, he's a genius, but he's still a human being."

It wasn't until last year that Drummond appeared on record with Dylan—the poet's spiritual testimonial, *Slow Train Coming* [Columbia]. Also appearing on the LP were Dire Straits guitarist Mark Knopfler, the Muscle Shoals Horns, and keyboardist/co-producer (with Jerry Wexler) Barry Beckett, but when it came time to take the show on the road Drummond was the only keeper—in fact, he helped Dylan form the band of Fred Tackett (guitar), Jim Keltner (drums), and Spooner Oldham (keyboards), perhaps Dylan's best group ever.

"Basically, what we both wanted was to have guys in the band that were mature enough to deal with the road," Drummond states, "not somebody getting thrown in jail and all that. We

Tim Drummond

just wanted reliable people—people who had been on the road and could play. I recommended Spooner, because we'd just come from recording the album in Alabama [at Muscle Shoals], and Spooner was the main keyboard player down there before Barry Beckett. And like Ry Cooder says, when he touches an organ it's almost angelic. And that exactly fit the bill that Bob needed. I recommended Fred, because I wanted to get people that wouldn't try to fill every hole they could. I knew how Bob wanted it—the music had to be simple. And filling every hole in the music isn't what it's all about. There's an art to being a sideman."

Tim describes the band's rehearsals thusly: "What Bob does is, he just starts singing a song, and we all jump in on it. 'I got the song'—and he'll start playing it. It will either sound right or it won't, and we'll stop and try it a different way. We all add our own ideas, and Bob has a lot to offer, himself. He'll hum a bass line to me and say, 'Do you think you can do this?' 'Certainly, man, I can do that. I love that!'"

And how does Dylan shape up, in Drummond's eyes, on guitar? "He's fantastic! He's one of the greatest rhythm guitar players

I've ever worked with."

On stage it is Drummond who more or less orchestrates the band, cuing other band members and signalling cut-offs. But his eyes are always on Dylan—as he says, "like a hawk." Tim reveals, "One thing I learned from James Brown is the timing of a song. Nobody knows the timing of a song like the singer. And if you watch their right heel, they keep time with their heel. Don't watch their toes, because if you tap your toe you get carried away. Not everybody knows that; it's just something you learn. And you didn't dare lose time in James Brown's band, because you'd lose twenty-five dollars right there. For each mistake you made there was a twenty-five dollar fine. So there weren't very many mistakes."

While on tour Drummond collaborated with Dylan on a new gospel composition, "I'm Saved," which is not yet on record. He also co-wrote a tune on Ry Cooder's *Bop Till You Drop* album [Warner Bros.], entitled "Down In Hollywood." But as for eventually forming his own group, Drummond is hesitant. "I don't know," he shrugs; "I thought it would be interesting to be in a band where everybody had started off together and created the thing. Not so much the Tim Drummond Show or anything like that, I wouldn't want that. But it might be fun to try it, just for the hell of it. I could probably put something together, but it's just a lot of headaches."

For the most part Drummond's bass style eschews flash and grandstanding. He describes

his tone as "a lot of punch," to hold down the bottom. Through the years Tim has almost always played Fender Precisions, except for a period when the entire James Brown band was playing Vox equipment. His current setup includes a stock early Sixties Precision with GHS strings, which is run through an Alembic preamp and a McIntosh 2300 amplifier into Heil 4x12 cabinets.

The only piece of equipment Drummond seems at all particular about is his strings. "I don't like putting new strings on a bass," he insists. "I think one of my basses has the original strings on it. I've also got some pre-CBS [Fender] strings that are real old."

But, according to Drummond, "I can play through basically anything. When we played the MUSE concerts [No Nukes, Asylum] they had Lee Sklar's setup—and he and I are totally different players—and Bobby Glaub was there, too. All three of us play differently. I switched one cabinet when I played, but basically I just used the setup they had there. It doesn't matter to me."

Tim Drummond's solid bass playing has already found its way into the rock elite of L.A., where it will no doubt remain. There's no telling what headliner he will be called on to back next, but for the time being he can be found in Bob Dylan's stellar outfit. The band is scheduled to return to Muscle Shoals to record a second rock-gospel album (the first using the road personnel) sometime in March.

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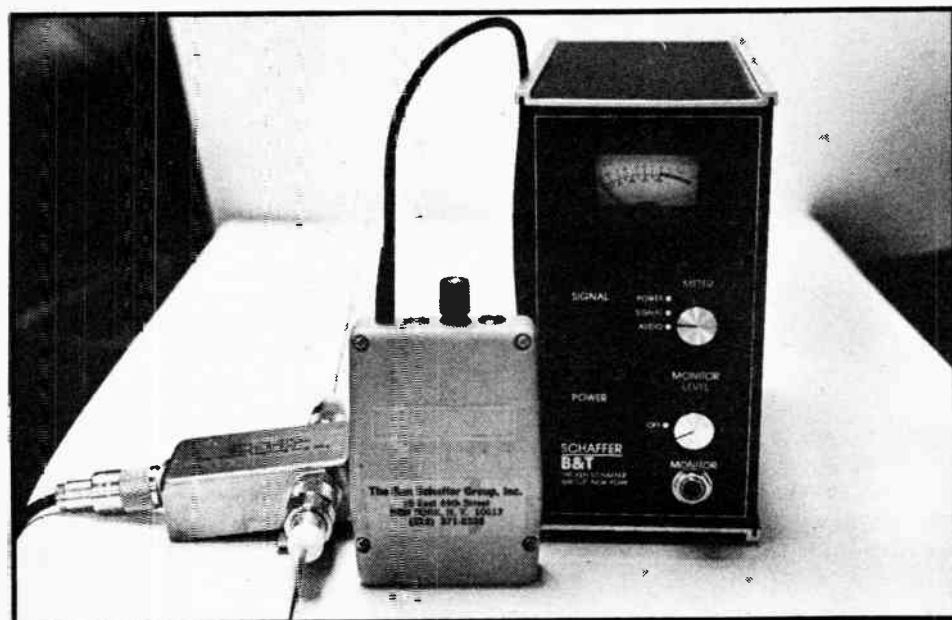
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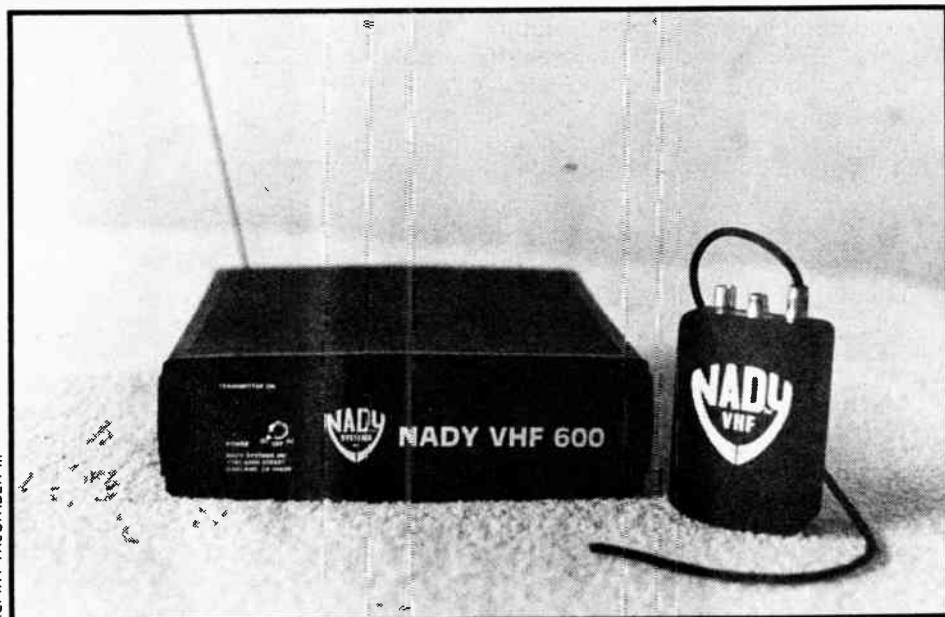
**SPEC
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Wireless TRANSMITTERS

Schaffer-Vega B&T



Nady Systems VHF



HENRY MCUMBER III

by Kirk Austin

Over the past three years the wireless guitar idea has come of age. If you go to see a major recording group these days, chances are they will be wireless. Recognizing the growing popularity of wireless systems, we invited the manufacturers to submit samples for our evaluation. The Ken Schaffer Group and Nady Systems accepted our invitation. We also contacted HME, but they chose not to be included. At any rate, we tested the two units that were submitted and found both of them performed up to spec. Tests were made with a Stratocaster played through a Marshall amplifier, and also with an SG (with humbucking pickups) played through a boosted Fender Bassman amp.

Both systems produced a tone with more treble than the tone we got using a regular cord. This is probably due to the pickups being isolated from the capacitance of the cord. Both systems also exhibited what is known as "breathing noise" under high gain conditions. That is, the background noise increases as the note is played, then decreases as the note fades out. What you hear is the action of the compensating circuitry, but I should point out that under most conditions this noise would go totally unnoticed. Distortion was low enough in both units to be insignificant, considering the amount of distortion contributed by the guitar amp even when it was not overdriven. (Something that we couldn't test for was susceptibility to interference. All we can say is that we didn't notice any

interference in either system under any conditions. Since San Francisco is pretty crowded as far as radio stations go one would expect some sort of interference, but there was none to be found.) Neither system required tuning, and operation was as simple as plug in and play.

The Schaffer-Vega system (\$2,450) is the B&T non-diversity model available from the Ken Schaffer Group, Inc. (10 East 49th St., New York, NY 10017). Its transmitter is housed in a plastic case that could possibly break if you smashed your boot heel on it (which could work out to be theatrically effective), but the receiver is a sturdy unit with aluminum edging. It has a meter on the front panel to monitor signal strength, and a single-ended output with volume control. This is separate from the balanced output on the back panel which is the one we used for the tests. According to Schaffer, the best output is obtained by using the balanced output through an impedance-matching transformer to increase the signal-to-noise ratio. We tried to do this, but had an apparent short in the transformer we had laying around the office.

The Nady System (\$1,800) is the VHF non-diversity version of the Nasty Cordless FM tunable system and has identical specs. Both are available from Nady Systems (1145 65th St., Oakland, CA 94608). This time the receiver is housed in plastic, and the transmitter is in a metal case. There are no meters—just an LED to

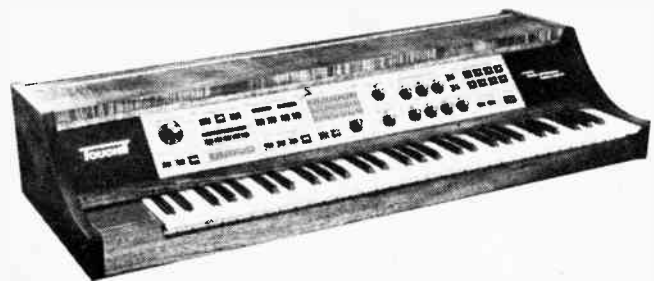
let you know if you're transmitting or not. One thing that is convenient about the Nady system is that it has the antenna attached to the receiver, so there is nothing that has to be held up with gaffers tape. Also, the Nady can be powered from a battery supply (for the receiver) which gives a better signal-to-noise-ratio. But I don't think very many people will want to carry around 12-volt batteries.

As far as the bench testing goes, the noise and distortion measurements were pretty straightforward, but the frequency response test looked a bit strange. After tearing out a bit of hair we could only figure that the odd results were due to some sort of impedance mismatching. Neither of the units tested sounded as though there were any frequency response deviations, but we're just printing what we read on the test equipment. Tests were made with a Heath Harmonic Distortion Analyzer model SM5258. M.I.

	Schaffer-Vega	Nady Systems
Test distortion:	.4%	.7%
noise (open input):	90dB	96dB (102 with battery)
frequency response:	± 3dB, 45-7K	± 3dB, 28-19K
current consumption (transmitter only):	30ma	20ma

PRO

file



Buchla & Associates has completed the development of Touche, a technologically, and musically sophisticated keyboard instrument that combines both analog and digital circuitry in a unique hybrid architecture that develops the advantages of both approaches. Sound production in the Touche is accomplished with a pipe-lined, multiplexed digital signal generator that assures absolute pitch accuracy (crystal derived) and provides timbral possibilities formerly available only to those with access to major computer installations. Touche's 24 digital oscillators are combined into eight voices that are playable in a variety of polyphonic, split keyboard, and multi-instrument modes. Touche is available from selected distributors; suggested retail price is \$8,500. For additional information, contact the manufacturer: Buchla & Associates; P.O. Box 5051; Berkeley, CA 94705

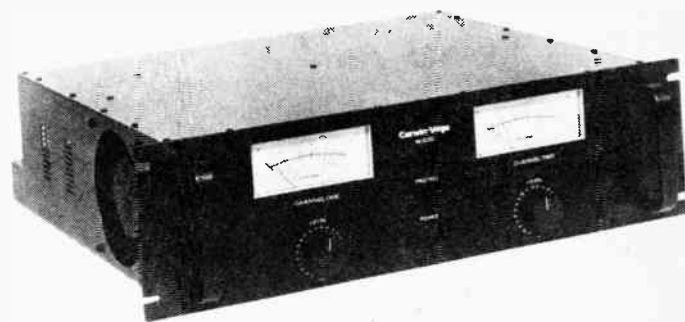


The Aria Pro II TSB-650 is a new addition to the line of guitars available from Aria. The 32" scale bass features a contoured body with neck-through-the-body construction. The two dual coil pickups can be wired in series or in parallel with the dual-sound switch, and there are tandem volume and tone controls for each pickup. A brass nut and bridge are also standard. Aria Music (USA) Inc., John Reed Court, City of Industry, CA 91744.

scheduled to begin in February. Distribution is being handled directly by Lectrosonics, Inc., 2100 Atrisco Drive, N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87105



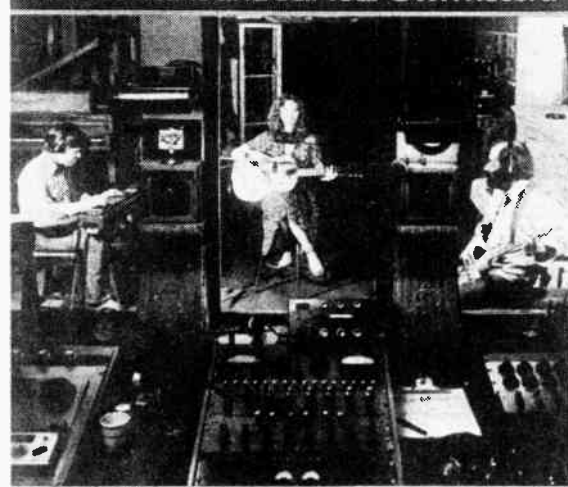
Drum World in San Francisco, which opened last September under the ownership of Don Sfarzo, has inaugurated a series of free monthly percussion clinics. Conducted by prominent Bay Area drummers, the clinics have featured such veterans as Bob Frediani and Johnny Rae. On Sunday, March 23, the clinic will be conducted by George Marsh of the Denny Zeitlin group. Appearing also will be bassist Mel Graves.



The **Cerwin-Vega M-500 Stereo Power Amplifier** is designed to meet the criteria of both professional and audiophile applications. This low-profile unit features a heat exchanger with a two-speed fan and peak holding meters with a 60 dB dynamic range. The M-500 is rated at 250 watts per channel into 8 ohms, at less than .02% THD or IM distortion. Cerwin Vega, 12250 Montague St., Arleta, CA 91331.

St. Regis & Leuenberger, the San Francisco keyboard specialists, recently opened **Sound Francisco**, a division devoted entirely to pro sound equipment. Sound Francisco is headed by Bay Area audio veteran Bob Ulius, and will carry numerous lines of equipment for both performing and recording applications. According to Ulius, Sound Francisco will have "California's most complete demo facility," including a Yamaha PM-2000 mixing console.

How to Make and Sell Your Own Record

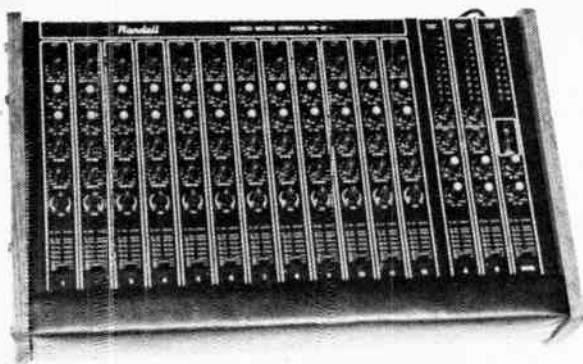


DIANE SWARD RAPAPORT

How To Make And Sell Your Own Record, by Diane Sward Rapaport, is the first book that offers the technical information, practical tips and business guidance to help musicians finance, produce, sell and promote records independently. Information on every aspect of a recording project is provided—from budgeting, financing and legalities, through recording, graphics, manufacturing, sales and promotion. Copies of the book can be ordered by mail (\$9.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling) from the Headlands Press, P.O. Box 862, Tiburon, CA 94920.

Craig Anderton, nationally-known author on the subject of musical electronics, will present a seminar on home recording techniques at Mau's Music (1450 Monument Blvd., Concord, CA 94520) on April 16th. Special emphasis will be given to budget recording techniques, how to record multiple tracks without using a multi-track machine, and new developments in home recording. For further information and free tickets, call (415) 676-3151 or write Mau's Music at the above address.

Lectrosonics, Inc. of Albuquerque, New Mexico has announced a second entry into the battery-operated portable amplifier market. Called the Mini-Mouse, the new entry follows less than a year after the introduction of the Mouse portable amplifier. When powered by eight alkaline "C" cell batteries, the Mini-Mouse provides from 25 to 50 hours normal operation, depending on volume levels. The Mini-Mouse features a powerful amplifier and a full-range 6" speaker protected behind an expanded metal grill. The case is of rugged construction to dampen vibration and protect components. The simplified control panel includes an instrument input jack, an output jack for use with other equipment, a volume control knob, and an A/C adaptor input. The suggested retail price for the Mini-Mouse is \$149.95. Deliveries of the Mini-Mouse are

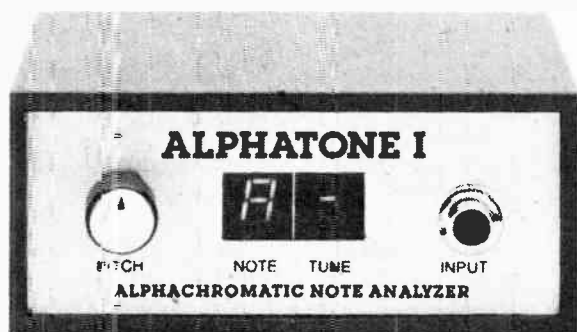


Randall Instruments, Inc. has introduced the RM 12-3 mixer for sound reinforcement applications. Each channel features both low and high impedance inputs with an input attenuator to eliminate clipping. In addition, each channel has hi and lo EQ controls, reverb send control, monitor send control, pan control, and fader. The master sections have effects/ auxiliary gain controls, master reverb controls, hi and lo EQ controls, and faders. Randall Instruments, Inc., 1132 Buryea, Irvine, CA 92714.

PRO file



The **Holmes Corp.** of Greenwood, Mississippi is introducing the Pro-Compact amplifier. The Pro-Compact features 90 watts RMS through two heavy-duty 10" Eminence speakers. Front panel controls include Drive, Overdrive, Bass, Treble and Reverb. The Drive and Overdrive circuitry offers a wide variety of sound, ranging from clean sustain to controlled distortion. And a Treble Boost provides extra bite at high frequencies. The Pro-Compact's cabinet is constructed of 3/4" stock, and is covered with Tolex. Cabinet size is 18" x 24 1/2" x 9 1/2". The Holmes Corp., 3000 Marcus Ave., Suite 2W7, Lake Success, NY 11042.



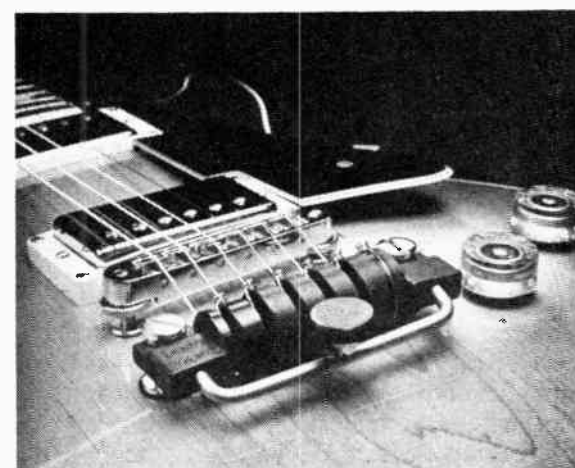
An unusual tuning device has been released by **Imaginearing Audio** of Portland, Oregon. The Alphonetone chromatic analyzer gives you the letter of the note you're playing instead of a number or an approximate reading. It also tells you whether the note is sharp or flat, and it has an automatic centering bar to show you when you're right on the note. The accuracy of the model AT-1 is plus or minus 1/100 of a semitone, and it is small enough to fit in a guitar case (4" x 4" x 1.75"). Imaginearing Audio, P.O. Box 66067, Portland, OR 97236.

Bon Scott, the 33-year-old Scottish-born lead singer with the band AC/DC, was found dead in his car the night of February 19th from alcohol poisoning. The band's latest album *Highway To Hell* went platinum immediately following Scott's death. AC/DC was recording new material in London at the time of his death, and the band plans to continue working.

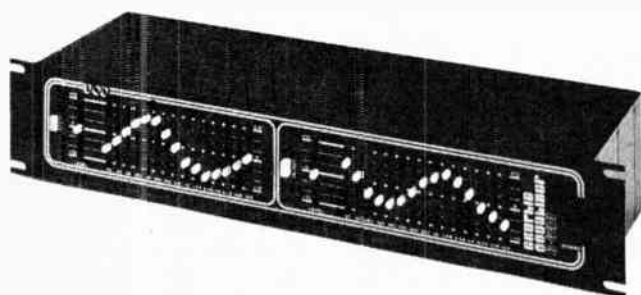
R.A. Cresco Guitar Works has developed the A.T.C. (Active Tone Circuit) for guitar and bass players who want more than the usual treble roll off tone controls. The A.T.C. provides boost or attenuation of both treble and bass. With the tone controls set at "5" the response is flat. The small size and single battery operation makes installation easy, and all mounting hardware is included. The A.T.C. is supplied with Bourns pots and a special jack that will disconnect the battery when the guitar is unplugged. R.A. Cresco Guitar Works, P.O. Box 2332, West Covina, CA 91793.



The Fender 75, a new tube-type guitar amplifier has recently been announced by **Fender Musical Instruments**. There's a lead and a rhythm channel, both foot switchable. The master volume control operates both simultaneously, while the lead master control works lead volume only. A midtone control with 40dB capability and boost switch expands mid-range potential. Individual pull-boost switches also give additional control to both bass and treble. High/low power switch gives an option of either 75 watts or ± 15 watts RMS. Rear panel features include an effects in/out jack to enhance sound potential, hum balance control, plus output tubes matching control for balancing tube replacements. The Fender 75 mounts a special design 15" heavy duty Fender speaker in a Fender enclosure. Power output is 75 watts RMS. Fender Musical Instruments, 1300 E. Valencia, Fullerton, CA



Lenny Pogan Productions has developed a quick way to retune all six strings of a guitar to facilitate playing along with the radio, tapes, or records. The Pitchfinder speed-tuner/tailpiece tunes all six strings simultaneously as little as a few hundredths of a semitone over a range of one half-step. Made from black anodized aluminum, the Pitchfinder replaces 'stop' type tailpieces such as those found on Les Pauls, SG's, etc. Lenny Pogan Productions, Inc., Cathedral Station, Box 353, New York, NY 10025.



DOD has announced the release of their model R-830 dual 15-band graphic equalizer. The R-830 is intended for acoustic and room equalization, and is designed for mounting in a standard 19" rack. The 15 bands are spaced on 2/3 octave ISO centers with 12 dB of boost or cut. The R-830 has .01% distortion and 95 dB signal to noise ratio with a frequency response of 10-40KHz. The maximum input and output levels are +20 dBm. DOD Electronics Co., 2950 South 242 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84115.

Off the Record



Adventures In Utopia Todd Rundgren and Utopia Bearsville, BRK 6991

Produced by Todd Rundgren and Utopia; engineered by Todd Rundgren; recorded at Utopia Sound Studios.

There are a few figures in pop music whose genius is of such consistency that it can only be measured in terms of itself. Rundgren is one of these.

Featuring the now familiar Utopia personnel of Roger Powell (keyboards), Kasim Sulton (bass) and John Wilcox (drums), this album's best moments come with the more hard driving numbers for which Utopia is best known; and for rock enthusiasts, there is plenty here. "The Last Of The New Wave Riders" shows them all at their best, wailing and rocking in the ultimate rock fantasy of total electrical overload, complete with the magic of full production. In this and on several other tunes, Rundgren is on his own turf. There is simply no one else who can touch him for his full throttle approach to rock and roll.

Rundgren breaks new ground with this LP as well. In "You Make Me Crazy" he bows to the New Wave. This tune, sung in the choppy, yelping style of David Byrne from Talking Heads, features an intro for which out of tune would be an understatement; but it captures a spontaneity and, blended with Rundgren's own style, shows a promising new direction, should he choose to follow it.

The album is marred by the other influence, however—that of disco. "Rock Love," in particular, is a tune not unlike the Trammps' "Disco Inferno." It's disco with integrity; but after last year's

overdose it comes too late in spite of the strong hook. Also "Love Alone," a ballad sung presumably by Kasim Sulton (no credits are given), is simply not very interesting. And in spite of Rundgren's efforts to rescue it with vocal arrangements that would make the Beach Boys look like monotones by comparison, the tune doesn't add much to the album.

"Adventures In Utopia" is the musical portion of a package intended for television presentation. In that format, the tunes may be more compelling. As it is, the album is not as strong overall as what Rundgren has put out in the past. But it's still Rundgren. And that puts it heads above most of the competition.

—Melodie Bryant



Acoustics The Tony Rice Unit Kaleidoscope, F-10

Produced by Tony Rice; engineered by Bill Wolf; recorded at 1750 Arch Studios, Berkeley, CA.

This album marks Tony Rice's fifth as a group leader but only his first all-instrumental jazz album; and everything on it serves to reinforce the fact that he is the most inventive and expressive steel-string acoustic guitarist to come along since the late Clarence White.

Rice has demonstrated his composing abilities on his two most recent Rounder albums and two David Grisman Quintet discs, but this is his first attempt to put together an entire album consisting primarily of his own music. Seven of the eight tunes presented here are his, and their content offers a panorama of Tony's musical heritage which runs the gamut from

White through Grisman to Neils-Henning Orsted Pederson. Complex musical changes blend easily with strong melodic lines to present a listening experience of understated elegance.

Rice has chosen a quartet format of guitar, mandolin, violin, and upright bass to explore his approach to acoustic music. To execute his ideas he has gathered some of the cream of acoustic string musicians. Richard Greene (former member of Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys, Seatrain, and the Great American Music Band) contributes his special brand of violin brilliance on four cuts, while Sam Bush, of the New Grass Revival, handles violin chorus on the other four. Sam also adds his spectacular rhythmic genius on mandolin on two cuts. Mike Marshall (the 21-year-old instrumental monster who is currently second mandolinist in Grisman's Quintet) plays on five tunes and Grisman, himself, turns up on one. Todd Phillips is the bassist throughout the album.

Tony's basic approach to recording this album was to gather the musicians for a day's rehearsal to familiarize them with the changes, and then turn them loose. The result is smoldering, high-energy music. DGQ fans will recognize Rice's "Swing '51" from the band's first Kaleidoscope album, though the arrangement has been changed and the tempo quickened considerably here. The album as a whole is paced beautifully as Rice shows he can slow the music down, too, with "Blues for Paradise" and "New Waltz." The rich, full-bodied tone and sustain that he squeezes out of an acoustic guitar on these cuts simply defy belief. The uptempo pieces like "Casology," "So Much," and "Fast Floyd" leave the listener gasping as these superb musicians interact and explore previously unheard melodic lines and rhythmic patterns. The only non-original tune presented here is Wes Montgomery's "Four On Six" adapted from an arrangement by John Carlini, and this band plays it like it was written for an acoustic string quartet.

The sound quality and the presence are equal to the

musicianship due to the engineering efforts of Bill Wolf and the studio, 1750 Arch Studio in Berkeley. The tunes were all recorded "live" in the studio with minimal overdubbing, which contributes greatly to the power and presence of the music. All in all, this is a must-have album for lovers of acoustic string music.

—Jon Sievert



John Cale Sabotage/Live SPY/IRS, SP004 (distributed by A&M Records)

Produced by John Cale; engineered by Charlie Martin.

John Cale is among the few urban poets who really deserve the title. His stark, frightening songs radiate images of decaying cities, despair, war, and mind manipulation, yet they never seem to lose a unique human element that warns with sincerity. *Sabotage/Live*, his first album in nearly four years (and his first American release on his long-promised SPY label), not only captures the excitement and honest emotion of a Cale concert, but it does so with the finest band he has ever worked with and with entirely new material.

John Cale has been making music like this for a long time. An Oxford scholar who came to New York to study classical viola, he soon quit school to form rock's first avant-garde band, the Velvet Underground. From 1973 until '76, he recorded a series of excellent solo albums for Island Records under the direction and assistance of Brian Eno. *Sabotage/Live* is not unlike his works from this period. Lyrical themes remain consistent, and the music (although definitely

weird) is highly listenable.

Cale's husky English voice is still intact, as is his raw piano and guitar work. The band—consisting of Marc Aaron on lead guitar, Joe Bidwell on keyboards and vocals, George Scott on bass and vocals, Doug Browne on drums and vocals, and Deerfrance on percussion and vocals—is an appropriate complement to Cale's music and singing. In addition to keyboards and guitar, Cale dabbles here on viola and fretless bass.

Cale seems obsessed with his role of modern day prophet of doom. He is forever warning us of some unavoidable, hopeless fate; however, this record is not a total downer. There's a kinky version of "Walkin' The Dog" (à la his version of "Heartbreak Hotel") and even a tender love ballad called "Only Time Will Tell."

Cale's lyrics are still his greatest appeal. He never fails to drive a point home with a sharp, biting phrase. On "Mercenaries (Ready For War)," for instance, he sings:

*Mercenaries are abuseless.
Disunited... unfaithful
They've got nothing more to keep them in
a war
Except for a meager wage which is just
enough to make them kill for ya...
But not enough to make 'em die for ya.*

Sabotage/Live, recorded at CBGB in New York last June, is an interesting alternative to a standard studio album. Obviously, the technology is sacrificed for the "realness" of a live atmosphere. The audio quality, while not exceptional by any means, is quite appropriate, allowing for a certain element of grittiness to show through.

—Bruce Pilato



Deguello

ZZ Top

Warner Bros., HS 3361

Produced by Bill Ham; engineered by Terry Manning and Bob Ludwig.

After a recording layoff of more than three years and a change in labels, these boys now prove they haven't let the years slow them down. *Deguello* opens with a remake of the David Porter-Issac Hayes tune "I Thank You" that is purely down-home, and moves into

"She Loves My Automobile," a ZZ Top blues with that familiar hard shuffle beat.

Songs such as "I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide" and "Manic Mechanic" show that Gibbons, Hill and Beard haven't lost any of their sense of humor, while also displaying some pretty hot licks. And Bill Ham's superb production has only enhanced the wildness of these songs with special vocal effects. Ham has again captured the essence of ZZ Top.

The vocals on "Lowdown In The Street," about a parade of hipsters down on the local main street, are reminiscent of early Doobie Brothers, while the influence of the present-day Doobies shows up during the instrumental passage in "Cheap Sunglasses." Billy Gibbons sounds like a Fender Rhodes piano as he lays a soft and funky cushion for his finely restrained guitar solo.

"Hi Fi Mama" is a real screamer, and it gives us a good example of ZZ Top's lyrics: "Hi Fi, Low Fi, No Fi's just fine with me/If you want to give me stereo, first give me Vitamin E."

The speaking voice at the end of this song shows a bit of similarity in style (through limited) with Frank Zappa. Both like to surprise their listeners lyrically. "Esther Be The One" is a strong closer, the story of a woman with unusual powers: "She'll get you with her gun, when the wolf starts howling at the moon." There is an Eagles-type of darkness to this song, and the mood is effective.

The inner sleeve of *Deguello* shows the group members posed as "The Lone Wolf Horns"; Billy Gibbons holding a baritone, bassist Dusty Hill on tenor, and drummer Frank Beard behind an alto sax. While the boys do give us a couple bursts on the record, they are not trying to rival the Memphis Horns, at least not yet. *Deguello* is not a big departure for the Texans; it is more of what they have been giving us for almost a decade—a bumper crop of good times.

—Robin Tolleson



The Bruford Tapes

Bill Bruford Band

Polydor, BRUBOOT 28

This is the latest chapter of the Bill Bruford saga, recorded live at My Father's Place, Roslyn, New York, on July 12, 1979. Bruford, the ex-Yes, ex-King Crimson drummer now has three albums out under his own name [*Feels Good To Me, One Of A Kind*]. His latest band plays contemporary improvisational music (I won't call it fusion) as well as any band playing it these days. Actually, there aren't very many bands playing this kind of music anymore, what with Jan Hammer going off the deep end with his teen-rock band, and Brand X turning towards traditional rock formulae. Bruford is definitely holding his own, and this album could very well outsell his other two albums combined.

Although all of the music here has been recorded previously, there is enough variation to warrant buying this album even if you have the others. Dave Stewart plays the grand piano more in the live situation than he does on the studio albums, and the result is very pleasant indeed. He is really the outstanding member of the band, and his use of the polyphonic synthesizer defines the sound of the band more than anything else. He and Bruford really hold the rhythm together since Jeff Berlin has decided that the bass is no longer a supporting instrument. I guess we're just going to have to go through a period with bass players similar to what we've gone through with guitarists. Bassists like Jeff Berlin, Jaco Pastorius, and Stanley Clarke have gotten the idea that the electric bass has more to offer than any other instrument. It has led to some playing that is at best self-indulgent, and at times downright irritating.

Guitarist John Clark does a commendable job of filling the spot left by Alan Holdsworth. Although it takes him a while to get going, the solos on "Fainting In Coils" and "Beelzebub" show off some really fine playing. Clark fits well with the rest of the band, and I look forward to hearing more from this relative unknown.

Bruford himself plays straight and to the point. His style has always been one of economy and taste, and his use of roto-toms rather than conventional batter toms makes for a crisp, identifiable sound. There is nothing tricky or mysterious about Bruford's style—just good solid drumming.

Except for a few drifts spots during "5g" the band plays very together, and there are moments of pure virtuosity. There is something worthwhile on this album for any musician, whatever instrument you might play.

—Kirk Austin



Angel Of The Night

Angela Bofill

Arista, GRP 5501

Produced by David Grusin and Larry Rosen.

A year after receiving critical acclaim for her debut album, *Angie* [Arista, GRP 5000], Angela Bofill is back with a beautiful and confident follow-up release. *Angel Of The Night* pursues her urban music themes in styles ranging from jazz to R&B to pop.

The 25-year-old songstress, often compared with Billie Holiday, started singing at four and composing at twelve. In high school in the Bronx she formed a band, the Puerto Rican Supremes, and played school and church dances. She studied at the Manhattan School of Music, then started singing with Ricardo Morrero's band and toured the Latin club circuit. She later sang, composed, arranged and conducted New York's Dance Theater of Harlem chorus, where flautist David Valentin introduced her to producers Grusin and Rosen. *Angie* was the result of that alliance.

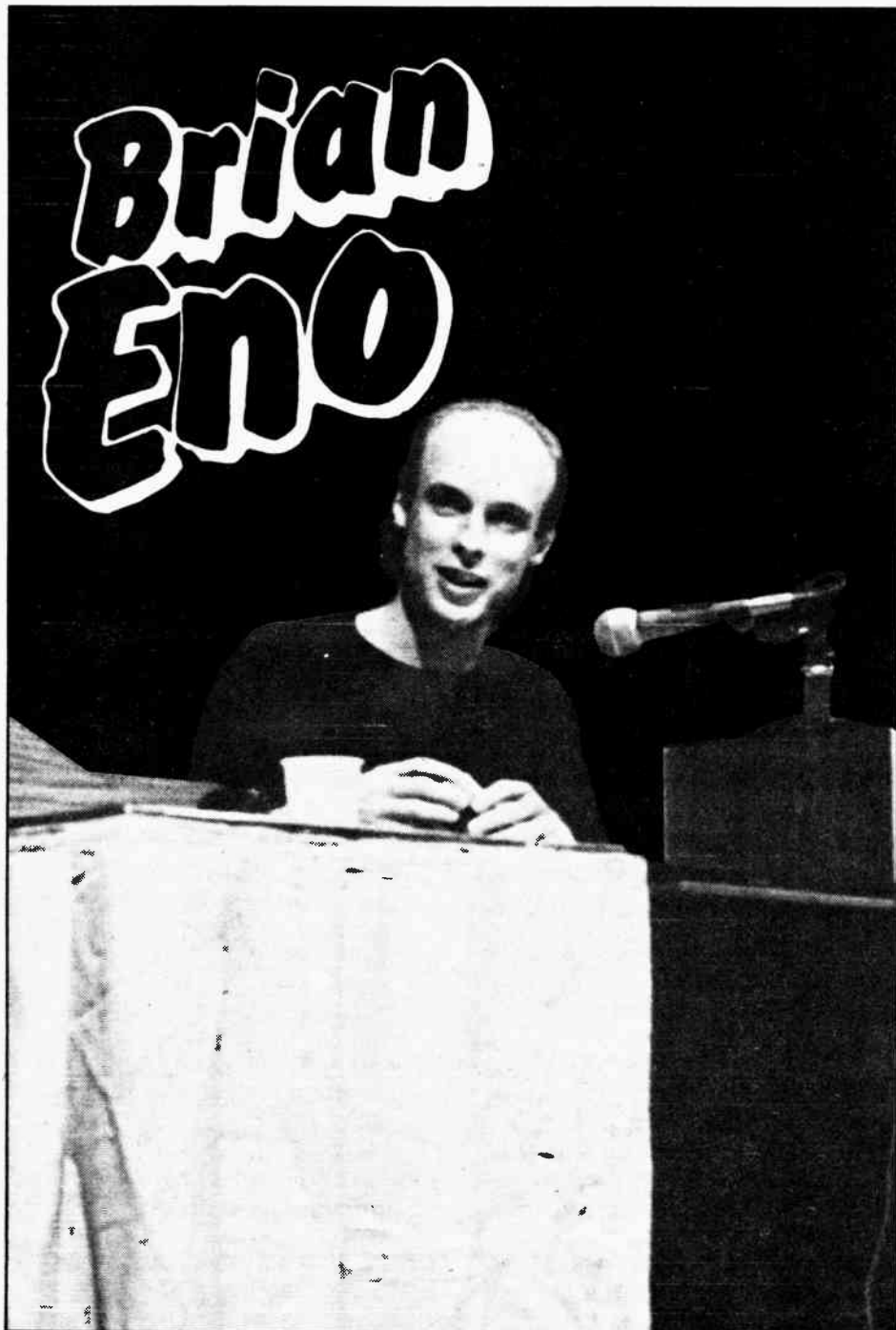
Since then Bofill has continued to work hard and become more poised on stage as well as on vinyl. On the new album she pours out her soul on cuts like "I Try" and "The Feeling's Love" (two out of four superb Bofill compositions on the album).

Bofill is supported by excellent musicians throughout, including Eddie Daniels who provides sensuous tenor sax solos, and co-producer Grusin, who adds beautiful electric piano and Oberheim Polyphonic synthesizer on several of the songs. Eric Gale's guitar work is outstanding and recognizable on "Love to Last," and Tinker Barfield's memorable electric bass line on "People Make The World Go Round" adds just the right R&B sound for a song about life in the ghetto. As for Angela, her voice is incredibly well developed and clean.

Similar to the songs on *Angie*, *Angel Of The Night* continues to project a feeling of optimism in a world that's full of pain. The tempo varies from song to song, but all of it gels together to make an easy-listening work of art.

—Mary Lowman

Live:



HARLAN MALLIS

by Kirk Austin
BERKELEY

Brian Eno lived up to his reputation as a non-performer during his two lectures at Wheeler Auditorium on the Berkeley campus February 1 and 4. This was not a concert by any means, but more like a typical college lecture except that the lecturer was much more charismatic than any of the professors I studied with.

The audience was veritably hanging onto every word as Eno (dressed in black and looking tired) discussed his early influences with musical examples played on a cassette machine.

After dragging through a brief history of music from the Twenties to the Fifties (which could just as well have been left out) he got into his funk influences playing examples of Sly Stone and the Supremes. Eno was definitely hooked by the electric bass in those days as is evidenced by his current use of bassist Percy Jones.

After about an hour of historical background Eno began to describe his own approach to music. He talked about trying to produce music with more singularity that is less repeti-

tious. He expressed his dependence on the tape recorder saying, "There would be no way I could make music without tape." Most musicians think that once they have recorded the music on tape it's done, but Eno views this as his starting point. From there he will delete certain parts; add delay or echo; slow the tape down; bring obscure instruments up in the mix; even blend together three separate guitar solos.

Eno sees the record as an abstract and unique entity that is not necessarily representative of anything. This makes for some very interesting records which unfortunately cannot be performed live. I say unfortunate because live performances are exciting and lectures are not. In fact, this particular lecture was boring for about half of its length, and although I like Eno's records very much, I do not expect them to replace live performances.

Eno describes his attitude as a passionate playfulness approach to style, and the results of his experimenting with the various studio toys are often as much a surprise to him as anyone else. "Virtuosity has nothing to do with making a good record," says Eno, and having heard good records by bad musicians and vice versa, I have to agree. This should be an inspiration to musicians going into the studio for the first time.

One myth that got dispelled is the idea that the more tracks you have the better the result will be. Eno uses a subtractive mixing technique in which he removes all but the most essential sounds on a piece. Then he creates new sounds by processing the existing tracks through digital delays, harmonisers, and filters. These new sounds are more intrinsically related to the basic tracks than any overdubbed part would be, feels Eno. This technique can produce dramatic results as in the final tape of "Drugs" by the Talking Heads, which bears no resemblance to the original tracks. Some instruments were removed completely, and approximately three out of every four snare drum beats were carefully edited out creating a totally different rhythm.

Another technique that Eno uses frequently is one of mixing tracks from various points in time. He might take a bass track made in the United

States and overdub a vocalist a year later in England and combine it with a drum track "borrowed" from another song altogether. This sort of juxtaposition technique produces some very interesting results that could not have been achieved any other way, and his use of multi-lingual vocals is at times reminiscent of some of Stockhausen's work. In fact, Eno's admiration for foreign vocalists has made him a bit self-conscious about his own singing to the point that he has quit doing it for the time being.

After the lecture there was a question and answer period during which a few people asked about *Oblique Strategies*—a set of over one hundred cards that are used when one is faced with an artistic block of one kind or another. Although originally published in 1975, a revised set is available from E. G. Records, 246 E. 62 St., New York, NY 10021. Other questions included one concerning the meaning of the number 801 which Eno has used as a name for his group with Phil Manzanera. All that Eno would say about this was that it had some kind of meaning in numerology, but that it was too precious a thing to disclose.

Eno does his best to maintain some sort of newness in everything he attempts. This is what gives his music a fresh quality even though most or all of his techniques have been around for years. But he doesn't pretend to be innovative, and in fact doesn't think that most great artists are. Instead, he believes that the artist puts together various influences in a way that sounds new to the listener, but is, in fact, just a remix of old material. This sort of modesty is a pleasant change from the pompous attitude of someone like Robert Fripp, who has a tendency to call other people's ideas his own.

Towards the end of the lecture Eno talked about the new things he has been working on, and he played some rough basic tracks. These were recordings of himself and David Byrne of the Talking Heads banging on ashtrays and garbage can lids. Needless to say, they were pretty raw sounding, and definitely in need of some polishing. But, as Eno said, "You do not know what to polish, or what you will achieve by polishing."

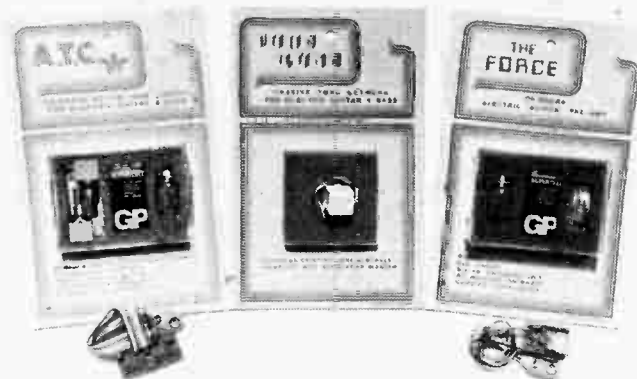
Such is the nature of experimental music. M.I.

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Live: The

ROMANTICS

by Bruce Pilato

ROCHESTER

The Romantics, the power pop/New Wave group that many music industry insiders are predicting will be the next big American band, mount the small stage as they prepare to play the fourth stop on their debut U.S. tour, January 28. Within arm's reach, the sold out audience at the Penny Arcade cheers emphatically, waiting for the show to begin.

Before I even received their debut album, *The Romantics* [Nemperor, NJZ 36273], in the mail, I was getting phone calls from publicists and DJ's telling me about this great new band from Detroit. But when I finally heard the record, I was impressed...and this live show clinched it. The Romantics are, indeed, a tremendous rock and roll group. Their album is good, but by no means great. It is during their highly energetic live performance that the group *does* live up to its expectations.

The Romantics were formed on or around Valentine's day 1977. An amalgamation of some of Detroit's finest local players, the group has written and played their own sassy brand of power pop since its inception. Their sound falls somewhere between the Knack, Cheap Trick and the Cars, with an obvious, strong influence of the British Invasion of the mid-Sixties. After a few years on the New York/Toronto/Detroit club circuit, the group was signed to Nat Weiss's Nemperor Records (distributed by CBS) in May of last year. Since then they have become the darlings of the alternative music press and the hopeful financial salvage of a somewhat hurting CBS.

But once the Romantics begin their live show, all the hype seems to just go away by itself. What remains is pure rock and roll fun. "I want to live up to everything they say," said guitarist/singer/writer Mike Skill backstage. "But it just snowballs sometimes, you know? I think we come down to earth when we get to a show and really work our butts off getting people going. It's a job, it's a



MARIA LIBERATORE

chore...but it's fun." And it certainly was just that. The group opened with one of their two A-O-R smashes that's been getting heavy airplay locally, "When I Look In Your Eyes," and from there continued with a 60-minute set of nonstop motion.

Guitarist/singer Wally Palmer held center stage throughout the night and proved to be the visual highlight of the act. Though both he and Skill play primarily rhythm guitar, they do so effectively, using bashing chords to bring out the solid pop chunkiness of each song. Bassist Rich Cole was the most sedate member onstage, and even he went wild a few times. Jimmy Marinos, a left-handed drummer who plays a right-handed kit, is unquestionably the engine room of the band. Playing a simple, driving beat and using a method whereby he never crosses his wrists, Marinos supplied the punch that the group's songs so heavily rely upon.

Onstage, the Romantics, like most

New Wave bands, like to keep it simple. Palmer, Skill and Cole each play out of a HiWatt top and bottom, either 50 or 100 watts, depending on the size of the place. Both guitarists used Fender Strats or Mustangs and Rickenbacker 6- and 12-strings, and bassist Cole stuck with a Fender Precision. Marinos' custom-built, lipstick red set of Ludwig drums—which included a super-sensitive dynacrome snare, a 12 x 16 side tom, a 16 x 18 floor tom and a 26" bass drum, with a full set of Zildjians—sounded, in a word, like bombs.

Though the Romantics are good musicians, they place their main emphasis on their songs. All of their material is short and to the point in standard pop formula (verse-chorus-verse-chorus-instrumental break-chorus-out). Most of the material performed was off the album, with only a few changes in the arrangements. Highlights of the evening included the aforementioned opener, "Keep In Touch," "Till I See You Again," and

the group's other radio hit, "What I Like About You," a classic power pop tune. The infectious harmonica solo in the middle is a sharp reminder of the work John Lennon did on harp during the early stages of the Beatles.

The audience ate the band up, and the industry people who had shown up to check the band out seemed impressed, if not totally enthused. By the time the band played their encore (a manic version of "The Hippy Hippy Shake"), the whole house was rockin'.

After the show, Skill explained why he feels the band's live show is as good as it is: "We've been on the road for about two and a half years, prior to getting in the studio. We've been doing it for a while, and people do believe in us. It feels good, and we know we've been working for it."

As good as they are, the Romantics may not cause the rock world to fall off its axis this time around, but they certainly have the potential to. M.I.

1965



Beau Brummels

Jefferson Airplane

Charlatans

Grateful Dead

1966



Big Brother & the Holding Company

Santana

Quicksilver

Cold Blood

Sopwith Camel

1967



Country Joe & the Fish

Buddy Miles

Neil Young

Electric Flag

1968



Blue Cheer

Sly and the Family Stone

Mike Bloomfield

Buffalo Springfield

1969



Steve Miller Band

Moby Grape

Elvin Bishop

1970



Creedence Clearwater Revival

Hot Tuna

Janis Joplin

1971



New Riders of the Purple Sage

Boz Scaggs

Tower of Power

1972



Lee Michaels

Malo

Van Morrison

1973



Graham Central Station

Doobie Brothers

Pointer Sisters

1974



Jefferson Starship

Herbie Hancock

Journey

1975



Pablo Cruise

Lee Oskar

1976



The Tubes

1977



Edd.e Money

1978



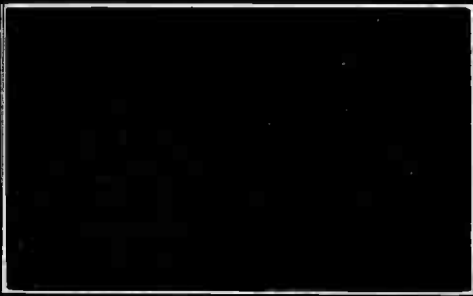
Sammy Hagar

1979



VAN HALEN

1980



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Live:

PINK
FLOYD

THE WALL

by Ken Kubernik

LOS ANGELES

Pink Floyd is the most peripatetic of rock bands; why run to the bank when you could walk? Their records stroll to the top of the charts while tickets to their infrequent concerts become as difficult to obtain as organic hallucinogens. Critics write treatises about the Floyd's audacious beginnings (sample: "Where for art thou, Syd Barrett?") and subsequent aural pioneering. Their production values, both on albums and in concert, are nonpareil; the attention to detail bordering on the baroque. Why then, do I feel such antipathy to this band, who work so assiduously to expand the perimeters of sight and sound? Why don't I share the same sense of awe and bedazzlement that characterizes the Pinko's massive following when new product arrives? Am I too cynical to be moved by their interstellar ruminations over animals, vegetables, and minerals?

Nothing accounts for an inflated sense of stature as does permanence. Pink Floyd has remained intact, in body and in spirit, since 1967. Their reclusive deportment and quasi-vanguard musical tendencies constitute the stuff of esoteric commendation; vaguely deified as Olympian vision. To this end the Floyd constituency must plead guilty of dilettantism—the glorification of form over substance. Pink Floyd is without peer in simulating complex and unwieldy musical expressions. But under closer examination, their lyrics (almost the exclusive domain of bassist/singer Roger Waters) are shamefully puerile and those celebrated musical tapestries mere throwrugs. Pink Floyd has mastered the socio-cultural temper of the Seventies, i.e. the packaging and marketing of the obvious as something vast and unknown, and laced it with the street credibility accrued through years of rock and roll posturing. They parade their supreme normalcy before the herd on a Gothic level; their concerts serving as a baptism into some wayfaring cosmological religion. Set your controls for the heart of the sun, kids, we're off to see the wizard. And you recall what a hustle he was!

Pink Floyd's latest cranial offering, a two-record concept titled, *The Wall* (Columbia), chronicles the misadven-

tures of a young man who takes a wrong turn in Hesse's magic theater and winds up on top of the music charts for several weeks. Sounds like great fodder for a TV sitcom. Owing to the logistics involved in staging the live version of *The Wall*, New York and Los Angeles were designated as the entire tour itinerary. As befitting all Floyd endeavors it was extravagant to the max, although one suspects that the tour schedule reveals a less-than-healthy commitment to grandstanding instead of their fans' best interests. I'm sure Floydians in Akron, Ohio, would be elated to see them open a shopping center let alone stage the world's first nuclear concert.

The week long string of dates at the Los Angeles Sports Arena were met with unbridled enthusiasm by ticket-holders. Those lucky enough to be clutching ducats were besieged by brokers and scalpers in a classic recital of Adam Smith economics. By the last night, tickets were fetching upwards of \$150.00 apiece, simulating a rock and roll version of the spot oil market.

Once inside, the portentous underpinnings of *The Wall* became manifest. An hysterical disc-jockey introduced the band, its plodding rhythms and throbbing melodies to the galvanized crowd. The group was tucked neatly into an opening on center stage, surrounded by a large

incomplete wall (natch), constructed of cardboard bricks. Throughout the first half of the show, roadies (nicknamed "wallies" for this tour) completed the wall with an estimated 340 bricks, obscuring the band totally from sight. Reaching 30' in height and 210' in length, one was impressed by the architectural achievement, but what of the music? Don't ask me, I was busy watching movies. Acclaimed graphic artist Gerald Scarfe, who designed the LP sleeve, was dispatched to animate the various characters and scenarios etched by Waters in his narrative. An enormous "mum" (re: mommy) skipped a light fandango across the stage as the band droned on about the protagonist's angst-ridden familial relationships. Porkers and airplanes zoomed overhead while the wall reflected the celluloid meanderings of Waters' acerbic intentions.

Typically, the intermission was filled with chatter proclaiming the genius of Pink Floyd. But no matter how hard I strained to eavesdrop, no mention was ever made of the music. Indeed, the show was designed to shift the focus from the band to the effects, much like the film *Star Wars*, with its predilection towards hardware over storyline. What we find then, is a band whose skillful maneuvering of externalities (i.e. concepts, props, etc.) takes precedence over musicianship and audience contact, two cornerstones of any memor-

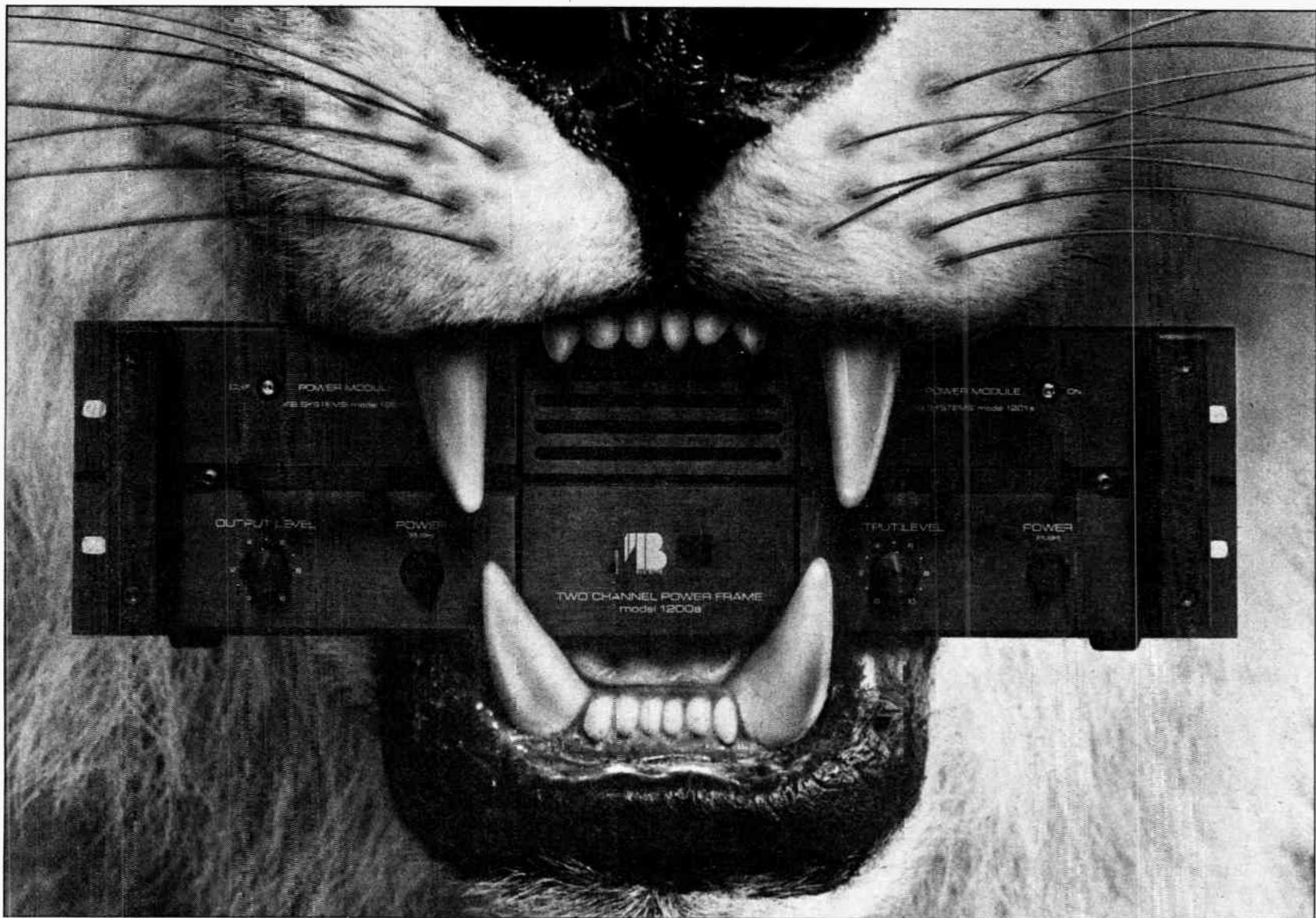
able artistic experience. Pink Floyd reduces their listeners to androids and wows them with mechanical folderol and cheap thrills. "It's just another brick in the wall," they chime ambivalently. And to think these guys started as a blues band!

The second half proceeded with the unrelenting whack-attack; lights and smoke and animation forging together with the aesthetic of a blacksmith. The band played from behind the wall, occasionally glimpsed through selected openings just to remind us that they hadn't left to see a double-feature. At the end of "The Trial" sequence, the wall collapsed backwards into rubble, eliciting the most carefully orchestrated response of the evening. I admired their pyrotechnics (literally) but felt genuinely unmoved.

The show closed to a folksy Celtic lament by the band, assisted by several other musicians who accompanied them throughout. Strumming acoustic guitars, harmonizing faintly, they reminded me of survivors from some grade B sci-fi film, the birds singing sweetly again after the acid rain.

It was a spectacle certainly, but it was also so damn uninvolved. Next time, boys, just send us the record and two tickets to the Universal tour. At least the Hulk is real flesh and blood.

M.I.



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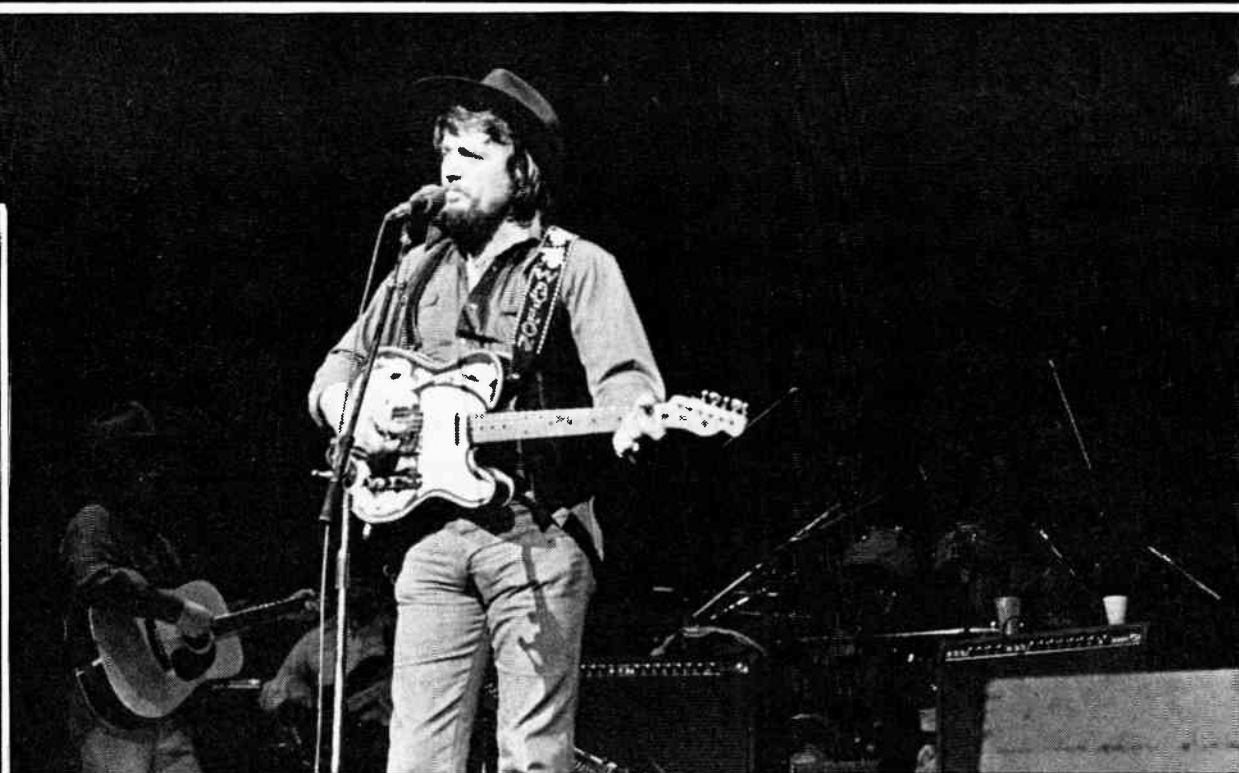
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Waylon & Johnny

by Sam Borgerson
NASHVILLE

The house lights dimmed, the stage lights came up, and the Waylors—Waylon Jennings' band—kicked into "The Weight." You could feel the wave of apathy surging through the audience as the thousands released their pent-up nonchalance. The sound oozed out of the diminutive speaker stacks, clean but far too weak. I found myself wishing that somehow this whole show could be magically whisked away to a redneck dive outside Lubbock—where it really belonged.

This sold-out January 31st concert at the Opry House, a benefit for families of Nashville firemen and policemen killed in the line of duty, demonstrated how Nashville appreciates its country stars, even though the populace as a whole may not be all that overwhelmed by their music. I suspect that a good deal of the crowd was there out of a feeling of civic duty, and their restrained response limited what could have been a rousing event to merely a pleasant gathering.

Waylon strode onto the stage, tipped his black hat, strapped on his hand-tooled, custom-bodied '57 Telecaster, and launched into "Are You Ready For the Country?" Something was wrong; his voice didn't have the

laryngitis. (The problem was so severe that he'd have to cancel the balance of his current tour.) He forged ahead bravely, though, rasping his way through a satisfying half-hour set. Two ballads—"Amanda" and "A Couple More Years"—were the high points; his hoarseness added an appropriate edge to these wistful melodies, while his female backup singer flowed like silk over his sandpaper notes.

Normally a most lively bunch, the Waylors (bass, steel, acoustic rhythm, electric rhythm, keyboards and drums) were restrained throughout the set. Waylon contributed a few terse leads, but most of the solos were handled by veteran Ralph Mooney on his Sho-Bud. When "Luckenback, Texas" rolled around and Waylon had to try for a note on the intro part three times—he turned it into a brief comic routine—it was obviously time for this Texas trouper to say goodnight.

Tammy Wynette brought her own six-piece band—five guys in matching white suits with only producer/husband George Richey in black—along with three female singers. Tammy's medley of hits, including "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad" and the immortal "D-I-V-O-R-C-E," brought the

crowd to life. A short gospel medley ("I'll Fly Away" and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken") got a few feet stomping, thanks mostly to some spirited keyboard romping by Richey on the Opry's immaculate white Yamaha grand.

It was no stunning surprise when ex-husband George Jones joined Wynette for a few numbers. The two had just finished recording together for the first time in years, and they blended their voices once again on their new single, "Golden Ring."

This was the emotional high point of the evening. The crowd—or at least a good portion of it—was finally stirred into modest adulation. Jones beamed. The long years of battling the bottle had furrowed his face, yet the quintessential honky-tonk voice still held its magic. On one mike, harmonizing eye to eye, they sang "Hold On To Each Other." George then took command and capped it with "The Race Is On." When called out for a curtain call, Jones was swept up by Richey in an unabashed bear hug. It was real gut feelings; it was real country.

There's still something wild in Johnny Cash's eyes, something still on the verge of losing control. After all these years, there is still defiance, yearning, and echoes of despair in that rich, reverberant voice.

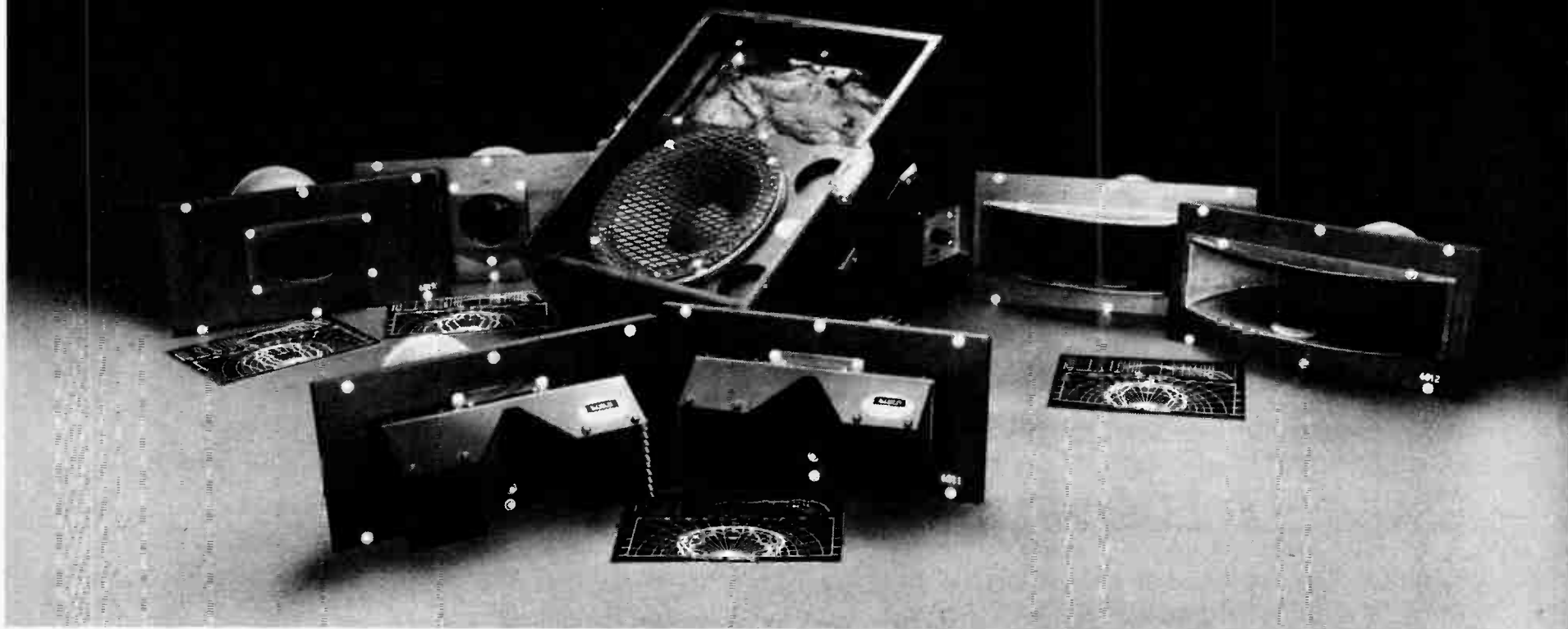
Cash, when he's in the spotlight alone, talks little and sings a lot. He punched in the hits one after the other: "Folsom Prison Blues," "Ring

of Fire," "One Piece At A Time"—all familiar, all still delivered with conviction.

Cash's band, even though now augmented by a second guitar, keyboards, and horns, is still called the Tennessee Three. Bassist Marshall Grant is a founding member of the trio, along with drummer W.S. Holland, who is a veteran of those first Cash/Presley/Carl Perkins Sun sessions in the mid-Fifties. The other founding member, Luther Perkins, died a few years back; Bob Wootten now ghosts his part, playing the bass string Telecaster licks that were Perkins' trademark. Johnny's rhythm guitar stayed very much in the background. On some songs he played his new \$2,000 custom Ferrington guitar; the pearl inlay eagle looked great, but it was difficult to hear its reputedly gorgeous sound.

June Carter Cash is an astonishing woman. Almost 51 yet still strikingly attractive, she has twice the energy of women half her age. She brought out Mother Maybelle's Autoharp for a snappy "San Antonio Rose," then picked up a banjo and stomped into a traditional Appalachian tune. When she and Johnny sparred vocally on "Jackson," her purring feminine growl was convincing—nay, enticing. By the time the four-hour show reached the finale, the 4,000 seat hall—amazingly intimate for its size—felt like June Carter's kitchen. Nobody was overly excited about this family jamboree, but everybody was glad to be there, everybody felt like they belonged. **M.I.**

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