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MUSICIAN

THE NEW PRETENDERS

Chrissie Hynde goes looking for Mr. Goodband.

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DSS-1

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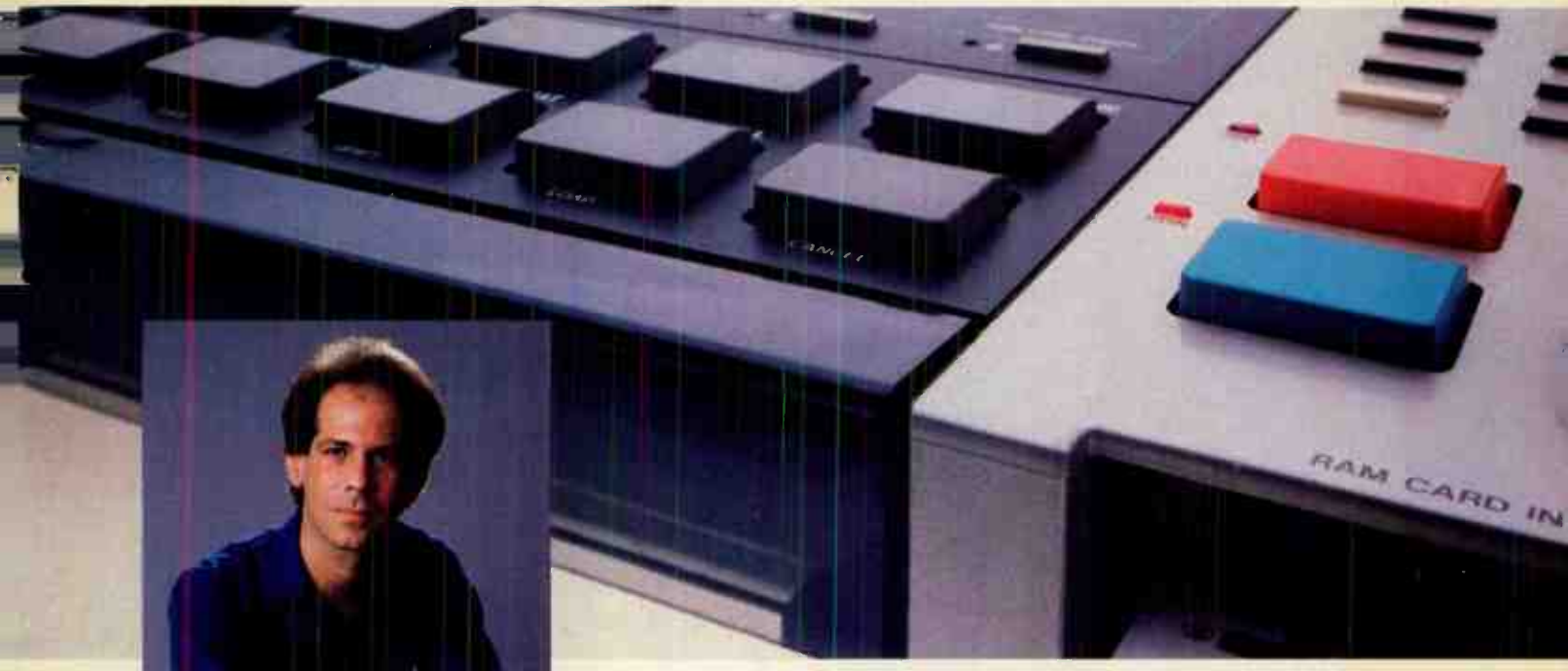

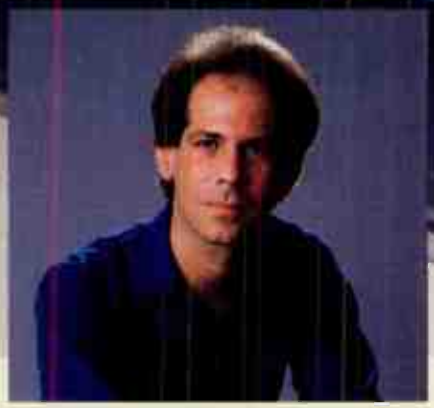

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DDD-1

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A BILLBOARD PUBLICATION
DECEMBER 1986 NO. 98

Pretenders

She's seen band members die and fired the rest, but Chrissie Hynde is too good at what she does to chuck it all and become a housewife. Don't believe her if she says otherwise.

By Vic Garbarini

DAVIES & STARR

JOHN BELLISMO RETNA

Big Clash Dynamite

Could Joe Strummer and Mick Jones *really* stay apart? Fortunately, no. The mouthpiece of The Only Band That Splattered has rejoined his comrade to make beautiful explosions together

By Chris Salewicz

Richard Thompson

More than a guitar hero, he's written an impressive catalog of songs. Come with us all the way back to Fairport Convention days, and then all the way forward.

By Bill Flanagan

Cover Photograph by Davies & Starr

STUDIO·STYLE

Producer's orgy: Hot hands, cool ears, high-tech, low-tech, no-tech.

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Annette Dion Denise O. Palazzola
Main Office/Production/Retail Sales
31 Commercial St., P.O. Box 701
Gloucester, MA 01930 (617) 281-3110
New York Advertising/Editorial
MUSICIAN, 1515 Broadway, 39 fl.
N.Y.C., NY 10036 (212) 764-7395
Circulation Director
Noreen McInerney
Circulation Assistant
Cathie Geraghty (212) 764-7536
Founders
Gordon Baird & Sam Holdsworth

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LETTERS

Experiencing Jimi

Thanks to Noel Redding for clearing the haze surrounding Lord Jimi. Despite his rather opaque literary style, Redding reveals clearly what many of us who've loved Jimi so long have often suspected: that Hendrix, however gifted, was as vulnerable a human being as the next, and capable of being selfish, irrational, cruel and drug-addicted. It's worth noting, too, that some things never change: Musicians are still being ruthlessly exploited by bad management, groupies and hangers-on, just as in the 60s. It's a testimony to Hendrix's genius that in the midst of it all he produced such a monumental body of work.

It's easy to romanticize Jimi, and say that craziness and drugs were necessary catalysts for his music. On the other hand, we can only wonder what he would've come up with if he'd managed to survive, get clear, and found some lasting values.

Claude Fixler
Newtonville, MA

The name of the band was the *Jimi Hendrix* Experience, not the Noel Redding Experience! Peace & Love.

Wah Wah Fuzz Face
Long Beach, CA

What I get out of it is that Jimi took the million offered by the mob, did not do as he was told, and was killed! It's plain as day.

from a S. Jersey person

Both the content and the presentation of "Inside the Jimi Hendrix Experience" reeked of the kind of vacuous journalism and shameless exploitation which I have resigned myself to accepting from lesser magazines. Noel Redding and Carol Appleby have succeeded only in churning out another illiterate and worthless rock memoir that reveals nothing of consequence, demeans the artist and insults the intelligence of the reader.

John Glicksman
Washington, DC

I'm sure Redding and Carol Appleby could have done a whole lot better for themselves if they'd gone to the *National Enquirer* with such an awkwardly written rehash.

Steve Worowski
Middlesex, NJ

I couldn't help thinking Noel Redding was a little crisp around the edges.

Bob Morin
Houston, TX

The much-touted "Noel Redding Tells All" offered no insights into Jimi Hendrix,

either as a musician or a human being. It seemed more like Noel's autobiography than anything else. If I was interested in Noel Redding, I would have bought Fat Mattress albums instead of Hendrix albums.

Mark Saucier
Gulfport, MS

Thanks for putting Jimi Hendrix and Prince together in the same issue. I especially liked their photos side by side on the contents page. Nobody has better shown how similar they are, with pictures...or how different they are, with words.

Mark Menke
Lafayette, CA

I don't know who is more confused—your photo-layout editor or myself. Perhaps two consecutive issues with Jimi Hendrix, a left-handed guitarist who played a right-handed guitar backwards (upside down?) is the culprit. Certainly the feature on Elliot Easton, another lefty, added to the mixup. Or perhaps the comparisons to Hendrix early in Prince's career led to the photo of Prince playing left-handed in the August issue. But what happened in the September issue? A southpaw John Abercrombie playing a "ZENABI" guitar? Pete Townshend and John Entwistle switch-hitting? Certainly this dexterity is what makes a good guitarist truly great!

Confoundedly yours,

Harry Muesse
Cypress, CA

[Don't know what you're talking about.—ED.]

Guitar Special

September's Guitar Special was, all in all, equally enlightening and confusing. My good friends at LaSalle Music in West Hartford, CT, hadn't even plugged in the Ovation GTM-6, saying, "It's probably lousy like the Pitchrider." So *I* set up the Ovation through a TX7 and caused a minor riot: customers quizzed me on the unit and the history of MIDI guitar and the employees freaked out and started climbing over me and plugging in all sorts of other things. But I'll still wait to try the Photon-Octave-Zeta efforts. Hopefully I can buy myself a Christmas present—*this year.*

John H. Kane
Holyoke, MA

Enjoyed your special guitar theme issue greatly, particularly the interview with the Edge. He is without doubt the most inventive rock guitarist alive today, and what he says about art having the potential to touch people on a spiritual level is definitely not bullshit.

Gary Kimber
Toronto, Ont.

Showdown II

After reading "Showdown in Chi-Town" (September), I felt it deserved some response. You were able to catch on tape a very interesting conversation/confrontation between Kevin Kent of K-Muse and Octave Plateau's Carmine Bonanno. The dialogue was heated, emotional, detailed and, to a certain extent, controversial. It certainly makes for news. I feel a lot of the information that was exchanged between Mr. Kent and Mr. Bonanno was well worth printing. It was good "news" for your publication, an interesting topic for your readers, needed and appreciated press exposure for K-Muse Inc., and I would assume that Mr. Bonanno was glad to get some press too. My only concern was that, in my opinion, you should have edited the "tape recording" a little more tastefully. The point that Kevin Kent likes to express himself with four-letter words or that Mr. Bonanno was obviously pissed off, were in fact true, but is it really fair to either individual, either company and to the music industry in general to print something like this word for word?

G. Bob Connelly
Vice Pres. Sales/Mktng.
K-Muse Inc.

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Dallas Meeseberg of Hollywood, CA has won our GRP Records/Yamaha Elektric Celebration. Mr. M. will receive new recording equipment, new releases and tix to a Chick Corea Elektric Band performance.

Errota

Due to a recurring stripping error, Chip Stern's byline was left off October's Jazz Shorts.

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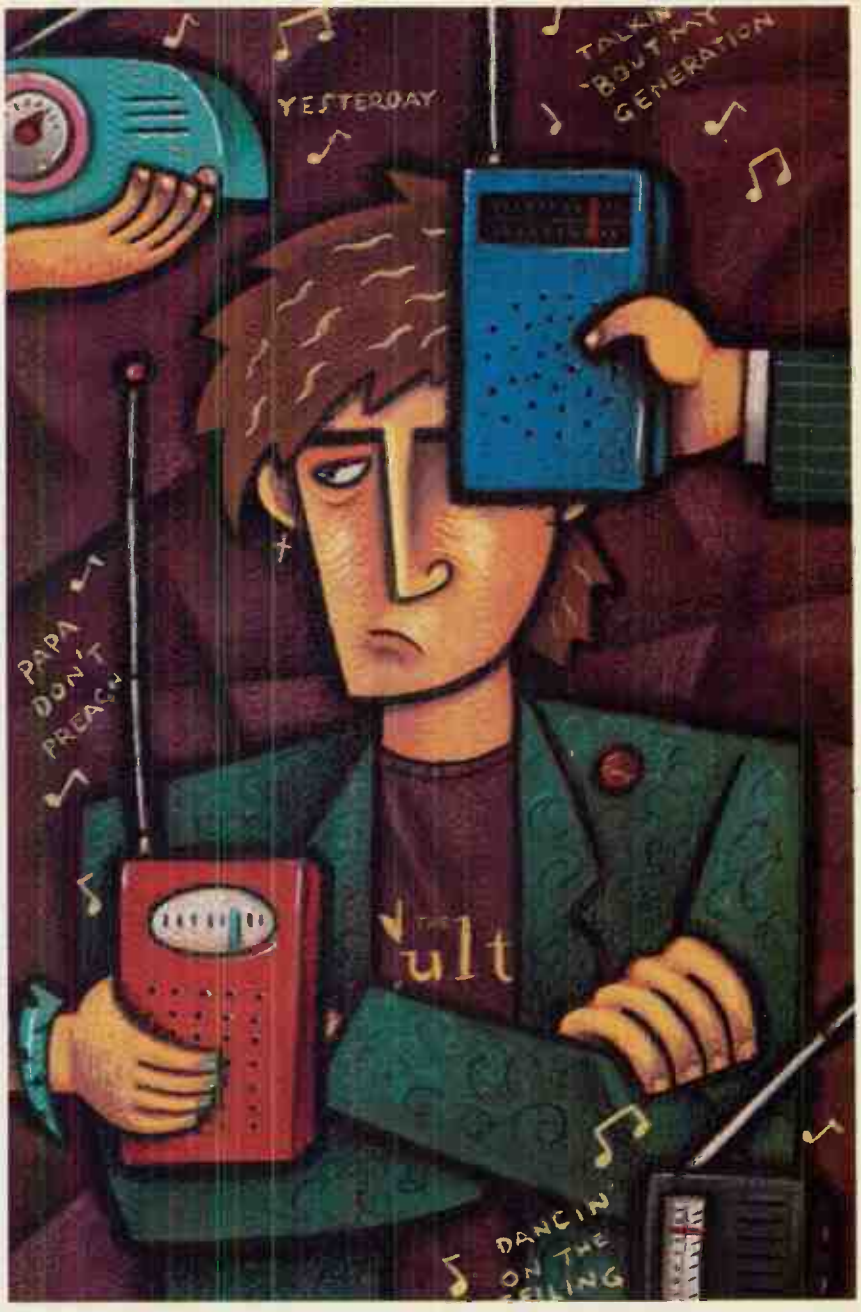
MISSING WAVELENGTH

BY GREG REIBMAN

THE 18-TO-24 RADIO AUDIENCE NOBODY WANTS



DAVID H COWLES

If you are a rock 'n' roll fan between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, there are two types of radio stations for you to choose from in most American cities: either classic rock (the music of your older brother's life) or top forty (the music of your younger sister's life). But if you want to hear the latest by Metallica, Queensryche and Dokken or by the Cure, the Cult or the Violent Femmes—you'd best head to a record store or over to a friend's house.

That's because in 1986 there are very few stations catering to this age group. And even though the aforementioned artists sell records (Metallica, for example, has moved more than a half-million copies of their *Master Of Puppets* LP and the Cure's *Standing On The Beach* has sold a respectable three hundred fifty thousand), radio rarely plays these acts.

Of course there are exceptions. In Long Beach, California and in San Antonio, Texas, for example, stations KNAC and KISS play nothing but hard-driving heavy-metal (imagine Metallica at eight o'clock in the morning). And both stations have enjoyed excellent ratings. On the opposite side of the coin, WLIR in Long Island and 91X in San Diego—plus many non-commercial college stations scattered throughout the country—have been just as successful playing new music acts like the Cure, Cult and Femmes.

However, for the most part, radio—particularly album-oriented rock stations (AOR) which during the late 60s and 70s thrived on high school and college-age listeners—now deliberately ignores this audience. AOR has instead decided to stick with its original, now-aging, Baby Boom audience by continuing to program records that were big when members of the Woodstock/Big Chill generation were growing up. But for many eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds, notes Jim Morrison, program director at Atlanta's top forty station 94Q, classic rock is ancient history. "Lots of these kids could care less about Led Zeppelin, the Moody Blues or the Who," says Morrison. "*Dark Side Of The Moon* has been on the charts for eleven years! That's not hip now...their daddies were listening to that!"

AOR's slow but deliberate transformation into mostly-oldies stations is creating havoc throughout the record industry. "It's really dismal the way radio has abandoned listeners between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four," Brad Hunt, vice president of album promotion for Elektra Records, says with disgust. "Most of these kids have outgrown top forty, but AOR has outgrown them. And unfortunately for us these are the kids that buy records."

Radio ratings in most cities show that most post-Baby Boom rockers still tune in to AOR. But, Hunt insists, "This is mostly by default. They don't have a choice." Tony Berardini, general manager at Boston album-rocker WBCN, agrees, saying that although a surprisingly high percentage of young listeners enjoy listening to classic rock, others have spent the past few years watching Simple Minds, Quiet Riot, U2 and Motley Crue on MTV and couldn't care less

about Dylan, Pete Townshend or Yes.

Some broadcasters are sympathetic to the concerns of new artists. And many worry about the long-term affect of ignoring young listeners and what will happen as the gap grows. But they also insist that record sales are not really radio's problem. For while record companies are in business to sell records and tapes, radio pushes a very different product: advertising. And as far as the advertising world is concerned, reports Berardini, "adults between twenty-five and fifty-four are top priority." Listeners eighteen to twenty-four, he adds, "are not even considered to be one of the top seven or eight demographics."

"It's a matter of going after a bigger slice of the pie," explains Jeff Pollack, a radio consultant who is under contract with forty stations worldwide. "Today's AOR stations appeal to adults who are up to forty years old. That's pretty wild when you consider the old anti-establishment 'don't trust anyone over thirty' days when album radio began."

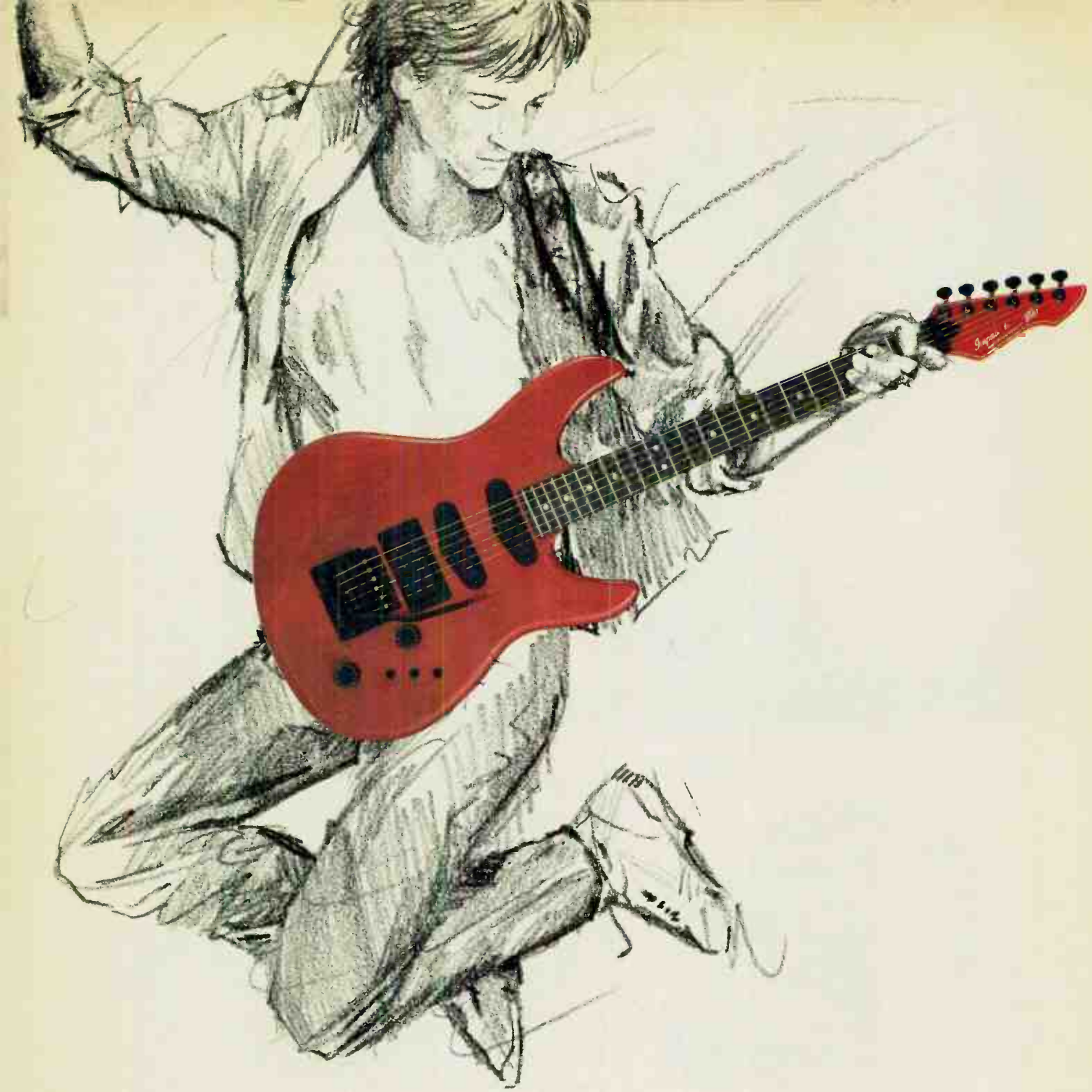
Twenty years ago, when album radio (then called progressive or free form) began, the small, obscure FM stations were run by allegedly idealistic young music fans. And the music they played was all new. But during the 70s, rock audiences, which had incited a cultural revolution the previous decade, began to show not only political but economic clout. Soon these experimental stations mushroomed into big business and began to depend on research, consultants and pared-down playlists. "At one time radio stations were different all over the country," Bob Dylan recently remarked after one of his shows at Madison Square Garden, "but now all the stations sound the same."

It was the bland, predictable radio of the late 70s—which made heroes of faceless acts like Foreigner, Journey, Kansas and REO Speedwagon—that provided much of the motivation for the punk revolution. "The whole music business was led to a state of boredom," recalls Ian Copeland, head of the talent agency Frontier Booking International, and one of the principals involved in bringing the Police, Buzzcocks, Gang of Four and other new acts to America for the first time. "Nothing was getting discovered because nothing new was getting played." But in spite of radio, these and other bands established themselves by constant touring and through alternative press and radio exposure.

Copeland now believes the current status of today's radio "sets the stage for another music revolution. I'm not sure what it will be—but I know kids want their own heroes and they're not getting them from radio."

Even if another music revolution occurs, what effect will it have on AOR? If what happened during the early part of this decade is any indication, the answer is very little. Sure some talented bands like the Police, the Cars, Pretenders and Talking Heads came along and were able to graduate into the mainstream. But many others, including hard-edged rockers like the Ramones and Sex Pistols, were mostly ignored. Still if you ask most AOR programmers why they play so little new music, they will tell you they tried—but it didn't work.

In 1982 AOR, led by influential consultant Lee Abrams, decided to give new music a chance. But, recalls Rob Barnett, program director at album rocker KZEW in Dallas, who at the time held the same title for the Abrams-consulted WAAF in Worcester, Mass., "Everybody over-reacted. Instead of introducing acts that might have had some lasting power, we made the mistake of playing one-hit nobodies like Flock of Seagulls, Thomas Dolby and Missing Persons." The experiment failed and AOR re-



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treated to Lynyrd Skynyrd, Led Zeppelin, Starship and Heart.

Two years later, Barnett adds, AOR overreacted again to a short-lived heavy-metal trend "and that's when everybody began to realize that metal was chasing away older listeners."

"People who run around chasing formulas based on demographics and computer print-outs forget that this is a society of lots of odd individuals," chuckles Jefferson Holt, REM's manager. "Just look at MTV. A couple of years ago it seemed like MTV had it pegged: They didn't play any black music and they only played so much of this and so much of that—then all of a sudden their ratings are gone."

AOR will never stop chasing Baby Boombucks. But if they aren't careful they will encounter problems along the way. For one thing, as listeners get older they typically become more involved with careers, raising families and watching TV and they tend to spend less time with radio. For another, warns Steve Smith, managing editor of the radio tip-sheet *Album Network* and producer of the syndicated radio program "Power Cuts" heard on 130 album stations, programmers have to "make sure the eighteen-year-old of today will be listening to their station seven or eight years from now."

Bill Hard, a long-time radio observer and former editor of a couple other industry tip-sheets, predicts AOR will split off in many directions. This will include stations that continue to play old and new cuts; classic rockers playing all, or almost all, oldies; and soft adult stations that will play soft rock and even some new-age jazz. In addition, Hard expects more new-music stations and hard-rock stations catering to eighteen-to-twenty-fours to spring up.

And sure enough, this fall Satellite Music Network, a radio syndicator, is unveiling a twenty-hour hard rock format which Robert Hall, the Dallas-based company's vice-president says will have fifty to one hundred subscribing stations within the next two years. Hall hails his new "real rock" format as "the rebirth of AOR with strong groups like Metallica, Judas Priest and AC/DC but also with the Stones, ZZ Top and Van Halen." And he dismisses the notion that ad agencies aren't interested in eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old listeners. "This crowd is very active. They have lots of money and they spend it right away."

So while it appears that some changes may finally be in store, the *Album Net-*

continued on page 129

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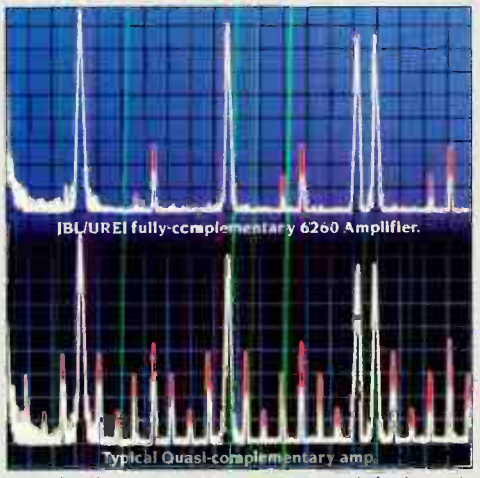

Red spikes in the TIM Spectrum reveal the dramatic differences in distortion output.

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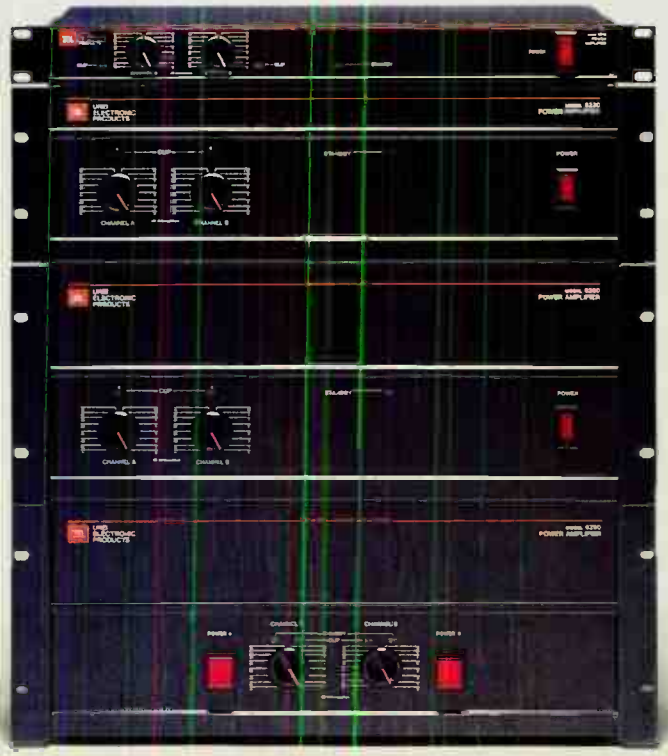

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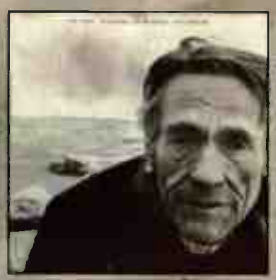

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TONY BENNETT

BY MARK ROWLAND

"THE BEST SINGER IN THE BUSINESS" – FRANK SINATRA

Tony Bennett has recorded eighty-nine albums in a career spanning more than three decades, all on Columbia records. But his latest effort, *The Art Of Excellence*, is the first he's recorded in nearly ten years.

"A while back one of the executives came on pretty strong and said I'd have to start doing covers of Janis Joplin tunes," Bennett explains, with just a touch of sarcasm. "So I thought, 'It's time to take a walk.'

"I really got weary of deadlines," he goes on more expansively, "and board meetings and discussions that turned into arguments. You have to combine business with pleasure, and if you give in to those kinds of corporate restrictions it just weakens you, you see, and you shouldn't feel that way.

"So for ten years I just went out and performed for the public. And that was very revealing; it justified the cliché about things working out for the best. Because they supported me steadily; not enough to fill stadiums, but enough for very beautiful concert halls around the world. And I was able to do this very understated thing with the trio, which everyone seems to respect—that you're not walking in there with a whole army, you know, to cover up your defects. With the trio, it's all a matter of singing, and if you do that well, the whole thing works."

One thing Tony Bennett does very well, of course, is sing. It's not his only talent—his portrait of New York governor Mario Cuomo, currently on display in the city's convention center, is evidence of that—but when it comes to music, Bennett's nuances of feeling intimate the romantic standards of previous eras while amplifying their natural grandeur with taste, understanding and technical control. Maybe that's some of what Frank Sinatra had in mind when he extolled Bennett as "the best singer in the business, the best exponent of song." For while Sinatra skates the contours of melody and line with seemingly effortless agility, Tony Bennett plumbs their emotional depths with near-surgical precision. Or as Bennett's veteran accompanist and musical director Ralph Sharon puts it, "He does not dismiss any song lightly. By the time he nails a song down and puts it on a record, that's the definitive version. You can sing it any way you want—but that's the way the song should be sung."

The good life: "The older you get, the more you have to live for."

Tony Bennett's face has the warm, weathered look of a musician whose mistress has inspired a lifetime's resume of saloons, halls and cabarets; on this rare furlough from their performance schedule, he and Sharon are relaxing in Tony's midtown apartment amidst a comfortably cluttered array of oils and pastels. "Economy of line, economy of composition, form, line, color, perspective—all the things you think about in music, you think about in painting," Tony points out. "Studying the masters, how they laid down the fundamentals, what makes things work right. And the more knowledgeable you get, the more your mind is stimulated; the older you get, the more you have something to live for." He points to one exhibit, a meticulously rendered streetscape. "You know, I get so involved with this stuff. It took me months to paint all these windows." He laughs. "At night I was having dreams about windows."

The painting seems oddly familiar, but it takes a minute to realize why—it's set in San Francisco. Tony Bennett has had his share of pop hits, including a smash rendition of Hank Williams' "Cold, Cold Heart"; he has recorded with jazz giants from Count Basie to Bill Evans to Stan Getz, even once cutting an LP with several jazz drummers; he is a compendium of knowledge and insight regarding the Gershwin/Berlin/Porter era of popular song, and his new album includes a duet with Ray Charles on a song by James Taylor. But it's fair to say that, for most listeners, Tony Bennett's reputation begins and ends with "I Left My Heart In San Francisco."

"That song was a blessing for me," he declares. "It kept me and sustained me for years, when the Beatle era was at its height, and audiences came to hear me sing that one song. It's funny, that song just sort of snuck in there," he laughs.

Actually, "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" was the number one song of 1962, a full year before the Liverpool lads took over, but after that the 60s didn't seem much like Tony's idea of a musical renaissance.

"It was such a shocking change," he recalls with amused resignation. "It seemed like one day I went into Central Park on a Saturday afternoon and every-

AARON RAPPAPORT

one looked different. I felt like Rip Van Winkle."

To those fans of the Beatles and Tony Bennett, it is a little sobering to realize that rock's musical coming-of-age came with a price tag for masters of older, equally valid musical traditions. But shed no tears for Tony: "I'm not bitter," he says convincingly, "I was just bewildered. See, years ago Sinatra said to me, 'Follow money by producing something good, and then money will follow you.' It's gotten reversed now to where everyone goes for the buck first, and then says, 'What do we need quality for? We got the money.' The problem with that is that you end up bitter and unhappy, because you're so unfulfilled. The other way is a slower process. But my idols are Ellington and Basie, who were working to the day they died."

Anthony Benedetto grew up not in San Francisco but in Queens, the son of a tailor from Calabria. His older brother studied singing and sang in the children's chorus of the Metropolitan Opera; Anthony attended the High School for Industrial Art. His first brush with showbiz occurred at age nine, when he led Mayor LaGuardia and several thousand others across the formal opening of the Triborough Bridge. As for music, Manhattan in the 40s provided its own education.

"I lived in an era when you'd play hooky from school and go see Sinatra with Dorsey, and Buddy Rich was the drummer and Ziggy Elman was on trumpet; you had all these big bands in the theaters and then the real solo artists like Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Art Tatum were all right here"—he gestures toward a window—"along 52nd Street. My ears were always pretty good, you know, so I'd be listening and figuring the rest of the country was too."

After serving in the infantry in Europe during the final months of World War II, he launched his career, only to discover that the rest of the country wasn't listening anymore—his first encounter with the generation gap. "I get boxed with guys like Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, but they're all ten years my elder," he points out. "I'd always admired the big bands, yet after the war it was all small groups in little lounges. I still liked singing with the big bands, though, and as I got bigger I was lucky enough to get booked with some of the ones left."

Following tours with Pearl Bailey and Bob Hope—who suggested he change his stage name to Tony Bennett—he signed with Columbia. At first, he admits, "I really didn't know what to do. I got known for these string works with Percy Faith—kind of like elevator music but with better quality," he cracks. "But eventually I made a commitment to not compromising and going with my instincts, and so I gravitated to a kind of pop/jazz attitude." That tendency was fortified by his alliance with Ralph Sharon, a jazz pianist who encouraged collaborations with players like Stan Getz and Art Blakey. "There was great resistance from the business at first," Bennett notes evenly, "because if you have one winner the executives want that and nothing else—it's more saleable. But Ralph insisted that I keep changing so I wouldn't get typed, and that opened up my whole career."

Tony's empathy for jazz is more felt than proven on his latest effort. What's more obvious is his passion for keeping the tradition of popular song vital—not merely by warming old chestnuts, but by discovering new contenders, a much tougher trick. "His instincts there are great," Sharon emphasizes. "But then, very rarely will he work on a song just a little before performing it, and he almost always tries it on an audience before he'll

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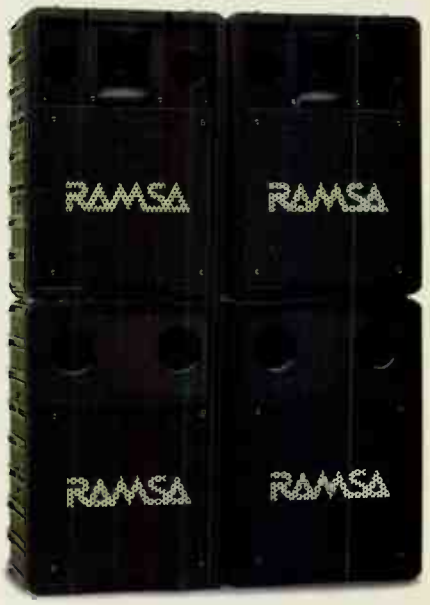

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put it on an album. Many times he'd close his show with a brand new song, and the audience reaction to that I found quite amazing. I saw people stand and cheer 'Why Do People Fall In Love?' [the current album's showpiece] and they'd never heard it before!"

"See, one reason Bunny Berigan's version of 'I Can't Get Started' became so famous," Tony elaborates, "was that they took it on the road from theater to dance hall, until it finally arrived at the right tempo, the right feel—*then* they recorded it. You can't get a better testing ground; if you give a song time and do it enough to get a sense of performance, you might find reason for that song to live. There's no nicer game for me than to find a song a singer can put in their repertoire, that a young singer might need to get that break. Because there are certain songs that will just stop you, songs that will eventually become 'evergreens' as the business calls them, songs that will live in our hearts, you know, like a great Irving Berlin song.

"And I think it's very threatening that those songs are not being treated right," he goes on with noticeable passion, "because the only thing any country has to offer the world is its art. Russia is a lot older than our country; the folk songs of their day became the symphonies of Prokofiev and Stravinsky and Shostakovich. Well, our folk songs aren't Joan Baez and Harry Belafonte; the real folk songs are 'Stormy Weather' and 'All The Things You Are' and 'Over The Rainbow.' To minimize this is a sin."

Casual pop fans may dismiss such comments as predictably wheezing. But while he's no trendy, the values Bennett espouses are not the sort likely to disappear with the coming of a new musical season. These days, in fact, his instincts appear decidedly modernist. He openly applauds digital and CD innovations, for example, for putting emphasis back on "collectibles"—"which is how the industry first started. You know, the first gold record went out to Enrico Caruso." He's also cheered by the substance as well as sartorial flair of contemporary pop chanteuses Sade and Cyndi Lauper. And though Bennett doesn't really like to talk about it, he's one performer who was exercising his social conscience well before it became fashionable. He's turned down "ridiculous" amounts of money (Sharon's word) to play South Africa, regularly funnels private contributions to progressive causes, and performs dozens of benefit concerts annually. And he's been doing it for a while; when Martin Luther King led his march from Selma

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to Montgomery, Tony Bennett was there.

"I know a lot of guys who do well will say, 'I'm lucky,'" he muses, "but I really am, because my peers have always encouraged me more than I believed in myself. To hear a person call you the best, or their favorite—to hear that from artists who I revere, when I was just trying to be a competent singer—well, that gave me a lot of exciting feelings, and strength. And it made me dream.

"See, this thing is hard to say, because it sounds so egomaniacal," he says at last, "but I've been singing since I was five years old. I'm fifty-nine now, and I can handle quite easily just about any form of popular singing—reggae or jazz or heavy metal, intimate singing in the Crosby tradition or hot jazz like Louis Armstrong. So it's confusing for me to hear, 'This is what Tony Bennett does—he sings ballads.' I gravitate toward all kinds of popular music, and after that it's just a matter of being selective. But I mean, I could sing with Ray Charles for the rest of my life. And if I hear Oscar Peterson with Louis Bellson on drums, I got to go with that beat. I'm ready for whatever turns me on." M

TONY'S TAPE TEST

In the course of our interview, I played for Tony a number of tunes by an admittedly esoteric collection of popular singers. He responded with some equally surprising comments.

"I Wanna Be Loved" by Dinah Washington (Polygram Classics): "That's Dinah," Tony says after three notes. "I could name her in a second. That's a great song, one I've always wanted to do. We should do that one, Ralph."

"If Only For One Night" by Luther Vandross (Epic): "What would you call that kind of singing—soul, or modern soul? Well, it's very nice. He sings well. The thing that I really like—it's sung with real feeling. If you're really saying something, say it! It's not a matter of diction. When I go to England, there are lots of British people who speak the King's English, you know, and it puts me to sleep. It's important to communicate that emotion."

"Cha Cha Cha D'Amour" by Dean Martin, arranged by Nelson Riddle: "Is that Tito Puente?" [*vocals enter*]. "Oh, it's Dean," he laughs. "Well, Dean is a great entertainer, a great emcee, he does comedy, sings, fools around with women [*laughs*]...the arrangement reminds me of Tito Puente though, who I love."

"Parker's Mood" by King Pleasure (Fantasy reissue): "Oh, I know that guy. This goes back to the early 50s. Don't tell me—he did 'Moody's Mood For Love'? Yeah, King Pleasure.

continued on page 44

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FINGERBOARD	ROSEWOOD	PICKUP	IBZ
NO. OF FRET	22	CONTROL	1V
BRIDGE	IBANEZ EDGE	FUNCTION	DUO-SOUND

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NECK	MAPLE 1 PC, OIL FINISH	HARDWARE	CHROME
FINGERBOARD	ROSEWOOD	PICKUP	2 X IBZ
NO. OF FRET	22	CONTROL	1V, 1T, 3 WAY
BRIDGE	IBANEZ EDGE	FUNCTION	2 X DUO-SOUND

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FINGERBOARD	ROSEWOOD	PICKUP	3 X SUPER 7F
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BRIDGE	IBANEZ EDGE	FUNCTION	

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NECK	MAPLE 1 PC, OIL FINISH	HARDWARE	CHROME
FINGERBOARD	ROSEWOOD	PICKUP	2 X SUPER 7F, IBZ
NO. OF FRET	22	CONTROL	1V, 1T, 5 WAY
BRIDGE	IBANEZ EDGE	FUNCTION	DUO-SOUND

OTHER FINISHES: BK (BLACK), DWB (DARK WINE), IVB (IVORY), PL (PEARL), PR (PEARL RED)

RICHARD LLOYD

BY BILL FLANAGAN

BACK FROM THE DEAD WITH A ROCK GUITAR MASTERPIECE

No longer nodding out in his hamburger at business meetings.

KAREN PETERSEN

The good thing for me, if I can say this without being too pompous, is that people like me. I was a screw-up, but I didn't insult people or play the big shot. I messed up and it was all a 'tragic shame.' Whereas some people burn everybody on the way up, I never burned anybody but myself." Richard Lloyd breaks into a smile. "And I managed to embezzle myself for every dime I had!" The guitarist laughs. "But that's okay in the grand scheme of things. You can live with yourself about it. One of the biggest facets of straightening yourself out is *aggressive amends*. You've got to pay the piper."

Lloyd is talking about one of the brightest—and most unexpected—comebacks since Lazarus. Here's a guy who was written off by the music business as a lost cause—an alcoholic drug addict who had traded in the bright hopes of the band Television for a bad end. *Alchemy*, Lloyd's 1979 solo debut on Elektra, was a fine pop/rock album, but the artist quickly proved himself a bad investment. After five years in the wilderness Lloyd returned with *Field Of Fire*, a raging, lyrical rock 'n' roll album as good as any pop record of 1986. Perhaps in part because of Lloyd's bad reputation, the LP was initially released (in late 1985) only in Scandinavia. Then it appeared in France, then England, and became a sought-after import in the U.S. Still, American A&R men were wary of Lloyd. Sure, it was great guitar playing, but were the songs commercial? Sure, they played the album at home, but what format did it fit? Hard rock but not heavy metal, extended guitar solos but not fusion. Did radio still play "Can't You Hear Me Knockin'" or *Rock 'n' Roll Animal*, or "Like A Hurricane" or *Royal Scam*? The general line was, "Sorry, Richard, we love it but it falls through the cracks."

Maybe. Or maybe nobody wanted to invest in an artist who'd blown it so badly the first time out. Now, after almost a year of playing great club dates to ecstatic fans and equivocating record companies, Lloyd has found an American home for *Field Of Fire* on the indy Celluloid Records, who proved their potential last year with the Golden Palominos' debut. With his substance abuse two years behind him, the singer/guitarist is set to emerge as one of the brightest American rockers of the late 80s.

"This album is hardly going to go platinum overnight," Lloyd says, sipping tea in a Manhattan restaurant. "But that's not gonna derail me from enjoying my own life. And mistake-ridden as it may seem, I have had a blast so far. The difficult thing is to convince people that it's possible to mess up so royally and then be together. I don't want to beat this dead horse into the ground, but alcoholism is an illness, a progressive, debilitating allergy that takes years to manifest itself to the chronic and severe stages that eventually lead one to do something about it. I was functionally alcoholic for the entire period of Television. When I made *Alchemy* I was very seriously getting into narcotics, and by the time *Alchemy* came out I was completely blistered. A combination of fear of success and fear of failure had pulled my hamstrings." He laughs again.

"The big business aspect of chew-

you-up-and-spit-you-out corporate behavior terrified me, and the 'we're gonna make you a star' machinery had me running hard and scared. Frankly, I showed up at some very important business meetings three sheets to the wind, and the corporate people just threw me in the toilet. That's why *Alchemy* suddenly became a non-album. One day I was a regional breakout in the Northeast and getting play on WNEW and all this other baloney, and they had this big hotshot manager they were gonna hook me up with, all this machinery was in motion—and then they had this business meeting at which I fell asleep. I nodded out in my hamburger. The next time I went to the Elektra offices nobody knew me." Lloyd shrugs and smiles. "In retrospect it's quite humorous."

In retrospect, maybe. But that downhill slide left the guitarist on the bottom until 1984, when he finally kicked junk and juice. "I was in New York," Lloyd says of his creative rebirth. "I had just straightened out my drug and alcohol situation—I was clean and dry for about four months. I was wondering how to get myself back into the music industry. Keith Patchel, a friend who played with me in 1981-82, found out I was clean and he was going to Scandinavia to relocate. He asked me if I wanted him to look into the possibility of bringing me over to do some live dates there. I told him I wasn't likely to leave the country, because I had support systems here and didn't want to take the chance. He left and I forgot about it.

"I was in my apartment in the middle of the night contemplating my fate or lack of it. I was deliberating what to do. I could get a band together and play the New York club circuit. I could go to work, save up some money and go into a studio to record a demo and shop it around. Or I could go to some of the people in the music industry that I've known through the years and ask them for the opportunity to do some recording. I was doing a meditation on 'What do I do?'

"I actually wrote down a prayer asking for guidance. After I wrote this I sat and looked at the paper and said, 'Well, you've done it now—you've pulled the trigger—now what's going to happen?' I was wondering if my reply would be forthcoming. In a week? In a month? I was trying to figure out when you pray

FIREARMS

On *Field Of Fire* Richard Lloyd played the same Stratocaster he's used on every record since Television's debut: "It's a '61, stock as far as I know. I had them put jumbo Les Paul frets on it; the ones that were on there were just too small—I needed something for my fingers to grip. That's my main guitar. There's also a lot of a Jazz Master that Keith Patchel, the other guitarist on *Field Of Fire*, owned. I played the Jazz Master mostly for rhythm parts—on 'Watch Yourself' and 'Lovin' Man.' I like them very much. That was the Television combination—a Stratocaster and a Jazz Master.

"On *Field Of Fire* there's eleven different amps, mostly Ampegs—the JT 22 and the JT 40. There's a Peavey Heritage, a Peavey Studio Pro 40. For the solo on 'Field Of Fire' I used a Marshall 50-watt self-contained box through a Vox Tone Bender. A Vox Tone Bender is what Jeff Beck used in the Yardbirds. They're very hard to find, and Mistlur had one; every musician that went in there would *touch* it, but people are very honest over there so it's still there. I didn't rip it off; I don't know how I feel about that." Other than that tempting Tone Bender, Lloyd avoided devices and effects: "It's mostly straight through the amps, turned up as loud as endurance could take.

"Onstage I use my Stratocaster and my JC 120 with a Boss Super Overdrive distortion device and a Korg SDD 2000 digital delay. I just traded an acoustic guitar for this little Acoustic amp to play at home and I've lately been using that onstage, too. Because the JC 120 is not giving me what I need. When we're in Europe we use Marshall amps, because they do something with the electronics of Fender amps in Europe and they're not as good. I'm probably going to switch to either Fenders or Marshalls, because the JC 120 has transistors and it's driving me crazy. It doesn't contain enough *threat*—it's too damn stable. Very pretty color tone. I mean, Adrian Belew swears by it—but he uses so many boxes he doesn't know what it sounds like anyway."

No interest in the new sciences?

"I'm probably going to introduce some boxes, only because I'm so far behind the technology. I just plug in and turn on. Keith Richards once said, 'I've tried different guitars and different amps and different boxes, but damn it, it always comes out sounding the same.' It's kind of the same with me. I've tried. Guys I've played with step on a pedal and I can't believe the sound that comes out of there. Then I step on the same damn pedal and it still sounds like me!

"I'm getting some little Ampeg amps, like the Jet. You don't need a pedal or anything for it—it's just a beautiful sound."

for something, how do you read events in order to perceive an answer? Well, in the middle of this deliberation the phone rang. I looked at the wall clock and it was 4:38 in the morning, so I knew it was out of the ordinary. I picked it up and Keith in Stockholm was on the line. He said, 'Richard? There's a guy over here who owns a record company and he wants to fly you over to record an album.' I looked down at this sheet of paper and I said, 'Well...when?' He said, 'As soon as you can get your passport in order.' I looked out the window and said, 'Well, I guess so.' I couldn't argue with that."

The man with the record company was Peter Yngen, whose Mistlur Records had released a number of albums in Scandinavia, and who was looking for a known American artist to give him a foot in the U.S. market. In most circumstances such a break would be welcomed by any musician, but Lloyd's friends worried that if he left New York, he would slip back into his addictions. Richard says he figured the quick response to his prayer was a sign too obvious to ignore: "I would say, 'I can't *not* do it. Clearly, I'm being guided.'"

What Lloyd did not have were songs. At least not an album's worth. He had two tunes ("Watch Yourself" and "Lovin' Man") left over from the days right after Television broke up, and "Losin' Anna," a blues rocker he wrote as a kid enamored of Led Zeppelin. Hardly a motherlode of material, and no indication of the gems he would produce for *Field Of Fire*: "My manager said, 'Where are the *songs*?' I told him, 'In my head.'"

The first indication that Lloyd's muse was with him came when he and Patchel settled into Sweden in January of 1985. They found themselves in an apartment in a village in the country, in the middle of the coldest winter in a century. Sitting in the room, Lloyd wrote "Black To White," a haunting song about a desperate man sharing a room with a woman who sees only the good in situations. Lloyd claims that the dream-like music was "the only thing I could play when my hands froze up," and that the lyric was "propelled by the fact that I was in a situation where you couldn't see out the window for the frost, and neither could you leave for the cold." He concedes that the

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song's ambiguity (about whether or not seeing the good in everything is really good for you) is intentional.

"It's actually a portrait of guilelessness," Lloyd says. "The characters in my songs are usually interchangeable in terms of *I, you, me, them.* The entire *Field Of Fire* record is in great measure about faith and trust. There's a small credit on the back that dedicates the album to the lodestone, the guiding principle. In great measure *Field Of Fire* is about that person who appears lost to everybody else, but true to their own inner guidance system they make it through to the other side. And when they've made it through they say to their friends, 'Thank you for believing in me.' The guilelessness of the character in 'Black To White' is a coin—you can look at either side. A lot of the songs are about danger. Danger is not an illusion. However, each of us is compelled to court danger to some extent."

Ironically, "Black To White" was almost left off the album, because Lloyd—who thinks *Alchemy* "lacked aggression"—was intent on making a hard rock record and thought the song might be too soft. ("I figured when I got *Beggars Banquet* or any albums that I really cherished, the songs I most appreciated were the harder ones.") Friends convinced him, though, that he needed a track to illustrate his more sensitive side, to be "Salt Of The Earth" to all his "Sympathy For The Devil"'s.

The aggression Lloyd cherishes in music may not have been totally unconnected to his tendancy to risk his life and career with intoxicants. When he speaks of the power of rock and the dangerous veins it opens, Lloyd recalls Keith Richards and Neil Young, other guitarists who have burned their candles at both ends. "Put in a nutshell," Lloyd says, "drink and drugs were only because the music can't go on forever, because music is like smoke, it dissipates. It's an aural thing that you have and you can't hold on to. It goes away. For people who are motivated by this thing called rock 'n' roll, it taps at such a root of primal feeling that it amounts to the strongest drug that I know of—besides the age-old drug of sex. All drugs and alcohol are a poor substitute for passion."

That passion is evident in the playing of a man who admits, "It's a little easier for me to play the guitar when I want to *throttle* it than when I want to play pretty things." Yet for all the abandon in the performances, *Field Of Fire* is a carefully constructed record.

"Everything's overdubbed," Lloyd explains. "It's not a live record. On 'Field Of Fire' the guitar solo is 40 or 48 bars long, and originally there was a voice counting the different parts in the background: 'A1,2,3,4/ A2,2,3,4/ A3,2,3,4'—up to A8. Then 'B1,2,3,4.' Then C section, D section. Because without that I would lose track of where I was and play twice as long." Fans will be relieved to know, though, that that wild, album-closing solo was executed top to bottom in one take.

Lloyd's live shows with his two-guitar/bass/drum group have showed that he can fan the same flames live, though he was recently forced into a brief hiatus when his rhythm guitarist quit the music business and Lloyd had to hold auditions to find a replacement. The new rhythm player Lloyd chose challenges his own rock 'n' roll prejudices: she's Donna Fisher—a woman.

"We looked at about forty or fifty guitarists," he sighs. "And some of them were good and some were slick, but a lot of it amounted to beat 'em up, dueling guitars and this macho kind of thing that's played out. I said to myself, 'Would the Rolling Stones have hired a woman musician? Would Led Zeppelin or AC/DC or

continued on page 44

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Edited by Scott Isler

FACES

THE SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS

Not Angry, Just Intense

Bill Carter laughingly describes himself as "quite conservative, as in straight. I'm just an old-fashioned guy." But anyone who's experienced the unleashed fury of the Screaming Blue Messiahs might find that hard to buy. The London-based trio's *Gun-Shy* LP is a series of barely controlled explosions, with firebrand Carter's barbed-wire guitar and man-in-distress vocals furnishing the power.

Although clenched-fist tunes like "Smash The Market Place" and "Killer Born Man" conjure up vivid images of a modern world headed straight for hell, Carter denies any topical intent. Instead, he sees the Messiahs as a descendant of fave raves John Lee Hooker and Captain Beefheart. "These songs are *our* blues," he explains. "Our music is about the same things people have always written about."

If *Gun-Shy* seems to reflect an outlook governed by anxiety and anger, don't tell Carter. "I don't see where people are gettin' that stuff from," he sighs, having heard it many times from the American press. "There's all sorts of different human emotions in our music. I hear humor, vulnerability, quirkiness.... I mean, 'Twin Cadillac Valentine' is a nice love song." However, the thirty-five-year-old music vet admits, "The music is delivered with quite a lot of power, which can be misinterpreted as anger. I see it more as intensity."

Formed in 1984, the Messiahs debuted on vinyl last year with a British indie EP, then moved to Elektra in the States for their first long-player, which Carter terms merely "passable": "It's not the album I wanted to make." Asked if he's surprised at the band's quick progress, Carter answers matter-of-factly, "I suppose. But I'm always surprised. I was surprised when we got our first gig."

– Jon Young

Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Famers

Another year, another brace of inductees for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The winners of the second annual election are the Coasters, Eddie Cochran, Bo Diddley, Aretha Franklin (the first female inductee), Marvin Gaye, Bill Haley, B.B. King, Clyde McPhatter, Ricky Nelson, Roy Orbison, Carl Perkins, Smokey Robinson, Joe Turner, Muddy Waters and Jackie Wilson. (Nominees must have released records twenty-five years or more before the Hall of Fame voting.) As with last year's Hall of Famers, the artists will be honored at a black-tie dinner at New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel on January 21.

End of an Era

Ten years ago in England a new record company midwived a new sound: The Stiff logo became synonymous with the British new wave. But times have changed. The new wave isn't what it used to be, and neither is Stiff. In September the label's parent company announced debts of over $5 million, and the formation of a new company to oversee Stiff.

Help came a couple of weeks later when Jill Sinclair, wife of producer Trevor Horn, bought the newly revamped Stiff Records Ltd. (Sinclair is chair of the Sarm Group and ZTT Records; Horn is a ZTT director.) Dave Robinson, Stiff's head and co-founder, will remain as Sinclair's partner.

B C KAGAN

GREGORY ISAACS

The Cool Ruler of John Public

"Do you want to ee-ahr my latest, mon?" asks the self-proclaimed claimed "cool ruler" of reggae. Before there's time to answer, Gregory Isaacs hits the play button on the blaster in front of him. The backroom offices of his African Museum record store fill with crisp snare drum cracks and a wide-angle bass line.

Hand on hip, Isaacs sways side to side, sweetly crooning a perfect harmony to the chorus of his "Dream My Life Over." The fervent lilt in his voice enhances the recorded version; he's obviously pleased with the song. "I deal with *all* forms of music," he says later. "Universal tribulation, black liberation struggle, lover's rock—it's because I represent John Public, and he feels it all."

Boastfulness may come with much of the reggae territory these days, but Isaacs' self-assessment isn't without foundation. The record sleeves littering the Museum's walls are a reminder that Isaacs' long career *has* spanned many of the shifts reggae's taken through the years, from the philosophical and religious to the carnal and party-oriented. The powerful way Isaacs has addressed topics from sex to politics makes it easy to draw a parallel with the body of work Marvin Gaye left behind.

The African Museum has been more effective as a record label than a retail outlet. With it, Isaacs has helped Kingston knowns and unknowns to document themselves without having to play the major-label game.

"It's been one of my dreams come true," he beams. "It's a form of independence, to build a foundation for the younger ones coming up. Jamaica is filled with talent. I want to concentrate on those who are in need. I remember all the trouble I had getting recorded; it's not good to forget the past."

With so much of his success coming from his forays into the softer, sultrier side of the music, will he be going back to politics at all? "Could be," he chuckles. "Music is a worldwide language; you've got to sing about people's needs. But don't forget, people need love too."

– Jim Macnie

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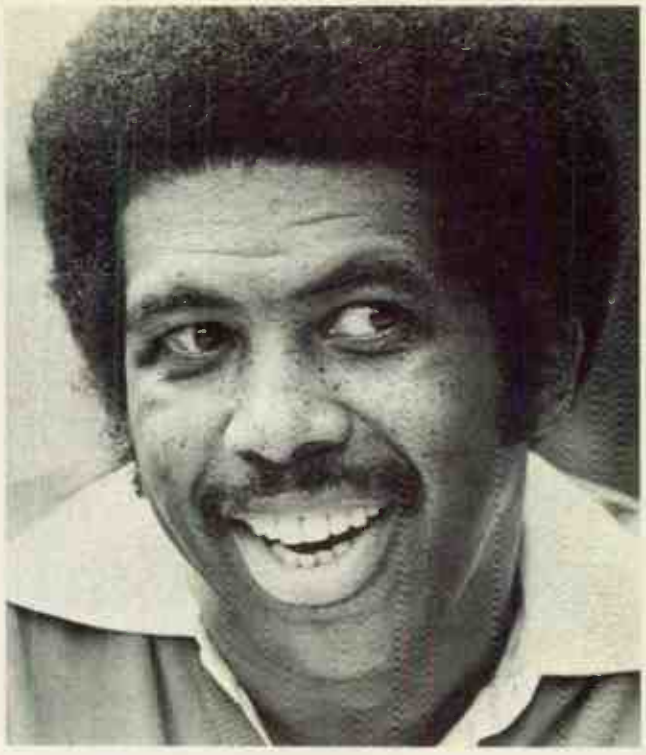


BEN E. KING

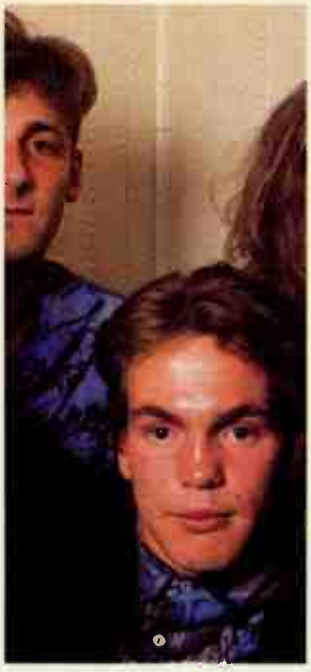
Return of a Romantic

As inviting as a cozy fire on a cold winter day, Ben E. King's voice slides through "Stand By Me," a 1961 classic that's been covered by Mickey Gilley, John Lennon and Maurice White. The original version is currently enjoying a fresh lease on life as the title song and spin-off single from Rob Reiner's hit film about growing up W.A.S.P. The tune's forty-eight-year-old singer and co-writer credits the taste of a generation that hadn't been born when he cut the song.

"Their ears are coming back; they want to hear music again," King offers about young people before dismissing the past decade's synthesizer-dominated black pop. "I'm happy to see so many *singers* out there now," he continues. "Kids are gonna need their standards; they're gonna need their Billy Oceans, their Whitney Houstons and their Freddie Jacksons. I want to say to them: 'Hold close to those people; help 'em survive. Don't just go crazy dancing. Listen to what they're saying. One of their songs is gonna make you fall in love someday.'"

Recently signed to Manhattan Records, King is now in a London studio with Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones producing (!); King says Jones is a fan and initiated their collaboration. After a minor 70s disco hit, "Supernatural Thing," and years of touring the world, this former Drifter is poised to make a comeback. "The voice is still there and hopefully 'Stand By Me' will strengthen the name Ben E. King," he says. If the forthcoming album takes off, King will join a club that includes Patti Labelle, James Brown and Kool & the Gang—all black artists who have successfully used a movie soundtrack to ride back into our consciousness and then up the charts. For King, this could be another magic moment.

– Havelock Nelson



WOODENTOPS

You Gotta Have Friends

Forget the MIDI revolution—the Woodentops are low-tech and proud of it. Describing their sound as essentially homemade, this British quintet developed its instrumentation more out of convenience than anything else. "I'd written some songs," singer **Rollo McGinty** explains, "and I did look for musicians to play with, but I found most of them to be really disappointing. So I wound up settling for a bunch of friends."

Mind you, none of them had much of a handle on what they were doing. Alice Thompson simply stabbed at her Casio while drummer Benny Staples stood behind an odd array of percussion. Even the two conventional instrumentalists, guitarist Simon Mawbry and bassist Frank DeFreitas, were more than a bit rusty at first. Still, McGinty says, "by playing and playing and playing, we knocked it into shape."

Did they ever. After about a year of woodshedding, the Woodentops won opening-act status for several trendy British groups. After a string of singles were collected on LP, Columbia Records picked up the group's album, *Giant*, for American release.

Does it sound like stardom is beckoning? Not to the Woodentops. "We don't like to think that we're going to conquer foreign lands, smash up the churches, rape the women and steal the gold," McGinty laughs. "We're just trying to entertain people. Basically, it's like we're on a school trip all the time.

"Our plan is that we'd like to have as much variety as possible, which means we won't be repeating ourselves, we won't be working on one formula simply for monetary gain. And we seem to be doing pretty well working that way."

Still, McGinty's concerns remain pretty down-to-earth. "Most of the songs are observations, attempts to get people going, stories of friends," he says. "Somebody asked me what nearly every song was about, and I realized that I write quite a lot of songs about how I like people." Which, as he says it, seems the most obvious thing on earth. – *J.D. Considine*

HENRY BUTLER

Takin' Care of Serious Inner Needs

For all the major labels' recent self-congratulatory clucking about their commitment to jazz, an intelligent, acoustic jazz record on a major is about as common as a Japanese-speaking trout. Pianist Henry Butler should be thanking every deity he can grab hold of: His *Fivin' Around*, a mostly straight-ahead debut sprinkled with string quartets and a gospel tune, initiated the newly reactivated Impulse! line. But to Butler, a New Orleans native who trekked to Los Angeles in 1980, the occasion was less than earthshaking. "I all along had this feeling I'd get signed," he says confidently. "I came out to L.A. to be signed, and I gave myself five years to do it. I probably could have done it sooner," he laughs, "if I hadn't done so many restaurant gigs."

Butler grew up listening to the New Orleans musicians who dominated the city's fertile if obscure jazz scene. He also absorbed the influence of McCoy Tyner, Cecil Taylor and Keith Jarrett. After receiving a master's degree in voice in 1974, he started teaching the next generation of New Orleans jazz musicians, including Wynton and Branford Marsalis. And like most musicians in that steamy and hedonistic part of the world, he loved the pop music of the Meters.

But it was jazz, and coincidentally jazz on the Impulse! label, that had the most effect on Butler's playing. "When Alvin Batiste turned me on to Coltrane, I rebelled because it was such a weird experience. I couldn't understand what was going on. But Batiste kept trying and finally I began to understand it. And though I love pop, I have serious inner needs that need to be taken care of, that pop music can't handle. Jazz gives me that space where I can improvise, release a lot of tension. I enjoy it," he laughs, "a lot more now that I have a record deal, too."

– *Peter Watrous*

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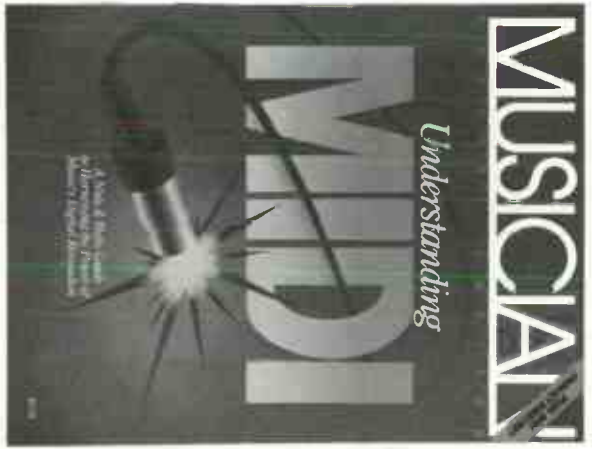

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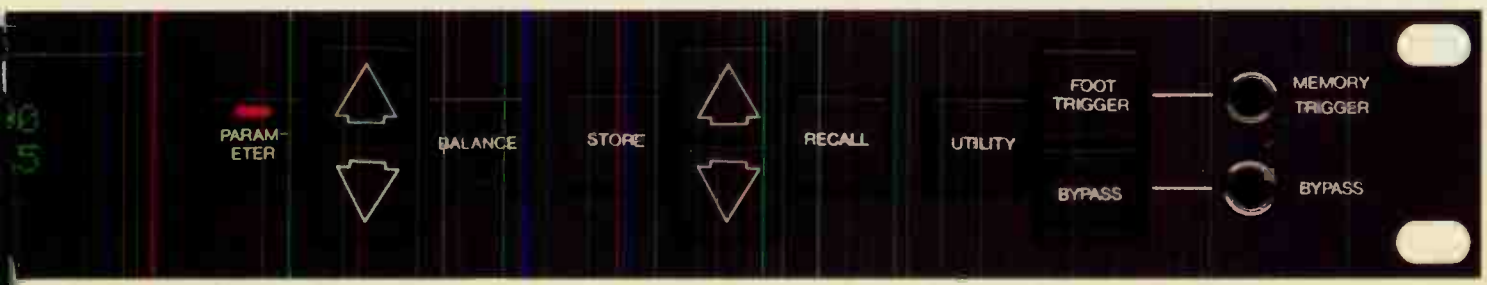

DON GEHMAN: WHAT IS HIP?

The producer as chameleon: John Mellencamp, R.E.M., Brian Setzer

By Rob Tannenbaum

AT FIRST, DON GEHMAN BECAME known as the architect of John Cougar Mellencamp's records, which the producer merrily describes as "obnoxious." Then Gehman's reputation increased following an unexpectedly strong album with reformed rockabilly moron Brian Setzer. And just as the last gold record was nailed to the wall of his sleek new home in the San Fernando Valley, he was summoned by everyone's favorite happening combo, R.E.M.

That's a pretty hip resume. But Don, what are the R.E.M. fans gonna say when they find out that you worked with Julio Iglesias?

"And the Bee Gees! That's on the edge!"

The albums in a producer's portfolio usually reflect his personality, just as most people are typified by their choices in automobiles or dogs or breakfast cereal. But as Don Gehman sits in his living room, his soft, even voice barely audible above the sound of cars passing in a light rain, it's clear that he's nothing like one of those boisterous Mellencamp albums. Gehman's earnestness is also a far cry from the moody abstractions of R.E.M. He uses no Brylcreem, and his shirt is buttoned all the way to the top, which distinguishes him from Julio and the Bee Gees. The trick to his success, it seems, is an ability to absorb and project the qualities of the bands he works with. Don Gehman is the Zelig of record producers.

"A lot of producers have *a sound*, and they make three or four records that sound the same. Maybe those records are all in the top ten at the same time. But a year later, nobody wants that *sound* anymore. I make a conscious effort not to have *a sound*. My job is to provide a signature for the group. That's why this R.E.M. record is so much like their others."

The thirty-six-year-old Gehman resembles a hipper, more handsome George Carlin, and he's nearly as thin as the pointy black boots he favors. He doesn't look like his records, which are rugged and leathery. "Conceptually, I've been sticking to the old style," he agrees. "I own a lot of equipment that's more than fifteen years old. And I'm a fanatic for it. I like those old warm, distorted sounds.

"Consoles used to be part of the sound of a record," he continues. "When you screamed, it distorted. Somebody got it in their head that what we all wanted was something flat, clean and neutral. I've been trying to tell manufacturers to add a knob that says *distortion*."

Don Gehman was born into the Mennonite community in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He played viola in the state orchestra, but tangled with the conductor, who suspected the youngster was a rebel, because "my hair was an inch long instead of a quarter-inch long." Gehman joined a local band just around the time of Beatlemania. "My parents were frightened by all the stuff on TV. Drinking was not a real kosher thing as it was, and we were playing fraternity parties under age."

Soon, Gehman began mixing live sound for Clair Brothers, a nascent audio company in nearby Lititz. His graduation from beer bashes to acid tests began when the Jefferson Airplane brought a hallucinatory light show to a local club. "I thought it was sinful," Gehman recalls. "It was the first time I'd heard anything at 110 decibels. I thought we were all gonna die."

As recording technology expanded, Clair Brothers engineers began to design and build new equipment. "I found it a lot more interesting than playing music, because we were pioneers. We really made what rock 'n' roll on the road is today. When we started, they didn't even have monitors onstage." Gehman estimates that Clair Brothers handled "half of the [live mixing] business in the country, and he augmented his practical experience with electrical engineering classes at Penn State. Over the years, he developed a strong relationship with Steven Stills, who "thought I had the right personality to be a studio engineer." Gehman had grown weary of touring, and felt that studio work would put him "on the edge again," so he went to Miami to work on *Illegal Stills*.

Even the worst tribulations qualify as nostalgia in better times, and Gehman smiles when he refers to his duty with Stills as "combat training." He learned that technology was the simple part of production, that savvy was necessary "mostly on the level of personality, and dealing with artists' temperaments." Although Stills gave Gehman a co-production credit on *Long May You Run*, his collaboration with Neil Young, Gehman says, "I was getting more credit than I deserved. I really didn't know what was going on. So I backed up."

Stills got Gehman a staff job at Criteria Studios in Miami, "one of the hotter places in the country at the time." His assignments there included Chicago, Pure Prairie League, a pre-duet Julio Iglesias ("he's a wonderful guy,

"From the Bee Gees to the guitar stuff I've done, I've learned a lot about what makes things moving emotionally and also highly technical."

STEVE MARSEL, HOWARD ROSENBERG, STEVE MARSEL

CHRIS CUFFARO/IMAGE

but he didn't speak much English"), Firefall, and McGuinn, Clarke & Hillman. "A good opportunity to work with good people," Gehman says charitably. He also redesigned many of the rooms at Criteria, "a natural progression from the stuff I'd done on the road. But once again, I started to get really bored. I didn't feel like we were doing anything new." The Bee Gees, who were coming off the world domination of *Saturday Night Fever*, hired Gehman to build them a new studio on Miami Beach and join their production staff.

Gehman hails the mossy-chested Gibb Brothers as "the real pioneers of what most people are doing today. That production team was doing a lot of very unique engineering—slave systems, tape loops, drum machines. They were very progressive, almost to the point of self-destruction. It was crazy, but we learned how far you could take it." His "graduate recording" began with Barbra Streisand's *Guilty*, a pop extravaganza written and produced by Barry Gibb. The process went "one step further" on the Bee Gees' *Living Eyes*, an album which made an indelible impression on Gehman's career. "We spent an incredible amount of time and money on it, and it sold forty thousand records. That was the end of the Bee Gees. The science project got the best of us. That's what I call The Year of Learning What Not To Do. It was also The Year John Called."

In 1979, before the Bee Gees, Gehman engineered *John Cougar*, which he admits is "an awful record." But he blames that failure on "the 70s sound: real clean and real wimpy," and insists that many of the songs were good. Mellencamp, who was in the midst of earning the nickname "Little Bastard," had been through producers like a baby goes through diapers (this analogy works on a few levels), but he had liked Gehman's patience and concern, and he came to Miami to make a new record.

"It was a mess," the producer recalls. "We wanted the feel of a Creedence record and the charm of a Lovin' Spoonful record, but we were still learning how to arrange songs. Nothing worked. We sat around screaming at one another." After three months of these festivities, PolyGram heard the tapes and blanched. Mellencamp wrote more songs, and the record company turned the tapes down again. "Even when we turned it in the third time, they were considering not putting it out," Gehman recalls. "They had thought of John as their next Neil Diamond." Although Cougar and Gehman had only one previous production credit between them, the hard, bare sound they developed stood out on the radio among the synth programs of the new British Invasion. "The Bee Gees were in the space age, but after that, I went back twenty years," Gehman explains. "Jack And Diane" and "Hurts So Good" were top five hits, *American Fool* was the best-selling LP of 1982, and the dubious American roots rock renaissance was under way.

"R.E.M. is one of the most undirectable groups I've ever worked with. I pushed real hard to make things clearer, more focused, but it was a dangerous thing for a group known for their mystery and fogginess."

With his new-found celebrity, Mellencamp patronized Mitch Ryder's comeback LP, *Never Kick A Sleeping Dog*, which Gehman engineered to familiar results. But Mellencamp knew his albums had to be more than nursing homes for elderly Bad Company riffs. In Martin Torgoff's book *American Fool*, the singer talks of imagining a sound "like the Pittsburgh Steelers on a power sweep, like fifty thousand stomping fans in the bleachers, like the assembly line of a steel mill, like a war." On the first day of recording *Uh-Huh*, he found that assembly line. "We were looking for a different sound on Kenny Aronoff's drums," Gehman explains. "All of a sudden, the drums started to ring. It was like an anvil. It was cranky and obnoxious. It made your eyes hurt. In the business, you learn that when that happens, you put a piece of padding around the drum to get the ring out. John said, 'Let's make it ring *more*.' We loved it." The drum sound, later described as "distorted and overmodulated" by *Stereo Review* ("that's quite a compliment from *Stereo Review*," Gehman retorts), was an exaggeration of the crude snap which can be heard in Rolling Stones songs from "Satisfaction" to "Neighbors." The inner sleeve even included thanks to the Stones "for never takin' the livin' room off the records when we were kids." After the educational combat of *American Fool*, *Uh-Huh* was finished in almost two weeks.

Although "Pink Houses" initiated the revisionism which would finally bring Mellencamp critical respect, it was only after the album and tour were finished that Mellencamp grew tired of being a professional jackass. Even Gehman, who professes to like many of the early songs, wasn't prepared for the improvement of the writing on *Scarecrow*. "We always had good songs, but this was the first time he'd come up with an album that was mature. When he sat down and played me the songs, I was in awe."

Gehman had relocated from Miami to Los Angeles, and he spent a lot of time in Indiana, helping to design Mellencamp's Belmont Mall recording studio. Gehman had noticed "all these records that were copying that sound" of *Uh-Huh*, so he and Mellencamp chose "a more 60s style, with a folksier, strummier guitar sound." The songs made the band more confident; having stripped their sound down to a tough core, they built it back up again. Again, Gehman adapted the production to the demands of the songs, and the fuller, more generous sound of *Scarecrow* complemented the end of Mellencamp's misanthropy.

Aside from introducing Brian Setzer to Mellencamp drummer Kenny Aronoff, Gehman's biggest contribution to *The Knife Feels Like Justice* was recognizing the singer's strengths and weaknesses. "When I had eleven songs, I

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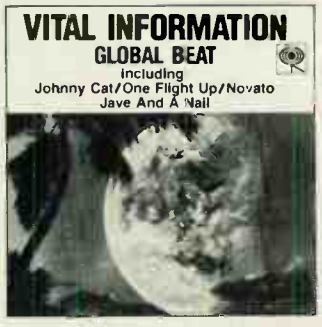

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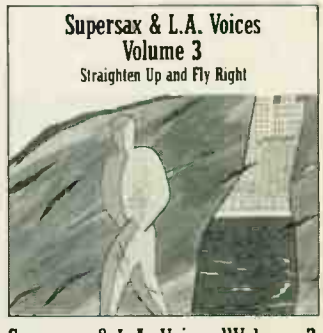

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played 'em for Don, and he said, 'Now you've got six,'" Setzer said earlier this year. Although he pushed Setzer to improve the lyrics, Gehman respected his trademark guitar twang, despite the producer's preference for cleanliness. "You can't take that away or you'll lose what makes him special," Gehman notes. Still, Gehman doesn't think *The Knife* carved a niche for Setzer. "He wanted to show the world that he's more than a rockabilly guitar player. But the record was a little unfocused. He's still trying to look for something he can call his own."

With R.E.M., Gehman had a band with a very strong niche, but one he wasn't satisfied with. He bought their records after the band called (Gehman admits he wasn't familiar with their work), and found them "really charming, and very demo-ey; not what I was used to." Since he was "looking for a new group I could take to the next step," he accepted the assignment.

It's not that Gehman wanted to turn the band into Mellencampers: "If I had made it like 'The Authority Song'—a clear story with hooks—that's not really R.E.M." Nonetheless, Gehman had absorbed Mellencamp's populist spirit, and he was uncomfortable with the artsy obscurantism of singer and songwriter Michael Stipe. So Gehman "pushed real hard to make things clearer, more accessible, more focused. It was a dangerous thing for a group that was known for their mystery and their fogginess."

Gehman speaks slowly and carefully when describing his "differences" with Stipe. There was, he says, "a constant discussion" about making the lyrics more linear. Yet Gehman calls R.E.M. "one of the most undirectable groups I've ever worked with." Stipe, he says, "was willing and yet not willing. He's a hard one to put your finger on because he's bright enough to know what he's doing and to still make you feel like he's accommodating you. I can't honestly say I felt like I accomplished any of the goals I set out as far as clear songs, what Michael would call 'banal.' The album doesn't come under the goals that I've been taught you should try to accomplish, as far as making a record that communicates.

"I found myself thinking I knew what the song was about, and when I asked Michael, he'd say, 'It's about hyperspace.' You think that he's real shy and sensitive, but he's kinda poking at you. You may only realize that a week later. Peter can tell when Michael is playing with you. I still don't understand."

So what did Gehman contribute to *Lifes Rich Pageant*? He cites the prominence of Stipe's vocals ("you can hear the words, even if you can't understand what they mean"), and the addition of keyboards and percussion overdubs "to make it sound more like a record" as developments that reflect his presence. Like Mellencamp and Setzer, R.E.M. are coming back to make another LP with Gehman, possibly their most important yet after the tentative evolution of the new album. "The next step is conceptual, whether they want to write something that's more powerful lyrically." But if this was the cause of "differences" during the last sessions, won't Gehman's plans lead to more friction? "I don't know. It depends on the band," he concludes tersely.

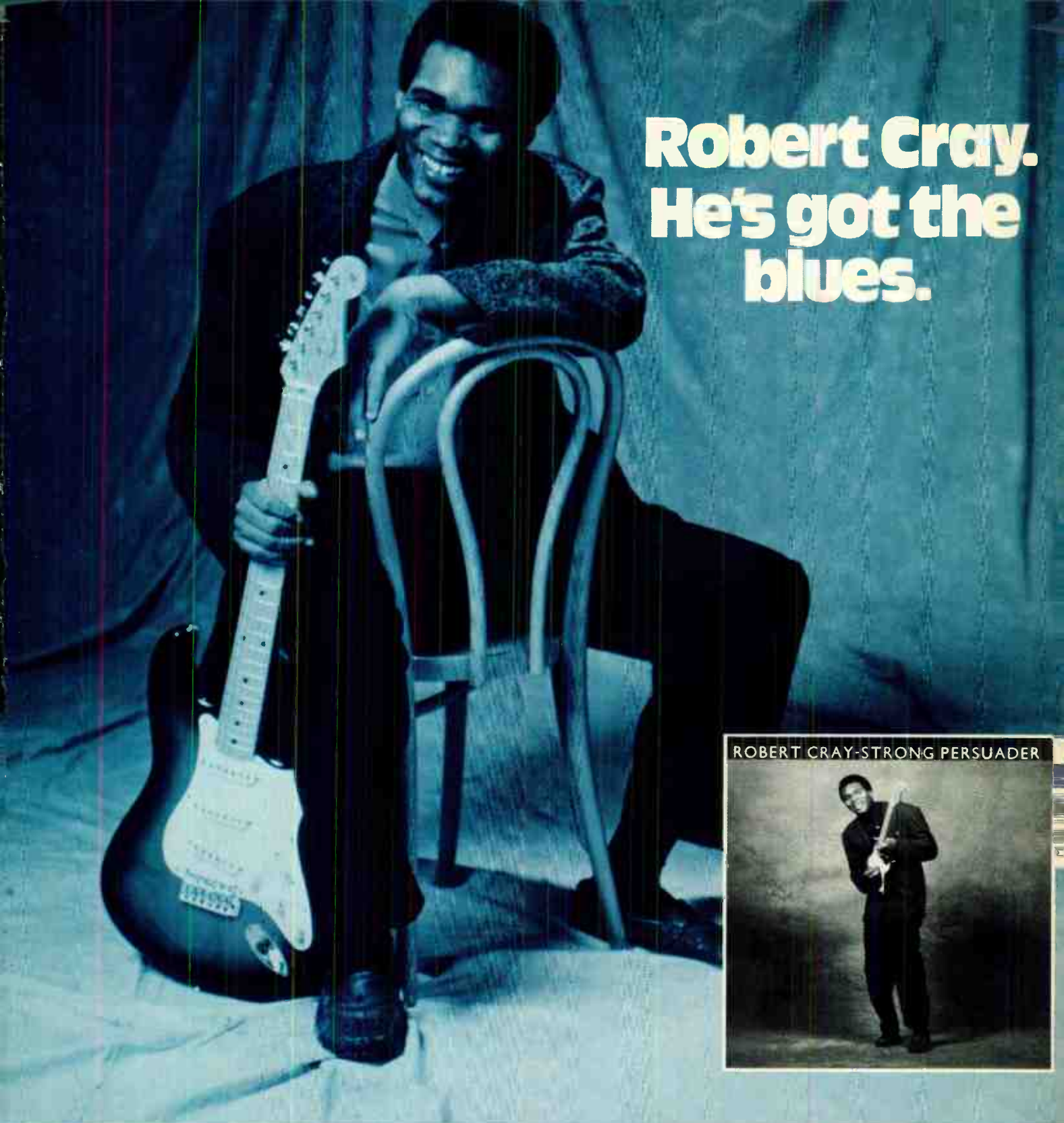
"A lot of producers have *a sound*, and make four records with that sound. A year later, nobody wants it anymore. I make a conscious effort *not* to have a sound. My job is to provide a group signature."

With all this return business, Gehman hasn't had time to take on new clients. But he did clear his schedule to produce an album for Cock Robin. *Cock Robin?* "That's what John said," Gehman smiles proudly. But then, Mellencamp himself seemed pretty hopeless at one point. As with previous projects, Gehman took on Cock Robin because they represent a challenge. First, he has to improve on a debut album he found "tedious, which is typical of machine records." And then he has to stretch his own abilities beyond his guitar-band expertise, to get the same warm sound out of a synth band. Most keyboard records, he says, "are poorly made—stiff, boring, irritating after you hear them more than once. Pop records with every trick in the book are just disgusting. I've become interested in synthesizers, and I've had all these ideas about what you can do with them. From the Bee Gees to the guitar stuff I've done, I've learned a lot about what makes things moving emotionally and also highly technical. I've had this vision that it can be done with keyboards."

If Don Gehman can make a good album with Cock Robin, his powers of reformation will be indisputable. After Mellencamp and Stills and Setzer and R.E.M. and the Bee Gees, he's proven that *a sound* can be a producer's biggest liability. "I'm not supposed to become a star," Gehman says on his way to the studio. "I'm more like a camp counselor."

BELMONTS & WHISTLES

Gehman's home court, Belmont Mall, sports a 24-track Otari MTR-90 recorder, with an Ampex ATR 1000 ½-inch and Otari ¼-inch to mix down on. The house console is a Trident Series 80B. Monitors are JBL 4341s, Fostex four-ways, and Yamaha NS10s, amped by burly Yamahas. Belmont signal processors include AMS, Lexicon 224X and Yamaha Rev 7 digital reverbs, EMT 140 tube plate reverb, Lexicon PCM 41 delay, Quantec and Sony PRE 1100 reverbs and Yamaha SPX90 multi-effects. Then there's the compressor/limiters: dbx 160s and 165s, LA 2As, Teletronics, and a Fairchild 670. As for noise gates, the Mall has Drawmers and dbxs. Equalizers consist of Massenbergs, API 550s and 560s, Neve 1071, Pultec EQP3. As for noise reduction. there's none. "We don't believe in it," Gehman shrugs. The more than sixty mikes include Neumann U67s, M49s and 269s, Sennheiser 421s, Shure SM57s and AKG 460s and 414s. Fave tape? Ampex 456. Favorite sampler? A Prophet 2000 which was used for some piano parts on the R.E.M. record.



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BENNETT from page 22

"I'll tell you something weird. Do you remember that night Manson murdered all those people in Los Angeles? Well, I was in Hollywood that night. And when the police entered that house, and there were all those bodies—King Pleasure was singing on the phonograph. I could never get that out of my head."

"Swordfishtrombones" by Tom Waits (Island): "Gee, what is that? [*laughs*] It sounds like he's trying to send a message. It's like somebody in an ashcan sending messages." [*shakes his head*]

"Maria" by Marvin Gaye (Columbia): "I don't know, who is that?" [Marvin Gaye] "He had a happy life, huh? It's funny, you'd think a tragedy like that would stay with us, but it doesn't. We've become so dulled to violence and tragedy. I remember years ago when Gene Krupa was caught with three marijuana cigarettes and it was headlines. He got sent to the slammer for six months, and in a way I don't think he ever recovered from it. Now we're so dulled by stuff like that. We're victims of the times we live in."

"I Only Have Eyes For You" by Frank Sinatra with the Count Basie Orchestra (Reprise): "Frank, of course. You know who wrote that song? It was a guy named Harry Warren. Almost no one knows his name, but after Irving Berlin, Harry is the most successful songwriter in the history of American music. You can look it up. He wrote "Boulevard Of Broken Dreams," "The More I See You," a lot of film scores—if you got a list you'd be amazed at his repertoire. But he was also kind of anti-snob, y'know? He kept a real low profile. I knew him. He lived in Hollywood, but you never saw him out. He wore old clothes and he drove around in an old car—not that he didn't have the money. And when he did play out, he only wanted to play on a piano with a dull finish. And then he'd get real upset because no one knew who he was!" Ⓜ

LLOYD from page 30

any of the bands I have respect for?' I don't know. Then I saw Don Henley and he was great and he had this woman bass player who was superb. And there was something about a woman that brought a kind of *dignity* to this guitar rock we're doing. I thought she made the band, the drummer and the bass player, sound cohesive and I thought, 'Here's less of a struggle onstage for attention; this isn't somebody who thinks, "Now *I* have to have a guitar lead."' She brought this subtly different energy to it."

So the passion player is growing up? "I'll tell ya," Lloyd says slyly, "I'm still doing emotional cartwheels over it in my head—'What have I done to myself?'" And Richard Lloyd laughs again. Ⓜ

DEVELOPMENTS from page 80

routing to four output groups. The main output section also has four separate dedicated effects returns.... And just in case you've filled up all the channels on your TAC Scorpion, **AMEK** is coming out with a 26-input extender unit for around ten grand that can take a Scorpion up to 58 channels.

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DANIEL LANOIS

The Producer as Conscience: Eno, U2, Peter Gabriel, Robbie Robertson

By Rob Tannenbaum

"THERE'S A LOT OF POLLUTION OUT there," says Daniel Lanois, drinking tea in the gazebo of his Santa Monica hotel one September morning, before continuing work on Robbie Robertson's first album since the Band came unbound ten years ago. Lanois isn't referring to the infamous Los Angeles smog, but to the toxic waste manufactured in recording studios. "Right now, we're in a slump, a confusion," he continues softly. "It's going to be very important in the future for those who have an understanding to do 'soul music,' born out of passion and commitment and need."

ANTON CORBIJN

"I'm put off by a lot of modern production. When people get scared of what they want to do, they just turn up the snare."

Lanois is dressed in a clinging black outfit, the same hue as his long curls, so that when he describes the similarity between his work with Robertson, U2, Peter Gabriel and Brian Eno as "spiritual content," the gentle confidence suggests both a devout missionary and a Ninja warrior. With an approach that emphasizes tranquility and ingenuity over technology, the thirty-four-year-old Lanois contradicts the modern notion of a producer as a flesh-bound digital instruction guide. "It's not that big a deal," he shrugs when confronted with the digital-versus-analog controversy. "It's the least of my problems. If you've got equipment that works, you'll do good work on it." Although Lanois controls some of the biggest-budget sessions in rock, he still relies on the inventiveness he learned during two-bit projects. To put his success in perspective to that of his current peers: Six years ago, U2 made an acclaimed debut, Eno was prompting Talking Heads to new heights, Gabriel was three albums gone from Genesis, and Daniel Lanois was professionally snowbound in Hamilton, Ontario, which he diplomatically describes as "not the most happening musical city in Canada."

Lanois admits he was "fairly sheltered" growing up in Hamilton, a blue-collar city forty miles southwest of Toronto. After years of guitar and woodwind lessons, Daniel and his brother Robert decided to open a recording studio. When all the local banks refused their loan applications, they borrowed five thousand dollars from their mom and rolled tape in the family's cellar. With little competition, the underground studio became "one of the major recording centers in Ontario," and by 1980 the brothers saved enough money to open the 24-track Grant Avenue Studio in Hamilton.

Although Toronto had a modest punk scene, Lanois recalls that the music "kinda went by me. I was just doing something else at the time. I didn't see myself going to the local club and butting my head against the stage while somebody was pissing on my back." Instead, Daniel and Robert spent most of their time baby-sitting VU meters for local country and bluegrass bands. Then a demo they made with an experimental band from Toronto was somehow forwarded to Brian Eno, who called to book time at Grant Avenue to produce *Plateaux Of Mirrors* for pianist Harold Budd. Was Lanois awed by a visit from the Pope of Progressivism? "I remember telling my brother, 'Let's make sure we get cash up front from this guy, 'cause we've never heard of him,'" Daniel laughs.

Lanois was quickly initiated to Eno's notoriously odd studio habits. "The first day, he brought in a string of bells and said, 'I want to put these throughout the record.' So we set up two microphones and he proceeded to walk throughout the studio with the bells for about an hour. As it turned out, we never used the bells. It was just an exercise to put us in the right frame of mind." At first, Lanois thought of *Plateaux* as "badly recorded piano tapes." But he quickly demonstrated that his talents weren't limited to Canadian bluegrass. While producing Budd's LP in Hamilton, Eno also began his ambient record *On Land*, on which he credits Lanois with contributing "encouragement and suggestions at the right times."

While Lanois' sister Jocelyn was playing bass in Martha & the Muffins, the Toronto band

scored an international hit with "Echo Beach." Coincidentally, the Muffins also included guitarist Michael Brook, who had played with trumpeter Jon Hassell, a frequent collaborator of Eno's. Daniel produced *This Is The Ice Age* and *Danseparc* for the Muffins before his sister and Brook left the band, which continued as M&M. Lanois produced *Mystery Walk* for the truncated group, which had a number two dance hit, "Black Stations/ White Stations."

Lanois' growing reputation brought Jon Hassell to Ontario to record *Dream Theory In Malaya*, which featured instrumental contributions from Eno and Brook. By 1983, Eno and Lanois had developed what has been called "the Hamilton Sound," an extension of ambient music which Eno has likened to aural landscapes; "a kind of music...with a sense of place and with a sense of some kind of psychic environment that one might choose to find oneself in. And it was also to do with the quality of feeling alone in a place." 1983's *Apollo* soundtrack formalized the Eno/Lanois partnership, with Daniel credited as co-producer in addition to composing many of the instrumental pieces. The Hamilton Sound continued to evolve on two records released last year, Michael Brook's excellent *Hybrid* and *Voices* by Roger Eno (Brian's younger brother).

"I learned a lot from Brian," Lanois confesses. One of his favorite Eno maxims is that "restrictions can be strengths." Thus, the challenge of evoking a strong emotion on an instrumental record without benefit of lyrics forced Lanois to experiment with outboard effects, playing the studio as he would a guitar. But these treatments, he cautions, are "not the sort of thing you go in the first day and dial up." Lanois is defensive about his collaborations with Eno. He doesn't like the "ambient" designation ("It was probably a good term eight years ago"); considers *On Land* an unacknowledged milestone; objects to having the LPs likened to New Age music, which he finds lacking in the requisite ambiguity; and believes that the description of them as "wallpaper music" is "uneducated."

"When you listen to the radio, the songs and the commercials all sound the same. When you walk up and down the aisles on an airplane, all you hear from people's earphones is 'tch-tch-tch,'" Lanois says, clicking out a backbeat as his voice rises for the first time. "Now, if there's anything to bitch about, that's it. Are we stupid? Is everyone making the same record? To slag some poor bugger for doing something different, especially Brian Eno. People should be giving this guy money to build a new empire or something."

The admiration is obviously mutual. When U2 called Eno to Dublin in '84 to produce *The Unforgettable Fire*, he brought Lanois along as co-producer. In one of the many videos for "Pride (In The Name Of Love)," Lanois can be seen slapping bongos, which are inaudible in the mix. "I'm a closet percussionist," he explains. "I usually try to sneak it in on every record. I find it's good for developing a rapport with an artist; if you're playing something, you're accepted as a band member. If I get stuck for ideas, I pick up a drum and it's a form of therapy." In contrast to Steve Lillywhite's hyperbolic sound, *The Unforgettable Fire* was a very chaste production. "I don't necessarily think that great sonic records are the truly great records. I have to admit that I'm put off by a lot of modern production. I'm very tired of the backbeat—when people get scared of what they want to do and say, they just turn up the snare drum. There are a lot of immature approaches that have become standard fare for no particular reason other than people who don't know any better."

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The new U2 album was recorded in bassist Adam Clayton's house, in the hope that the comfortable surroundings would add "warmth and life" to the sessions. Lanois predicts that "the days are numbered" for the recording studio. The new songs were also recorded "in a bit of a huddle," with Eno on keyboards and Lanois on guitar or percussion. "We have a few ground rules," Lanois says. "We decided to rediscover the guitar on this record, so there will be fewer treatments. We want it to sound like it wasn't overdubbed. And we're using some classical horns, like one might have heard on *Sgt. Pepper.* There's dreamy stuff, but you can also expect to be knocked out of your seat."

The dreamy side of Lanois' resume convinced Peter Gabriel to have the Canadian co-produce the *Birdy* soundtrack, which led to the *So* album. "I was not a Genesis fan," Lanois admits. "But if you don't know everything about someone's background, you have a fresher view of it all." Lanois participated in pre-production sessions for *So* as one of the Three Stooges, with Gabriel and David Rhodes, working in a makeshift studio on Peter's farm in Bath. "The songs were still very much scratch ideas when I came in. You might say I was a composer chaperone for six months. We had the back room of his studio set up. He'd blare his keyboards and his rhythm box, and the environment was kinda like a punky club, a room you went into to do some hollering." Nonetheless, *So* was Gabriel's most subdued work to date. "I'm not really a rocker at heart," Lanois shrugs. "I love a beat, but my intuition would not cause me to plug into a Mar-

continued on page 92

LANOIS PATOIS

Being a big-league producer has its benefits, not the least of them being access to top of the line gear. Lanois appreciates SSLs for mixing and Neves for recording. He's partial to AMS digital reverbs and the EMT 250 plate. Daniel likes Neumann U-47s for vocals, and isn't above using one on a floor tom if it belongs to someone else. But wait—not everything costs an arm and a leg. He also uses the DeltaLab DL2 digital delay and that classic Roland Space Echo. Lanois admits being partial to old amps—especially old Fenders with tremolo. Last and perhaps most important is the amazing Suzuki Omnichord—a little plastic autoharp gizmo with buttons for major, minor and 7th chords, available at your local Toys R Us. No top-notch producer should be without one. – *Will Hunt*

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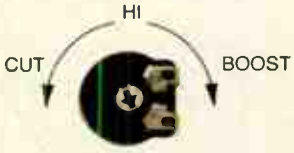

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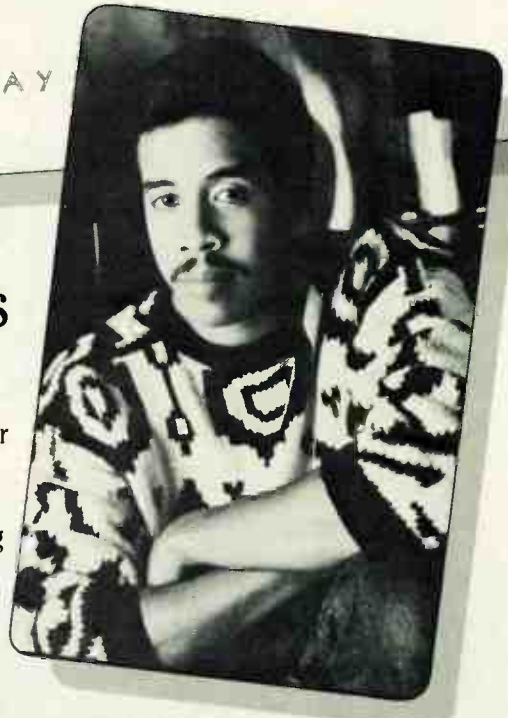

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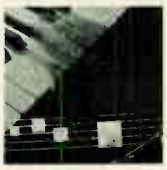


The Producer as Mad MIDI Scientist: Kool & the Gang's Secret Weapon

By Jock Baird

NO ONE WHO LISTENS TO KOOL & THE Gang's recent records or reads their interviews can avoid the Goodie-Two-Shoes Factor. I mean, compared to spokesmen Robert "Kool" Bell (named for his legendary equanimity) and James "JT" Taylor, the Smurfs sound like Satanists. And yet, behind that safe-as-milk facade is coming some undeniably interesting—if occasionally schlocky—music. So what's the deal? There's got to be something more exciting and risky going on here, something perhaps related to the band's jazz roots and now classic mid-70s career as party purveyors. No way could two guys with personalities like overcooked pasta be the whole story.

"We're translating musical ideas into computer language and making them sound like they're meant to, instead of stiff and synthetic."

No, America, it's not. Behind Kool & the Gang lies a vast, mysterious production empire, tucked away in an unassuming Livingston, New Jersey suburban home. This shadow government is called the IBMC, or Itty Bitty MIDI Committee, and it's run by this man, Ronald Bell, known to friends and family as Khalis Bayyan. Yes, Ronald is Robert/Kool's brother, and as sax player has been with the band from the beginning. Excepting lyrics, he is the principal writer of the band's extraordinary string of 80s hits. He has produced the last two Kool & the Gang LPs, *In The Heart* and *Emergency*, as well as their just-released *Forever*, on which he plays virtually all the instruments. But most importantly, Ronald Bell is Kool & the Gang's secret personality. He's a funky jazz mad scientist, Coltrane meets Mr. Wizard, Soul Train meets micro-chip. He is funny, radical, skeptical, an excellent horn and keyboard musician, and clearly smart as hell. Ronald Bell is not safe as milk.

Bell's Itty Bitty MIDI Committee is not so Itty Bitty anymore. The IBMC has grown in its three-and-a-half-year existence to more than a dozen producers, programmers, engineers and musicians (Bell: "the proper word would be geniuses"); the house is buzzing with activity. Devout Muslims, IBMC members all pray in an oriental-carpeted room off the kitchen, and drive a fleet of rented black BMWs parked outside. Each specialist has his own research room, including an Apple-equipped DX programming room (with Fairlight standing by), an Emulator-packed sampling room, a writing room, a basement demo studio/vocal booth, a state-of-the-art first-floor monitor/mixdown room where the new album was laid to tape, and the heart of the operation, a second-floor sequencer/keyboard complex that includes nearly every synth and sequencer known to humanity. All the rooms are wired together with snakes, sync lines and Dr. Click boxes (with a videocam handling communications). Here the IMBC continues its prime directive, "studying this MIDI situation."

Among Bell's principal lieutenants are Kendall Stubbs (a top engineer recruited from Compass Point Studios when Kool recorded *Emergency* there), engineer Ibrahim Duarte, DX specialist Randy Webber, computer-head Alex Williams, and sampling-man Jason Miles. Bell is clearly first among equals, a chairman full of quotations, but in explaining his success, he passes around the the credit by regularly breaking into a rap-mantra based on the commiteemen's names: "Kendalization, Ibreality, Webber-matic, the Woodapple...." If Bell is Kool's secret weapon, he readily admits "*my* secret weapon is IBMC, which is a powerhouse. They have a fresh outlook, and they're willing to try things that people who are into a set mode of things wouldn't try."

This means Bell and his IBMC cohorts are exerting a steady change on Kool & the Gang's music, away from some of its most cloying Goodie-Two-Shoes propensities, but that change won't be made overnight. After all, Bell has already accomplished something extraordinary, convincing the band to let him replace their recorded parts with sequenced synthesizers, drum machines and samplers. How did he manage such a feat?

"We understand their *interpretation*. It's just digital processing. The IBMC takes their tapes that they make at home or wherever, and translates everything on them to MIDI sequencers, getting as close as we can to acoustical reality. The Itty Bitty MIDI Committee is basically translating musical ideas into computer language, and bringing it out to sound like what they're really meant to be, instead of

JOCK BAIRD

sounding like stiff, synthetic computer music."

So what we thought was a band on much of *Emergency* and all of *Victory* is just Ronald Bell playing everything into sequencers? "Yeah, that's me. Actually, I've been the main writer for all these years. I've been underrated. But I've done most of the work—the major work. And actually all the production before that as well. All the songs and the arrangements. You don't have to print that, but it's true. That's the way it's always been, from the beginning."

Ever since the first drummer got replaced by a LinnDrum, this has been going on in studios, but this situation seems unique in its absence of resentment from the replaced parties. "It's still a unified effort," explains Bell. "There used to be resistence: When we were doing the *In The Heart* album, they wouldn't even let us put a drum machine on because they were against it at that time. It was new to them: 'Hey, what are you doing, you're taking my gig!' But now they understand technology. In other words, they know if they have to be on one TV show in New York at two o'clock and on another one in L.A. six hours later, they know enough to get on a jet and not try to drive there.

"All we're doing is translating to MIDI what would normally take studio time. Regular recording just takes too long. You go into the studio, it takes two days to get a drum sound, hours to dub in parts, two weeks for the guitars, the horn player does fifteen solos, right? That's time and money spent. Using this system, we recorded our new LP in *three hours*, every instrument—not counting vocals—that you'll hear on this record."

Ronald Bell was indeed a founding member of Kool & the Gang, as it evolved in the 60s from the free-wheeling Jersey City-based Jazziacs to a more polished instrumental progressive ensemble. "We were doing very creative music before we made our first commercially successful album, *Wild & Peaceful*. The peaceful side was more jazz, while the front side of it was commercial, songs like 'Jungle Boogie,' 'Hollywood Swingers,' and all that. They were tunes we made up in the morning and recorded that night. We just thought we'd throw it up, good luck. The next album after that was *The Light Of The World*, and we went back to *our* music. And it didn't sell. We said, 'Okay, open sesame. We went full disco. We survived the disco era. And then we decided this was just a business, let's make some money off it, because we had families and things. So we learned the art of making commercial music. We came up with songs like 'Ladies Night,' 'Too Hot,' 'Hanging Out,' and then 'Celebration,' where we really caught the pop market."

The production midwife of Kool & the Gang's 80s rebirth is generally thought to be Deodato—he is specifically credited with suggesting they hire James Taylor—but Bell maintains the change was something the band had already decided on when they hired Deodato. "We had already done some studying when Chic had 'Freak Out' and a couple of other things, and we had already decided we needed a singer, just about the time JT came along. Deodato is one of the best arrangers around, and what he did was arrange the sound we had already decided on. We really didn't need a producer—there are enough producers in Kool & the Gang to produce eight other groups—but *they* thought we did. I say 'they,' as they know who 'they' are: the business side. We went along with it. We learned a great deal from it about interacting with people's ideas, understanding how they work. And then to come to know how we want to work."

It was not until four Deodato-produced albums had passed that Bell was given the producer's chair for *In The Heart*, but if he had an agenda, "echoes of the Deodato school" kept the sound fairly conservative. But with last year's *Emergency*, a bit of an edge was coming back into the band's sound, particularly on the guitar-drenched "Misled" and the LP's title cut. The band that was deliberately holding something back was giving us more of it, but only in measured doses. "You're right," Bell nods. "We give it a little bit at a time. You don't want to grow too fast, give the audience too much of a radical change. It would be too drastic."

Still, it may take something a bit more drastic to keep Kool & the Gang from creeping Lionel Richie-ism. "I know what you mean," Bell nods thoughtfully, and then cues up the final mix of their new single "Victory." It is indeed more punchy than its predecessors, with more than a hint of Earth, Wind & Fire. "We were just talking about that," laughs Bell. "In fact we know which part that is! Okay, now take this music you just heard. Does that sound like it's going away from what was becoming sterile? That's what we were afraid of. That's why we said, 'We must now say goodbye.'"

Are we to assume, then, that Bell was behind the change embodied on "Mis-

led"? "Yeah. That's what it means, misled, go the other way. Let's go back to where we really want to before we get into no place to go, like sterilization. Kool & the Gang's not going to become that. 'Misled' was the perfect marriage of rock 'n' roll and funk. The song itself brought attention, but lyrically it didn't come clear, because it wasn't understood. It doesn't fit in to the universal—it's just a new concept."

But although Bell is afraid of sterilization, he has no such fears of simplification. In fact, reducing music to its smallest possible denominators is the basis of what he calls the Microbar concept, the cornerstone of the IBMC method: "Most people look at a sequencer and say it's just a big tape recorder, but it isn't. Computers allow things to go micro-seconds faster, into the speed of thought, which we're at now. Musical ideas can be translated in split seconds, instead of taking 240 bars of a song on tape and taking forever to rewind, you take that and condense it into a microbar, whatever the definitive of what the song is. You work with odd bars, one bar, then two bars, then three bars. Anything over five bars is too much. It actually is, because there's only five tones, five chords—or really just three."

Three chords? Does Bell mean one, four and five? "That's it," he laughs. "Something else?"

But Kool's music certainly uses more than three chords in their songs.... "No, not really. In reality, there's only three chords. The others are only relatives. C minor takes over from B-flat major, because there's no such thing as minor. That's one thing Deodato taught me. He says, 'There's no such thing as minor, everything is ascending.' And when he said that, I said, 'You're right!' And he said, 'I'm *absolutely* right.' And he *is* absolutely right."

What about a song like "Too Hot"? That's a minor descending. "*You* would say that's minor, but that's major, that's 'My Funny Valentine.' It's just an ancient way of looking at it, a system that's taught in acoustical instruments. Yes, the bass line is descending, but it's ascending in terms of oval shape, in terms of getting away from that gravitational pull of relativity outside the earth's atmosphere."

But what about dissonance? In Bell's three-chord scheme, there are no passing chords, no atonality. "See, we take that out. That's where I come in and take out all that confusion. It doesn't go there. You can make dissonance, but we don't want that. That's where we are, that's

CLEAR AS A BELL

We use it all. We have everybody's product," notes Bell of his Quiet Sound studios. and that's no exaggeration. The master mixing room has an AMEK Angela console patched into an MCI JH-24 24-track deck. Digital mixdown is done on a Sony DBV-800 processor run into a U-matic ¾-inch VCR, while analog mixing is handled by an Ampex ATR-5000. Ampex 456 tape is "all we use." Main monitors are a brand new pair of Ramsas and some Urei 809s, with Yamaha NS10s as mini-monitors. Power amps are also by Ramsa.

Outboard gear includes AMS RMX-16 and DMX-1508S delay and reverb, Lexicon 224 reverb (with Larc) and PCM-70 multi-effects, Yamaha REV-7 reverbs, SPX90 multi-effects (which the IBMC raves about) and a D-15 delay. There's also an Ashley graphic equalizer, a Korg SDD-2000 used mainly to delay triggers for punch-ins, and a whole bunch of Dynamite compressor/limiters.

The former rec room basement studio includes a Fostex B-16, Urei 813B monitors, an ART 1A reverb, a Yamaha R-1000 reverb, dbx NX40 noise reduction, a Linn 9000, a Roland MKS-20 digital piano and a set of DDR-30 drums, a Seymour Duncan amp and two Neumann U-87 condenser mikes for recording both vocals and samples. There's also a batch of Shure SM57s on hand. A Kamlet MIDI switching box directs traffic.

Bell and the boys are probably most loyal to the Yamaha DX series—they have several DX7s, a DX5, a DX21, a couple of TX16s, and even a DX1, which Bell describes as a dinosaur and now lives in the writing room. Programmer Randy Webber uses mainly DX-Pro software on an Apple IIe, although Passport Polywriter is sometimes booted up.

The sampling room has two Emulator II + s and an E-max, with an SP-12 nearby ("the E-mu stuff works better together.") A Soundcraft 200B mixer maintains order. Next door is the main sequencing room, with a Linn 9000, Roland MC-500 and MSQ-700, and Yamaha QX1 in constant use, patched through two Yamaha RM2408 mixers. Monitors are Cerwin-Vegas. The master keyboard is a Yamaha KX88, and slave synths include two rackmount Roland Super Jupiters and more MKS-20s and DDR-30s, an Ensoniq Multi-Sampler, a lowly Casio CZ101 and an Oberheim Expander. Somewhere in there was also a Yamaha RX11 drum machine.

Upstairs outboard gear includes a pack of REV-7s, Roland SRV-2000 reverbs. and more SPX90s and PCM-70s, all chosen for their MIDI capabilities. Kamlet and JL Cooper MIDI boxes switch and split, while Garfield Dr. Clicks and a Masterbeat ("it's fantastic!") sync every room together.

where we are deposited by life."

This sounds a bit like medieval church efforts to ban the so-called "devil's interval," a flatted fifth. "Yeah, the dark stuff. Right, we take that out. We want the music to be clear as a bell."

But given Bell's jazz background, isn't he taking too much out? "Even in great jazz, you take that out. [Coltrane's] 'Giant Steps' is exactly what it says, giant steps. [*Hums it*] I mean, these are perfect intervals. It's like scrolls of music Trane left here—it's perfect music. Miles, and Wynton Kelly, the classical jazz, the real clear ones, the ones you still hear today, all the way down to Beethoven. It's all the same, all clear. The rest of it is like organic, something that is still trying to evolve itself into the crystalization of what it is becoming. Ascending. So when we go through hit or miss, the next time I won't put that chord in there. That's why the song 'Joanna' is so clear, because all that other stuff is gone, it's all the way down to the whole, and the whole world, from babies to men to old ladies say, 'Yes, that's *it*!"

And yet like food, too much refinement may actually be removing some nutritive fibre out of Kool & the Gang's music. After all, a lot of the charm of their early-70s funk was a kind of splendid murkiness. "I like that too," Bell smiles, "and that theme. A lot of people missed that era of our music. But to go back to that world would be going backwards, because we've done that already."

To dispel lingering doubts about his three-chord concept, Bell goes upstairs and parks down at a DX7. It quickly becomes apparent that he's not talking about making every song "Louie Louie"—by putting those three chords against different bass lines, Bell evokes a very sophisticated sense of tonality. He then turns to a Linn 9000 and begins explaining his Microbar concept.

"The 9000 suffers from too much information—like the song says. You put in too much information and it walks out the door—you say, 'Hey, where you going?' What we've done is to reduce the amount of information. Instead of twenty bars, do two. First bar, second bar, that's enough." Bell laughs delightedly. "Because it's actually *enough!* Take that, copy, insert, merge. How many times? How many times do you want it? Done."

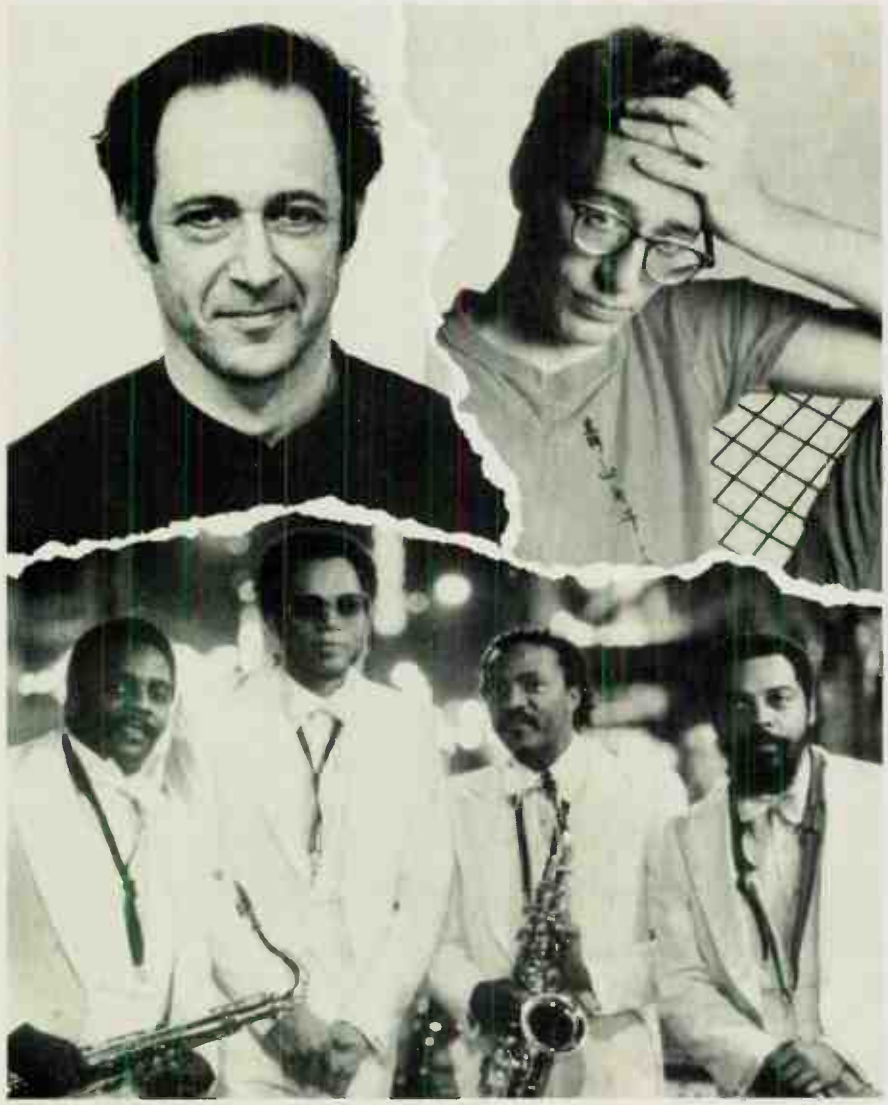
But how does Bell keep all these repetitions from becoming boring? "Once you get it laid out like you want it, you refine it, add to it, give it a little more flexibility, so it doesn't sound like a machine."

I know, it sounds like a prescription

continued on page 80

STEVE REICH

The release of "the dancing, hypnotically involving" (*N.Y. Times*) *Sextet* and *Six Marimbas* marks Steve Reich's first compositions for percussion ensemble since the classic *Music for 18 Musicians.* Nonesuch (79138)



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JOHN ZORN

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(*Chicago Tribune, 1/16/83)

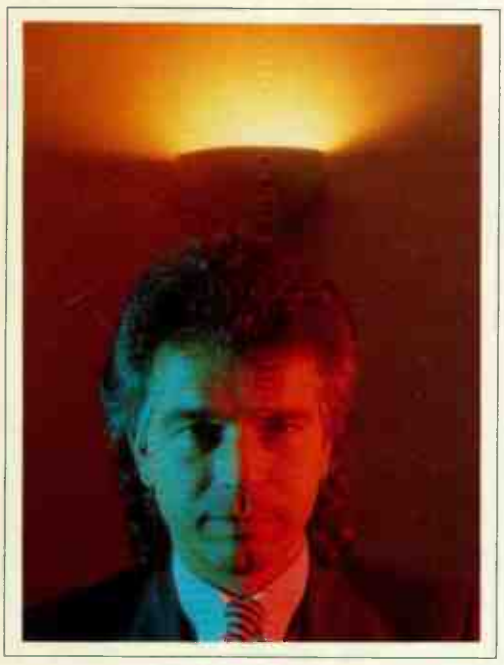
TONY VISCONTI

The Producer as Compulsive Consumer: Bowie and Other Brit-Royalty

By Richard Buskin

"I'M ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO JUST prefers to buy things all of the time, rather than rent them. I don't mean to sound like Harry Flash, but I'm just a sucker for a concept! If someone sits down and sells me a concept, I'll just think I *have* to have one, how can I live without it?"

Some of the hardware that Tony Visconti—studio owner, producer extraordinaire and bon vivant—finds it difficult to live without has gone on to help him make sonic history, so don't ask him to join Compulsive Shoppers Anonymous.



"I'm very proud of the fact that I've often been the first one to take the risk of buying a piece of equipment that a lot of people are now using. I was the second person in Britain to buy a harmonizer—the Eventide 910. It was 1977, and David Bowie phoned me up to tell me he had this idea for recording the album *Low*. He told me it might be a total disaster, because it would be concerned with 'minimal music.' He had been having talks with Brian Eno, messing around with synthesizers and wanted one side of the record to be instrumental. He asked me if I was interested and I said 'Fine!'

"I'm proud of the fact that I've often been the first one to take the risk of buying a piece of equipment that a lot of people are now using."

"I introduced him to this little harmonizer gadget that I had bought. He asked me 'What does it do?' and I said, 'Well, it messes with the fabric of time!' That impressed him so much that he said 'I love it, bring it along!' What I actually was referring to, of course, was the way that it raises and lowers the pitch without raising and lowering the speed of the tape. In 1977 this was a bizarre concept. I had already been experimenting with the drop-off of pitch, when you de-tune the harmonizer and feed something like a snaredrum into it and feed back, so it sounds like a motorbike in reverse. That sound is now as obvious as the nose on your face, but when we first used it on *Low* in 1977 top producers were phoning me up for months afterwards and asking how I got that sound.

"I've still got the Eventide 910, and it's so popular that some people come here especially to use it! Those early models were very inconsistent, but now with an AMS you can trigger perfectly and get the same drop-off every time you whack the snare. On those old harmonizers you'd never know what each snare beat would sound like, and if you just listen to the opening three snare shots on 'Sound And Vision' you'll see what I mean!"

Tony Visconti was raised in New York, and entered the music business playing with a band called Mike Dee & the Dukes, making his first recording at the age of fifteen. Towards the end of the 60s, after working as an A&R man at RCA, he traveled to England and joined Essex Music as a producer, working with the likes of Joe Cocker, Procol Harum and the Move, prior to forming his own production company—Good Earth Productions—in 1974. Realizing that he could recoup much of the money spent on recording by purchasing his own studio, he acquired a 16-track establishment in West London before buying Zodiac Studios in Soho, Central London, in 1976, and changing the name to Good Earth.

Over the years, while his native accent has been flavored with a very subtle, but nevertheless noticeable, London slant, Tony Visconti has worked with the likes of David Bowie, Paul McCartney, U2, Thin Lizzy, Iggy Pop, T. Rex, the Stranglers, Bonnie Tyler, the Moody Blues and Dexy's Midnight Runners, and he continues to stock Good Earth with new technology that he feels may be beneficial to both his clients and himself.

But gear salesmen, beware—Visconti won't buy everything. He prefers equipment that is straightforward to operate, for although he is a qualified engineer as well as a producer he is not overly obsessed with complicated gadgetry, emphasizing that machinery is in his studio to serve both his clients and himself rather than be simply admired. "I'm an enthusiastic programmer, so I like the shortest period of time between my idea and the realization of it. I want that idea down on tape as soon as possible after I've thought of it, and so if a machine is going to take up an hour of my time to program, forget it! All in all I like machines that are fairly immediate in their response and don't tie your fingers in knots in the process."

Tony's fave rave of the moment is the Publison Infernal Machine 90, which boasts twenty-

BARRY MARSDEN

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one seconds of stereo sampling as well as a host of goodies. "With the Moody Blues, who do these massive group-vocals, who use about twelve tracks for a chorus and then feel too exhausted to do another chorus, I sampled everything in stereo into the Publison. I just love that machine. It's MIDI-addressable, you can divide up the twenty-one seconds and assign certain samples to certain parts of the keyboard, it has digital delay, pitch-change and about sixty usable reverb programs. Between that, the Lexicon and the Quantec, I have got about three hundred rooms at my fingertips, so who wants to get into programming?"

Visconti is no prisoner of his high-tech toys, though, as evidenced by his journey a few months ago into the heart of the English Sussex countryside in order to lend his expertise to the latest album by Paul McCartney, at the latter's own recording complex. He was required to orchestrate and conduct on the ballad track "Only Love Remains." "It was wonderful. It was really a bit like the Magical Mystery Tour: A bus load of violinists came down to Sussex from London, and in the morning while we were rehearsing they were being feasted on a cold buffet in a local motel!

"On the backing there was Graham Wood on drums, Simon Chamberlain on synthesizer, Eric Stewart on guitar, Paul on piano and me conducting. When the violinists arrived at about two-thirty, we were fully rehearsed, and doing the live take really was a wonderful, wonderful experience. Paul was about six feet away from me to my right, and he played and sang every take perfectly. It's at times like that you get to appreciate why Paul McCartney is Paul McCartney! The guy is a bloody genius! He does everything not only correctly, he does it with soul, so for all of the criticism that comes down on his head you cannot deny that the man is from start to finish a total professional, more than these moody people who can only sing when they're inspired."

Of course, not all great vocalists are recorded the same way. *Especially* David Bowie: "In one of the films that Bowie did, his voice had to age during the course of the picture. We wanted it to pick up his voice live but not the voice of the actress he was working with. So I came up with this crazy idea of putting a C-Ducer—a strip of tape with a built-in microphone—around his neck, and he wore a scarf over it. That then went through my harmonizer, and we varied the pitch so he could speak in his normal tones and his voice would come out higher or lower. At the same time it wouldn't pick up the actress's voice. We had certain problems, such as it picked up his pulse so you could hear his heartbeat, and also if he didn't shave you could hear a scratching sound from the bristles as he turned his neck! But in the end we overcame these hitches."

This brought Visconti around to the subject of microphones in general and the little matter of sibilance, something which obviously gives rise to the need for different mikes for different types. Tony, whose own collection includes AKG, Beyer, Crown, Sanken and Neumann, (of which two valve U47s were featured in *Let It Be*), thinks that he may have a simpler solution: "I find sibilance is always a dental problem so if I had my way rather than use a correct mike I would have three months' work done on the person's mouth!

"Everyone's different: For some reason, John Lodge of the Moody Blues sounds literally brilliant on the Sanken CU-41—my favorite mike—but Justin Hayward doesn't; his mike seems to be the Neumann 87, there's no other one for him. Now he is very sibilant. Another artist whom I worked with years ago—Ralph McTell—has two front teeth that always produce a whistle. There again Bonnie Tyler has very low sibilance, so

you've got to peak her voice up. Elaine Paige, on the other hand, [UK star of *Evita* and *Cats*, and recipient of three platinum albums] is best suited to the AKG 414, a beautiful, beautiful hi-fi mike. I've got two of those, but I'd like to own eight. I would mike up an entire string section with those, for instance, because they are so lean and represent the high-end of a program beautifully.

"On toms, I'll use a Shure Unidyn, whereas I'll combine the Shure with a U87 condenser mike on guitar amps. You go into any British studio and on average you'll find more condenser mikes than in any American studio—traditionally American technique is to use dynamic miking on rock sessions. I learned the advantages of that the hard way by losing many a good mike capsule when putting Neumann 87s, for instance, on tom-toms; they give out a glorious sound, but hardly last a week as the sound pressure is simply too much.

"My favorite snare mike is the Beyer M160—a dual-ribbon mike—which rarely lasts a session. But if your drummer's really hot and you know he's going to do it in a few takes, I will risk putting my M160 on the snare drum, as by virtue of being a dual-ribbon it's beautifully representative of both high and low frequencies. There's only one artist in the world who suits that mike as a vocal mike, and that's Bowie. He always complained to me that his voice was too thin, which most singers do anyway; most people, especially men with a big frame, use their cavities as resonators, and hear themselves as a ponderously god-like figure with a really boomy voice, until they hear their playback and think they sound like a wimp! That's everyone's experience, but Bowie actually wanted me to *do* something about that. He's also got a terrible, terrible sibilance, another dental problem, and as the M160 is not as responsive to high frequencies as it is to lows it is a lot kinder to it. He sounds clear and warm with it, and I used that microphone throughout the *Young Americans* sessions of which about ninety percent were done live.

"He insisted on being in the room with the musicians playing flat out, so we had a special setup there which consisted of an M160 right on his mouth together with a whacky idea—which worked—of having another M160 about eight inches below. He was told purposely to just sing into the top one, and although both the bottom and the top ones were picking up the band, they were directly out of phase. That was the trick. The band was

continued on page 92

GOOD EARTH GEAR

Visconti swears by his Solid State Logic SL4048E 48-channel primary studio computer with total recall. His main monitors are Eastlakes (with JBL and Tad components) driven by two Studer A68 power amplifiers. His small monitors are Yamaha NS10Ms, Auratones and "Ear Openers." Tape machines consist of two Otari MTR-90 24-tracks (synchronized by a BTX Shadow); Otari MTR12 ½-inch (30 or 15 ips or 7½ ips); Studer A-80 ½-inch (30 or 15 ips); Studer A-80 ¼-inch (30 or 15 ips or 7½ ips); Sony PCM F1 digital; and two Studer A710 decks.

The mass of outboard equipment includes a Publison Infernal Machine 90, Lexicon 224XL, AMS 15-80s Stereo DDL and harmonizer, Quantec room simulator, EMT 140 echo plate, EMT Gold Foil (240) echo plate, Delta Lab DL2 DDL & DL1 DDL, Eventide "Instant Flanger," MXR autoflangers and autophasers, two Drawmer dual noise gates, two Urei 1176 compressor/limiters, Audio and Design "vocal stresser," Audio and Design stereo limiter, two Allison Gain Brains (NK1), two Allison Kepexes (MK1), "Scamp" rack with expander/gates, Orban 3 channel de-esser, Trident and Audio Design equalizers, and a Bokse SU-8 Universal Synchronizer.

MICK JONES

The Producer as Strongman: Foreigner, Van Halen, Bad Company

By J.D. Considine

ON THE WHOLE, FOREIGNER'S MICK Jones looks more like a manager than a rock guitarist. Perhaps it's the way he dresses, for his taste in clothes is casually expensive, running to open-necked silk shirts and loose, robe-like jackets; on the other hand, it might be his physical appearance, which tends toward well-tanned corpulence instead of the wraith-like pallor of most rock guitarists.

"I don't tend to think of myself as a sound specialist; I just like to discover things, play it by ear."

Or maybe it's just his manner, that combination of quiet confidence and expensive elocution that doesn't seem to jibe with Marshall stacks and ear-splitting power chords. Forget the "Jukebox Hero" routine—Mick Jones comes across as a take-charge kind of guy, the sort of strongman you wouldn't want to have to negotiate against.

Which, perhaps, explains why Jones is beginning to move into production. Mind you, he's not exactly a stranger to the field, having shared production credits on each of Foreigner's five albums. Lately, he's begun to seek work elsewhere, and hasn't done badly for a beginner. His first production credit came with Van Halen's *5150*, a quiet little project that shot straight up the charts, while his second project was overseeing a revamped Bad Company for the album *Fame And Fortune*.

Not a bad start, is it?

Jones unleashed a satisfied chuckle before pointing out that there are indeed disadvantages to starting out at the top. "I'd certainly be spoiled working with anybody else in the near future," he confessed. "I got a lot of satisfaction out of feeling our relationship begin to make sense, getting to know Eddie and Sammy and everyone. For part of the time, I started to feel I was in the band. It was a great feeling."

He paused for a moment, then added with a smile, "But it was nice, once I got finished with the album, to know that I didn't have to go on the road."

Considering that Jones had just gotten off a grueling tour with Foreigner when he arrived at 5150, Edward Van Halen's backyard studio, it's not hard to understand his relief. In fact, as he explained it, finishing the Foreigner tour was part of what delayed the Van Halen album.

"I was still on tour at the time, and they were in a hurry to get started, so a certain amount of it was under way when I joined the project." How did the pairing come about in the first place? "We bumped into each other last summer, just vaguely had a chat. Sammy and Eddie came to a party [Foreigner] had after the Garden show that we did last year, and, just barely above the noise, said, 'Yeah, we gotta get together.' I didn't know what we were going to talk about particularly at that point.

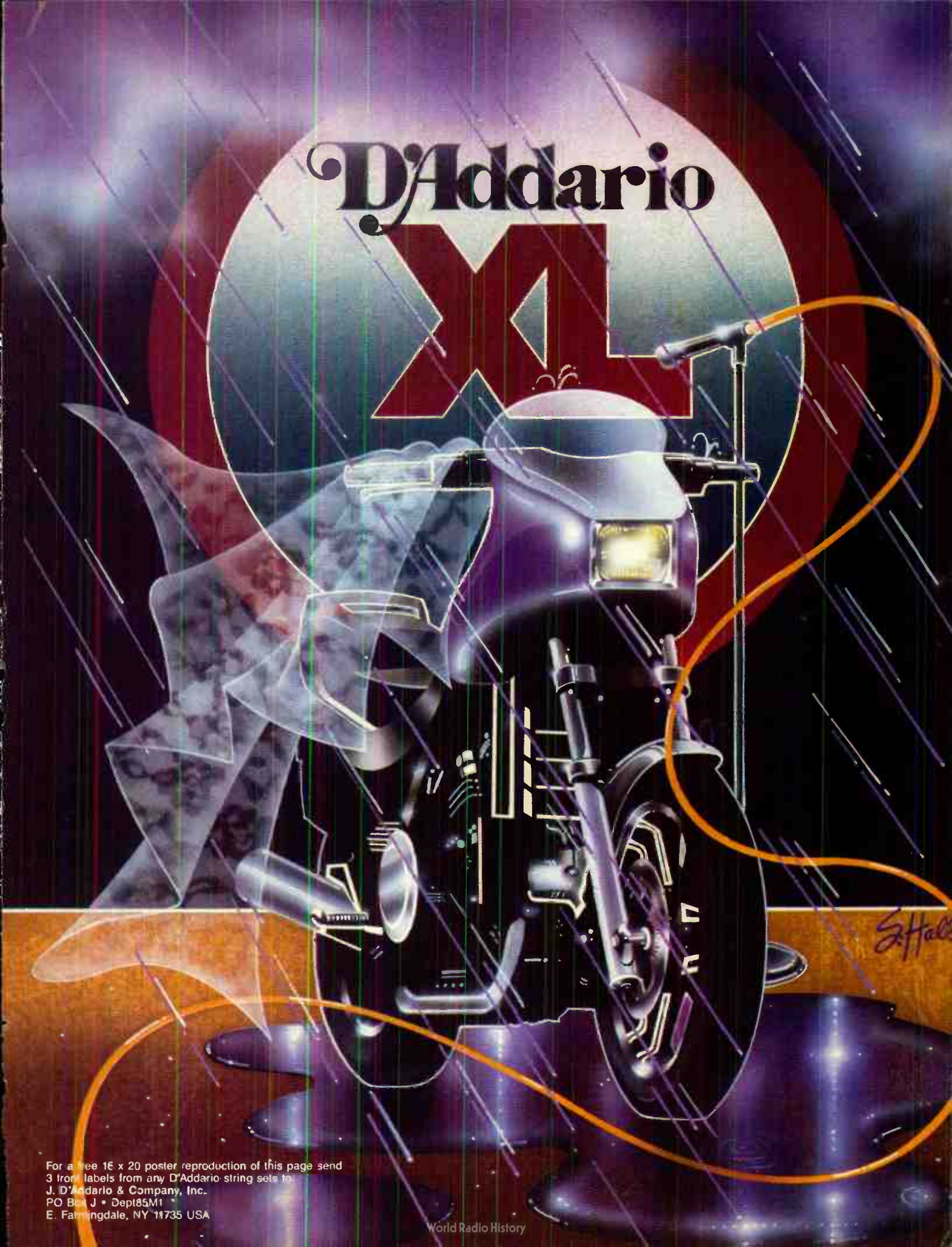
"A couple of months later, I sort of heard that interest had been shown in me perhaps working with them. I was on tour, and they asked me to come out and listen to some stuff. They played two tracks, maybe three, and I just sat there, blown away. It sounded like it could be pretty good, that it might really work."

Still, Jones admitted that he doesn't think either side "knew why we wanted to work together, exactly. It's just that we thought something good would come out of the collaboration. Just helping to achieve the album was the main thing I did, just helping them to do it, and learning myself what it is like to be involved in somebody else's world."

The first part of that meant coming to terms with 5150 itself. Unlike most modern studios, which try to take every technological advantage possible, Van Halen's workplace is essentially a demo studio run amok. As Jones described the place, only Donn Landee understood the electronics well enough to keep things working, and that made cooperation essential.

"Just through experimenting on different tracks, Donn and I found that we developed a sort of relationship," Jones said. "In the mixing stage especially, we exchanged ideas about sound and that sort of thing that he, having

PAUL COX LFI



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been working with the same producer for several years, hadn't thought of. I don't think of myself as a sound specialist; I like to discover things, play it by ear. So it's just suggestions of things, some things I'd tried before, some things I'd never tried before. And some things he hadn't tried.

"One of the refreshing things about the Van Halen album was the basic equipment we used," he added. "Like the 1969 Urei board, which I'd never seen before. The un-sophistication of the whole project was refreshing."

Technology, it seems, is not one of Jones' strong suits. "I like to keep aware of certain things, at least keep abreast of things," he said. "But I haven't really found myself in need of very much of it, and when I've used it, I've felt that there are still ways to achieve your goals with a limited amount of equipment, as opposed to having a tremendous amount at your disposal, and getting drowned out by the technology of the whole thing."

Consider, for example, his approach to vocals. After hearing me tell of a friend who'd spent hours with a top-line Lexicon one day trying to duplicate the vocal sound of Foreigner's *4*, Jones assumed his cat-who-ate-the-canary grin. "I can't remember what I did," he said, trying to look innocent but ultimately breaking into a laugh.

"No," he said, calming down, "to dispel any myths about that, I've been very fortunate to work with some great engineers. I know what I want to hear; I don't always know how to get it.

"It's a question of trial and error very often, but I like usually to try to use the most acoustical type of effects. In other words, you very rarely hear any of Lou's [Gramm] vocals coming directly through any kind of effect. I like to get it with a tape delay—a proper tape delay—and then alter that in certain ways, usually by doubling the vocals, or by eq. Almost never through an effect, through a Prime Time or a Lexicon. I like to use those things to enhance the general, overall

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FOREIGN PARTS

Mick's favorite outboard gear includes a Lexicon 224 XL, Quantec room simulator, Lexicon 200, Publison Infernal 90, AMS digital delay and reverb, Lexicon Prime Time, Yamaha REV 7, SPX-90, and Roland Dimension D. He's interested in the SynthAxe, plays the Synclavier occasionally, has a pre-production studio built around the Akai MG1212 mixer/recorder.

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troller is an easy way of adding mobility to your abilities. It's battery powered, touch-sensitive and will support all 128 program changes, even over two MIDI channels. The AZ-1 can be used to control any function of any MIDI instrument on the market by the use of ten controllers, five of which are user-definable. This allows you to customize its performance to match your set-up, no matter how your gear changes.

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HOME DIGITAL!

Affordable New Encoders Which Turn VCRs into Digital Mastering Decks

By Freff

EVEN IN LATE 1986, THERE IS STILL THE very real possibility that you've never heard of the Sony PCM-501ES, or such brothers-in-circuitry as the JVC VP-100 and the Sansui PC-X11. Digital audio processors, while not a secret, have not exactly been shouted about from the rooftops, either. But they deserve to be. And as a convert of nearly a year's standing I'll do anything in my power to make certain every one of you gets a shot at joining me in this brave new (and eminently affordable) world of audio thrills.

The key word in "digital audio processor" is "digital." As in digital recording, digital synthesizers, digital compact discs...all slightly different but related technologies based around the concept that—if you do it fast enough—even extraordinarily complicated sounds can be accurately represented by a simple pattern of 0's and 1's. Furthermore, you can do so without 99% of the problems that bedevil analog sound recording and reproduction, like wow, flutter, rumble, tape hiss, channel cross-talk, pre-echo, low dynamic and frequency ranges, generation loss...Sound good? Well, yes, that's precisely the point. Digital does. As anyone who has listened to a well-engineered compact disc on a halfway decent stereo knows.

First punchline: Would you like your master mixes to be CD-quality? Or do sound-on-sound dubs without grinding earlier tracks into the sonic dirt? That's what the combination of a digital audio processor and a decent VCR can do for you.

Second punchline: getting there will cost you less than a DX7. Even a DX7 on sale.

The nicest thing these eyes have beheld in recent times was when I walked into Manhattan's Martin Audio/Video and saw a Sony PCM-501ES digital audio processor inside the sales case. The nicest thing I've *heard* was a salesman telling me that this was no fluke, but a Sign of Changing Times: in response to audience demand Sony had shipped a year's supply into the States.

Year's supply? Hah! They deserve to sell out in a month. They very well may. So my best advice to all you home-recordists and demon demo-makers is that you get out there and get one. *Now.* (You can read the rest of this article on the way.)

Caveat: There are a few tradeoffs.

In basic terms, here's how the deal works. You buy a digital audio processor, pair it with a decent VCR (or two, for digital copies and the sound-on-sound game), and plug the processor into your system in place of the two-track or cassette deck you would typically use for mixdown. During recording, the audio signal you send to the processor is automatically filtered to remove frequencies greater than half the unit's sampling rate (which prevents aliasing noise), sampled many thousands of times a second (which turns the analog signal into 0's and 1's), analyzed and error-coded and shuffled seventeen ways from last Sunday (which turns it into a clever *imitation* of a standard NTSC video signal), and then sent to the VCR to be recorded onto videotape. That's a critical point, and worth remembering. With a digital audio processor the sound is recorded on the tape's single wide video track, *not* the two narrow audio tracks—as far as the VCR is concerned, you're just sending it another TV program. On playback the process is reversed: Circuitry in the processor reshuffles the 0's and 1's to make up for the time-slicing and time-compression that was necessary to get them onto videotape in the first place, corrects for errors and tape dropouts, and converts the digital data into analog audio, splitting the signal back into left and right channels and filtering to

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remove any digital artifacts (such as false harmonics and noise) that may have been accumulated in processing.

The result is great sound, with a dynamic range like nothing you have ever heard in your own studio, and the capacity to make direct digital-to-digital transfers with zero generation loss. Instruments that can be recorded direct literally couldn't sound any better, not even in the best recording studio in the world. And instruments that have to be miked...well, best use quality microphones and brush up on your placement theory, because a digital audio processor is going to hand everything back to you, including the stuff you do wrong. My studio is a one-room affair. Since getting the Sony PCM-501ES my life has become a quest to obliterate every creak, squeak, rattle, pop and sympathetic vibraion in the place. Do you want to know what my noise floor is now, for microphone tracks? *The transformer hum from the dbx 180 noise reduction units.* It's so quiet a sound that a whisper will obscure it; but crank up the playback from a PCM-501ES and there it is. I find myself in the position of having to design an acoustic baffle for my noise-reduction gear. Is that ironic, or what?

That incredible clarity is tradeoff #1. If anything in your audio chain is below par, be it a synth with some high-frequency distortion or a grainy DDL or an echo bus on your mixing board with crunched headroom, you are going to hear it. And, eventually, be irritated by it. (I speak from experience.) A corollary is that mediocrity can be as irksome as outright badness. More than one synth voicing or sample that sounded fine when obscured by a slight mist of tape hiss has been revealed for the lifeless clunker that it was, especially when placed side-by-side with the timbral complexity of a digitally-recorded acoustic instrument.

Both these problems can be solved with some thought, sweat, imagination (for improving sounds), and money (for hardware replacement or modification). But you're just going to have to live, at least for a time, with the tradeoffs that result from using videotape for a recording medium.

First, there's the matter of dropouts. Digital audio processors are deliberately designed to handle a lot of data errors and missing information without hiccuping—the current generation of the technology is particularly good at this—but there are limits. When those limits are exceeded you don't get steady, hissy, analog-type noise: you get sudden, abrupt, unmistakable *glartches*, and a more unpleasant sound is difficult to imagine. Commonest cause of the glartches? Tape dropout, i.e., flaking of the videotape caused by friction between tape and the VCR's rotating head. (That stuff is moving at a rate equivalent to 18 feet per second, which makes the average 15 ips tape deck seem a little tame.) To fight the glartches, do any or all of the following: Buy the highest-quality videotape you can, buy the highest-quality VCR you can (in terms of tape transport), run the VCR at its highest speed, tweak the tracking optimization control on the digital audio processor, and—if your processor offers you the choice—record using the 14-bit mode.

Tradeoff #2 is that there is no such thing, in this setup, as a separate monitor head. Recording becomes a two-step process: You do a take, then you listen to it. If a dropout happened to occur you'll just have to grit your teeth and try again. (Or maybe not. Sometimes you'll hear a glartch because of a dropout during playback, as opposed to one that happened during recording. In my experience those don't necessarily repeat; apparently because tape in the

continued on page 92

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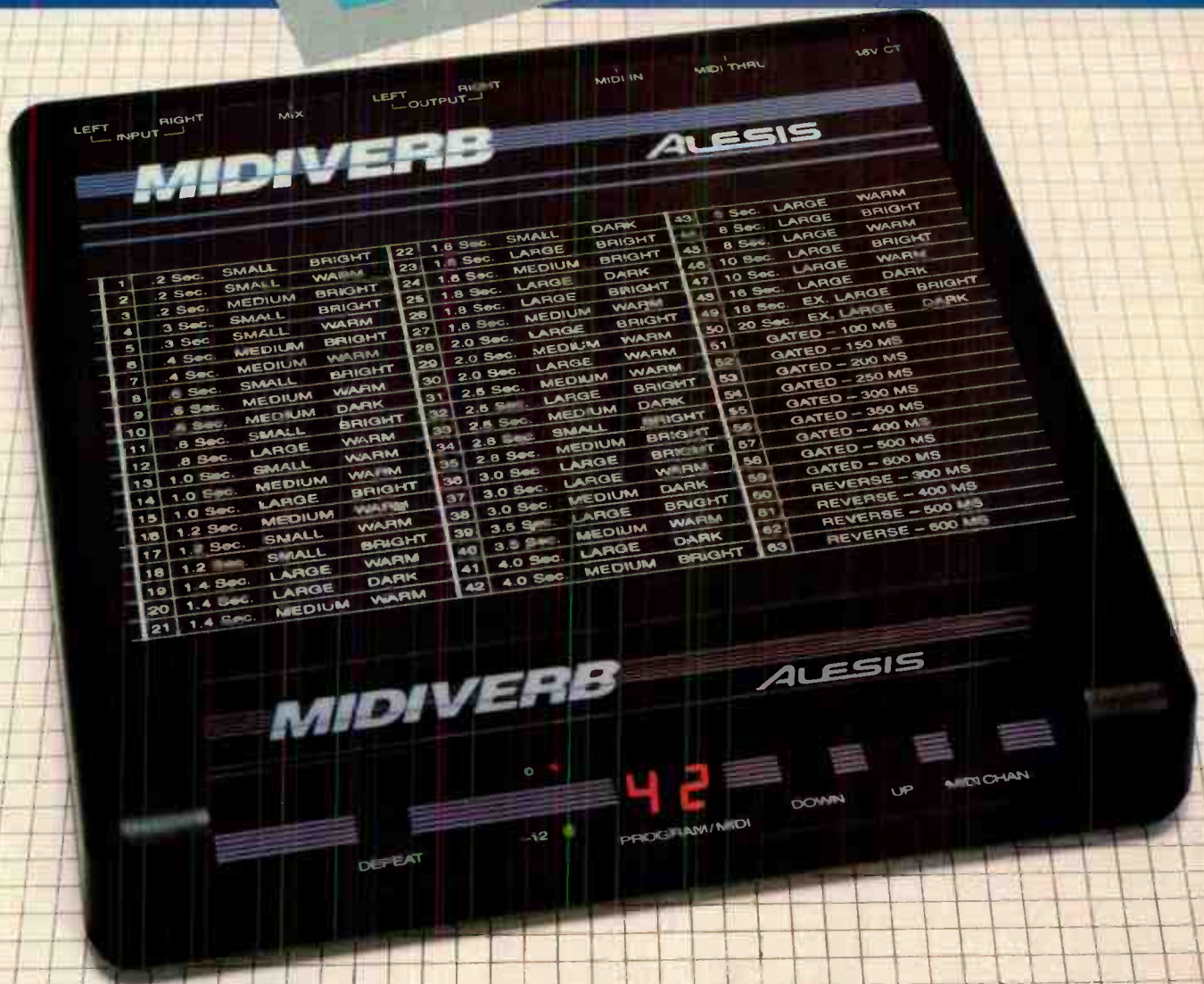

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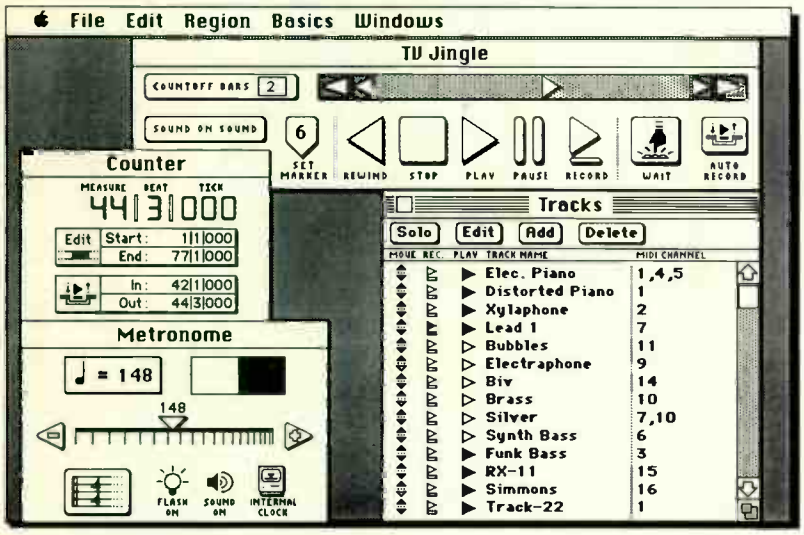
SOFTWARE CITY

New Mac Sequencers from Opcode and Mark of the Unicorn

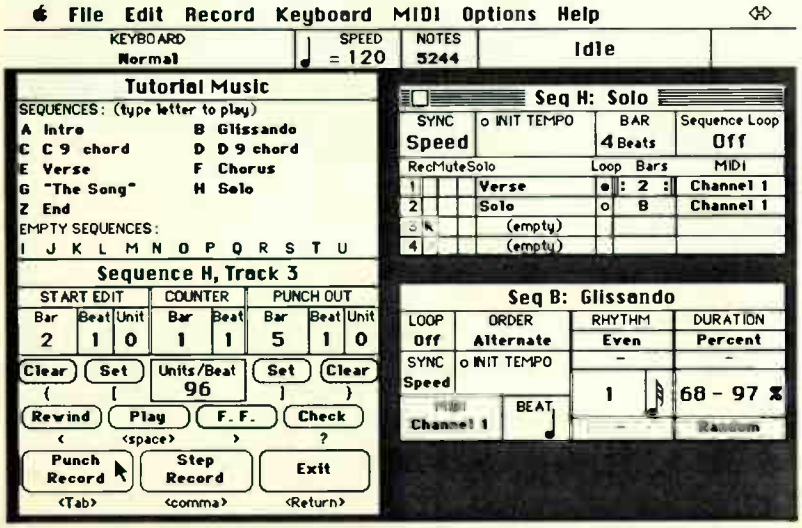
By David Barnett

THE WORLD OF MIDI, ESPECIALLY MIDI computer software, has grown incredibly over the last few years. There was a time when it was a challenge to find a product that did what you needed to get done. Happily those days have passed, and today's music world is flooded with more and more gizmos that seem to do more than we ever could have imagined in the first place! The challenge is no longer to find anything that works, but to find the thing (synth, computer, software, etc.) that does what you want to do the way you want to do it.



Different keystrokes for different folks: (above) Mark of the Unicorn's Performer; (below) Opcode's MIDIMAC sequencer.

Two pieces of MIDI software for the Apple Macintosh computer, **Performer** from **Mark of the Unicorn** and the **MidiMac Sequencer** from **Opcode**, are good examples of similar though contrasting products. Both are strong packages, yet they handle music in two distinct ways. One keeps the music in a linear format. One file, one composition. The other can store independent music segments in one file, to be assembled or re-ordered at will. It is up to the user to determine which works the best.



Performer

Performer is a full-featured MIDI recorder, with extensive access to the MIDI data, both through a wide variety of filtering functions and through the raw data itself. The operation of the program is patterned after the operation of an actual tape recorder. The primary controls are laid out in areas on the screen, called "windows" in Mac parlance. One window encloses the tape controls, with on-screen buttons for Play, Record, Rewind, etc. Another acts as a glorified "tape counter," used both for keeping track of where you are at any moment, but also for setting a time "region" for edit and filter functions. Another is the Metronome, another a Track Sheet. All very recognizable.

The tape recorder analogy holds when you start recording your music. You hit Record and start playing. The tape keeps running until you hit Stop. Your piece is kept in one long song file, an electronic piece of Ampex 456. The only way to edit the structure of the piece is to get out your electronic razor blade, and get into a splicing state of mind.

Using the counter, you establish a start and end point for your splice, cut the section, and paste it back in somewhere. There are a few choices you have to make when planning this procedure. If the segment is supposed to precisely replace another section of the piece, then just define the start point and paste away. The original music will be gone. If you want to overlay, or overdub, the segment on other music, then use the Merge command. If the segment is to be inserted into the piece without losing any music, you must first slide all the music after the insert point through time to leave enough blank "tape" to insert your splice on. If you want to hear an alternate arrangement of your composition, then you have to go through the entire procedure again.

The linear design of Performer is fine for people who know how their piece will sound from beginning to end. If, on the other hand, you enjoy rearranging your music and hearing

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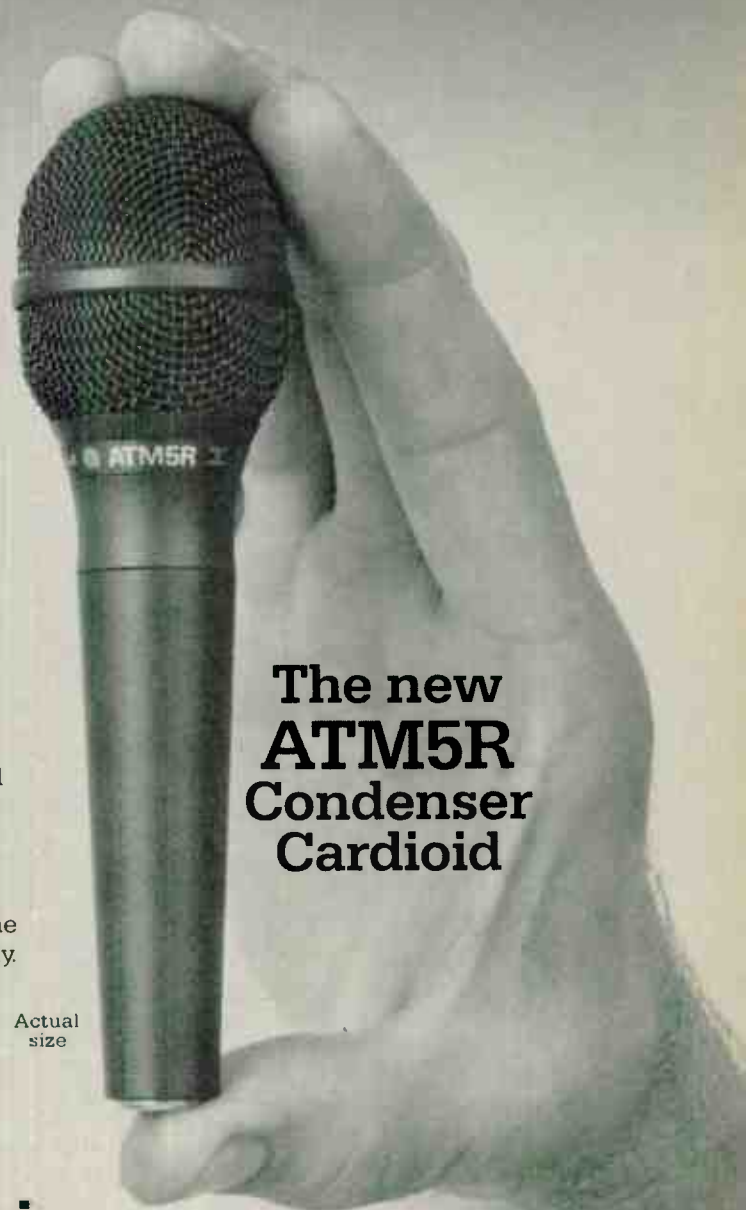
Handling and cable noise are also better controlled than with most microphones. And the small size of the ATM5R means less bulk between you and the audience.

You know how great you sound in the studio. Now you can put that same sound on the road. Test sing the ATM5R at your Audio-Technica sound specialist today.



The new ATM5R Condenser Cardioid

Actual size

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variation after variation, then a modular sequencer would be your choice.

MidiMac Sequencer

Opcode has designed their sequencer program to be extremely flexible about combining segments of music. A single file can actually contain twenty-six separate segments, which can either be a complete piece, or building blocks of a larger composition.

Each segment, or sequence, is a totally distinct unit to start. Each sequence is assigned a letter name, A to Z, hence the 26-sequence limit. To record music in a sequence, tape recorder-type screen buttons control the action. Each sequence is made up of tracks assigned to a MIDI channel. It is possible to merge tracks into one Multi-MIDI track which can play out over multiple MIDI channels.

Once a sequence is entered, then the fun begins. The easiest way to play a sequence is to simply hit the sequence's assigned letter on the computer keyboard. It will immediately start playing, and if any of its component tracks have loops assigned, they will loop continually. This is a great way to try out different arrangements of a tune. Assign the verse to sequence "A," the bridge to "B," and so on. Then you can trigger the sequences in any order by hitting their letter keys. In addition, you can use your synth keyboard to trigger sequences with transpositions. When a sequence is playing, hitting the "D" above middle "C" will start the sequence a whole step up from where it was recorded. Once you have an arrangement that pleases you, then you can assemble it in a "conductor" sequence. This conductor sequence contains no music data at all, only sequence calls. If you want a new arrangement, just construct a new conductor sequence. Each can be saved as one of the 26 sequences in a song file. [*Seasoned C-64 users will note this system first appeared on Dr. T's Keyboard Controlled Sequencer.*]

All Things to All People?

There are many other features that Performer and Sequencer share, including step time entry and various sync options. They also both have the ability to export information to notation software for high-quality printout of the music. Of course they both have features the other lacks. For instance, Performer can be told to quantize a 5- against 7-tuplet, or any other tuplet for that matter. It also has excellent filter functions, such as copying only the bottom note of a piano part to construct a separate bass track with. Opcode's Sequencer has a "generated" sequence mode which acts as a super-charged arpeggiator. With care it can generate some stunning effects. Redirecting MIDI output can be done with a few global commands, saving the changing of MIDI output assignments in every track of each sequence.

Given all that, the final decision on which to use will probably depend on how you record your music. If you have the entire piece composed in your head, ready to be played straight through top to bottom, then Performer, with its ability to fine-tune individual performance parameters, is the obvious choice. On the other hand, if you think of a studio as a workshop, the MidiMac Sequencer will give you the power to repeatedly tear down and rebuild your music on the conceptual level, while modestly insulating you from those annoying bits and bytes of the MIDI code.

In conclusion, when you are ready to put out your hard-earned cash for a music program, first carefully analyze what you plan to do with it, and find the software which most closely matches your style of working. M

0-120 in 3.6 seconds

If you're interested in a high-performance synth, it's time to test drive an Ensoniq ESQ-1 Digital Wave Synthesizer. It puts 120 sounds at your fingertips as fast as you can switch it on and plug in a cartridge. But that's only the beginning.

In addition to standard synthesizer waveforms, the ESQ-1 features complex multi-sampled waves for a total of 32 waveforms on board. Each of the ESQ-1's 8 voices uses 3 digital oscillators with the ability to assign a different waveform to each oscillator. That's thousands of distinct sonic possibilities.

The ESQ-1 is simple to program because it lets you see what's really going on inside. Its 80-character lighted display shows ten programs or parameters simultaneously. So you'll spend less time writing down numbers and more time laying down music.

A built-in 8-track polyphonic sequencer makes the ESQ-1 an ideal MIDI studio. Each track can play internal voices, external MIDI instruments, or a combination of both. And each track can be assigned a separate program and MIDI channel. Like any good studio, the ESQ-1 can auto-correct timing, auto-locate passages and balance individual tracks during mixdown.

You can build songs made up of 30 different sequences and store them internally, externally on tape or on 3.5" diskettes using the Mirage Sampling Keyboard or Multi-Sampler.

If controlling other MIDI instruments is on your list of priorities, the ESQ-1 puts you in the driver's seat. It supports poly, omni and mono modes along with Ensoniq's multi and overflow modes that extend the MIDI capability of the ESQ-1 far beyond ordinary synths. You won't ever have to leave the comfort of its 61-note weighted, velocity sensitive keyboard to play any MIDI instrument in your setup.

Comparable high performance digital waveform synthesizers and MIDI sequencers can easily exceed the legal limits of your cash on hand. But the good news is that the ESQ-1 comes from Ensoniq—at a sane price of just $1395. For a glimpse of technology that's earned the name "advanced", put an ESQ-1 through its paces at your authorized Ensoniq dealer today.

Synthesizer

8-voice polyphonic and polytimbral
32 synthesized and sampled waveforms
40 internal, 80 cartridge programs
80-character lighted display
Each voice features:
3 digital oscillators
3 multi-waveform LFO's
4-pole analog filters
15 routable modulation sources
4 complex envelope generators

Sequencer

8 polyphonic tracks
Auto-correct, auto-locate, step edit
Internal storage—2400 notes
Expandable to 10,000 notes

MIDI

Poly, omni, multi and mono modes
MIDI Overflow Mode for slaving units
8 simultaneous polyphonic channels
MIDI remote programming
MIDI guitar controller compatible

Although you should always fasten your seat belt when playing the ESQ-1, you don't have to wear a helmet or obey the 55mph speed limit. ESQ-1 and Mirage are trademarks of ENSONIQ Corp.

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DEVELOPMENTS

The Latest Word from the Ongoing World of Studio and Reinforcement Technology

By Jock Baird

THE WORLD MAY NOT NEED AN IMproved dynamic microphone or a new reinforcement system, but in an industry which puts such a heavy premium on technological innovation, these can be important indicators of a company's health and welfare. Thus did **Electro-Voice** under president Robert Pabst embark on two top-secret projects with code names right out of Ian Fleming: "Thunderbolt" and "Venus."

Thunderbolt involved the age-old problem of getting more concert sound out of less cabinet space. Obviously an arena reinforcement situation needs more than one set of drivers on each side, but could multiple drivers share the same cabinet without a big frontal area? Wouldn't that create all kinds of horrendous phase cancellations and frequency gridlocks? Thunderbolt's head engineer David Carlson elected to use something he called manifold technology, which is essentially the same thing as your car's intake and exhaust system: One big pipe carries gas and air to several cylinders for combustion, then several more pipes carry away the fumes linking up to form one exhaust pipe.

"Thunderbolt": the beefy bass section of Electro-Voice's Manifold Technology reinforcement system, the MT-4 (below) "Venus": the N/D dynamic mike series

Here the idea was to gang up multiple drivers and have them share the same exit, still creating the same sound pressure levels, as if each driver were pointing the same way, but taking advantage of a tighter pattern control. The E-V engineers came up with a four-way system, with all four frequency divisions using four drivers—hoo boy, thirty two drivers in two 3-foot x 6-foot stacks. Last March, they brought the system to the AES show at Montreux and cranked it to 130 decibels with no audible distortion, causing something of a sensation. Carlson also claims the bass cabinet is actually more efficient at the bottom end than a folded horn design. Now named the MT-4, the system will hold court again at the Los Angeles AES show in November, joined by "Venus."

Venus was code for the next generation of dynamic microphones for Electro-Voice, who have hitherto put their research muscle into condenser mikes. Venus project head Al Watson felt it was time to look at more powerful magnet materials, and fell upon the rare earth element neodymium, which despite across-the-board magnetic advantages, was not commercially available. In fact, they were unable to even get a piece of the alloy they came up with for months, causing them to build more extensive computer models and holographic analysis than most product designers. The more powerful magnet material, dubbed N/DYM, favored all kinds of interesting changes, especially the use of a larger voice coil and diaphragm. That gave noticeable improvements in sensitivity, signal-to-noise ratio, high-end and transient response, with less feedback and distortion.

The Venus team also had to redesign the geometry of the magnet and case, since the magnet itself was considerably smaller. While they were at it, they went ahead and renovated the shock mount system (even the handle) and tossed in some pre-entrance acoustic equalizers. The resulting N/D Series will probably find its core use in concert reinforcement, but there'll be plenty of studio advantages too. The top-of-the-line N/D757 costs about a hundred bucks less than its model number, with 457, 357 and 257 models. Then there are the N/D408 and 308, which are mounted on a yoke for tighter instrument miking. It's more than possible that E-V's N/DYN alloy will find other applications in the audio industry, and that's the kind of market leadership that makes the big price tags for research offensives like these worth it.

This month's next new technology entry is not brand-new—the **Axxess MIDI Mapper** first appeared about six months ago—but a new revision has just appeared that offers a good excuse to talk about it. Why would you need a mapper, especially a $900 one? What does it do, exactly? Pretty much everything you ever wanted a MIDI system to do. For instance, it will split and layer your keyboard, sending different zones

Otari goes digital: the 32-track DTR-900

Point Source Monitors for Point Blank Truth.

FOSTEX RP TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to sound, some people get a little funny about the point blank truth, in that they don't want to hear it.

They've come to expect that low end bump around 200 Hz because it makes the kick drum punchier, or they like the phase irregularities of the typical tweeter because the highs are all tst-tst.

At Fostex, we believe that truth is stronger than fiction. That's why we made the RM-Series. Point Source. Phase Coherent. Near Field.

They are reference monitors. They tell you exactly what you have and let you hear precisely what you're doing. Period. With neither apologies nor pamperings. Just the point blank truth.

What's more, when you mix with RM-765s or 780s, tape playback remains relatively the same from studio mains, to home stereo to car.

How many times have you heard just the right sound on a mix, only to find a completely different sound when you hear the tape on other monitors?

When you work with sound, you need a truthful reference. One that lets you hear the misses as well as the hits.

We encourage you to audition these Fostex reference monitors with a known source. Because we're confident that you'll know the truth when you hear it.

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RM-765/780

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to different channels. You can set a velocity threshold to channelize MIDI data depending on how hard you play—if you hit hard, you'll activate a sharper piano sample, for instance. It can rescale velocity information, or strip it off and make it constant, turning it into a MIDI mixer. It can turn one note into a ten-note, multi-channel chord (it has room for 880 note reassignments), and will even let you use a controller to change the harmony of the chord.

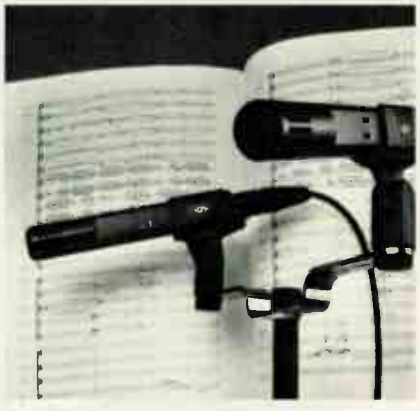
The MIDI spec actually has thirty-two possible continuous controllers, even though most keyboards have just a pitch and mod wheel, aftertouch, a foot pedal and maybe a breath controller. The Mapper allows you to do weird things like make one controller control another (called cross-modulating) in all manner of combinations—it'll slave up to sixteen! They can send system exclusive parameters, channel assignments, harmonizations, and virtually any MIDI message up to 17 bytes long. The Mapper also lets you assign the MIDI spec's 32 MIDI switches, as well as any note-on on the keyboard and even some common panel buttons. There's room for 128 different maps, and 64 chain map chains. And when a map changes, the last one is "turned off," returning you to a standard setup before the next map is initialized. It's high-tech minimal: there are only two menu buttons on the unit (available as a rack-mount or stand-alone box) and everything else is done on your keyboard. This machine is definitely on the new frontier, not just for onstage keyboard performers, but for turning MIDI studios into powerhouses.

Most of the rest of the pre-AES gossip comes in the form of singles, bunts and stolen basses. Mike activity seems the most prevalent, with **Sennheiser**'s new condenser MKH 40 P48 (cardioid) and MKH 20 P48 (omnidirectional) leading the pack. Sennheiser was particularly interested in getting transducer noise out for digital recording, and tried some new approaches to the problem. They combined a system of symmetrical transducers that used two stators (instead of the usual single one) with a radio frequency modulation design that replaces conventional polarizing voltage schemes for converting acoustical sound to electrical energy. The MKH 20 and 40 each cost $696, and are getting strong reviews.

Another condenser mike offensive is from **Yamaha**, who used beryllium to make a more rigid diaphragm—the rare metal's enhanced rigidity gives the so-called MZ Series a much-extended high-end capability. Yamaha also developed a new damping and three-point suspension system, and gold-plated the connectors.

The big-bucks world of digital multitrack decks has a new addition from **Otari**. It's the 32-track PD format DTR-900, complete with integral metering. Don't ask what it costs.... In less rarified price ranges, **Fostex** has taken the innovations in its E-2 and E-22 mixdown decks and applied them to the B-16 (ergo the E-16) and a new ¼-inch 8-track with 10-inch reels, the $4300 E-8. What innovations, you might well ask. Well, more sophisticated transports, 2-position auto-locate and auto play/repeat setups, and reduced sync crosstalk. Fostex also has a new computer SMPTE editing system designed to be used with their 4030 synchronizer. It's called F.A.M.E., and is so far only out on the Apple, with Mac and IBM versions on the way.

Other renovations included **Akai**'s new version of the MG-1212, numbered the MG1214. There are better faders and mike inputs, more headroom and headphone output, and a jack to hook up to any SMPTE synchronizer.... **Tascam** also did some upgrading of their own on their acclaimed Porta One 4-track cassette recorder, adding two more mixing channels, 4-channel record capability, a stereo effects system and a special tape sync fuinction. Tascam also has some new pro cassette decks, the 112 and 112R (the latter has a 16-pin connector



Sennheiser MKH 20 P48

in the back to sync two decks together) and even a CD player, the CD-501.

Mixer madness includes a new 16 x 2 rack-mount mixer from **Biamp**, the Rackmax. For a surprising $1900, each channel has 48-volt phantom power, three effects sends, pre- and post-eq, a solo system and full metering capability. Perhaps not uncoincidently, it's a hundred bucks cheaper than the new 16-channel version of the Fostex 450 mixer.... With Series 200B mixers popping up in thousands of stage and studio setups, **Soundcraft** has done yet another version, the Series 200SR specializing in reinforcement situations. They come in 8, 16 and 24-channel sizes, with each channel sporting 4-band eq, four auxiliary sends, phantom power and

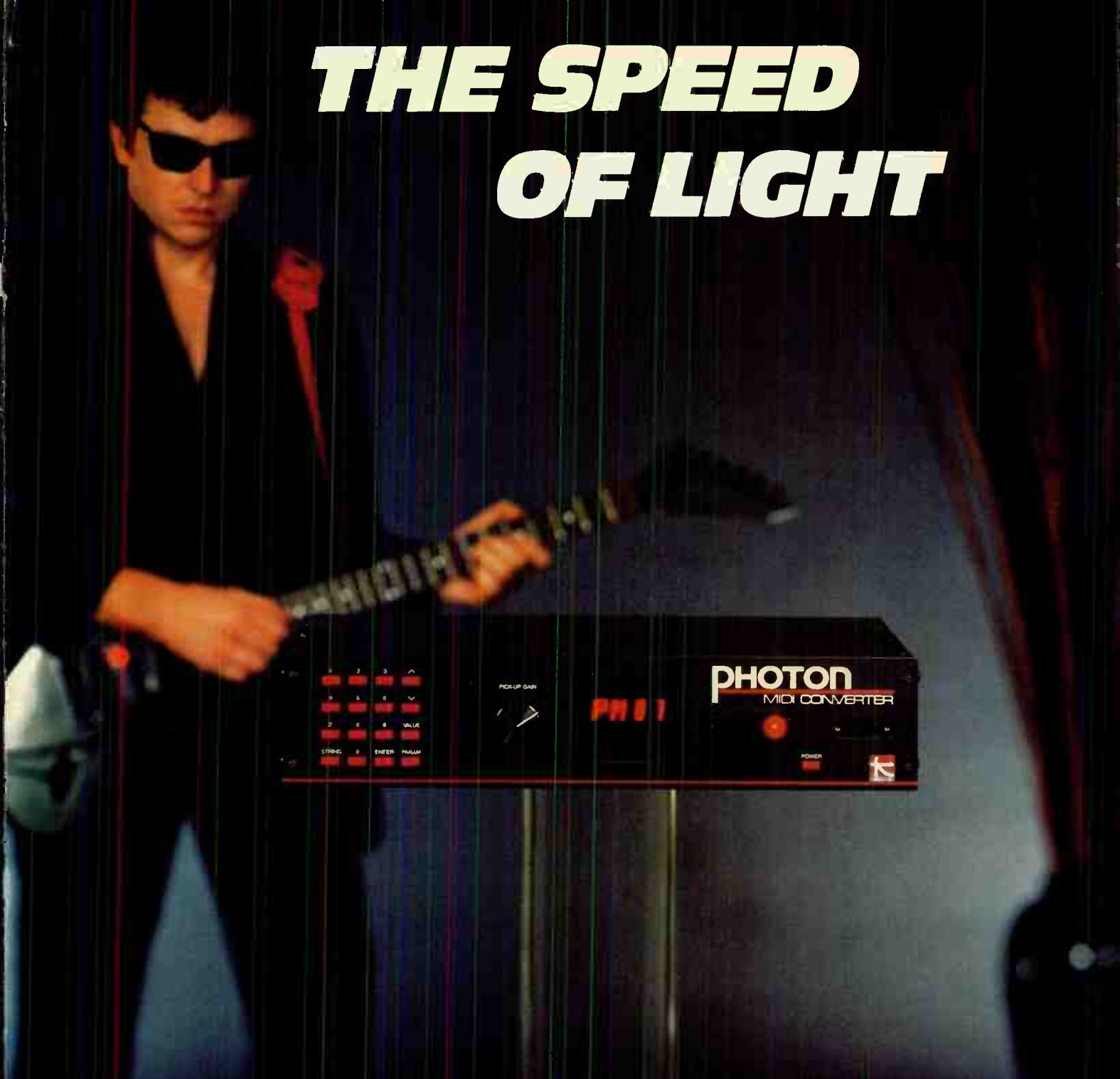
continued on page 44

APPLE'S IIGS FACE-LIFT

With all manner of Ataris, Amigas, C-128s and IBM clones taking the shine off the old faithful but lately less than competitive **Apple** IIe, a viable update was long overdue. Here it is at last, and what an update it is! It's called the Apple IIGS, GS for graphics and sound, both of which are improved by a quantum leap. The sonic part of this is due to a special chip made for Apple by **Ensoniq**—the very same 32-oscillator job (with its own dedicated 64K of RAM) that's on the Mirage and the ESQ1. The computer now has 256K of memory, with another 128K of ROM for the Macintosh-like operating system (complete with pull-down windows) and communications chip. There's also eight expansion slots, an interface for both 5¼-inch and 3½-inch disk drives, and joystick and mouse ports. (What, no MIDI port?)

The Apple IIGS will retail for an even grand (not counting monitor), while an upgrade for a current IIe (available in early '87) will run you $500. The IIGS will in most cases be compatible with existing Apple peripherals and software, of which there's a pantload, but software developers are already adapting their existing Apple programs to take advantage of all these new improvements. One product tie-in comes from **Bose**, who adapted its RoomMate speakers to work with the new Apple—they plug right into the IIGS's stereo headphone pin jack, sound wonderful, and cost only $229. It's a whole new ballgame in Appleland.

THE SPEED OF LIGHT



Racing through the heavens at 186,000 miles per second is nothing for a beam of light. In fact, we take light for granted. But when this marvel of nature is harnessed and put to musical use, it's worth noting. That's what K-Muse has done, with the **PHOTON MIDI CONVERTER**. Instead of antiquated magnetic pickups or switched frets, the patented **PHOTON** pickup emits a beam of infrared light across each individual string, then transmits and converts the string's frequency, amplitude and other parameters into a MIDI signal faster than the blink of an eye! Until now, guitar-to-MIDI conversion has been slow, unpredictable and even unusable. But not with the **PHOTON MIDI CONVERTER**. It tracks and plays the way you do...*fast!* What's more, the **PHOTON MIDI CONVERTER** is only the beginning of a growing system which can be updated and expanded simply by plugging in a program cartridge. And you don't have to buy a special, strange-looking/strange-feeling guitar, either. The **PHOTON** light-emitting pickup will mount on many of the standard guitars and basses on the market today...probably even yours!

So if it's accuracy, response and reliability you're looking for, try the **PHOTON MIDI CONVERTER** at your local music store and experience *the speed of light.*

K-MUSE, INC

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BELL from page 57

for the type of boring one-chord vamps that are currently passing themselves off as songs, but in Bell's nimble hands, madly chaining away his two or three bars, there's nothing boring about it. He proceeds to build three extraordinary song sections in the space of fifteen minutes, with no trace of machine feel. Rather than building, say, an eight-bar sequence, Bell will take his two bars and loop them, then go right on to do other tracks in their shortest possible repeat schemes: The bass part may also be a two-bar loop, the melody sixteen bars, the drums four. He really *is* working at the "speed of thought," slipping in blank bars of drum fills or stray repeats of a bar to throw off our pattern recognition.

Bell and the Itty Bitty MIDI Committee have several other key concepts, including "Rhythm of the Word," a scheme for developing song parts that are derived from the same spoken rhythmic multiples, and something they call "Transparent Rhythm." But perhaps the most provocative discovery of the IBMC is their banishment of the dreaded MIDI lag ("It's a drag") using Omni Mode. They do their first recordings in Mode 3, with each instrument listening on its own channel, then they go back and zone and map the sequences and the keyboards so that the whole system can run in Omni, or Mode 1. Bell claims this completely eliminates MIDI delay. Like many of his ideas, this technique mixes complexity with a powerful simplicity. Does it work? I dunno; try it on your own.

Perhaps Bell's theories of Magnificent Simplicity would be more impressive if he hadn't already admitted that the system has proven financial benefits. After all, isn't this just a more sophisticated way of watering down difficult or daring music for public consumption? "No, no, no, it works," Bell reassures. "It's really arranging, making things in order. Most of the stars in the universe don't run into each other, you don't see the sun running into the moon. You don't see chaos in creation until there's a disturbance in it, which is misunderstood a lot of times. Thunder and lightning are really a gift, you know. The ionization of the air and the thunder say, 'Run for cover, it's going to rain and replenish the earth.' But thunder's misinterpreted many times, like an agony sound, almost like birth pains, but it's a beautiful part of the whole. All we're doing is taking out the part that's misunderstood to get to the crystallization, the Kendallization, the Ibreality, the Weber-magic. Because our early music was more struggling and trying to get out of there to this point."

Like the blues? "No blues, no blues. I mean, blues is fine, but what the blues artist was expressing at that time was oppression. They just couldn't say it directly—which a lot of times you still can't say, because you have to deal with the commercial element. Especially for those who write lyrics.

"What we're really talking about is the art form. Suppose I'm going to make a painting and I take a fresh bucket of paint, and throw it all over that wall—RRRRRRR. Then another—RRRRR. And so on. And this is my next creation, ladies and gentlemen! And you say, 'Uhhh,' and the people say, 'Uhhhh.' Is this art? Is this concern for the art form? Okay, you can't do that. So this time you take a paintbrush and start to paint, paint this color so it doesn't run into the next color. It's the same picture, without it being splattered over the wall, right? Then you do it with tiles. It's the same, but it's becoming more and more organized and clarified, until it gets to its appointed state of clarification and that will be the end. Close the book. Okay, now let's do something else."Ⓜ

The Latest Page in Audio History.

1877: The microphone is invented.

Developed by Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison and Emile Berliner, it was patterned after the human ear itself. The first of many attempts to capture sound as we really hear it—a goal that took more than a century to realize.

1896: The first synthesizer.

Thaddeus Cahill's Telharmonium weighed 200 tons! A touch-sensitive keyboard drove a complex labyrinth of motors, pulleys and alternators.

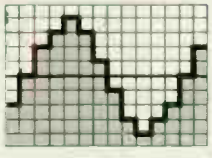
1924: The dynamic loudspeaker.

The design first developed by Chester W. Rice and Edward W. Kellog has changed very little over the years. But today's broad frequency bands and increasingly complex audio signals are challenging the loudspeaker like it's never been challenged before.

1925: The vacuum tube amplifier.

The collective work of Edison, John Flemming and Lee DeForest. Transistors later came to replace tubes, but audiophiles have never been entirely satisfied with what they heard.

1958: The advent of digital.



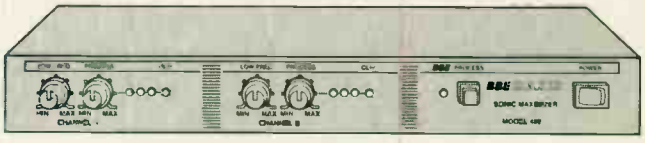
Working at Bell Telephone Laboratories, Max Matthews developed a computer program for creating and storing audio waveforms as digital data. Today, digital technology is widely available to musicians and consumers through innovations like user sampling devices and CD players. To hear the sound, however, it's still necessary to translate it back into the analog domain. And that's where problems develop.

1978: The BBE breakthrough.

When you put a power amp and a loudspeaker together, something has always been lost in the interface. That's where phase and amplitude distortion develop, due to "miscommunication" between amp and speaker. And that's why amplified sound has never had the dimension, depth and realism that the human ear can hear all around it in nature. That is until Bob Crooks made an important discovery—BBE. BBE is the vital "missing link" between amplifier and speaker. It analyzes the action of both—automatically and on a continual basis. It applies the phase and amplitude correction that's needed to make the sound come through the way you and nature intended it. The difference is easy to hear. Improved low-end definition and punch. Cleaner high-end transients. Better mid-range presence. *In short, unprecedented clarity.*

1984: BBE on stage.

Major P.A. companies like Stanal Sound and Best Audio made BBE part of their touring systems. And when the entertainment industry



gathers for such events as the Grammies and the Academy Awards, BBE is there, making sure the sound is as special as the occasion itself.

1985: BBE in the studio.

Award winning producer Steve Levine joined forces with the Beach Boys and teamed them up with BBE for an all-digital recording session for CBS/Caribou. *"BBE is to digital what equalizers were to analog,"* said Levine. *"I can't imagine ever recording without BBE again."*

1986: BBE today.

Wherever sound is amplified, recorded or broadcast, there's room for the BBE improvement. Because at the end of the line, we still have the loudspeaker that made big news back in 1924. Which is why you need BBE more than ever. Visit your BBE dealer for a demonstration. To find a BBE dealer near you call today toll-free at 1-800-233-8346. In California, 1-800-558-3963. And start making some history of your own.

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Barcus-Berry Electronics, Inc.

JONES from page 64

sound of the rest of the track."

Jones puts an awful lot of emphasis on the vocal mike as well. Curiously, though, he can't remember which mike it is that he prefers. "I can't, to tell you the truth. We did change once or twice the last time." A look of embarrassment crossed his face. "It would be good for me to remember these things," he added, laughing at himself. "I have them noted down."

In any case, the mike even outweighs acoustic considerations. As Jones put it, the room is "not really that important, really. It's the proximity and the direction the mike is attacked at. Seventy-five percent of the vocals on the last album were done in the control room, with headphones. That worked very well."

The other major consideration for Jones is the drum sound. "The basis of a track for me is getting the drums right," he said. "I start from there—at all costs, get the drum track right. And usually, it's a combination of sound and performance. The basic drum sound has to be able to stand right from the moment the tracks are put down."

Why? "The sound is part of the mood at that point, and it has to be pretty close. I mean, the snare drum has to sound decent. You know that you can embellish it, but as far as changing it drastically, I don't really like to do that. If, at some point, you feel that it's totally wrong, you might as well go back and do the whole track over again."

Because Alex Van Halen was using a Simmons kit on *5150*, along with a Tama snare and Paiste cymbals, getting a "live" drum sound took a bit of doing. Jones claimed to have gone after an "ambient" sound, and when asked how that was possible with electronic drums, answered, "Well, you have them coming through an amplifier in the room."

He laughed, then added, "But that's Donn Landee's familiarity with the way the band is. It just so happens that the room is an amazing little room, and Alex spends a lot of time working on his sound. I was amazed to see how conscientious he is about his sound. It's just flat out, a lot of it, but it's also ambience in the room, picking that up as well."

Taking Landee's lead, Jones made much use of the Quantec room simulator to round out the acoustics. But, he says, the trickiest bit involved dealing with microphone bleed on Alex's tracks.

Mike bleed *on a Simmons?!?*

"It's because they're so loud in the studio," Jones said patiently. "You're not just taking a direct signal to the board. But Alex does play extremely loud. Too loud for any normal human being, or any seasoned sound person. It's just *so* loud. And right in his ears, too."

Since then, Jones has been devoting himself to somewhat saner projects, ranging from Bad Company to Foreigner to his long-rumored solo album. Bad Company, though, was basically an executive production job, with Keith Olsen doing most of the day-to-day boardwork. Jones got involved because the band "kind of got together through my instigation last year." Before Boz Burrell rejoined the fold, the working name for the band was Kirke, Ralphs & Howe, that last being unknown vocalist Brian Howe. "He's a local lad from my hometown, Portsmouth," Jones said. "We're quite intrigued by this; it's going to sound really good."

As for his other projects, it's hard to say which will turn up first. "This changes from day to day," he confessed, "but really, I feel that I'd kind of like to make the next Foreigner album the first priority, and perhaps be preparing my solo project while I'm doing that, which I think I can do. Separate the two things like that."

And see what new offers turn up in the meantime. ▼

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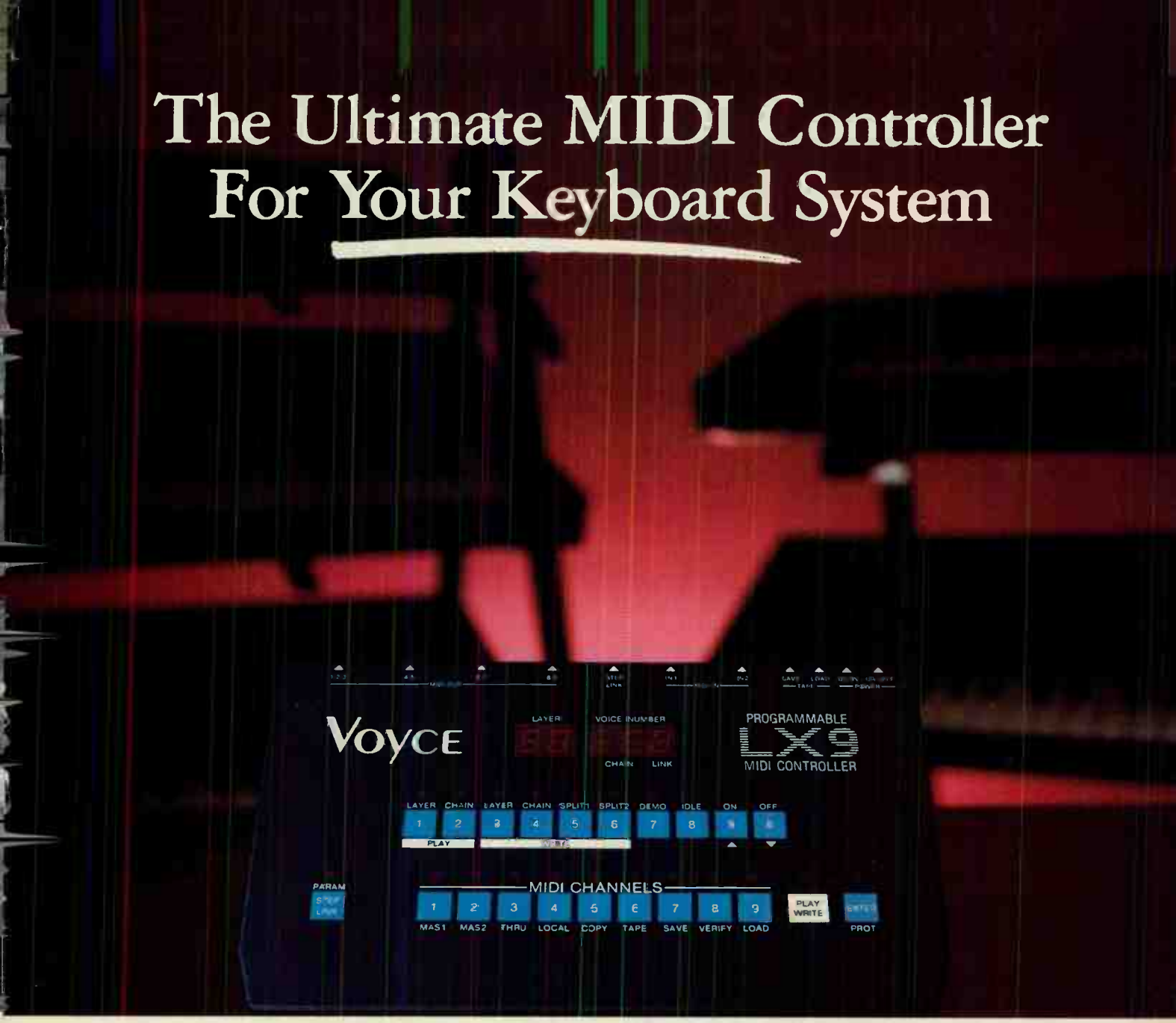

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THE CLASH GOES B.A.D.

Joe Strummer and Mick Jones bury the hatchet

By Chris Salewicz

IN JULY OF 1985 BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE WERE AT Sam West studios in London's Notting Hill, recording their first album. Mick Jones had assembled his new band after Joe Strummer kicked him out of the Clash in '84, and now Jones was adding vocals to "The Medicine Show," a song that put the medical industry on trial. "We're not choosing themes like these to be deliberately controversial," Jones said. "It's simply that in the 1980s it doesn't seem very relevant to write about moon/June." Of course, everyone knew that Strummer had accused Jones of being insufficiently radical for the leftist Clash, and maybe Mick was trying to prove his old partner wrong.

When Jones was satisfied with his vocal, we adjourned to the studio canteen with Don Letts, the Clash video director turned B.A.D. member. Sipping tea and waiting for our fish pies to cook, I asked Jones how writing songs with Letts was different from composing the five Clash LPs with Strummer. "At first," he answered, "Joe and I used to write everything together. Then we wrote sitting in separate parts of the same room. Then we got to the stage where we were sending lyrics over to each other through our manager."

A year later, on June 26, 1986 (Mick Jones' thirty-first birthday), B.A.D. was in Trident studio recording *No. 10*,

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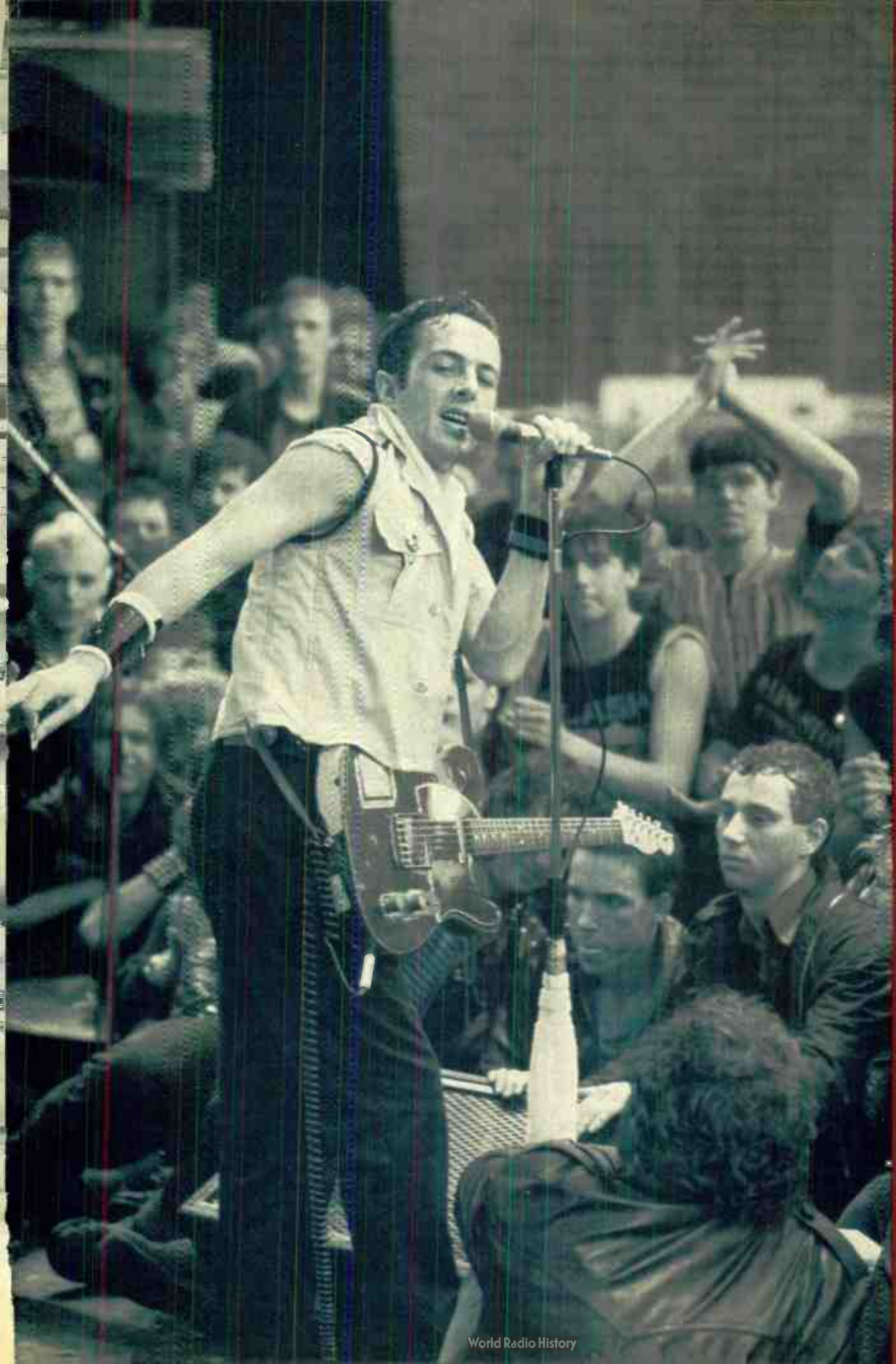

Joe Strummer looks back in anger and decides to keep B.A.D. company with Don Letts and Mick Jones (at left).

Upping St., their second album. Joe Strummer was there, too. "It's good news seeing you here," I told Strummer.

"I hope so," he replied. "We need some rock 'n' roll."

The story of how the Strummer/Jones team overcame their feud is heartening for Clash fans, and maybe for anyone else who figures that all good things come to an end and you can't go home again. The Mick/Joe reunion demonstrates that sometimes the good guys win.

The relationships between Mick Jones, Joe Strummer and Bernie Rhodes—the original Clash manager—have always been complex. A partner-in-crime of Malcolm McLaren in his 1976 efforts to overturn the British music industry, Rhodes had helped with Jones' idea of the Clash, for whom the guitarist pirated Strummer from a pub-rock combo called the 101'ers. Rhodes reputedly won the seminal punk group a financially advantageous contract with CBS—though as the deal called for ten albums, it was hardly *easy* money.

Ultimately Jones and the verbose Rhodes were unable to see eye to eye, and by the end of 1978 Rhodes was no longer managing the Clash. Over the next two years the Clash had their career cared for by a succession of people (writer Caroline Coon, Peter Jenner and Andrew King of Blackhill Enterprises, the notorious Kosmo Vinyl). It was a period of popular growth and public confusion over how a band reconciles punk with stardom. At the beginning of 1981 Strummer declared he was tired of the Clash being a rudderless ship: Unless Bernie Rhodes returned and took charge he was quitting.

It was Mick Jones, Rhodes' most ardent critic and opponent in the past, who went to see the diminutive manager and asked him to return. Two and a half years later Jones was out on his elbow on a trumped-up charge. To those familiar with the Mafia-like intriguing in the Clash camp following the return of the endlessly paranoid Rhodes, it was no great surprise.

At the Los Angeles US Festival in June 1983, the Clash received $700,000 for their appearance. At a press conference before the show, the group sat mute, seemingly shellshocked, as Rhodes and Kosmo Vinyl answered questions with glib expertise. After the concert Rhodes told a friend of the group, "Mick's not going to be around much longer."

Even Jones now admits that he was hard to work with at the time. "Mick was completely unreliable," said former manager Peter Jenner. "He would never turn up when you needed him."

Strummer—in an ongoing state of personal crisis, partly from the weight of being Joe Strummer—went along with Rhodes' scheme to dump Jones. Strummer is a man who believes in notions of good and evil with a fervor usually associated with the Old Testament. His soul was rent to shreds for having, as he now puts it, "stabbed Mick Jones in the back."

But neither sat around moping. Strummer and bassist Paul Simonon put together their new Clash and toured America. Jones assembled Big Audio Dynamite, with Don Letts playing Eno to Mick's Bryan Ferry. B.A.D. was completed by drummer Greg Roberts, keyboard player Dan Donovan and bassist Leo Williams—who Jones met at the Roxy club when Williams offered him some grass and sold him lawn clippings. Publicly, Jones was not as tough on Strummer as Strummer was on him; Jones said that he figured the real serpent in the Clash's garden was Bernie Rhodes.

As B.A.D. started to come together, Jones' eyes took on a distinct gleam of purpose. After a phenomenal B.A.D. concert in Kentish Town, we sat down to talk over an Indian dinner. "I like to think I'm working for good, for God," Jones explained. "After all, someone's got to do it. It's the opposite of the deal with Faust; after all, God's got a lot of strong troops, too. Most people on this tour have some spiritual basis to their lives." He chuckled. "Apart from those that are completely morally bankrupt." He turned serious. "Not many people get a second chance like I've had. I see this as an opportunity to avoid making all those mistakes again. I won't throw any wobblers this time." He laughed and added, "Though sometimes I'm still a bit late. The thing is, I'm realizing this time that the more I put into it, the more I get out of it."

In the summer of '85, while Jones was working on the first B.A.D. album, I ran into Joe Strummer from time to time around his Notting Hill home. In early August he suggested we go have a drink. We sat in the bar for three hours, getting slowly drunk but skirting around the real issue. Then Strummer made an announcement. "I've got a big problem," he said. "Hang on, I'll have a piss and tell you about it." When he returned from the toilet he came straight to the point. "The thing is," Strummer said, "Mick was right about Bernie."

A few days later he ran into Jones on the street. It was the first time they'd seen each other since that August day when Mick walked into rehearsal and was fired. Strummer told Jones what he'd told me, and a sort of reconciliation was achieved. "But," Mick sighed, "it's a bit late, isn't it?"

Jones wrapped up work on *This Is Big Audio Dynamite* and took his family to the Bahamas for a vacation. Strummer got on a plane and went looking for him, intent on persuading Jones to rejoin the Clash.

Plain speaking has always been one of Joe Strummer's commendable virtues, which is to say that *tact* has not. In Nassau, Jones played Strummer the tapes of *This Is Big Audio Dynamite*. Joe's review: "I don't like it, there aren't any songs. You need me." Not the best way to re-establish a working partnership.

Nonetheless, B.A.D.'s debut sold quite well, while the new Clash's *Cut The Crap* landed in the dumper. Strummer disbanded his new group, and Paul Simonon—the last of the real Clash—returned to the painting career he'd abandoned ten years earlier. Meanwhile the Strummer/Jones friendship continued to quietly strengthen; Strummer and Simonon made a cameo appearance as Southern cops in the video for B.A.D.'s "Medicine Show."

After *Cut The Crap* hit the fan, though, Joe developed a bit of a creative block. When he accepted the assignment to write the theme song for Alex Cox's film *Love Kills*, Jones quietly came aboard to restructure the tune and add guitar to the recording. "I spent days trying to get the words to fit in properly with the song," Joe laughed. "And then they changed the title to *Sid & Nancy*!" While working on the song in Soho, Strummer stepped out for a bite and ran into Don Letts. On a nearby wall was a poster for B.A.D. Pretending Letts was a perfect stranger, Strummer started grabbing passers-by and pointing: "Look! It's the man in the poster!" Stricken with embarrassment, Letts fled into a nearby tobacconist's. Strummer followed him, continuing his rant.

Strummer then accompanied Letts to Trident studios, where B.A.D. were working on *No. 10, Upping St.*, album number two. Once he got there, Strummer never left; he helped write the lyrics and co-produced the LP. He approached his new job with the obsessive, loving dedication of old, working thirty-six-hour stretches and sleeping under the studio's grand piano: "Once the rest of B.A.D. realized I don't get involved in anything unless I do it to the max, it worked out fine."

Working with Jones again also unplugged Strummer's creative block. Songs started pouring out of him, "like spunk in a whorehouse. Ever since I hit that B.A.D. studio I just started to go."

Sitting in a pub drinking cans of Castlemaine, Strummer in-

EBET ROBERTS

The good old days: "So that's an E chord, izzit?"

sisted, "This record has got to be truly *bad*: hard, you know? I've figured out why all the B.A.D. songs are a minute too long; because so many of the parts are programmed onto tape and no one remembers to stop them!

"I'm getting them to roughen up the sound and lose that Radio 2 tendency Mick has. Mick isn't going to know what happened when this record gets going in the mix."

For that crucial mix, Strummer convinced Jones and engineer Groucho Smykle they should move to New York. "We flew in," Strummer said, "got a cab, hit the hotel, threw our stuff in the room and walked seven blocks to the studio. I was in there for twenty days and nights before I went to a bar. We did it in New York because we wanted it to be like good vegetables—*fresh*."

"We've done it in New York," Mick Jones added two days before finishing, "simply because it's the most happening place to be. We could've done it in Victoria, but Manhattan seemed a better idea. And it's really changed the album. We were in such great shape in London, and then we moved here and got into an even higher gear. What we've got down is really exciting. Everything's gone as it should have. It went even greater once Joe was on board, but somehow I always felt great about this LP, even before we started work. I can't remember a time when I felt so over-awed, or was so happy with what I was doing."

Strummer even made a public *mea culpa*. In a *New Musical Express* interview with writer Gavin Martin he kicked himself for letting Bernie Rhodes back in, blamed Rhodes for *Cut The Crap*, and blamed himself for betraying Jones. "What you must realize," Joe said, "is that a large percentage of people like me are idiots. I sit in a room and write ditties while others are selling stocks to Malaysia on the photophone."

Most remarkable for the old Sandinista, Strummer conceded political naiveté: "There's a lot of illusion. You really think you're doing something when you're rocking every night, traveling through lands...and maybe for that moment in that hall, for those people you are doing something. But, talking seriously, you ain't doing anything. I was quite distressed to come to that conclusion. Before, I was always in that rock 'n' roll bubble. When you step outside it you find the stock ex-

change still runs, arms deals are still made. Give me a spliff, a drink, a guitar, a foreign city at night, and let me scribble something. Those are the things that get me. I'm a romantic, not a dialectic theoretician. The rebel chic, the Belfast photos, H-Block T-shirts and Baader-Meinhof shirts; they were all my fault.... There's a line between what's preachy and what's human, and you can make your most devastating political points in the human sector. Like 'Love Of The Common People': I could think about the lyrics of that for a hundred years. That to me is real political writing."

Mick poses for the People, Joe communes with them.

Jones and Strummer did their mixing at New York's Soundworks studio, across from the Hit Factory where Billy Idol was recording and next to Studio 54. One day a strange figure in a pony tail and New Romantic dress approached them as they worked. Neither Strummer nor Jones recognized the intruder until he got right up close. Then they said, "It's Terry!" Old Clash drummer Terry Chimes was dressed up for his new band, the Cherry Bombz. "We couldn't get over it," Jones laughed. "Because even in the Clash he was recognizable as Terry. He didn't automatically assume Clash attire."

The pressure of obsessive mixing finally took its toll on engineer Grouch Smykle; Joe and Mick recruited as replacement Sam Severs, who programmed drum sounds for Run D.M.C.

"We burned out Groucho after six weeks," Jones said. "He did an incredible job, but after six weeks he was finished. The day he left I was in Chinatown and I had a fortune cookie. It said, 'Where one grouch goes, two smiles appear.' And that night I met Sam at a club.

"He did remixes with additional beats. We had another couple of weeks working with him. We did hundreds of mixes, hundreds more than we used. Some are very different, some are just instrumentals. Sam knew this guy called Chep Nunez, an editing specialist. All he does is edit. He can tape single beats and stick them together, beat by beat, on tape. I'd never seen such intricate edits done before.

"We started the record off by laying everything down on sequencers and stuff. Then we gradually replaced all that with real instruments. Sam came in and added those extra beats. The idea was to have a full canvas at all times. There was always more on tape than is on the record. There was so much that the tape was packed full. Then it was just a question of sorting through it all and deciding what you wanted.

"I tended to favor the more natural things, the *real* things. So it ended up mostly guitar, bass, and a *mixture* of drums—that includes beatboxes, maybe fifty-fifty: Drums that sound like beatboxes and beatboxes that sound like drums.

"The singing was better because we were a bit more confident. We'd had success in England and that does wonders for your confidence. And then getting Joe in was the last straw; it made everything else good as well."

With the LP finished, Strummer flew back to London, got one long night of sleep, and then headed to southern Spain to star (with Elvis Costello and the Pogues) in Alex Cox's spaghetti-western *Straight To Hell*.

Jones, meanwhile, headed to Jamaica for a holiday. There he decided that *No. 10, Upping St.* wasn't complete after all. "I was sneaking off to corners of beaches," he said, "listening to different mixes. I spent about a week trying to remix it by phone to New York. That obviously wasn't working, so I went back to the studio in New York and spent another week on it."

The result is an album that succeeds in Jones and Strummer's shared vision of dropping B.A.D.'s urban beat onto a rock 'n' roll base. The proof of their success is in the first track, the Eddie-Cochran-meets-hiphop "C'mon Every Beatbox."

The philosophical foundation of the album—indeed of B.A.D. itself—recalls the group's involvement in Britain's Artists Against Apartheid. "Beyond the Pale" is a lilting, melodic, and for Jones autobiographical song that begins, "My grandpa came from Russia."

"It's about immigration to Britain," Jones explained as we listened to the finished album in his Holland Park living room. "Pre-war immigration. It's to remind people of where everyone in the country comes from, of the cultural mix that is the reality of life in Britain, as opposed to the W.A.S.P. myth."

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"Ticket" is sung by Don Letts ("My Ringo song," he jokes) and describes the experiences to which a Jamaican immigrant was subject in the England of the 1950s. Strummer co-wrote two songs with Jones: "V13" and "Sightsee MC." The latter, which closes the LP, is a work of formidable power and ferocity: classic rock 'n' roll. "It sends shivers up my spine," Jones smiled.

"Everyone can understand the songs," he said. "Which is what I wanted. A lot of that comes from Joe's writing—gutsy. I'm glad of that—for me this record was simpler. It's many-faceted, but I still think that the ordinary person in the street will find it easier to relate to, they can dig it more, because it's not quite so *clever*. It's almost as if, before, it had to be intellectually satisfying and very much away from any kind of Clash-style preaching, from being stern about things. But now Joe's seen where I was going, as opposed to where the Clash was going. We don't really need to be preachy about it. I think Joe doesn't need to worry about that sort of thing either. He can actually work quite freely, without being too concerned.

"I'm taking a stand here; it's all straightforward now and, yeah, *gutsy* writing is how I'd describe it—easier to understand. I think it should move a few people and be more emotional than intellectual. I think that's what music is supposed to be. On our first record I was probably saying it had to be intellectual because that was my way of compensating for the way I am. And Don helped me get to that first stage. Then Joe came in and helped me get to where I wanted to be—the type of music everybody can understand and enjoy."

Were the other members of B.A.D. at all nervous when Joe came aboard?

"Everyone was really cool about it," Jones said. "No one got paranoid. Don was looking at it from the viewpoint of this great story—watching us work our thing out in front of everyone."

Jones said that working it out felt good: "It helped us realize the potential of the thing we have. We can do better now. Last time it was harder. I hope we've learned something." He laughed. "But maybe we don't learn anything."

Eleven days after he left for Spain, Strummer telephoned me at three a.m. Spanish time. He said he was standing looking across the Mediterranean at Africa, eighty miles away. He insisted that he was not joining B.A.D.: "Are you kidding? The B.A.D. LP's brilliant, because me and Mick were involved. But I'm going to make a record of my own when I've got something really good to put out.

"And I'm just about ready. I'm looking forward to working with Mick again, because we're going to do it together. It'll be called *Throwdown*, and it'll be completely the opposite of everything else that's being made now; just three instruments and the cheapest studio. Everyone'll hate it, except the hipsters and flipsters.

"I just promise to make a good record when I can, and not to tour and not to foist any shit on the public. And never to make another video. It's the performance and the content that counts.

"I'm thirty-three and—no offense to Huey—I don't want to be Huey Lewis. It ain't rock 'n' roll anymore. It's just wallpaper or just the latest thing. You've got no indication of what's hip and what's not anymore, because it's all the same thing. Now is the time we've got to look for things, as it was in the days of beatniks existing in straight society, when the good stuff was hard to find but was even more valuable when you discovered it.

"You've got to seek it out. Because what is being handed out by straight society today is not good for your soul." ■

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LANOIS from page 50

shall first thing in the morning. I'd probably do something a little quieter."

Since the success of "Sledgehammer," Lanois has gotten "a lot of phone calls, as you might expect," including one from an ex-punk singer with a rotten past. "It's very flattering, but it's not a very comfortable position because I get tapes from people who have strong careers and I have a lot of respect for. And little Dan Lanois has to say, "I'm too busy." Lanois is also trying to set aside time for a solo album which "would be instrumental, but not necessarily ambient." But one inquiry he couldn't refuse came from Robbie Robertson, who is making his long-awaited solo debut. According to Lanois, he and Robertson share more than Canadian heritage and experience with basement tapes: "It's not total coincidence that you run into an artist—there's usually some natural force that pushes you together. Robbie is a very visual lyricist, which is the kind of person I gravitate towards. There's a professional relationship, but there's something beyond that. There are common ideas we share without having to talk about them. Or in conversation, I'll happen to discover that we love the same record. That's what creates a direction and a strong bond."

The Robertson album includes appearances by Peter Gabriel and his band, and U2. "I didn't want it to turn into the Dan Lanois Club, but you have to use somebody," the producer says. He describes the approach as both traditional and modern. "We didn't want to make just an old rock or blues record. It's homemade in the sense that there's a lot of early performances on the tracks, and we've been favoring good feel moments over sequencers."

The subject of Robertson's album leads Lanois into a diatribe against technology, "an area that's been invaded by talentless people." He views technology as "the land of promise; you never know what you're going to get, and to find out, you have to devote a lot of time. You could find out you're making a mistake two weeks later. If you're really excited about that kind of thing, fine and dandy. But I prefer to get on with the performance aspect of it."

Distrust of technology is a common theme among the roots-rock brigade, but most of them wouldn't know a MIDI patch from a maxi-pad. The necessity of running his own small studio, on the other hand, made Lanois "very much a technician," which means his reservations are informed by experience. His resume proves that restrictions *can* be strengths, that a modern record doesn't have to sound like a Synclavier beach party. "I'm not sure technology has a whole lot to do with good work," Lanois muses. "People think, 'I just spent fifty thousand dollars on this device, I'd better use it.' In fact, it might be just as interesting if you used your voice." M

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being recorded out of phase, but his voice on the top mike was being recorded in phase, so we were actually able to get quite isolated vocals without too much spillage from the band. To this day I still use that technique, even though you rarely ever get a whole band playing live nowadays!"

One of the biggest issues facing recording studios at present is whether or not to have digital recording facilities. The first concession that Visconti has made in that direction is to mix digitally, utilizing a Sony PCM F1 and converting it to 1610 format, and the results have met with his characteristically enthusiastic approval.

"I went 1610 with the Moody Blues, and even cut the analog disc from the 1610 rather than the half-inch. For the last few years I've been doing half-inch 30 ips mixes like everyone else and finding them just a dream—and I still love that method—but the Moody Blues said that it's a big sales point in the States if you say a record was analog recorded, digitally mixed and digitally cut. So I went along with that just as a marketing exercise, and I found to my delight that the digital mix was superior to the analog tape. The bass was more controlled, the low end was more steady and the high end was crystal clear without going into distortion. It really is great. In the last year I also did my first bit of digital editing and I don't know how I lived without it, just like I don't know how I lived without my SSL!

"I can honestly now say that my own studio is also my favorite studio. There's a kind of magic formula about this place: What with *Absolute Beginners* Soho has become trendier than ever—there are loads of restaurants and bars close by—and in the studio itself I've got a great staff, and all the technology that I need is at my fingertips."

Could all of this possibly be supplemented by the acquisition of a resident dentist, who could cure some artists of their problems with sibilance? "Now that would be the ultimate! Get a dentist in and work on all of those dentures!" M

HOME DIGITAL from page 70

process of flaking generates more errors than the gap that is left behind. Always listen twice before giving up on a take.)

Tradeoff #3 is that editing this digital format is limited and fairly expensive. You won't be able to do any of the things you are used to doing with razor blades without spending upwards of five grand on editing VCRs and special co-processors like the one manufactured by N.Y.C.'s Electric Valve Corporation.

Tradeoff #4 coincidentally solves tradeoff #3, but also at a price. If you want to make a CD out of your digital audio processor mixes (and it has been done, by people from me to the Metropolitan Opera) you will have to convert the digital data on your tapes to the industry standard Sony 1610/1630 digital format. In this new format your tapes can be edited with tremendous precision, and made directly into CDs. Unfortunately, studios offering these services are still few and far between, and typically cost $175 (or more) and hour.

By now you really ought to be at your local store, haggling over price and model, so I'll wrap things up with some consumer tips. On the right processor: There are a lot out there, but only the ones from Sony and Nakamichi offer you 16-bit as well as 14-bit recording. 16-bit gives better sound at the expense of slightly weakened error correction. Go for it, and only switch to 14-bit if dropouts force you to. (I've only had to on *really* cruddy videotape.)

On the right VCR: Don't buy at random. Do some homework and make sure you buy one with superior video circuitry and mechanical transport. If you are seriously intent on quality, go with a ¾-inch U-matic instead of a ½-inch consumer deck. It will cost you more (mine was $2000) but they offer professional quality transports and the professional tape formulations available in the ¾-inch size are better than anything you can buy on the consumer level. Last hint—try and get a VCR with an external switch for turning off the built-in dropout compensation. This particular memory buffer is nice for improving your TV viewing, but is largely incompatible with the digital audio processors out there and may prove a source of the glartches. On the right tape: The best you can buy.

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Richard Thompson: Constant in the darkness... Where's that at?

By Bill Flanagan

RICHARD THOMPSON WAS ONSTAGE AT THE HEARTBREAK Hotel, playing guitar like a demon as blood trickled down his face. He had come back for the encore without his wife and singing partner, Linda, who had apparently inflicted the head wound with a bottle backstage a couple of minutes earlier. It was late 1982, *Shoot Out The Lights* was the Thompsons' brilliant new album, and this was their first U.S. tour in a decade. It was also the end of their marriage.

Hey! The guy's head is bleeding and he's still playing guitar!

Tension had been building all night. When the Thompsons arrived at the Rhode Island club for soundcheck, a local fan told Richard how great it was that he had at last come to Providence. "We have places like this in England," Richard said, surveying the punch-drunk environment. "I don't go there." But when the band took the stage a few hours later the Thompsons held the crowd with their songs of betrayal and anger between warring lovers. The couple took turns singing lead but never looked at each other. When Linda sang she stood motionless at the mike and closed her eyes. When Richard sang Linda walked to the edge of the stage and stared off, or made eye-rolling faces at the band members, who shrugged and smiled nervously. Was this part of the show?

Thompson's guitar playing got stronger and fiercer. All eyes were fixed and a few mouths were hanging open. "I'm walking on a wire," they sang, "I'm walking on a wire—and I'm falling." Then his guitar took off again, like a buzz saw through a redwood. If there is some magical funnel where artists pour in pain and pull out beauty, they were pouring down silver that night.

But the minute they got alone, pow—right in the kisser.

Well, nobody said life as a Sufi fundamentalist was gonna be easy.

The marriage had known tough times before. In the mid-70s Richard embraced Islam, and Linda—probably less out of religious conviction than devotion to her husband—followed him. It was an especially conservative line of Sufi fundamentalism, with the woman walking behind the man, but Linda put up with it; she took the veil. For a while they quit the pop world altogether, and their subsequent on-and-off recording career did not make them rich. Now that they finally had a new record out in America, a lot of media attention, and were in demand for live performances, Richard had told Linda that he was in love with someone else—Nancy Covey, a vivacious Californian who ran the folk club at McCabe's guitar shop in Santa Monica. On the grand scale you can't fault anyone

Photograph By Bonnie Schiffman/Onyx

"I don't think I've written an autobiographical song in my life, though there's autobiography in a lot of my songs.... Every record should have a disclaimer: 'The views expressed by the singer are not necessarily those of the songwriter.'"

when one love dies and another begins. On a more mundane level of human emotion, you can understand why Linda would want to brain him with a beer bottle.

A few months later Richard Thompson, single man, returned to Providence to perform for free at a guitar exhibition at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. The guitars on display were the craftwork of his L.A. friend Danny Ferrington, and if the notion of guitars as art seemed odd, there was no doubting the value of Thompson's own exhibition. Sitting on a folding chair in the museum foyer he gave a lighthearted demonstration/lecture on the history of guitar and folk music, from Middle Eastern scales and British reels to delta blues and Hank Williams to Chuck Berry and—for the fans—Richard Thompson.

After *Shoot Out The Lights* knocked rock fans on their ears, and Richard and Linda went their separate ways, a lot of new listeners started digging into Thompson's back catalog. It's immense, dating from his 60s work with Fairport Convention through a whole slew of 70s albums, solo and with Linda. Thanks to the dedication of his fans and the good graces of Hannibal and Carthage Records, almost all the old gems are now available in the U.S.A.

Thompson followed *Shoot Out The Lights* with *Hand Of Kindness*, for Hannibal; two years ago he signed with PolyGram. His first LP for the label, *Across A Crowded Room*, was disappointing—too many polka rhythms trying to pass themselves off as rock 'n' roll. Thompson's new record, *Daring Adventures*, has a bolder, booming sound, and he's no longer equivocating between folk and rock; acoustic ballads like "How Will I Ever Be Simple Again" are beautiful in their melancholy, while "Valerie" rocks and rolls with a punch the Blasters would be proud of.

By now, Thompson has become a hero both to fans of his passionate rock guitar playing and lovers of his warm folkie sensibility. In the former group is Lou Reed, who told *Musician*, "I thought the guitar on *Shoot Out The Lights* was really, *really* good. I was absolutely stunned when I heard it. I didn't believe anyone could do that anymore."

In the latter camp is John Cougar Mellencamp, who admitted that "Richard Thompson could say more in one line than I could in a whole song."

What is constant is the darkness in Thompson's vision. His songs view the world as a hard, cruel place—a long decline with death's wide jaws at the bottom. It's impossible to say the degree to which Thompson's experience has shaped his philosophy; and how much his attitude has led him into dark experiences. Certainly Fairport Convention was enamored of the British tradition of songs about plague and murder and suicide. But life imitated art, as tragedy dogged the band. When Fairport's van crashed while returning from a gig in 1969, drummer Martin Lamble and Richard's girlfriend Jeannie Franklyn were killed. Richard was shaken, and the band took several months off. Soon after reuniting, both Thompson and singer Sandy Denny left the group. Richard continued to write songs for and play guitar on Denny's solo albums, until she died in 1978 from what was declared an accidental fall down a flight of stairs.

So much tragedy could send anyone looking for a better world. Now happily remarried and on the road again, Thompson is quick to laugh and newly willing to talk about his past.

"I used to think there was a real split between music and business," he says backstage at a Washington, D.C. folk festival. "Until I saw the Sabri Brothers, this Pakistani family who play a music called Kowali. It's a very spiritual music and very beautiful. I was amazed at the way they really go out to the audience and perform. There's a lot of hand gestures and communication with the audience. If the audience asks them to sing about something, they'll improvise a song on the spot. I thought, 'Wow, this is wonderful music—it's really spiritual and they really reach the audience. If they can do that, I can do interviews and be on the telly and stuff.' Why should I be so precious about it?"

MUSICIAN: *In "Ain't Gonna Drag My Feet No More" you say, "Where I come from feeling is a crime."*

THOMPSON: Yeah, it's true. As R. Crumb put it, "Will Whitey join the parade?" Coming from a Nordic country, sometimes you have to work at being looser or more emotional. England's right on the edge of the Nordic countries. It's cold weather.

MUSICIAN: *And the farther north you get...*

THOMPSON: ...the thicker the mist, as they say. It's true. I've always thought that English people love the blues and black music because it's this thing that they can draw on and learn from and take into themselves as something looser. The English music tradition is fairly staid and Germanic. I think it's great that European popular music has been influenced by black music.

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever feel you don't want to give away too much of yourself?*

THOMPSON: Yeah. I try to fight that kind of restriction in myself. It's very hard to throw something naked out there and leave it. And sing it. It's really tough. [*Laughs*] But I don't care any more.

MUSICIAN: *That's good. 'Cause when you step out on a stage and they put a big light on you and all those people are staring...*

THOMPSON: ...they're looking at you anyway, right. Might as well make a complete idiot out of yourself.

MUSICIAN: *Let's start at the beginning. To many people you and Sandy Denny* were *Fairport Convention. But after you both left the band, you continued to play on her albums and write songs for her. It was as if after the Beatles broke up Lennon and McCartney had kept working together. Why couldn't the Thompson/Denny collaboration be continued within Fairport?*

THOMPSON: I think a band can be a constricting thing. I wanted to leave to experiment, just to feel free that I was experimenting on my own time, that I wasn't going to lead anybody else up a dark path. If I fell nobody else was to blame. I love all those people. They're all great musicians and I play with them all the time.

MUSICIAN: *That's why it's confusing for outsiders; since you all got along, why couldn't it all be contained in Fairport?*

THOMPSON: I don't know. All I know is, I had to leave the band, I really had to get out. With Sandy, she didn't like to travel. More than anything else. She hated flying.

MUSICIAN: *Is "Did She Jump Or Was She Pushed" about Sandy?*
THOMPSON: Yeah. It's a song about two different people who did the same thing. Or did they do the same thing? What happened? The song has to be ambiguous 'cause I don't have the answer. It's about two people...one of whom was Sandy.
MUSICIAN: *An awful lot of people die in your songs, even more than in Jackson Browne's. I don't think you've ever done an album where somebody doesn't die. Is this something you've carried with you your whole life, Richard? As a child did you think about dying all the time?*
THOMPSON: No, as a child I'd look up at the trees and the sky...
MUSICIAN: *...and say, "Well, I'll be dead soon."*
THOMPSON: ...And play with my tin soldiers. That sort of thing's interesting. I'm interested in murder and stuff, extremes of the human psyche. This is all good material. I mean, give me a break—at least there's only one dead person per album!
MUSICIAN: *That's true—you do leave ten or eleven alive. Hearing "End Of The Rainbow" (a lullaby in which a baby is promised a miserable life ending in death) tonight I thought, "Did Richard get a flat tire the day he wrote that one? Was there no hot water?"*
THOMPSON: I think it was one of those days. I don't sing that song much, but I kind of like it. I don't know why. And it's one of the most requested songs. It must have some strange cathartic effect. You take it to the limit and then you can relax.

EBET ROBERTS

Thompson playing bloody good guitar, unbloodied.

MUSICIAN: *On Richard & Linda Thompson LPs you had the unusual advantage of being able to write in the voice of a woman. Some of those songs—for example "Friend In Me"—are hard to imagine a man singing. Did you write them specifically for Linda?*
THOMPSON: Both. Some were written specially for a female voice and some were written with ambiguity. I couldn't do "Friend In Me," I don't think.
MUSICIAN: *Did you take that into account melodically? Ever say, "I can't sing this but Linda could"?*
THOMPSON: Not really. I don't think Linda has a big range.
MUSICIAN: *"How I Wanted To" appears to be very confessional. James Taylor said that while some songs he writes are confessional and some therapeutic, he figures the very act of making it rhyme and setting it to music gives it distance from real events.*
THOMPSON: I think he's right. I don't think I've written an autobiographical song in my life, literally, though there's autobiography in a lot of my songs. Therapeutic? Yeah, I think it's therapeutic sometimes. Hopefully it serves some other purpose than just self-confession. I'm not personally a fan of the life-of-the-artist-as-art approach—"This is my life so it must be great" or must be art. It's too boring for me. "How I Wanted To" is a kind of confessional song, but confessing about what and with whom? It's easy to jump to all these conclusions. It's not to be taken literally. You're the guy writing the song and you're singing it, so people think this must be true. "There it is—he said it!" But it's not like that.

When you're on a stage or singing on a record you're wearing another hat, you're wearing a false beard and moustache. You're assuming some kind of role. This doesn't mean you're not sincere about what you sing about or it doesn't mean a lot to you, but it's not necessarily the truth as lived by you in your life. I know people who do write like that and it works very well. I just finished a record with Loudon Wainwright. He probably writes more literally about his life than anybody else. He has a way of doing it that's very honest. He doesn't shirk from the painful bits. I think it's tremendous but I can't do that. I'd rather turn it into something that for me has more meaning and for me has a more lasting quality, and perhaps I can sneak in a little allegory or a little morality without anybody noticing. I admire Loudon's honesty. I don't think I could be that honest.
MUSICIAN: *But often even if a thing's not autobiographical, you know when you put it out it's going to be taken that way.*
THOMPSON: But what can you do about that? If you don't say something because of how it's going to be taken you're failing in your job. You have to do what you think is the right thing to do and the audience has to take it the way they take it. At the bottom of every record there should be a disclaimer saying, "The views expressed by the singer are not necessarily those of the songwriter."

I'd certainly use a personal relationship to write a song. But not overtly; it's just more interesting to twist it a little bit and turn it into a story.
MUSICIAN: *Do people you know often get it wrong? Do they say, "Richard, I heard that song you wrote about me?"*
THOMPSON: Yeah, I get a lot of that. I sometimes have amusing interludes with my wife where she tries to figure out who a song's about. Or if she's in any of them.

I should include liner notes. It would make my life a lot simpler. The biggest misunderstanding is people assuming you're writing about your own life. It's really much more oblique than that—it's *mediated* reality. It's not real, it's fantasized. People hear "How I Wanted To" and say, "That's a song about your ex-wife." It's not, really. That wasn't even the original intention. It's something totally different to me.

"Everything any musician plays in an improvisatory situation is prepared for. You learn scales and you learn runs in the course of practice, which allows you the vocabulary to play that which is spontaneous. That's the jumping-off point."

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever feel you have an unfair advantage in a song? The audience hears only your side of the story and sympathizes with you.*

THOMPSON: Music's a medium and if you're expressing something through the medium you're trying to do your best to put a point across, whatever the point and however subtle. The moral is in there. It's a form of propaganda. So I suppose you could say it's an unfair advantage, yes, because you may actually overwhelm someone with your ideas. At least temporarily. It's amazing what you can do through music. You can do stuff very subtly as well; you can plant time bombs in a song.

A song like "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda" by Eric Bogle could manipulate you into having a point of view, into sympathizing with the song—because it's expressed very beautifully and very seductively. It is kind of seducing people to your idea.

But I also think there's a kind of self-censorship that goes on while you're writing a song; you probably wouldn't let yourself go to the point of viciously attacking someone you know. You might attack a public figure, you might attack something you hate, but it's certainly a weapon that you'd be careful how you use. I wouldn't use it on my ex-wife. I've probably slipped in some cynical or quasi-humorous things about...uh...people like ex-wives [*laughter*]. But I wouldn't be direct.

MUSICIAN: *But when you do a song like "She Twists The Knife Again," whatever your motivation for writing it, people can take it as being about Linda.*

THOMPSON: Yeah, they certainly can. And that's a danger. But I wouldn't want to change the song because of that. I like the song as it is. And you could make it an awfully neutered song, you could chop its balls off. It's not a direct song about my life—it's a kind of a story. It's fiction. Well...it's faction.

MUSICIAN: *"Ghosts In The Wind" seems to be an amendment to "Dimming Of The Day"—both songs start out describing "this old house," but in "Dimming" there's a hope, and in "Ghosts" the hope is gone, the house is empty.*

THOMPSON: "Dimming Of The Day" is a pretty straightforward love song. It's a different house. Well, it's the same house I suppose. It's always the same house. It's always the same damn song, really. It's a different part of the same house.

MUSICIAN: *"Ghosts" puts a sad light on "Dimming."*

THOMPSON: It shouldn't. I don't think songs are interrelated in that way. They shouldn't be. I don't see "Ghosts In The Wind" as a sad song. Really. It's a matter of your viewpoint, I think. Perhaps "Ghosts" is a song about being stripped of everything. And when you're stripped of everything it's frightening. It's dreadful, because you've got nothing left. You're just empty. Some would say this is also an ideal. It's a beginning. It isn't depressing, it's necessary so that something better has room to come into you.

MUSICIAN: *Maybe we better talk about guitar playing for a while. Within the space of a solo you often go back and forth between Middle Eastern, Indian or Celtic scales and rock forms. To what degree are the switches premeditated and to what degree does it just come flying out?*

THOMPSON: I think everything any musician ever plays in an improvisatory situation is *prepared for.* You learn scales and you learn runs in the course of practice, which allows you the vocabulary to play that which is spontaneous. That's the jumping-off point to come up with inspirational things. And there's always things that take you by surprise. If you're lucky you leave charted waters on some songs and hit on things you weren't expected to find. The groundwork is laid and you have some idea of where you're going, and then hopefully you find some new stuff. I rarely play a worked-out solo, though there are a couple of songs where I almost stick to the same thing every time—but in those it's not so much a solo as part of the song—more a riff than a solo. On "Wall Of Death" I play basically the same thing every time. It differs a bit, but the basic structure of that solo should always stay around the melody.

MUSICIAN: *You always play Mike Bloomfield's lick from "Like A Rolling Stone" on that.*

THOMPSON: Yeah, it's a great lick, and no one ever plays those kinds of Bloomfield/Langhorne licks anymore.

MUSICIAN: *There's a degree to which these solos seem measured. If you play four bars of leprechaun music or Mideast music, you'll almost always follow it with four bars of Chuck Berry or Jeff Beck. Or vice versa. You rarely go all the way out in one direction without doubling back.*

THOMPSON: I don't think about it. It's part of the vocabulary I use. I wouldn't compare myself to a jazz musician in terms of ability, but a jazz musician would play eight bars of a tune fairly diatonically or chromatically, and then eight bars of blues runs around the same chords. It just gives it a different flavor, and sometimes it helps with the tension of the music. If you're building a solo, tension's very important—in the sense of the notes you leave out and the notes you work around. You want to take different scales and sometimes use a lot of different elements to achieve the desired effect.

MUSICIAN: *Let's look at "Love In A Faithless Country." It's a rare song because it maintains a sense of* dread*—lyrically and musically—without tipping over into corny monster movie music. It's not a* version *of something like "Thriller," it really is the thing. Dylan talks about how hard it is, when you realize*

DARING TO REMEMBER

I'm *interested* in the stuff," Richard Thompson sighs when asked about his equipment. "But I can't always remember. 'What model AMS was it out of fifty different models?' I don't know!" From what we reconstructed under hypnosis, Thompson plays a stock '58 Stratocaster, a '56 Telecaster and a Martin 00018. He played a Fender 12-string electric on "Dead Man's Handle," but his real enthusiasm is for his pal Danny Ferrington's prototypical new thin-bodied acoustic, marketed as the Kramer Ferrington, which Richard uses onstage and used in the studio for the two acoustic tunes on *Daring Adventures*. "The body's about two inches deep," Thompson explains, "but it's acoustic. It's shaped like a Telecaster or Stratocaster. It comes acoustic/electric now, but it's basically a very quiet acoustic guitar that fits in an electric guitar case. It's a little quiet because it's so small, but it sounds great. One way of looking at it is as an acoustic guitar for electric guitar players, but I think it's a very versatile guitar—the first of its kind." Richard is pretty sure he uses Ernie Ball strings and Fender amps.

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"If the twentieth century disappeared would we be able to stand the change of pace? The age we live in may be terrible, but we have to live in it. For me it sets up an endless conflict between wanting to be in the now and wanting to be out of it."

you're writing a song that opens new ground, to stay right on the track and complete the song without losing the trail, without taking an easy way out, slipping back into a familiar style.

THOMPSON: That's a song that started with the lyric being recited. It's a recitational lyric. There's a great traditional Scottish singer named Jeannie Robinson who used to occasionally recite songs. They're more like poems or folk tales, meant to be recited in a very lilting way. I used to love that, and I heard this song that way—lilted: "*Al*ways *move* in pairs..." The song doesn't have a real tune and it couldn't take a real tune. There'd be too much movement. It has to almost drone in a hypnotic way. The lyrics impose some real limitations on the instrumentation and melody. The melody has to be real simple. The harmony, to my ear, has to be atonal and monotone to achieve the effect. It's either got to be that or it's got to be Schönberg, it's got to be twelve-tone where every interval you sing is completely weird. But then I think you'd lose the impact of the lyric. I think that happens in classical music a lot—the lyric becomes indistinct. [*Smiles*] This is one of the advantages popular music has over classical music, for my money.

MUSICIAN: *It's interesting how you keep the song on that ominous track. Even the jokes—the double entendre "always keep your tools well out of sight"—don't break the dark mood.*

THOMPSON: The humor is very displaced. It's all jarred and jagged because the character's psyche is jarred and jagged. I appreciate very much what Dylan says and I wish I could do what he's saying. It's difficult. I think it's true of this sort of song in the sense that it was hard to not compromise the song, it was hard to not turn it into something more acceptable, more forgiving. It's hard to leave it out there as a statement of something that's really unpleasant. The temptation is to round it off in some sense, to homogenize it. That was the hard thing. That's a frightening song for me.

MUSICIAN: *That's an extreme example, but a lot of your songs have images of soldiers and guns. Even some of your prettiest songs—"Devonside," "How Can I Ever Be Simple Again?"—are set against that background.*

THOMPSON: Sometimes the effect of a love song is stronger through contrast, against a really ravaged background. You could write a song about a prostitute who's forty-five years old and totally ravaged—but who has something about her that keeps you spellbound in spite of what she is and what she looks like. There's something very moving about that. Rather than just "She's the most beautiful woman in the world." I think what's also effective is a pastoral song, a song about the natural simplicity of beauty. "How Will I Ever Be Simple" is a song of contrast—it's about the confusion in a man's mind between his life and the terrible experiences life shows him, and what he sees in this girl—a real pastoral simplicity. She's a figure from Christopher Marlowe or something—she's out of the past. He's confused by her innocence and her reality. He's very complicated but he yearns for her simplicity.

Whether he could stand it if he had it is another matter. If the twentieth century disappeared would we really be able to stand the change of pace? Could we unplug and slow down? Trying to unplug and slow down occasionally is a very disturbing experience. If you say, "I'm going to get out of the city and live on the farm for a few years with no electricity," that can be a hard experience—you feel like you're missing the age you live in. The age we live in may be terrible, but we have to live in it. And for me it does set up an endless conflict between wanting to be in the now and wanting to be out of it. It's a strange thing. It's twentieth-century fever.

MUSICIAN: *You went through a period of withdrawal and spiritual reassessment, quit the music business and came back. Do you feel that period of withdrawal was necessary to the work you're doing now?*

THOMPSON: I don't know if it was really a period of withdrawal. I didn't want to play music for a while. For me it was real beneficial 'cause I realized some of the reasons I did play music and why it was so important to me. It was something I needed to do. I need to express things through music and communicate. So it was really nice to have that time. I mean, I was still *playing* music, but I wasn't touring. It was probably a couple of years, three years.

The thing is, I really enjoy playing. I'm one of the three people who enjoys touring; I really like playing live and I like making records. So to do these things is not a burden or something. And I have to keep earning money to pay the child support.

MUSICIAN: *The songs on* Daring Adventures *are very straightforward, unlike many of the songs on the two albums before it. For instance, "A Poison Heart And A Twisted Memory" had a jaunty feel, like grandpa on St. Patrick's Day, married to a very depressing lyric. The irony is nice, but it keeps the listener at a bit of a distance.*

THOMPSON: We may have a different perspective. What to you sounds like your grandfather on St. Patrick's Day to me sounds like rock 'n' roll. It sounds heavy and aggressive to me. But I appreciate what you're saying. The music I like playing is somewhere between traditional music and rock 'n' roll. It's just what I like to hear.

MUSICIAN: *"Little Blue Number," on the last album, took a shot at fashion-hounds, but it was nothing compared to "A Bone Through Her Nose." Everyone loves the line, "Her boyfriend plays in Scritti Politti."*

THOMPSON: I haven't been sued yet. "A Bone Through Her Nose" is about a certain breed of English girl who comes from a fairly good family, gets out of school at about eighteen and has a couple of years of token rebellion. She becomes a social sort of anarchistic animal, extremely fashion-conscious in the most downbeat possible way. Then, at about twenty-two or twenty-three, it's time to get married. So she marries Henry who has a very nice house in Smith Square and a charming manor house in Berkshire. They've got dogs and a couple of horses. It's frightfully good. Yet in their *rebellious* time some of these sorts become quite serious media figures and spokespersons for their generation and stuff. And it's all a total sham.

MUSICIAN: *Am I right in saying that though you are no longer involved in the Sufi fundamentalist sect of the mid-70s, you are still a Muslim?*

THOMPSON: That's fair enough.

MUSICIAN: *But you had no moment of conversion?*

THOMPSON: No, I think that you are who you are. I've always

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been me somehow, and if I'm a Muslim then I always was. That's who I see myself as and I always was that. I think I was always moving in the right direction, actually. Since I was a teenager, anyway, I've always wanted to get further into the right direction. I kind of recognized that that's who I was, and those were the people with whom I felt empathy. It's more *recognition*.

MUSICIAN: *An awful lot of your songs—"Man In Need," "When The Spell Is Broken"—imply that the world is a dark place, and you can have moments of happiness, but ultimately we come in alone and go out alone.*

THOMPSON: Absolutely. We come in alone and go out alone. But does this make it a dark place? I don't think it's dark and I don't think it's depressing. I think I write a lot of songs about the folly of possession, about trying to possess the world. If you want to possess the world or possess people then the world will be a dark depressing place—it will be a disaster.

MUSICIAN: *If you can get yourself to a pure enough state to accept that you cannot possess things or places or people—doesn't it leave you awfully disconnected? What do you hook onto?*

THOMPSON: You can enjoy things without possessing them. Some of these songs might be directed toward myself; I'm trying to tell myself something.

MUSICIAN: *Do you mistrust good fortune?*

THOMPSON: No, not at all. I really don't. I enjoy good fortune most of the time. I probably have to stop myself getting into a frame of mind in the music business where I see myself at a certain level. I could kind of get used to being on the edge of the music business. I'm always saying to people, "Here we are down here and there's those guys up there." I tend to look at the music business in terms of monetary status, which I wish I didn't do. 'Cause that's stupid. But that's life, and change is uncomfortable. And good fortune is much harder to handle than bad fortune. Ⓜ

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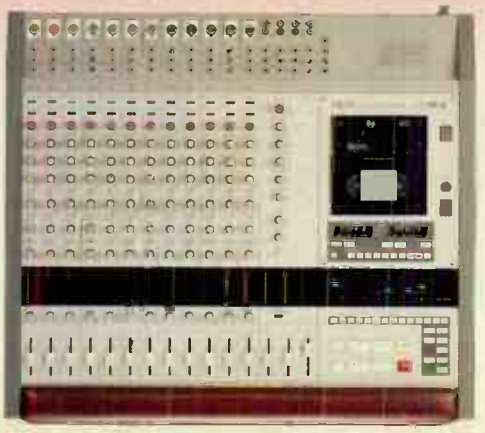

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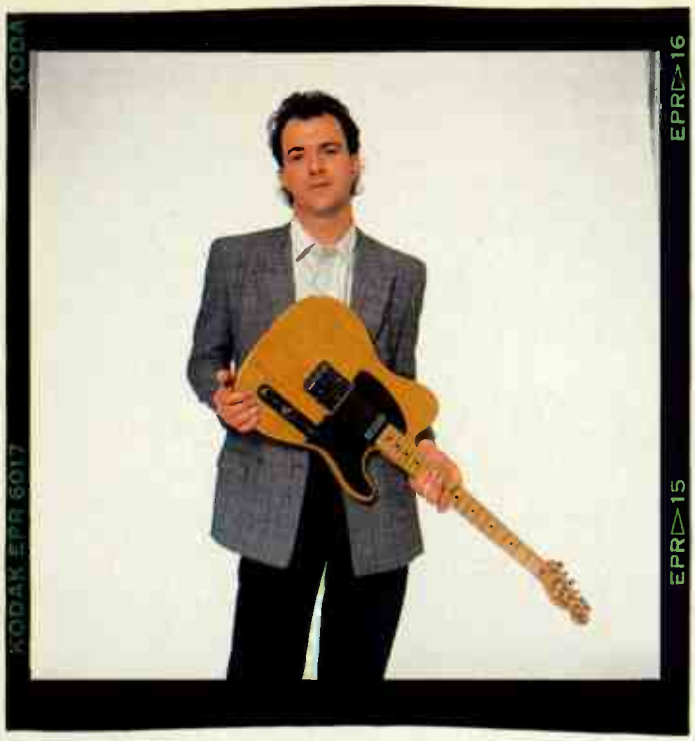
THE NEW PRETENDERS
CHRISSIE'S 20/20 HYNDE-SIGHT

BY VIC GARBARINI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVIES & STARR

Goddammit! Chrissie Hynde collapses into her chair and commences staring dejectedly at the floor. Cradling her Telecaster in her arm, she ignores the members of her band standing before her, poised to launch into the next number. It's the first day of rehearsals for the new Pretenders line-up, and it's hard to tell just who or what has ticked her off. They've just finished working through a rendition of "Tradition Of Love" from the new album, *Get Close*. It's a modal, raga-esque rocker that recalls the Rolling Stones filtered through the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Already their ensemble playing manages the neat trick of seeming both tight and fluid simultaneously; these guys already sound like veterans.

Which, of course, they are. Lanky, dreadlocked T.M. Stevens has played with everyone from Bob Geldof to the aforementioned Mahavishnu. His meaty, pick 'n' slap lines are both rhythmically supportive and melodically inventive—a damn neat trick for any bass player. Good-natured and diminutive, drummer Blair Cunningham offers deceptively simple, rock-steady support coupled with incredible versatility. "He's amazingly consistent," offers guitarist Robbie McIntosh, shaking his head in bemused admiration. "Toss



Robbie McIntosh was encouraged to step out.

three tempo changes at him, and he'll remember each one of them flawlessly the next day." As the youngest of nine brothers, all drummers, you could say it's in his blood. "Ten, actually," Blair corrects me. "My oldest brother, Carl, was Otis Redding's drummer. He went down in the same plane crash."

On synths and keyboards, the redoubtable Bernie Worrell serves up the same multidimensional colorations that vitalized the P-Funk mob and David Byrne's expanding Head band. Finally, there's McIntosh, the only holdover from the Pretenders' previous incarnation. The late, lamented Jim Honeyman-Scott had lobbied to have Robbie added to the band as a second guitarist. When the former succumbed to a drug overdose, McIntosh became his friend's reluctant replacement. On 1984's *Learning To Crawl* the new guitarist proved his mettle, paralleling Scott's chiming, melodic playing while adding his own bite and grit to the formula.

But it's on *Get Close* that McIntosh comes fully into his own, dominating the album musically and carving a niche for himself next to the premiere guitar stylist of the day. Tastefully filtered through chorus, compressors and an ancient wah-wah pedal, his stinging, blues-drenched modalisms get stretched and pulled into other dimensions like some bizarre aural taffy. The result is akin to liquid fire; it's oddly reassuring to find someone taking up the gauntlet of improvisation that was more or less abandoned in the wake of punk's visceral reactions against indulgent guitar noodlings.

A killer band; a remarkable album. So what's bugging Ms. Hynde? There is, of course, the matter of Martin Chambers' absence. The original Pretenders drummer had soldiered on after the dismissal and subsequent drug-related death of bassist Pete Farndon, and the similar demise of guitarist Honeyman-Scott. But by the time the reconstituted band (with bassist Malcolm Foster) played Live Aid, Chrissie knew something wasn't meshing. Things came to a head on the first day of the new album's recording session in Bearsville. Streetwise and straightforward, producer Jimmy Iovine and mixmaster Bob Clearmountain pulled Hynde aside and confirmed what she already knew in her gut: The rhythm section was just not cutting it. A number of session players were brought in. Eventually the split became permanent. Everyone agrees that Chambers handled it well. "Just don't make it seem we're saying anything negative about Martin," pleads Hynde. "It really wasn't like that. He's a great musician and still one of my best friends. But the feel I was looking for just wasn't there." With this legacy of death and dismissals, a little negative nostalgia would be understandable. But no, there's something else astir here.

Hynde is suddenly on her feet. Distracted and tense, she nervously runs her hands through her hair. "It isn't fair," she blurts—her voice racked with genuine anguish and frustration. "My little girl is going to her first dress-up party tonight. She's dressed as a fairy princess...and I know I should be there with her. Not off wasting time at photo sessions, and going to rehearsals and...goddammit!"

MUSICIAN: *The first thing I thought when I heard* Get Close *was, "She's letting those guys really play." It occurred to me what a strange thing that is because the whole punk ethic—even though it was ten years ago, there's still this thing hanging in the air that anyone who plays more than eight bars of anything is being self-indulgent.*

HYNDE: Well, lots of times they are.

MUSICIAN: *Was there any more structure, or less structure, to the arrangements on this album? In terms of drumming and guitar playing, the players are allowed a lot of room to move.*

HYNDE: Well, Robbie is a great, great guitar player. The bass player and drummer we had before were very good but they weren't giving Robbie...Robbie had to concentrate a little bit more on holding the rhythm section together. He couldn't stretch himself as much as I would have liked. I'm a real guitar fan and I always like to think it's a guitar-based band—or at least it always has been.

"I realized the band just didn't have the feel when we couldn't go from a big arena to a club. It happens to a lot of bands, but I didn't want it to happen to me!"

We were gonna do a warm-up rehearsal for Live Aid in a club. At this little rehearsal someone suggested why don't we do a gig here tonight, do a set in the club? We hadn't played for like six months, or even longer. We asked the band there if we could go on and do a set before them; they were cool about that. Since we were in a club, I said, "Let's try a couple of things more like a club set"; we had come from playing places like Madison Square Garden, that size. There was one song called "Soul Of The Man," the B-side of Fontella Bass' "Rescue Me" single, a very bluesy thing. Robbie's like a real blues player. I always have to steer him away from playing blues on everything. He's the guy at a party who ends up at five in the

morning looking through the album collection and pulling out all the Chuck Berry records. He's like just a guitar bore. If I leave the studio for ten minutes to go to the toilet, I come back and it's "the blues," y'know? I'm like, "I can't trust you for ten minutes!" So this day I said, "How about let's do a blues song?" 'Cause we're in a club, why not? So Robbie was wailing away, and that day I realized that this band just didn't have the feel. We couldn't transpose our thing from a great big arena to a club! I guess it happens to a lot of bands, but I didn't want it to happen to me! I thought we were gonna lose a lot of feel and skill if we couldn't do that. It really stuck in my head, that incident. After we got through the first verse I said, "Cut! Let's just go through our set." I didn't say any more about it. But I could tell that feel wasn't there.

Over the next few months I tried to write some songs. We went in with Steve Lillywhite and began to record a song. Something wasn't there. I was about to have a baby, so I wasn't all there either. Fortunately Jim [Kerr] was there and I could talk to him about it, though it probably drove him crazy. It really bothered me. I never really got the band back on the rails. When Jimmy Scott...A band isn't just four great players. It's

Ex-P-Funkateer and Head keysman Bernie Worrell

this balance thing, it's astrological; whatever it is, there's something magical, and once you replace someone everything changes. Once you replace two people it's a different tune, nearly! So not only did I have to replace Pete Farndon, it was just—the mind boggles at the magnitude of this, to get this thing back together. I think I've got something together now, but now if someone joins the band I say, "Hey, do you want to play with me for the next year?" Otherwise people would be too frightened. I'm not superstitious, but....

MUSICIAN: *What wasn't there?*

HYNDE: Feel. Not only that, there wasn't a certain kind of passion. Too much passion is obviously a bad thing; we won't get into the finer points of that. There was enthusiasm, everyone was into the trip. So would 10,000 other guys in the same situation. But whatever it was—I'm probably very bossy and aggressive—I am!—but I've also got a certain something to offer. But I need this feedback; there has to be this band thing going, and it wasn't happening. Robbie's a very quiet personality. Martin was a more quiet personality. Pete and Jimmy were the real crazy ones. So I ended up with all these quiet personalities and it was like [*snores*]. The vibe was gone.

MUSICIAN: *I always got the feeling that Martin and Jimmy were really close mates. I wonder if that made it more difficult for Martin afterward.*

HYNDE: They kept Martin in line. I don't want to sound like I'm criticizing Martin, but if Martin would have gone to the keyboard and started playing one of his own songs, Jimmy and Pete would have both spontaneously gotten up and walked out of the room. They were actually mean to him, they were like sadistic schoolboys. Even if we were on television, if Martin started to explain something they'd both get up and walk off. Or if Martin started to talk to them, they'd cut him off. Once Pete and Jimmy were out of the picture, Martin started writing his own songs, trying to work on his own stuff and get his keyboards. If Jimmy had still been around it just wouldn't have happened, they wouldn't have tolerated that. Again, it was this balanced situation that kept everyone in line. Like Jimmy brought the melody out of me 'cause I was very punky. I force guitar players into another direction than their natural bents. It was already getting out of whack with Pete and that's why we fired Pete. I thought we could've gotten it on the rails if we'd audition someone. I didn't realize that Martin was the weak link at this point because the Pete thing was so upfront. Of course, after you tour for six months any band's going to start sounding great. You get your chops together and you're in stride, playing the same songs every night.

As I was leaving Live Aid I saw this guy walk in front of me with this real old Pretenders badge on. I thought, "That's pretty cool." He turned around, saw me and went [*breathlessly*], "Wow!" He was knocked out to see me and I was like, "Hello?" He said, "You're my favorite!" and I was like, "Oh, great! What do you do?" He goes, "I'm a drummer. I was playing tonight." There was something so immediate about him, so warm and friendly and rock 'n' roll. I said, "Well, we must get together sometime." Somewhere it was already in my head that I needed to try something with some other people. I'm not a guitar player who can just go and jam with other people. I only play my three chords to write songs. Since I'd been in the Pretenders I'd never been in that situation with musicians where I've gotta play my guitar to show someone how it goes. 'Cause I'm shy about my inability to really express myself that way, so I've gotten even worse and lazier.

Well, this guy's name was Steve Jordan and he lived in New York. When I came to New York I called him and said, "What are you doin'? Meet me in this coffee shop." Bang! Twenty minutes later he was there. Steve took me on the subway—I'd never been on the subway in New York—over to his place. It was all so exciting for me, it made me feel young again! I was kinda riveted by this guy's whole thing. He said, "Let's get together, we'll have a blow, I've got this friend." It was this other kid named Charlie Drake—when I say "kid," he was like twenty years old, playing bass. I kind of hogged the show because I can't follow anyone else, so I was playing all these old songs. Well, these guys were huge fans of mine! I forget that someone out there has that relationship with me; I'm on my own little insulated trip. So I was playing and I could tell they were really diggin' it. It was fun! I said to them, "You guys are fantastic together. Why aren't you in a band?" They said, "Well, because we've been waiting for you." And I don't even know these guys! But somewhere I really believed they meant that.

I played with them for a couple of days. I would go back to my room and start writing songs, and I was all excited.

After the party was over I went back to England, got rehearsals booked, went in to work with the band, everyone showed up, we played—it was crap! There was no vibe. Then I started getting depressed again, thinking, "Wow, I'm not inspired, I've lost it." In the next few months I cancelled our rehearsals and went back to New York: "Hi, remember me?" Back down playing with those guys: a few joints, a lotta laughs. Then I'd go home and write a song, 'cause I was vibed up. It made me feel like I was getting a band together. They were both sitting there, wondering, "Well?" They would have joined me, I know. But...I thought about it: "Look, I've got a band, what am I doing? I'm losing my marbles, or what?" Plus every time I make one of these moves I've got nannies and kids and all this; it's not like I've got just an overnight bag, like in the old days. Every move is a major upheaval.

So I went back with my songs, worked 'em out with the band, really tried to get the thing together, thought it was pretty good and went into the studio. We recorded "Room Full Of Mirrors." When we went into the studio to do "When I Change My Life," no one seemed to have any vision or particular input. This had happened when we were in the studio with Chris Thomas as well. He used to say to me when he dropped me off at night, "I'm doing all the work! No one has any ideas!" That's why with this new record I wanted to just see where I stood. It's one thing if you can go onstage and because you're such a famous superstar you can get away with anything. But can you actually be great just sitting on a stool playing guitar

T.M. Stevens: Mahavishnu meets Geldof.

and singing? Can you hold anyone's attention? I don't know if I can. I wanted to work out what my strengths and weaknesses are. I don't want Chris Thomas to wheel me out on a stretcher again. I just felt, time for a change.

I met Jimmy Iovine through Jim Kerr. Jim had told Jimmy, "Chrissie's not gonna work with Steve Lillywhite. She's still not sure what she's gonna do." We met when Jimmy was in London. He talked to me for a long time; in fact, he was like a psychiatrist or something. It would have never occurred to me that he could be interested in working with me because I seemed so out of touch, I didn't know what I was doing with my band. But as he was leaving, I said, "Well, anyway, when I do go ahead and make an album, would you be interested in working with me?" He goes, "You name the time and place, and I'm there." That always blows my mind, that people are into it. So twelve hours later, the phone rings. "Hi, it's Jimmy! I just got to New York." This happened every single day after that. "How are the songs?" It became this force in my life that came in and picked me up. He'd say, "How are the songs?" I'd say, "Songs? Oh, I haven't thought about that." He's going, "You know, songs 'cause you're a songwriter. You know when you write your occupation on a passport, you put 'songwriter.' That's what you do!" And he just called me every day.

The first day in the studio we put everything down in demo form and listened back to it. I kept looking over to see the reactions of the guys and they were just...listening. I was thinking, "Oh my god," it was becoming a nightmare for me. Because I was so proud of my band; the Pretenders had always been such a vibey great band, and I could tell that these guys—there was no vibe! I was like, "Fuck me! This is terrible!" Jimmy took me aside and said, "We're in trouble. We can make a good album with this; we're not going to make a *great* album here." I said, "Look, pal, start earnin' your money. See you tomorrow." And I just walked out. I threw the towel in and just gave it to Jimmy. That was the great thing about Jimmy: If there was a problem, "you fix it"—and it's done! The next day he met with them and said, "We're gonna try some other musicians." He got on the phone, we got some people down, we made the rest of the album. We spent only twelve weeks in the studio.

MUSICIAN: *Can you point to a song that changed through the relationship between you and Jimmy Iovine?*

HYNDE: "When I Change My Life." We had tried to do it with Steve Lillywhite; I tried to do it different ways. It was a song we had from our second album, it was that old. But it was too much like "Birds Of Paradise"; no one wanted to touch it. If someone doesn't particularly like something, that's it, I won't mention it again because I'm not that confident about what I do most of the time. We've been trying to do this song different ways for years. We tried this crazy Otis-Redding-goes-punk version of "When I Change My Life," which Jimmy heard. He can't handle anything that's weird. He goes, "Hang on, wait a minute." I said, "Look, I'll show the guys how it goes." So I sat down, got a guitar and played the whole song. Jimmy looks over and says, "Do it exactly like that! The whole thing revolves around the acoustic guitar; that's the sound." We went out and recorded it in twenty minutes. We did the whole thing once live, with the vocal. We came in, listened to it, and it sounded amazing. I went back and double-tracked the vocal; that took five minutes. The vocal you hear is just me doing it twice in a row, with maybe one patch. Robbie did one guitar overdub. The keyboard player Wix sprinkled some fairy dust on it. And that was it. In twenty minutes we had this song that sounds like this huge production. At this point I felt I connected with Jimmy.

MUSICIAN: *One of the songs on the album that hits strongest is "How Much Did You Get For Your Soul?"*

HYNDE: I was a product of the 1960s. I used to get *Ramparts* magazine. Hello, Eldridge Cleaver! James Baldwin, are you out there? Anyone heard of Martin Luther King? There are no leaders today. Or maybe there are and I'm out of touch because I'm not interested in politics. But nobody can stand up. Why would someone who sold more records than anyone in history get up after not saying anything for three years and say, "I'd

like to thank Mr. Enrico for giving me the honor of representing Pepsi-Cola for the next three years, thank you," and leave?

MUSICIAN: *But you know the answer to that. You can be a multimillionaire and feel like you'll never have enough money.*

HYNDE: But on this song, although I'm talking about an American problem on the face of it, and a black problem on the face of it.... Say you're writing a song about your addiction to heroin: Instead you say, "I've been loving you so long I can't stop now," and try to make it look like it's about a woman, 'cause it's a little bit more palatable. "How Much Did You Get For Your Soul?" is about a spiritual problem, and that's all it's about. Actually, the story of this song is very much like Europe opposed to America. The English will knock Americans a lot, but open a McDonald's in a corner and they flock there. So this is not a question of black and white, it's not a question of America. I know I'm going to take some stick because people will say, "Well, what about Michael Jackson, blah blah blah." This is a spiritual problem. "Take the money and run": where, why, how, for what? At the moment nobody's saying anything that I can tell, and it really annoys me. The 60s might have been silly—I thought it was pretty far out at the time—but at least people were talking about all sorts of subversive things. I mean, Country Joe & the Fish: "When your boy comes home in a box." People don't say things like that anymore.

MUSICIAN: *Literally they don't. But I think something different is happening. Now when I looked at the lyrics on this album—and I don't think you did this consciously—the whole thing has an inner order to it that I think your basic self or unconscious put together. Do you realize that four of these songs have moon imagery in them?*

HYNDE: I didn't, but somebody else mentioned that, and I don't know what it means anyway.

MUSICIAN: *And "Room Full Of Mirrors"—the moon is a mirror, that's archetypal imagery—ends the album. The moon is the archetypal feminine in all of us. You're somebody that—obviously your personality comes across as brash...*

HYNDE: I don't like to come across as brash.

MUSICIAN: *But that's the point. You don't like to, and the other part comes across in the unconscious. All this moon imagery is quite extraordinary, and the ocean, which is a symbol of the unconscious, is always with it too. It's like a striving for wholeness, the other part of the self coming out to say—*

HYNDE: I don't even want to hear all this, because I think it's gonna make me self-conscious about my writing in the future. This is certainly reading a lot into it. I mean, it could be right, but it's like astrological. It's not—

Drummer Blair Cunningham: from Memphis to Haircut 100

thought it was just phenomenal. She's the worst singer you've heard in your life. I know she thinks her voice is brilliant, which is a delightful thing about her. I tracked her down. She's living in a commune called East Wind Community in Missouri, making nut butter and hammocks. The people around her didn't even know she played or wrote. I said, "Look, would you come out to San Francisco? You can record all the rest of your songs. I'm gonna get you a ticket and fly you out, I've booked a studio, you can hang out with us, whatever you want." She said, "Great." I was on the road and I called her about five days later than I said I would. I said, "I'm sorry, I've been really busy. Everything's set." She said, "Oh, I've already made my plans for next week. I can't change my plans now." I said, "Oh, okay." So I sent her a few hundred dollars and she said she'd record stuff. She sent me those tapes; they weren't very well recorded. But that was her attitude. I had to publish her because she wasn't published. It was the hardest song for us to

"A woman's strength is in her chastity, and a man's weakness is his pride. Sometimes I wish I had more of an ego to fire me up and get me out there."

MUSICIAN: *But look at the songs you picked that weren't yours. Both of them have moon imagery. Now I'm saying you didn't consciously do that. If you talk about it too much you lose it. Why did you pick "Hymn To Her"? Who is the songwriter Meg Keene?*

HYNDE: She's someone I went to high school with. She was the oddball of the school. I was very friendly with her and a few other people; we had our own little circle. She played piano and was very jazz-oriented. She was quite an amazing person, actually. I hadn't seen her for like fifteen years, but I bumped into someone in San Francisco who was in that circle of friends, and she gave me this tape of her songs. I listened to the tape and record because it was so off-the-wall; there's no time signature. She's got some other songs that are *amazing*. Annie Lennox heard it and said, "That's the best songwriting I've heard."

MUSICIAN: *There's a part of you that knows what this imagery is about. You can't always think it out. But if it appears that much, and a lot of these images mean the same thing on a deep level to everybody, and your songwriting reaches a lot of people, something in you is tapping something universal. What the moon generally stands for is the feminine aspect, the receptive, calm, loving aspect. Does that make sense?*

HYNDE: I'm not gonna go into that. I don't want to talk about

FOLLOWING THE BOSS' ORDERS

Robbie McIntosh says, "I wind up usually acting as Chrissie's musical translator for the band. She'll often say something like 'I want the solo to be eight bars long,' but she doesn't really know what a bar is." He claims that Hynde encouraged him to step out more on *Get Close*. "I don't think there's anything excessive about anybody's playing on this album," McIntosh says. "It's loose, but it suits the mood and the material." He agrees that Hynde often has to nudge him out of his natural tendency to play the blues, which partly explains his use of the relatively unfashionable wah-wah pedal on the album. "It's a Vox Crybaby, just like Hendrix used," McIntosh explains. "They can be very expressive if used tastefully—like a moving parametric eq. They've been ignored for too many years now." Robbie cites a number of 60s superstars including Clapton, Hendrix, George Harrison, Pete Townshend and Jeff Beck as seminal influences. "I used a Gretsch Country Gentleman on the solo on the single 'Don't Get Me Wrong' in order to get that Beatles feel. It's sharp but quite breathy." His weapon of choice at the moment is a '57 Strat supplemented by a Roland Chorus Echo and a Yamaha SPX-90 multi-effects unit. He's quite happy using either Guild or Ernie Ball strings.

McIntosh confesses that he was torn between his loyalty to the old Chambers-Foster rhythm section and the fact that he knew Hynde wanted and needed a different sound. "She was after a more immediate feel, a deeper groove and more versatility. She told me she was impressed recently by records by Madonna and Prince." Besides his work with the Pretenders, Robbie's done some session work recently on solo albums by both Daryl Hall and Roger Daltrey. According to McIntosh, Jimmy Iovine and Bob Clearmountain were the perfect production team to help the Pretenders move into a more fluid, less-structured sound. "Iovine knows exactly what he wants, but he doesn't know exactly how to get it. So he lets you get on with it, and as soon as he hears something he wants, he goes, 'Right, stop!' He's very impressionistic; he doesn't work the board much. Bob is just the opposite, so they complement each other. But with Jimmy it's pure vibe."

T.M. Stevens "started out playing funk, then moved into jazz-rock fusion with people like John McLaughlin, Miles and Al DiMeola. I was called on to play not only melodically, but rhythmically as well. With Mahavishnu it was the drummer's role to play along with the guitar," he continues, "while mine was to keep the rhythm with Shankar's violin. So I developed a bass fingerpicking technique that's a variation on thumb-slapping." T.M. favors Spector basses because "the way the knobs are I can dial as much bass or treble as I need, and also the pickup selector switches rotate, and they have that high-end pop that's necessary in today's music." He also utilizes a Ripley five-string bass on the album, "to avoid having to tune my E-string lower to get those low notes." Stevens, who's also played with Billy Squier, Alison Moyet and Bob Geldof, is a recent convert to LaBella roundwound strings.

Somewhat intimidated by having all those older brother drummers, **Blair Cunningham** had decided to become an accountant. "But it didn't work out," he sighs. "I had these rhythms inside me head." A native of Memphis, Blair has resided in England since 1978, where he has played with bands like Haircut 100 and Echo & the Bunnymen, "replacing a rhythm box. How low can you get in this business, huh?" he giggles. And how does he handle Hynde's legendary non-technical instruction technique? "She can hear it and see it, but her translations often don't come out very clear...but I usually click right into what she wants. We were working on a reggae track and she requested 'less bass, no, lesser than that...one note, no, uh, two notes.... Act like you have a big spliff and you're laying back and you've got nothing to worry about.' It was amazing," he chuckles. "But I knew what she wanted." Blair is a Sonor drum man, sporting 12-, 13-, 15- and 16-inch toms, 22-inch bass drum and a 14-inch snare. The five cymbals and high hats are all by Sabian. "I'm looking for a massive endorsement," he adds.

Bernie Worrell claims that working with the Pretenders is not all that different from his assignments with Talking Heads and P-Funk. "Like David Byrne and Clinton, Jimmy Iovine lets musicians play whatever they feel. Then afterward he'll edit whatever he feels is useful. Often my whole original track would stay." On *Get Close* Worrell depended on his Yamaha DX7, a Roland Jupiter 8, an Emulator II for sampling horn parts, and a venerable Hammond organ with what he calls Bob Clearmountain's "exotic miking setup. Bob sets the mikes on the top, bottom and both sides of the Leslie," explains Worrell.

Chrissie plays her Fender Telecaster through a Fender Twin.

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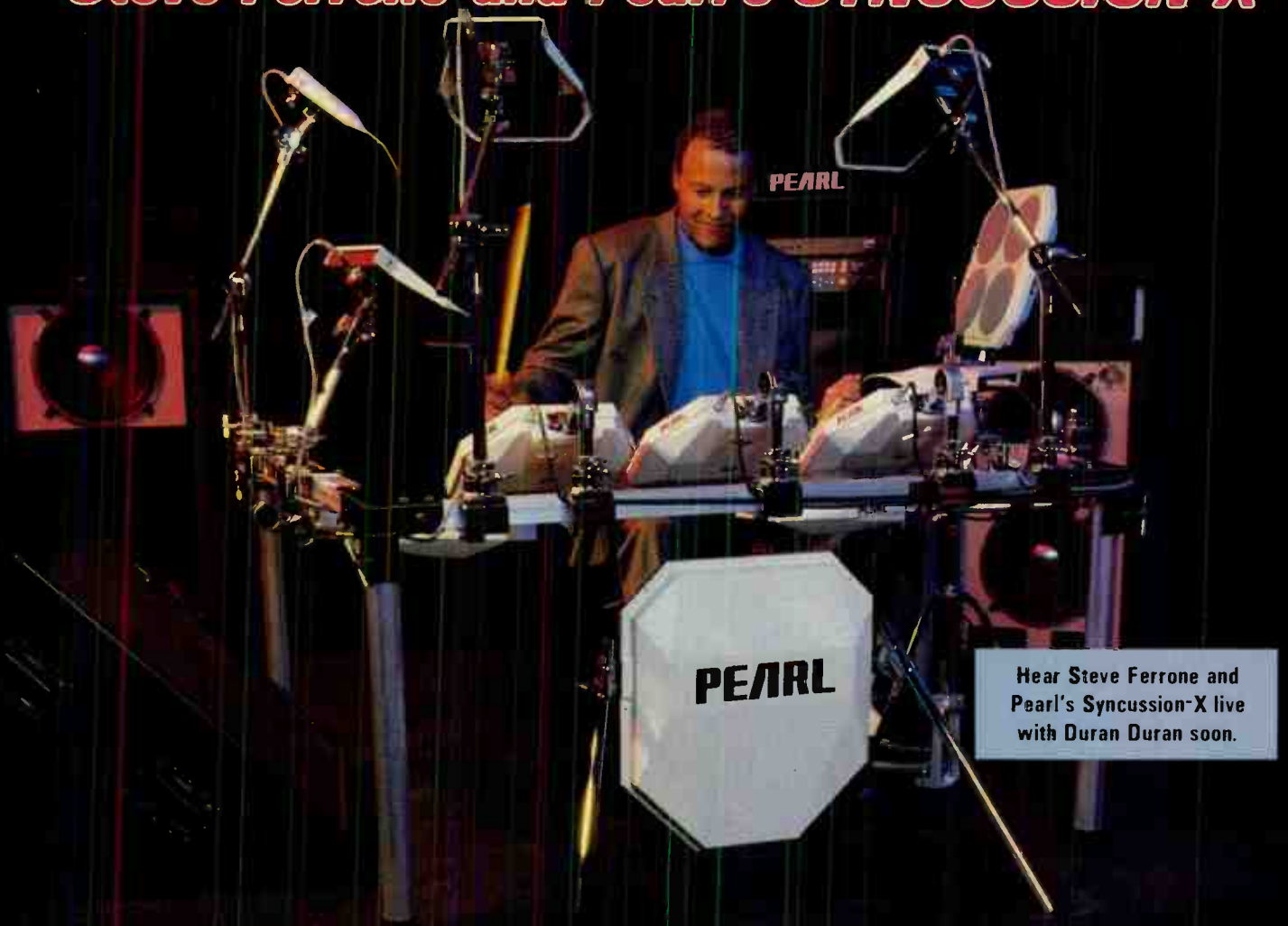

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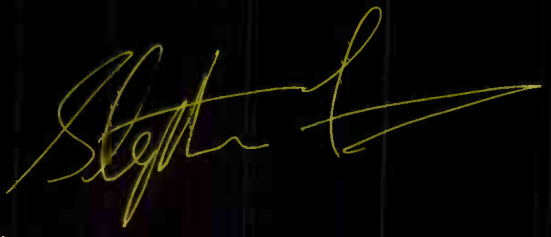

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the meaning of my songs; I never have.

MUSICIAN: *The song "Dance!" is a mixed metaphor. Dance is generally considered as getting out of our linear minds, we're liberating ourselves. And yet the imagery here is also very dark. You're talking about politicians, people using a certain magnetism which dance symbolizes, but using it wrong, using it to screw us over. There's an interesting black-against-white tension in that. I don't know if it was intended.*

HYNDE: I don't think I have enough time to intend all this, y'know?

MUSICIAN: *You don't intend from your head. If you sat there and said, "I'm gonna organize all this, I'm gonna have these images all work," it wouldn't work that way.*

HYNDE: I'm hip. I can dig that. You think this is like a coherent album that really makes sense. This is all news to me.

MUSICIAN: *I'll tell you what my self feels, my intuitive. I don't know if "My Baby" is about your children, but I think it probably is, more than about a lover.*

HYNDE: Uh huh.

MUSICIAN: *"Baby" is also the baby in yourself—not intended—new life, something being born. "When I Change My Life": This is what you really think about yourself and your outer personality: "I'm kind of an awful person, I've got these habits I shouldn't have." But there's a wish coming from underneath, from the baby, that you want to be like this. "Light Of The Moon": What is the moon? The moon is a part of yourself you need to be in touch with to complete yourself. The moon is receptive, graceful, not just female. Then there's "Dance!": Dancing is an activity of the moon part of the self, not of the mind. Then you get "Tradition Of Love," with more moon imagery here, and some religious references. I think there's a part of you that's looking for Eastern religions and finding it interesting.*

HYNDE: I've been into that for twenty years. That's my thing.

MUSICIAN: *On the second side, "Don't Get Me Wrong," "I Remember You" and "How Much Did You Get For Your Soul?" are all more looking outward; you're talking to somebody. "Chill Factor" is about an abandoned woman, but what it's really about is the abandoned woman in all of us. In "Hymn To Her" you're trying to listen to that part of yourself where all these songs come from. The reason you put "Room Full Of Mirrors" last is that the album is a room full of mirrors. The moon is the ultimate mirror; it mirrors the light of the sun.*

HYNDE: Wow, this album sounds like it really works. But it's crap. Let me ask you a couple of questions. What do you think of Prince?

MUSICIAN: [Pause] *It takes a lot of courage for any of you people to become a vehicle for what's rolling around in the collective unconscious. Popular songs can be for a culture what dreams are for the individual: a deeper self layer sending out symbols. It was very easy to get lost in Prince's eroticism. He was working through something that had to do with the difference between sex and love, and integrating them. The danger is, when somebody does that and gets all that attention, it's very difficult for the ego not to go "Right!" and take it all in.*

HYNDE: Yeah, but they're men. Women don't have that kind of ego. A woman doesn't have the problem of pride that men have. A woman's strength is in her chastity, and a man's weakness is his pride.

Sometimes I wish I had more of an ego to fire me up and get me out there. Sometimes it takes a blow to my ego—I don't even know if it's a blow to my ego because it's very hard for me to determine what ego is. It's a very male thing. For example,

I was going to do *The Terry Wogan Show.* Normally I would just go in, wear my usual gear, whatever, and do the show. But some singles reviews came out and someone happened to bring one to my attention that was something like, "So the Pretenders are back. So who cares? Her vocals have seen better days. Besides, I lost all respect for her ever since she could sleep with a jerk like Jim Kerr." So initially I thought, "Screw you!" Then I laughed; I thought, that's so over the top that you had to laugh. I know if Jim was there I wouldn't want him to see that. I thought, "Hang on, man. That's my husband you're talking about. That's the father of my child you're talking about. That's my goddamn *single* you're talking about!" I laughed, but it still pissed me off enough that when I went on to do this show, rather than just go like I normally would, I thought, "Shit, I'm really gonna go for this. I'll show those bastards who's rock 'n' roll around here, I'll show them who's rich and successful, who's in show business." It woke up my ego. The way I've always looked at everything I've ever done, since I was a teenager, I thought, "I don't want to play your game, and I'm not going to play. But if you're going to force me to play, then I'll just beat you at it."

Okay, I've done an album, I know it touches a lot of people, they get a lot of enjoyment out of it. I can completely relate to that. I've had the same thing with other artists, who not only meant a lot to me—I had their pictures on my wall, I thought about them all the time—they were like my drug, my saviors at some points. I can certainly dig that. Maybe I'm the vehicle for the same thing for someone else. But I just don't want to be bothered with it too much. I'll make my records, I'll sing the songs, I'll be in the studio, I'll cry when I'm singing, I'll fire people, whatever it takes, I'll have my drug problems, whatever my thing is. And then, can I just go home and start work on my next album, or play with my kids, or just do my thing? I don't like all the attention. I don't like being recognized in the street. I don't like to go to a club and people are looking at me. I find it a real imposition on my personal freedom. I like anonymity when I go out. To me, anonymity is freedom in my life. 'Cause I was twenty-seven before I got onstage. I had worked out who I was when I walked down the street, and my relationship with strangers. Now I don't have that.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think Jim Kerr experiences it a different way?*

HYNDE: Absolutely. I don't think he minds it at all. This is the thing I've discovered about Jim: I think, "I'm in a band, and that's what I do, but that's not what I am." But Jim thinks he's in a band, that's what he does, and that's what he *is.* When he works with his band, he moves in with them. I might be an hour down the road, but he lives with them for two or three weeks. They make noise, he sits around, he writes, he's totally absorbed in it. When he records, he lives with them. I come home every night and do my thing. I do my work, I get into it, then I come home. You can't talk to him the day of a show. He's totally there, that's his whole thing.

At first I couldn't work it out. Now I realize there isn't anything in his life outside of that. Everything in his life has to be part of that Simple Minds experience. I'm not saying it's not right. It was a dilemma for me for a while, because my approach to everything is to look so incredibly casual compared to him that it almost could be interpreted that I've got no enthusiasm. I don't care. I used to say to him, "I might be in a band, but that's not me." But he was eighteen when he got in a band. His band lifted his family from their meager surroundings

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THE HOODOO MAN PUTS ON THE ANTI-WAR PAINT

JOHN FOGERTY

Eye Of The Zombie
(Warner Bros.)

Creedence was a singles band, Creedence was a *singles* band, *Creedence* was a singles band.... That's a handy mantra to remember while listening to *Eye Of The Zombie*, John Fogerty's comeback to a comeback (the heartwarming *Centerfield*). While not a musical grand slam, the album has enough line drives—and even impressive fouls—to mark Fogerty as one of the most promising players in the majors.

Granted, "promising" is not an adjective normally applied to someone of Fogerty's accomplishment. But this time, instead of cute pop songs Fogerty's handed us a near-concept album about the breakdown of law and order. *Eye Of The Zombie* even announces its ambition with a prologue: "Goin' Back Home" is a stately neo-spiritual substituting a wordless synthesized vocal chorus for Fogerty's trademark yowl. That distinctive instrument emerges with the title cut, which seems a poor choice for a single release, not so much for its oddball subject matter (a metaphor for terrorism) as for its tuneless verse and surprisingly hookfree chorus. The following "Headlines" is more like it: Over a Hookerful boogie rhythm track Fogerty screeches about the uselessness of information. Musically, it's one of the rawest things released this year on a dependent label; lyrically, it's as up to date as today's neuroses.

That's pretty much the pattern throughout *Eye Of The Zombie*: Topical

stomps alternate with less timely pastiches. Among the latter, "Knockin' On Your Door" is a spot-the-reference Stax/Volt tribute that may be too clever for its own good. The vapid, sexist "Wasn't That A Woman" comes dangerously close to filler. But "Violence Is Golden," a tract about arms suppliers, compensates with a rancorous vengeance, while "Soda Pop" attacks music-biz manipulations. *There's* the single; its sing-song chorus (à la "Zanz"—oops, "Vanz Kant Danz") is as catchy and mindlessly repetitive as the real thing.

"Change In The Weather" focuses both the drawbacks and benefits of Fogerty's musical make-up. The song's apocalyptic lyric is pure Creedence, while the minor-third modality and tremolo guitar chords recall their version of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" (same key too). So does a colicky guitar solo whose expressive stuttering instantly puts a generation of fleet-fingered arrivistes to shame. You've heard it all before, and it sure sounds great to hear it again.

Eye Of The Zombie signs off with "Sail Away," whose escapist theme (salvation through UFOs) evokes Fogerty's prettiest singing. It's a downbeat ending to a generally downbeat album. In terms of kick power, the flesh-and-blood rhythm section on *Zombie* beats the one-man band on *Centerfield*; on the other hand, the received R&B forms and spiky subject matter here don't make for particularly commercial fare. But John Fogerty has always hewn pop to his needs rather than vice versa, and the result usually coincides with mass taste. Should *Zombie*'s idealism strike a common nerve, that would be as encouraging as Fogerty's return to action. – **Scott Isler**

ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS

Blood & Chocolate
(Columbia)

When Elvis Costello checked in with the listless *Goodbye Cruel World* in 1984, burnout showed its nasty little face. Worry no more: Just as *King Of America* signaled a return to form, the new *Blood & Chocolate* "celebrates" the fully recharged Elvis, brimming with vitriol. It's overwrought and choked with desperate emotions, the way you want his records to be. What fun!

Costello's gift for capturing the heat of

the moment has sometimes been undercut by a weakness for too many clever words, compounded by stylistic dabbling. Not on *Blood & Chocolate*, a horror show devoted to the coarser manifestations of romance. Lyrics are often startlingly, effectively blunt, and even literary outbursts get the point across. There's no synthetic country music, no fake soul, plenty of primal power.

Abetted by the able Attractions and ace producer Nick Lowe, Costello has created his equivalent of *Blonde On Blonde*, crafting a series of tragicomic vignettes that bleed lyrics and melodies into one gripping whole. "I Hope You're Happy Now" churns energetically like the early days, as Elvis snidely comments on an ex's new lover, who resembles "a matador with his pork sword, while we all die of laughter." He mocks his own hand-wringing by titling one track "Poor Napoleon"—Costello's *nom de disque* here is Napoleon Dynamite—while lacing the hushed tune with dire lines like "You can take the truthful things you've said to me / And put them on the head of a pin." If severity threatens to crush more functional pop songs, he's also developed a keen sense of absurdity. For details, see "The Next Time 'Round," a careening tune of shattered romance, in which Costello predicts, "You'll be someone else's baby / But I'll be underground."

Nick Lowe's sonic textures prove the perfect garnish, with rough-hewn mixes equally suited to nice numbers ("Blue Chair") and stark ones ("Battered Old Bird"). He deftly inserts sounds out of nowhere for dramatic effect, adding echo and snatches of psychedelic guitar to enhance the sprawling energy of "Tokyo Storm Warning" (Elvis' "Subterranean Homesick Blues").

At the center of the action, of course, stands Costello. With his nagging, obsessive voice, he remains the compelling bigmouth who sees too much for his own good and can't keep quiet. Two tracks illustrate El at his best: "Uncomplicated," hoarse devotion over a chaotic back-

LISA LAARMAN

drop, and "I Want You," an agonizingly slow tale of (what else?) faithless love that finds him leaning into the mike to unnerving effect.

To paraphrase a sage, he never does anything nice and easy—he always does it nice and rough. *Blood And Chocolate* is essential Elvis Costello. – **Jon Young**

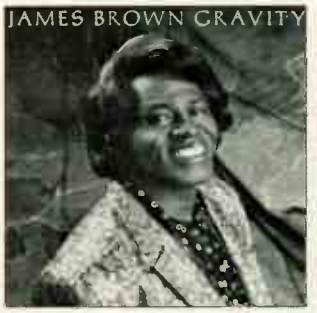
MILES DAVIS

Tutu
(Warner Bros.)

Tutu is a pop album. *Tutu* is a jazz album. Wait, you're both right! *Tutu* seems unlikely to pry many new converts from either camp, however; today's popheads show small patience for modal incongruities, even those hitched to a sturdy backbeat, while dyed-in-the-tweed jazzbos still mourn the good, "old" Miles, like widows who light votive candles to glimpse reflections of their virtue.

Well, 'scuse me for livin', but I like this album, almost as much as the underrated *Decoy* and considerably more than last year's *You're Under Arrest*. I like the jabbing funk of "Full Nelson," the rope-a-dope reggae of "Don't Lose Your Mind," and especially how the hammering vamps behind "Splatch" summon the ghost of "Jack Johnson." I like Marcus Miller's warm orchestrations of "Tutu" and "Portia," along with "Backyard Ritual"'s more convex arrangements by the much-maligned George Duke. Mostly, I like the way these disciples have crafted sympathetic canvases for Davis to plot his darting, impressionistic solos. The result is that Miles sounds more expansive here than on any record since his comeback several years ago.

Tutu has its blemishes; Davis' predilection for pop covers is here evidenced by a "Perfect Way" that has less in common with his exquisite "Time After Time" than the epicene "Human Nature." And Davis' decision to turn over compositional duties to Marcus Miller, while inspiring some nicely sculpted tunes and a more clearly defined pop sensibility than recent efforts by either, also sacrifices the startling invention and pure cojones that have long distinguished Miles' best bands. As his current touring ensemble, with saxophonist Bob Berg and guitarist Robben Ford, is his most exciting in over a decade, the omission here seems strange, though perhaps attributable to Miles and Warner Brothers' common desire to make bread even as they break it. Ironically, *Tutu*'s aesthetic merits far outstrip its commercial promise, as Miles Davis once more echoes his past without holding himself hostage to it. How many artists, pop or jazz, can you say that about? – **Mark Rowland**



JAMES BROWN

In The Jungle Groove
(PolyGram)
Gravity
(Scotti Bros.)

James Brown has been a Great Historical Figure for a while now, but with the release of *In The Jungle Groove*, four sides' worth of unreleased tracks, re-recorded tunes, unedited versions of masterpieces etc., Brown's getting the Hemingway treatment, where every grunt the guy ever huffed out makes it on vinyl. Great for us. It means that the commercial considerations for releasing a single in 1970—keeping it fairly short, editing out the jams, making sure nobody misses the hooks—can be ignored in favor of the Almighty Groove. And what grooves these are, averaging between six and nine minutes each, with JB muttering in the background, exhorting soloists, even stopping the proceedings at one point to give a discourse over the drums. What emerges is the greatest funk band of its time (1969-71), doing what they do best, which is dispensing rhythm therapy, and doing it for a long time, too. No qualifications: this is as good as JB gets.

The days of the record-as-document-as-art are gone, and *Gravity*, JB's follow-up on his "Living In America" success, sounds less like JB than someone's idea of JB; specifically producer Dan Hartman. These freeze-dried grooves could just as easily apply to Robert Palmer as the Great Wigged One, though a couple tracks—"Gravity," "Turn Me Loose, I'm Dr. Feelgood"—approximate the sound of an organic band, and the Master howls appropriately. Me, I hope the record does well enough so he can go into the studio with his own band, produce his own record, shoot Stevie Winwood and Alison Moyet (what are these wimps doing on a JB record, huh?), collaborate with Miles Davis, make lots of money, and retire triumphantly. – **Peter Watrous**

THE HOUSEMARTINS

London 0, Hull 4
(Elektra)

It's hard to know what to make of the Housemartins. On one level they seem about as parochial and eccentric as British pop acts come. The band name is obscure in a typically English way (a housemartin is similar to the purple martin, a bird prized by gardeners for its insect-eating ability) while their LP title displays the sort of hometown pride that's almost incomprehensible on this side of the Atlantic.

Despite all that, the Housemartins have assembled a sound that's amazingly eclectic and well-polished. Like a lot of the "new innocents" (the Woodentops, the Mighty Lemon Drops, the Shop Assistants), the Housemartins' approach is rooted in the folk-based bounce of guitar pop, but you can also hear bits of surf music, Four Freshmen harmony, Velvet Underground dissonance, even traces of gospel. Moreover, the writing is so solidly melodic that such flourishes merely flesh out the sound instead of standing in for content. "Flag Day," for instance, meshes a mournful piano accompaniment with fervent harmony singing, until P.d. Heaton's fluid lead floats off into gospel embellishment. It's an inspired arrangement, but hardly essential to the song, which would have stood up as easily with only an acoustic guitar and vocal. Similarly, the bouncy "Happy Hour" and the gentle, contemplative "Think For A Minute" boast the sort of hooks that would snag a listener regardless of the arrangement.

But the best thing about this record is that it's *not* just another set of pretty popsongs. Even after you strip away the bright verses and buoyant refrains, the Housemartins still have content to spare, lacing insightful lyrics with unexpectedly acrid commentary. Consider the way "Get Up Off Our Knees" looks at economics and class with a militancy that's made all the more unsettling by its major-chord optimism, while "Sheep," for all its upbeat cheer, proves a scathing denunciation of social complacency. Throughout this debut, there's so much going on that you'll continue to find new treasures in the music long after you've learned the melodies by heart. How often does a band offer that?

– **J.D. Considine**

'TIL TUESDAY

Welcome Home
(Epic)

Since few band debuts were as exciting as 'Til Tuesday's last year, few second albums are as likely to disappoint. It's not merely because nothing here approaches the dramatic sweep of "Voices Carry"—though "What About Love," this LP's sturdy but unspectacular breakout single, makes that point clear enough; it's more that *Welcome Home* remains so narrowly confined in terms of musical range and thematic concerns. Enough listens to this record, and even the Ramones sound eclectic.

Most of the credit/blame is naturally

assignable to Aimee Mann, 'Til Tuesday's singer, songwriter and raison d'être, who here proffers ten new tunes about ruined loves and emotional cripples. "My sadness for me/Is now sadness for you," she croons on "No One Is Watching You Now"—a sentiment which all too frequently doubles as a world view. Like early Joni Mitchell, Mann dotes on her wounds in a suitably confessional manner, but while Mitchell's was the voice of an iconoclast who turned musical and social convention on its head, Aimee's just seems insecure. Maybe that's why her vocals veer so wildly here, from suggestions of Joni ("Sleeping And Waking") to Annie Lennox ("Lovers' Day") to Petula Clark ("On Sunday"). She is consistently neurotic, however. "There's no such thing as lovers' day," she lashes out at one point. Boo hoo.

Producer Rhett Davies, best known for coating Roxy Music's exquisite veneers, is up to his tricks again, which might be the real problem. This band *already* sounded slick; what made it vital were guitarist Robert Holmes' surprising instrumental voicings and Mann's quirky songcraft. That's all been washed out here in the guise of "polishing" the band's sound, and the result is about as rewarding as a sail in the Sargasso Sea. There are moments, notably on "Coming Up Close," when Mann shows the narrative ability to match her unusually strong melodic gifts, and hints at the potential this band may yet achieve. But they ain't quite home yet.

– **Mark Rowland**

JAMES NEWTON

The African Flower
(Blue Note)
Water Mystery
(Gramavision)

Let's get the accolades out of the way: Newton is the most creative musician playing the flute on this continent. He has an amazing sound—vocal, dark and humid—and a dazzling technique. But what's more impressive is his ability to mesh so naturally with any background, tradition or influence without becoming a chameleon. Whether he's working with twentieth-century classical techniques, as he does on *Water Mystery*, or elegantly rearranging the Ellington and Strayhorn standards of *African Flower*, you're always aware of an unusually benevolent presence.

While *Water Mystery* convincingly juggles harsh density with fluidity, and features outstanding ensemble playing (especially clarinetist John Carter, who makes such poetic use of the extremes of tension and release), *African Flower* is perhaps the most mature, balanced record Newton has made. Spanning half a century of Ellington/Strayhorn, it covers music of playful passion ("Cottontail," "Black And Tan Fantasy"), erotic complexity ("Virgin Jungle") and sublime, mysterious beauty ("African Flower," "Sophisticated Lady," "Passion Flower"). Taking his cue from Ellington the orchestrator as bandleader, Newton selects an inspired group of diverse and powerful personalities—and then inspires *them*. Led by veteran pianist Sir Roland Hanna, the rhythm section of drummers Billy Hart and Pheeroan Ak Laff (alternating takes) and bassist Rick Rozie kick all the way through, while the frontline soloists—Newton, Arthur Blythe, Jay Hoggard, Olu Dara and John Blake—exhibit the distinctive approach of players who would have been viable contenders for chairs in Ellington bands of the past. Listen to Olu's Cootie Williams-like growls, Blythe's tasteful homage to Hodges on "Passion Flower," Newton's sensitive, close-to-the-melody solo rendition of "Sophisticated Lady" or the teeming percussive undergrowth he fashions on "Jungle." Such reverie is a true evocation of Ellington and Strayhorn's spirit, a tribute that's respectful but unbowed. – **Cliff Tinder**

KAZUMI WATANABE

Mobo Splash
(Gramavision)

This hot young Japanese technocrat has always been somewhat of an enigma. He possesses breathtaking guitar technique, his fusion is well intentioned, he always surrounds himself with superior sidemen, and he obviously knows something about jazz. On the other hand, his playing

is often chilly, calculated, disjointed and strangely naive.

Take the cryptically titled "Sometimes We Say Monk." It starts with a bop-inflected melody that's so insipid it could be a soundtrack for a young Japanese boy walking merrily through the countryside before stumbling upon a giant Mothra cocoon. Cut to the guitar synthesizer as our tot examines the glowing object ("Watch out! It's hatching!"). The band dissolves away as Kazutoki Umezu blasts out a Roscoe Mitchell-like, avant-altissimo, screaming alto solo ("Please baby Mothra, don't eat me!"). Then the happy little melody rears its cuddly head ("Whoooh, it's friendly after all"). Is this biting satire? Is it stupid? Only his Mothra knows for sure.

If you can't tell by now, *Mobo Splash* tends to incite mixed reactions. I found myself alternately laughing, in disgust or delight (the often-brilliant sax solos by Michael Brecker, Dave Sanborn and Umezu are much further *out* than the usual fusion fare), and shuffling to the always solid grooves, but only half-enjoying Watanabe's compositions, which mix jazz's harmonic subtlety with rock's punch but are marred by a too-hip self-consciousness. Of course, I just may not understand Watanabe or Japanese fusion. Or maybe you just have to have seen the movie. – **Cliff Tinder**

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out of the doldrums of their working-class set-up. He's the messiah of his family. Everything he does is channeled through his family; he does it all for his family. Whereas I left my family to do my thing. Everything about us is like opposites. He doesn't want to exist outside of that, and I only want to exist outside of that. Everyone he knows he met because of the band—even me. We met because he was on tour. Whereas nobody that I know has anything to do with the Pretenders. Meg Keene probably hasn't listened to the record.

When people say, "What's more important: your career or your family?" that's like saying, "What's more important: your eyesight or your hearing?" But I think you have a responsibility to make sure it's balanced. It's so easy for a man, because he doesn't have that umbilical cord to children, to go off and do his thing 'cause he knows it's taking off and he's going to be a great father and he'll come back and it'll be all right. Whereas a woman has the day-to-day experiences, like nappies and fevers. That's sort of what "Chill Factor" is talking about. It's easy for a guy to go, "Don't worry, it's going to be fine," forgetting what a woman needs. I'm going through this all the time, these questions. I think a woman should stay home and take care of her children. It's inexcusable for a woman to let her career become that important. On the other hand, I like my thing. I have to do this because it's kind of a trip, I've asked for it, I have to see it through. I know my children aren't suffering for it because I've got a set-up where I'm very close to them and they know exactly what's going on. Of course, I leave them out of it. You never see me bringing them on television.

MUSICIAN: *You've always kept your life with any of the people you've been involved with totally out of this.*

HYNDE: As much as I can. Okay, Ray Davies—it's kind of obvious that there's some interest there. But I don't sensationalize it, just like I don't talk to the press when someone dies of a heroin overdose.

MUSICIAN: *How do you feel about drugs?*

HYNDE: Heroin should be legalized. If you have a drug problem, you should be able to get it over the counter from a chemist. Alcohol should be as illegal as heroin. I'm not being fanatical. If you're addicted to heroin, there's no point in making it unobtainable to a person who's going to commit a violent crime to get it. Also, initially that takes a little bit of the curiosity value out of it. That's really why people like myself would experiment. The main thing is to take the forbidden-fruit aspect out of it and face it as a real problem, a health hazard, and make it not so hard to get hold of.

The point I'm trying to make with heroin, with alcohol, with anything, is you gotta have something. Look at the world we're living in. Everything is going too fast. Planes, cars—the whole thing is completely unnatural, and we don't have the facility to cope with it. It's driving us insane and we don't even realize how much we're out of touch with reality. In America, nobody goes the whole day without watching television. They're just being brainwashed. It's like Muzak; if I'm sitting down to eat somewhere, I'm still working on some lyrics or a tune. The minute Muzak goes on, cut! Everything stops; there's no process anymore because I'm being fed.

I would really like to see McDonald's put out of business. I'd love to bring down the state. I went to Kent State University and I haven't even finished yet. I haven't gotten my degree; I'm still going for it, in a way. Ⓜ

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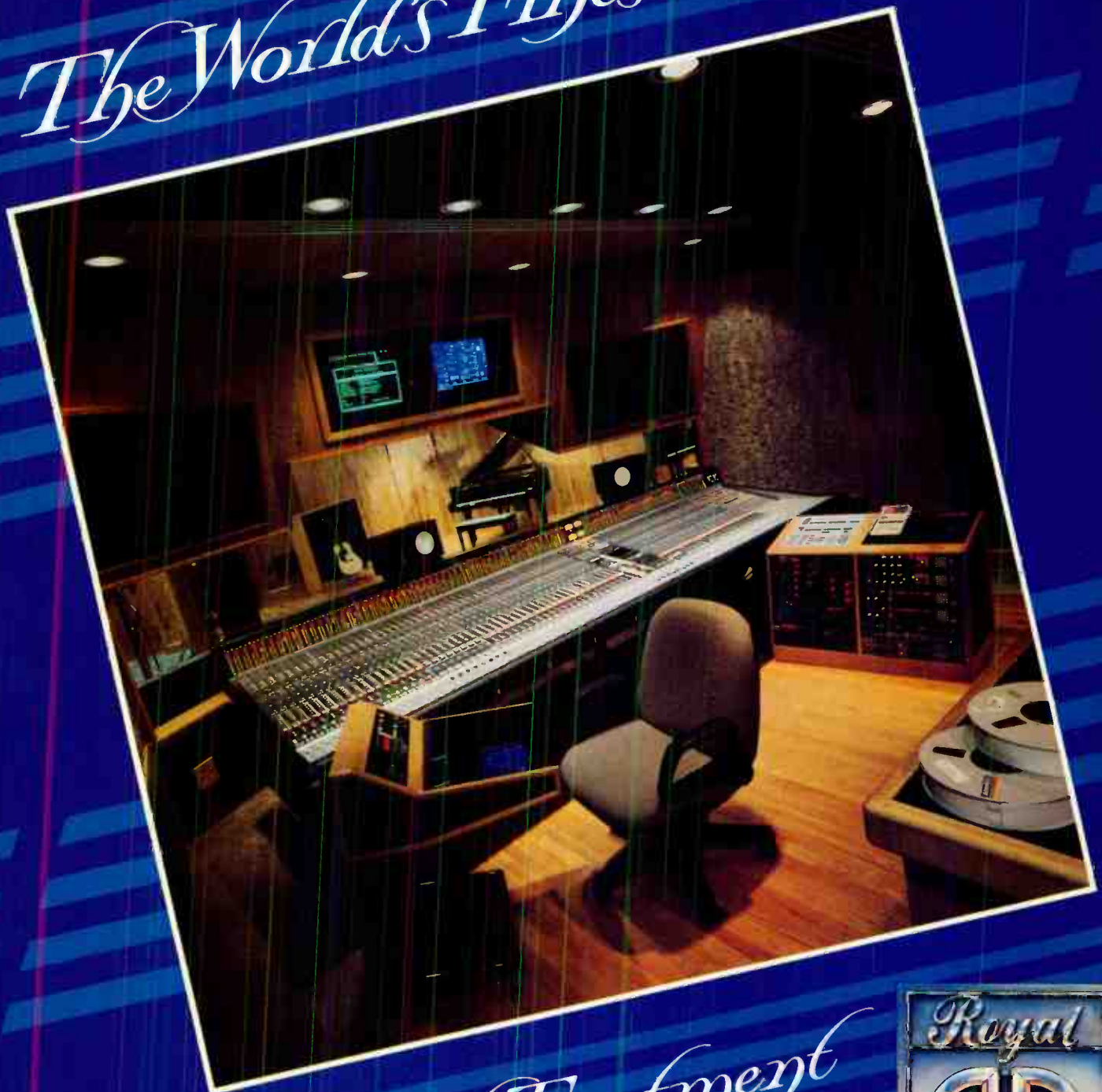

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SHORT Rock TAKES

Cyndi Lauper
True Colors (Portrait)

She's still pretty unusual, though not always in the ways we would have wanted. Covering "What's Going On," for instance, is a great idea; trying to cop Marvin Gaye's phrasing, on the other hand, is not. But though *True Colors* stumbles occasionally, it never actually falls, for the songs exhibit a consistency its predecessor never managed. There's nothing here quite as giddy as "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," but then, this isn't a particularly girlish album, thanks to such solidly adult fare as "Change Of Heart" and the title track. Hardly a masterwork, but an impressive step forward.

Al Jarreau
L Is For Lover (Warner Bros.)

Leave it to Nile Rodgers to have finally figured out how to tap the pop potential within Jarreau's voice. It isn't simply that Rodgers reins in the singer's almost freakish virtuosity, although that helps; more to the point, the arrangements provide both focus and contrast for the singing, so that the flash bits truly excite. Best of all, from the EW&F swing of "Golden Girl" to the Chic-style groove of the title tune, Rodgers ties the vocals so closely to the beat that it's almost impossible not to be captivated.

Marti Jones
Match Game (A&M)

Marti Jones might have been a latter-day Linda Ronstadt, a fate not to be wished on anyone. But between Don Dixon's deft production and her own solid instincts, *Match Game* manages to suggest how great it would have been had Elvis Costello, Richard Barone or Dwight Twilley learned to sing as well as they write. Nor is that simply a matter of vocal technique, for Jones finds amazing emotional resonance in her material, illuminating everything from Costello's "Just A Memory" to David Bowie's "Soul Love."

Regina
Curiosity (Atlantic)

Regina Richards may claim that her vocal resemblance to Mrs. Sean Penn is only coincidence, but you wouldn't know by this. It doesn't hurt to have Stephen Bray on hand for "Baby Love," but otherwise, this queen of the wanna-be's is hopelessly hampered by Leslie Ming's drab rhythm arrangements. Get into the *groove*, girl!

Cameo
Word Up (Atlanta Artists)

Larry Blackmon may borrow some—the first thirty seconds of "Word Up" quotes both Frankie Smith's "Double Dutch Bus" and Cameo's own "Single Life"—but even when you know his sources, he doesn't seem derivative. His genuinely warped vocal perspective helps, but what ultimately sets him apart is his way with a rhythm, a quirky, minimalist groove that's as inscrutable as it is effective.

General Public
Hand To Mouth (IRS)

Strangely enough, this starts off with "Come Again," an ardently Christian plea for divine intervention that seems utterly out of character; its religiosity doesn't seem shocking so much as the unflagging optimism. The music here is energetic in the best Beat tradition, with buoyant melodies but without the self-consciousness of *All The Rage*, so that even the preachiest lyrics celebrate instead of sermonize.

Fishbone
In Your Face (Columbia)

Yeah, the band's still something of a cartoon, but these days it's more like classic Tex Avery than Saturday morning kidvid. Doubtless part of that has to do with David Kahne's crisply confident production, but mostly it's the band's own doing. The playing is slick enough to make every punchline seem deliberate, while the writing ranges from wry romance to jokey rage to Prince-styled ballads. Guaranteed to stick in your ears.

Tina Turner
Break Every Rule (Capitol)

The title has got to be a joke, because it's hard to imagine how this record could be any more formulaic. It may be a good formula, but it still leaves Turner sounding too tied down for the record's good. Despite his MOR instincts, Terry Britten does a workmanlike job with the first side. But Mark Knopfler's "Overnight Sensation" never quite builds beyond its opening sizzle, while Bryan Adams' "Back Where You Started" seems sloppy seconds at best.

Joan Jett
Good Music
(CBS Associated/Blackheart)

After the scattershot approach of *Glorious Results Of A Misspent Youth*, it's great to hear our Joan back on the right track. Not only are the oldies appropriate, from a surprisingly gritty "Fun, Fun, Fun" to a joyful, jams-out "Roadrunner," but the originals boast the same rock candy crunch of her best. Just like the title promises.

Throwing Muses
Throwing Muses (4AD Import)

Finding a band as precocious as this is rare enough, but what really sets this Dartmouth-based quartet apart is the raw-nerved intensity of its material. Singer Kristin Hersh isn't even twenty yet, and has already mastered both Marianne Faithfull's weary rage and Patti Smith's edgy release, a combination she infuses with an irony that's anything but adolescent. Add the band's ability to balance post-punk rave-ups against delicate, intentionally pretty ostinati, and these ten songs turn out to be as arresting as anything you're likely to hear this year. (Ken Goes, Box 9515, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747)

The Rainmakers
The Rainmakers (Mercury)

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BY J.D. CONSIDINE

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SHORT JAZZ TAKES

Frank Morgan
Lament (Contemporary)

Sprightly, swooping alto by a survivor of the drug era, who, having spent thirty years on and off the deep freeze, now emerges like Riff Van Winkle in the company of Buster Williams, Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins for a bright, hard-swinging update on the classic bebop tradition. Still, for all his clipped precision and tart elliptical phrasing ("Half Nelson" anyone?) Leonard Feather must have been drinking industrial strength Metracal to annoint him "the greatest living alto player." This will certainly come as a surprise to Phil Woods, Julius Hemphill, Benny Carter, Bobby Watson and Donald Harrison, among others. Morgan has much to offer, but leave us not saddle him with the next Bird albatross, okay?

Art Farmer/Benny Golson Jazztet
Back To The City (Contemporary)

Hey, if we have to have a bebop revival, let grand lyric masters like Art Farmer and Benny Golson lead the way. This is bebop deluxe, not only for the serene heat of Farmer's flugelhorn and Golson's old-timey/modernist tenor, but for the quality of the writing, which takes the raw material of bop's harmonic structures and extends them beyond the usual strings of notes, while engaging the hot, sensitive rhythm section (Mickey Tucker, Ray Drummond and Smitty Smith) in a more orchestral manner. Not surprisingly, their maturity shines forth on ballads, like the lovely "From Dream To Dream"; while the drummer's feature "Without Delay" separates the men from the boys. These are men.

Billie Holiday
At Monterey/1958 (Blackhawk)

A truly frightening aural document that mingles pain and pleasure in harrowing proportions. From the low-flying plane that swoops through your living room on side one, to the measured regret of "Billie's Blues"—her voice cracking yet never breaking—this is a portrait of an artist in the twilight between death and recollection. It is not enough to talk of past triumphs or to look away and wince; as "Trav'lin' Light" illustrates, Billie's most compelling quality was her all-too-human fragility. Listen if you dare.

Bobby McFerrin
Spontaneous Inventions (Blue Note)

The voice lives! An unprecedented tour de force for this master of vocalese, recorded here with breathtaking clarity and nary a hint of commercial Miracle Whip to obscure his singular, unaccompanied improvisations—most remarkable on "I Hear Music." Sounding at times like a Bach cello suite, a Fender bass, a breakneck trumpet solo, a feedback guitar—or all at once—McFerrin is a genre unto himself, and his collaborations with Hancock, Shorter and (particularly) Manhattan Transfer and Jon Hendricks on a delightful "Another Night In Tunisia" offer hints of a new age of jazz singing 'a comin'.' Say amen.

Steve Coleman & Five Elements
On The Edge Of Tomorrow (JMT)
Cassandra Wilson
Point Of View (JMT)

Steve Coleman is one of the more singular thinkers to emerge on the "jazz" scene in recent years. With his cool, bulbous alto tone, his circuitous, backpedaling improvisations, and his colorful polyphonic writing (most notably in the Dave Holland Quintet), Coleman is extending the jazz tradition while slyly eluding its bop mainstream. *On The Edge Of Tomorrow* would be a crossover event, if fusion hadn't already been debauched by vile hacks like Spyro Gyra. Coleman's R&B inflections are genuinely funky, his rhythmic cycles extend phrases in unusual ways amidst a swelter of counterpoint and contrasting tempi, and in Gerri Allen, he has a synthesist who eschews canned corn. Hell, even his songs are interesting—and mercifully free of pseudo-spiritual balderdash.

His musical influence is also much in evidence on vocalist Wilson's *Point Of View.* She has a dry, serpentine way with a song, tending more towards the dramatic than the lyric, and oftentimes fades in and out of the ensemble like an instrument one second, a commentator the next. Coleman's "Desperate Move" is the most telling original; Wilson's lyrics to Miles' "Blue In Green" the most affecting standard. Guitarist Jean-Paul Bourelly and trombonist Grachan Moncur III make powerful contributions.

Milt Buckner
Block Chord Parade (Black & Blue)

This posthumous release (i.e., leave us postpone dis release 'til dey be safely buried in duh humus) from 1974 is a golden last hurrah for two aged warriors of the 30s. Milt Buckner invented the locked hand-block chord piano style and helped fly it home with Lionel Hampton's big band. He was a hollering funky mother (though harmonically subtle and resourceful), and "Blue For Diane" is a rousing houserocker that shows how those jazz musicians helped define the shape of R&B and rock 'n' roll to come. Mr. Jo Jones summed up the history of rhythm, slang, dance step and guffaw to his day; his drumming on "All Of Me" is a paradigm of effortless grace and Bojanglish wit. Major Holley's blustery, mulish bass walks and jigs it along.

Larry Coryell
Equipoise (Muse)

This is the music the Seattle (cum Texan) guitar flash probably had in mind from the outset, a blues-jazz amalgam that blends one shot T-Bone Walker and several snifters of Kenny Burrell into a kind of 60s Blue Note overview. Buster Williams, Billy Hart and the eternally unsung pianist Stanley Cowell provide a loose, swinging rhythmic axis. Coryell's angular flights evince a lyric calm, glowing tone and harmonic curiosity which underscore his hard-won cachet as a jazz guitarist of the first rank.

BY CHIP STERN

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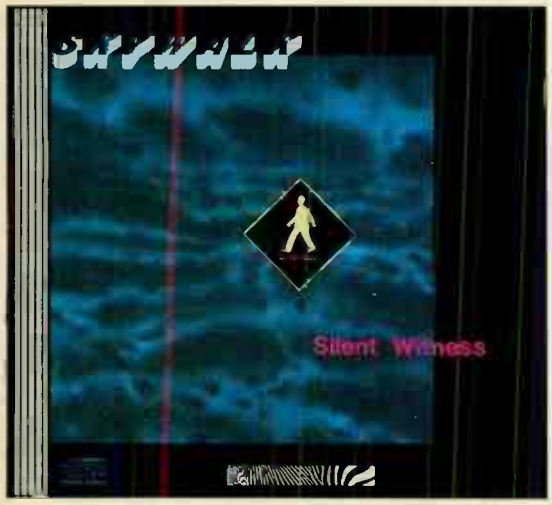

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SHORT Indie TAKES

Louis Jordan
Hoodoo Man
Knock Me Out (Swingtime)

Louis Jordan is the crucial link between the big band and rock 'n' roll eras, a figure of cult reverence but unknown to most. If you belong to either category (as you must) you ought to investigate these LPs, culled from Jordan's earliest single releases, and previously unavailable on LP. That means neither album contains later classics like "Five Guys Named Moe" or "Nobody Here But Us Chickens," jump tunes that reveal the source of Chuck Berry's genius (he admits it). But the thirty-plus songs here do comprise a virtual repository of jazz, blues, vaudeville and even minstrel styles, soldered by Jordan's fine humor, Lestorian swing on saxophone, ingratiating vocals and the sharply creased accompaniment of his "Tympany Five." Each song is a delight, but especially these jitterbug renditions of everything from the "After School Swing Session" to "Barnacle Bill The Sailor." Believe me, this is what collecting records is all about. (Street Level Trading Co., 5298/1 Valley Blvd., L.A., CA 90032)
–Mark Rowland

Various Artists
You Can Tell The World About This: Classic Ethnic Recordings From the 1920s (Morning Star)

It may have been coincidence that commercial recording began to mushroom at about the same time ethnomusicology came into its prime; otherwise it's doubtful that we'd have been blessed with such an abundance of well-recorded and well-preserved music from around the world. This album is but an appetizer, offering a mere fourteen selections, but the best bits are absolutely scrumptious, from the awesome ease of Cantor Berele Chagy's two-octave showpiece "Me Sheoso Nisim" to "La Virgen De Coradonga," an amazing Spanish ballad blending a Moorish vocal with Celtic-derived bagpipes. Hope there's more to come. (Dalebrook Pk., Ho-Ho-Kus NJ 07423)– *J.D. Considine*

Bertram Levy/Peter Ostroushko
First Generation (Flying Fish)

Levy and Ostroushko play concertina and mandolin, respectively, which, ethnically speaking, is my idea of a good time. With able assists from Tom Carroll on bass and acoustic guitarist Mark Rasmussen, that's just what they deliver, leading an affectionate tour that ranges from the bouncy "Ukrainian Polka" to a Parisian waltz to English jigs and finally back home to Levy's North Carolina home with an engaging "Southern Sonata." These arrangements combine unfettered emotion with a purist's respect for old-world tradition. Endlessly listenable. (1304 W. Schubert, Chicago, IL 60614)– *Mark Rowland*

The Modern Lovers
The Modern Lovers (Rhino)

The addition of three rare tracks to this album—recorded in '72, released in '76, and out of print for too long—helps to clarify why it was an epochal fluke. Repulsed by hippie excesses Jonathan Richman combined the traditional values of the 50s (cars, parents, girlfriends, AM radio) with the confrontational crudity of the Velvet Underground. The other Modern Lovers took the Velvets' influence with them when they dispersed to the Cars and Talking Heads, while Richman's stunted morals dictated his subsequent career. Aside from historical documentation, you get "Roadrunner" and "Pablo Picasso." (1201 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 94040)
– Rob Tannenbaum

Hod O'Brien
Opalessence (Criss Cross Jazz)

A generous helping of modern hard bop from a band of stalwarts who've not wavered for even a second. Pianist O'Brien is a sensitive player who sums up the best qualities of Bud Powell, Eddie Costa and Bill Evans, and whose block chord accompaniments fill harmonic cracks while creating new breaks and edges in the glow of the rhythm section (Kenny Washington and Ray Drummond). Baritonist Pepper Adams and the always resourceful melodist Tom Harrell on trumpet navigate changes with lyrical élan (to particular effect on the title tune and "The Blues Walk"), an ideal contrast to O'Brien's melodic reticence. Then there's the pleasure of a smoky vocal by Stephanie Nakasian (from the Jon Hendricks Group) on "A Handful Of Dust." Prime bebop du jour. (1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140) – *Chip Stern*

Mantronix
The Album (Sleeping Bag)

The basic components Mantronix wire into their sound are pretty run-of-the-mill, from vintage electronic percussion to M.C. Tee's tired wordplay. But Mantronix definitely has a way with the music, assembling those parts with funky finesse, heating the machinery behind "Bassline" until the rap evaporates into pure rhythm. Particularly noteworthy is the "Mega-Mix," which is about as *concrète* as this music gets. (1974 Broadway, N.Y., NY 10023)–*J.D. Considine*

Kilkenny Cats
Hands Down (Coyote)

The Cats bounce between garage band grunge and folk rock, not unlike other "new American" guitar bands; what sets them apart is their writing, which is bracingly melodic and rarely clichéd. The band's Athens origin suggests R.E.M. overtones, but they've resisted cloning, in large part thanks to the sturdy interplay terplay between guitarists Keith Landers and Clifton Hill. (TwinTone, 441 Oliver Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55405) – *J.D. Considine*

John Renbourn
The Nine Maidens (Flying Fish)

For some twenty years, John Renbourn's eclectic acoustic guitar work has been a continual delight—both in solo settings and the British folk group Pentangle. No new ground is broken here, but this latest set of mellow Medievalisms adds another tasteful entry to Renbourn's lengthy resumé. (1304 W. Schubert, Chicago, IL 60614)–*Ben Sandmel*

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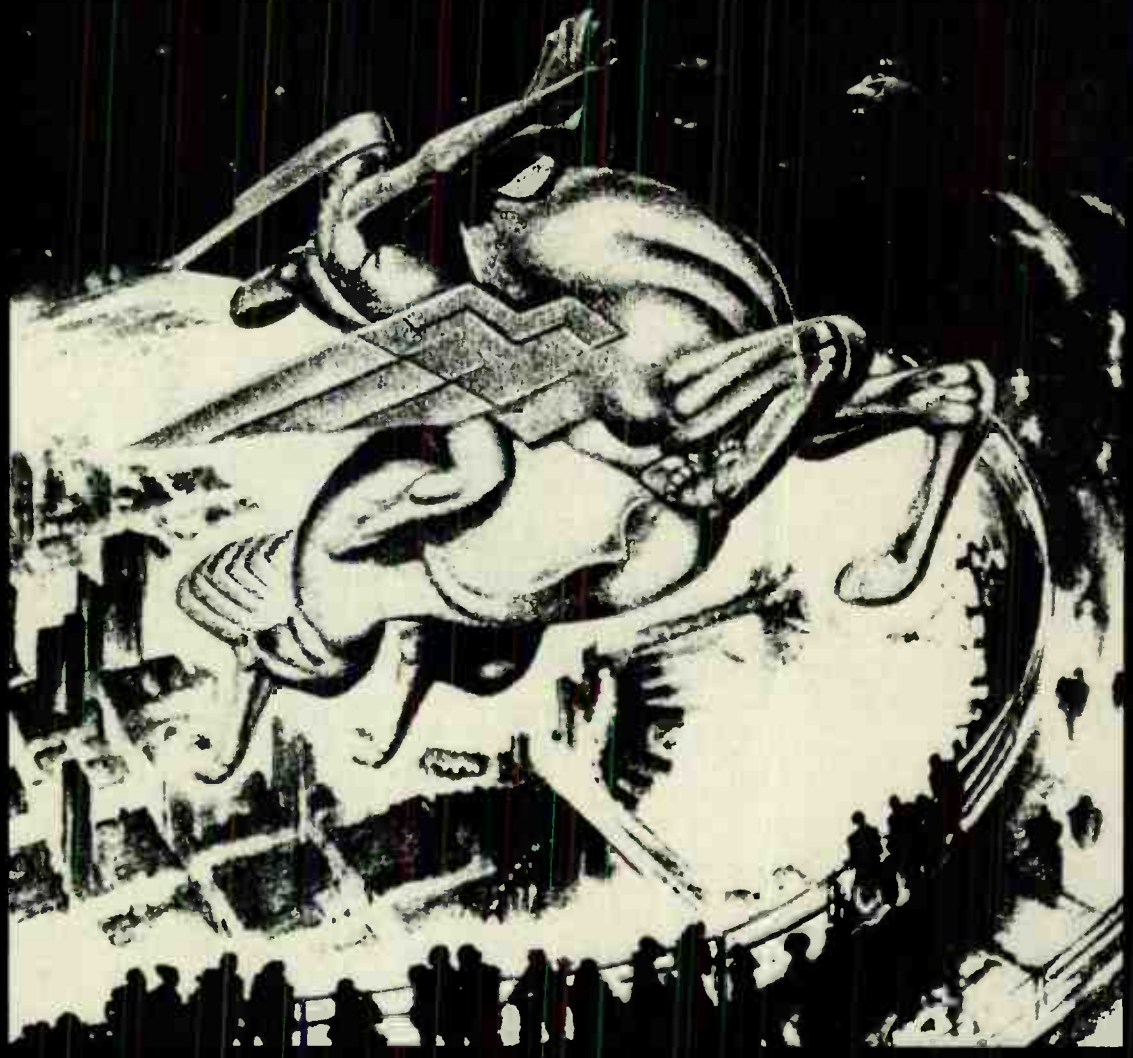

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WAVELENGTH from page 14

work's Smith warns that "it is foolish to confuse heavy metal programming as being equivalent to serving all eighteen to twenty-fours. I don't think that everybody that age listens to Wasp anymore than I think that anybody who is older never listens to Wasp." And surely if new stations come along playing heavy metal they are bound to stir up groups like the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC). Because of that Bill Hard wonders how many station owners will even decide to put the Satellite or other similar programs on the air.

No matter what happens, Elektra's Hunt says it is vital for musicians, managers, promoters and record labels to develop alternative means of street level promotion. "I hope radio comes along," adds Ian Copeland. "But frankly radio has ignored my acts before, so I usually just ignore radio. It's just a shame that kids don't have anything to listen to." M

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OWNER Bob Allecca STUDIO MANAGER Bob Allecca, Julian Hernandez ENGINEERS Bob Allecca, Julian Hernandez TAPE RECORDERS MCI JH 24 w/Autolocator III, 24-track w/16-track head stack; TEAC 80-8, 8-track w/DX8 N.R.; TEAC A3440, 4-track w/RX9 N.R.; Technics 1500, 2-track; (2) TEAC 122 cassettes; Sony PCM-F1, 2-track digital MIXING CONSOLES Trident Series 80 (automated) 32x24x24 MONITOR AMPLIFIERS Yamaha 2200s, 2050s MONITOR SPEAKERS JBL 4411s, JBL 4312s, Yamaha NS-10Ms, Auratones ECHO, REVERB & DELAY SYSTEMS EcoplateIII, Orban IIIB, (2) Lexicon Prime Time w/MEO, Lexicon PCM42/MEO, Eventide Harmonizer H949, Eventide Instant Flanger, Yamaha DI500 (2), Yamaha REV7 (2), Lexicon Model 200, Lexicon PCM70, (2) Yamaha SPX 90's, Ibanez SDR 1000, (2) Roland Digital Delay, Roland SRV 2000 Digital Reverb OTHER OUTBOARD EQUIPMENT 26 channels dbx noise reduction, Kepex IIs, dbx 900 signal processing rack, gates, compressors de-essers, (2) dbx 160 compressor/limiter, Orban 622B parametric EQ, TEAC GE-20 graphic EQ, Symetrix noise gates, White ⅓ room EQ, (2) Aphex Aural Exciters MICROPHONES Neumann U87; AKG 414s; Sennheiser 441s, MD 421s; E-V RE-20, RE-15s 635As; Beyer 201N; Shure SM57 INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE Yamaha acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes, Korg Poly-6, Yamaha DX7, Pro-one, Yamaha JX50B amp, full set of Tama drums, percussion, congas, wood blocks, cowbells, etc. Commodore 64, MIDI interface, Roland SBX-80, DMX digital drum machine, Yamaha RX11 digital drum machine, Roland MSQ-700, Apple IIe, DX Pro (voice library), Akai S-612 sampler, Akai MD280 disk drive, Passport MIDI 8 Plus, music data, Korg super percussion, Mini Doc RATES Call (block rates available) EXTRAS We offer in-house production, arranging, lead sheets, full keyboard and drum machine programming

WESTRAX RECORDING STUDIO
484 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036
(212) 947-0533

OWNER Peter Link STUDIO MANAGER Bob Lowe ENGINEERS Todd Anderson, Jeremy Harris, Jesse Plumley DIMENSIONS OF STUDIO 17x24 DIMENSIONS OF CONTROL ROOM 17x20 TAPE RECORDERS Tascam 85-16B, 16-track; Otari MKIII, 8-track; Otari MTR 12, ½-inch 2-track; Technics 1520, 2-track

DREAMLAND RECORDING STUDIOS
P.O. Box 383, Bearsville, NY 12409
(914) 338-7151

STUDIO MANAGER Joel Bluestein ENGINEERS Dave Cook, Harvey Sorgen, Jay Bender DIMENSIONS OF STUDIO 16x25x12 with iso booth, 40x50x33 situated in a 100-year-old church DIMENSIONS OF CONTROL ROOMS A 15x25x10 B 12x20x9 RECORDERS Studer A-80, MCI JH 24-16, Ampex ATR 102 MIXING CONSOLES API 32-32, 36 input 68 channels in remix, rebuilt MCI 428 MONITOR AMPLIFIER McIntosh, Crown, BGW MONITOR SPEAKER UREI 813, CSI TA3, Yamaha NS 10, Auratone, Altec 604 with mastering lab crossovers OUTBOARD 2 Yamaha Rev-7s, Lexicon 224, PCM 60, Echo Plate II, Pultec EQs, AKAI Sampler, BTX Shadow 4700 with Cypher Reader/generator, Passport Sequencing Software, Eventide 949

AVENUE STUDIOS, INC.
123 4th Ave., New York, NY 10003
212-477-2435

OWNER Lawrence Buksbaum ENGINEERS Larry Jay, Godfry Nelson TAPE RECORDERS MCI JH 24, Otari 5050B, Tascam 3440, 122 cassette decks DIMENSIONS OF STUDIO CR 14x18, studio 18x28 MIXING CONSOLE Sound Workshop (modified) MONITOR AMPS Crown MONITOR SPEAKERS Urei 809s, Yamaha NS-10, JBL 4313, Auratones OUTBOARD Lexicon PCM60, ART•DR•1, Lexicon Prime Time 93, PCM 42, Valley People 610, Dynamite Gates INSTRUMENTS Wide selection of keyboards and drum machines available with expert programmers, arrangers and composers

C/M STUDIOS
30 E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010
(212) 777-7755

STUDIO A 20x17 control room containing an exceptional array of synthesizers, sampling systems, computers, drum machines and sequencers. Work stations with indiv. stereo cue mixes allow up to 4 programmers to work simultaneously. All stations are linked with a custom MIDI matrix and the centrally located digital signal processing equipment allows accessibility by synthesist and engineer. STUDIO B a software-based, pre-production studio with a large selection of the most up-to-date MIDI software and hardware. The TX816 and the Akai sampler, together with an extensive library of custom sounds, combine big-studio sound with an ideal personal composition environment. EQUIPMENT Automated Amek Angela, Akai MG1214, Urei 813, Otari MTR90 (2), Lynx TimeLine, Lexicon 224XL, Yamaha Rev 1, Rev 7, SPX 90s, TX816s, Roland digital pianos, Linn 9000, LinnDrum, IBM, Mac, Commodore, Amiga PC, Akai S900, 128 Voice Synclavier II w/polysampling, Yamaha DX7s, Voyetra, Video Proj. System

SOUTHEAST

THE CASTLE RECORDING STUDIO, INC.
Old Hillsboro Road, Rt. 11, Franklin, TN 37064
(615) 791-0810 Telex 750471

CONTACT Jozef Nuyens EQUIPMENT SSL 48; Mitsubishi X-850, X-80; 3M Digital/32; Studer; Synthesizer MIDI room

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ROYAL RECORDERS
Americana Resort Hwy. 50, Lake Geneva, WI 53147
(414) 248-9100

RECORDERS (2) Studer A800 24-track, Mitsubishi X-850 32-track digital, Studer A80 ½" 2-track, Studer A80 ¼" 2-track MIXING CONSOLE Solid State Logic 4027E with Primary and Total Recall Automation—64 Mono Channels plus 8 Stereo Channels VINTAGE TUBE MICROPHONES Neumann/Telefunken: (6) U47, (3) M249, (3) M250, (2) M269, (1) 251, (2) 254, (2) 253; AKG: (2) C24, (3) C12, (4) C12A, (1) C60, (1) The Tube; Shoeps: (2) M934B; Sony: (2) C37 A; Altec: (1) 29B MICROPHONES Neumann: (3) U87, (7) KM 84, (1) U47 FET; AKG: (2) 414, (6) 451, (2) 452, (1) D12, (1) D707; Shure: (8) SM57, (4) SM 81, (1) SM 7, (1) 565, (1) 546, (1) 55 S; Sennheiser: (5) 421, (2) Profi/power; Shoeps: (4) SKM 5; E.V.: (2) RE 20, (1) 668; Sony: (1) EMC 50; Beyer: (1) M 101; RCA: (1) D77X

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THE PLANT RECORDING STUDIOS
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(415) 332-6100

OWNER Bob Skye STUDIO MANAGER Claire Pister

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SOUTHWEST

WONDERLAND STUDIOS
729 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 386-2954

CONTACT Stephanie Andrews CONSOLE Neve 8128, Necam II TAPE RECORDERS 3M 32-track digital/Sony 24-track digital EDITING SYSTEM Sony DAE 1100"

GATEWAY STUDIOS
6381A Rose Lane, Carpinteria, CA 93013
(805) 684-8336

OWNER Jim Messina STUDIO MANAGER Amy Foster ENGINEER Peter Bergren DIMENSIONS OF STUDIO Main Studio: 23x27; Piano Isolation Room: 11x16; Vocal Isolation Room: 11x13 DIMENSIONS OF CONTROL ROOM 18x23 TAPE RECORDERS Studer A80 24-track, Studer A80 ½" 2-track, Scully ½" 4-track, Scully ¼" 2-track, Otari ¼" 2-track MIXING CONSOLE Soundcraft Series 2400, 28x24 MONITOR AMPLIFIERS Phase Linear 700B MONITOR SPEAKERS Altec 604E with Mastering Lab crossovers and 15" Sub-woofers (Super Reds) ECHO, REVERB AND DELAY SYSTEMS AMS DMX 15 80S Stereo Digital Delay, 224X Digital Reverb with LARC, AKG BX20 E1 Spring Reverb INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE Yamaha C73 7' Grand Piano, Roland Keyboards—JX8P with programmer, and Juno 106, Yamaha DX7, Oberheim Controller Keyboard, MiniMoog, Apple IIe with DX Pro Software and MIDI soundfiler, Linn 9000 with digital sampling, drums, Seymour Duncan Amps, Guitar Rentals—Fender, Gibson, Dobro, Martin, etc. RATES please call.

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