MUSICAL

R.E.M.

SELECT 14014

AUGUST, 1983

THE KINKS

C'mon Ray... is it madness, the weather, comedy or just Confusion?

MARVIN GAYE
THE INTERVIEW

BROOKLYN NY 11228
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KEN DEMMA

World Radio History

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A BILLBOARD PUBLICATION

MUSICIAN

NO. 58, AUGUST, 1983

Bryan Ferry and Roxy Music's audacious, sartorial style laid the foundation for 70s glam-rock and 80s video-age new music. Through Roxy's demise and contemporary resurrection, Ferry has built his own musical vision, first of irony and ennui, then of the introspect and the ideal. Mark Rowland and Vic Garbarini meet the many faces of Ferry. Page 42

Marvin Gaye, the sultan of sensuality, stepped out of his "dark period" of European exile into the light of renewed adulation, creative freedom and chart conquest. Nelson George plumbs the depths of a mysterious soul aristocrat. Page 50

Ray Davies, the Kinks' analytical poet and father of heavy metal, whose odes to anxiety and alienation have become clamorous classics, does occasionally allow an optimist's innocence to filter through. Vic Garbarini explores Ray's state of grace and his *State Of Confusion* that has powered the Kinks' recent resurgence. Page 58

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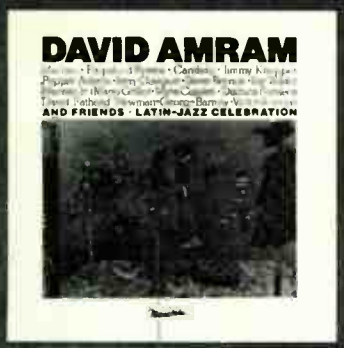
Cover Photo by Robert Matheu

World Radio History

"Music is supposed to wash away the dust of everyday life."

ART BLAKEY



DAVID AMRAM'S LATIN-JAZZ CELEBRATION 60195

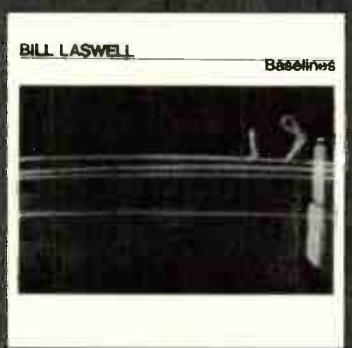
David Amram, a pioneer of the French Horn in the 40's and 50's, displays his talents on the instrument (and many others) as he strolls, struts and strides across Latin and Jazz frontiers throughout this infectious recording. David "Fathead" Newman, Pepper Adams, Jimmy Knepper, Taquito d'Rivera and others join the celebration.

THE YOUNG LIONS 2 RECORD SET 60196

The roar of the future—17 brilliant young players recorded at a spell-binding Carnegie Hall concert event last summer. This double album features all-new music including Kevin Eubanks' "Breakin'," "B'n'W" from Bobby McFerrin and Wynton Marsalis, and Chico Freeman's "Whatever Happened To The Dream Deffered".

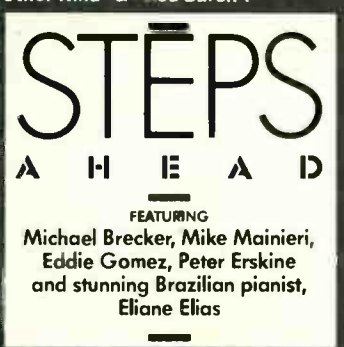
BILLY COBHAM'S GLASS MENAGERIE/SMOKIN' 60233

Billy took his new high-energy, electric band to Montreux last summer and came out SMOKIN"! Hear GLASS MENAGERIE at full throttle on "Chiquita Linda," "Some Other Kind" & "Red Baron".



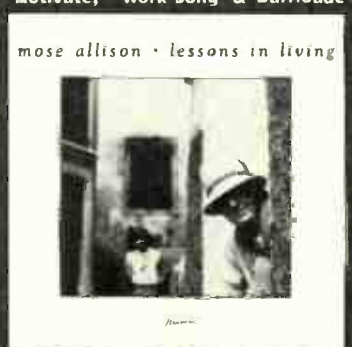
BILL LASWELL/BASELINES 60251

Adventure into the unknown along the fine lines of MATERIAL'S Bill Laswell. As an electric bass player, composer and producer, he defies musical categorization with such provocative statements as "Activate," "Work Song" &"Barricade".



STEPS AHEAD 60168

Virtuosity and musical synergy abound on the debut American release of a true superband, STEPS AHEAD, featuring Michael Brecker, Mike Mainieri, Eddie Gomez, Peter Erskine and stunning Brazilian pianist, Eliane Elias. "Pools," "Islands" & "Skyward Bound" lead the way.



MOSE ALLISON/LESSONS IN LIVING 60237

Another epochal Montreux Festival recording—this time Mose Allison's first European concert in 20 years and he celebrated the occasion in grand style with Jack Bruce, Billy Cobham, Lou Donaldson and Eric Gale.

"CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO... ON MUSICIAN RECORDS THIS MARCH!"
Musically, Bruce Lundvall

ELEKTRA Musician

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Letters

NEW FRONTIER

I would like to thank Vic Garbarini, Andy Summers and Chip Stern for their features on the Police (June, 1983). Instead of retelling us how the band got started and how they achieved world-wide popularity, they reveal sides of the group that most of us never knew existed. We get to see the Police for what they really are: three intelligent, multi-faceted individuals who aren't afraid to try to reach new frontiers together or alone. They aren't timorous of progression in any form. Even as a successful act, they retain the down-to-earth, no-nonsense attitude which is continually reflected in their musical philosophy and thus in their music.

Andy's article was thoroughly enjoyable. His literary style was witty and descriptive and his photography was a wonderful addition to the articles.

Andy, Sting and Stewart—thanks for making such great music. Your hard work is greatly appreciated.
Pauline Blasingame
Pensacola, FL

Thanks to Mr. Garbarini for his interview with Sting. It was interesting how he chose his questions in order to maintain "creative friction." I think it showed a more human side to Mr. Sumner which I was unfamiliar with before.

By the way, I found it amazing that Sting had never heard "Down Under" before. He has to be the only person who hasn't heard it at least once!
C. Dallas
Los Angeles, CA
Yeah, we wondered about that, too.

Musician Magazine has done to my love for the Police what radio does to most of my favorite songs—OVERKILL!
Gerri Enriquez
Reseda, CA
Overkill? Isn't that a Men At Work song?

DON'T DROOL-BE COOL

Mr. Tate! It sounds as if you've discovered a new revelation in your article in issue #56. Some of us are more aware than you have so assumed. I hate to disappoint. I agree, Ronnie Drayton and Vernon Reid are masters (almost as good as Carlos Alomar), but please don't drool, it's embarrassing!!!

And thank you, *Musician*, for your most colorful issue #55. Though I found it somewhat short of informative, I have to admit to some drooling of my own over the pages devoted to the incredible legend, the true artist, the incomparable genius (race excluded), the one, the only, David Bowie. What a privilege for Timothy White!
Lori Wineinger
Burlingame, CA

Let me just say that Greg Tate ought to be given a Pulitzer prize for reporting a tale long swept under the guitar case. Since Jimi Hendrix's death, we have had nothing but white guitarists in rock magazines, when Jimi created this form of rock in the first place. Thanks to Greg Tate, you've finally brought the truth into the light. Vernon Reid said, "We are ready to take it to the wall," and we are. Just give us a chance!
K. Delaun Gray
St. Louis, MO

NOW THE HARD PART

It was really terrific to see your article on home recording. The options and possibilities open to musicians today in this area are absolutely mind-boggling, not to mention inspiring. However, you should do a follow-up on what happens to all the terrific, independently produced and recorded music that gets no farther than somebody's living room. I released an album that went to number two in the *Melody Maker's* Independent Top Ten, and number one in *Sounds*, yet I still can't get anybody's attention over here. Home recording is only half the battle and it's actually the easy part. The hard part comes when you try to get people to take you seriously and actually listen. Things may be changing, but they have to change a whole lot more for those of us who aren't Phil Collins of Jeff Baxter.
Charles W. Vrtacek
President and owner, Leisure Time Records
New Milford, CT

Amazing. Not only feature articles on the Police, but also Kate Bush and Larry Fast in the same issue. Keep up the fabulous work.
Anthony Indelicato
Astoria, NY

TIM DID GOOD

Excellent interview of David Bowie by Timothy White. Mr. White is tops in his field and he, too, must be a Bowie fan, or he did his homework well. It is great to see David Bowie back in the limelight where he belongs. His new album, *Let's Dance*, is a piece of creative genius and in my opinion his best album to date. If you shake your head no, then check the top hundred albums and see how quickly it jumped.

A simple test of his versatility never to be repetitious is to play any of his albums, one right after the other, and the answer is always a different sound. When I look at photographs of him, the same answer occurs: always different. There is no other rock star as mysterious or talented as Bowie.

Musician, you did good!
Danny McCormick
Ducor, CA

MORE SKIN, MORE FUR

My thanks to Bill Abelson for his interesting article on the Psychedelic Furs. Richard Butler has got to be the supreme being of new wave music. He is the creator of imagination and the object of my excessive devotion. The *Forever Now* album has perfectly hypnotic head music and seeing the band in New Haven and Hartford was intensely stimulating. I only wish the article had been longer and that here had been a picture of Richard undisguised—perhaps naked.
Carol Melnick
Vernon, CT

I greatly appreciated the article on the Psychedelic Furs. Their music either carries you gently or throws you headfirst down a dark stairway of sincere and piercing lyrics only Richard could bring to such graphic reality. He sings of the things in our lives that we won't admit about ourselves and kicks us in the ass for it. The Furs may have to deal with a lot of unquestioned allegiance in the future—they have mine.
Kevin Roggenbuck
Aberdeen, SD

BURMA RAVE

Hats off to Julie Panebianco for her accurate story on Mission of Burma. I was saddened to learn they have disbanded. The integrity and sheer emotion of their music was highly therapeutic and will be missed greatly. The fact is, Mission of Burma is setting the path: America's independent music community is becoming recognized!!
Climate Control
River Forest, IL

Extra credit dept.: The photo of Dream Syndicate in #57 was actually taken by Laura Levine. The McGarrigles Face in #56 was written by Geoffrey Himes.

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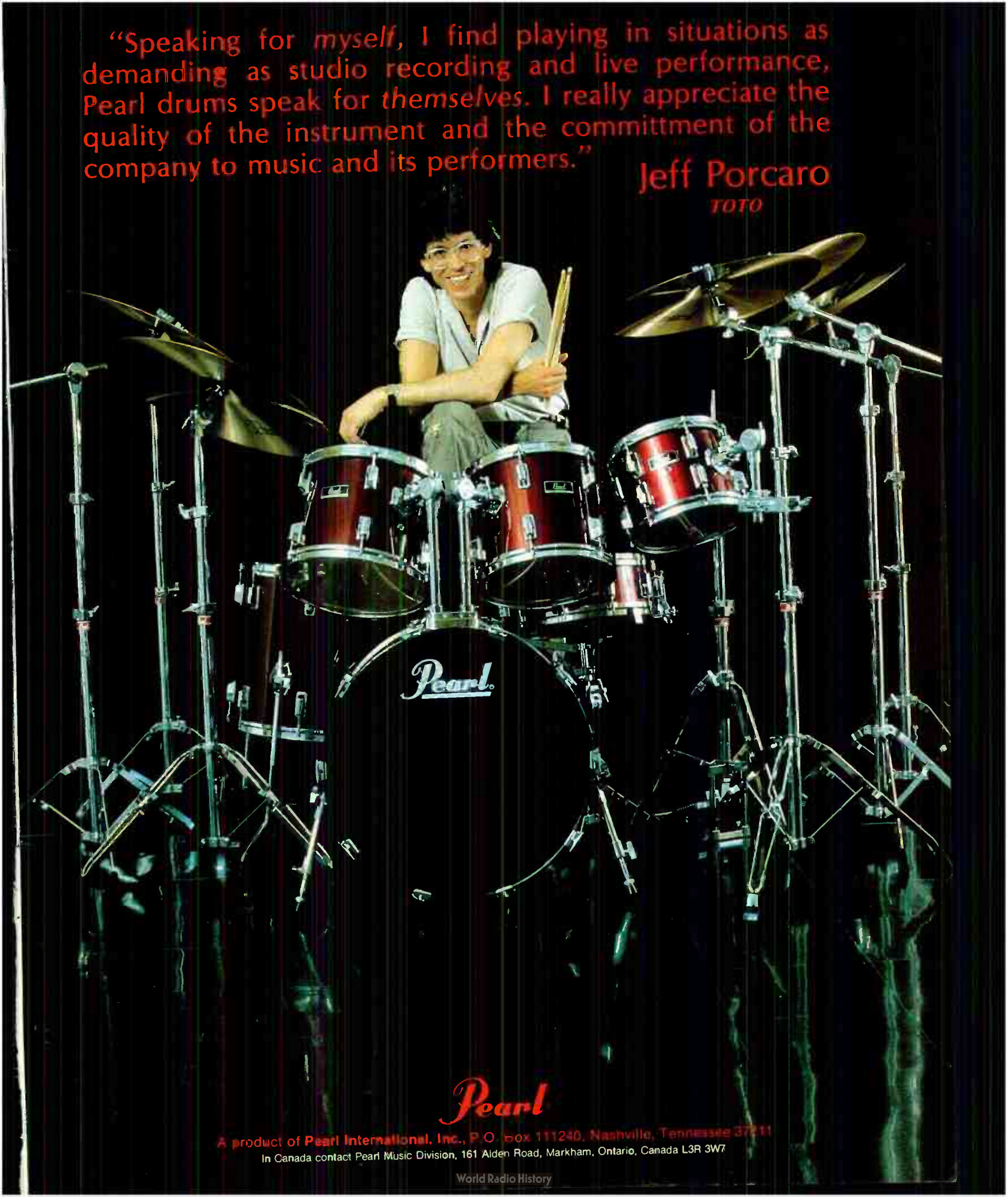


World Radio History

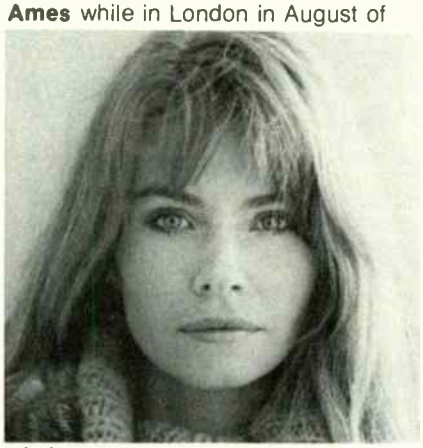
music industry news

by Jock Baird

Over a year of Congressional hearings on halting electronic copyright erosion bore its first fruits when the Senate subcommittee chaired by Senator Charles Mathias (R-Maryland) marked up and sent to the full Judiciary Committee a bill that requires the permission of copyright holders (read record companies and artists) before records can be rented. The bill, known as S.32, may not eliminate record rentals, but will certainly give the labels a piece of the action; more importantly, it shows that the Senate subcommittee is accepting many of the Coalition to Save America's Music's arguments, boding well for some movement on a levy on blank tape and recording machines. The corresponding House subcommittee is moving slower on the rental law modification, though, and House markup and passage is months away.

It didn't take long for new MCA Records Group president **Irving Azoff**, who recently left Warners' Full Moon Records and Front Line Management (Stevie Nicks, Styx, Go-Go's, Christopher Cross, Eagles, Chicago) to make his mark on his new company. Azoff signed **Joan Jett & the Blackhearts** in time to release their new LP, *ALBUM*. MCA's hiring of Joan's favorite promo man **Steve Leeds** to head East Coast A&R was their ace in the hole. Azoff intends to pursue other potential free agents as well, saying, "I think the move of Elektra/Asylum to New York left a void in California and I for one am tired of reading about how the music business is shifting East." Speaking of free agents, **Rod Stewart** became one after settling a year-long legal battle with his former manager **Billy Gaff**. Rod won a seven-figure sum and his freedom from Gaff's Riva Records; his new *Body Wishes* will end up on Warner Bros.

Talk about truth in advertising: the upwardly mobile dance hit "Baby Doll" is allegedly performed by a trio of scantily clad women known as **Girls Can't Help It**, but the lead vocal was, in fact, sung by an American singer/actress named **Kimberle Ames** while in London in August of



Kimberle Ames: the girl *can* help it.

1982. Kimberle thought it was merely a demo and thought no more about the session until she heard "Baby Doll" on the radio recently. Says Kimberle, "**Colin Campsie**, the producer, asked me to sing it for fun because the girls couldn't cut it in the studio. When I heard myself on the Virgin single, I nearly fell over." In addition to Kimberle, whose only credit is a small-type "Thanks Kimberley [*sic*]" on the back of the 12-inch, Campsie and another British session singer are the backup vocalists, leaving *no* members of Girls Can't Help It (a quite apt name) on the single. Only in the record biz....

Stevie Ray Vaughan, Texas guitar whiz, abruptly dropped off the **David Bowie** tour in a disagreement about his rather minimal sideman's wages (said to be $300 a show, even for the US Festival date for which Bowie was paid a rumored $1.2 million) and about Stevie Ray's access to the press. **Earl Slick**, a Bowie stalwart, replaced Vaughan for the tour.... **John Fogerty** and the members of **Creedence Clearwater Revival** won $8.6 million in unpaid royalties from their label, Fantasy. After the decision, the elusive Fogerty again promised his long-awaited solo LP.... **Earth Wind & Fire**'s **Maurice White** is producing Dreamgirl **Jennifer Holliday**, even as EW&Fers **Larry Dunn** and **Verdine White** are producing Britain's **Level 42**.... **Michael Smotherman** has completed a new album.... **Ultravox** has gone right back into the studio after their U.S. tour.... Dexy **Kevin Rowland** will marry his violinist, **Helen O'Hara**.... **Emmylou Harris** was elected president of the Country Music Foundation.... **Randy Crawford** is finishing up her latest.... **Material**'s **Bill Laswell** and **Michael Beinhorn** are producing **Herbie Hancock**.... **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Joe Pass** are doing another album of duets.... **Jeffrey Osborne** is back in the studio with **George Duke** at the helm.... Musician photographer **Deborah Feingold** shot the beautiful color photograph on the cover of **James Newton**'s newest.

Chart Action

Try as they may, the most brilliant minds in the industry have been unable to bump Michael Jackson from the top album spot; they should be getting better with all the practice, since Michael's been up there for sixteen weeks now. They've tried heavy metal (Def Leppard's remarkable platinum *Pyromania*), corporate rock (Journey, Styx), Aussie invaders (two Men At Work LPs, one of which debuted at #11), reconstituted disco (*Flashdance*, which shot to #2), seasoned veterans (David Bowie, Hall & Oates, Pink Floyd and Lionel Richie) and talented rookies (Bryan Adams at #9, Thomas Dolby at #14) and everything else (Prince at #10) and still that Jackson kid is running away with the whole derby.

U2 peaked at #9 but lost momentum, as did Al Jarreau after going to #13. A new single from Culture Club (which shamelessly rips off the Human League's "Don't You Want Me") pushed their LP to #15). Duran Duran's long run in the top ten finally came to a close, as did Bob Seger's, but they still were tough enough to clog the way for ZZ Top, the Tubes, Rick Springfield and a good showing by rampaging Eddy Grant. Big moves seem afoot by the B-52s, A Flock Of Seagulls, the Fixx, Krokus and Madness, and don't forget to factor in the new Police, Stevie Nicks and Loverboy albums.

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THE CALL

Love & Politics for Tense Times

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

The Call: Scott Musick, Greg Freeman, Michael Been, Steve Huddleston & Tom Ferrier.

BY GEOFFREY HIMES

The Call had come down from Santa Cruz to Los Angeles to negotiate a possible contract with Capitol. Bruce Garfield, the Capitol rep, asked if they would use anyone other than the four of them when they recorded an album. "We told him no, we'd do it all ourselves," recounted drummer Scott Musick recently. "Then, just kidding around, we said, 'If we would use anybody, it would be Garth Hudson.' Bruce said, 'Oh, I know Garth; I'll give him a call and see what he's doing.' So we ran a tape over to his house that evening. He phoned us in the morning and said he wanted to do it. He's been playing with us ever since."

The Call eventually signed with Mercury instead of Capitol, but Hudson—the band's virtuoso keyboardist—has played on both of the Call's albums: *The Call* (1982) and *Modern Romans* (1983). Though the Call play with the same passion and compassion as their heroes, the Band, the Call's music has the fractured new wave attack of Talking Heads and the explicitly political lyrics of the Clash. "I got the feeling Garth didn't know if he could fit into rock 'n' roll anymore the way it was going," suggested the Call's singer-songwriter Michael Been. "He had hung up his rock 'n' roll shoes for a while, or at least thought he had, but he liked what we were doing."

"I thought the writing was excellent," Hudson revealed later. "I liked the melodies and all the little things they put in. They're all strong players—both in arrangements and in improvisation. They felt good; the songs had something to do with what's going on. The words had a cause, which was important, because I'm concerned about the state of America. I'd rather be a representative of the fighters than the wimp-rockers."

The qualities that attracted Hudson were obvious when the Call's first East Coast tour stopped in Washington in May. Now a sextet, the Call kick off "Turn A Blind Eye" with Scott Musick's muscular drum figure. A dual rhythm guitar riff by Michael Been and Tom Ferrier builds from a nervous scratching to an excruciating tension. In a voice that simmers just below the boiling point, Been mocks those who "turn a blind eye" to unfashionable political problems. As Been recites a long Dylanesque litany ("To the desperate young—Turn a blind eye! To the old and lonely—Turn a blind eye!"), the band gradually increases the pressure. Greg Freeman's bass quickens the pace; Steve Huddleston and Garth Hudson shift their synthesizers to shriller tones.

The band segues into "Violent Times," also from the new album. The tempo slows for Been's mournful eulogy for friends who have died violently. Rather than individual perpetrators, he fingers the "careless rulers" who advocate "eye for eye" and thus produce "guarded cities" and "violent times." The young, short, burly singer—sweating in his short-sleeved black jacket and black boots—shadow-boxes with imaginary enemies, closes his eyes and pounds his forehead as he sings, "Still recovering from the loss." To Been's right, bobbing with his balding, graying head bowed, Hudson coaxes high, wistful yearning and low, rumbling warnings from his three keyboards to give the song its necessary context. The Call closes its set with "The Walls Come Down," a triumphant, anthemic invitation—backed by a ringing guitar hook—to use music to bring the walls of nationalism tumbling down.

"A couple of weeks ago," Been explained, "Reagan told a bunch of evangelicals that the Soviet Union was the source of the evil in the world. 'The Walls Come Down' is a reaction to that, to the current resurgence of McCarthyism. That was the initial intent. Plus, I had that guitar riff in mind for a couple of years and didn't know what to do with it. The song really started with that. It just worked.

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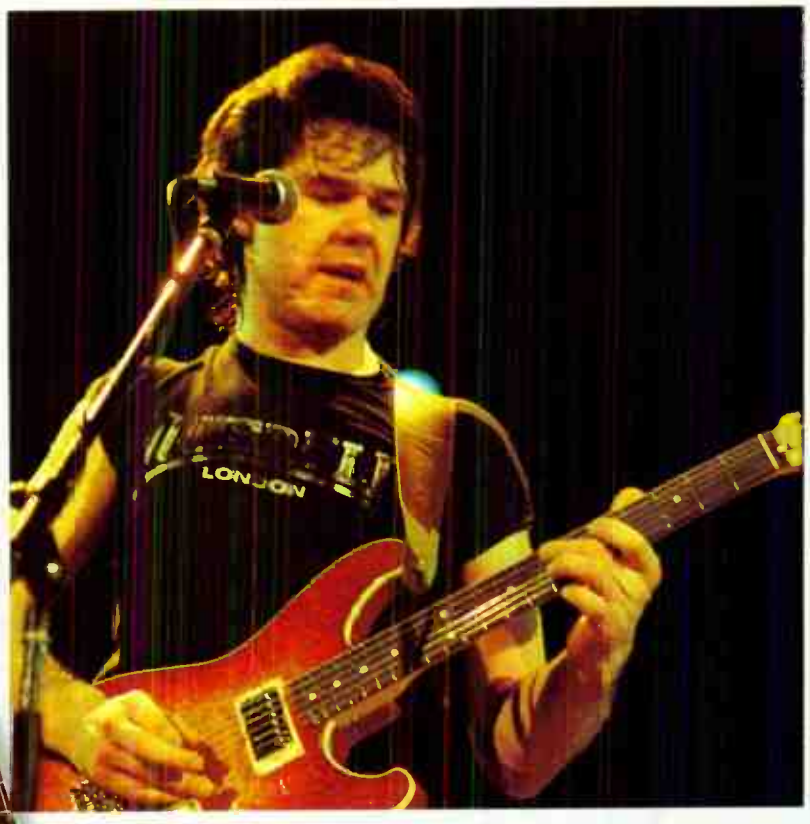

RS1000CS

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"They're saying, 'Let's hate the Russians, and we'll find a common bond in a mutual hatred of someone else.' I wanted to get people away from hating this poor nation of people who are just like we are. Like all our songs, though, two different themes run through 'Walls.' One is the statement of outward politics, but the other is how an individual is affected. What kind of things can happen to your psyche? How do you react? Do you shut down certain emotions? Do you react with fear? Do you escape?"

Been, Musick and Huddleston are all from Oklahoma, though Been didn't meet the other two until they all got to California pursuing music dreams. "Oklahoma had its impact," Been concedes. "There's not much else to do, so if you're into music at all, the tendency is to be consumed by it. Because it's one of the only things you could call culture going on there; you're bombarded by music: rockabilly, country & western, gospel, southern rock 'n' roll."

Been and Musick have been in bands for ten years; they joined native Californians Freeman and Ferrier in Santa Cruz in 1979. "We decided then to get serious about recording instead of just playing live in clubs," Musick recalled. "It meant spending all our money making demos rather than making money in clubs." Been boiled it down: "Spending money instead of making money." Huddleston added, "and we have continued in that tradition to this day."

The Call's 1980 trip to England to make some demos and play some gigs galvanized the band. "I don't even remember which bands we saw," Musick remembered. "We saw maybe a hundred; they were all over the place. A place would be open from eight to eleven and there'd be five bands. They didn't wait around for an elaborate stage set-up; they just dragged their stuff out there and hit it hard. We didn't like all the bands we heard, but they were all definitely way into what they were doing. That's what hit us. It brought us back to why we started playing."

"The British punk bands weren't so concerned with technique and orthodox standards," Been added. "They just played like their lives depended on it. For so many years now, we've been able to listen to fantastic accomplishments by technically wonderful musicians. But I'm more interested in content that the ability to pull it off. I want to feel something very elemental there, maybe innocence; that's more important to me than technical virtuosity. If you can combine the two, that's great. That's why I like the Band so much, but they're a rarity. I also like Joy Division, though, and not one of them was a 'musician's musician.' The guitar player couldn't go 'deedelleedledy,' but he could pick out four notes and just kill you. The singer wasn't the greatest vocal acrobat you could hear, but boy, he meant every word."

Mercury insisted that the Call use a name producer for the first album, so the California quartet traveled to England to work with Hugh Padgham (the Police, Genesis, XTC). "They spent a fortune on the first one and got almost no sales," Musick laughed, "so when Michael said he wanted to produce the second one, they said, 'Sure, go ahead.' I think they were just going to let our contract run out with the second one. We found a studio we liked and did it ourselves. We didn't even see anyone from the record company until the album was done. Now that the album turned out real well and has caught on, they're giving us support again."

Hudson played on five cuts on each album; Huddleston played on the second one, and they both joined the band after *Modern Romans* was released. "We didn't even intend to have keyboards until Garth came into the picture," Been noted, "and then it was something we couldn't do without anymore." "Garth is such an inspiration just to be around and play with," Musick added. "His parts always shaped the atmosphere, the surrounding mood of a song. He works real hard at it; he figures out bar by bar what he's going to do."

"He'd always color the words," Been

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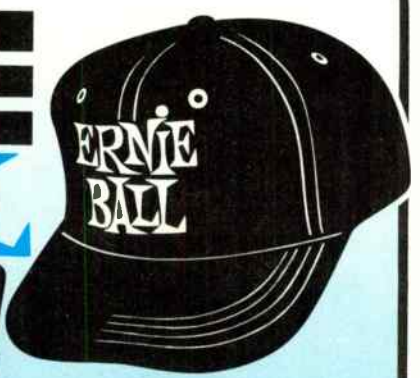

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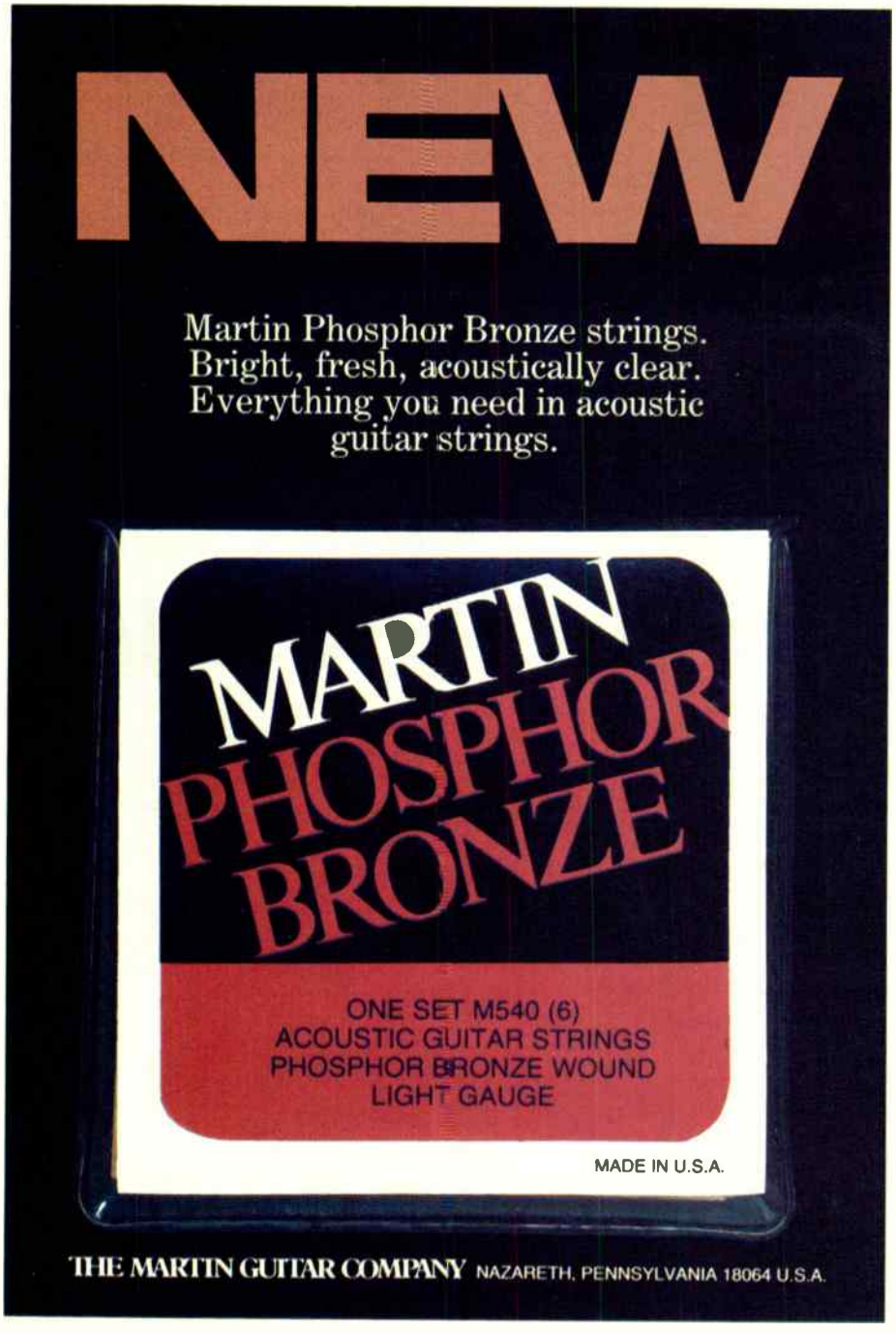
said. "When I listened to the Band, it always sounded like he was playing to Robbie Robertson's lyrics. Sure enough, the first thing he does is ask for the lyrics. He sits there and works on every word. He hears a word and and knows what that word would sound like if it were music."

In contrast to their British and Irish counterparts, American new wave bands are not usually politically-oriented. "I don't know why the other bands aren't," Been exclaimed; "it seems unAmerican to me. A lot of them seem kind of cynical. I'm not a big believer in cynicism; I look at it as a flaw rather than as a virtue. It seems like someone sitting over in a corner and laughing at this guy who walks by and can't walk right. It's easy to be cynical; it requires absolutely no effort.

"But I don't even think of my songs as political songs," he continued. "To me they're all love songs. If you talk about war, war comes from hate, so if it's just an anti-war song, it must be about love. If you're talking about social injustices, the way people inflict certain miseries on each other, you're talking about hate or at least a lack of concern about others, so you're talking about love. You're not talking about sexual love. There seem to be plenty of people writing about that. But even if you make love to somebody two hours every day of your life, you're still only talking about one-twelfth of your life. Let's not blow it out of proportion."

Been leaned back in his hotel chair. It was a hot, stifling afternoon in the capital, and a cacophony of sirens poured in through the window. "There are so many parts of people," Been maintained, "and so many areas of our emotions get shut down. That's what art can do; it can give people a shock so they can use those parts again. I don't think apathy is so much the problem as fear. People appear not to care, but I think that started with fear, and people got so afraid that those particular emotions of care and concern got shut down as a defense. It's fear of those sirens out there; fear of rejection, insecurity about status; fear of not being the person you think you should be; fear of being blown off the face of the earth. There's obviously no easy answers, but a song like 'Turn A Blind Eye' suggests that one of the ways *not* to solve these problems is to turn a blind eye to them. I believe in confrontation. I think fear is healthy; it's a totally reasonable, logical reaction to what's going on.

"The reason rock 'n' roll is so exciting is it's a wonderful outlet for not having to keep all those things in. It's a very intense time now; we're bombarded with intense situations all the time—both inside ourselves and outside ourselves. Rock 'n' roll is a vehicle to express the emotions you're not allowed to use in everyday life. How else can you do it? I can't think of any other way." ■



Call Boxes

Greg Freeman: I use a Fender Precision bass from the mid-60s with a Gallien-Krueger 400-B. I like Fenders; the action is good.

Scott Musick: I've played Ludwig drums most of my life; they're the most dependable for rock 'n' roll. They have a hard-hitting sound; you can tune them real low and still get a full tone. I use Paiste for my top cymbals and Zildjian for my bottom cymbals, because Zildjian sounds better on the bottom.

Michael Been: I use an old '56 Telecaster and an old '58 Stratocaster. I just use these because I already have them. I like Fenders, but I have to find ones with a neck that will fit my hand. Tom Ferrier uses a custom-made, left-handed, black Les Paul. Steve Huddleston plays a CS60 Yamaha synthesizer.

Garth Hudson: With the Band, I used a Lowry Festival tube organ. We dragged two of them all over the world from 1960 to 1976. I also used an R.M.I. and a Fender Rhodes. With the Call, I use a Yamaha CS80 polyphonic synthesizer and a CBS Rhodes Chroma. I also play them with the Shut-Outs, a country bar band in the L.A. Valley. I'm looking forward to playing with the Band again. All of us but Robbie should go on the road this summer. Robbie likes to play but he doesn't want to sweat in some stinking hangar in Arizona.

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R.E.M.

Subverting Small Town Boredom

LAURA LEVINE

Athens, Georgia rapid movers: Michael Stipe, Mike Mills, Bill Berry and Peter Buck.

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

Almost everybody else at the Athens, Georgia Holiday Inn was there for some convention being held at the University of Georgia—seminars in bovine prosthetics or some such. I was there to interview the members of R.E.M. on their home turf and in the process soak up local color. After all, given Athens' ability to churn out interesting and unusual rock bands, ranging from nationally-known acts like R.E.M. and the B-52s to such stalwarts of Independent America as Pylon, the Method Actors, Love Tractor and the Swimming Pool Q's, the local scene here must be some sort of new music Nirvana. Imagine the bands! Imagine the fans! Imagine the insights to be gained, the sounds to be savored!

Imagine the 40-Watt Club, the hub of the Athens club scene since Tyrone's, the only other venue willing to book untried talent, burned down. Standing outside the club, a discreet distance from the door, is R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, an accordion strapped to his chest. Along with two friends, one on xylophone, the other on snare drum, Stipe is faking his way through Nina Rota-style Italian cafe music. On the sidewalk in front of the trio is Stipe's accordion case, propped open with a few dollars inside to give passers-by the right idea. They play for about an hour, get harassed by a drunken Atlanta club owner, and make about four dollars.

This is the Athens new music scene?

"There's not much else to do, unless you just want to sit and drink in a bar," says R.E.M.'s bassist Mike Mills the next day. Although Mills was not party to Stipe's bit of busking, he's no stranger to the sort of boredom that sparks such adventures. "There aren't any out-of-town acts that come through, except for the one or two major acts the university will bring in. So when you get bored with listening to records, you get up and do it yourself."

Which is essentially what R.E.M. did, although with uncommon success. Within a year after the band's formation in February 1980, R.E.M. was touring the southeast. A single, "Radio Free Europe," was released in 1981, and astonished the band by topping the singles category in the *Village Voice* critics' poll. *Chronic Town*, an EP that the band recorded in October, '81 was picked up by I.R.S. and released in 1982; it topped the *Voice* poll's EP list for '82. Nor were the critics alone in their ardor. According to Mills, I.R.S. was "as surprised as we were" by how well *Chronic Town* sold; *Murmur*, the band's album debut, leaped up the charts at an even more surprising rate, and looks likely to catapult a redone "Radio Free Europe" onto the singles chart.

All of which should make the band extremely happy. "Success beyond their wildest dreams," and all that. But at a point where other bands would be waiting with bated breath for the next week's charts and spending their spare time at the local Porsche dealer, R.E.M. is unusually wary of success or its trappings.

"We're kind of unassumingly ambitious, in that we never do anything expecting any kind of feedback," explains guitarist Peter Buck. "We just do things to please ourselves—we write to please ourselves, record to please ourselves, do the cover, hand in the record and *then* we think, 'Hmmm, I wonder how this is going to do?' And we still wonder—we still talk about how many records we *want* to sell. 'Okay, no more

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than this many, because more than that and it starts getting kinda bullshit.'

"I don't know," he shrugs. "The record just took a big jump today, thirty places or something, and I'm really pleased, I'm really happy. It's nice to be appreciated. I just don't know when it would start affecting us adversely."

If worrying about the adverse effects of success when your first album makes the prodigious leap from #130 to #97 on the *Billboard* charts seems a bit, uh, *premature*, singer Michael Stipe puts things into perspective. "I was shopping the other day," he says, "and this guy walked up to me and said, 'You're Michael Stipe, and you're going to make a lot of money.' He went on to explain how he was going to start a production company in Athens, and use the Athens calling card to sell unheard-of songwriters, get them published around the country.

"I was going, '*Great*....'" He shakes his head in amazement. "It was a real gregarious kind of thing for this guy, while I was trying to plan my menu for the week."

No wonder the band is tired of hearing about the wonderfully unique Athens Sound. This theory, which came into play after the B-52s emerged from a Georgia town that none of the New York critics had ever heard of, takes the argument that if more than one band worth listening to can come out of a town nobody has ever heard of, all the bands must belong to a school founded by the first group to make it big. After all, how many ideas can there be in a town that gets the *Village Voice* a month late?

"It's just a mistake to lump all the bands together," complains Mills. "In the first place, we don't sound like anybody else, and if you listen, they don't really sound that much like each other, either. What it really comes down to is the same thing that's happening in a lot of other places—there's just a real good atmosphere here, and club owners who will let you play when you're small and unknown. It's a very low-pressure area, in that you can play, play a lot, and improve yourself. Because everybody is horrible when they start out. We certainly were."

As drummer Bill Berry puts it, R.E.M. got started as "nothing more than something to do, maybe annihilate a little of the boredom that you get around here." The quartet first met at a party through a mutual friend. Berry and Mills had come up to the University of Georgia together from Macon, where they had played in an assortment of high school ensembles as well as a few southern-style top forty bands. ("We did a few originals that I would be afraid to even think about," confesses Berry.) Stipe, whose previous experience included "a real bad punk band in St. Louis," was living in a dilapidated church in Athens with Buck, the only one in the group who was not a day student at the university—he studied at night, while selling records during the day.

"When we first got together, it was just, 'What song does everybody know?'" recalls Stipe. "We played old 60s songs, like 'Stepping Stone,' Troggs songs, stuff like that. Then Kathleen, the woman who lived there with us, had this grand idea to have a birthday party in three weeks, and she said, 'Why don't you guys play?' So we sat down and wrote a bunch of songs which probably took as long to play as they did to write. I guess we had fifteen songs and a bunch of covers; we ended up doing three sets that night. It was a real hootenanny."

Despite R.E.M.'s garage band—or, given their rehearsal hall, abandoned church band—origins, the sound they emerged with was a far cry from the usual Gospel According to *Nuggets*. Buck's guitar figures tend towards lean, graceful arpeggios instead of jagged power chords, while Mills' bass lines emerge more as a form of countermelody than anything else. Strap on Stipe's dark, nasal vocals and power the whole thing with Berry's practical, melodic drumming, and you've got a package that's irresistible to almost any rock fan.

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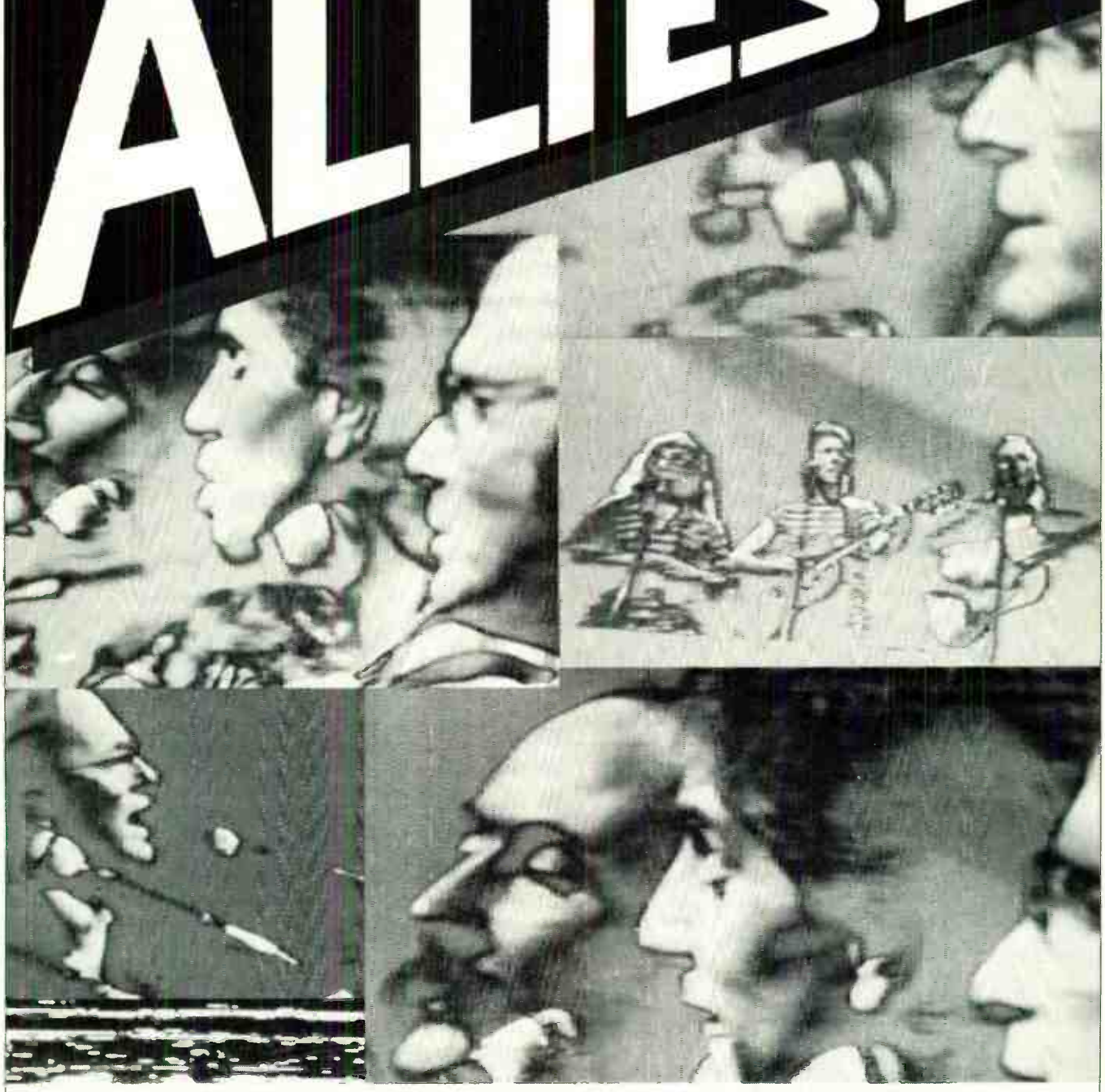

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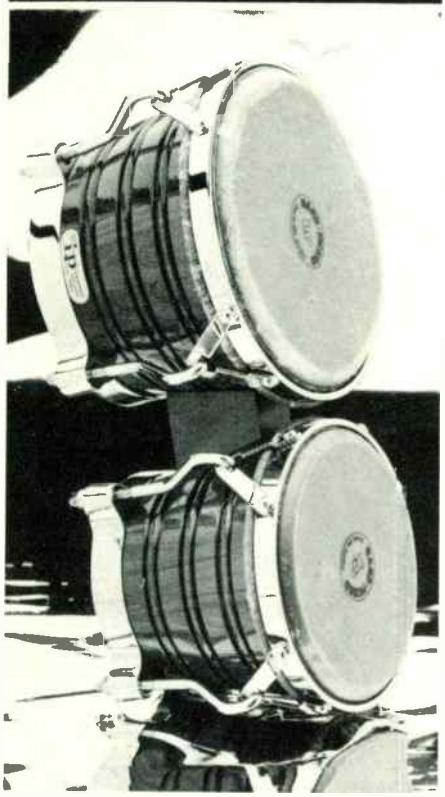

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guitars and resolute tunefulness, a number of listeners have likened R.E.M.'s best to "Eight Miles High" or "Turn! Turn! Turn!," but as far as the band is concerned, such comparisons are for the Byrds.

"It's just coincidental to the way Peter picks guitar," shrugs Mills. "None of us really listened to the Byrds until after we started getting all these comparisons. So I went out and bought a couple of Byrds albums to see what everybody was talking about, and a lot of it is in the picking style."

"I use a pick, but also these two fingers," says Buck, holding up his hand and waggling his second and third fingers. "What I'm trying to do now is teach myself the Chet Atkins style without learning what Chet Aktins really sounds like." He laughs. "I'm really limited. I certainly like the way I play, but I'm more style than anything else. I can't sit down and play anything but what we play. And I can play a little country and western, because I've always liked that kind of stuff, but that's really about all."

Noble new wave sentiments, to be sure, but Buck has other reasons for shying away from solos. Earlier in the day, Michael Stipe and I had been out on the porch of the house where Buck and R.E.M.'s manager, Jefferson Holt, live, discussing the relative merits of Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper" (one of Stipe's favorites). I mentioned that it would be a great tune for R.E.M. to cover, provided they left the guitar solo out, and Stipe replied, "That's okay. Pete only knows one guitar solo anyway, and he did it on *Murmur*."

"Yeah," Buck agrees later, "and Mike (Mills) taught it to me. On 'Talk About The Passion,' that little thing. That was something Mike just taught me. I probably could have figured it out myself, because I come up with things that are pretty much similar, but I thought it was really funny—my one little guitar solo, and the bass player came up with it."

Mills, in fact, turns out to be R.E.M.'s real utility player. In addition to the bass, he also provided the keyboard parts for *Murmur*. Given R.E.M.'s straightforward stage sound, the amount of detail on the album—multi-tracked acoustic guitars, piano doubling the bass line, even a bit of cello on "Talk About The Passion," vibraphone on "Pilgrimage"—may come as a surprise to fans of the band's energetic live shows, but as Mills puts it, "Well, there's no way that we're going to be able to come into the studio and reproduce the live sound, and why should we? We figured we'd go into the studio and approach each song separately, both separate from our live performances and separate from the other songs, and see what we could do with them. As long as you're in the studio, you might as well use what you can, as long as you're avoiding the tinkering syndrome; of using everything you can put your hands on."

One thing you won't hear on an R.E.M. record, at least not all that clearly, is lyrics. Between Stipe's swallowed enunciation and producer Mitch Easter's intentionally murky mix, the listener is lucky if he or she can make out two words in six. Which is fine with R.E.M. "If there is a philosophy to the band," says Stipe, "it's that every individual person who hears or has anything to do with the band has their own idea of what it's about and what's going on. What they get out of it is what they put into it, kinda. It's great—with the EP, people would send in their idea of what the lyrics were, and often I would like what they sent better than what they originally were."

Nonetheless, Stipe has been toying with the idea of making up an official response to requests for lyrics. "He was just going to mimeograph a sheet and say, okay, these are the lyrics—they're not necessarily in order, some of them are missing, and some of them are extra things," explains Buck, "but this is a vague idea of what we're doing."

An even vaguer idea of what the band is up to can be gleaned from the video to "Radio Free Europe," which shows neither Europe nor free radios. Instead, it has the band wandering around a church in Summerville, Georgia, and other seemingly unrelated terrains. Perhaps R.E.M. has some secret mania for old churches, sparked by their early days in Athens; perhaps not. When Peter Buck took me by the band's first Athens home, he was surprised to see that it was no longer condemned. "It's a real dump," he said, "but it's such a cool idea, living in this old church, that every year there are kids from the university who move in. I think we lasted the longest—we were in there for almost a year." The Summerville church, on the other hand, is the home of Vernon Finster, a renowned folk artist and self-taught preacher who, among other things, receives the word of God in visions of Elvis Presley, and who, in an attempt to save the world, is fashioning a sort of Garden of Eden out of other people's junk.

What's the point? "I think there's a particularly southern sensibility to it," offers Buck (who, by the way, was born in Indiana but has lived the bulk of his life in Georgia). "When we were making the album, it struck me as having a real southern sensibility, real Flannery O'Connor. That was one of the things we wanted to do on this album, affirm that we're a southern band without pandering to the Lynyrd Skynyrd-type mentality. I don't know if that came across, though," he adds, laughing. "The cover's probably more southern than the record is."

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Because the System 100M was designed using mini-phone jacks (rather than the much larger phone jacks) it gives a lot of performance without taking up a lot of room. Complete synthesizer modules start at just $275.

MC-4/MTR-100

The Roland MicroComposer has, without question, written the industry rules for music programming and computer control of a musical performance. Roland has refined this process into an artform on the latest generation MicroComposer—the MC-4. Describing the numerous features on the MC-4 must include mention of the 16K of internal ROM music programming software, which makes programming fluid, and editing flawless.

The MC-4 features 4 channels of sequential control with 2-CVs 1-Gate and 1-Multiplex output for each channel. Connecting easily to modular synths like the System 100-M, the MC-4 can also connect to many other synthesizers (like the JP-8 and Juno 60) by means of the CV Interface Unit (OP-8). The MTR-100 Digital Cassette Recorder is used for digital storage and retrieval of program data. MC-4 with 48K RAM memory retails for $3295.

JUPITER-8

The current heavyweight champion of the keyboard industry, the Jupiter-8 is responsible for introducing features like Split, Dual, and Whole Keyboard Modes, Oscillator Assign Modes and Arpeggiator. The 8-voice 16 oscillator JP-8 has 64 program memories, 3 patch presets and cassette interface for patch program storage. The powerful sound and sleek design of the JP-8 have also dictated synthesizer design for the 80's and into the future.

A brand new feature of the Jupiter-8 is its new low price of $4995.

JUNO-6/JUNO-60

In Greek mythology, Juno was Jupiter's mate. In every sense the same is true in keyboards, as the JUNO perfectly complements the Jupiter in sound, features and price. The fat-sounding DCO (Digitally Controlled Oscillator) first introduced on the JUNO-6 has become accepted as a "must" by many keyboard players. Internal architecture of the JUNOs make it next to impossible to get a bad sound out of one.

The JUNO-60 provides the addition of 56 patch memory to the 6-voice JUNO-6 and also cassette program storage and DCB (Digital Communication Bus) that lets you slave two JUNOs, or interface with the MC-4 through the OP-8 interface. JUNO-6 is $1295, JUNO-60 is $1795.

JUPITER-6

The Jupiter-6 is a six voice version of Roland's Jupiter-8 featuring a split keyboard and a host of new performance features. The JP-6 can store 32 different patch preset combinations and up to 48 different patch sounds, all easily switched by a remote footswitch.

Other unique features include a four-direction Arpeggio, a Detune key for ensemble effect, Cross Mod, VCO 1 & 2 Syncing in either direction, Key Follow, 3 kinds of Keyboard split, MIDI digital interface and tape Save and Load of patches. The Jupiter-6 retails for $2995.

MC-202

The MC-202 is a two channel polyphonic sequencer that employs the same advanced music-programming system found on Roland's MC-4 and MC-8 MicroComposers, is battery operated for go-anywhere convenience, and even contains a full function synthesizer.

The MC-202 can be programmed live or by step programming off its own keyboard or by connecting another synthesizer keyboard, and it easily syncs to Roland's TR-606 Drumatix and TB-303 Bassline to form a complete computer-controlled ensemble. The real beauty of the MC-202 is that it contains a tape sync function (like the MC-4) that allows it to lay down a sync tone on one tape track, and then sync to that track to lay down a whole orchestra of sounds. Even more remarkable is the amount of performance you get from the MC-202 for $595.

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But if R.E.M. doesn't quite come across as the rock 'n' roll equivalent of "Go Down Moses," they certainly shape up as a band with an immense potential. Although Berry admits that, "we're still basically an untight garage band," R.E.M. is very together when it comes to managing its career and putting its "untight" musical ability to good use. It all comes down to working within certain limitations, and R.E.M. seems no more likely to hit the coliseum circuit than to hire the London Symphony Orchestra for its next album. So far in its brief career, the band has turned down opening spots with the Clash, U2 and the Go-Go's—moves that have left the band's agents scratching their heads in bewilderment.

But as Mills explains, passing up such opportunities makes far more sense than accepting them. "The thing with U2—what they were saying was that touring with U2 would be a shortcut to getting bigger. But that's not our goal. We didn't start this whole thing to get a record contract and to be big. We started it in order to play live and have a good time. And it's so much truer to the spirit of being a live band to play where everybody can see you. You can't really communicate with people more than a hundred feet away; you lose an incredible amount of intimacy when the closest people to you are ten feet below you and twenty feet out.

"We would much rather set up in any bar in the country and just play." ■

R.E.M. Gear

Although R.E.M.'s proficiency has improved since the band first bashed out "Stepping Stone" in an Athens church, their equipment, for the most part, has not. Peter Buck likes "guitars that sound like acoustic guitars made electric," and started out on a Telecaster. He now plays a Rickenbacker—he isn't sure what model—with "a long cord going straight into a Fender Twin Reverb." Although he played acoustic guitar on *Murmur*, those instruments were all borrowed. Mike Mills also plays a Rickenbacker, a 4001 bass, run through a 100-watt Fender Dual Showman head "that used to belong to 10cc a long, long time ago," and into a cabinet with two JBL 15-inch speakers. Like Buck, he uses no effects, but his bass has been modified with a Fender Jazz bass pickup in the treble position. Bill Berry's drums are a five-piece Rogers set that he bought "years ago, used." The hardware has been completely replaced with Tama hardware, except for the rims and tuning pegs, and he uses a Tama snare. His cymbals are Zildjians, with one Paiste 505 Chinese, and for the moment, his heads are Tama coated.

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World Radio History

FACES

SIMPLE MINDS

A THIN SLIVER OF STYLE

PAUL CANTY/RETNA

As the instrumental track to "Someone Somewhere In Summertime" vamped over the P.A., fog enveloped the stage of Washington, D.C.'s decrepit Ontario Theater, obscuring the stark architectural lines of the Simple Minds' stage set. Suddenly center stage was shot through with light, as laser-like shafts of purple, then green, intersected above the equipment. As the lights shifted and contrasted, the sell-out audience was already ecstatic, and Simple Minds had earned their first ovation of the evening before they even hit the stage. This wasn't so much a victory of style over content so much as proof that, for bands such as Simple Minds, style is content.

From the first number, "King Is White And In The Crowd," the parallels between audio and visual were clear. The rhythm bed of bassist Derek Forbes and recently-added drummer Mel Gaynor provided a solid, geometric platform for the billowing, cloud-like atmospherics of Michael MacNeil's synthesizers and Charles Burchill's guitar. Cutting through the instrumental fog with laser-like intensity was singer Jim Kerr, whose energetic tenor and flamboyant delivery illuminated the stage.

Once the dynamics were established, Simple Minds made sure to keep them in place. Whether reciting from their American debut, *New Gold Dream (81-82-83-84)*, or offering bits from their British back-catalog, the *modus operandi* remained the same. Yet throughout, it remained as effective as the set stayed visually striking; Simple Minds may have only one idea to offer, but they played the hell out of it.

Things seemed a bit shaky at first, largely due to the wobbly acoustics of the Ontario and the band's dependence on technology. As Kerr commented later, "Studio and live is like black and white. In the studio, the sound is very clear; live, you've got to deal sometimes with halls that are acoustically bad, you've got to deal with messy stage equipment, and you don't have any engineers or producers to clean it up for you, apart from your soundman."

Still, as the mix leveled out and the concert progressed, it was easy to see that Simple Minds weren't all gadgetry and technological flash. Mel Gaynor was a real surprise, a genuine powerhouse who occasionally pushed through the rest of the band to electrify the groove as only a great drummer can. Charles Burchill, when he emerged from the fragmented atmospherics in which his guitar was so often mired, played with fire and invention. But for the most part, the show belonged to Jim Kerr, whose grandiose gestures and unabashed romanticism converted his lyrics' vagaries to active commitment.

It was in that transformation that Simple Minds' greatest achievement lay, for unlike so many inheritors of the art rock tradition, Simple Minds have foregone breadth of vision to pursue a single idea that works. And even if it works only to elucidate a thin sliver of pop style, its success says more about the promise and possibilities of the new art rock than even the most ambitious technocrat could have dreamed.—***J.D. Considine***

MITCH RYDER

NEVER KICK A SLEEPING GIANT

Mitch Ryder is sitting across the table in a conference room at the Manhattan office of his new record label, mulling over his re-entry into the rock 'n' roll mainstream. "All day long," he muses, "these rock journalists have been foisting the Springsteen/Gary U.S. Bonds comparison on me in their interviews. And in a limited sense, it's true that John Cougar, my new producer, is a major contemporary artist, and that I'm best known for my work in the 60s and early 70s. But that's where the comparison ends. I'm a working musician—I've had a record deal in Europe for several years, and I've been touring there and in America all along. Besides, it's not as if Cougar had to revive a voice."

Indeed, for Ryder still holds a unique place in rock's pantheon of great vocalists. As the nineteen-year-old leader of the Detroit Wheels in the mid 60s, he churned out the hardest-rocking American singles of that time, and offered the original British Invasion its only serious stateside competition. In those days he careened around the stage like a demon, jumping off pianos with soaring leg splits to the floor, while belting out the band's rewired, souped-up versions of 50s classics like "See See Rider," "Jenny Take A Ride" and a relatively obscure Motown chestnut, "Devil With The Blue Dress." He got his start at fifteen singing gospel on a small, black-owned label in Detroit, then worked in soul clubs, met and joined the Detroit Wheels, and was discovered by producer Bob Crewe. The rest was a burning, memorable

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MICHAEL WEINSTEIN/PHOTO RESERVE

chapter, however brief, in rock n' roll history.

"Those were amazing times for me," he now recalls. "I did a number of tours with Wilson Pickett and jammed with him at the Apollo Theater. At one point Wilson even gave me his valet to use on the road, a guy named Baby James, who had a Don King haircut before it was fashionable. Then one day the guy turned up missing, along with half our equipment."

A series of management hassles and record label snafus led Ryder to retire from recording in the mid-70s, after completing one album with the band Detroit, which featured several ex-Detroit Wheels and had a driving, crunching sound that's made this LP a collector's item today. He re-emerged in '79 with a series of albums on his own independent label that featured some strong autobiographically-tinged originals chronicling Ryder's high-life and hard times in the music biz; then last year, a Motor City DJ introduced him to John Cougar, who was apparently a longtime fan. They hit it off, collaborated on some tunes, and Cougar offered to produce. The result, *Never Kick A Sleeping Dog*, mates Mr Hurt-So-Good's rough-hewn mainstream simplicity with Ryder's unique slant on gospel and soul-derived rock phrasing, from soaring falsetto wails to plaintively gruff crooning.

Ryder calls Cougar "the consummate producer, concerned with every detail, from anguishing over bass drum sounds to setting up a quick but inspired vocal trio session with me, him and Marianne Faithfull on a Long John Baldry tune, 'A Thrill Is A Thrill.'" Mitch will be touring by late summer with a band that Cougar put together, and he feels ready "because I've actually been touring the States every year for a while." As for any comment on the myriad changes in the music business over the past twenty years, Mitch Ryder wryly concludes that "the business part of it has gotten a lot more sophisticated. But artists are still artists and record companies will always find new ways to exploit them. And right now, this is a deliberate attempt on my part to be exploited, once again." — ***Crispin Cloe***

HERMAN & RICH

THE ROAD WARRIORS RUMBLE

Woody Herman and Buddy Rich are road warriors. They've each spent over forty years on the road, and that's where they'll probably die. Woody Herman and Buddy Rich. Last of the great big band leaders... get on the bus, set up, hit... on to the next gig. Here's Woody Herman, a short time after losing his wife and his long-standing, thirty-nine-weeks-a-year gig at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans, out with a beautiful sextet; then, months later, back to Manhattan at the Lone Star Cafe with his crack team of All-American youth—first-round draft choices to a man. Here's Buddy Rich, still brash and powerful, but suddenly looking his age, onstage at New York's hip showcase The Bottom Line, when he might be better occupied soaking up some rays in Florida on a lounge chair—sixty-three-year-old men don't generally step out taking drum solos after coming off not single or double or triple, but *quadruple* bypass surgery (one for each limb?).

There's an ever-present element of nostalgia in their music, but Herman and Rich aren't looking back, and they've always been among the most sincere practitioners of rock and funk grooves (mainly as they intersect with hard blues and hard bop). Both are able to handle the past gracefullly, even if their fans aren't. Herman graces his audience with elegant, teasing swing on the clarinet, slyly playing the microphone and the acoustics of the room, intersecting with his roaring brass in boppish dabs and stabs. Anchoring his reed and brass sections are assistant coaches Frank Tiberi and Bill Byrne, who provide modernist-traditionalist stability. The flag-waving "Caledonia," robust "Four Brothers" and ephemeral "Early Autumn" provide timeless signposts of Herman's decade by decade growth.

And here's Buddy. Thank you, you're a beautiful audience... hey, was that round of applause for me or my doctor... glad to be here tonight—glad to be anywhere tonight. Bang, zoom. Love you, Buddy, it's your audience I can't stand. Outtakes from *Family Feud*, they obscure the gentle power of Rich's drumming, punctuating his interaction with the band by cheering his all-singing, all-knowing single stroke rolls as if the contestants had just won a trip to Hawaii. Faster, Buddy... look, he just fell over his snare drum—wotta showman. You don't have to play those drum solos, Buddy. It's the way you play with a band that's special.

The spiritual heir to Chick Webb's throne, Rich accents the flow of the band with counter-punching flourishes, rumbling syncopations and a big, bell-like beat on his humungous 26-inch bass drum, keying shift in mood and meter like a living light show.

One can hear clearly in Rich's acrobatic sound the roots of Tony Williams, Michael Carvin, Michael Clark and a host of other modernists. As Billy Hart once said, "All drummers in Boston are trying to play like Buddy Rich." That should be amended to read, "May all drummers do their own thing, but we'd all be a lot poorer if it weren't for Buddy Rich."—***Chip Stern***

DAVID REDFERN/RETNA

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INXS

FACING THE FIRING SQUAD

EBET ROBERTS

Already established stars in their native Australia, INXS' American debut, *Shabooh, Shoobah*, is their third LP. With five years of pro experience down under, the six-piece group had plenty of time to hone their performance chops before hitting America this spring. But though "The One Thing" won attention on FM and MTV, some listeners were put off by *Shabooh*'s sleek, detached production. As soon as cynics heard the stark snare drum and aloof, old Bowie-style vocals, they muttered, "Ah, this week's fashion. More style than substance."

So when INXS (pronounced "in excess") arrived in New York to headline at the Ritz in late May, they faced a show-me attitude from many of the scenemakers. "Tomorrow night sounds like the Spanish firing squad," composer/keyboard player Andrew Farriss laughed the day before the New York show. "Everyone's going to be there. I wonder if the guns are loaded with live rounds or just blanks."

Despite (or perhaps because of) the pressure, INXS rose to the challenge. Displaying a fatter, more guitar-based sound than the album promised, the group demonstrated that they are hard rockers capable of executing clever variations on an *Exile On Main Street* wail of whammy.

In concert the band relied on a keen sense of dynamics. The five instruments played against each other as often as they fell together, with synthesizer often assigned a sweet, moody voice and guitar a raunchy wail. Songs moved suddenly from abandon to restraint, and the designation of different moods to different players was like a hard rock "Peter And The Wolf."

The band used these dynamics to achieve rhythmic sleights of hand. On "Spy Of Love" the verses floated along on a Caribbean groove. Andrew coaxed a marimba sound from his synth while the rhythm was held by Gary Beers' bass. Then, as the chorus approached, Kirk Pengilly's guitar began to swell, to distract, to briefly flare up and dominate. When it dropped back, the song had hit the chorus and the beat had shifted to a hard 4/4; the bass had been pushed way back and the snare brought forward. Thus the group used a moment of arena flash as a magician uses a smoke bomb—to distract the audience from the quick switch he's pulling with his other hand.

Sometimes there was a mad scramble for dominance (The guitar's got this solo—nope, the synth grabbed it—holy smoke, the sax has intercepted!) that recalled the happy anarchy of the 2-tone bands, but generally INXS maintained an almost classical sense of everything in its place.

While hard rock clichés were being subverted, most attention was fixed on lead singer Michael Hutchence's Jagger-like vocal drawl and lunatic ballet. Although Hutchence's preening captivated much of the crowd (and peeved a few curmudgeons who thought him over-rehearsed), the pure self-conscious theatricality of the singer's performance made it likable. As he zipped from mock-fury to humility, from flirting to bounding to leaping into the audience, it was quite clear that Hutchence was less a Jim Morrison-type narcissist than a performer with an old-fashioned commitment to knocking himself out for a good show.

Andrew Farriss explained the different colors that have crept into INXS' rock by saying, "We've been together five or six years now. We're a bit tired of playing just one kind of music and thrashing it to death. I think Bach said the greatest composers don't borrow—they steal. Art is the same. People see a technique, borrow from it and go on. When I go back and listen to all the rock 'n' roll of the last twenty years, it's just about impossible to find something new, which I think this band—surprisingly—still does."

The composer smiled. "So when we do, we grab it and don't let it run away."—***Bill Flanagan***

GEORGE CLINTON

THE FUNK OVER THE HUMP

Funk. It was the hip new trend all of a sudden. Even the British, an unfunky race if ever there was one, tried to sell it back to the Americans. Funk had never been so various, so widespread, so safe.

But something was missing; a black hole existed where the core should've been. Where was the man who invented funk? Where indeed was George Clinton? I activated the P-switch of my Funkonnection box and repeated the secret code. There was the sound of computer blips and beeps and then a familiar voice: "Hey, let me finish this game and we'll talk!" Success!

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"No matter what you do, eventually people are going to forget about you or take you for granted," says the original Dr. Funkenstein of his two-year hiatus. "I'd say we were at that peak about the time of *Glory Hallestupid*. No matter what we did at that attention-span time, it was gonna be time for the new groups to move in. The halftime show, in other words. In the meantime, I cleared up all my legal hassles, had some time to go over some new things and get some grooves together, so all of it works out. For me, without no hump, there'd be no getting over. These last two years were the hump."

Clinton definitely seems to be getting over. "Atomic Dog," the single from his new LP *Computer Games*, has taken up residence atop the black charts and the members of P-Funk, scattered to the winds of record company politics and personal differences, are quietly returning to the fold; so many have returned, in fact, that George plans to resume his famous habit of sending the same basic concept out under different names (and often under different recording

continued on page 102

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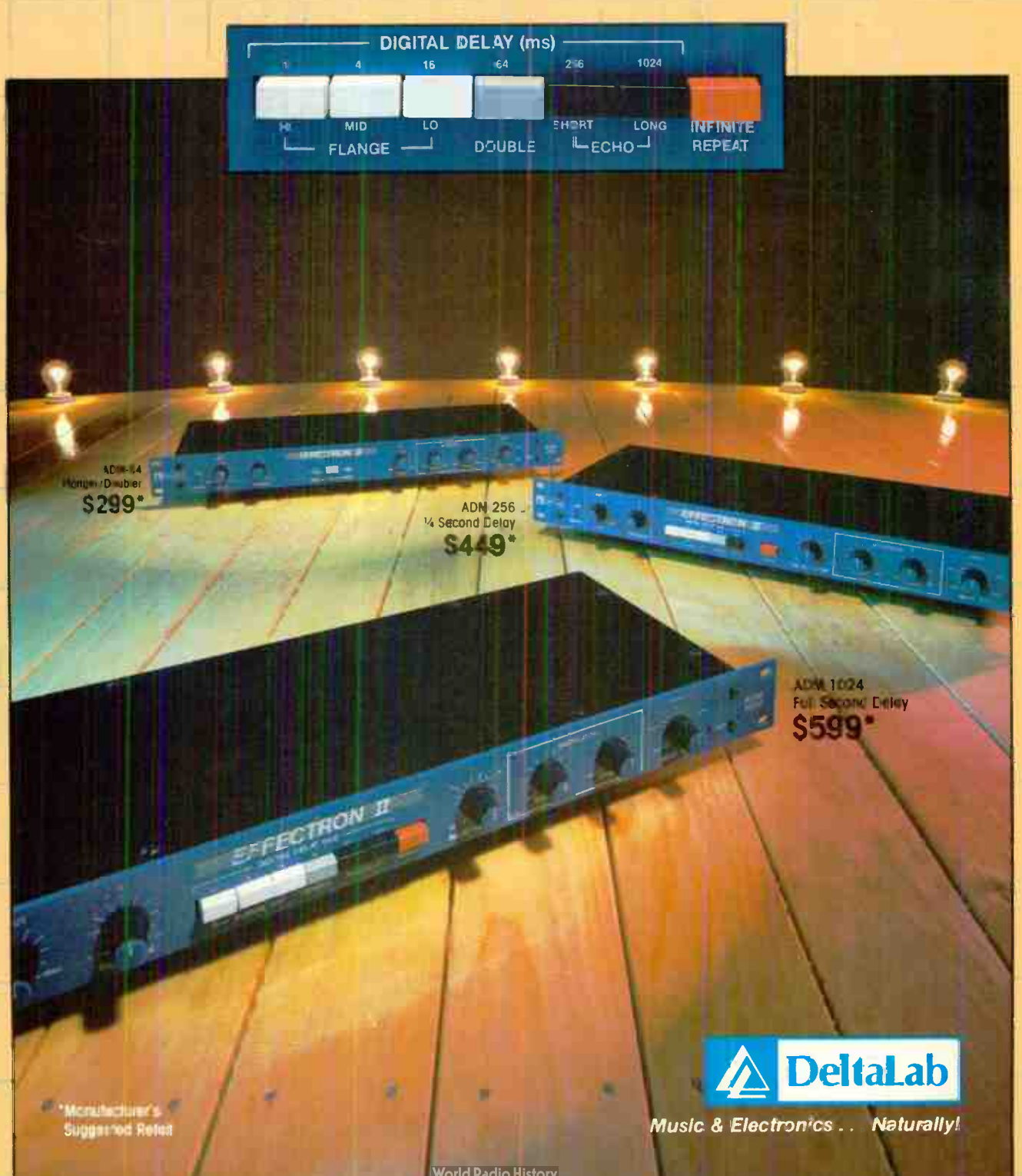

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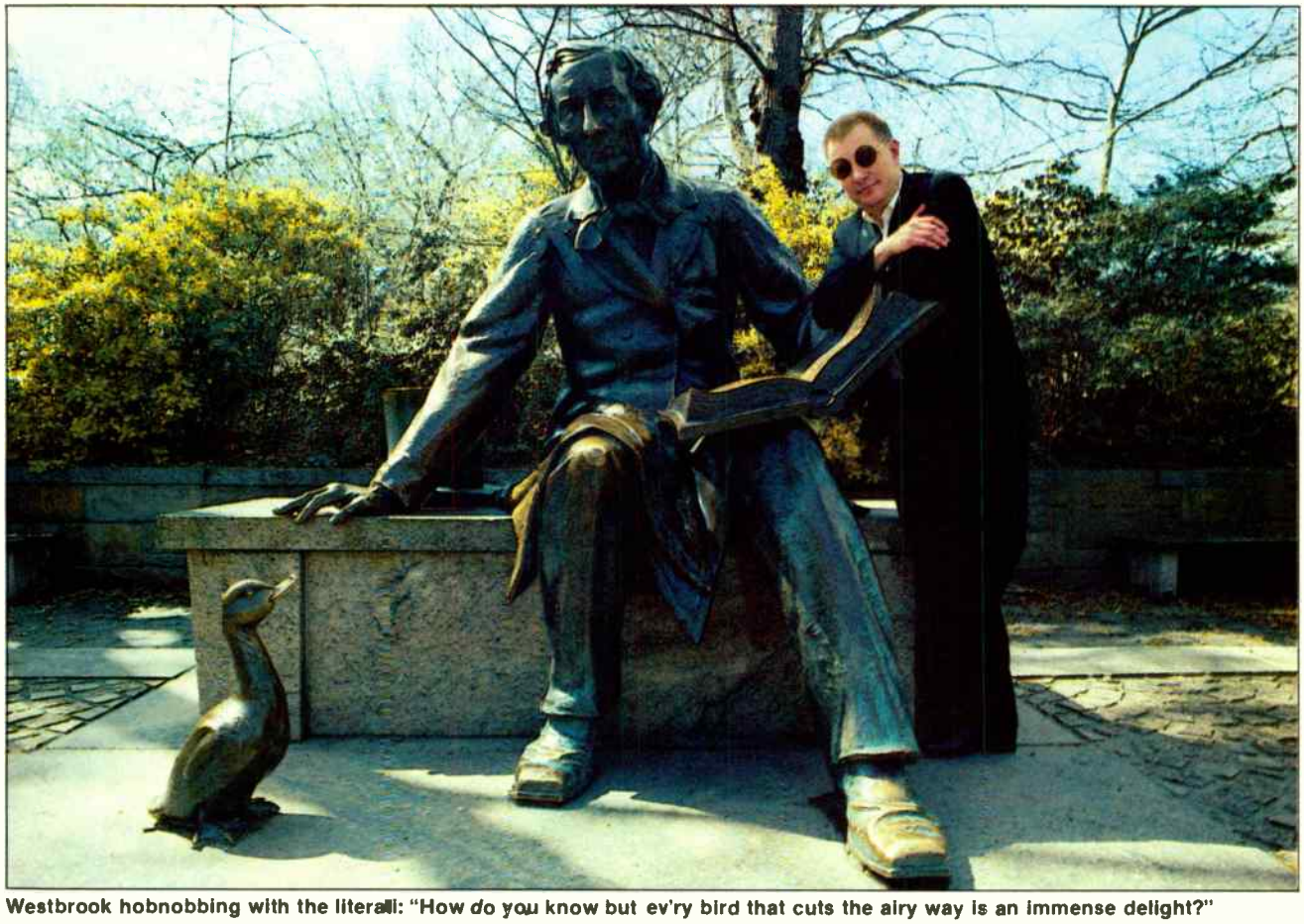
BY RAFI ZABOR

Mike Westbrook

Plays William Blake's Great Hits

DEBORAH FEINGOLD



Westbrook hobnobbing with the literati: "How *do* you know but ev'ry bird that cuts the airy way is an immense delight?"

I can't tell you if *The Westbrook Blake* was last year's greatest jazz album. I'm not even sure it's a jazz record, since the parts I listen to again and again are not the instrumental "jazz" sections but the ones in which Phil Minton sings William Blake's heart out over Mike Westbrook's cathedral of sound (piccolo trumpets waving banners on the battlements while the children's choir soars in from Elsewhere with the news). So, I can't tell you if *The Westbrook Blake* was last year's greatest jazz album (Cleanest Pair of Socks in North America, Prize Sow at the Council Bluffs State Fair, Largest Number of Unnecessary Judgments in a Single Article, etc.) but I do know that it was the album that most completely reconvinced me of music's prophetic and restorative powers. I mean to the degree that it regularly literally lifted me from my archcritical seat and has more than once flushed, yes folks, a tear from my presumably professional eyes. This doesn't mean I expect you to behave the way I do, but it does mean I hope you'll like the record too, if you ever get to hear it. You may not, since it's distributed here by a small, necessarily quixotic record company called Europa (611 Broadway, Suite 214, New York, NY 10012).

Which brings us back to *jazz*, a music almost no one is interested in and a syllable so poisonous to anyone's prosperity I would have gladly dispensed

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BOBBY COCHRAN Guitarist
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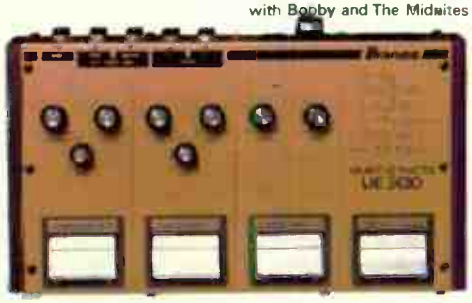

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Keyboard player Tom Coster
with Santana

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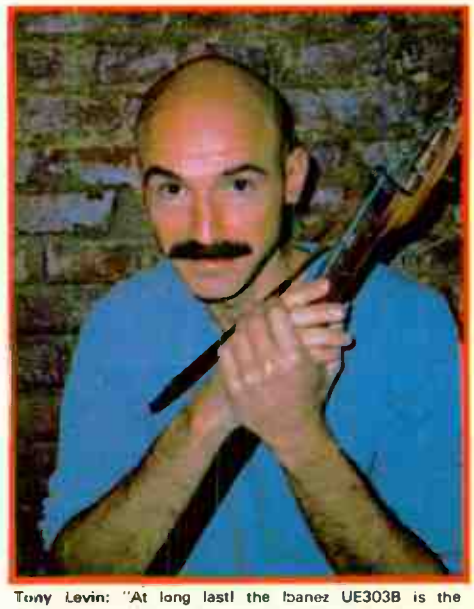
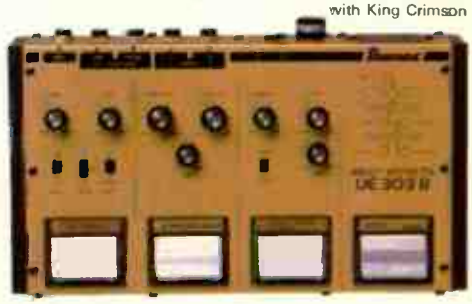


Tony Levin: "At long last! the Ibanez UE303B is the first multieffects unit designed specifically for the contemporary bassist. And it's the most convenient floor system around. I love it!."

Tony Levin Bassist
with King Crimson



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with it were it not so inevitable; for although William Blake is a 225-year-old English visionary poet, Mike Westbrook, who has set his visions so memorably to music, is inescapably an English jazz musician, and his album, while a collection of songs, is inescapably a jazz record—all that brass orchestration, all those tenor solos even though the rhythms are rockish—and hence irrelevant to nearly ten tenths of the so-called human race. Damn shame too, because I haven't heard vocal music dare so much or succeed so majestically in a long time, and the album's musical parameters shouldn't pitch it beyond the modern rock audience's aesthetic reach. It hasn't crossed over yet though, either here or in England.

Americans are, if possible, even less aware of British jazz musicians than the British themselves, but as it happened I heard a Mike Westbrook sextet at the Little Theatre Club in London as early as 1966. It was an okay band, not the best I heard in England that year, but at least I knew who Westbrook was when his vaguely anomalous record turned up in the mailroom pile last spring. And Blake, I knew who he was too, and that was the main reason I rushed right home with it and put it on the toaster, the washing machine, the typewriter, and then, eureka! the record player.

The remarkable thing about *The Westbrook Blake* is the consistency with which it rises to Blake's level, which implies not only exceptional height but considerable range. From charter'd material London in its pain to the vision of Jerusalem as a six-winged angel in a triple universe of beauty, its eye bright as fire and its wings, "ribbed, delicate," spreading into final azure, Blake's eye sees clear from the political corpus to the cosmic, and his verse, even at its least penetrable, is full of the unquestionable weight of real experience and sight. Unlike other poets, even unlike other mystical poets, Blake at his best writes less at the level of subjective expression than at that of objective law. He states himself with a lack of compromise so total that it can both loosen the chains of the spirit and affright our compromised consciousness that daily consents to trivial life. Every generated body in its inward form is a garden of delight and a building of magnificence, he wrote. He also saw human consciousness and energy, infinite and eternal, imprisoned in a prismatic and illusory subjectivity down there in the abyss of its five senses, peering out at the universe through the miserable chinks in its cavern.

He is the most imposing and unorthodox visionary poet in the English language, the last unforgettable voice before the ship of prophecy went down in the West and an index, a titanic reminder, of the immensity lost. How *do* you know but ev'ry bird that cuts the airy way is not an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?

Well, since I'm so enthusiastic about the whole thing, it's not surprising that I would take advantage of a trip to England to interview the Westbrooks and Minton for a piece. I'd heard from an English drummer friend that since I'd seen Westbrook last he'd grown disillusioned with the jazz scene and organized a brass band that played outdoors mostly—art festivals, shopping centers, public places, wherever there was room—and had done pretty well with it. I also wanted to find out more about Phil Minton, one of the most impressive singers of any kind I'd heard in years. I was having trouble making sense of him from what I knew from his records, since in addition to his noble and impassioned singing of Blake I'd been sent a copy of *Solo Singing: A Doughnut In Both Hands* by NMDS, a deranged but lovable album of bleats, banshee wails, strangulations, wheezes and screams. It had taken me more than a little while to realize that both Phil Mintons were the same singer.

Luck was with me; my plane set me down in time to catch a London concert by Westbrook's five-piece brass band at which I saw in an unanticipated virtuosity the connection between the apostolic and strangled Mintons: the man can sing anything, at will. I didn't hear anything

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that impressed me as overwhelmingly as the Blake album, but I did take in some fine alto playing from Chris Biscoe, made immediate sense of Kate Westbrook's ironic and hypertheatrical singing style which had puzzled me so on record, and grew to appreciate Westbrook's patient way with a small band. His affection for good, small-scale brass writing—pianist Westbrook doubling on tuba, Kate playing alto horn and Minton no slouch on trumpet, all to lovely effect on tunes like John Lewis' "Django" and Jelly Roll Morton's "The Chimes"—was obvious. His organizational sense encompassed free-jazz wailathons, Brecht/Weill marches, bop saxophony and lots of strange vocals.

I found the Westbrooks in the house left them by Kate's grandfather, facing one of London's less distinguished squares under a sky of the regulation three shades of grey. They said hello, they served me coffee, they set up a microphone and I asked Mike what he'd been doing since 1966 and what was this about working shopping centers and the street.

"It's been a lifetime of gradual evolution," he replied, "and through the 60s and early 70s this led me through various combinations and bands, including big bands, because at that time I started doing 'major works,' and a lot of experimentation along the way. That reached a kind of stop in the early 70s. In fact the end of that line was actually a rock group, Solid Gold Cadillac, which included Phil Minton and a few others I still work with sometimes. But a new era began with the formation of the Brass Band. Out of the ruins of the rock band emerged something that was its total opposite, a small acoustic band, a street band. It began in a very casual way. We were invited to Bath to play an alternative festival there—it was sort of the peak period of community art—and we began playing very simple acoustical music, not with any big deal concept of changing the world or anything, just responding to the situation, and this I found tremendously liberating, getting away from the sterile world of the rock band, of concerts with all that equipment and so on and very little spontaneity or communication—and getting back to a very close relationship with the audience. This was such a simple solution, so obvious. We didn't go about hustling for work. We just responded to invitations from theater groups and community festivals.

"Calling it the Brass Band was kind of a double take, because there is a long tradition of brass bands in England but it was never that kind of music. From quite early on we might play arrangements of Thelonious Monk tunes. We might equally play some Elizabethan music, folk songs or originals. I started doing more arrangements that worked with that lineup, Jelly Roll Morton tunes, and anything anyone in the band wanted to do, we did. It evolved and developed out of its own energy. In the beginning there was a lot of free improvising and theater, but I wasn't satisfied with evenings that rambled. I have the composer's instinct to make some sort of structure that harnesses these forces; doesn't inhibit them but helps make them work.

"We were going for about eighteen months when we did our first London gig, in 1975. Once we were indoors it meant we could have the piano, do more songs, use the microphone for vocals. The repertoire expanded but without losing the feel of the brass band. It seems to be running counter to the preoccupation with electronics, but we're not on a crusade: in *The Cortege* (Westbrook's most recent long work) we use the Orchestra, of which the Brass Band is the nucleus, lots of guitar, echo and fuzzboxes, but I infinitely prefer playing acoustic piano to the electric, and I very much enjoy playing the tuba and ensemble brass work."

It seemed to me that Westbrook had been lucky to escape the confines of the British jazz world with the Brass Band, and he insisted he *was* part of the jazz scene, which I then asked him to characterize.

To make a long story short, he characterized it as mostly awful, "a terrific lot of energy and talent among the musicians," virtually no audience, and a very discouraged mood among the best young musicians, who rightly feel themselves up against the legendary and ubiquitous brick wall held together by its usual mortar of day gigs, club dates for cab fare, dreck to play in studios. Kate had words of thanks and praise for the French audience that had sustained them over the years and Mike allowed that because he, Kate and Phil had done a lot of work they hadn't been paid for over the last ten years, this had helped, finally, to build some sort of platform for them in their homeland. In conclusion, this: "Kate and I were trained in art, not music—Kate is still a practicing painter—and we have a wide sense of being artists in society. One can be sustained by the examples of other people, not just jazz musicians but painters and writers, and I suppose even in the darkest times we've remained convinced that this is what we should do. I've had lots of discussions over the years with musicians who are always bemoaning the lot of the English jazz musician, and it's true: many of them are incredibly good, there are players and arrangers who are miles better than I am, but the trouble is they're not doing it. And in the end you have to say, well, who is *doing* it? Those are the people that I respect. It may be true that there are people buried in the studios who could eat them alive

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but the fact is they're *not* doing it, and one's commitment goes to the ones that *are* doing it and dedicating their lives to what they believe."

I asked Westbrook about William Blake and Westbrook didn't know who he was. I primed his memory: remember that poet Adrian Mitchell had written about in a play called *Tyger* in 1971, which opened at the National Theater? "To great critical abuse," Westbrook added. "They spent thousands of pounds on scenery they couldn't even get into the theatre—that's the way they do things there. The main thing for me was, and I owe this to Adrian, that for the first time I sat down to do some serious songwriting, using Blake's words. It wasn't fulfilled in the show itself, but then when the Brass Band started up, the Blake songs suddenly came back and very strongly. In the show they'd been done with a gospelly rock band, and there was a complete change of approach that took ever so long to work round to, finding a way to do it ever so simply, and this was the best thing for it.

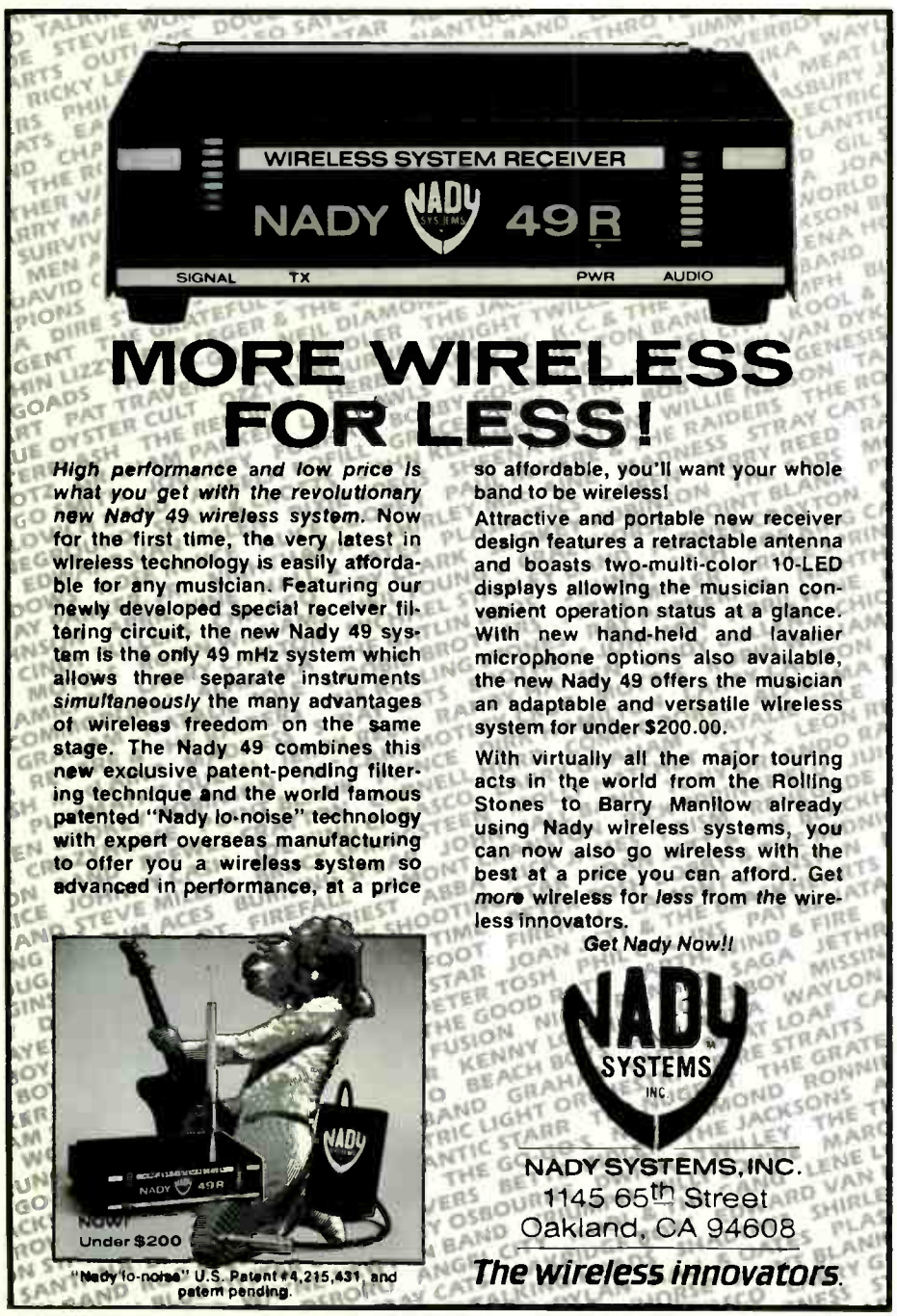
"The Blake material is really sacred to the Brass Band, the philosophy of the group is embodied in it and we've been able to expand the Blake repertoire, most recently with 'The Human Abstract,' (from *The Songs Of Experience*) which we're recording as a single because it's very relevant to the anti-nuclear movement."

Kate pointed out "the uncanny way in which Blake speaks to us in images we can only now understand about the cold war," and I suggested that as a flipside they use the same chart for "The Divine Image," the poem's opposite number in *The Songs Of Innocence*; same images, inverted meaning. The Westbrooks told me they were unaware of the second poem. I quoted from it inaccurately and they liked it.

"This kind of thing keeps happening. We don't sit down and decide to do a lot of Blake, but every now and then a suggestion will come from somebody. Adrian suggested we do 'Long John Brown and Little Mary Bell,' which we'd never even come across before. Since we made the Blake album our coverage of Blake has broadened. This is the process by which the Blake material has evolved. There has never been a point at which one has said 'Right, here's the whole of Blake and we'll take this and this.' One is led. After your comment we'll undoubtedly have a look at that poem.

"What's funny about the Blake things is that all of the material I've worked with has just written itself. There's already something there. The songs fall fairly quickly into shape and there they stay. Sometimes I've extended them a bit but it's been very difficult. On the whole they create their own thing and there's nothing you can do about it. And the improvisations are continuations of the words, saying the same thing in another medium. Solos of the most uncompromising modernity come out of it and fit: on 'The Fields' there are these choirs singing and suddenly this screaming tenor saxophone and it's absolutely right. It's not something we've ever discussed in the band; it's beyond the level of discussion, but that's what the material does to people. They're not just blowing on this song or those changes—the material draws something out of them which is their highest aspiration. I'm sure Phil would be the first to admit that words are not terribly important to him. He's into the voice. On that solo record you have an expression of Phil doing what he wants and there's not a word on it. But with Blake, Phil has never done anything but sing it straight. I'm sure that with Blake's work...you're just a channel, you don't even have to understand the words. I don't think about the mystical aspect as opposed to the political aspect, I'm just a channel. We're aware of it, that the Blake content is rather sacred.

"We do concerts of just Blake music and they are always very memorable and demanding—the attitude you have to bring to it is demanding. We couldn't do it all the time, even though we know it's the summit of what we do. It has to be approached with respect, it's something one has to save. Yes, it feels terribly



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powerful, important, disturbing, uplifting, depending on the material we're doing, in ways one can't rationalize anymore. One can just do it. It demands the maximum, and very few gigs do that; that's why it has to be done as a special sort of thing.

"It's a little like Cezanne and his mountain: he never painted *the* picture of the mountain, he was constantly circling around it from different angles and each time starting with a new canvas, looking again at the target. And with whatever we do, whatever the material and whether it's a street gig or a concert, we're looking at that target, and we're never going to do the one that finishes it. It's like the search of a Coltrane, circling around his goal with passionate intensity, reaching out with maximum commitment and bringing to bear everything he knows on this search. It's a process that jazz lends itself to, because jazz is more about process than product." And here Westbrook divested himself of his cloak of civilised Englishness at last. "What we've got to do is just turn on the human race to this, this...*energy*." He's embarrassed himself now. "Haven't we."

Phil Minton's Greatest Hit

You're going to have to deal with Phil Minton sooner or later so you might as well start now. He's begun picking up good notices for his avant-garde work as well as his singing with Westbrook, and if there's any justice left eventually he will be impossible to ignore. The Westbrooks had been wonderful to interview but I wondered about Minton. It was not only his wildman vocalizations but the fact that I'd been listening to his voice sing Blake for months, thrilled every time, and I didn't know if I could talk to that voice—it's easier with saxophones somehow. Also, Minton had a juicer's face and I was tired of drinking.

He was at least as charming as the Westbrooks on the phone and suggested I meet him at a pub near the rebuilt Covent Garden Market, "at two p.m., when the crowd will have begun to thin out." My hat and parsely it had begun to thin out. It was the most crowded pub in the known world, crowded with a crowdedness such as the IRT at rush hour cannot contemplate. Though it was friendlier than the subway and my pint of Young's Special Bitter was excellent, I understood that Minton did not like being interviewed, hoped in fact that circumstances might conspire to make it impossible. As soon as he came in and I recognized him—golden hair, face of a half-boozed angel, intelligent, possibly anxious eyes—he resupplied me with Young's Special, maneuvered us to a table where an interview could never in a million years be taped for the noise, and we both got

continued on page 97

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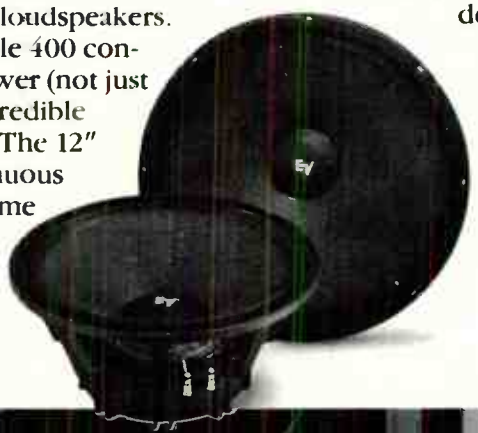

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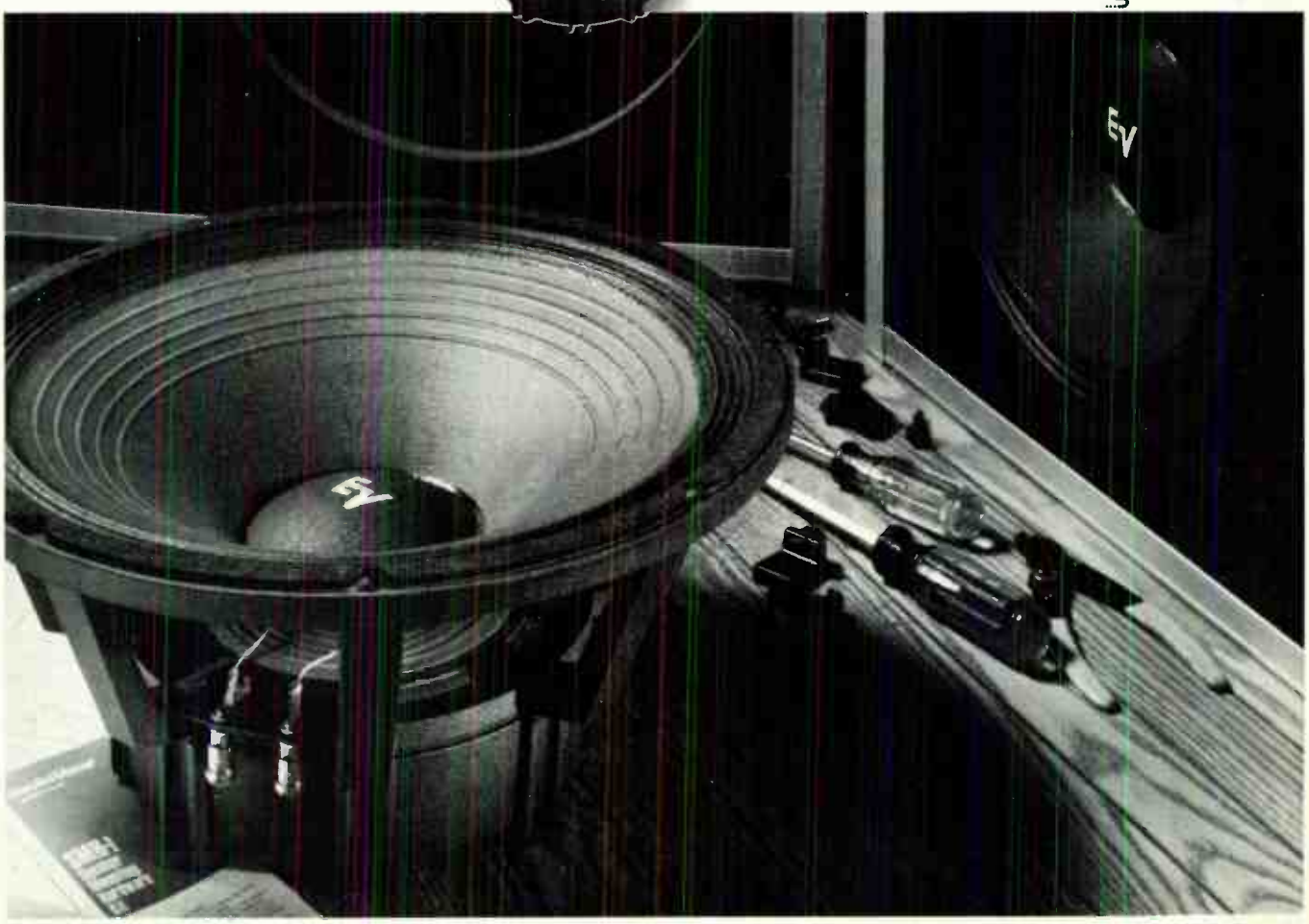

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BRYAN FERRY'S ROXY WEATHER

Dark Brooding Clouds, Courtly Silver Linings

A week or so before Roxy Music came to town, I embarked upon an evening ritual. After knocking off work at the typewriter, I'd turn out the lights and get ready to hit the hay; but then, instead of merely opting for my own dreamy realms, I'd clasp on a set of headphones and tap into Bryan Ferry's. One night it would be the burnished alienation of *Country Life* and *Siren*, another the shimmering mirage of *Manifesto*, a third the kitch-in-synch formality of *These Foolish Things*, and some evenings a bit of everything. Though the night would always be still when I began, after a few songs the giant palm trees across the road would start to sway and rock their fronds, stars would disappear, and then, suddenly, the skies would crack and burst weeping with the force of small monsoons.

When I told Bryan Ferry this tale, he gave a low chuckle of

BY MARK ROWLAND WITH VIC GARBARINI

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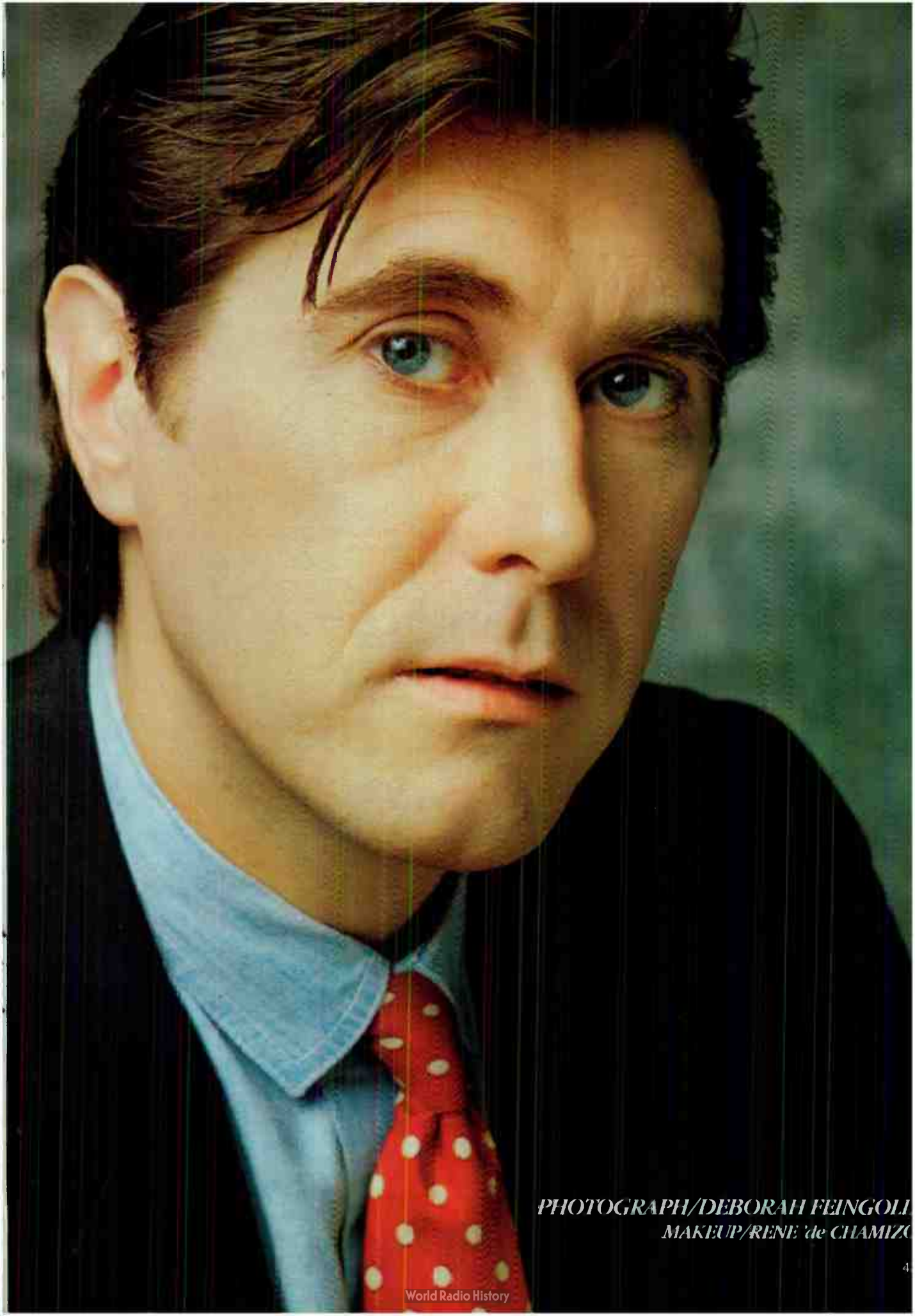

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recognition. "Ah, yes," he nodded in agreement, "the rain does seem to follow us wherever we go. The band likes to make jokes about it; we call it 'Roxy weather.'"

Over the years, of course, Roxy's weather has undergone more startling permutations than New England's. From its genesis as an audacious art-school band, meshing modal jazz and post-psychedelic instrumental textures with smart, opaquely observed social commentary, through its latest rendezvous in *Avalon*, where personal ruminations etch a tightly framed canvas with the delicacy of Japanese brush strokes, Roxy has traded on the tensions between irony and passion, risk and refinement, sentiment and shrewdness, formalism and free expression, and heart and soul with the dexterity of tightrope artists. Yet above it all has hovered a cloud of brooding melancholia, the distinctly modernist claims of a poet whose hold upon our consciousness was never less defined by content as by style: Bryan Ferry. And who, in the process, has

MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

Ferry trading on the tension between irony and passion.

probably done as much to sway the course of popular music in the 70s and early 80s as any other single figure.

This influence has frequently had as much to do with visage as with vision. Coming into focus at a moment when hippiedom had just passed its apogee, and cock-rockers like Rod Stewart were considered models of urbanity. Ferry's supremely civilized manner, his chiseled good looks and impeccable sartorial style were certainly a revelation. Through Roxy he helped redefine rock as a visual medium (they were producing videos in 1972), sailing from glitter garb to Safari shtick to paramilitary apparel; a literal dress rehearsal for a later generation of fashion-crazed new wavers who rarely bothered to examine, as Ferry had, the darker implications of such preening self-absorption.

He's described himself as a modern blues singer, filtering the raw emotions of the blues through the subtler perspective of a rarefied English artiste. One found provocative resolutions in his voice, which meshed a stilted, melodramatic tone rather suggestive of Bobby 'Boris' Pickett with phrasings and rhythms as elastic as a jazz singer's. Over time the bizarre black humor of songs like "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" deepened into more persuasive (if deceptively detached) irony, just as Bryan's more outré costumes eventually gave way to immaculately fitted dinner jackets. Perhaps such artful twists of character were still too eccentric for American audiences; in any event, Roxy's popularity here never grew beyond a pale shadow of its European eminence. By the time they finally broke a semi-hit in 1975, "Love Is The Drug," the band was already in the process of breaking up.

Ferry's overlapping solo career was bookended by two minor masterpieces. *These Foolish Things*, a concept album of pop covers, was at least as startling in its range (from "Sympathy For The Devil" to "It's My Party") as in its baroque execution (which casual listeners mistook for camp). A second LP's worth of covers proved less inspired, though, and for the first time Ferry's musical direction seemed to waver. In the breach he certainly wasn't treated with any great reverence by his peers. David Bowie, who'd launched his own brilliant career by co-opting Roxy's movement into a vehicle for personal iconization, tried to one-up the effect of *These Foolish Things* by rushing his own album of covers into print first. The new wavers stole Ferry's tailor (Antony Price) and Mick Jagger stole his girlfriend (Jeri Hall—the siren on *Siren*). And while none of Ferry's solo records were ever really bad, by the time he released *In Your Mind* (1977) and toured America with a band that included pub-rock veteran Chris Spedding, his music had become relatively unfocused—for Ferry, a far graver indictment. He retreated to Los Angeles for a year of soul searching, and produced *The Bride Stripped Bare*, a stark chronicle of personal depression which ranks with Roxy's best work but which, nonetheless, bombed.

His resulting crisis of conscience seems to have only fortified Ferry's instincts, for the new edition of Roxy Music, which rose like a phoenix from the ashes, was at once a more cohesive and less collectively organic ensemble than its storied predecessor. Those qualities were still in evidence when the band kicked off its recent U.S. tour (only their fourth) at L.A.'s Universal Amphitheater; Roxy's music, while beautifully sculpted, remained fairly devoid of adventurism or even, for that matter, much creative interplay. Instead, a crack ten-piece ensemble helped render anthemic Roxy's diverse collection of classics, and a packed house, perhaps mindful of previous neglect, helped salute them as such.

But Roxy is not the Who, and their songs are not really anthems. Nor was the celebratory vibe of their show a particularly apt evocation of the painful ennui which distinguishes Roxy's older songs, or the introspective spirit which infuses their later ones. Still, there were moments of transcendence—Ferry's aching rendition of John Lennon's "Jealous Guy" was almost too poignant to bear—and besides, should this tour serve no purpose beyond sheer homage, I suspect Ferry has earned that much.

Of course, he's had help. Those early Roxy records were defined in part by the sonic effects of a young keyboard whiz named Eno. And Roxy simply wouldn't be Roxy without the slicing attack and acid-tinged coloration of Phil Manzanera's guitar, or the haunting, Black Forest quality of Andy Mackay's oboe. On the other hand it's hard to imagine another pop maestro showcasing Mackay with greater delicacy or effect (quick, name another rock oboist) or knowing when to pull the reins in on Manzanera, a mercurial talent whose solo records give new meaning to the word indulgence. Ferry may be a benevolent despot, but he's always needed creative control. It was that issue which led to the departure of Brian Eno from Roxy ten years ago, and since he re-formed the band, Ferry's role in shaping Roxy's overall sound has become all the more evident.

That steely will, which has survived a fifteen-year career at the top of the pops (at least in some countries), fifteen albums under his own name or Roxy's, and the desire, albeit a reluctant one, to crisscross the U.S. in one more quest for the grail of stateside stardom, is clearly one dimension of Ferry's character, but it is an aspect one seldom sees revealed, at least in public. Still, I must confess some trepidation prior to our inter-

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view, despite, or perhaps because, I had heard so much about his "tasteful reserve" and "gracious manner." Taking stock of the dark threads which wind through so much of his music, his brilliant word play and, at times, barbed acuity, I was hardly anxious to meet some angst-affected artist whose manners were simply a veneer for arrogance, or whose wary vulnerability (which congeals songs as otherwise diverse as "Out Of The Blue," "Song For Europe" and "The Main Thing") was perhaps only rooted in the abstract tone of a restless intellect (so who's paranoid?).

Relaxing in one of the sedate cottages in back of the Beverly Hills Hotel, however, was a considerably more engaging species. Ferry's good-humored politesse was indeed unfailing, but instead of masking conceit it served to reflect a deep humility and a shyness which found more natural expression in ideas and speculation than blunt self-analysis. His responses were in some ways suggestive of Roxy's music—not terribly direct, yet revealing in the angle from which their light was cast. His recent marriage and the birth of a son last fall also seem to have soothed Ferry's inner demons; his overall mien was less troubled than wistful, and as we spoke, his eyes often seemed to peer off toward some dim horizon of the imagination, until one had the feeling that we weren't really sitting around in Beverly Hills at all, but perhaps along the misty banks of some faraway lagoon. Meanwhile, the last bright shafts of afternoon sun had faded into twilight, then darkness. But alas, it never rained.

MUSICIAN: *When you re-formed Roxy Music in 1979, you seemed to take the band in a direction that was a considerable departure, both musically and philosophically, from Roxy in its earlier incarnation.*

FERRY: Wow, that's a great question, but—I don't really think it was (laughs). You never think, "Well, this is going to be very different in intention, or attitude from how it was six years previous," or whatever. It's always a bit of fresh air to have changes—with the people you play with, the places you record in, and all the things you've done in between the last recording, and, "have you felt anything new or seen anything different in that time?" I had obviously learned a lot from my sabbatical period, which was spent mainly away from England. I made a very important album, at least for me, which was probably the least commercially successful thing I've ever done, *The Bride Stripped Bare*, which I still like to hear now. There's some wonderful musicianly things which happened on it. And I had worked with new people on that album, so it was like going to school for me, because they were such good players—half the band was American and half English, and they had never met each other before. I thought it rather a risky thing to do, to put players together like that. And it became a very strange, intense, brooding sort of album for me...and after that, the only work I would do would have to be different. And you're right in seeing it that way—they have sounded different. And better, in some ways for me.

MUSICIAN: *As you say,* The Bride Stripped Bare *was an artistic success, yet a commercial failure—the first time those had coincided. How did that affect you?*

FERRY: I think after I'd heard it a bit I realized it was very bleak, very bleak indeed. It was very real and raw and honest, but it was too down for people to stand. Too potently bleak. "I'd say—m'lord!" (laughs). And also, I should have done more of my own songs on it. Sometimes I get very lazy, you see, about writing. And I think I've sometimes recorded other people's songs as a way of escaping from my responsibilities as a songwriter. I've liked the songs and so on, but I have to have pressure to write. It's very difficult for me—blood out of a stone half the time. And so I've got to have people really pressuring, to say, you know, "Go and do it." I'm sometimes a reluctant bride in that respect (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *Was L.A. a supportive environment for that period—did it reflect some of that inner turmoil?*

"In the early Roxy days, we were terrified to go onstage. Dressing up made it possible for us to perform."

FERRY: It was very good for me. I think it was strengthening, in that it was very hard. It was the first time I had actually lived outside England. Oh, I've traveled a lot over the years, always sort of living out of a suitcase. But to actually spend time, to have one's house in another country, it was the first time I'd done it. And L.A. felt very foreign. I've always been a great admirer of the place, because of a fascination with Raymond Chandler, basically. And obviously the whole Hollywood thing, always having been interested in movies, the whole aura of the place, being in a modern creative center—that was appealing. But I lived a very insular existence here; just listening to the radio, listening to things, taking in different information. The fact that I was away from home, and from fans, made me very inward looking, and a lot of soul searching went on. I had just done a very long tour, and I was a bit fed up with music. And so I had the dreaded doubts that any artist who cares about his work has to get now and then. It was one of those periods.

MUSICIAN: *What would you identify with in Chandler?*

FERRY: I think...being nosy (laughs). His observations are intensely good, just an eye for detail, painting a picture of a bar in downtown L.A., and all the smoke that goes with it, and the intrigue. And a sense of dry humor, and irony, which I kind of identify with. I was always a great Jack Benny fan as well.

MUSICIAN: *But there's also that undertone of seeing degeneration in paradise.*

FERRY: That's always an attractive thing to me, and I don't know why. Maybe just because it's a sad theme, and sad things have always interested me, sad music in particular. It's always been kinds of blues music—jazz, blues, emotional sort of 'cry' music—that I've liked as a fan.

MUSICIAN: *Why? Is it cathartic?*

FERRY: I don't know why, it just touched me from a very early

Andy Mackay, Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera and Brian Eno being debonair in first Roxy incarnation.

LFI/RETNA

World Radio History

here's the romantic side, a more flamboyant, soulful emotion, that must be put in. Otherwise it's worthless."

age. I used to memorize Charlie Parker solos, and to this day I can still kind of sing them. And he was someone who could sing through his instrument, in a very positive way, very beautiful lines. I've always looked for that in players that I've worked with—people who could actually 'sing,' make their instrument talk, in other words. With guitarists especially.

MUSICIAN: *I can see a certain approximation in the way you shape your own vocal style....*

FERRY: Well, you try to use it as an instrument as much as you can and make the best of it. I don't really have the technique or the range of a lot of the singers that I have admired, but I try to mean what I sing. Somebody else who always did that for me was Dylan, who had a great character voice, and would drawl his way through a song, and yet it would be very musical.

MUSICIAN: *But your later albums do reflect increased control and utilization of technique. Are you becoming more enamored of that, and does that pose a danger to the animus of personal expression?*

FERRY: Well, that's basically the ultimate question, isn't it (laughter)? It's true, in the last few years I've become more interested in being in the studio. Not that I was ever disinterested, but now I'm more positively involved. In the past I would write at home on the piano all the time, being a very secretive person. That's why I've been so difficult to interview, people tell me—I tend to be guarded in everything I say. Just a natural trait, I'm afraid. So I would take a song into the studio only when I knew very well what I wanted to do. Nowadays I'm much more open about it, and will create a song in the studio—"Rain, Rain, Rain" is one that springs to mind, from the *Flesh And Blood* album. So I do create more in the studio, from square one, and just hope that the mood will get me, and that I won't get too technically minded. And I never engineer myself—I think that would get in the way for me. Since I'm working with someone I know very well, Rhett Davies, I can be as emotional, and make as many mistakes as I like (laughs), while he's looking after the technical side.

After I have the force of the mood onto the piece, I can change my role a bit, and be a kind of mediator with the next artist who plays on it—whether it's bass or drums, guitar, whatever. And that's how I like to do it, really, in a one-to-one situation with me and the producer/engineer. I never yearn for the ability to play it all myself. I like to imagine that I can, but it's great being with other people, because magical things do come out of it.

MUSICIAN: *When you give that type of instruction to Andy (Mackay) or whomever it happens to be, do you instruct them on the mood: "That's it, that's not it"? Or are you more precise?*

FERRY: It depends. Generally it's best not to say anything at all at first, just tape the music and get their basic response. And sometimes great things can happen because a musician will feel something you haven't felt before, and do something that's very off-the-wall, perhaps. The track can veer off in a much more interesting direction than you'd imagine. Other times you will be very specific indeed. You might hear some riff that you know *has* to be on the record. A player might be groping—he's almost there but not quite—and that's what I really enjoy doing, thinking out parts and trying to put as much of my stuff onto the record. It's a very selfish thing, but if you feel you have a part, you really should try to put it on.

MUSICIAN: *How does Phil Manzanera fit into all that?*

FERRY: Ah, it varies. Phil is very good, because he's very much into experimenting with his sound, changing sounds. Sometimes he'll have a sound that he's worked out while we're behind the desk top doing something else; other times he'll be sitting there tuning up, as we'll say, "Stop!" Because that's the sound. You have to remember, there has been another guitarist as well as Phil on the last couple—well, for me the last four or five—albums, Neil Hubbard, who's a very good counterpoint to Phil. Neil does the light, soulful things, and Phil is into the heavy, dark sounds. I like to have both.

MUSICIAN: *Has there been a problem coordinating that, since Phil has been with Roxy from the start, and now with someone else coming in, you're in charge of delegating parts?*

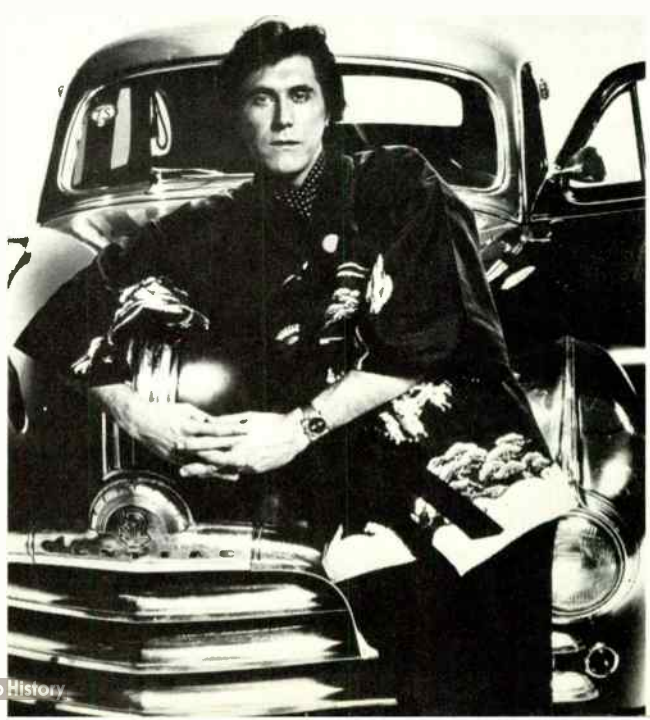
FERRY: Yeah, it's difficult. It depends on the song, and you really have to follow your own instinct of what should happen. Getting into politics has been the downfall of a lot of groups, and worse, it's made for a lot of mediocre records. You see it happening with groups that have been together a long time; somebody will get a song on the album because everybody's being friendly or something, and it might be a really bad, weak song, which will weaken the whole effect. I try to be fair to the players and also fair to the song. You've got to make it as good as you can.

MUSICIAN: *You're not being overly blunt. It does seem that, in a sense, Roxy has become your accompanying group.*

FERRY: I think it's just that I've taken a bigger profile in the last few years. *The Bride Stripped Bare* thing hurt me a bit, I think—at the time it did, not now. It's good to have a kind of dark horse album floating around somewhere that you think someone might discover later on, or see the point of. But I think in the early days I was much more shy. Not that I've changed that much—a little more confidence talking to people about music. But then I was happy just to feel like the man in the background playing the piano rather than the one up front pushing himself.

MUSICIAN: *On "Take A Chance With Me" you take leave of past ennui, or the problems of past love relationships, and go beyond that and move toward optimism, with basically a happy ending. Is that your first optimistic love song?*

Ferry absorbing style from '49 Pontiac.



CLAUDE VAN HEYE/RETNA

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FERRY: (laughs) Yeah. Glad you noticed it. That's true. Part of that is probably that I was getting married. And so obviously there's a kind of optimistic streak there, as well as being a romantic album. I suppose part must have been this sort of a steadying, domestic set-up; not that I ever talk about such things. And the fact that some of the album was planned on the west coast of Ireland, on that lake; the pictures taken at five or six o'clock in the morning on the cover of the album. So that mood is there in a few things; "More Than This," I like the end of that. I wanted to get in some instrumental passages without them necessarily being fixed solos. Like the beginning of "Take A Chance With Me" that you were talking about, and the end of "More Than This."

MUSICIAN: *Avalon is a mood, obviously. If you had to sum it up, what is that mood?*

FERRY: Hmmm... I don't know really. Smug (laughter).

MUSICIAN: *There does seem to be on* Avalon *a real embrace of Arthurian myth, and the ideal of courtly love.*

FERRY: Yeah. I could feel it was a very romantic album from start to finish. And "Avalon" felt like the right word to sum it up. It was possibly a little corny. I felt that there was a lot of nature in the record, and having this kind of landscape, basically. And then having the cover of some woman in a very glamorous, lush situation. But I just put the woman in for fun, with the hawk, you know. It was my wife, in fact.

MUSICIAN: *There are two ways that you could look at that. Some people would say, well, that's just escapist, that's illusion. And somebody else might say, that ideal, it's a higher thing that we all aspire to and that you were yearning for. What's your reaction?*

FERRY: I think it's good to stylize life in certain ways, and have set ways of doing things. Like, taking tea at four can be quite fun. But at the same time I'm as much a classicist as a romantic. I like to think in art terms, really. When you're making records there's a classical side, where you're dealing with structures and shapes of a song, or texture of different instruments. You can be quite cold, you're kind of chiseling things out here and putting them in there, and just modeling—it's like architecture. Then there's the romantic side, a more flamboyant, soulful emotion if you like, that must be put in as well. Otherwise it's worthless. Because music should be an emotional statement first.

But then having got the thing going, you have to start shaping it. And the more records you make and the older you get, you start to get more sophisticated or refined in the way you do it. There's no way of avoiding that. But you have to guard against making things too swish, too smooth and perfect.

MUSICIAN: *So, it's the old problem of, as you lose that initial spark, how to refine your art while keeping....*

FERRY: Keeping some spark going, yes. And how I do that is by not living the life all the time, not always touring. One of the reasons we've never been so big in America, I suppose, is that we haven't toured here much—or anywhere else, for that matter. So by not touring and driving the music out of myself, I keep hungry for it; that is, for new work and self-expression. I don't feel that I've done too much. I've rationed it out, even though I keep working all the time. I don't take six-month holidays or anything.

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever feel as if you've taken a wrong turn?*

FERRY: Yeah, I think *Another Time Another Place*. Even though it has some things on it that I like. still, as an album it was too much.

MUSICIAN: *Too much?*

FERRY: Too much of the same thing. I was trying too hard—but then again I was learning different things by doing it, you see. Doing other people's songs is what I'm trying to say. Some of them weren't right for me to do, possibly. Now I say, "Why did I do that song?"

MUSICIAN: *One of the problems with covers is that some people will read irony into a point that's not ironic, and at other points miss the irony completely.*

DAVE HOGAN/LGI

Ferry emanating style for limo and wife.

FERRY: A confusion of image was one of the great drawbacks, especially in this country. It's a wonderful place, and I like spending time in America. But it's very different than Europe, for the European artist, in that a lot of things are sometimes taken at face value by the mass audience, and that's not really the European way. You want to be less obvious; find complex, complicated, different, double meanings for things, and different reasons for doing one thing or another. And generally, you tie yourself up in knots (laughs). And there was a knife edge with a lot of those songs, quite frankly. You walked a perilous line. And sometimes you could easly slip over. And sometimes people would just push you over in their imagination (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *How conscious was your image in the early days, when you would appear in everything from tuxedos to military uniforms?*

FERRY: Oh, very. Especially the early Roxy days, we were terrified to go onstage. And it was a way of making it possible for us to perform, dressing up and becoming other people, in a sense. And we could do that without affecting the music. It made us feel more comfortable, like protection somehow.

MUSICIAN: *But the funny thing is that the audience took this very literally—everything was a symbol that had to be taken seriously. Was it ever disconcerting that they thought, "He's trying to be a lounge lizard, he's trying to be a storm trooper"?*

FERRY: I did worry about it, because I said, "Oh God. they've got it all wrong again." And half the time I was just wearing different costumes to make it more interesting. If you've done a hundred photograph sessions in a particular suit, you get tired of looking like that. You say, "Oh well, let's put on a redskin costume," or whatever. And then you pay the price for it years later.

MUSICIAN: *Robert Fripp told this story about trying out lead singers for King Crimson. Wasn't that your original entrée into the scene?*

FERRY: Oh yes, that was before I'd done anything with Roxy, obviously. I was in London, writing the first songs and finding it hard to find other musicians. I didn't know any. I was only working with the bass player from the first Roxy line at that time. And King Crimson was one of the groups that I liked. And I went to this audition and they were very friendly. I think I did a reasonable job of singing the songs.

MUSICIAN: *Those first Roxy records just exploded onto the scene with a vitality and adventurous spirit that's still remarkable to hear. How do you place those records in retrospect?*

FERRY: Well, I don't listen to them very much (laughs). But—oh, so many ideas, in every song. And some of them were really badly played (laughs). Well, you would just do it differ-

World Radio History

ANATOMY OF AN EXTRAVAGANZA

Bryan Ferry sings through a Shure SM58 microphone piped into a custom-built Electro-Tech P.A. **Phil Manzanera** plays a black vintage Les Paul Custom (and occasionally a Fender Strat reissue) through a Peter Cornish-designed pedalboard that includes an MXR phaser, a treble boost unit, a Roland effects rack (with Digital Delay and Space Echo) and thence into a Mesa Boogie (for lead scronch) and a Fender Twin Reverb (for clean rhythm) with either/or/both switching. Rhythm guitarist **Neil Hubbard** uses the same amps to drive his cherry red Gibson 335. Being a clean fellow, he uses only a volume pedal and a Roland Chorus Echo.

Andy Mackay uses two Selmers for alto and tenor and is particulary fond of a one-of-a-kind soprano sax built as a prototype for Yamaha but never put into production. He mikes his horns with two tiny clip-ons, a Shure D19 and an AKG, and runs the signal through a Peter Cornish pedalboard that includes an MXR phaser, Roland Space Echo and Chorus and other assorted flangers and whatnot. He also has a stage mike, usually a Shure SM57 or an AKG, for clean sounds. Both Andy and Phil Manzanera use Shaefer-Vega wireless systems. Keysman **Guy Fletcher** mans a Yamaha CP80 electric grand, two Roland Jupiter 8 synthesizers, a Korg Cx3 organ, an ARP string synth and a Wurlitzer EP-800 electric piano. After sending the signal through an 8-channel mixer and a Roland effects rack (RE-555 Chorus, SDE-2000 Digital Delay, SBF 325 Stereo Flanger and RE-501 Space Echo) he splits it, sending half through the P.A. board and the other half through a Yamaha A4115H stage amp.

Bassist **Alan Spenner**, being power-mad, uses an Ampeg SVT with 8x10 cabinet to crank his Fender Jazz and Wahl basses, occasionally spiced by a flanger. Drummer **Andy Newmark** pounds a natural wood finish Yamaha drum set (made especially for him) with only four drums: a 22-inch bass, a 16-inch floor tom, a 12- or 13-inch mounted tom (depending on the Roxy weather) and a 14-inch snare, either 5½ or 6½ inches deep. His three cymbals are by Paiste and Zildjian. Percussionist **Jimmy Maelen** has virtually everything onstage with him, including two Latin Percussion congas (11-inch and 12-inch), which he mikes with two Sennheisers piped through a Roland Chorus Echo. He may at times feel the need to lay into a Paiste 36-inch gong. Flashy back-up singers **Tawatha Agee**, **Michelle Cobbs** (ex-Chic) and **Fonzi Thornton** sing through Shure SM58s. Production manager **Chris Adamson** keeps track of everything and still finds time to graciously answer prying newshounds' questions. — *jb*

ently now. And part of the fun was making mistakes, as I've mentioned. I feel like Alfred Hitchcock talking about fifty years ago, and it doesn't seem all that long ago, it's strange. It was just really exciting to be doing it. To suddenly find that you were making a record, after you'd wanted to do it for such a long time.

MUSICIAN: *If you had to say what songs best manifested what you were trying to do at any moment, what would they be?*

FERRY: Well, I think "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" comes quite close to being something that I still quite like, where the form and content of it seem to match up well. From the second album, which is one of my favorite ones, really. I suppose—what's the other one? From *The Bride Stripped Bare*, called "This Island Earth," which also follows that strain—rather bleak and all things swirling around. That's the sort of thing I like to set up; but that one slipped away (laughs). It was a nice song.

MUSICIAN: *If you had to say which side of the line you fall on, optimist or pessimist, at this time in your life, which would it be?*

FERRY: Hmmm...I think I'm much more optimistic now.

MUSICIAN: *Was there a point where you felt you crossed from night into day?*

FERRY: I suppose it must have been the *Manifesto* album, where there was to some extent a marrying of the two things, the musical forms that you're playing and the ideas. Not being just satisfied with good playing, or good ideas, trying to get both. I like the title track very much. And also "Stronger Through The Years," which finishes off that side, and goes through *tour de force* bass playing by Alan Spenner, who is a great mood player.

MUSICIAN: *What about "Dance Away"?*

FERRY: Oh, I don't know—it was just a bit of fun. I tried doing that on the *In Your Mind* album, and then again on *The Bride Stripped Bare* and it didn't work. It's just strange how I tried to do it with different players, all much better than I, and in the end it only worked with me and a rhythm box; though obviously I added other things afterwards. It was just an attempt to write a good pop song—and it worked. It's difficult doing interviews over here sometimes, because that was a major hit in Europe. I know nobody here will have heard of the song (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *Your catalog, until recently, has had an overwhelming amount of more melancholy songs. Is that an accurate reflection of your character, are you just more likely to write when you feel that way?*

FERRY: Yeah, very much so. I feel more inclined to work late at night and when I'm in a certain mood. It doesn't mean that I'm like that all the time, it just suits my personality to do those kind of more reflective, slower songs. But it's a great feeling when you come up with an up-tempo, optimistic fast thing. A bit of fun, like "Do The Strand." I wish I could write more of them, but they don't come as easily. Maybe you just become too serious (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *That's what I'm wondering. Because it's been such a strong, propelling force for your art, isn't there a danger of cultivating that part of your personality?*

FERRY: Of course; you have to watch out for becoming too hammy, or cultivating the brooding stranger, or whatever (chuckles). You know, the outsider at odds with the world. Those things are there, but there's humor as well, which perhaps doesn't come out as much as it ought to. Because any friends I have are the ones I can laugh with; I think that's something we all find.

MUSICIAN: *I think a lot of people who hear your songs associate them with what might be called upper-class sensibilities or concerns. But that's not really where you're from at all. Do you have the perspective of being in both camps at once?*

FERRY: Oh, very much so. Or being campless, in fact. Having come from, well, a poor industrial town, and a family which wasn't rich at all; and then having moved away from that, through my work and through any sort of success or celebrity that's come through working. In England that's very difficult, because you can't go back. And so you're pushed into strange company, and you become socially limited. Where you can go and so on without being bothered by people—it tends to push you into kind of exclusive surroundings. And the image-building thing starts taking on a life of its own, and the only time you ever see yourself in print is when you're photographed at a party or whatever. And there's nothing wrong with that, but that's how people get this whole English upper-class kind of impression. Whereas I know a lot of people from different areas of society—I think you have to. But probably very few friends. They're mostly tried and tested artist-type friends, people I've known for ten years or more.

I feel not only classless, but stateless in a sense, inasmuch as I spend a lot of time in America. I like the humor of New York. I'm very Americanized in some ways. Certainly in my musical tastes—most of my heroes came out of American music. My son's named after one. Young Otis.

MUSICIAN: *You've said that you plan to release your next record under your own name rather than Roxy's. Given the kind of control you presently have over Roxy Music, is there a difference?*

FERRY: Hmmm....

MUSICIAN: *A royalty check?*

FERRY: (laughs) Yes, I suppose—that's very kind. I guess it's probably some sort of ego thing. It feels right; I'm not one to oversaturate the audience, and after *Avalon* and *Flesh And Blood* perhaps another Roxy album would be coming too close. But there's no grand plan. I'll be playing with a few different people, but I can't say who at the moment. Sometimes you don't know about things until the last moment. ▣

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WINTER 1981:

Marvin Gaye's words on the phone from London were full of sadness. "There was not the kind of love for me in Los Angeles that I was accustomed to," he said in an eerily calm voice. "I wanted more love, more respect for me as an artist. There were so many plots and plans against me. People were saying that I was finished. My personality took a horrible beating there. I couldn't work in that kind of psychological hell-hole. I won't go back until my tarnished image is repolished by my work. I can't do my best work in America right now."

This was the voice of a man bedeviled by events. His divorce from Anna Gordy and the cool commercial reception to *Here, My Dear* still chafed. Pressure from the IRS and other creditors had forced him to spend almost four years in self-imposed European exile. The reason for our conversation, his *In Our Lifetime* album, had been remixed by Motown and some material had been deleted. Gaye still professed affection for Motown's founder Berry Gordy, but he was bitter toward Motown and the whole Los Angeles music scene. To hear the man who had given such joy, from "Stubborn Kinda Fella" to "Got To Give It Up," in such personal turmoil left me with hollow feelings. However, Marvin did add one optimistic—and prophetic—comment. He spoke of a "dark period" in his life ending and that "perhaps now I'll experience an equal period of good fortune." I certainly hoped he was right, but I have to admit I was skeptical.

SPRING 1983:

It is a clear, blue day in San Mateo, California, part of the area known to computer-chip fans as Silicon Valley. Past Apple Computer's current building (another's going up across the street) and down the road a bit is the Villa, a nondescript motel housing Marvin Gaye for five days while he appears at a nearby suburban concert hall. Sitting in a robe and slippers, surrounded by bodyguards and roadies, Gaye is watching a fight and is quite pleased that his man is winning ("I told you he'd walk into that right").

Gaye appears relaxed and he certainly has every reason to be. The IRS is off his back. He's living in the U.S. again, and on the strength of "Sexual Healing" he is enjoying a platinum album, *Midnight*

World Radio History

BY NELSON GEORGE

A SOUL HEAVYWEIGHT RECAPTURES HIS TITLE

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

World Radio History

"My approach is that of a subtle exhibitionist. I can't deal with the raw fact. I'd rather be teased by a woman before I get it."

Love, and a sold-out concert tour backed by a powerful twenty-four-piece band. He even "turned out" the national anthem at the National Basketball Association All-Star game, making the video of his performance a hot item on both coasts and his interpretation the B-side of a single. *Midnight Love*, his first Columbia album, was virtually a one-man show, recorded in Belgium with Gaye relying heavily on synthesizers. For the skeptics (like me), it certified that Gaye had lost none of his musical intelligence or his commercial acumen.

Yet in the midst of celebrating the biggest selling album of his career, Marvin still seemed restless and disturbed. The battle of love versus lust that has dominated all of his albums since *Let's Get It On*, the desire for lasting spiritual salvation introduced on his landmark *What's Going On*, and the personal idiosyncrasies that make his concerts an adventure still trouble him. Despite being the most intelligently passionate pop singer of his generation, Gaye still worries over little things like his microphone technique. As he says in the following interview, "No conflicts are resolved," and for Marvin Gaye that definitely seems true.

MUSICIAN: *I've read so much about your not enjoying live performance, but you were enjoying yourself last night.*
GAYE: Well, I did, but it's sort of a mixed emotion thing. I'm performing under stress, but it's okay, because I get a lot of positive reaction from the audience and those who love me. I can exist on that alone, but I can also pick up negative responses just as surely.
MUSICIAN: *What kind of negative things do you pick up?*
GAYE: I don't know. I feel, that's all I can say. I feel and I know my house and my crowds. I've been doing this for about twenty-five years, so it comes to a point when you can sense hostility or interest or love. I can also tell you almost how many adoring fans I have in the audience as opposed to critics and people who are there just out of curiosity. I guess I put out what I get back. I'm very honest in my performances. I'm not mechanical at all onstage. So, naturally, being a performer like that, I will have some good shows and some bad shows. I prefer it that way. I work according to how my heart feels.
MUSICIAN: *Last night you really fooled the band when you went into that medley, songs you recorded with Tammi Terrell, Mary Wells and Diana Ross. They were looking around at each other and searching through their charts.*
GAYE: I'm not the easiest guy for a band director to work with unless we really have good rapport. McKinley Jackson has been arranging for years and he's incredible, but this is our first tour together and as we go along, he will get used to those zingers. I'm an ad libber, you know. I love to ad lib.
MUSICIAN: *It's amazing—you had twenty-four pieces, three percussionists, three synthesizers and seven horns—but it all supported your voice and didn't overpower it.*
GAYE: During rehearsals we were looking at that, thinking it might be too much. I decided that we would keep the three keyboards and three percussionists because they seemed extremely compatible and I liked the sound of it. In order for a performer to be able to perform onstage and make an artistic statement, he can't save anything.
MUSICIAN: *I notice that you rearranged most of your older material. As opposed to the original version, the new "Heard It Through The Grapevine" was very slowed down.*
GAYE: There comes a time in life when you better slow down a bit. I'm forty-four years old and I'm not exactly a kid or spring chicken. This is the time to slow down a bit and take it easy, or as easy as I can, although I'm not the most unanimated act in show business. You know, I don't know how long I can keep up this sex image stuff, but I'm not going to do it much longer.
MUSICIAN: *Your frank approach to sensuality since* Let's Get It On *has certainly been influential.*
GAYE: Oh, I think my approach to sensuality and sexuality is that of subtle exhibitionist. I can't deal with the raw fact. I'd rather be teased by a woman before I get it. That's the French way: you make a person think you are going to do something, but never do until you are ready. I kind of borrowed that from the French. I actually won't be stripping down to the shorts or anything like that, though they may think I will. But that's out of the question.
MUSICIAN: *Your last album,* In Our Lifetime, *revolved around the conflicts between sex and love, sex and spirituality.* Midnight Love *is more straightforward in its view of love and sex. Has that conflict been resolved in your mind?*
GAYE: No conflicts are resolved, but I think I have taken the personal edge off it on *Midnight Love*. I tend to write of my personal interest. In this album I tend to generalize about these situations. Perhaps I will go back to writing more personally on my next one.
MUSICIAN: *How long does it take you to write?*
GAYE: If it's inspired, seconds, minutes. If it's contrived, hours, days, months.
MUSICIAN: *Is there anything on* Midnight Love *that you would consider contrived?*
GAYE: A couple of songs, yes. I have to think about it a minute..."Midnight Lady" is one that'll give you a good example of what I mean. You're surprised I'm so honest. My honesty has gotten me in trouble in the past, but one can't be a true artist without it.
MUSICIAN: *Your old friend Harvey Fuqua played a prominent role in this album. What did he contribute?*
GAYE: I was pretty much bogged down overseas. I didn't have the technical instruments and musicians I needed and I was not about to fly back and forth to look for them. Harvey was invaluable to me in this area. He was able to go to America and supervise McKinley Jackson doing the horn arrangements and things like that.
MUSICIAN: *Throughout your career others—from Harvey Fuqua on your early work, to Leon Ware* (I Want You), *Alfred Cleveland* (What's Going On) *and Ed Townsend* (Let's Get It On)*—have either written or produced your music with you. Do you feel the need for an objective pair of ears in the studio?*
GAYE: Contrary to popular belief, I am quite produceable and I enjoy the role of interpreter. I love it when someone wants to produce me and I'm able to give them what they want. I think I'm going to let Barry White produce my next album.
MUSICIAN: *That's rather surprising. Some might say you would be giving Barry a big break at this stage of his career.*
GAYE: Oh, I wouldn't look at it like that. Barry White is a tremendous talent and I think I can sing Barry White's music. I think it would be a great marriage.
MUSICIAN: *The arrangements on* Midnight Love *are much cleaner than those of any of your albums since* Let's Get It On. *The vocals in particular are more defined.*
GAYE: A lot of that has to do with my microphone technique. I have a very sensitive voice. It doesn't record the same as most people's and I have to be extremely aware of my technique when I am recording. In the past I had not been perfecting my microphone technique but while I was in Europe I studied it. I think I found what I need to make my voice more recordable.

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MUSICIAN: *During your performance you twisted and turned your microphone, as I've seen some jazz singers do.*

GAYE: Well, it's because I have three voices, a very rough voice, a falsetto and my natural and smooth midrange. Each one demands a different microphone technique. The more falsetto I sing, the closer I make the microphone, for example. This was only my fifth show, so it will take a week or so to get in shape. When I'm at that point, I won't have to deal with the microphone so much.

MUSICIAN: *It struck me that perhaps your great reliance on synthesizers on* Midnight Love *affected the writing.*

GAYE: I've been using them for a few years now. Stevie (Wonder) gave the Moog to me. I like the way I can write and produce myself with all the music coming from me. It gives me a control and feeling of self-containment that I enjoy. But one does need a change, which is why I mentioned Barry White.

MUSICIAN: *Isn't working primarily by yourself slower than working with a band?*

GAYE: Not really. That's traditionalism and I disdain tradition. I have to change totally from thing to thing or I get bored easily.

MUSICIAN: *Have you considered touring with just synths?*

GAYE: I thought about hooking it up that way and if I hadn't found the proper musicians, I probably would have.

MUSICIAN: *Since* What's Going On, *you've moved away from politics in your songwriting, though you do make mention of Bob Marley, albeit subtly, on "Third World Girl."*

GAYE: I am surprised you picked up on that. I am not about to capitalize on a man's death. I tried to refer to him indirectly out of respect. Thank you.

MUSICIAN: *The times seem to call for the kind of commentary you provided on* What's Going On.

GAYE: It seems to me that I have to do some soul searching to see what I want to say. You can say something. Or you can say something profound. It calls for fasting, feeling, praying, lots of prayer, and maybe we can come up with a more spiritual social statement to give people more food for thought.

MUSICIAN: *I take it that this process hasn't been going on within you for quite some time.*

GAYE: I have been apathetic, because I know the end is near. Sometimes I feel like going off and taking a vacation and enjoying the last ten or fifteen years and forgetting about my message, which I feel is in a form of being a true messenger of God. I was thinking this morning that in my stage performance, I am not putting out the message like I should. Today I already decided that I am going to make a slight change.

MUSICIAN: *What about doing what Al Green did and turn your back on the whole thing?*

GAYE: That's his role. My role is not necessarily his. That doesn't make me a devil. It's just that my role is different, you see. If he wants to turn to God and become without sin and have his reputation become that, then that is what it should be. I am not concerned with what my role should be. I am only concerned with completing my mission here on earth. My mission is what it is and I think I'm presenting it in a proper way. What people think about me is their business.

MUSICIAN: *What is your mission?*

GAYE: My mission is to tell the world and the people about the upcoming holocaust and to find all of those of higher consciousness who can be saved. The rest can be left alone.

MUSICIAN: *Yet your new music deals purely with romance.*

GAYE: For legitimacy I need worldwide exposure. This is a chance for the world to recognize Marvin Gaye so that ultimately I can get my message across. If it's through romance, etc., then that's what it is. I have to deal with God.

MUSICIAN: *In your later years with Motown, your relationship with them was very poor. I remember in the late 70s you released a single, "Ego Tripping Out," that was later pulled from the market. It was supposed to be the lead in to an album called* Love Man. *But your next album turned out to be called* In Our Lifetime.

GAYE: That was a single written about myself at a time when I was trying to get a handle on my ego, which was always at the forefront. I'm very self-centered and I feel like I'm it. When one is that ill, one has to try to deal with his ego. They never really gave me a chance to complete it and when I did complete it, for some reason they didn't put it on the album.

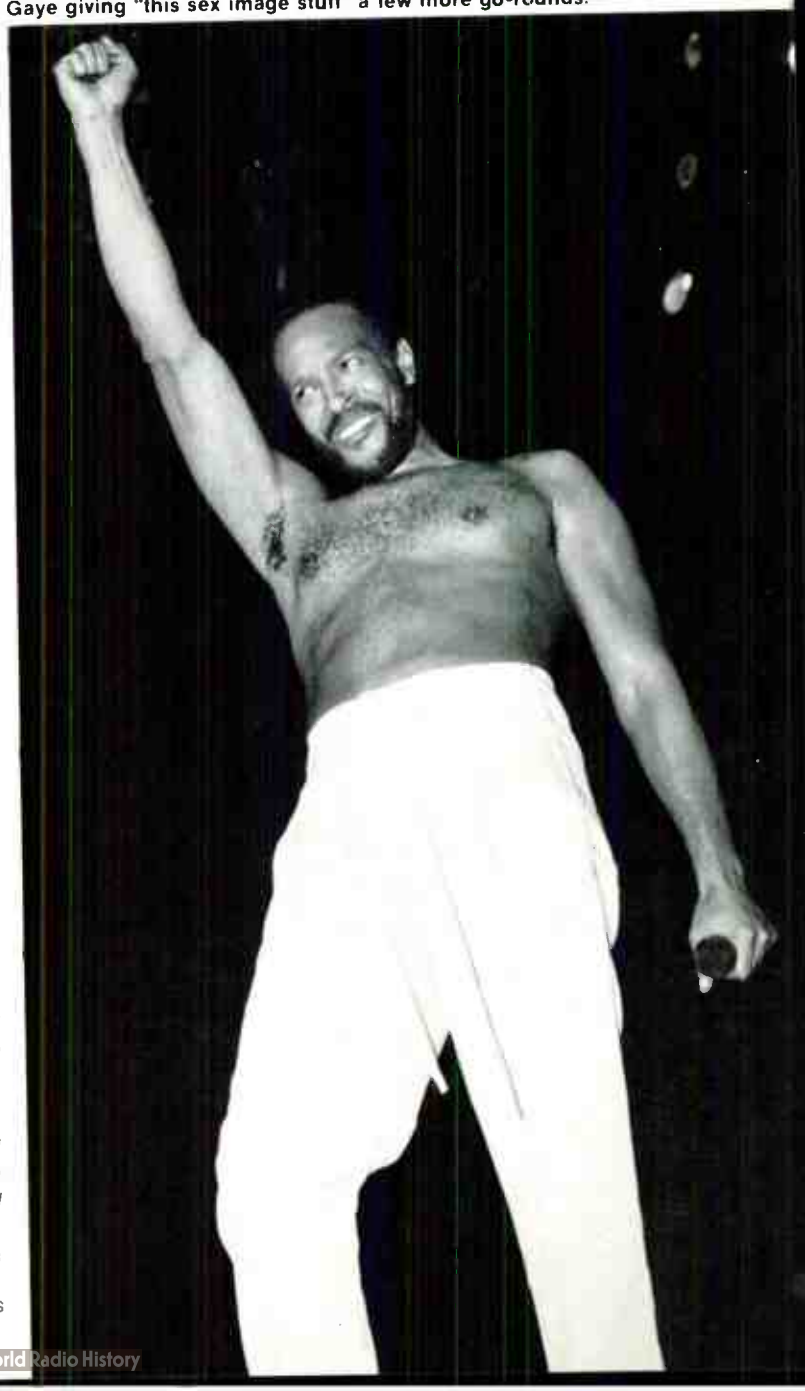
The album didn't come out the way I had done it. It's like taking a Leonardo da Vinci and submitting it to your agent and your agent has another artist paint a different smile or something on top of it. I view people tampering with my art in the same context.

MUSICIAN: *"Got To Give It Up" was released under curious circumstances. Here was almost twelve minutes of pure funk stuck onto this live package* (Live In London), *which seemed to be almost filler, an excuse to put out the long version of "Give It Up" at LP prices.*

GAYE: The reason I did that was that it was the closest I was going to get to doing disco, despite what some forces wished. I thought it was ridiculous and I refused to get into that madness. That was as close as I was coming. I just said I was going to ride out that crazy disco number.

MUSICIAN: *How much creative input did you have on the music you recorded at Motown during the 60s?*

Gaye giving "this sex image stuff" a few more go-rounds.



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GAYE: In those days I probably wrote seventy-five to ninety percent of every song my name was one. As a writer in those days I was very generous and I gave a lot. If someone contributed a word or a chord I'd give them twenty-five percent of a song, things like that.

MUSICIAN: *Did you play drums on most of your records?*

GAYE: I played drums on quite a few of my songs and also on some of Smokey Robinson's. I traveled with Smokey on the road on occasion in the early days as well. Benny Benjamin played drums on most of the songs, but if it wasn't a heavy reading thing or stuff like that, I would do it myself. Stevie played on a few things, too.

MUSICIAN: *I talked with James Jamerson, the Motown bassist, and he claims many of the production and musical ideas come from the band and not just the producers.*

GAYE: He's absolutely right. Jamerson was a genius. The little group that they had there was the Motown sound, and half the credit for the productions should go to the musicians, who were not only great musicians, but great producers and arrangers as well. They didn't get enough credit. I don't feel that's very good. It's unfortunate.

MUSICIAN: *Why did that happen?*

GAYE: Because they didn't make it happen. You give your input out of love and expect nothing or you give it and sign a contract. If you want something, you say, "I'm not giving it up until I sign something and get something for it."

MUSICIAN: *Do you look back on those days at Motown?*

GAYE: I rarely deal in the past. I think it's a waster of time and emotion. One should be concerned with the now and not even the future. What's important is if I get the next breath or not. It's now that's important.

MUSICIAN: *Do you listen to a lot of Third World Music?*

GAYE: I have not been exposed to it here in the States, but when I was in Europe I was exposed to a tremendous amount of it. If you listen closely to my new album it is quite evident that I was influenced by it on "Third World Girl" and "Sexual Healing."

MUSICIAN: *Did you ever get a chance to meet Bob Marley?*

GAYE: We were on tour together for three weeks in the 70s, but I never met him face to face. I had tremendous respect for him. He was a great man. He was one of the greatest men in the history of the world. I view him from that perspective. I know what he had given up and I know where his heart was, so I am very sorry I never got a chance to shake his hand.

MUSICIAN: *You radically dismembered the national anthem at the N.B.A. All-Star game. In fact, when you finished with it, it really was a different, surprisingly soulful song.*

GAYE: Thank you.... It's difficult to deal with the national anthem because of its structure. It was written for an operatic type of voice. A soul singer isn't exactly comfortable singing it, nor is any other ethnic person, really. So I think in a country full of ethnic nationalities, we should sing it in accordance with what is most comfortable. I can't sing it white and say I am totally white. I have to sing it so it moves *me*. Since I am a soul singer I must sing it with soul. Those who are afraid of the sound can't sing it my way and I can't see singing it their way. If I'm categorized as a soul singer, I'm going to sing like one.

MUSICIAN: *How about calling yourself a pop-soul singer?*

GAYE: I don't know what that is (laughs). Unless they say that we're going to let you make it halfway, that you're going to come up here where the "big boys," the white boys, are, so you can be half-soul. You see, the pop artists are the ones who make the money, but soul artists are not supposed to make a lot of money. They are exploitable. Pop means making money. Soul means exploit.

MUSICIAN: *Some say Lionel Richie has sold his soul to make money.*

GAYE: Well, I don't know. I have a lot of respect for Lionel.... But if he did, I hope he got a good deal.

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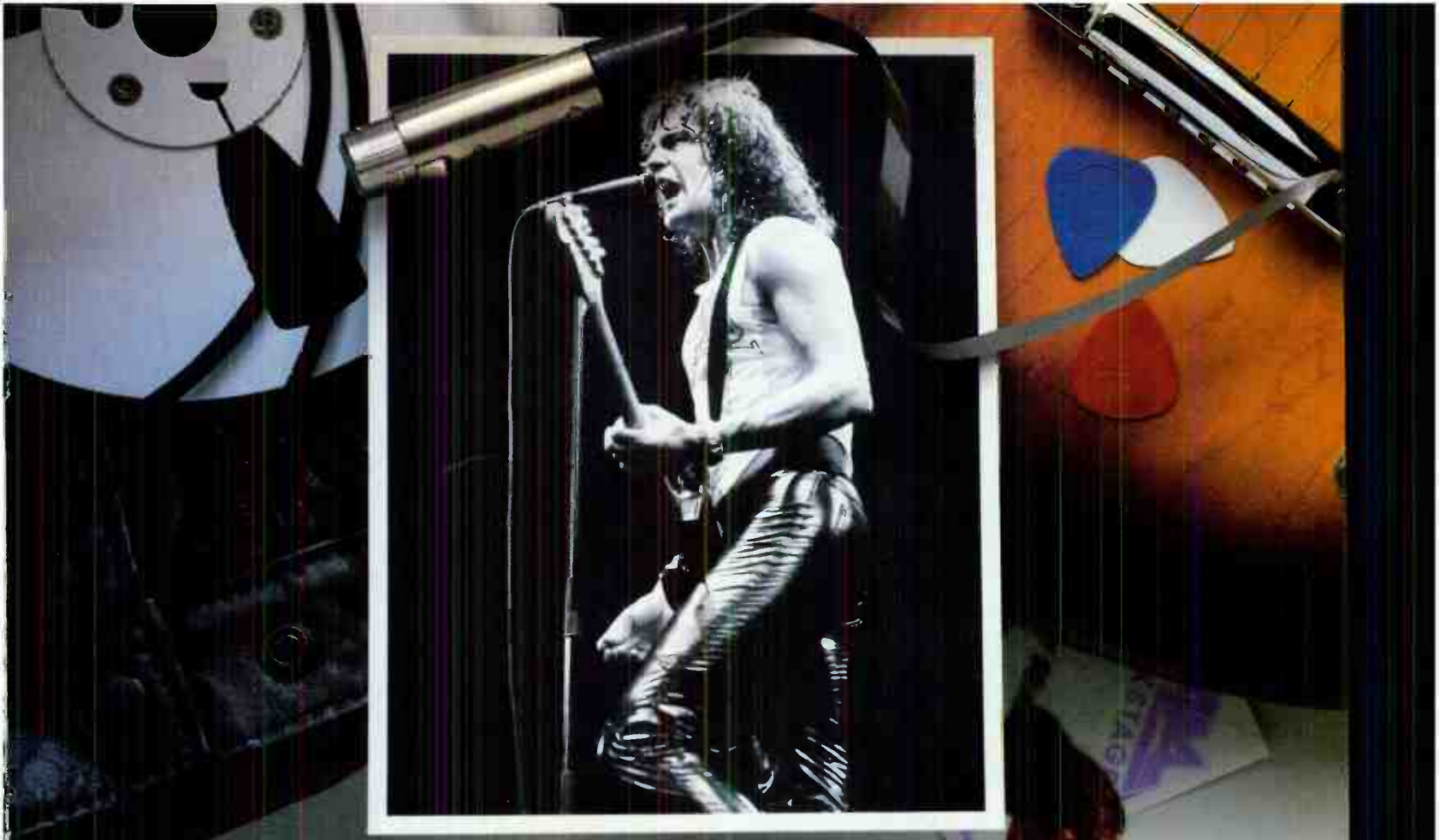

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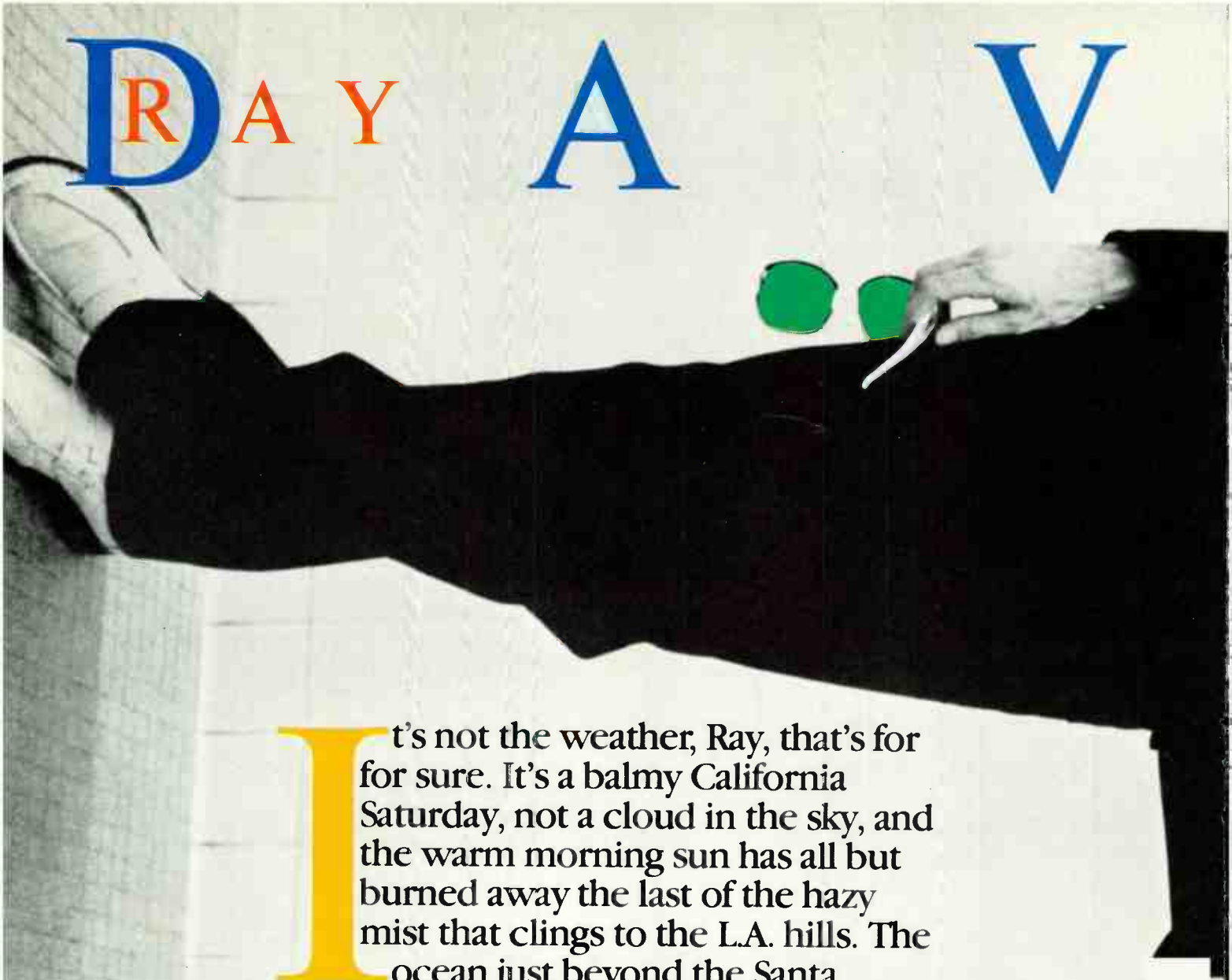
RAY DAVIES



It's not the weather, Ray, that's for for sure. It's a balmy California Saturday, not a cloud in the sky, and the warm morning sun has all but burned away the last of the hazy mist that clings to the L.A. hills. The ocean just beyond the Santa Monica pier is truly pacific, while what's left of the boardwalk after last winter's devastating storm is alive with tourists and the usual beach weirdos, who pop in and out of ersatz rococo arcades that look like they were designed by Rod Serling on nitrous oxide. In short, we have here the kind of crazy-quilt tapestry ("Lola" meets "Waterloo Sunset" by the sea) that you'd expect Ray Davies could easily tap into for at least three or four tunes. So why is he staring blankly out

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I E S

The Kinks' Innocent Abroad

"Don't know why I feel so bad
Is it the weather, or am I
going mad?
Can't cover up 'cause it's
obviously showing
It's a state—state of confusion"

BY VIC GARBARINI

EBET ROBERTS

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"I think I'm very naive, more than anything—a pretty basic person. I'm very atonal: no quarter tones, no three-part harmony."

to sea, hands stuffed into his pockets, newsboy cap pulled low over his Holmesian features with that utterly miserable look plastered across his face? "I was standing there on the pier this morning, and I was really confused and worried because...." Because why, Ray? "Because I was so...so *happy*, and I couldn't figure out why!" Maybe because his new album *State Of Confusion* is securely lodged at the top of the charts? Or because his mate Chrissie Hynde has just called with news of their month-old daughter? Nope. "As I stood there smelling the different smells of the hot dog stands and things, I suddenly realized that it was because I had nothing to do, and I was innocent again. It's like remembering you're alive, and I wanted to celebrate it...celebrate it through music."

If we're lucky, the events of this morning will metamorphosize into a first-class Kinks song sometime soon. If he centers on the anxiety and alienation, the result will be another "State Of Confusion," or "Dead End Street"—bleak, unrelieved visions of the inner paralysis of modern life. These are the kind of songs that emerge from Ray's heavy-metal Hamlet persona, bitter little odes to existential angst driven home by brother Dave's ominous, industrial-strength power chords. But if we're really lucky, the images just might crystallize around that moment of innocence and wonder. In that state of naiveté something of a different order might appear, a state of grace that he can't enter in his analytical mode. It's the voice of hope heard in songs like "Better Things" and "Don't Forget To Dance," naked, vulnerable and almost painfully moving in their blend of courage and faith. You'd expect someone with his literate sensibilities to go about carefully molding moods and images to fit preconceived story lines and intentions, but not so. In fact, Ray claims to be the last person to know whether it's the lady or the tiger behind any given door.

"I don't really analyze the whole world," explains Ray; "just parts of it. I have to trivialize things; otherwise I'd get too heavy. Like a psychic who can reconstruct a stranger's life by merely touching the individual's handkerchief, any sight, sound, smell or other simulus may be enough to open the floodgates of the Davies unconscious. But like a child at a horror flick who peers through his fingers while covering his eyes, Davies can only allow himself to view glimpses of the overall picture. It's as if the partial stimulus then consciously sparks some deeper pattern. Sometimes he has to wait for the process to play itself out before he discovers what the hell it is he's really writing about. That's why, in the case of "Waterloo Sunset," Davies thought he was writing a boy/girl song only to watch it become a picture poem about a train station. Or in the case of "Catch Me Now I'm Falling" which, during a walk to and from the supermarket, went from being a reflection on lost friendship to a eulogy for the American dream.

Pete Townshend, with whom Ray is often compared, agrees that what finally comes through on songs like this is often deeper and more universal than what one's conscious mind first intended. That's one of the advantages of walking around with no deflector shields. The obvious disadvantage is that all the raw agonizing pain in the world can also get through. That's why those special moments of innocence are such a relief. In that gentle image, Ray Davies sees his reflection somewhere so high above this world. It tells him not to Forget To Dance, that Better Things are on the way, that even under the bitterest exterior there may be, no, there *must* be, a Heart Of Gold.

Heading back to the hotel, the anxiety returns. Interviews are not much fun with people without deflector shields. Others may enjoy this kind of therapy, but for Ray Davies it is pure torment. "I'm simply incapable of being clever, of turning it on and off for the press," he notes. Indeed, he's completely vulnerable to nosy journalists asking questions about motivation and purpose that can't be answered, or worse, making the kind of queries that something in him feels compelled to answer, in spite of the inevitable pain. Meanwhile, high above the Santa Monica pier, two brown and white seagulls wheel and turn in blissful innocence like ballroom dancers.

GOD SAVE THE KINKS.

MUSICIAN: *As you know, a number of stylistic, historical and temperamental parallels have been drawn between your work and Pete Townshend's. Yet Townshend claims to be unable to suss out what makes you tick. He's not sure whether you're really sad about the passing of certain values and the deterioration of our quality of life, or whether you're just trying to make humorous commentary, or just fishing around for interesting song material.*

DAVIES: The fact that he thinks about that proves he's got a problem. I don't use *any* of those devices. I think I'm naive, more than anything—a pretty basic person. I'm very atonal; I mean, I've got the scale but no quarter tones, no three-part harmony. Sometimes I don't understand when people analyze what I do.

MUSICIAN: *But you spend so much time analyzing the world, it's not surprising that the world's going to turn around and analyze you.*

DAVIES: I don't really analyze the whole world, just parts of it. This may sound silly, but when I think back on the 70s, all I remember about it is trousers getting narrower. Or this woman I went out with a lot in the early days; I can't remember her name, but I recall her teaching me to stand on my head; that's what stayed in the end. I have to trivialize things like that, otherwise I'd get too heavy, too analytical. In fact, I was going to call this LP *It's Easy*.

MUSICIAN: *Cute.*

DAVIES: Yeah, well, I can't help it. I think Townshend and I should be a comedy team. He could be the straight man, or we might keep switching roles. There's a DJ in London called John Peel who said to me, "Cor, I can't believe you. There's only one person more insecure than you, and that's Pete Townshend." Maybe so. I feel pretty secure. Don't know why. First signs of madness, when you feel like that.

MUSICIAN: *Funny what you said before about being atonal, because, to be honest, listening to your records of the last few years I get more of a feeling of what's happening in the world from the overall musical and emotional tone of the record than from what you're saying in the lyrics...frustration and despair, really.*

DAVIES: Strange, I feel that the world's been in a kind of monotone for the last five years. Disco music and rhythm machines. I was listening to Thomas Dolby's single yesterday and there's no dynamics to it; it's all arrangement covering up the fact that there's no song there.

MUSICIAN: *The exact opposite of something like* Village Green Preservation Society....

DAVIES: Yeah, that whole album was a demo, you know. Theoretically, it should have been given to a record producer and he would have made it Hollywood, and made it a hit. But I intended it to be kind of bare and unsuccessful, in a sense. It had charm, and possibly a lot of those qualities that Pete Townshend said it did. Simple and naive.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

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"I've always been worried about writing subjective 'you and me, baby' songs. Even my new dance songs have a detached feel."

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of which, "Better Things," the "simple, naive" little tune that ended your last album, was the most moving thing you've done in a decade. It was such a poignantly hopeful ending to such a bleak record. But it was courageous optimism in the face of despair, not just saccharine sentiment....*

DAVIES: Another demo, that one. Actually, we did it at the end of a session as a send-up of our own genre. We did it for a laugh, and it turned out great. See, that's what I mean about doing things naively. Three minutes, and it said it all very clearly, like an old Kinks song.

MUSICIAN: *Are you still the optimist depicted in that song?*

DAVIES: Yeah, optimism, definitely. I've got this song called "The Optimist" that...I shouldn't talk about this.

MUSICIAN: *Go ahead, I won't tell....*

DAVIES: It's a catalyst for other songs. What happens is we go into the studio to record this "optimist" song, and start laying the track down and I get irritable and say, "Oh, let's try it like this..." and we try something else. We got "Destroyer," "Better Things" and two songs off the new album simply because we tried to re-record "The Optimist." One day we're going to do it....

MUSICIAN: *Maybe that would be like killing the goose that laid the golden egg. Was "Superman" your way of confronting the disco mechanization trend you were complaining about before? Were you sending it up? Or saying, "I'm going to jump into this new mode and make it my own"?*

DAVIES: I can only tell you what I felt when I was writing it. I went to see *Superman* on Boxing Day (December 26) in 1978, and it nearly made me cry, because I was a big fan of the comics. And I was thrilled that they acknowledged the comic strip in the beginning so the young kids could get the background, especially since the guy who created Superman got ripped off a lot. In the song there's a character who—okay, *maybe* it's partly me—who is having a problem with the world, and at the time we were having problems within the group, and the character wishes that...maybe he could just fly away from this mess.

MUSICIAN: *Half escapism and half transcendence?*

DAVIES: Yeah. It was a *dance* record, and I suppose dance is disco, but the real key to it is Mick's drumming, because at the time we didn't use rhythm boxes. I just took away his toms and gave him a high-hat, snare and bass drum. Mick's very constant and it was a great performance. Doing the same thing for five minutes without any deviation is not easy.

MUSICIAN: *Nick Lowe also has a tendency to jump in and out of various genres, as well as borrow riffs from other people, which you've done, too. But unlike Nick, you're one of the Founding Fathers of rock. So why bother putting the riff from something as obvious a "Jumping Jack Flash" in "Catch Me Now I'm Falling"?*

DAVIES: Right, can I tell you I didn't know I was doing that? When I was writing "Catch Me," I started off with the right hand (mimics chording piano, sings), "...help me now I'm falling." Then I thought, "Oh, I've got to have something else...oh, this is clever." (hums riff in question) And I'll tell you something: it's *not* the same riff. Mine is a minor riff against a major chord, and theirs is a major riff. The same rhythmic pattern but not the same notes.

MUSICIAN: *Fair enough. However, you're not going to tell me that's not "All The Day And All The Night" in the middle of "Destroyer"? Were you sending yourself up, in a sense?*

DAVIES: Again, that was one of the songs that came out of "The Optimist." I wanted Mick to play a certain pattern so I just referred to something he'd know. I don't think there's anything wrong with referring to one of your own songs. I'll admit that.

MUSICIAN: *But on the new album, isn't one of the verses of "Definite Maybe" identical to a verse in "Over, Under, Sideways, Down"?*

DAVIES: What? I haven't noticed that.

MUSICIAN: *You know, the Yardbirds song (hums opening verse).*

DAVIES: No, mine is nothing like it (sings verse from "Definite Maybe").

MUSICIAN: *C'mon, Ray, it's close enough....*

DAVIES: (angrily) No, that's bullshit! (*A tense discussion ensues, followed by a long pause.*) Ask me that question again about "Back To Front, Down and Sideways [*sic*]."

MUSICIAN: *Are you sure you want me to...? Okay, I noticed the intro to "Definite Maybe" is very similar to the intro to a Yardbirds song....*

DAVIES: (feigning surprise) Oh, yeah? I didn't realize that! (general laughter) But it isn't, really. It's just a four-bar line, a miniscule part of the song. I'll sit down at a piano with you and show you and prove that mine is a descending line, while theirs is ascending.

MUSICIAN: *All right. Incidentally, Townshend also said that "I Can't Explain" was a direct attempt to copy your style and impress Shel Talmy, your mutual producer at the time.*

DAVIES: I must admit, I've wondered about that. When I heard "Can't Explain" on the radio I was surprised, because we'd played with them when they were called the High Numbers and they hadn't played anything like that...and we did have the same producer. Hmmm....

MUSICIAN: *Coming back to the present, the two most melodic tunes on the new album are both about dancing. Vat doss dis zymbolize?*

DAVIES: The lyrics of both those songs were written at roughly the same time, and I was so taken with "Come Dancing" that I thought the whole album should take place in a ballroom—just the story of two people's lives set in a ballroom. Eventually I gave up on that one (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *Now that we're in the video age, do you also write with specific visuals in mind for future video clips?*

DAVIES: Yeah, on "Come Dancing" I was writing a kind of video script as well. There might be a first on that song, because it's the first vocal dub done over the telephone. What happened was, there's a part of the song where he says, "I saw them in the moonlight kissing by the garden gate." I thought, "Ah, this is where we'll have the mum come out and shout at them." So I called an actress I'd worked with named Kate Williams, and she did the lines right there over the phone, then I edited the best out and sunk them into the track.

MUSICIAN: *This could bring new meaning to the idea of phoning in your solos. It's a shame that MTV wasn't around to catch the vivid imagery of "Waterloo Sunset" and "Dead End Street."*

DAVIES: Ah, but there was a video done for "Dead End Street," promos we called them then, and it was banned by the BBC because there's a scene where a dead bloke gets out of a coffin, believe it or not (laughs).

But right from "Waterloo Sunset" I've always thought visually about my work, making little notes about scenes and visuals. Funny, I only decided to call it that at the last minute. I wanted to write a boy/girl song, but from the position of an outsider watching this couple.

World Radio History

MUSICIAN: *From "Well Respected Man" on, you've maintained that detached but empathetic distance in your songs. What led you to favor that approach?*

DAVIES: Because I've always been worried about writing subjective "You and me, baby" things, which bore me. I know "You Really Got Me" and "All The Day And All The Night" are direct, but other than that stuff, I've tried to stay away from it. Even the dance songs you mentioned on the new album have that detached feel about them. "Waterloo Sunset" was one step removed from that, even, since when I finished it I found that all along it was more about the station than observing the people. After I finished the record, I did a really pretentious thing: I went down just to stand on the bridge, because that was my final conquest. It was like having your picture taken with your foot on the animal you had just shot (laughs). I do silly things like that, you know.

MUSICIAN: *You may be detached intellectually when you write, but you must sometimes emotionally identify with, or find yourself in these situations and characters, as you explained happened with "Superman." The classic example is, of course, "Lola," where you've never revealed whether it was a he or a she, let alone if it were based on a true incident. So after all these years....*

DAVIES: Ummm...it was a man. Or *he* was a man. Whatever. Several men, in fact, and all in the same place...and it's a woman, too.

MUSICIAN: *You mean it's based on a real incident?*

DAVIES: Oh, yeah, based on truth. There was a great club we used to go to in Paris in the late 60s and early 70s, the Castelle Club. I was there dancing one night with what I thought was a woman, but it turned out to be a man. And the woman part-...well, let's just say that if you get caught by your wife or girlfriend in a club dancing with a woman, all you have to say is, "It's okay, it's a transvestite." (pause) I think people have strange ideas about how I feel about my sexuality...most people are confused about their own. The funny thing is that "Lola" got banned in Australia, where they've got one of the highest gay populations in the world.

MUSICIAN: *There was a rumor that "Well Respected Man" was actually about your manager.*

DAVIES: No, it was written about...me, in a way. I was sent to a posh holiday resort in the south of England to recover from a tour. There were all sorts of stockbrokers and bankers there asking me to play golf with them, so it was written in rebellion, really. Rebellion against what I saw there, and against what I was becoming. I was reading Noel Coward at the time, too, and that was a real inspiration for me, especially on "Dedicated Follower Of Fashion," which it's rumored that he liked. I couldn't have written a song like that without someone like him coming along before me and writing *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* and *Private Lives*, and without me there wouldn't be writers like Paul Weller. We're part of a chain.

MUSICIAN: *What did you think of the Jam's version of "David Watt"?*

DAVIES: Very similar to ours, but with a bit more punch. They also changed a few words, I think (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *As the next link in the chain, what advice would you give him if he were here now?*

DAVIES: Change your tailor.

MUSICIAN: *(laughs) It took me a while to get past his smugness and lack of humor and feel the genuine passion in his work, but then again, "Beat Surrender" shows he's opened up a great deal lately.*

DAVIES: Yeah, I think he's a very serious young man, but he *should* get a new tailor. I also think it was a mistake to break up the Jam. I think they should re-form and they will. At the end of the year, they'll come on tour here. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. They were overexposed in England where they were big fish in a little pond, and everything they touched turned to gold. But it wasn't happening elsewhere. So I think maybe they will come back, and come back with more humor. You're right. Good observation.

MUSICIAN: *Weren't you guys in a similar situation in the late 60s during your Edwardian phase, when you were writing those little Gainsborough sketches?*

DAVIES: (with mock anger) Are you insinuating I'm a chocolate box writer!?

MUSICIAN: *Is there any way I can compliment you that you'll accept?*

DAVIES: (laughs) No, I'm in a bad mood. I know a journalist who met someone whom she really admired. They went out for a meal, got drunk, and he raped her. It's terrible, isn't it? Awful. That's why I don't like to meet people I admire, like Chuck Berry. I was afraid if I met him, he'd try to shoot me.

MUSICIAN: *I hate to feed your fears, but he did punch Keith Richards in the mouth. Sometime later Ron Wood jammed with Chuck onstage, and he pointed to Wood and publicly apologized for hitting this man, Keith Richards, in the mouth.*

DAVIES: Maybe he's smarter than we think.

MUSICIAN: *Did you have similar fears about meeting Chrissie Hynde?*

DAVIES: Oh, yeah, she tried to meet me two or three times

SCOTT WEINER RETNA

Ray on Chrissie: "I knew what I was in for right away."

and I just avoided it. Not because I disliked her in any way; I just couldn't face it because I heard that she'd said nice things about me. I thought, "Oh, God, when she meets the real person and sees what a conner I am...." So I stayed away from her, but somebody set it up so we would meet.

MUSICIAN: *Obviously, your first impressions couldn't have been too bad.*

DAVIES: It was all right...I knew what I was in for right away.

MUSICIAN: *While we're still clearing up song themes, most people assume that "Labor Of Love" and "Heart Of Gold" on*

World Radio History

KINKS KITZ

Father Ray's main machine is a Les Paul Deluxe ('78), strung with Ernie Ball extra lights. An old Gibson Melody Maker with Bill Lawrence pickups also shows up onstage now and again, as does an Ovation Electric Legend with Ernie Ball bronze strings featured on "Lola" and other acoustic numbers. Kinks tech guru Dave Powell adds that Ray also sports two '81 Gibson Victory MV-10 guitars, and says the maestro uses absolutely no effects devices (being a purist at heart). Said goodies are run through two Marshall 4x12 cabinets and a Mesa Boogie top. Two Gibson Artisan Les Pauls ('72 and '74) highlight Brother Dave's arsenal, run through two Mesa Boogie amps and four Roland 2x12 cabinets with ATC speakers and a small Peavey Mace amp. Dave prefers GHS Boomer ultralight strings, and unlike his sibling rival, is willing to corrupt things with at least two effects boxes, namely a Roland Boss Chorus pedal and Roland Space Echo. Dave Powell adds that Dave wants as little as possible coming between the guitar signal and the amp, and therefore runs his effects through the microphone line to avoid loss of top end or sound definition. Along the same lines, a number of ancillary effects are channeled directly through the sound mixer, including a Lexicon Prime Time digital delay, MXR Harmonizer, dbx compressor/limiter and a Lexicon 224 reverb unit.

Keyboardist Ian Gibbons hunkers down at a Kawai electric grand piano, switching to a Korg CX3 organ and a Korg Poly 6 and Trident synthesizers for the fancy stuff. Ian feeds his little electronic jungle into a Sound Production monitor system, allowing for minor detours through a Dynacord CLS-22 Leslie and Ibanez chorus for when he wants to compete with the guitar heroes. Bassist Jim Rodford favors a funky but chic '63 Fender Mustang bass with Precision pickups, with an Aria bass serving as backup. Jim is another GHS Boomers fan, opting for the medium bass variety. Also in the Rodford Files is a Dynacord BS-408 amplifier and a 15-inch Electro-Voice speaker. Percussion Lord Kevin Brown reports that Mick Avory uses only Sonar drums, and endorses Paiste cymbals (18-inch crash and 22-inch ride). A Sennheiser MD421 mikes the kick and toms, while a Shure 548 handles the snare and AKG C-414s cover the top of the kit. Shure 548s mike the guitar amps, with an AKG D-12 on Ian's bass amp. Vocals pour forth courtesy of Shure SM57s and SM58s.

the new album are about you and Chrissie.

DAVIES: "Labor Of Love"? No, that was written in 1978, actually. There's one song I definitely wanted to have that "All Right Now" riff. And "Heart Of Gold"—that was written about Princess Anne (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *Princess Anne of England?*

DAVIES: Yeah, everybody is knocking Princess Anne because she's got a bad temper. Then after I recorded it, Chris had a baby and I remembered that I'd said in the song, "Someday you'll get a little girl of your own," referring to Princess Anne, but that Chris...hmmm, let's say it's about Chris. It's more romantic that way.

MUSICIAN: *The other rumor is that "Young Conservatives" with its "Rebel, Rebel" reference is a swipe at David Bowie.*

DAVIES: No, I just used the two words consecutively because they fitted together. After I'd sung it I remembered there was a record by that name, and someone would ask me about that. But, no, it's not a reference to Bowie. I plead not guilty. Temporary insanity. "Young Conservatives" is about starting out as a rebel and then getting seduced by the system and becoming part of it. I fight that all the time; I try desperately, maybe I try too hard. I think Townshend does that as well.

MUSICIAN: *I'm also confused about what you were trying to say in "Rock And Roll Fantasy," "Juke Box Music" and "Celluloid Heroes." The latter seems to be almost glorifying the illusions of fame and stardom, while "Fantasy" laments the use of rock as escapism, and "Juke Box" is somewhere in between. Was that ambivalence intentional?*

DAVIES: I don't want to appear to be a complete downer, but I don't think about what I do that much (laughs). But yes, I think those contradictions are present in "Rock And Roll Fantasy."

MUSICIAN: *Many people think that an artist always plans out consciously and intentionally what images and ideas he intends to convey, when actually it's often a case of being receptive to a certain pattern of events or impressions that somehow come together non-intellectually to make a whole statement.*

DAVIES: That's true, and that more or less happened with "Rock And Roll Fantasy." The night I wrote that I'd been to a Peter Frampton concert and Elvis Presley had died and I felt really depressed. I couldn't sleep, so I started writing this song. Looking out the window, I watched all the lights gradually go off across the street till there was just one on, probably some guy watching *The Late Late Show*. I imagined him alone there playing music, and that was the first verse. Then I thought about my brother in England who was going through a hard time, and I thought, "Well, let's break the band up and go our separate ways." So I wrote that. Then I thought about Elvis, and put that in.

MUSICIAN: *I would think that the Frampton concert might have figured in there somewhere as a symbol of the music industry's tendency to turn rock into a safe, pre-packaged fantasy. Do you ever worry about video's ability to restrict and limit imagination as well as to liberate it?*

DAVIES: Yeah, though I do like MTV and think it's a good thing, I feel a lot of it dates itself. I mean, you look at something like Little Richard singing "The Girl Can't Help It" and it looks like 1990 compared to some of the Duran Duran videos, which are just bad Vogue magazine ads. What's good about it is that they can invest less money in a group nowadays by putting it into video, and actually get more exposure for new bands. And I'm worried when I hear people say, "Oh, the record's crap, but it's a *great* video." The new David Bowie record, for instance, has mediocre drum sounds and I don't think he's singing brilliantly—I think *I'm* singing better—but the video sells it. And look what they're paying for those things. The best video the Kinks ever did cost $1,000 and was done in my back garden.

MUSICIAN: *At least the Bowie video had an emotionally coherent story line, unlike the usual vacuous decadence they churn out. Aren't there any that have impressed you? Have you see the George Thorogood?*

DAVIES: The one where they play pool? Yeah, but that made me sad because I wanted Bo Diddley to win (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *I was surprised when some people took "Around The Dial" to be your attempt to curry some favor from AOR radio, when it was clear that you were talking about a spirit that was missing from the medium. Was it about anyone in particular?*

DAVIES: There was a guy in Buffalo who got fired for playing the records he wanted to play, because they weren't in rotation. You know, I've still got this fantasy about one DJ hearing a record and playing it time and time again until it gets picked up, but it doesn't work like that anymore.

MUSICIAN: *Forget it. The only reason they're playing new music now is because the consultants told them to. Programmers are so afraid of trusting their own or their DJ's instincts, they'd play Nazi band marches in Swahili if some computer told them to. That seems to be the theme of "State Of Confusion" and "Definite Maybe" on the new album: the paralyzing effect of being passive in front of a mindless media machine.*

DAVIES: That's what I think is missing, the ability for an individual to turn something around and start something. When people jumped up on the stage the other night at Irvine I got really pissed off; *not* because they jumped up there, but because once they got onstage they just stood there and then jumped off! Hell, I was hoping to be entertained! Finally, a woman jumped up and started singing with me, and *that* was impressive.

MUSICIAN: *If you had to name two or three songs that are the most complete manifestations of the Kinks spirit, of what you were reaching for at that particular moment, what would they be?*

DAVIES: "Cliches Of The World" off the new album, "The

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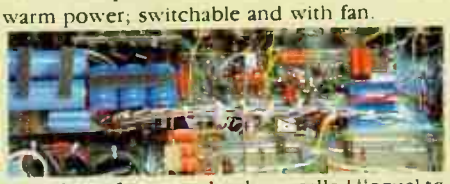

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Optimist," and "You Really Got Me." "All The Day And All The Night" more so than "You Really Got Me," because it was recorded three or four times so we could get it right.

MUSICIAN: *There's another legend that claims you thought you had only one take to do "You Really Got Me."*

DAVIES: We did that song three times, actually. The record company was going to put out an awful version we didn't like that sounded like a Phil Specter record. So we booked into a cheap little studio to get that dry, bassy sound—*our* sound. They gave us £200 and a few hours in the studio; we had one tape to do it. I remember going over to Dave when he did the solo and said, "Bleedin' do it *right*!" He just raved away on his G string and there it was.

MUSICIAN: *I've always wondered how he got that incredible guitar sound on those early tracks.*

DAVIES: Very simple, he stuck knitting needles into the amps to get distortion. I was playing a Maton guitar and Dave played a Harmony on "You Really Got Me" and a Guild, I think, on "All The Day."

MUSICIAN: *Could you clear up once and for all these rumors about Jimmy Page playing the solo on "You Really Got Me"?*

DAVIES: That's bullshit. I'd be surprised if the rumor really came from him. Why would he need to spread such a rumor? Perhaps his manager would, but he wouldn't. He did play rhythm guitar on "Lover Not A Fighter," but *I* played the solo on that one, and he played tambourine on "Long Tall Short." But we also had Jon Lord [*later of Deep Purple*] playing organ. Everyone wanted to hang around Kinks sessions because we were the hot thing, and they wanted to see how we did it. Look, my brother Dave hasn't got too much going for him, but to try to take that stuff away from him is bullshit. He invented that guitar sound, I didn't. I wrote the song, but it wouldn't have been anything without his work.

MUSICIAN: *On the last two albums, we're hearing a lot more of Dave's heavy metal-style guitar work. Whose decision was it to go for the harder sound?*

DAVIES: I've just felt like playing some rock 'n' roll, enjoying myself. I've been mixing the records better, though. The guitars are actually in the mix, but they sound louder 'cause they're in the right perspective. Same thing with the drums. They're not mixed loud, it's just apparent loudness. I had this conversation with Bruce Springsteen at the Power Station in New York. I was saying "apparent loudness, Bruce, *that's* what you should get, forget all this rock 'n' roll crap! What you need is to make the drums sound louder than they actually are."

MUSICIAN: *So what's the secret?*

DAVIES: Use ambient mikes. In the Power Station they've got mikes in the ceiling. Clap your hands and you get an instant slapback. That's good, but it can only be used on something that's got a slow backbeat to it because of the delay. You can't really use it for, say, soul music.

MUSICIAN: *Something like "Around The Dial" would be perfect for that.*

DAVIES: Yeah, there, you see. I wrote that song with that drum sound in mind. So sounds do sometimes dictate how you write songs. Apparent loudness: Otis Redding's drummer had it—pop, slap—Buddy Holly's drummer too.

MUSICIAN: *Technology's fine, I agree, but no studio tricks were responsible for the magic and exuberance of something like "Victoria," which was technically pretty primitive....*

DAVIES: No, that's about spirit. If you put on some old Stax or James Brown records, you won't find any instrument doing anything that great, but what you're aiming for at the end of the day is just that kind of atmosphere. It's the magic, the electricity of a song like "Dancing In The Streets." I remember doing a show with Martha & the Vandellas and their manager had a Polaroid camera, which I'd never seen before. I just remember them singing that song and watching this Polaroid picture of them in these beautiful blue dresses come out as they sang. I'll tell you something else: around that time, I was talking to the Stones' manager, Andrew Oldham, and asked about their new record. He said, "It's gonna be great, the biggest hit of the summer. We just took a bit of 'Nowhere To Run' and a bit of 'Pretty Woman' and strung 'em together. We call it 'Satisfaction.'" That was his opinion of course; the Stones probably didn't think that.

MUSICIAN: *In a more serious vein: is it true that your old keyboard player actually fell asleep once while playing onstage?*

DAVIES: Yeah, he was pissed and he went out in the middle of the set. It was in Washington, and Dave went over to him and said (in an evil Spanish accent), "I SPEET ON YEW!" And then spat on him. So Mick said, "Yeah, he's an asshole." But Dave thought that *he* was being called an asshole, so he said to Mick, "Who you calling an asshole, you asshole!" Mick said, "No, *he's* an asshole!" But by then Dave had gone over and kicked Mick's drums over and that's when Mick got up and walked off. Meanwhile, there am I trying to sing "Celluloid Heroes." The funny thing is that some of the President's aides were fans and we were due to go to the White House after the show.

MUSICIAN: *That must have been impressive.*

DAVIES: I don't know. They never came backstage to get us, for some reason (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *It must be difficult for someone with a reputation as a chronicler of idiosyncratic British working-class life to move to America and attempt to gain a comparable insight into American culture.*

DAVIES: All I can say is, the first time I woke up in Reno, Nevada it was as big a culture shock for me as, say, someone here joining the army and waking up in the Far East. Sheriffs with guns and things you see in films. Shattering. Now I've got a flat in New York and I've learned to live with the fear, but I know what you mean. It was very hard.

MUSICIAN: *What is it you miss the most about the traditional English society you used to celebrate?*

DAVIES: Being young. Being innocent. Doing things for the first time. West Indian people's sense of humor. The only thing I really remember about living there in the 60s is walking down Carnaby Street and seeing somebody from Manfred Mann ask someone from the Hollies, "Hey, where'd you buy that shirt?" That's the only image I've got besides seeing that first Polaroid of Martha & the Vandellas...it was all about doing things for the first time. That's what was special about it.

MUSICIAN: *When you wrote "Catch Me Now I'm Falling" were you feeling compassionate about America, or did you think we were getting our just desserts?*

DAVIES: Like "Rock And Roll Fantasy," it just evolved from one theme to another as I wrote it. It started out being about a friend whom I'd felt used by, and who was now out of my life. Then I went to the supermarket, bumped into John and Yoko, and heard someone commenting on the price of cornflakes, and that's when I came up with that little hook, "This is Captain America calling." So on that walk to the supermarket and back it changed from being a song about friendship into a song about America. I can sit back now and say, "Oh, yes, that's how I did it," but the best thing is not to be aware of it when you're doing it. It's like you were saying before, and that's why something like "Better Things" is interesting. Because it's innocent.

MUSICIAN: *You're one of the few major figures in rock who's never done a solo album. Any plans in the works?*

DAVIES: Pete Townshend wanted to do an LP with me. I don't know why I didn't do it. He wound up doing it with someone else. But I will when the time comes.

MUSICIAN: *If you had your choice of anyone you wanted to play on such an album, who would you get.*

DAVIES: That woman who came up onstage the other night and sang. Seriously, I liked her.

MUSICIAN: *What was it about her performance that was so special?*

DAVIES: It was innocent. M

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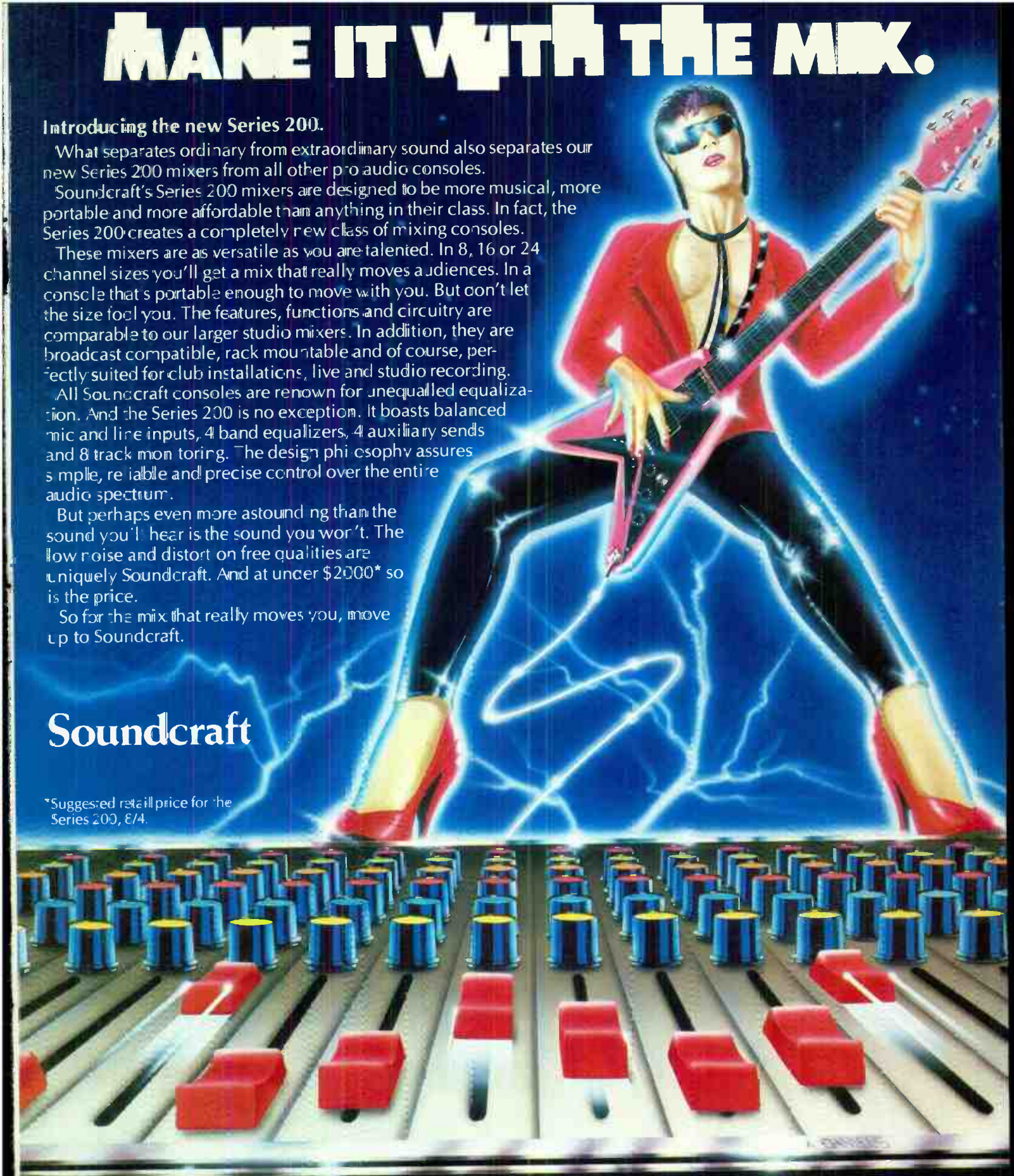

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PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBORAH FEINGOLD

STEVE SWALLOW, BASS MODERNIST IN FULL BLOOM

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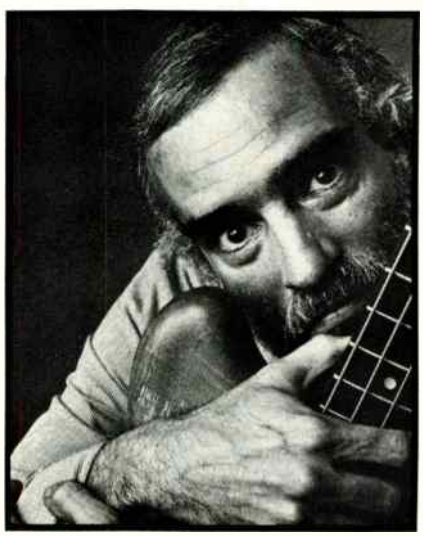
In a little over twenty years, he has produced an impressive body of compositions and a singular integration of bass violin, bass guitar and human values in the ensembles of Jimmy Giuffre/Jim Hall, Gary Burton, Scofield, Mike Mantler and Carla Bley, among others. He is perhaps the instrument's only true modernist; his signature is a rich cello-like legato attack with a cynical, contrapuntal flow, never falling into rote snap-crackle-pop or entertaining other fashionable notions.

"Indeed, I can't," he adds pointedly with a Cheshire-grin, "and I'm proud of it. Ineptitude can be a real virtue, a salvation—it keeps you from falling into other people's bags. I couldn't play like Jaco or Larry Graham to save my life. What's especially important to me is the element of *breath*. It needs to be in the music of people who don't play a wind instrument. I feel uncomfortable in the presence of musicians who play in a very athletic manner, playing phrases for longer than the human breath is capable of sustaining.

"But you see, talking about sound is never adequate—you never get to the point. I know exactly the sound I'm shooting for, and it's *my* sound. I do believe it was simply a sound that was born in my ear. just as my voice has assumed a character that's not intentional. It's a form of destiny, and it's the same sound that I was going for when I played acoustic bass and never quite achieved. I've yet to achieve it on electric bass either, but I will surely know it when it arrives. It's a human sound—I'm looking for *my* voice, pure and simple. But I wouldn't be surprised if I never got it, and if the joke is that it's the process that counts."

But in that process, Swallow has been an oasis of taste, restraint and power on bass guitar since picking up the instrument in the late 60s, most notably on a series of brilliant recordings with Gary Burton's Quartet (featuring Larry Coryell or Jerry Hahn on guitar; Bob Moses or Roy Haynes on drums). A landmark ensemble of the last decade, their investigations into rock, country, post-Bill Evans impressionism and modern jazz on the sadly-deleted RCA LPs *Duster* and *Country Roads* still stand out as great virgin areas of exploration, waiting only to be rediscovered along with Miles Davis' *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, John McLaughlin's *Extrapolation* and Tony Williams' *Emergency* as beacons of creative fusion.

For more readily available examples of Swallow's bass guitar and composing artistry, turn to his brilliant accompaniment of Scofield on the latter's tune "New Strings Attached" (from *Bar Talk* on Arista/Novus). He hits chords and arpeggios under Scofield's chordal intro with such deft, understated authority that it's hard to tell where the bottom of the guitarist's range ends or the top of Swallow's begins. Even more tasty is the way Swallow calmly vamps away as Scofield begins to taxi towards his solo; then, by suspending one or two notes of the harmony in a canny bit of reverse-field motion, he supercharges Scofield's ascent. Or check out the way he and Eberhard Weber lock into a surging, complex motif under Mick Goodrick's dramatic guitar solo on "Unfinished Sympathy" from Burton's *Ring* (ECM), and the way the very timbre of their chords adds a vocal urgency to the ensemble. On his own composition "Radio" (from Burton's *Times Square*, ECM), his supportive yet badgering harmonies, rather than dictating a vertical or horizontal structure, seem to circle behind Burton's dense bell clusters in constant dialogue with the great drummer Roy Haynes, giving the illusion of both unison and counterpoint.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Steve embraced the electric bass late in life.

"That's funny you should describe it that way," he remarks, "because I think in terms of circles, too. There's a wonderful Edward Weston photograph of snail and conch shells with wonderful spiral forms that appear all through nature. That photo struck a huge, resonant chord of affinity, and there's something about that form which constitutes an affirmation for me. And I just hate, when I listen to music, having the sense of the player reaching the right-hand bottom of the page and returning to the upper left again; it's like the typewriter reaching the end, and then the bell goes off and the thing slams back to the other side again—it's terribly disruptive of the flow in music.

"I also hate the feeling that I get from some players when, after they've polished off a good eight-bar section, you can hear them sort of dusting off their hands manfully and preparing to eat another one. I don't like that at all. It enforces a closure in music; you might as well stop, acknowledge applause and begin another tune at that point, because as soon as that sense of flow is broken, it's a new piece. So, yes, I write circular forms and if I'm playing on a form that's not circular, I'll do everything I can to obscure the sense of sections and of bar lines."

I also suggested that, unlike so many bassists, he seems to hear his instrument as existing simultaneously in both the bass and treble clef. "Yes, I think I do tend to conceptualize that way," Swallow acknowledges, "especially when I'm soloing, because I miss the *bass function* terribly; I feel cheated of the bass function under my own solo line, so I tend to try to provide that by soloing on the top two strings and accompanying myself on the bottom two, which involves the art of counterpoint, of keeping two or three lines happening simultaneously. It's most certainly in the nature of guitar technique, to be able to think *across* the neck, rather than up and down. And particularly, to be able to get a good sound in the upper register on the lower two strings—that's the real trick. Of course, if you're simply doing a dancing bear trick—oh boy, it sounds like two guys up there and it's only one guy—that won't do at all. There simply has to be that sense of integration."

One can only wonder why such a brilliant, open mind as Swallow's has been, if not ignored, at least neglected in the saga of electric bass guitar, because clearly few, if any, of his contemporaries bring so much knowledge and sensitivity to bear on their music or instrument. Perhaps it's because this native of Fairlawn, New Jersey (born October 4, 1940), in spite of his unimpeachable virtuosity and flowing melodic gifts, brings more support than ego to the ensembles he's worked with. "Well, I think I was drawn to the *function* and not so much the instrument at first. My beginnings were remarkably inauspicious—I mean, we're talking *white*," he laughs. "But I gravitated towards music with a groove, music with drumming in it, and through selective listening I got caught up in the jazz of the 50s, which meant Blue Note and Prestige, and the work of bassists like Percy Heath, Paul Chambers and Wilbur Ware. Also, my early playing experiences were in Dixieland, even though I wanted to play bebop, and those ensemble-counterpoint values were as valuable to me as what I learned from Charlie Parker. Mind you, we're talking about acoustic bass at this point, which was physically awkward and terribly punishing for me—so it wasn't the instrument as much as its function that attracted me.

"I was drawn to the social aspects of the instrument. I see playing bass as a service occupation. When somebody takes a really good solo in front of me, I share his pleasure in it. If you don't get a great deal of sensual satisfaction in stepping in between a drummer's time and with a few well chosen notes, com-

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pleting the arc of his phrase, satisfaction in playing a root in tune underneath a nice chord on top, then you're on the wrong instrument.

"The bass—despite Scott LaFaro and Eddie Gomez—is in the tradition of the rhythm section. To be more specific it is in a traditon that goes back thousands of years. And its context is tribal. as opposed to the notion of the virtuoso as epitomized by Paganini or Bird. I'm drawing more and more on the function called *tumbao* in Latin music, which has nothing to do with four-to-the-bar. The bass function is delightfully asymmetrical and surprising where the bass player—or his equivalent—is accenting some very special places within the flow.

Like the way Robbie Shakespeare plays, I suggest.

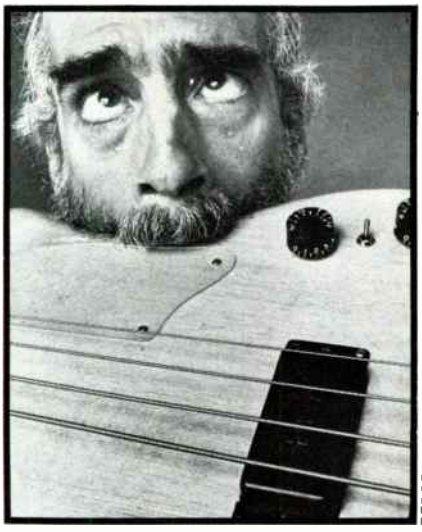
"Yeah. I feel a very strong kinship to Robbie, and if I were playing with Sly Dunbar, I would put it exactly where Robbie puts it. Probably everybody feels that way when they hear Robbie, and that's the quality that you want from a bassist. What you want from a Charlie Parker is to astonish you, like, 'God, I'd never have thought of that.' From the bass player, you want, 'Yeah, that's it—that's exactly what me, my brother, my sister and my father would do."

Perhaps this explains why Swallow is such an elusive figure in electric bass history. He would rather symbolize values that are mutually supportive than jump out front with knife-like, "here I am" assertiveness. Even when he's soloing, he never upsets the flow. "I've enjoyed my relationships with drummers as much as I've enjoyed my relationsnips with women—they're quite comparable in intensity," he adds with nary a hint of irony. So when he traces his journey from acoustic bass violin to electric bass guitar—a move which *to this day* elicits a giant hiccup from the jazz cognescenti—you cannot doubt his intentions, nor can you deny the incredible amount of thought he's put into integrating himself with the instrument and advancing its very technology.

"After years of resisting the electric bass, for reasons I could never defend—because they were all the wrong reasons, reasons of snobbery—and because I was really unaware of Sam Cooke, Jackie Wilson, Otis Redding and people like that, I found that I'd sort of blown it for ten years. When nobody was looking, I checked out the Fender and Gibson booths at a N.A.M.M. show where Burton and I were performing, and it was all over—no contest. There was an instantaneous message from my fingers—they just loved flapping around on the neck—and I found that late in my life I had a pull towards this, and that it was probably my instrument of destiny.

"Then, shortly thereafter, the Gary Burton Quartet opened a bill at the Fillmore West opposite the Electric Flag and Cream—*goddamn* that was hot! This was Cream's first trip to America and they were loaded for bear. I was overwhelmed by the very first note out of Jack Bruce's bass, and I felt as if he were speaking right to me. So I went back and he let me try his EB-0, a solid body, and I bought a Gibson because of Jack. But I was drawn to the EB-2, which was semi-solid, like a B.B. King guitar; it even had a burgundy finish like Lucille. This was probably because of my concurrent love for the acoustic bass, and for the deep, woody sound."

When Swallow went electric, he went all the way. He sold his beautiful acoustic to Jack Gregg ("It's probably with him sipping an aperitif in Paris now, the lucky devil"), and even started using a pick, everything from plastic and stone to laminated ebony. "To get greater clarity of sound," he explains. "I couldn't get



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Recalling epic drummers and epic women.

enough with my fingers, and paradoxically, I found it increased the possibilities for getting a legato line. I found that by picking lightly and raising the volume on the amplifier, I could get that Lester Young-Charlie Christian kind of phrasing." More surprising is that the robust, beefy sound that Swallow got through the 70s and early 80s was with guitar amps, specifically, Randall Smith's Mesa Boogie designs. "I've had good luck with guitar amps. It seems to me that the frequency curve built into most bass amps is undesirably woofy. I have one of the first Boogies, serial number 104, which I love, and a more recent 300-watter. I also have a Walter Woods amplifier. It's 300 watts, and its MOSFET circuitry is just as warm, by my standards. The bottom three or four notes come out considerably clearer; its equalization is quasi-parametric and very flexible, and I found that it enabled me to get a greater degree of throatiness, and in tandem with a two 12-inch Cerwin Vega cabinet, it enabled me to avoid that lower midrange boom."

Yet even though Swallow had in every sense of the word become a bass guitarist, his instincts kept drawing him back towards the rich, deeply colored sound of a bass violin. As a result, Swallow, a Hartford luthier named Froc Fillipetti and Zeta Systems' Keith McMillan have, in effect, gone forward into the past to create a new instrument.

"My chief concern was to eliminate metal in the design of the instrument, that zingy sound of metal against metal that I don't like. My belief is that it's possible to have a bass guitar that is effectively an acoustic instrument, that vibrates like a violin, but which may be successfully amplified. The main portion of the body is composed of a solid piece of maple, routed out so that it is hollow in the middle, which is what imparts this remarkable sustain. Then there's a spruce soundboard covering which contributes to the mellowness of the sound. We have four wooden bridge posts, like on a violin, which is what the strings ride on; they're maple, which has been used for violin bridges for centuries and they add considerably to the warmth and sustain of the sound.

"I'd thought that transducers might be the way to go, and years ago Dan Armstrong and I experimented with Navy contact mikes that were used to detect metal stress in submarines. But we could never eliminate the problems of feedback, woof tones and a general kind of fogginess to the sound. Now, Keith has built me these separate piezo-electric transducers to be mounted by the bridge posts under each individual string; these are controlled by four separate pre-amps with a volume pot for each with a ±10db range so that I can adjust the response to be very balanced, so even notes at the top of the neck are clear and articulate.

"There's a wonderful, rubbery, sensual quality to the instrument's action. The neck, a 1959 Precision C, is meaty and substantial. That surely affects the sound, too. And there's no varnish on anything, just a light oil finish.

"This bass design isn't the least bit adjustable," he concludes. "It's built exactly to my tastes, not for versatility but for one sound—*my sound*—the voice I've been seeking to realize since I began learning the upright. There's probably a rhythm, a voice that one's life has, and this instrument is helping me to achieve that."

But what is it? How does Swallow describe this purely vocal quality of sound that art and science have drawn him to? "The ideal for me," Swallow concludes, "is Marvin Gaye—that's it. What an instrument! He's a tremendously artful, disciplined musician as well, but there's also something else that's just there—a medium, a presence to it. It used to be Otis Redding for me, but now it's Marvin Gaye. If I could phrase like that, I'd be perfectly content." ■

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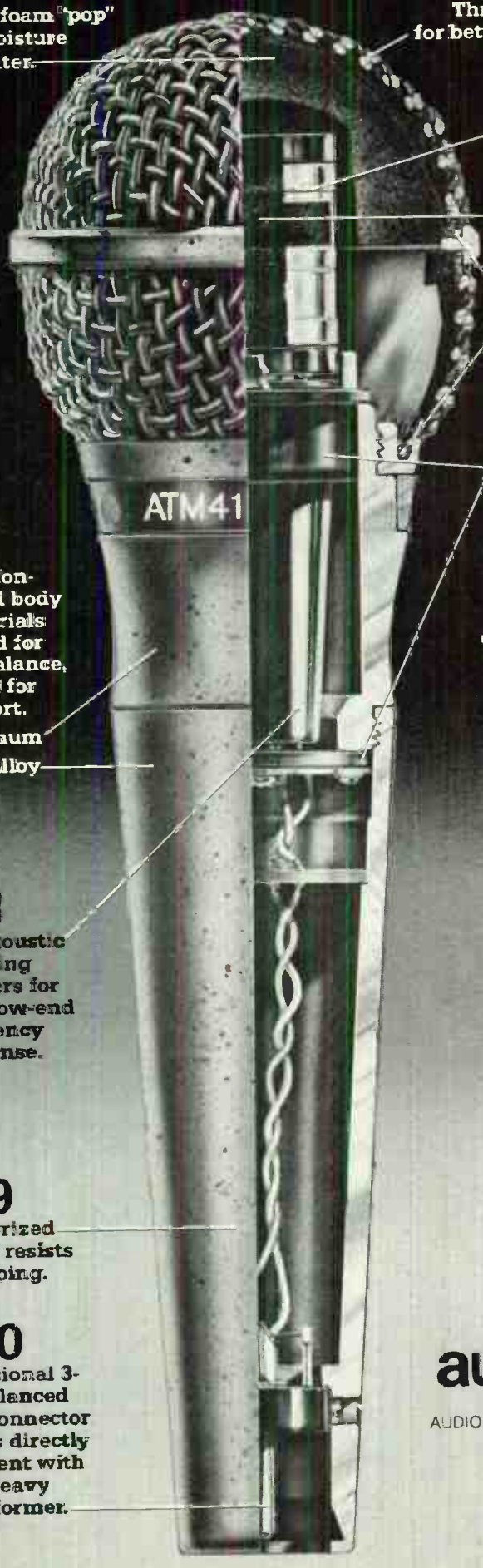

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P R O D U C I N G

MITCH EASTER'S DRIVE-IN STUDIOS

Producing the Post-Punk Pantheon

BY ROY TRAKIN

GREG GIBSON

Amid the cases of Alpo, Easter has captured R.E.M., the Individuals, the Bongos and Pylon.

What do rising new post-punk talents like 60s revisionists the Bongos, abstract pop stylists the Individuals and modern tribal stompers Pylon all have in common? They have all recorded at a makeshift studio installed in a two-car garage of an otherwise nondescript ranch-style house on the outskirts of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And the man in charge is a fair-haired twenty-eight year old triple threat named Mitch Easter.

"It's real low and long," drawls producer/engineer/artist Easter of his modest but highly productive studio. "At one end, there's a garage turned into a bedroom. All I did was knock a hole in one wall and set up a piece of glass for the control booth. The studio room is in the garage and the control room is in the converted bedroom. The third room is where we put the guitar amps...it's also where my mother keeps the dog food."

The novelty of picking out solos amid cartons of Alpo has not bothered the variety of hot new bands attracted to the hominess of Easter's 16-track Drive-In Studios. Underground sensations R.E.M. cut their critically acclaimed *Chronic Town* EP there; the Individuals also cut their promising *Fields* LP in Easter's garage. Other young ambitious popsters who have used the facility include Chris Stamey of the dBs, guitarists Richard Barone and James Mastro of the Bongos (who cut their *Nuts And Bolts* offshoot album there), Pylon and New Jersey rockabilly revisionists Steve Almaas' Beat Rodeo.

"I don't have a formal production agreement with most of these groups," says Easter, who does receive a co-credit on R.E.M.'s records. "It's just that when the bands get in there and ask me how something works, I tell them what I think. And that's the way I ended up producing some of those records."

Mitch Easter's interest in recording and studios goes back to his North Carolina high school days with Chris Stamey, his best buddy and bandmate in a punky pop group called Sneakers. Stamey bought a 4-track TEAC when both were in the twelfth grade.

"We didn't even have a mixer at the time," Easter recalls. "It was real primitive. We just plugged the microphones into the front of the tape recorder. The TEAC had volume control for each of the four tracks, so we just turned the knobs to get the mix. We could only record two things at once.

"I was a real fanatic for the Move and all those studio things Roy Wood was doing at the time. That was my ideal. And it was so much cooler than playing in bands down there. Everyone else was into heavy metal."

After graduating from college four years ago, Easter decided to invest $24,000 in second-hand equipment, still the basis for his home studio. "I bought two used 3M tape machines—a 3M-56 16-track for $12,000, about half what it costs new. It came from a studio called the Sound Pit in Atlanta. I think it's main claim to fame was it had recorded some James Brown albums and the first two Ted Nugent records on Epic," he says. "I also bought its brother 2-track for about $2,000—they're both about ten years old—and a Quantum 20-channel console for $8,500, which is really cheap. Also, I got a couple of Alison Gain Brain compressors and an assortment of good studio microphones—AKGs, Shure, Electro-Voice. That was the core equipment. I also had a digital delay, a Lexicon M93, for some special effects."

Mitch lugged the stuff up to New York, hoping to establish an alternative to the city's big-time, big-money recording palaces. But the red tape involved in setting himself up there sent him packing back to his parents' house in Winston-Salem.

"I really bought the equipment so I could use it, but I felt like an idiot using it as some rich kid's plaything," he admits. "I wanted it to be available to everybody because all my friends were at a similar level: none had labels who could pay for their studio time. I felt if I kept my overhead down, I could keep the rates down. I charge about forty dollars an hour for studio time, and that can still add up pretty fast.

"I think sixteen tracks is generally enough to record most bands," he adds, defending his low-key set-up. "The equipment really is secondary, though. There are some things I can't do, but not many. They made some pretty great sounding records ten years ago on equipment a lot more primitive than mine.

"I can hear more distortion in my records, and I believe that comes from the console, which is understandable seeing that mine cost $12,000, while a front-line studio's can run about $350,000. And there's the difference right there. But most people don't seem to hear it. I listened to the *Nuts And Bolts* record after Duran Duran and I couldn't tell them apart in quality. I think any slickness you hear is the result of the time involved. Most of the stuff I've done has been real fast. On the real snazzy records, the difference is in the performance. They spend the time to get it

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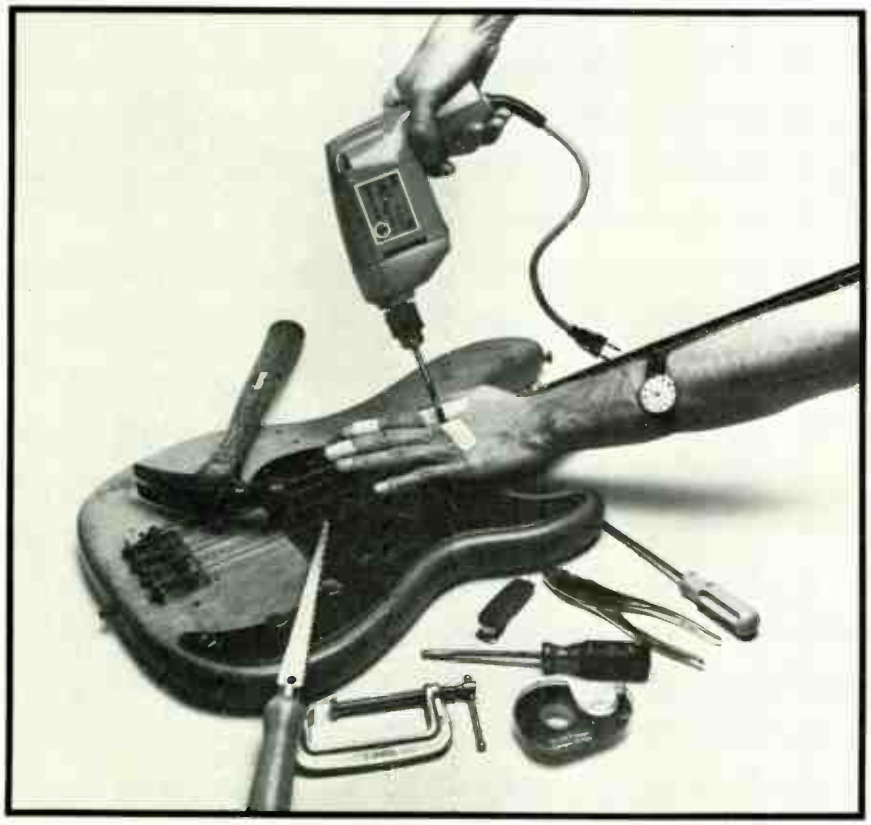
TOOLS

IDIOT'S GUIDE TO GUITAR UPGRADING

Modifications Anyone Can Make

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

DEBORAH FEINGOLD



Even the Chronically Uncoordinated can change pickups and necks with minimal distress.

Like most people who spent their youth as one of the Chronically Uncoordinated, I have long held the belief that mandatory shop class is the supreme adolescent humiliation. There's something uniquely humbling about using sophisticated woodworking equipment to construct something as misshapen and rickety as the birdhouse I hammered together when I was seven (and which my father eventually had to bury in the back yard).

As a result, I have always been somewhat leery of columns telling "How to Re-Fret Your Guitar," "How to Build Your Own Digital Delay" or "How to Convert a Surfboard into a Les Paul." It isn't that I doubt these things can be done; it's just that when I get to a phrase like "turning to your lathe...," I realize that most of these people live in a world far different from mine. Being able to use a lathe is a fantastic enough concept. Actually owning one defies comprehension.

Nonetheless, there are some things any idiot can do to upgrade their guitar or bass. I know, because I'm one of the idiots who have done so. Despite the fact that most of the tools I used belong to my wife, and that the whole lot could fit in a tool box smaller than the average carpenter's lunchpail, I was able to replace the pickups on my guitar and put a new neck and bridge on my bass. All it took was patience, a few basic skills and sense enough to find somebody who knew what they were doing before I really loused things up.

I started with my guitar, a Peavey T-60. I bought it basically because I am a bass player. While it would be nice to own a classic expensive guitar, a little voice in the back of my head (or was it my bank book?) told me it would be foolish to spend a lot of money on what essentially would be a second instrument. To its credit, the Peavey played smoothly and easily, fulfilling my every expectation but one—bite. The Peavey sound was versatile, but just a little too squeaky-clean for my tastes. Replacement pickups were the obvious way around this problem, and as my frugal brain cells pointed out, wiring in a new pair of humbuckers is a hell of a lot cheaper than buying a new instrument.

Unfortunately, replacing pickups isn't just a matter of unplugging one and plugging in another; not only are things soldered into place, but there are all sorts of capacitors and other transistor-radio junk back there. Normally, I would leave that sort of thing to somebody whose knowledge of electronics extends beyond where to put the batteries in, but an interview I did with guitarist Eddie Van Halen put a different light on things. Explaining how he came up with his single-pickup, single-volume knob arrangement, he said that after taking the guts out of his Stratocaster, "I didn't know how to put it back! So I just took everything out, and took the two wires that went from the pickup to the volume pot, and the two from the jack, and I switched them around until I heard something." Now *that*'s the kind of electrical engineering I understand.

Instead of relying on trial and error like Mr. Van Halen, I took a slightly more scientific approach. Unscrewing the pick-guard, I made a preliminary check of the guts of the guitar. Yep, looks like wires to me! Nothing I could understand, but nothing that looked completely inscrutable either, with a clever use of different-colored wires so a jerk like me could keep them straight.

Taking things one step at a time, I went out and got my first pickup, a Seymour Duncan Custom. Like many consumers, I had decided on Seymour Duncan because of his solid reputation as guitarsmith for Hendrix, Beck, etc., and his nifty full-color ads. Upon getting the pickup home, I was quite pleased to find a bone-head simple wiring diagram, plus a phone number if none of the five options sketched out met your needs.

Somewhat less heartening was the realization that the Duncan pickup was held in place by a single screw on each side, while the mounting rings (those little plastic jobbers the pickup sits in on the face of your guitar) on my Peavey were set for two per side. The ever-patient folks at Gordon Miller Music (in Towson, Maryland), after listening to a tortured explanation of what I wanted, sold me a DiMarzio mounting ring that had the right number of holes, but a cantilevered bottom. My Peavey mounting rings were flat. So as I warmed up the

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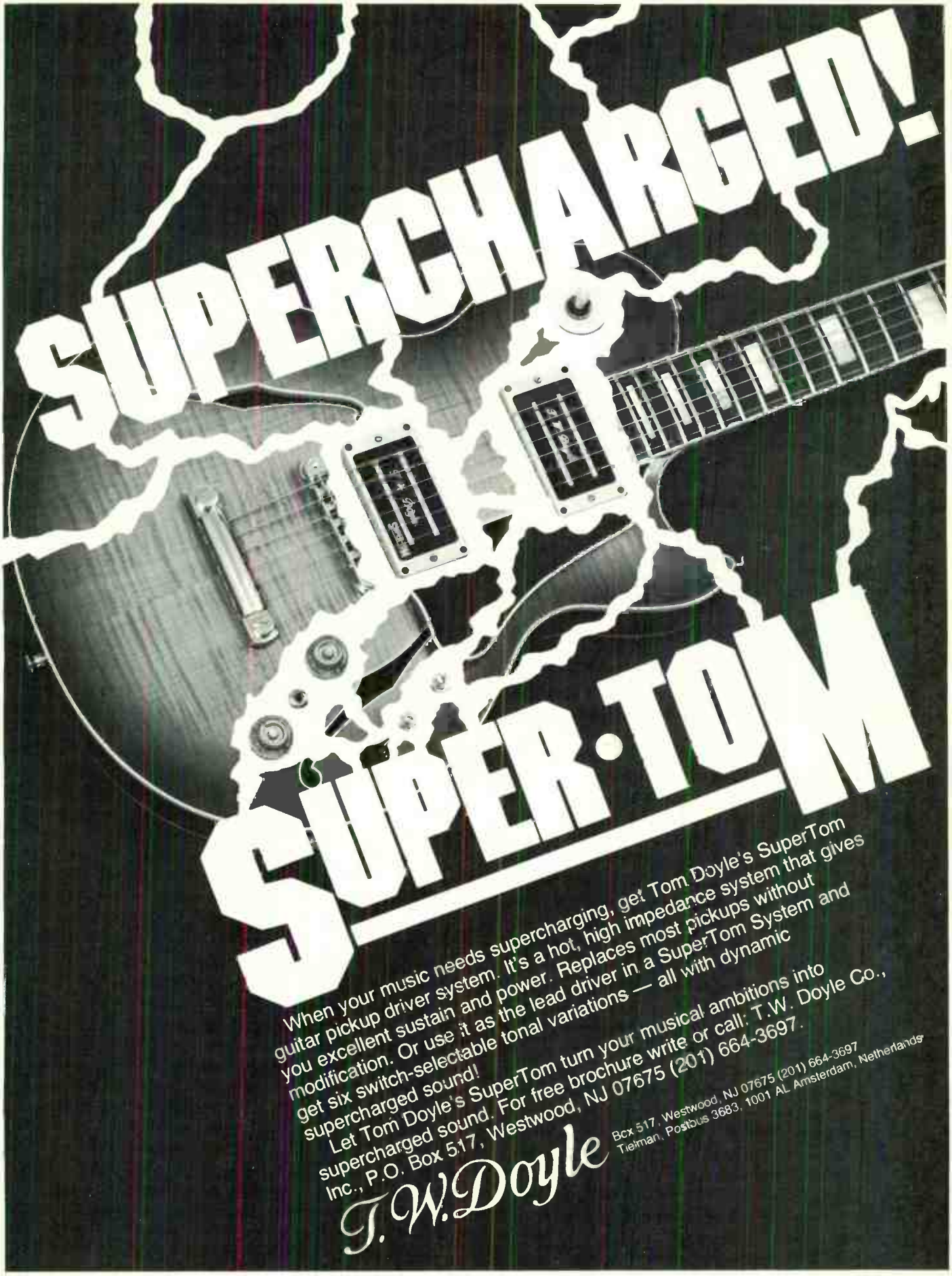
World Radio History



World Radio History

P R O D U C I N G

BAKER & ROBIE, GURUS OF RAP

Quest for the Perfect Beat

BY STEVEN HAGER

MARILYN WARD

Producer Arthur Baker (left) and synthesist John Robie (right) masterminding dance classics.

Arthur Baker and John Robie arrive at the Fun House, a hip disco in Manhattan's Chelsea section, at about 1:30 a.m. They are immediately recognized by two doormen and ushered inside, where 3,000 teenagers—mostly Hispanics and Italians from the outer boroughs of New York City—are performing the latest dances with ritualistic intensity. Pressing through the gyrating mass, the pair pass through a door at the rear of the dance floor marked "Private" into a dressing room doubling as a VIP lounge.

Two of the hottest record producers in rap and funk music today, Baker and Robie can be found here almost every Saturday night, keeping a close watch on the latest trends in dance music. "If a record goes over at the Fun House, I know it will be a hit," says Baker, who often previews tapes here before pressing them. "If a tape doesn't go over," he adds, "it's back to the mixing board."

You may not be familiar with their names, but you have certainly danced to their records. A year ago, Baker and keyboard player Robie collaborated with a southeast Bronx rap group called Soul Sonic Force on "Planet Rock," a remarkable fusion of hardcore funk, synthesizer sound effects, and spaghetti Western soundtrack music with the distinctive thud of a Roland TR-808 drum machine. An immediate crossover hit, "Planet Rock" also put the independent Tommy Boy label on the map and launched the careers of two men who had been struggling for years to get a toehold in the music business.

Both as a team and working separately, Baker and Robie have followed "Planet Rock" with a slew of "electro-boogie" records in rapid succession: "Walking In Sunshine" and "The Harder They Come" by Rocker's Revenge, DJ Afrika Bambaataa and Soul Sonic Force's "Looking For The Perfect Beat," "Funky Soul Makossa" by Nairobi and most recently "Candy Girl," an updated electronic variation of the Jackson Five's "ABC" by the young black Boston group New Edition (Baker acted as executive producer on "Candy Girl" with Maurice Starr and Michael Jonzun). Besides their electronic pulse, these records have two things in common: they are credited to groups usually manufactured by the producers and they all shot straight to the top of the dance music charts. In dance music circles, Arthur Baker and John Robie are now respectfully known as "the gurus."

They make an unlikely pair. Baker, twenty-seven, is a huge bearded hulk of a man with shoulder-length black hair who could pass as a member of the Hell's Angels. A former disco DJ with no formal musical training, he began spinning records at Lucifer's in Boston, which he describes as a "typical polyester disco." He talked his way into producing a few mediocre disco records before moving to New York and stumbling across the active rap music scene in the South Bronx.

The balding thirty-year-old Robie grew up in Queens, played guitar in rock bands, and was eventually signed as a solo artist to the now-defunct Infinity Records. Until he met Baker his contact with R&B was minimal. "I was working in a rock format and my production style was very wall-of-sound," he explains. "I was tech-oriented. I had a 4-track studio in my apartment, a Farfisa organ and a Multimoog. My main instrument was the guitar."

Baker and Robie met through Tom Silverman, publisher of *Dance Music Report*, a disco tip sheet. Interested in rap music and starting his own rap record label, Silverman offered Baker the opportunity to produce a record with noted Bronx DJ Afrika Bambaataa, who was managing a number of local rap groups. The result was "Jazzy Sensation," a remake of Gwen McRae's "Funky Sensation."

The main difference between Baker and other producers was the extraordinary amount of time he spent at obscure record stores, talking to kids and developing a feel for what they wanted. At the time, German synthesists Kraftwerk were making a surprisingly strong impact in the black market with their *Computer World* album. Taking Kraftwerk as their inspiration, Baker and Bambaataa went to work on another single. All they needed was a good synthesizer player.

With his knack for melodic hooks and his percussive dexterity on keyboards, John Robie proved to be the perfect choice. "I called up Tom Silverman," Robie recalls, "because he had this new label and I wanted him to put out this record I was working on. He said, 'Don't you play synthesizer? Why don't you come over here?'" The next day Baker, Robie and Bambaataa went into the studio and effortlessly laid down the musical track for "Planet Rock" in a few hours. They have been working together ever since.

"Some people think electronic music

continued on page 96

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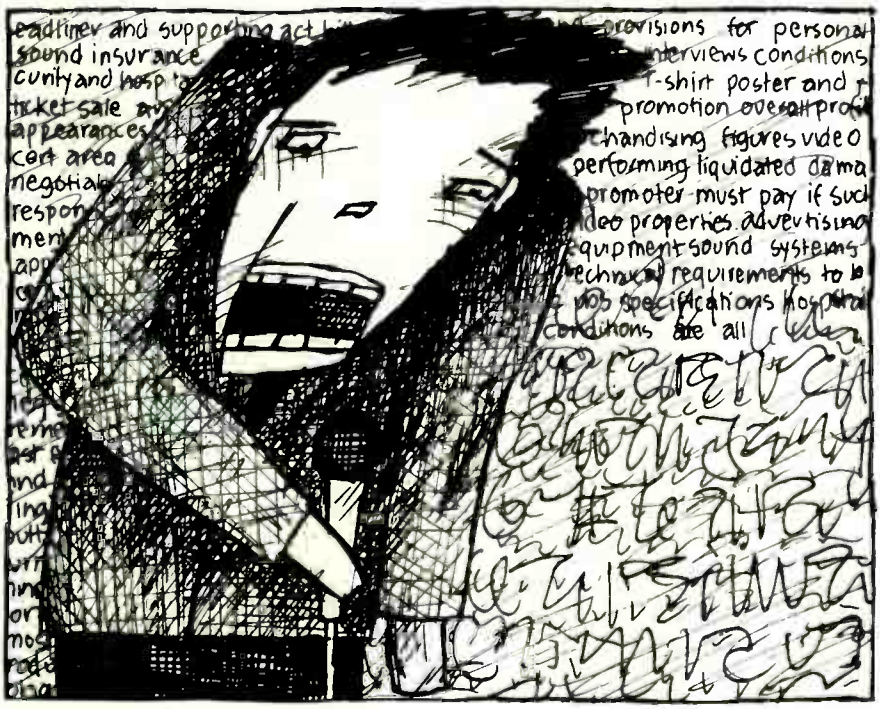
L E G A L

PERFORMANCE CONTRACTS

No Easy Riders

BY STAN SOOCHER



Booking agent Ian Copeland became convinced the negotiating process had gotten out of hand the day someone showed him a performing contract that required the promoter to provide quantities of a certain white leisure drug backstage for the band. "The clause read 'Promoter shall provide a snowstorm, a blizzard would be better,'" Copeland recalls with a strong hint of concern in his voice. "Here was this illegal action written into this lengthy legal document. That clause was both excessive and absurd."

Copeland, younger brother of Police manager and I.R.S. Records boss Miles Copeland, doesn't work like that. His Frontier Booking International, the largest booking agency for New Wave acts in this country, is based on the concept of bare essentials, securing only those things necessary to get his acts comfortably from the last encore in one town to the opening number in the next. The way he sees it, success in the music business has nothing to do with backstage blizzards. It has everything to do with the realities of business.

The performing contract is the basic legal tool for staging a concert. Not all acts sign such written agreements. This is especially true of up-and-coming bands that have no record product or guaranteed club followings. But the critical points in both oral and written agreements are fundamentally the same, varying primarily in degree.

Lawyers play a surprisingly small role in the negotiating process. An act that wants a written agreement will consult its attorney to draw up a standard rider to be utilized in all situations, from clubs to middle-sized halls to large arenas and stadiums. Then the act and its manager present the rider to a booking agent who adds his or her own thoughts to the document and procures the concert employment. (In some states, a manager may obtain the employment.)

"You (the act) sign a separate contract that gives the booking agency the exclusive right to negotiate all performing deals, subject to management approval," Copeland explains. "A term of three to five years is typical with the agent getting ten percent of your gross concert earnings."

The agent pitches the acts to the promoter, who buys the talent and rents the facility where the concert will take place. The heart of a written deal is often laid out on a short document prepared by the American Federation of Musicians, known as a "contract face." This contains the agreed-upon date of the show, place, time, venue capacity, ticket price, gross sales potential and method of payment.

Oral deals are often struck up when a member of a band contacts a club owner directly. "We'll sometimes use an agent to get out-of-town bookings, but we try to develop our own working relationship with the clubs when we play at home," declares Jody Wos, bass guitarist for promising New York punk-reggae rockers Soviet Sex. As a young band on a fiercely competitive scene, their experiences are typical of new acts hustling for bread-and-butter work. "Unequal bargaining power can be frustrating," Wos continues. "But when the club owner gets to know and like you, you can get booked on the same show with the big acts that play the club, exposing you to a larger audience."

One of four different methods is commonly used to pay an act for a concert appearance: a simple percentage of the gate; a flat guarantee with no percentage of the gate; a guarantee with an artist/promoter split at varying percentages for all amounts over the guarantee plus promoter's expenses; or a guarantee against a percentage of the gross, whichever is higher. Bands that rely on percentages in oral agreements will have to trust clubs to keep an accurate customer count or post their own personnel at the door. But once you become familiar with a club, you'll be able to come up with a good estimate of audience size.

In a written deal, an act's standard rider is attached to the contract face. The promoter reviews the rider, deletes clauses, adds her or his own conditions and returns the rider to the booking agent who presents the promoter's demands to the act. Stanley Snadowsky, a lawyer and co-owner of the Manhattan night club the Bottom Line, calls this the "varicose veins" approach.

"For example, a major act can be playing both clubs and large arenas on a lengthy tour," Snadowsky says. "The rider contains a section with technical requirements that gives step-by-step instructions on erecting the stage and sound system for a stadium. We've spent at least three hundred thousand dollars on sound at the Bottom Line, so we're not about to take down our equip-

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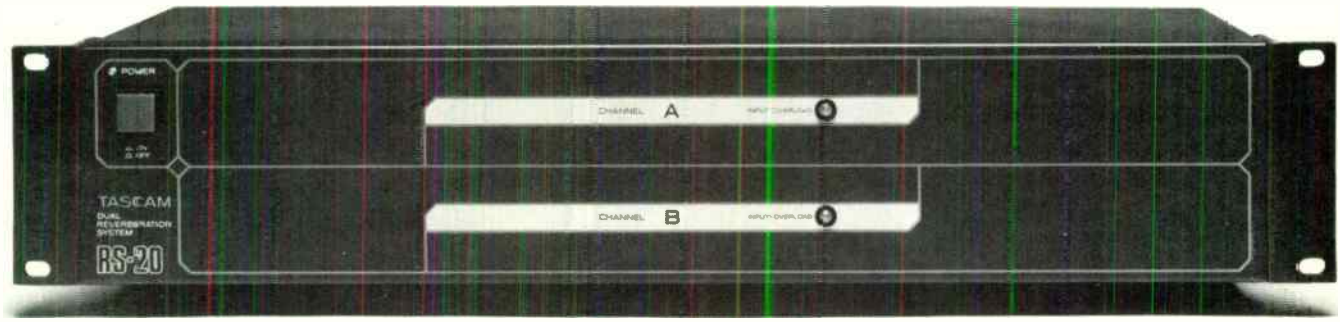

TWEAK FREE REVERB. REVERB. REVERB.

Many reverbs come with level controls, but not the RS-20—it's tweak free. After all, your mixer has echo send and return controls, so why pay twice for the same thing. Just set the rear panel sensitivity switch, and a pair of bi-color LEDs on the front panel help you set the mixer's send level. That's it.

Limiters ahead of the RS-20 drive amps then prevent overdrive or "twangy" spring sounds caused by high energy transients inherent in plucked guitar strings, etc., so the RS-20 remains "squeak free."

This exciting new unit incorporates a proprietary design with three different sized springs on each channel. Here's why: Most conventional single-spring reverbs have poor high frequency response, and those that don't usually compensate by "shunting" high frequencies directly through their reverb with a capacitor, a short-cut that cheats you of high frequency delay. The RS-20's multiple springs extend the frequency range at least an octave above conventional units (without a shunt). Also, three springs let us scale the decay time to the frequency for superbly natural sounding reverb.

You've got to hear it—sound that rivals high quality plates and digital systems, for a whole lot less. Even at twice the price, nothing beats the RS-20 Dual Reverb.

For additional information, see your TASCAM dealer, or write TASCAM Products, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, CA 90640, (213) 726-0303.

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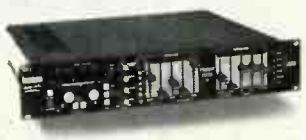
Panasonic **Ramsa** model WR-8112 is designed with twelve mike and line inputs. This combination sound reinforcement and recording console provides the versatility of trim, monitor/effect send, solo controls, stereo effects returns and cue send outputs. The outputs include four Group, two Master and one Mono Master. Further, the 12-point LED meter can measure any signal that travels through the console. A flexible set of controls directs both sound reinforcement and recording functions, including a 3-band equalization section on each input, covering high, mid-range and low frequencies. Control over such frequencies as vocals and brass are provided through a sweepable, peak-dip mid-range knob, covering a more varied range than the fixed type. Panasonic, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094. (201) 348-7464.

DOD Electronics introduces a new line of professional equipment which replaces all existing 800 Series rack units and expands the line with several new units. The redesigned chassis will not only give the series a distinctive new look, but will also house dramatically improved electronics and components: 15-band eq, dual 15-band eq, 31-band eq, Compressor-Limiter, Crossover, Flanger Doubler, Analog Delay, Spectrum and Digital Delay. DOD Electronics Corp., 2953 South 300 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84115. (801) 485-8534.

Ovation Guitars has announced their 1983 "Collector's Series" model, the first Ovation production *supershallow bowl* model, finished in a striking gray/black sunburst with genuine abalone rosette and fingerboard inlay pattern including a "1983" block inlay at the 12th fret. Add Ovation's famous piezoelectric pickup/preamp system, Kaman Bar neck, special bowl label and serially numbered certificate of authenticity individually signed by Ovation vice president Bill Kaman and you have a truly unique instrument. These guitars will only be manufactured in a limited edition in the summer of 1983... and never again. Ovation, Box 4, Bloomfield, CT 06002. (203) 243-1711.

The new **Lexicon** Prime Time II retains most of the human engineering factors and control format of the original Prime Time. It has two independently adjustable delay outputs, complete input and output mixing and a wide array of control and interface capabilities. The unit has long delay capabilities with memory option and metronome features. These allow Prime Time II to be used as a short term digital audio recorder to create dramatic new sound-on-sound layering effects, and, when used with the infinite repeat, allows creative use of captured delay loops, which may be synchronized by the metronome clock, to drive external automatic drum and synthesizer equipment. Lexicon, Inc., 60 Turner Street, Waltham, MA 02154. (617) 891-6790.



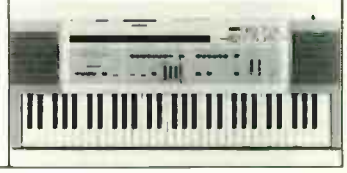
Nady Systems announces the new Nady 49 Wireless System. For the first time, a 49-mHz system with 3-channel capability is available at a price that brings clean-sounding wireless technology within reach of the working musician. Three separate instruments can utilize the advantages of wireless freedom on the same stage utilizing the 49-mHz band. The system features two 10-LED trees to measure the instrument's audio signal and to indicate the radio frequency strength to the musician at a glance. Nady Systems, 1145 65th Street, Oakland, CA 94608 (415) 652-2411.

Ibanez introduces three microphones for instrument miking. The IM70 super cardioid dynamic mike uses a lightweight cartridge diaphragm. This gives fast transient response and makes this an excellent choice for miking snare, mounted toms and brass instruments. The IM76 is an excellent percussion microphone, particularly suited for low-frequency drums such as the bass drum and floor toms. The cartridge diaphragm features a high-compliance edge and double dome for wide response and clean, full lows. The IM80 cardioid condenser microphone, because of its very flat response in all frequencies, is an ideal microphone for overhead cymbals, high-hat, acoustic guitar, piano and woodwinds. The IM80 utilizes a 9-volt battery which has greater dynamic range over conventional 1.5-volt condenser microphones. Hoshino, 1716 Winchester Road, Bensalem, PA 19020 (215) 638-8670. In the West: Chesbro Co., 327 Broadway, Idaho Falls, ID 83401. (208) 522-8671.

Series 200, the newest console range from **Soundcraft**, London, England is available in three frame sizes: 8, 16 and 24, with the 8-input model being 19-inch rack mountable. Equipped with four group and two stereo outputs, the 200 series features balance mike and line inputs, 4-band equalizer, four auxiliary sends, two post and two pre-fader and 8-track monitor capability. Suggested retail prices are $1,995, $2,350 and $4,500. Soundcraft, 20610 Manhattan Place, Suite 120, Torrance, CA 90501. (213) 328-2595.

The Warlock II Bass has a mahogany body and neck featuring the famous **B.C. Rich** one-piece through-the-body neck with rosewood fingerboard and mother of pearl dot inlay. Electronics include one volume, one tone, preamp on/off and preamp volume. Badass bridge and four chrome-plated machines as well as black anodized aluminum truss rod cover, back and jack plates finish off this beautiful bass. The body is bound in white and available in all B.C. Rich custom colors. B.C. Rich, Box 60119, Los Angeles, CA 90060. (213) 222-8167.

KORG's revolutionary new SAS-20 Personal Keyboard using a built-in microcomputer, analyzes the melody being played and provides the entire song accompaniment including rhythm, bass and chord progressions. Melody chord (one fingered chord melody), sustain and stereo (through twin built-in speakers) add variety and richness. The key transpose feature allows the player to shift the entire keyboard pitch, making it easy to play in different keys or to match the music to a vocal range. In addition, a virtually unlimited library of rhythm and accompaniments to suit all kinds of music can be created with a series of SAS cartridges. Unicord, 89 Frost Street, Westbury, NY 11590. (516) 333-9100.



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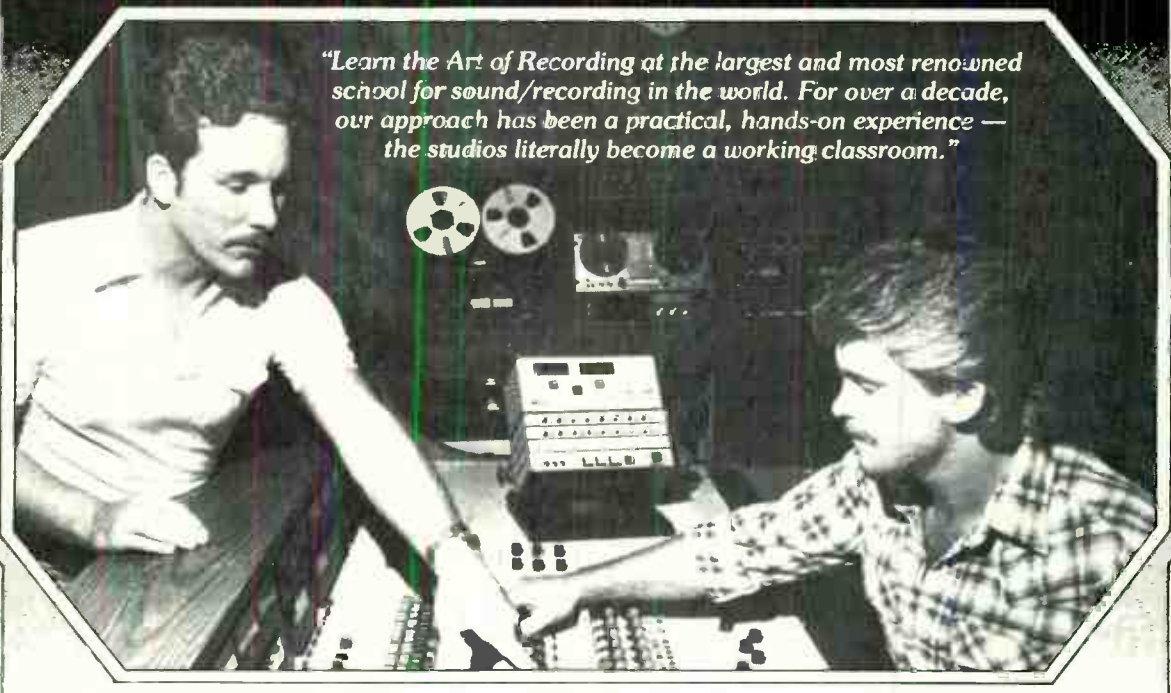

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World Radio History

Easter from pg. 76
perfect. At my place, there's usually more rough edges left because people can't afford to stay in there very long."

Still, despite the limitations (or maybe even because of them), Easter's modest studio has produced a wide range of distinct sounding records. While Mitch himself prefers "good Leiber-Stoller Brill Building pop with real dense arrangements," the Individuals' *Fields* LP (produced by dB bassist Gene Holder at Drive-In) boasts a clear ringing Fender guitar sound that recalls the jamming rock bands of the late 60s and early 70s.

"We put Glenn Morrow's guitar amp in the dog food closet and shut the doors so the sound would bang around and create a real good tone," recalls Mitch. "That gave it a bigger sound, with more echo. When you put a microphone right up against the speaker, it sounds very close and compact, which isn't always good. I try to put two microphones on the guitar amp—one close and one far away, so you get that feeling of space."

For a garage studio stocked with such a motley collection of gear, Drive-In has given birth to a suprising variety of sounds, from the lush folk-rock guitar layers of R.E.M.'s *Chronic Town* EP to Pylon's dense post-punk jungle stomp on their brand new *Chomp* album (produced by Chris Stamey and Gene Holder). Easter and his pals are conversant with such a breadth and depth of sound because they are not afraid to test the limits of the Drive-In equipment, not to mention that of their own abilitites. For example, Stamey's recent solo album *It's A Wonderful Life* was recorded at Drive-In using noise gates in quite an unorthodox manner. The gates were triggered by a drum kit which was in turn electronically connected to a keyboard. Stamey used fishing weights to hold down certain notes on the keyboard which would not actually sound until the drum was hit.

"The result," notes Easter, "was this mechanical synchronization. The idea was to achieve the goal of all rhythm sections—to play tight."

Easter confesses that his operation could stand some upgrading. "I'd like to make it a *little* more state-of-the-art," he winks. He's already added some new "ancient" equipment to his collection—an Audio Instrument tape echo machine, three twenty-three year old Pultec equalizers ("The Power Station swears by 'em") and an Altec 436A tube compressor which Richard Barone used for all his bass parts on *Nuts And Bolts*.

"I think the old stuff has the most character. The ancient tube equalizers, the tube echo, the tube compressor—there are a lot of people who think that stuff sounds better and so do I. The new solid state stuff may be cleaner, but the tube equipment has more presence. Think about all those old Elvis and Beatles records with their great vocal sounds. That was all recorded with tube microphones and compressors. Those voices all seem to have this very special quality. So I always try to run the vocals through as many of those tubes as I can."

But Easter's studio is no mere recording museum. In the tradition of great garage studios like Sun Records in Memphis and Norman Petty's Clovis, New Mexico hideaway, where Buddy Holly cut some of his greatest sides, Drive-In Studios makes up in creative atmosphere what it may lack in the latest hot-rodding equipment. The quiet familial charm of its location and lack of high-tech precision have been a liberating influence on Easter and his new wave gang.

"When musicians come and record here, it's like they were at practice or something. We can do things here we could never do at the big studios. For instance, on the R.E.M. song 'Wolves' on the EP, the band did all the singing outdoors. You can actually hear the crickets in the background." M

Garage Mechanix:
A Drive-In Studios Checklist

Tape Machines
3M56 16-track
3M64 2-track
3M23 4-track
Quantum 128 + 8EX 20-channel mixing console
Biamp graphic equalizer
Ecoplate II reverb
Alison Gain Brain compressors
UREI 1178 compressor
Symetrix 501 compressor
Altec 436A "ancient" tube compressor
Audio Instrument Co. "ancient" tape echo machines (2)
Pultec EQP-IAS equalizers
Roger Mayer RM68 noise gates (8)
Lexicon M93 digital delay

Microphones
AKG 414, D-1000, D-190
Electro-Voice RE 20, C5-15P
Shure SM7
Sennheiser MD-421
RCA 77AX

Idiot's from pg. 78
soldering iron, my wife went off to trim the DiMarzio rings down to size with a razor blade.

On our way to the emergency room to get her finger stitched up, I made a mental note to restrict future renovations to things that can be done with blunt instruments. Why weren't those damned rings flat, anyhow? I later learned that the problem was that almost all custom parts are designed for Fender and Gibson guitars.

One of the unfortunate aspects of this unnatural cross-breeding was the fact that the color code of the Peavey stock pickup's output wires looked the same as that of my new Seymour Duncan's, but turned out to serve different purposes. Not knowing this at the time, and seeing that the existing pickups weren't wired in as Seymour Duncan suggested, I experienced a loss of faith and soldered the new pickup in to match the way the old one was installed. I figured if it worked once, it should work again.

Wrong-o! A few days later, I chanced to be talking with Paul Reed Smith, whose hand-built guitars have become the favorite instruments of such players as Carlos Santana, Neal Schon and Al DiMeola. Hoping to impress him that I knew a little more about guitars than where the D string was, I described my adventures in rewiring. "Well, you know," he said, trying to break it to me gently, "the color code that Peavey uses doesn't have anything to do with the Duncan." Added Jon Ingram, his assistant, "Yeah, if you don't wire the white and red leads together, you won't get both coils." Gee, I *wondered* where that hum came from.... This is not to say "don't attempt," but rather "don't assume."

A few other interesting facts I picked up along the way: unless you're installing a fairly standard pickup or knob arrangement on a Fender or Gibson guitar, count on pick-guard problems. Precut pick-guards aren't famous for wide variety, and while custom cutting can be done, the plastic sheets used to make pick-guards are expensive and hard to come by, and the process itself is well beyond the home-hobby level. While Strats (and Peaveys) leave plenty of maneuvering room, Telecasters and Les Pauls leave little room for error; you may want to farm out soldering work on the latter types.

By comparison, upgrading my bass was a piece of cake. For one thing, it's a Fender Precision—practically the industry standard—so getting parts that would fit it was no problem. For another, the limitations of what I could do without making a botch of the project were so obvious that I didn't hesitate to get outside help.

My goals were pretty straightforward: add a new neck and bridge. Although the Badass Bridge provides enough mass to boost anybody's treble response, it requires routing out the body, something I won't even consider attempting. The Badass II, on the other hand, isn't as massive but offers the compensatory advantage of easily bolting on, using the same screw holes as the stock Fender tailpiece.

The neck took a little more work. I opted for a Phil Kubicki neck, because he makes excellent Fender replace-

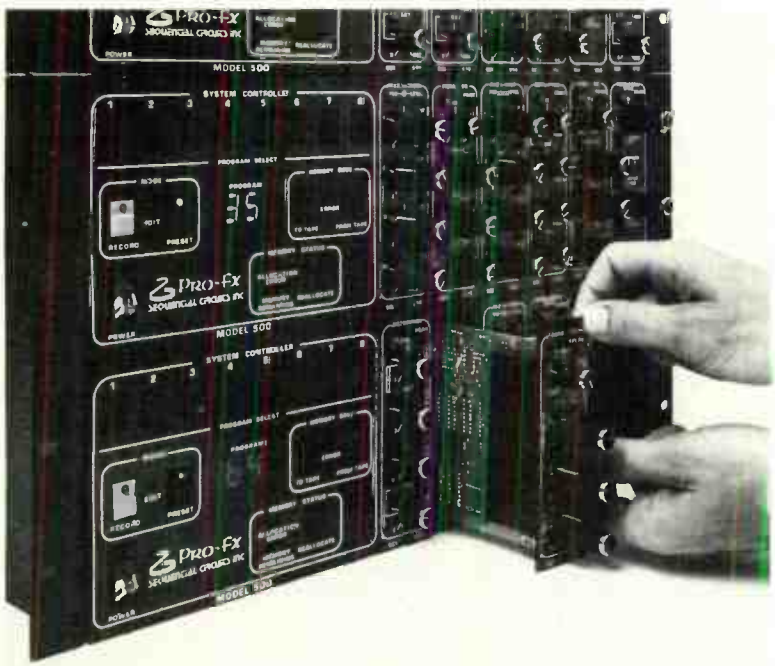
continued on page 96

World Radio History

PROGRAMMABILITY, THE POWER OF THE 80's!

In the last 10 years, the advantages gained by using instruments that remember and act upon stored information have become so apparent (and practical in terms of cost) that today it's tough to find a newly engineered product that doesn't feature programmability, particularly in industries with stringent specifications and performance requirements.

So . . . what about audio processing systems? Wouldn't delay lines, equalizers, phase shifters, and all other sound coloring devices do a better job for you in the studio and on stage if you had much more control (programmable control!) over them? A programmable system will remember your custom sounds, for instant recall, at any moment. Complex sound changes, using any combination of effects, can be accomplished at the touch of a footswitch!



Obviously, the benefits of a fully programmable signal processing system are enormous. Add to this the advantages that are inherent in an integrated, modular packaging concept (such as expandability and the ability of the user to custom-configure a system to individual needs) and you begin to appreciate the power and flexibility of the PRO-FX programmable processing system.

- The PRO-FX Mainframe will control up to 30 individual effects modules.
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World Radio History

RECORD REVIEWS

Stevie Nicks
Wild Heart (Modern)

Right from the start, I'm telling you I don't know Stevie Nicks, because if I don't say that, I'm going to get frantic phone calls from Dubuque at three a.m. saying, "I have to get a message to Stevie Nicks or I'll die," and then I'll have to explain for half an hour that however heavy duty your mystical connection to Stevie Nicks is, getting her a message will not save your life. What will save your life is getting out of Dubuque.

Actually, I did meet Stevie Nicks once and we didn't establish much mystical connection. She thought I was a sexual pervert because of this article I had just written about Carly Simon in which I took inordinate interest in her breastfeeding her kid. So even if I could give Stevie Nicks your message (tell the truth—it isn't even a message, it's song lyrics about unrequited love, right?), chances are she wouldn't be favorably disposed to saving your life. So don't call.

Which brings me to Stevie Nicks' new album, *Wild Heart*. I am hesitant to say how much I think of this record because Stevie Nicks will probably think less of her songs if she knows that a sexual pervert like myself is into them. Nonetheless, I'll risk it and say that *Wild Hearts* is wonderful and astonishing in parts and never less than pretty good in others.

Most wonderful and astonishing is "Beauty And The Beast." In Stevie Nicks' version of the fairytale, the beast dies in the end because the beauty fails to return in time. When I first heard it, I thought, "Hey, somebody should clue Stevie Nicks in that emotions this deep ought to be dealt with through 400 layers of irony." Then I listened again and decided that lack of irony is not necessarily a character flaw, and further decided to sell my record collection because "Beauty And The Beast" has singlehandedly dumped all other love songs that have ever been written into the toxic waste pit of history. A word of warning, however: give yourself a full two hours to be immobilized after every listening.

Not to imply that Stevie Nicks is incapable of irony, a suspicion I used to harbor. "Enchanted" is a pretty funny song: "You thought you saw something in my eyes/ It's a shame you wanted me and didn't try," which sums up the sex lives of eighty percent of the guys I know. And the other twenty percent are perverts and not my friends anyway.

Other Stuff That Normally Gets Covered In Record Reviews: every song is partially or totally hummable—"If Anyone Falls In Love" and "I'll Run To You" (a duel with Tom Petty) having first engrooved themselves in this critic's brain. Jimmy Iovine's production is up to its usual selfless standard of displaying the artist's style (not the producer's) in the best possible aural environment. The only thing even slightly disappointing is the lack of "Edge Of Seventeen"-type high energy, but who's stopping you from listening to "Edge Of Seventeen" again? And while you're doing that, I have this message I have to get to Stevie Nicks.... — ***Charles M. Young***

Peter Tosh
Mama Africa (EMI/America)

In rural Jamaica there is an impish little conspiracy between the prospering workman and the country cobbler that's commonly referred to as the "crier." A piece of fine leather sewn into a new, locally-fashioned boot or shoe, the crier is there to ensure a luxuriant squeak. The purposes of the ostentatious device are two: to "pop style," showing off one's rising financial status in the community, and to interrupt the preacher's sermon in church on Sunday. Exquisitely arrogant is the well-heeled young man who dares to stride into services wearing "crier's boot," halting the gospel in mid-brimstone hail.

Since his earliest days as a solo performer, former Wailer Peter Tosh has been the crier against the sole of reggae, constantly calling attention to himself with often-irksome bombast. No matter how compelling the composition, Peter always made it clear that it was *he*, not the song, that was the point. Sometimes the brazen means-to-an-end swash in his manner tended to buckle, other times it was an inspired alloy of mettle and egotism, as in the early Coxsone single "I'm The Toughest," the 1972 Pressure Beat single, "Them A Fe Get A Beatin'," "Legalize It" in 1975 or 1977's "Steppin Razor."

Tosh's U.S. LPs have been highly erratic in quality, *Legalize It* and *Equal Rights* on Columbia standing as utterly inspired distillations of his best JA output in the mid 1970s. His subsequent albums for Rolling Stones Records have been often embarrassing grab bags of disco-reggae and sci-fi hokum, larded with silly sound effects, cloyingly sweet female backing vocals and a flaccid rhythm sound (Sorry, Sly & Robbie). *Bush Doctor*'s "Creation" was lame, "Buk-in-hamm Palace" on *Mystic Man* was laughable, and "Reggae-Mylitis" from *Wanted Dred And Alive* (Rolling Stone/EMI) so stultifyingly stupid as to be unlistenable.

Things looked embarrassingly bleak for Tosh. And yet, Peter must somehow still be capable of taking his own pompous advice that "you got to walk and don't look back," for on *Mama Africa* he breaks his cocky stride—sans criers—and moves into the reggae mainstream once again with a sound that is remarkably free of studio histrionics and bluster. From the lovely title track to "Not Gonna Give It Up" and "Feel No Way," Tosh is in excellent, snarlingly percussive voice, and actually acting as a team player with Sly & Robbie, a star-bright horn section and strong vocal support from the likes of Betty Wright and the Tamlins. Only on "Peace Treaty" does Peter slip back into one of his cynical cants, lecturing with an I-told-you-so ferocity those who believed in 1978 that Jamaica's rival political gangs could bury the ratchet.

But the standout track on *Mama Africa* is "Johnny B. Goode," a brilliant

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reworking set "deep down in Jamaica close to Mandeville, back up in the woods on top of a hill." The mood is ominous and eerie, with an underlying desperation, and the music builds with a sweeping muscularity that is downright cinematic. Tosh sings his heart out with a barefoot fervor that would give the preacher-man more pause than any noisy shoeleather. This time around, Peter Tosh is truly a step ahead of the congregation. — ***Timothy White***

James Newton

James Newton (Gramavision)

Free, classical, swing, blues . . . convenient catchwords for bygone eras, and almost totally irrelevant to the music of the 1980s. The challenge for musicians in the next decade is to transcend these meaningless distinctions and delineate a unity of direction and purpose. In other words, it isn't enough to be a virtuoso jazz player anymore; there's got to be some compositional insight behind it all.

James Newton is uniquely qualified to make sense out of our musical history explosion, and, like most of his fellow Gramavision artists, a sense of structure animates his every move. Combining the elegant symmetry of Frank Wess with the elliptical fancy of Eric Dolphy, Newton has fashioned a bold, personal solo style on flute the likes of which has never been equalled in jazz; his swooping, acrobatic chromaticism, enormous brass-like tone and African-flavored percussive breathiness have made him an underground star on his instrument since he hit New York in his early twenties. But it is the graceful, reflective beauty of his mature solo style, and the matching calm of his ensemble writing and arranging that distinguish his Gramavision debut.

Even though Newton and collaborators Slide Hampton, Billy Hart, Cecil McBee, John Blake, Anthony Davis and Jay Hoggard might be familiar to you as powerful, original improvisers in go-for-broke settings, the way they sublimate that spirit to the demands of the young flutist's dark, probing compositions indicates that what Coltrane and Parker were to musicians of the past two decades, Duke Ellington will be for the next generation.

His spirit, and those of Billy Strayhorn, Charles Mingus, Wayne Shorter and Thelonious Monk hover over these proceedings, as Newton (and Davis) readily acknowledge. *James Newton* begins to fulfill their concept of *extended form*, in which written and improvised sections ("comprovisation" if you like) act as springboards for melodic and thematic development. On "The Crips" Newton layers section upon section so subtly that even when the whole band is improvising, the polyphony is more symphonic than chaotic—not merely jamming off changes but taking responsibility for developing ideas. This sensitivity extends to the rich, airy textures Newton conjures from piano, vibes, bass and trombone to mirror his tone on Strayhorn's "Daydream," and the way his little interludes on "Budapest" and "Ismene" overcome the string-of-solo staleness of other all-star dates. For all its surface eclecticism, *James Newton* swings when all is said and done; but unlike your typical jazz showoffs, Newton and company never supercede the mood of the music, which makes this one of the important new visions of group music to have come along in years. — ***Chip Stern***

The Kinks

State Of Confusion (Arista)

State Of Confusion follows logically from *Give The People What They Want* both as music and as a philosophical couplet. It's no secret that the Kinks' recent popular upsurge is directly related to their renascence as rock's classiest head-bangers, though anyone who followed them through their mid-70s malaise would probably acknowledge that the overall change has been for the better, at least in live performance. But on vinyl, even Ray Davies' buoyant spirit can't counteract this much hard-rock ballast—a too-familiar Yardbirds' riff on "Definite Maybe," the lumbering backbeat and fuzzy guitar cascades of "Bernadette" and a thoroughly unconvincing if well-intentioned rant against "Young Conservatives." History has writ that the Kinks invented the Heavy Riff with "You Really Got Me" back in 1964; but since they've never come up with anything to equal it after, say 1965, perhaps they should consider abandoning this part of the field to their inferiors.

That said, it should also be noted that among rock's venerable Big Three (Kinks, Stones, Who) this band is the only one left still bothering to earn their adulation, and that Davies remains one of the few pop *auteurs* for whom compassion is more than hearty affectation. Thus the best moments of *Confusion* are also the most personal: on "Heart Of Gold," which uses *Muswell Hillbillies* pickings to frame the story of a lass who's tough but tender; the unabashed sentiment and rococo balladry of "Don't Forget To Dance"; and spare funk-edged "Property," a poignant study of the ironies of divorce, perhaps inspired by Davies' own.

As its title suggests, *State Of Confusion* is too disjointed a collection of songs to hold together thematically (in the past, the Kinks' problem was often being too thematic), but it still provides its share of provocative reflections from a Romantic poet bravely trying to cope with the existential dilemmas of this age, and although there is no "Better Things" here to wind all the spare threads into a ball of optimism, there is a wistful, Saroyanesque "Come Dancing" which dextrously couples familial nostalgia with Davies' tribute to music as the elixir of eternal youth. And after watching Ray prove it for twenty years, who can doubt that wisdom? — ***Mark Rowland***

A Flock Of Seagulls

Listen (Jive/Arista)

Over a year ago, A Flock Of Seagulls made a grueling transatlantic flight and arrived on a hostile shore, a beach in the iron hand of motorcycle heathens and redneck rockers. Being the first wave of a new music species, they flew fast (they had to, since so much was being hurled at them) and basically did one thing very well. They launched a tight distillation of that sound, "I Ran," directly at the ears of the chainsaw programmers, and in doing so drove the bikers from the beach and made it a safe landing zone for flights of other strange birds making the long crossing.

Now that all manner of avian invaders have taken up residence on the beach, A Flock Of Seagulls has returned with considerably more dignity and subtlety, scarcely holding a grudge against the people who said rude things about Mike Score's hair ("I try not to look back in anger/I try not to look back at all"). In recording *Listen* at Conny Plank's German synth laboratory, they have traded their guitar-y, double-time attack for synthetic, spacial exploration, attempting rather ambitious and eclectic variations on their pop-melodic strong suit. While not all of these variations work completely, a good three-quarters of *Listen* is successful, especially in the way guitarist Paul Reynolds and synthman/singer Score weave their instrumental tracks together; in some cases, the entrance of the vocals is almost anticlimactic.

Listen's highlights include the inventive dynamics of "Nightmares," the gentle

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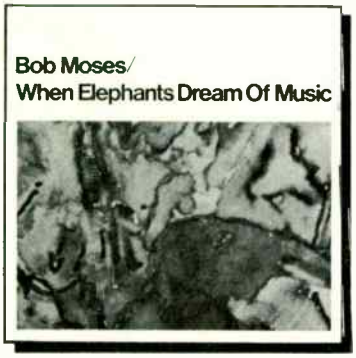

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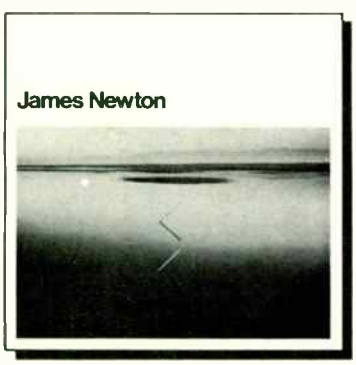

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pop kineticism of "Transfer Affection," the punky humor of "Electrics" and the wistful, Moody Blues-like (?!) "The Fall." Yorkshire wizard Bill Nelson adds a touch of production refinement on the rave-up finale "(It's Not Me) Talking," and the excessive repetition of a cloying synth line on the British single "Wishing" fails to spoil the song's melodic tug. All in all, an excellent album for birdwatchers, but not one that will be easily spoon-fed to people who *need* to rock 'n' roll. Good thing the birdwatchers now own the beach. — ***Jock Baird***

Richard Thompson

Hand Of Kindness (Hannibal)

The general public may be tired of rock critics browbeating them with the greatness of British guitar magician Richard Thompson—let's face it, a man who, for years, could barely get records released in this country, much less on the charts—but it's hardly our fault. He is *that* special. His songs, while rooted in English folk traditions, blossom into a colorful pop Esperanto incorporating Middle Eastern modality, the blues' poignant sigh and the bold thrust of rock 'n' roll. As a guitarist, he often seems to play in tongues, absorbing all of the above with jazzy fluency, sucking you into the intricate maze of his eloquent riffs and fills while launching you into a new fascinating space with the spontaneous ambition of his solos.

The only thing missing here is his ex-wife Linda Thompson. On their half dozen albums together, the organic clarity and simple drama of her folk-operatic voice cut soulful new lines in Richard's vivid song diamonds. Their recent split put a sorry end to that (she is now making a solo go of it). But as Richard's first solo rebound, *Hand Of Kindness* is a confident return to form; fortified by the crack backing of ex-Fairport Convention mates Simon Nicol on rhythm guitar, bassist Dave Pegg and drummer Dave Mattacks (not to mention the jolly wheeze of John Kirkpatrick's accordion), it is a shining confirmation of nearly everything you probably heard about last year's extraordinary *Shoot Out The Lights*.

Not surprisingly, most of the eight songs on *Hand Of Kindness* are laced with the lingering hurt and recriminatory anger of love gone sour. "See that lifer doing his time/ If I could have his place and he had mine," snarls Thompson in "A Poisoned Heart And A Twisted Memory," a forceful bitter blues in which he plays a brittle screeching guitar solo every bit as emotionally fraught as his belligerent vocal and the song's pounding-fist rhythm. A sad slow ballad of loss, "How I Wanted To" contrasts the delicate metallic collision of Thompson's and Simon Nicol's guitars like wind chimes in a gentle breeze, with the pain etched deeply in Thompson's voice.

Ah, but Thompson's unique folk 'n' roll vision never hurt so good as the album's lead-off blast "Tear-Stained Letter." With Kirkpatrick pumping out Cajun jig licks like Clifton Chenier in a kilt, the rhythm boys kick hard and fast behind a couple of blowsy "Quarter To Three"-style saxes and Thompson's hearty barking vocal ("My heart is beating like a song by the Clash"!). Dave Mattacks' playful timbale rolls add an infectious Caribbean lilt to the sunny "The Wrong Heartbeat" while the drunken sway of "Both Ends Burning" gets a periodic jolt with Thompson's sharp sober guitar breaks.

Other innocent pleasures include the brash folkie hopper "Two Left Feet" and a fragile ballad "Devonside" distinguished by an evocative violin solo by Aly Bain of the Boys of the Lough. But even in its upbeat modes, *Hand Of Kindness* audibly bristles with the emotional fallout of Thompson's broken marriage; a moody voodoo beat and the sweet-and-sour ripples of his Stratocaster heighten the crippling desperation of the title song. That he can come back with a winning album under that pall is testament to his special charms. And with Linda sure to make her own solo mark, this may be one house divided that will still stand. — ***David Fricke***

Miles Davis

Star People (Columbia)

When trumpeter Miles Davis plays the blues, people listen. Lester, you and your after-hours blues caravan and Olu, you and your okra cookin' buddies, step aside for a minute, please, because Miles seems to have some roots he'd like to talk about. He does it without using any fancy, obscurantist labels. For this homeboy it's just irreducible call-and-response (though sometimes a solo statement is expanded into an ensemble theme). Listen to the old-fashioned, stripped-down instrumental interplay on the stutter-steppin' shuffle "It Gets Better," on which the rumbling bass of Marcus Miller shares the thematic line with the twangy guitars of Mike Stern and John Scofield and the percussive chatter of Al Foster and Mino Cinelu, all anchored by

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a gentle backbeat. Throughout the album, from the up-tempo, chicken-scratched, JB-ish "Come Get It" and the joyous, expansive urban strut "U 'n' I" to the slow blues title track, Miles' associates get to rhythms that are low 'n' mellow, on the one and in the pocket.

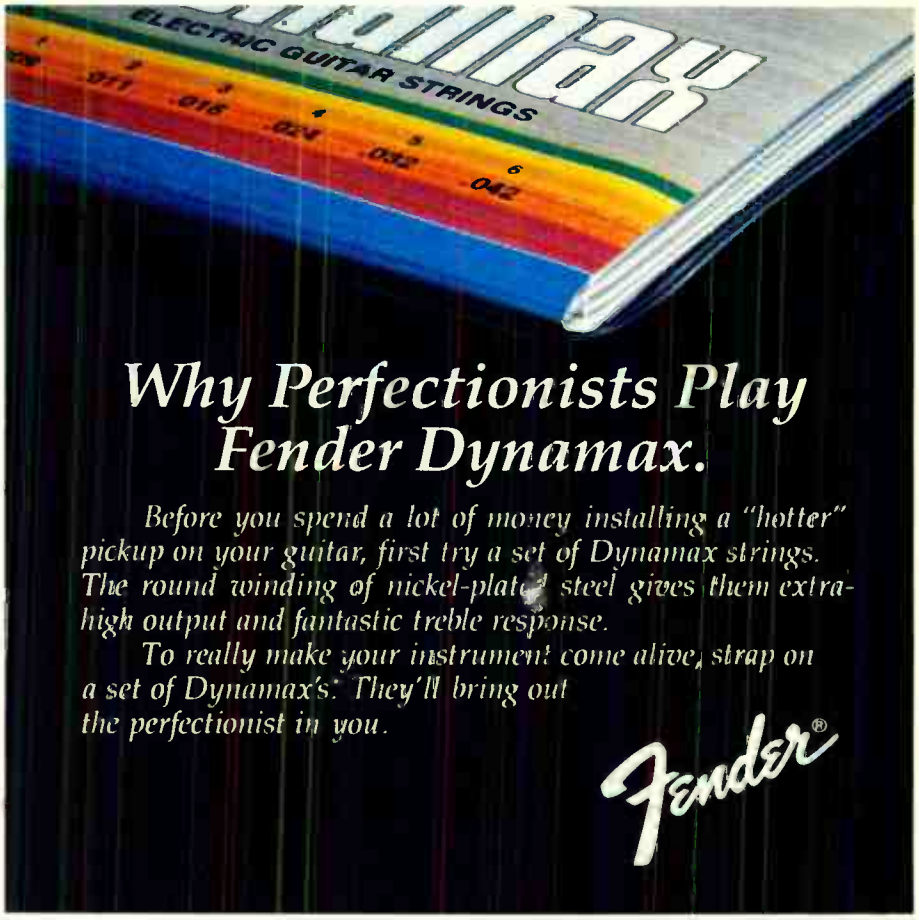
Using this backdrop, Miles goes to work. With a sound ranging from a whisper to a shriek and in a bitchy, wind-up toy tone, Miles eludes, piques, and echoes the rhythm section. The gem is "Star People" which is introduced by guitar and Miles' blissful, supernal keyboards before dovetailing into a poignant blues. Miles, like blues and trouble knockin' at your door, comes up from behind the beat when you least expect him. His economical phrases put a freeze on emotion and create a sense of urgency and sorrow that rival the lamentations of a west African Muslim mourner. Scofield's sweet, stinging guitar is an appropriate foil for Miles' bittersweet blues feeling.

Suitable to *Star People*'s jam format, there is an unfinished quality to some of the tunes. "Come Get It" starts in mid-note at full volume, and the rocked-out "Speak," with Miles' piano trumpet shriek choruses accompanying Scofield's guitar over a backbending funk beat, sounds like one of Sun Ra's home recordings. Nonetheless, the brilliant moments of *Star People* equal those of *We Want Miles* even if neither are as dense and arcanely hip-shaking as *On The Corner*. But when Miles plays the blues... — ***Don Palmer***

Peter Gabriel

Peter Gabriel Live (Geffen)

"You are bad, you have not wings, the river is deep. Go back." (River inhabitants to Dr. Stanley, Zaire, 1876.) Peter Gabriel seems the very model of a concerned citizen: his interest and involvement in world music led to his organizing and sponsoring the WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) festival; more than any established pop musician who draws on tribal and third world musics, he seems concerned about the traditions he draws on, determined to keep the music rooted in its proper context. This all makes for good politics, but musically it frequently falls flat...often because of good but misplaced intentions. Where Talking Heads, the Police, XTC and many lesser bands appropriate tribal rhythms and incorporate them into their sound, into their world (David Byrne can eat Ocora and Tangent records for breakfast every day and still retain a



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racial memory of "1-2-3 Red Light"), Gabriel seems to want to be *appropriated*, to somehow lose himself in the music and the cultures that he's borrowing from. He must want to be reincarnated as part of the Nonesuch Explorer series.

Without the textures, undercurrents and cross rhythms, without the studio wizardry that made his last two records so appealing, Gabriel is at a severe loss. He emerges as an able, occasionally emotive vocalist fronting a first-rate band (Tony Levin on bass and "stick," Jerry Marotta on drums, Larry Fast on synthesizers, David Rhodes on guitar—more or less the same band that played on *Security*), but he's merely filling time; nothing particularly new or fresh is brought to the material, and in the translation quite a bit is lost. "Shock The Monkey," stripped of the brilliant production and mix of the studio album, seems the merest sketch of a song, nothing you'd cross the street to hear.

There are moments that work. "Family Photograph" gains by subtraction. Stripped to just voice and keyboards, the song is more personal and far less bombastic than on the studio version. And "Biko," Gabriel's most powerful song/chant, retains its power and clarity, Larry Fast's synthesized bagpipes sounding as anthemic as ever and Gabriel's whoah-oh-ohs sounding more and more like the Ronettes in Africa.

Still, since Gabriel's interest, time and attention have shifted away from songwriting to working in rhythm and texture, the layering of his newer songs deserves full studio production. Without it, they're not even naked, just undressed. — ***Brian Cullman***

The Young Lions

The Young Lions (Elektra/Musician)

The young "lions" of contemporary jazz are in a unique situation. The jazz tradition has always required that each generation assimilate all that preceded them; in this respect, the seventeen under-forty-five-year-olds who participated in this momentous program at last year's Kool Jazz Fest have done their homework and then some. This double record of that event acknowledges roots stretching past Coltrane, Parker and Ellington all the way to the music's ethnic origins. But what makes this new generation special is the amount of formal training that the majority bring to their appreciation of the past. In lesser hands, such an academic base might result in pretentiousness. For such gifted players as Chico Freeman, James Newton, Hamiet Bluiett, Wynton Marsalis and Anthony Davis, however, it means greater ambition and the ability to pull any ambition off.

At this most democratic of concerts, nearly every instrumentalist was given the chance to compose a piece utilizing any number of his talented compatriots. Freeman's "Whatever Happened To The Dream Deferred" and trombonist Craig Harris' "Nigerian Sunset" are the only works to take advantage of a full orchestra boasting oboe, cello, marimba and the voice of Bobby McFerrin. These evocative tone poems stand out by virtue of their sheer collective power, but the smaller groups show similar thought and organization, while avoiding blustery free-form blowing. Anthony Davis' "FMW" and violinist John Blake's "Maiden Dance" eliminate horns in order to highlight soloist/rhythm section shadings, while Bluiett's "Thank You" plays up the mighty reed section in resurrecting the spirit of Ellington 80s fashion. Jay Hoggard's "Pleasant Memories" dispenses with the band altogether, but his skillful pyrotechnics on *balafon* and vibes impart a cross-cultural unity that was shared by all that night. Such stellar soloists as Marsalis and Paquito D'Rivera, and such talented support players as John Purcell, Abdul Wadud and Daniel Ponce were also given their say. Here's hoping for a Volume Two. — ***Steve Futterman***

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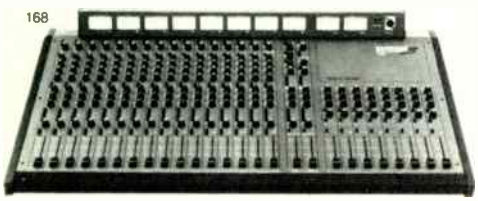

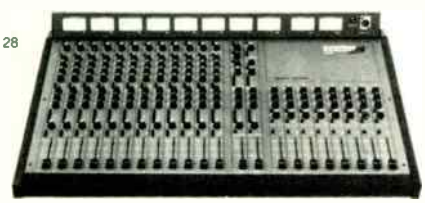

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Bill Laswell

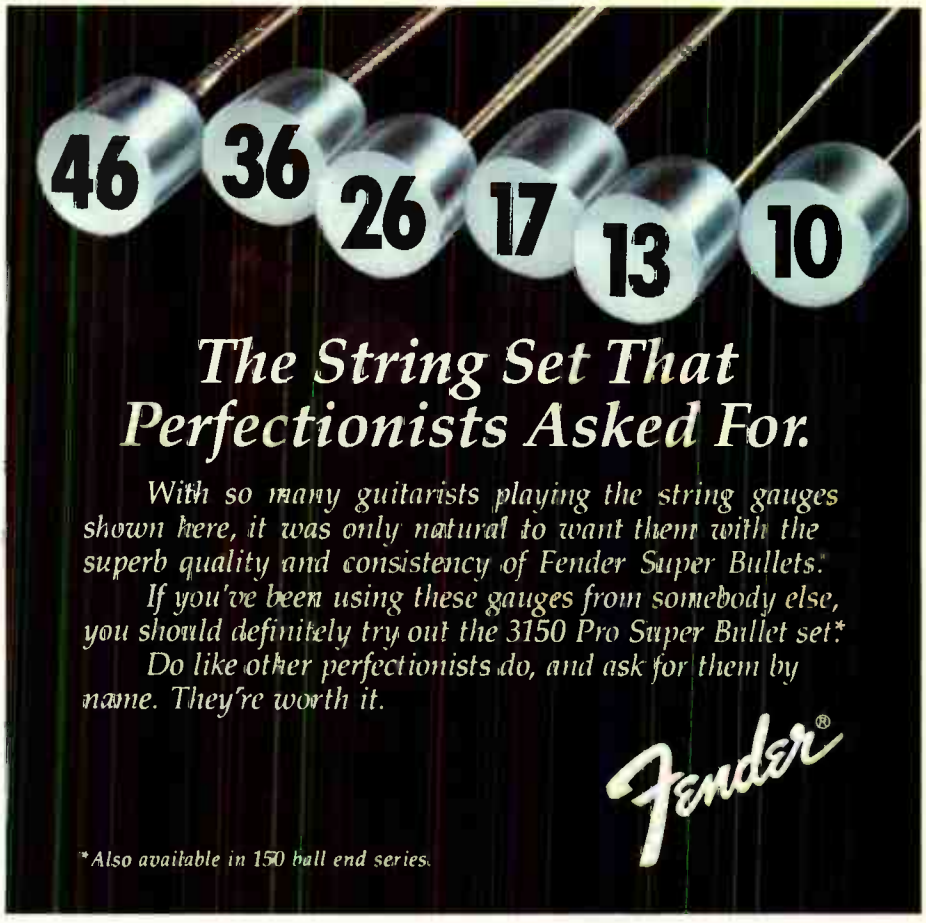
Baselines (Elektra/Musician)

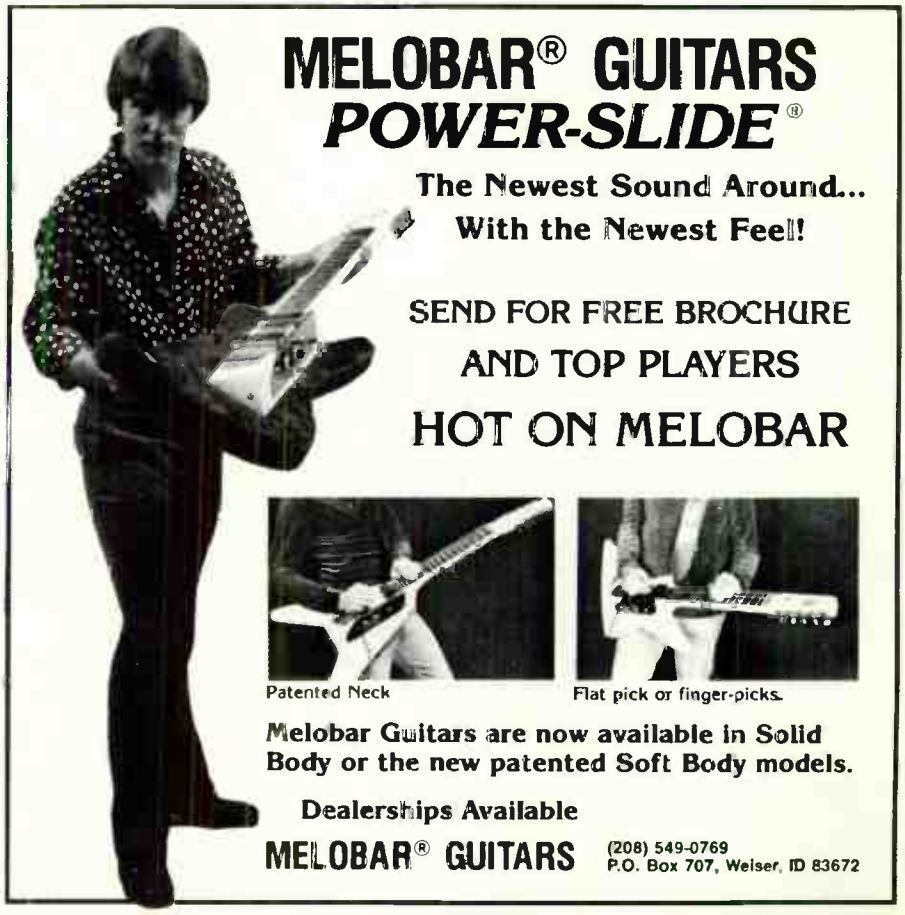
Arriving on a crescendo of demonic drums and synth diesel-roar-cum-helicopter blades, Bill Laswell's thick string-ings *do* connect the disparate talents who fill in the details of an exotic, decaying, post-industrelectronic soundscape—reminiscent of late night, downtown Manhattan—in his debut LP. Though *Baselines* is Laswell's first, it's the third disc on Elektra/Musician by Material, the Brooklyn-based production triumvirate which includes bassist Michael Beinhorn (on Prophet 5, shortwave and prepared tapes) and Martin Bisi, engineer and occasional percussionist. Relatively ego-less, flexible and imaginative, this cooperative draws on several East Coast rhythmists—the powerful Ronald Shannon Jackson, innovator David Moss, congero Daniel Ponce and backbeater Phillip Wilson—to provide the propulsion that keeps our heads and hips bobbing through coolly-composed, often chilling music, much of it created by 16-track manipulation of originally improvised motifs.

In Material's previous *Memory Serves* and *One Down*, funk vocalists and guitar stars or jazz-associated improvisers were prominent in the mix. In *Baselines*, Laswell is central, using various graphite, fretless and eight-string electric basses, yet rarely spotlighting his virtuosic dexterity (well, "Activate," "Barricade," "Moving Target" and "Conservation" show off some of his special stuff). To his credit, Laswell plays for the project; it's Beinhorn's vivid development of sound effects and spoken texts in strange new contexts that insinuates descriptive dimension in what might otherwise seem, for all the drummers' pounding, like busy but low-pitched background.

In spots, a top is concocted by guitarist/fiddler Fred Frith (as on the witty old-timey parody "Lowlands"). Elsewhere, trombonist George Lewis and bass saxist/contrabass clarinetist Ralph Carney of the Swollen Monkeys add riffs, fanfares and depth-plumbing solos. Unpredictably, these elements combine to define a futuristic yet somehow familiar whole. Is this the aural world we usually walk through, yet only vaguely hear? Whether Bill Laswell is the sole source, the music contractor or merely the consensual focus of a group effort is, considering the strength and distinction of the results, totally immaterial.

— ***Howard Mandel***





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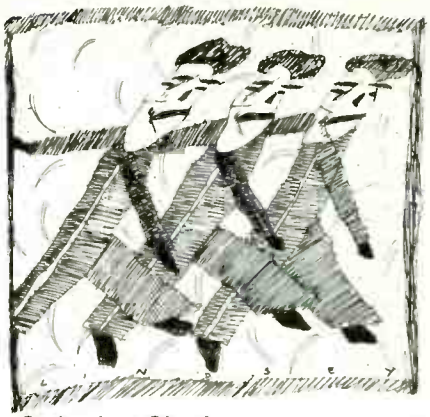

Swinging Singles

A 12-inch single, formerly the rarest cult acquisition, is now *the* place to showcase one piece of self-possessed pop with a heightened backbeat. From disco the 12-inch inherited shrewd techniques of sounding out frank body rhythms, from the commercial success of danceable new wave it picked up increased market viability, and from the literary acumen of Grandmaster Flash's "The Message" it realized that it might talk seriously. Flip through the overcrowded 12-inch sections now in most record stores and you'll go from Angela Bofill to Soft Cell, from A&M to Sugarhill. They'll all bear that beat, but they'll work it in surprisingly varied ways. The only trick is to buy them before they disappear, because although supplies are plentiful at first,

World Radio History

shelf-life reflects chart-life.

Most 12-inch remixes are songs already well defined in their original LP or 45 versions, superfluous to all but collectors. But not **Prince**'s nails-hard 8:30 expansion of "Little Red Corvette" (WEA Holland), deep-heat pop-funk that ought to be in jail. Driving a whispery snare track right down the middle of his sexual freeway, Prince gooses this tune—awesome even in its GP-rated radio version—to further greatness with well-lubed guitars and a bad burping bass. A remix apotheosis, it's worth a trip to the Netherlands.

The pop bases of 12-inch get purer and purer. **Ignatius Jones**' "Like A Ghost" "maxi-single" (Warner Bros.) is Beatley Australian electropop buoyed by plush bites of synrhythms and Jones' shadowy singing, and it's as frightening as an abandoned room. **Wham!** frames a tale of modern nightclubbing on "Young Guns (Go For It)" (Columbia) with Chic guitars (which are down cold), and the whole rapid-fire, chattery thing spins as irresistibly as choice bubblegum of yore. World-class mixmaster Francois Kevorkian (of D-Train fame) makes **Tin Tin**'s rockish "Kiss Me" (Sire) into a warm spacey roll, but the singer's many fey requests of "kiss me with your mouth" grow tiresome; you soon want to hit him with your fist. Much more grown-up, but just as pop based is **Shriekback**'s "Lined Up" (Y/Warner Bros.), a throbbing blur of sound, the singers knee-deep in everyday frustrations but still managing to bark out alluringly shaded vocals of chunky, fetching doom.

Grandmaster Flash's new "New York, New York" (Sugarhill) is another angry message of urban displeasure, but the formula's hardly a dinosaur yet, not with writing this skilled, vocals this demanding, and a sixteenth-note crush on the one this devastating. It ends with a guitar just wailing. It's a long way from cagey dancefloor escapes like **Shirley Lites**' "Heat You Up (Melt You Down)" (West End), a real wall-sweaters, or **Madonna**'s winningly shameless "Burning Up/Physical Attraction" (Warner Bros.).

But the 12-inch that wants to rule the world is **Afrika Bambaataa & Soul Force**'s "Looking For The Perfect Beat" (Tommy Boy). Fast and fabulous, DJ Bambaataa's mind says Kraftwerk, but his gut says James Brown, and his gut wins out as his mind controls everything with hard rock zest. The ecstatic voices are rap-like chants, boasts, cheers and slogans, but they're trickier, less discreet. This incredible sound orgy finds just what it's looking for, too, much more solidly than last year's "Planet Rock." "Beat This," it double-dares you, and you can't—not now. — ***James Hunter***

PICK HITS

DAVID FRICKE: ***Hot:*** **Richard Thompson** — *Hand Of Kindness* (Hannibal); **The Imposter (Elvis Costello)** — "Pills And Soap" (Demon, limited edition U.K. single); **Alan Vega** — *Saturn Strip* (Ze/Elektra); **Henry Kaiser** — *Aloha* (Metalanguage); **Violent Femmes** — *Violent Femmes* (Slash); ***Cold:*** **Adam and the Ants** — *Dirk Wears White Sox* (Epic); ***Live:*** **Kinks**, Brendan Byrne Arena, East Rutherford, N.J.

VIC GARBARINI: ***Hot:*** **The Police** — *Synchronicity* (A&M); **Bob Marley & the Wailers** — *Confrontation* (Island); **Goanna** — "Solid Rock" (Atlantic 45); **Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition** — *Inflation Blues* (ECM); **Divinyls** — *Desperate* (Chrysalis); ***Cold:*** **R.E.M.** — *Murmur* (I.R.S.); ***Live:*** **The Who** at the Rockpalast

BRIAN CULLMAN: ***Hot:*** **Richard Thompson** — *Hand Of Kindness* (Hannibal); **The Decorators** — *The Decorators* (Red Flame); **Lou Reed** — *Legendary Hearts* (RCA); **William Boyd** — *A Good Man In Africa* (Penguin); **ZZ Top** — *Eliminator* (Warner Bros.); ***Cold:*** **Marvin Gaye**, live at Radio City, New York City; ***Live:*** **John Martyn** at the Bottom Line, New York City.

FRANCIS DAVIS: ***Hot:*** **Miles Davis** — *Star People* (Columbia); **Anthony Davis** *Variations In Dreamtime* (India Navigation); **Joe Turner** — *Life Ain't Easy* (Pablo); **Lennie Tristano** — *Live In Toronto 1952* (Jazz); **Ella Fitzgerald** — *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The George Gershwin Songbook* (Verve/PSI).

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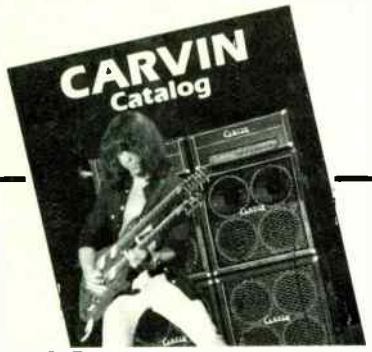

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Idiot's from pg. 86

ment parts and is the only manufacturer I'm aware of who makes ebony fingerboards. My neck was mahogany with a fretless ebony fingerboard, and I was even able to get one without dots on the binding. ("Oh, wow," said my wife in imitation awe. "Macho bass!") It also had been drilled, for a few dollars extra, for Schaller machines.

Putting the machines in was no problem. Attaching the neck was another matter altogether. Although the folks at my local music store assured me that the new neck would bolt right on like the old one, they apparently assumed I'd understand that you first had to drill holes for the bolts. Furthermore, the nut (or as I called it, "the little plastic thing the strings sit in") came without grooves. Once the array of files used for setting the action were displayed before me by a helpful guitar technician, I was thoroughly cowed. Time to turn this sucker over to the professionals.

In short, the handiest rule of thumb for the semi-competent do-it-yourselfer is, "If what you're considering could totally ruin something you can't afford to replace, get somebody else to do it." Cutting the nut, grooving string saddles and setting the torsion rod are guitar adjustments I won't pretend to know how to do; drilling holes in the neck ought to be done on a drill press, a machine a little too large for my apartment. As for refinishing a guitar, unless you've had a lot of experience with lacquering, you can ruin the guitar's appearance and tone (not to mention your own nose and lungs).

As for me, the improved sound of my instruments turned out pretty much as I had hoped, with minimal damage to them, the furniture and the bank account (although my wife complains that her finger may never be the same). Still, the impulse to tinker lingers on. Just the other day, I was looking at my bass amp and thinking about how nice it would be to have two speakers instead of one. Maybe if I got some wood and an extra bass horn.... M

Baker/Robie from pg. 80

is sterile," says Baker, "but it's actually the least sterile form of music. Our records are really improvised. They're like a jam session, except it's usually one person on a synthesizer jamming with himself. The major labels can't understand how we can go into a studio without a song and come out two days later with a hit record."

The Baker-Robie sound is characterized by an unnatural use of an electronic bass drum (which often plays syncopated sixteenth notes in a manner normally found in a high-hat pattern), unusual space-age sound effects, occasional rapping, wild synthesizer solos and the fugue-like interplay of a large variety of melodic hooks. Although Baker packs an amazing amount of musical information into his records, the result is surprisingly airy and spacious.

Not only do these records sound new, they also have a radical new style of production. For one thing, there is no arranger. The records usually start with a beat, which is punched into the Roland TR-808 and runs continuously for the length of the song. A synthesizer player then adds up to fifteen different simple, melodic patterns, which also run the length of the song and are recorded on separate tracks. Some of these patterns are worked out in advance, some are the result of accident, improvisation or last-minute inspiration.

"The whole concept of creating a song in the mix is something that very few people know how to do," says Robie. "It isn't until everything is on tape that we decide when and where to use something." Since entire songs can be built around a few effects, it's understandable that Robie spends a great deal of time playing with a variety of synthesizers, and looking for weird new sound effects, relying mainly on his Prophet 5 and his E-Mu Systems Emulator, which can recreate any sound that is played into it.

"When rap music started, the DJs would take the break section of a James Brown song and play it over and over," says Baker. "They didn't want to deal with anything except the eight seconds when the song was at its hottest intensity. That's the sort of feeling we're after."

Baker certainly achieved what he was after with "Looking For The Perfect Beat." Although the record didn't sell as well as "Planet Rock," it is still light years ahead of its predecessor in terms of mixing ingenuity. Robert Palmer, rock critic for *The New York Times*, aptly described the record as "a remarkable seven-minute symphony, with electronic textures and colors, melodic themes and rhythmic signatures shifting kaleidoscopically while the momentum never lets up." The rhythm track is so powerful that although the song is actually ten beats per minute slower than "Planet Rock," most listeners hear "Looking For The Perfect Beat" as a much faster song.

The remarkable success of Baker and Robie has not been without controversy. Since they freely raid other songs for source material, they are frequently charged with piracy. It should be pointed out, however, that up until now Baker has always paid publishing rights on borrowed material. "Rap music is the jazz of today," explains Baker. "The idea is to take something that's already out there, play with it and change it around."

In the past year, life could not have changed more dramatically for Baker and Robie. Baker once had to scrounge

World Radio History

up the money just to spend a few hours in the studio. Now he can't possibly find time to accept all the offers he's receiving. He recently co-founded his own label (Streetwise) and the company is already well-established with several hits under its belt. Although still somewhat in Baker's shadow, Robie has written and produced two dance hits of his own ("One More Shot" by C Bank and Quadrant Six's "Body Mechanic").

"I'm really bored with most of the music being done today," says Baker, who has now agreed to produce an album for the British post-punk dance band New Order. "Now it's up to John and me to come up with an entirely new sound."

Contracts from pg. 82

ment and put up someone else's just for one or two nights. We don't have the room for it. In fact, most clubs provide their own sound systems and bands have come to expect their technical requirements to be crossed out when they play clubs."

Performing deals can cover headliner and supporting act billing; stage, lighting, and sound specifications; insurance, advertising, security and hospitality responsibilities; ticket sale arrangements; and provisions for personal appearances and interviews in the concert area. These conditions are all negotiable to some extent.

Two rider clauses which have grown tremendously in importance over the last few years are the merchandising and video clauses. "Bands are beginning to realize that T-shirt, poster and button sales can make up for a weak turnout at a concert," notes Eric Henning, vice-president of college booking for Cellar Door Productions, one of the most active promotion companies in the United States. "Younger fans in particular will spend more on merchandise than they will for the price of a ticket to the show. I know of acts who've lost money touring on the basis of ticket sales alone but who turn an overall profit when merchandising figures are thrown in."

Just a short time ago, hardly anyone placed a video clause in a performing contract. "Now everyone has one—in big, bold type," Snadowsky confirms. This clause forbids the filming of an act's performance for either private or commercial purposes without the act's written consent—an indication of the value of these video properties.

In a real sense, then, performing deals involve much more than a working command of legal and economic gymnastics. They are organic arrangements that reflect the musical and even sociological tastes of the moment. "You know, that's one of the positive by-products of the music business," Snadowsky notes. "And it wasn't thought up by lawyers."

Westbrook from pg. 40

exceptionally drunk, me keeping away from the questions I was saving for him and he happy to talk as long as the damnable tape machine wasn't on. We established a certain hallucinated rapport and I asked him why he thought all my English friends disliked *The Westbrook Blake*—Phil Bradbury had even visibly cringed. I had tried to hear the music as if it were bad and had failed; all I could come up with was that it might, to some, sound ponderous rather than majestic, and it was a bit foursquare rhythmically. Minton agreed about the rhythm and said he had had to work hard on his phrasing to both serve the music and bend the beat a bit, but felt that the main thing was that I had failed to appreciate Mike Westbrook's status as part of England's cultural furniture: everyone knew he was there and thought he was safe as milk or the local Arts Council Jazz Band. He was also upset that stateside critics hadn't appreciated Kate's vocals as much as his. That's about all I remember from the conversation, though we had a terrific time, several more Young's Specials and a couple of those paltry things the English insist on calling sandwiches. Then I turned on the tape recorder and Minton clammed up. A transcript ensues.

Musician: *Mike said you weren't interested in words. How do you, in "I See*

continued on page 106

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World Radio History

ROCK

By J.D. Considine

SHORT TAKES

The Fixx

Madness

Greg Hawkes

Ministry

UB40 — *UB40* (A&M). Steel Pulse may be grittier and Musical Youth are certainly cuter, but for my money, this is the British reggae band to watch. UB40, who take their name from a British Unemployment Benefits form, possess a social consciousness that stretches well beyond reciting the evils of life in Babylon; from the stoic sarcasm of "One In Ten" to the resigned realism of "So Here I Am," these songs pick up where the best of the 2-tone movement left off. But it's the way that the music progresses, slyly blending funk licks and dub technology, that'll keep bringing you back.

The Fixx — *Reach The Beach* (MCA). Unlike so many of these new age dance bands, for whom passion is impossible if it isn't in the presets, the members of Fixx play like they really mean it. Granted, *Reach The Beach* has its moments of romantic hyperbole, but Cy Curnin's raspy tenor never sounds fey or self-impressed, and the instrumental tracks are marvels of detail and restraint (no simple minds, these fellows). Now if only MCA had come up with cover art as tasteful as the music inside....

Greg Hawkes — *Niagara Falls* (Passport). This isn't as ambitious as Carsmate Ric Ocasek's solo outing, which is perhaps why it's ultimately more satisfying. Greg Hawkes has kept his musical perspective nice and tidy—it's tuneful, mostly instrumental synth-minimalism, not unlike Kraftwerk with impressionistic overtones—so that the energy goes into details of color and texture that make all the difference. *Niagara Falls* is truly a record that sounds better with each successive play.

Mtume — *Juicy Fruit* (Epic). The salacious simile of the title track is an inspired touch and quite a good hook in its own right, but the real genius here is the way James Mtume's rhythm arrangements make less a whole lot more. By paying attention to texture as much as groove, Mtume has refined the Afro-Cuban beat to a stripped down pulse that keeps it lean and mean, and leaves more than enough room for Tawatha's rich, sexy vocals. A funk hit for sure, and one new wavers would do well to notice.

Burning Sensations — *Burning Sensations* (Capitol). The format here is mini—just four songs—but the approach is sheer excess, with former Motel Tim McGovern's squalling guitar propelled by a firestorm of Latin percussion, hot saxophone and post-funk punk. Although the noise is glorious, the best thing about Burning Sensations is that the songs aren't just an excuse for cutting loose, and McGovern's "Belly Of The Whale" and "Carnival Of Souls" are strong enough to leave me hoping that the wait for a full album won't be a long one.

Indeep — *Last Night A DJ Saved My Life* (Sound of New York). The title track was a major R&B hit as a single, and no surprise—in addition to a great gimmick, the song features the most hypnotic bassline since Taana Gardner's "Heartbeat." That would be reason enough to check out the album, but the consistency of the other cuts, ranging from the fad-bashing of "Buffalo Bill" to the sexual politics of "When Boys Talk," suggests that Indeep has the makings of a major group. So why not avoid the rush and get hip now?

Madness — *Madness* (Geffen). For a group that combines the narrative abilities of Squeeze, the wit of Ray Davies and the comic delivery of the Coasters, Madness has passed unnoticed in America for an awfully long time, but this appealing compilation ought to do the trick. Not only does it lead off with their best single ever, the sprightly "Our House," but it includes such low-key gems as "Grey Day," "It Must Be Love" and "Rise And Fall" to boot. In all, the sort of album you'd have to be crazy to dislike.

Blackfoot — *Siogo* (Atco). With former Uriah Heep keyboardist Ken Hensley added to the lineup, Blackfoot is now able to emphasize their English metal tendencies without undercutting their southern rock roots. Sounds complicated, I know, but what it amounts to is a tighter, more melodic approach, with the same horsepower as before. Consequently, songs like "Heart's Grown Cold" or "Send Me An Angel" carry the emotional depth of ballads, but hit home with the intensity of full-bore rockers.

Goanna — *Spirit Of Place* (Atco). The idea here seems to be something along the lines of an Australian Fleetwood Mac, but the execution is more along the lines of a second-string Firefall with female vocals.

Ministry — *With Sympathy* (Arista). More synthesized dance rock, but with a good ear for melody and a surprising amount of vigor. Alain Jourgensen, the brains and voice behind the group, is a whiz at giving new twists to old clichés, and sings like he has something more on his mind than easy rhymes. Not just the same old song and dance.

Marillion — *Script For A Jester's Tear* (Capitol). Perhaps a better title would be *From Genesis To Irrelevance*; in any

continued on page 102

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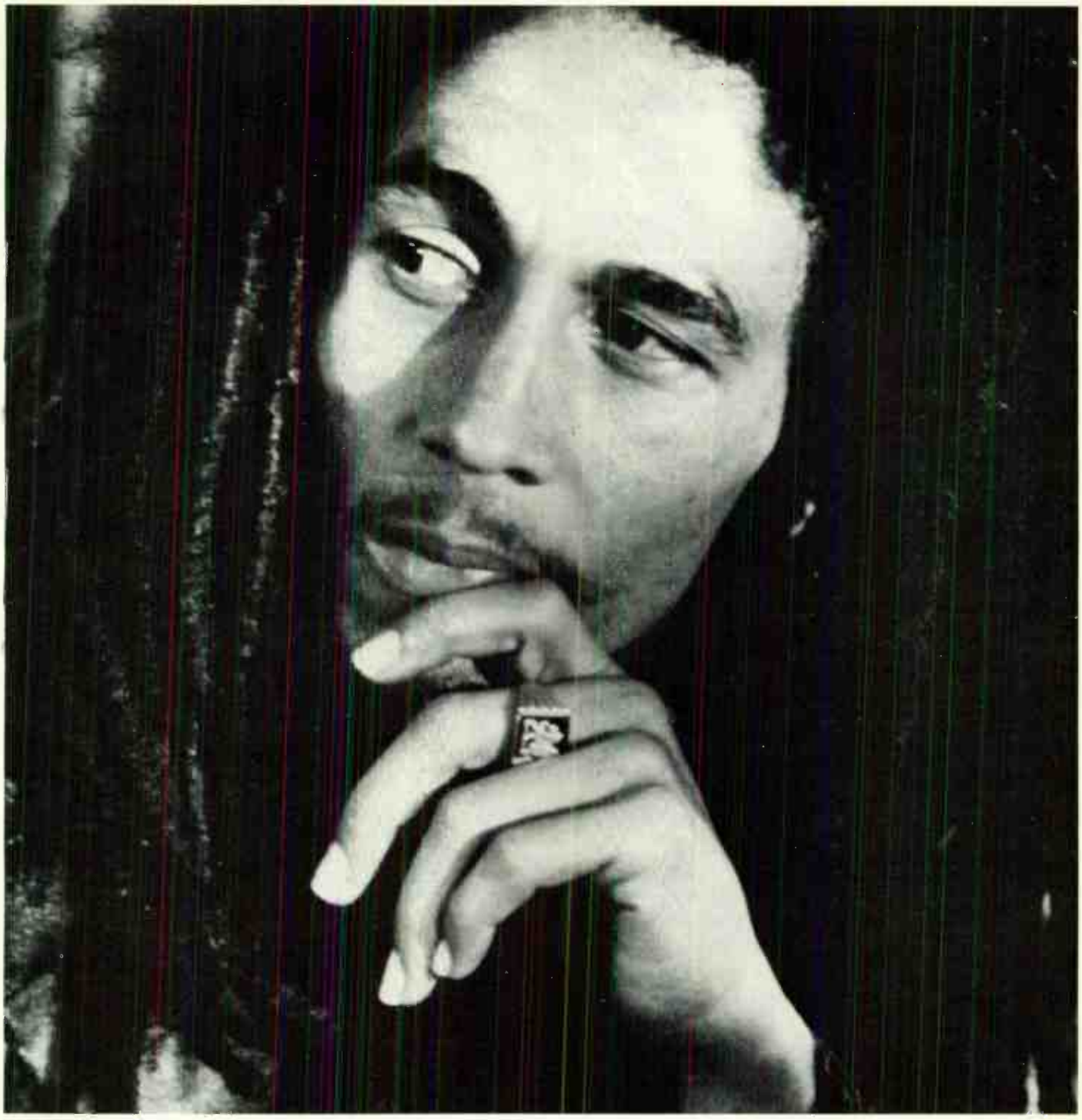

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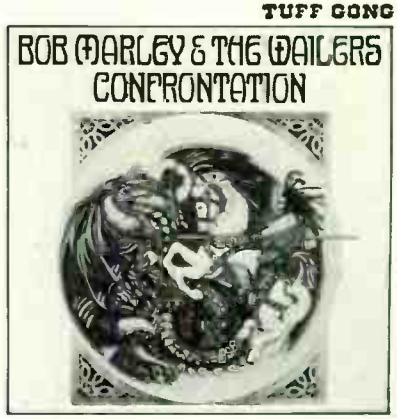

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World Radio History

JAZZ

By Francis Davis

SHORT TAKES

Cecil Taylor — *Calling It The 8th* (hat MUSICS, available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012); **Donald Byrd** & **Gigi Gryce/Cecil Taylor** — *At Newport* (Verve/PolyGram Classics). Taylor breaks in a new bassist and a new drummer on *Calling It The 8th,* with mixed results. William Parker's running pizzicato generally finishes a distant second to the pianist's left hand; his arco twistings are more apposite. Rashid Bakr's cymbals dance and sing, but he's less willing than his illustrious predecessors Jackson, Cyrille and Murray to follow the leader's dare all the way to the edge. Still, the lap and crash of Taylor's oceanic solos and the lyric exacerbations of altoist Jimmy Lyons make listening to this German concert recording an exhilarating if somewhat draining experience. From Taylor, one expects no less. Meanwhile, side two of the Verve reissue unearths a still provocative set by Taylor's 1957 quartet with Steve Lacy. While of lesser historic moment, side one offers tasty solos by Byrd, Hank Jones and the late, undervalued altoist Gigi Gryce.

Anthony Davis — *Variations In Dream Time* (India Navigation). What establishes Davis as the most gifted pianist/composer to surface in the last decade is his ability to craft music which prompts intellectual speculation with its structural devices even as it pleasures the senses with its vibrant textures and body warmth. He unveils two new extended compositions here, both utilizing drones, rounds and compound rhythms; both fleshed out handsomely by the leader, George Lewis, J.D. Parron, Abdul Wadud, Rick Rozie and the infallible Pheeroan Ak Laff.

Chico Freeman — *The Search* (India Navigation). Freeman's tenor is luminous as always and Kenny Barron's piano adds sparkle to the rhythm section. But, oh—that singer! And, oh—those homiletic lyrics!

Bob Moses — *When Elephants Dream Of Music* (Gramavision). The worthy (if grievously belated) successor to the mid-70s *Bittersuite In The Ozone* suggests once again that we would all benefit if drummer Moses were sufficiently bankrolled to lead a large ensemble full-time. His writing is both fanciful and exacting; he approaches electronics and the human voice without gimmickry or trepidation; and here he elicits stirring performances from a diverse cast including Jim Pepper, Teremuso Hino, Steve Swallow and Sheila Jordan.

Ralph Towner — *Blue Sun* (ECM). A gauzy, overdubbed solo effort by the man from Oregon. It makes bewitching background listening and if you attend to it more closely...it recedes even further into the background.

Various Artists —*Jazz At The Opera House* (Columbia). The idea was to bring Marsalis, Shorter, Hancock, Haden, Williams, Hutcherson, Tabackin, et al, to San Francisco; then deploy them in various combinations. The results are predictably uneven, but you'll want to near this double anyway for its unadulterated distillations of Shorter's inky tenor—not exactly a plentiful commodity these days, what?

Lennie Tristano — *Live In Toronto 1952* (Jazz); **Max Roach** & **Connie Crothers** — *Swish* (New Artists). The well-recorded Toronto concert (with Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh) is yet another revelation from the Tristano archives. How different our perception of this troublesome figure might have been had his most energetic, most carefree playing been documented on record during his lifetime. An essential purchase. Crothers was one of Tristano's last star pupils. She lacks her mentor's subterranean lyricism, but she's much less reluctant to heed the call of the drums, thankfully. Her duets with the most formidable of all jazz drummers (himself one of Tristano's few supporters within the jazz mainstream) are exciting for their low rustle and dark fire. (Both are available from N.M.D.S.)

Jay Hoggard — *Love Survives* (Gramavision). The best young vibraphonist in jazz hasn't an inkling of what it takes to make a good pop record. On this try, he seeks inspiration from both the Creator and Christopher Cross.

Dwight James — *Inner Heat* (Cadence Jazz, Redwood, NY 13679). Stirring freebop from Philadelphia journeymen including Mobley-ish tenor Middie Middleton, rhythmically insistent vibist Khan Jamal and drummer/leader James (with Byard Lancaster, whose name should be more familiar, guesting on the album's most explosive track). If the label didn't say otherwise, you'd swear this was a previously unissued Blue Note. It has that sound—more important, it has that feel.

Billy Bang & **Dennis Charles** — *Bangception* (hat MUSICS/N.M.D.S.). Violinist Bang risks overexposure at the rate he's going, but his records all have their moments, this duet with drummer Charles included. Highlights: Bang's dialogue with Ornette's "Lonely Woman" (she asks him what did she do to be so black and blue), and the drummer's melodic extension of Monk's "Thelonious."

Sonny Stitt — *The Last Stitt Session, Volume 1* (Muse). It's not grief at his passing that leads me to call Stitt's last session his best of the 80s. It's the bark of his tenor, the sly bounce of his alto and—not least of all—the bracing accompaniment he receives from pianist Junior Mance.

Errol Parker — *Tribute To Thelonious Monk* (Sahara, 1143 1st Ave., Suite 4D, New York, NY 10021). Nine standards, none of them associated with Monk, but as Parker himself eloquently explains in his liner note, "When I am lovingly disfiguring vintage standards...there is no doubt in my mind I am paying tribute to Thelonious Monk." And indeed, Monk is like Ives in that respect—he's a beacon of hope for gifted eccentrics who follow their own paths, hoping the world will catch up with them some day. I'm not saying Parker is in Monk's league—far from it—but he deserves a fairer hearing than he's gotten so far and this album of cantilevered pop tunes is a good place to start.

Tom Cora & **David Moss** — *Cargo Cult*

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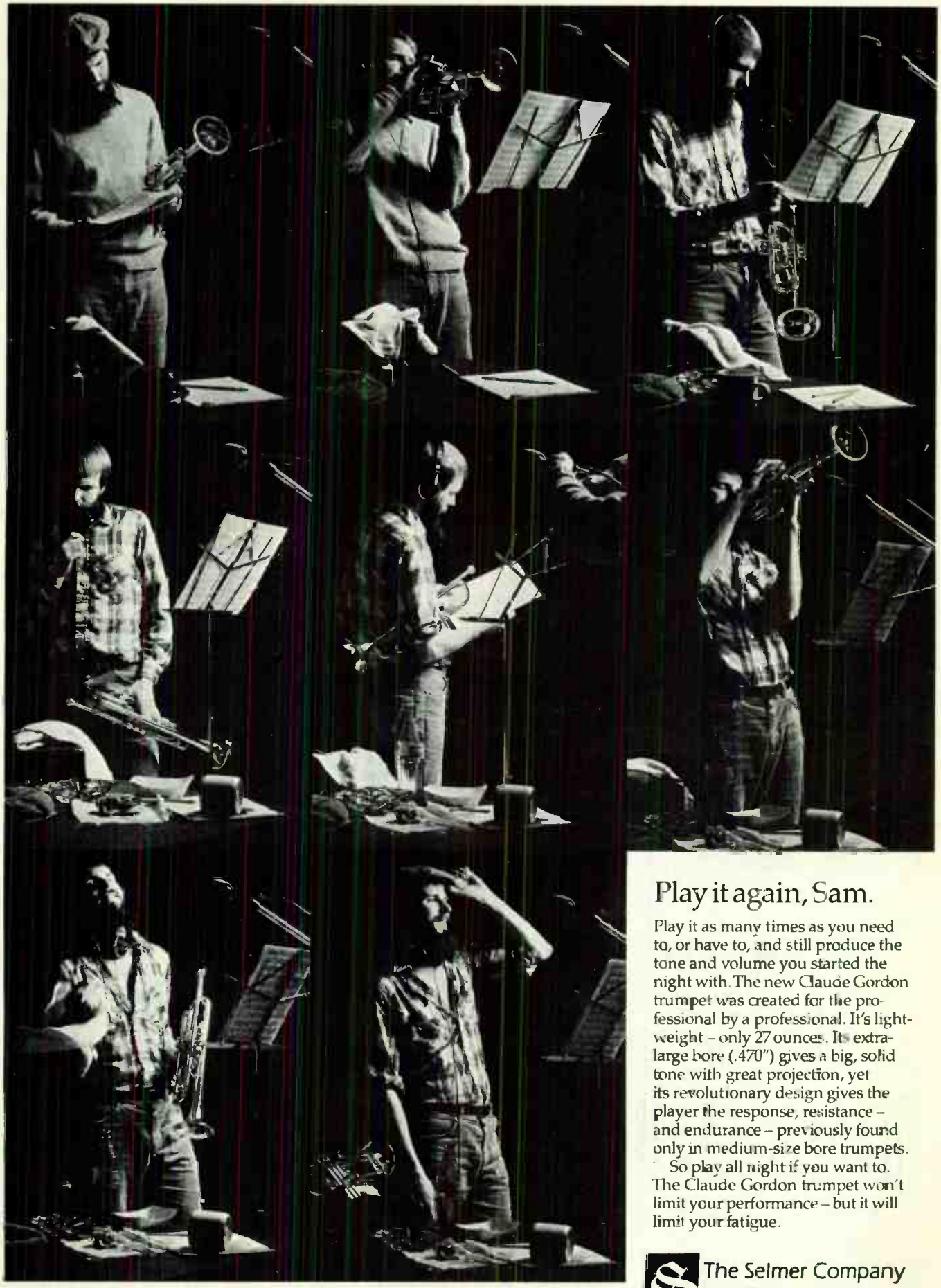

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Revival (Rift/N.M.D.S.). Cellist Cora and percussionist Moss have succeeded in disassembling music back into sound, and there are moments when they convince me it was a necessary task. But the question is: Can they reassemble sound back into music again? The answer: They haven't so far, but they'll keep trying and I'll keep listening so long as my nerves hold out.

Tito Puente — *On Broadway* (Concord Jazz). Others borrow Puente's rhythms, but what eludes them is his brio. Despite the shopworn material, this is one of the zestiest albums I've heard in quite some time, with a crack band, ace percussionists and suave soloists in Mario Rivera, tenor and Alfredo De La Fe, violin.

Joe Battaglia — *Freehand* (Gnuvista/N.M.D.S.). The debut of a promising young guitarist whose chief assets would seem to be his biting tone, his flair for linear elaboration and the rhythmic elasticity he gains from his bassist Ed Schuller and his drummer Peter LeMaitre. Ⓜ

Rock Shorts from pg. 98

case, there's no revelation in these regressive rock clichés. At least the original art rockers had the excuse of novelty.

Sparks — *In Outer Space* (Atlantic). The unexpected catchiness of "Cool Places" and the duet with Go-Go Jane Wiedlin had me wondering if perhaps the Sparkies hadn't finally shaken off their smug weirdness and weakness for cheap jokes, but the rest of the album soon convinced me otherwise. Still, one song in ten is a lot higher than their average has been lately.

Original Soundtrack — *Doctor Detroit* (Backstreet). A good R&B record featuring Dan Aykroyd is not an easy concept for the mind to embrace, much less a good R&B album boasting both Aykroyd and Devo, but here's one, anyway. Fortunately, Aykroyd keeps well into the background, and the lion's share of the album is given over to Pattie Brooks, sounding sexier than ever, and James Brown, whose remake of "Get Up Offa That Thing" is his best work in years.

Elvis Presley — *I Was The One* (RCA). Perhaps stabbed by conscience (but more likely spurred by the furor over the Stray Cats), RCA has finally put together a near-definitive album of Elvis the rocker. Of course, there are some stupid omissions—no "Heartbreak Hotel," no "I Got A Woman"—but on the whole, this ought to be enough to convince even the most ahistorical rock fan that the Elvis myth does indeed have a basis in fact.

Meat Loaf — *Midnight At The Lost And Found* (Epic/Cleveland International). It's probably cruel to kick him when he's down, but I don't think I've ever heard a performer more desperately in need of a duet with Cher. Ⓜ

George Clinton from pg. 30

deals). "One thing this layoff did was it made everybody independent and strong. Now we can go out there streamlined and have a P-Funk All-Stars group, and a Parliament, a Funkadelic and a George Clinton Group. The first tour, we're probably all going to be together, but there's going to be a time this summer when Parliament and Funkadelic and George Clinton will all be playin' different places at the same time. We've got so many quality musicians that the only way we're all gonna get to play is if we do it this way."

Over the layoff, he says, "we cut lots of tracks. We got a P-Funk All-Stars album finished that is the *bomb*! It's on Hump Records, distributed by CBS. I don't even know what name I'm going to call all these albums yet. I don't even know what groups they're going to be, but we got at least fifty songs that we finished mixin' and dubbin'. I do know that the Funkadelic's next album is called *By Way Of The Drum*. Junkanoo meets funkanoo. That's the groove we got from the Bahamas when we were down there. We'll have so many drummers and cowbell players on stage with us, it's going to be a whole new thang happenin'."

As for the funky-come-latelies, George is ready to acknowledge their contributions, but promises stiff competition: "I'm thankful for Talking Heads, the Gap Band, Rick James even, because they keep the funk alive. It ain't like I gotta come back here and start the whole movement over again. But this time, we just came and took the ball back from the people we left the ball with. Still, if they think they've taken over, well, that's going to make it healthier."—***Ed Ward***

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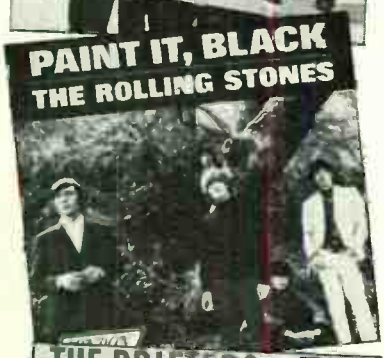

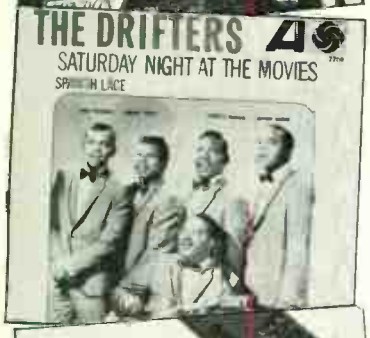

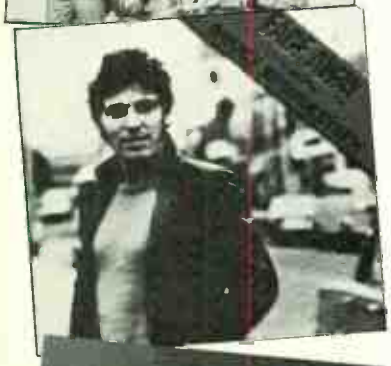

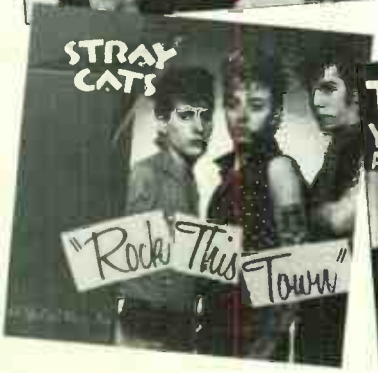

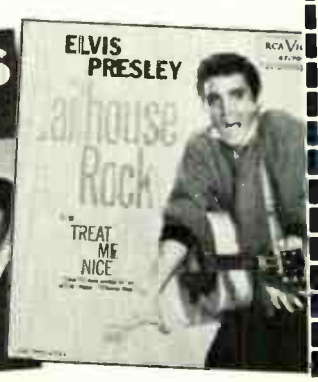

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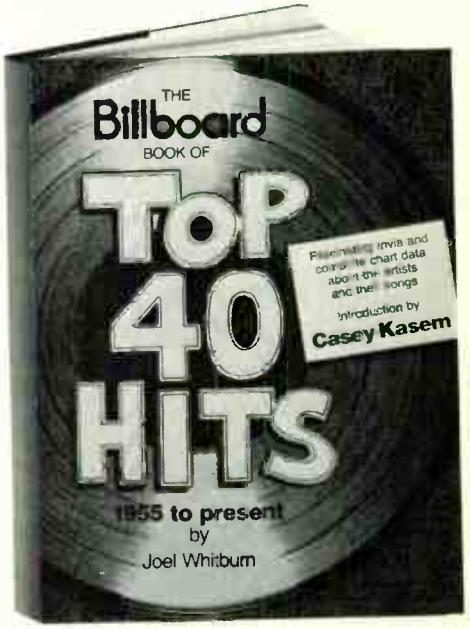

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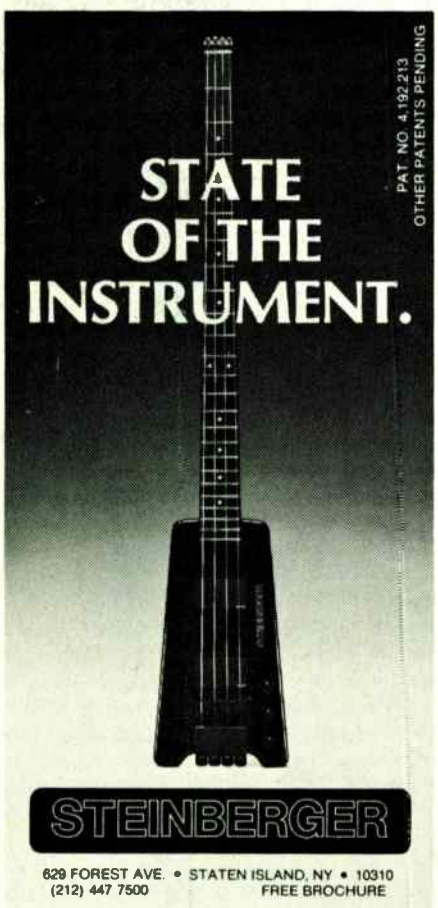

Westbrook from pg. 97

Thy Form" for instance, interpret a lyric that describes a six-fold angel in detail?

Minton: I recognize the archaic language and that Blake was a tradesman, not a scholar, not an intellectual particularly, and the only language he'd learned was that of the Bible. It was the most optimistic thing he could put his pen to and he used it. I'm reading a lot into what Blake was actually....

Musician: *What are you reading in?*

Minton: I'm reading Noam Chomsky (laughs strangely).

Musician: *(incredulous) Chomsky?*

Minton: I mean the sort of sense that Chomsky talks now I read into Blake. If Noam Chomsky wrote lyrics, it'd be really great (unaccountably hysterical laughter from both parties). I think he writes sense. Chomsky writes about contemporary problems, and he writes about them in a very scientific/analytical way. I don't understand everything he writes but I get a general gut feeling of what he's about and I get a gut feeling of what Blake was about, a sense that he was writing about the amazing injustices that he saw, the unfairness of everything. He was using biblical language; Chomsky uses Western philosophical language.

Musician: *So you connect with Blake politically rather than mystically.*

Minton: Yeah. All this business with seeing visions was probably some sort of dietary malfunction. Don't you think so?

Musician: *(crushed) No. I like visions.*

Minton: I've taken acid too.

Musician: *(stiff upper lip) I don't mean acid.*

Minton: It's common sense. Political common sense. I mean if the human race is gonna survive *take heed of William Blake and what he says.*

Musician: *What about singing words as opposed to purely vocal music?*

Minton: I can't write words. If anybody gets a tune together with really amazing words, I'm into singing it. I think Mike Westbrook is one of the most brilliant tunesmiths of the age, and William Blake is quite an amazing sort of lyricist, so it seems like a good thing to do. And I don't want to get involved with the mediocrity of a Bob Dylan kind of thing. The only way I have to express myself is *sound*. I don't think in a particularly verbal sort of way. I don't want to make a big point about it, but most words aren't worth making a song out of. I would like to say there's a song by Rolf Chaplin, he was one of the Wobblies (the International Workers of the World) and he was also a poet. He spent most of his time in prison in America. I'd like to find more of his words. There's a song called "Mourn Not The Dead" that you heard in concert. You can find his poems in a book of Wobbly poems, and he's very strong. So I don't mind singing songs by Rolf Chaplin, Noam Chomsky and William Blake.

Musician: *When you sing most material you bend it pretty far out of its original shape, but Blake you don't screw with.*

Minton: (with emphasis) *I want them to hear the words.*

T.S. Eliot: HURRY UP, PLEASE. IT'S TIME.

So Minton and I stumbled out into the prismatic sunlight of corporeal London splintered, with the aid of a great deal of Young's Special Bitter, into a bewildering multiplicity of perceptual aspects—Blake's own Golgonooza, the spiritual four-fold London, loins of the giant Albion in the mantle of its smokes. As we passed the Bow Street Criminal Courts Minton swung his arm to point out the fourth or fifth small glass window in a row up an alleyway—*"That was my cell!"*—and began to tell me all about it.

"Maybe Americans think that London bobbies are cute in their hats, some kind of social workers, kind to kids and polite to ladies, but you ought to see them for what they are. When they busted me, I told them what rotten bastards they were and four or five of them got me down on the ground *right here on the street* just kicking the living crap out of me and I was so drunk and more than that, so full of things to call them, I hardly felt a thing at the time." We reeled up the curve toward Leicester Square, which in turn reeled about us with a psychedelic abandon it had likely not mustered for the better part of two decades. "And when they put me in the cell, bruised, beat up, I hung onto the bars, just like in the movies, and spent the entire night screaming every name I could think of at them down the corridor, non-stop, and you wouldn't believe some of the things I came up with and how I managed to put them across. I used up everything I knew about the voice and went right past it; you should have heard it, it was something. In the morning, they couldn't find anything to charge me with and ended up fining me one pound fifty and they'd already given me a breakfast worth two quid anywhere in London so I figure I made a profit on them, and if I hadn't spent the whole night screaming they would have given me cigarettes too. I'll say one thing for them: they serve an excellent breakfast." He paused to reflect. "It was the greatest night of my life."

I left this veteran of the Bow Street Police Court—where is Rumpole when you need him?—and of Swedish soul bands in which he waited for the midnight hour under the midnight sun, in the four-gated Bowlahoola of the Piccadilly Circus tube station, amid a transmigration of English bodies and English souls, flamed with his vision of the truth and in converse with another avant-garde vocalist with whom he was planning a tandem assault on the Continent. The son of morn in weary night's decline. The lost traveller's dream under the hill. ■

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