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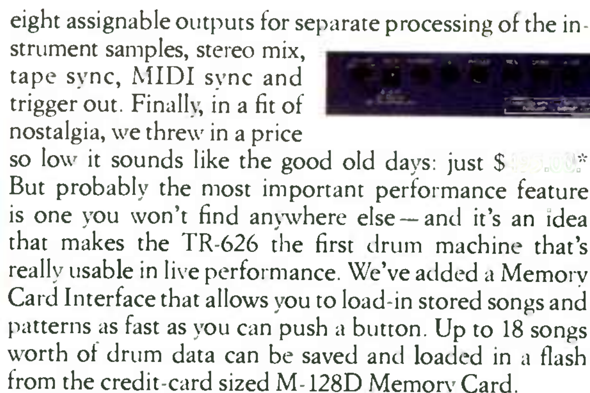

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For 15 years after the Beatles, Paul McCartney made hits without breaking a sweat. Now his record sales have slowed and the world's most successful songwriter has to examine himself and face the future. In a candid interview, Paul evaluates his entire solo career, vents his anger with Michael Jackson, previews his new collaboration with Elvis Costello and examines his conscience.

by Timothy White

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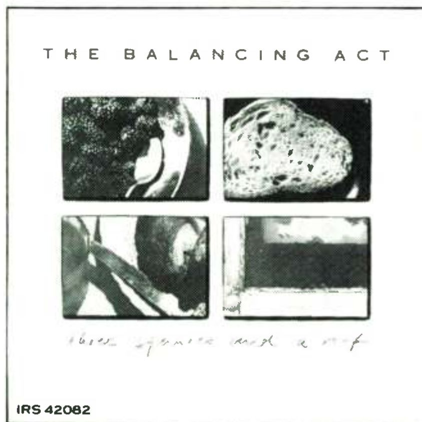

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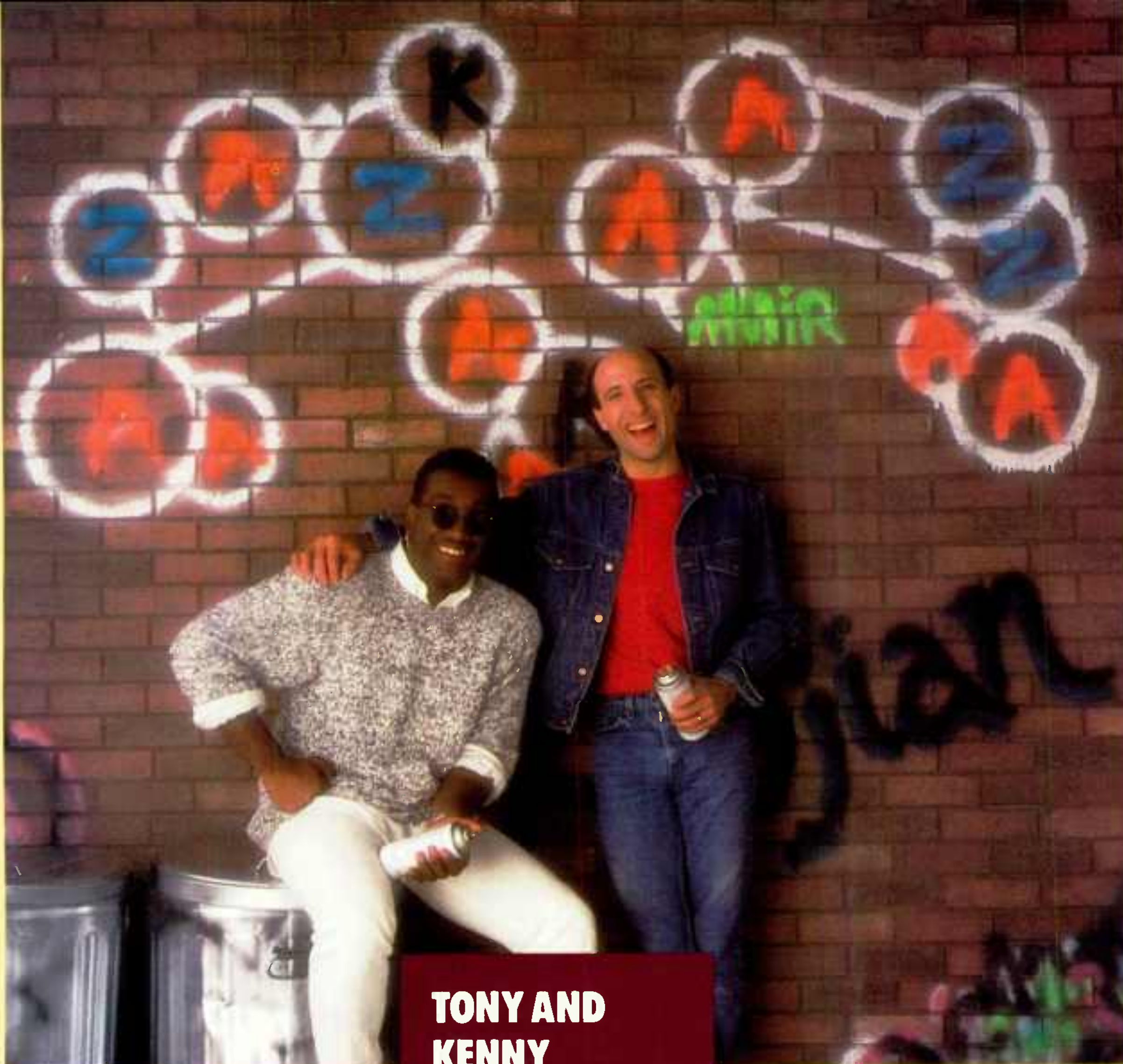

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Thompson takes a similar approach, "I switch around a lot. I've been using a 22″ A Ping or a 22″ Z Light Power Ride on current studio projects and with my new band, The Distance. And I match them with A Quick Beat Hi Hats—the ones with the flat bottom and holes. I might use K crashes in the studio, but on tour I'll go with A's and Z's. I love the way the Z's cut through on stage. I hit hard and want my cymbals to be heard."

"Music is a series of frequency ranges. I look for the one that isn't being saturated, so my cymbals stick out. For example, recently I was in the studio and tried an A Ping Ride, then a K. But for the music I was playing, the Amir Ride really cut it. It was incredible!" says Aronoff.

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LETTERS

Georgemania

George Harrison (Nov. '87) was easily the most refreshing, intelligent and eloquent interview to grace the pages of your magazine in years. His insight into the music industry's past, present and future was both provocative and entertaining—but more importantly, the interview reveals a man who has a very deep respect for life. It is this quality which sets Harrison apart from most others in his field. He takes the time to care, and to show that he cares. We are all a bit better off because of his example. Welcome back, George, although, for me, you were never really gone!

Joe Morra
New York, NY

Looks like November has been deemed George Harrison month in all the magazines across the land. It's great when the interviewee clicks with the interviewer, as did Messrs. Harrison and Timothy White. Thanks to those two for sharing the most interesting and intelligent conversation of the bunch. Is there enough left for part two?

Eric Berg
Santa Cruz, CA

I do not object to articles which preview an artist's upcoming album. However, I do object to articles which *promote* such an album. Such a piece is Timothy White's "George Harrison Reconsidered." Come on, Timothy, stop kissing up to the record company and let us make up our own minds about Harrison's *Cloud Nine*.

Michael Shogi
Turnersville, NJ

A Very Special Iovine

After reading Vic Garbarini's article on Jimmy Iovine (Nov. '87), I felt compelled to write my first letter ever to a magazine. God bless you, Jimmy Iovine! And to Vic Garbarini as well as to Jimmy: Thank you, thank you, thank you!!! You guys give me hope.

T.F. Bailey
Shreveport, LA

Eldridge on the Bridge

I guess a lot has changed in the Bay Area since Roy Eldridge played at Sweet's Ballroom (Nov. '87), but the site of the Golden Gate Bridge has stayed the same for the past 50 years. If Sweet's was in Oakland, it was the Bay Bridge Eldridge crossed, not the Golden Gate. Otherwise, a great article!

Erica Freeman
San Francisco, CA

Dickinson Postscript

Many thanks for Tony Scherman's "Jim Dickinson and the New Low-Fi" (Nov. '87). Let me clear up one point: Carmen McRae's *Just a Little Lovin'* was produced by Arif Mardin. It was my privilege to play piano on the sessions in Miami with the Dixie Flyers. And, "just 4 the record," please add Johnny Vincent (Ace Records, Jackson, Miss.) to my list of all-time "master" producers.

Jim Dickinson
Hernando, MS

The Jackson Race

If Michael Jackson (*Faces*, Nov. '87) is reclusive or inaccessible it's because of people incessantly trying to take something from him—whether it's his money, his personal, *private* life or his good name.

Writer Leonard Pitts, Jr.'s allegations that Michael is white and/or acting white are very unfair, very biased and unfeeling. They demonstrate a lack of compassion and understanding, and the height of ignorance.

Michael became famous at age 11; Hollywood and the music industry are, like it or not, dominated by white people. Now, children—black, white, Hispanic, Indian or Oriental—are very impressionable. If what you see every day, what you hear and who you work with are white, you're not going to shuck and jive and talk street slang.

Michael doesn't swear, doesn't drink beer and doesn't belch out loud—or do it without saying "excuse me." And I doubt seriously that he wears shirts with "Born to Raise Hell" on them. Not all white people do these things—in fact, very few of them do—just as few black people, thankfully, are as ignorant as you.

Rachel Hobbs
Newport, RI

I am shock [*sic*] at the shit you people calling yourselves writers are allowed to print. I'll never buy or read another *Musician* magazine again. I've lived two streets from Jackson in Encino, and spoken to him several times. I know he is the most together person in the music business, with enormous talent that has not yet been explored. It is a pity you people are not sued and put out of business.

E. Traverso
Brooklyn, NY

Leonard Pitts, Jr. replies: "The Michael Jackson I remember is a brown kid with a big nose and bigger Afro who rode on a float once in the Watts Christmas Parade. He got his start with black audiences, and his first national exposure in a black tabloid.

"He is now the brightest star in the firmament, and I'm honestly proud of him for that. But I'm also saddened that success seems for him to have come at the expense of his identification with the community from which he sprang. Contrary to Ms. Hobbs' borderline racist view, that doesn't mean shucking and jiving. It doesn't even mean rejecting white people on any *level or changing his name to Muhammad-something.*

"What it does *mean is embracing a sense of community—of shared experience—with his fellow black Americans. It means not using the magnitude of his success, the skill of his plastic surgeon and Lord knows what else to reject and push those people away. They were there before crossover. They will be there after.*

"I could have gotten a less vehement response if I had made jokes about crippled children. And that's what the piece was, folks: j-o-k-e. Satire, albeit with a message. Get a life, *people. Or, to use a pun that seems rather apropos to the moment, lighten up."*

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F A C E S

NEWS STORIES BY SCOTT ISLER

RON WOLFSON/LFI

MARLON JACKSON

On His Own, but the Name's the Same

How to get a recording contract in today's dog-eat-dog world? It's surprisingly simple. Change your name. Be a Jackson. Be Waldo Jackson, Helga Jackson or Kareem Abdul Jackson. It doesn't matter. Just manufacture some kinship—however distant—to that family from Gary, Indiana and you'll have to beat the moguls away with a stick.

But seriously, folks. Marlon, the latest Jackson to try his hand at a solo career, wants you to know that the famous name goes only so far.

"The only way it helps me in my solo career is, I knew the people would put the needle on the wax. And if it wasn't happening, that was it. No more."

Actually, the project—a self-written and -produced album called *Baby Tonight* and a single called "Don't Go"—*is* happening rather nicely for Marlon, and for the best of reasons, too: It's good product. Marlon says, "There's a little more caring involved. It's more critical now. When you've got five brothers, everyone's in charge of everything. You don't care as much. You drop the dribble, someone else will pick it up. But now it's just me. I love it because I love a challenge."

Those of you who still hold LaToya against the family, please note: Marlon meets that challenge with fluid and appealing vocals. Of course, Marlon's singing could be about as fluid as concrete and as appealing as a garbage truck with a bad muffler at six in the morning, and in some corners it wouldn't matter. He's a Jackson and that's a bankable name. Hide the flaws with glitzy overproduction, put his name in big red letters and get that puppy on the street.

That would have been the easy route. To his lasting credit, Marlon chose a rougher road on *Don't Go*. He just straight-up sings and lets the chips fall where they may. As he points out, "I'm playing the majority of the instruments on the album and there aren't that many different things in there. Everything is *clean*. My tracks are very clean and I like my vocals to stand out. I put my vocals out there, because I think that's what the people buy. They want to hear you sing, if you say you're a singer."

And, for the record, Marlon is. – *Leonard Pitts, Jr.*

THE RAINMAKERS

They're Not in Kansas Anymore

My father had a full life, but he lived and died without ever seeing Washington, D.C., much less New York or Los Angeles or Finland," says **Bob Walkenhorst** of Kansas City's Rainmakers. "I'm getting the chance to do things the rest of my family never did."

GARY GERSHOFF/RETNA

Such are the rewards when you're the singer and songwriter for a snappy, up-and-coming rock 'n' roll band. The Rainmakers found themselves on the fast track last year following the release of their major-label debut LP. As a trio called Steve, Bob & Rich, they'd enjoyed regional success with *Balls*, a homemade album. But the Rainmakers' self-titled Mercury disc and subsequent heavy touring raised the stakes dramatically, sparking widespread interest in Walkenhorst's provocative tunes, which proffered harsh comments on such subjects as welfare, suicide and substance abuse. Horrormeister Stephen King even quoted a couple of Rainmakers songs in his latest best-seller *The Tommyknockers*.

"The political and moral perspective on the first LP owed a lot to where we were from and the way we were raised," Walkenhorst explains. "In the past year, though, we've absorbed so much. We've learned that it's a big old world; there's more out there than we could have imagined. I think we're a little more wide-eyed now."

Walkenhorst feels the Rainmakers' recent follow-up, *Tornado*, reflects these experiences. "I think there's a lot more hope on this album. It says that maybe there are more options than we talked about before, different ways of looking at things.

"On the first record, 'Government Cheese' dealt with the stigma attached to welfare in America. Well, I've since learned that in England it just doesn't have that stigma, so maybe my little world isn't the beginning and end of everything."

Thus, he says, "*Tornado* addresses emotions more than social problems because that's the thing that binds us all together. Heartbreak is the same to me as it is to someone in Japan."

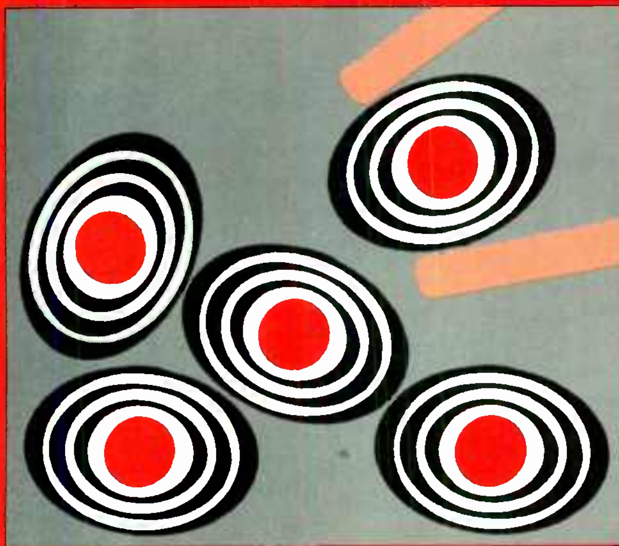
The soft-spoken singer/guitarist pauses for a moment of self-criticism. "At its best, rock 'n' roll is instinctual rather than intellectual. I tend to think about it too much," he concedes. "I wish I were a bit more reflexive. Or I wish I were a lot smarter. Then I could write novels." – *Jon Young*

World Radio History

Ailin' Maelen

Percussionist Jimmy Maelen has leukemia. But he also has friends: people like Bryan Ferry, Kool & the Gang, Patty Smyth, Garland Jeffreys, the System (with all of whom he's recorded), Southside Johnny, David Sanborn, Paul Shaffer and Ronnie Spector. They, and others, came to his financial aid at a benefit concert December 6 in New York. Hospital bills being what they are, Maelen could still use some help. If you'd like to be his friend too, send a contribution to The Maelen Fund, c/o House of Music, 1400 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange, NJ 07052.

LISA LAARMAN



Sony Has a Yen... for CBS Records

It's official: After an on-again, off-again courtship, the Sony Corporation on November 19 bought the CBS Records Group for around $2 billion. The marriage was, if not made on Wall St., at least influenced by it: When the stock market got an upset stomach on October 19, CBS dove back into negotiations with Sony.

Sony has denied that the Japanese firm (which manufactures home digital tape recorders) will make any sudden changes at the record company (which opposes home digital tape recorders). There is, of course, absolutely no truth to the vicious, ugly rumors that all CBS Records executives' offices are being shifted to face east; that the employees' cafeteria is being converted to a sushi bar; and that Columbia Records will soon issue a five-album boxed live retrospective by Eikichi Yazawa. Yazawa records for Warner Bros.

SINEAD O'CONNOR

Better Music through Braincleaning

In olden days minstrels wove epic tales of love and struggle. If they were exceptionally good, they'd leave their listeners spellbound. Sinead O'Connor would have fared well as one of those minstrels. A doe-eyed beauty who speaks in a gentle brogue, this 20-year-old Irishwoman yelps, whispers and keens with an intensity that verges on menace—or madness.

Oddly enough, she's not really out to unsettle. "If you're pissed off, or you just want to tidy your brain out," she explains, "it's good if you talk to somebody. But sometimes it's the same goodness if you talk out loud to yourself; it seems to sort things into neat little piles. These songs are just me tidying my brain."

The results of O'Connor's mental housecleaning, however, are hardly ordinary. Her debut album, *The Lion and the Cobra*, is full of mythical, mystical images more akin to the bards' archetypal constructs than to Freud's stream-of-consciousness ramblings. "I like to hide behind the veil of things," she confides. "I don't like being direct; I tend to write vaguely."

"Vague" is certainly an apt description of O'Connor's musical upbringing. Raised by a family whose sole musical awareness was of Irish drinking songs, O'Connor's first exposure to contemporary sound came with the Smiths and, belatedly, Bob Dylan. Despite such insular beginnings, she developed a talent sufficient for In Tua Nua to record a piece she wrote when she was 14, and for U2's Edge to collaborate with her on the theme for the film *Captive*.

As for the traditional Irish patterns that surface in her music, though she was never specifically tutored in them, O'Connor admits she probably learned them by osmosis during her childhood in the wilds of Ireland ("very uninhabited; just farms and chickens and everyone speaking Irish—very old-romantic").

In fact, her favorite piece of music is an ancient a capella chorale sung entirely in Gaelic. "I don't know what it means," she admits, "but just the sound of it is so descriptive. It's like how, in dancing, you can say something without having to *say* it and it's really beautiful. Singing's that way too."

– Robin J. Schwartz

World Radio History

GAME THEORY

Masterpiece—or Heaven's Gate?

Even the big corporate record companies put out very few double albums these days. So before you hear a note of Game Theory's *Lolita Nation*—a sprawling two-record set recently released by indie-label Enigma—you know you have something pretty unusual in hand.

No kidding. From the first side, where cuts clock in between 21 seconds and six-plus minutes, to side two, where the lilting single "The Real Sheila" resides; from the *really* tilted third side on which lead Theoretician **Scott Miller** shares songwriting space with the other band members, to the comparatively straightforward fourth side—*Lolita Nation* is a wide-open, ambitious sonic and verbal adventure that suggests that most every idea was tried. And most of 'em worked.

That's not to say it won't be a hard sell, which Miller says Enigma realized as the company heard more and more of the project in progress. "They didn't want to have something on their hands that was just big and unwieldy—some kind of audio *Heaven's Gate.*"

But despite efforts to convince the San Francisco-based outfit that four sides of this musical crazy quilt might be two too many, Miller kept plugging away. "You kind of screw yourself if you submit to that kind of panic," he says, "because I think a lot of the charm of this album is that it *is* sprawling."

After such a large and wonderfully off-kilter opus, what can he do for an encore? Not to worry; Miller says he tends to make records that are alternately down-the-line, then off-the-wall. This pattern began shortly after Game Theory came together in 1982 in Davis, California, a college town that also spawned the Dream Syndicate, True West and Thin White Rope. *Real Nighttime* (1985), Miller recalls, "was just sort of *out there* compared to the records I'd done before, and the one after it [*The Big Shot Chronicles*]."

That certainly bodes weird for the album after next. When you consider how far out *Lolita Nation* goes—you gotta love a psycho-cut titled "Watch Who You're Calling Space Garbage Meteor Mouth Pretty Green Card Shark," which takes longer to say than to hear—you can bet the next experimental LP will see Miller blast Game Theory further into the sonic universe. But it won't be no space garbage. – *Duncan Strauss*

MOJO NIXON

Vinyl Novelties, Almost Polished

"The biggest problem," Mojo Nixon says, "is that people perceive the record as a novelty. They'll play it a couple of times for yucks, but won't treat it the way they'd treat, say, the Del Fuegos."

Of course, the Del Fuegos never released "Elvis Is Everywhere," a rave-up that promises redemption through the "Big E," or "Stuffin' Martha's Muffin," an anti-MTV diatribe. Nor do the Del Fuegos perform live as a guitar-and-washboard duo. So it seems inevitable that Nixon and Skid Roper might get pegged as a one-joke band.

"It doesn't really bother me that much," he says. "I've always tended to say things I'm not supposed to say in a funny way, so I won't get beat up." These days, not only is he not getting beat up, he's doing rather well. Nixon's newest album, *Bo-Day-Shus!*, has sold more copies than his three previous releases combined; "Elvis" is getting heavy morning airplay on commercial FM stations; and the video has made it onto MTV.

Folks who buy Nixon's records for laughs often get hooked on his admittedly weird blend of blues, soul and bluegrass. The last two influences come from Nixon's childhood (he was born Kirby McMillan) in southern Virginia, where his dad owned a soul radio station; the blues he picked up on a convoluted musical journey that started with Led Zeppelin and led to Joe Turner and Howlin' Wolf.

About five years ago, Nixon teamed with Roper—who seemingly played with every band within 50 miles of San Diego—and started shaping the Nixon persona. They've released three albums and an EP on various Enigma labels; each has contained funny—okay, *novelty*—songs, as well as reasonably straightforward blues and bluegrass tunes.

Bo-Day-Shus! stands out from the others for two reasons. It's the only release you could *almost* play for your parents. ("The record company said I shouldn't say 'fuck' or 'shit' on this album," Nixon says.) And, where their first release was very obviously recorded in a garage, the new album is almost polished.

Maybe the next album will also be the one to kill the "novelty" tag. "My plan is to be so good they can't deny us," Nixon says. "I hope it will be so good that people will say, 'Whoa! I don't care if it's just two guys and one of them is named Mojo. I just gotta play it.'" – *W. Vann Hall*

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PAUL KELLY

BY JON YOUNG

NO AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OR CONFESSIONS, JUST SONGS

Kelly (fourth from left) and Messengers at the world's biggest fretboard.

Here's good news for all you late bloomers: Paul Kelly didn't pick up a guitar until he was 19 or so, and didn't start writing songs for another three years. If this wiry Australian is really only 32, as he claims, that's not a very long time to blossom into a world-class songwriter.

Make no mistake; Paul Kelly is ready for serious consideration, right alongside the Costellos, Hiatts and whoever else you think sets the standards for tune-smithing these days. It's all there in the grooves of *Gossip*, his first U.S. LP: elegantly twisted pop songs in the vein of Squeeze, like "Before the Old Man Died" and "Before Too Long"; scruffy rockers with dark undertones, like "White Train" and "Darling It Hurts"; frisky Aussie funk in the form of "Tighten Up" (not the Archie Bell song, but plenty lowdown); and even a country weeper with the evocative title "Somebody's Forgetting Somebody (Somebody's Letting Somebody Down)." This stew gets its sizzle from Kelly's twangy, lonesome singing and the sure-handed support of the Messengers, a quartet combining the enthusiasm of a well-worn bar band with more refined instincts.

So why haven't we heard of this talented chap before? Mostly because he's been otherwise engaged, namely earning a degree at the college of hard knocks. Kelly grew up in a large Irish-Italian family in Adelaide, a major seaport on the south coast of Australia. Having dabbled in piano and trumpet as a kid, he left school at age 16 and went traveling for a few years. "I was probably thinking of Jack Kerouac," he smiles.

Talking to the soft-spoken Kelly the day after two showcase gigs in New York City, it's hard to imagine him toiling as a kitchen-hand or laborer on the 2,000-mile stretch of railway between Adelaide and Perth. In the aftermath of a late-night show, he seems weary and none too hardy, considerably older than 32. The noontime sun pouring into the A&M Records office in midtown Manhattan highlights a dingy T-shirt and the beginnings of gray in his black curly hair.

Following two years on the road, Kelly returned home and took up harmonica and guitar, though it didn't occur to him to start composing songs just then. "I always wanted to be some sort of writer, but it was a vague thing," he remembered. "I'd kept a diary from the time I was 15, the way a lot of teenagers do, only I never stopped. For a while I was writing short stories, until I realized I could say the same things with music. Once I started writing songs, I knew I was in it for the long haul."

He played briefly with his sister in a group called the Debutantes. Then he got itchy feet again in the late '70s and took off for the cosmopolitan horizons of Melbourne and a band with the punky name High Rise Bombers. "We weren't a punk band, though," he explains. "I wasn't too keen on the Sex Pistols. The stuff coming out of New York was more interesting, especially Blondie, Television, Talking Heads and John Cale.

"We were a pretty mixed-up group. My songs were like the ones I write now, only not as good, and I was one of three songwriters in the band. Anyway, the Bombers only lasted about nine months. It was one of those bands that becomes more famous after it breaks up."

By the early '80s, Kelly was beginning to find a voice. He formed the Dots, which served as an outlet for his songs exclusively on two LPs, and began to incorporate other influences into his work, from Buddy Holly to the Clash. "I loved the Clash when they weren't so thrashy," Kelly says. "*Manila*, the second Dots LP, was heavily influenced by *Sandinista!* and *London Calling*."

Cool inspirations aside, the Dots were not a success. "I was struggling with how to direct other people and still learning to write songs. Our two records didn't do very well, but then, they weren't very good."

It was a "pretty discouraged" Kelly who disbanded the Dots and relocated to Sydney with his wife and son in 1984, intending to start from scratch. Friends Steve Connolly (guitar) and Michael Barclay (drums) followed, and the three set to work on Kelly's solo debut, the acoustic *Post*.

The story of a heroin addict's decline and salvation, *Post* was, Kelly notes, "the first LP that turned out something the way I intended. It wasn't a huge seller, but I think a lot of people must have taped it from their friends, because it had a bigger impact than its sales."

For instance, reporters and fans began wondering if *Post*'s harrowing tale came directly from experience. Although Kelly's been quoted in the Australian press as saying such a question "shows how gullible people are," he now takes a more tolerant approach. "It's quite normal that some people would

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think all your songs are autobiographical. After all, you're trying to be believable, so you can't be upset.

"It's more funny than annoying. If someone confuses the character on *Post* with me, I wonder how they think I would still be alive and working five nights a week with a band! In the long run, it's the songs that matter, not whether they're true to life or an act of imagination. I don't write autobiographies. I don't write confessions. I write songs."

Encouraged by the interest in *Post*, Kelly formed a group to play the songs live, eventually enlisting Connolly, Barclay, keyboardist Peter Bull and bassist Jon Schofield to become the Messengers. The band subsequently cut *Gossip*, a two-disc opus, in early 1986. Reduced to one record and 15 tracks (17 on CD) for U.S. release, this impressive work is all over the map thematically. Nobody's gonna pin an easy label on Kelly now.

"There are certain things that keep coming up in the songs," he concedes when pressed. "For one, memory—that is, what we remember and what we forget. Then there's sex and death, the only two things William Butler Yeats said an intelligent man should be concerned with. And families: Being a parent makes me more aware of them. 'Going About My Father's Business' [CD only] comes from telling my son off and hearing my father in me."

"Adelaide," another CD-only track, also dredges up the past. Kelly writes about his hometown with such vivid flourishes—the wisteria, the great-aunts, the dying father—that it's impossible not to wonder if it comes straight from his diary. "Some of it," he says quietly. "But songs can never claim to be accurate because they close in on one aspect of something. My father did die when I was 13 and I did want to get away. But that's not the extent of my feelings."

The song goes, "All the king's horses, all the king's men/ Wouldn't drag me back again." Some people "assume it's a total putdown," Kelly concedes. "But emotions are never pure. My feelings for Adelaide are more complex than that."

Ask about the relative importance of songwriting and singing, and he'll say it's 50-50. Quick to acknowledge vocal influences, he cites George Jones, Gram Parsons, Howlin' Wolf and the second Sonny Boy Williamson as favorites. But nothing gets this otherwise reticent soul to open up better than a question about the process of creating a song.

"As a rule, I'm a pretty slow worker. Sometimes you break the back of a song really quickly—get the melody, title, the drift and the first two verses. But then it's hard to finish it off, get that extra little twist." "Leaps and Bounds," for exam-

continued on page 121

DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

"I don't really know much about guitars," **Paul Kelly** cautions. "My electric is a Les Paul Signature. People have told me that it's fairly rare, but I'm not a collector. I just bought it in a shop in Sydney. I also play a Takamine acoustic; sometimes in the studio I use a Washburn acoustic/electric. I'd really like to get a good Martin or something like that, because the Takamine's falling apart." His amp is a MESA/Boogie.

Lead guitarist **Steve Connolly** gets the message across with a Fender Strat, a Les Paul Black Beauty, a Vox AC30 and a Fender Bandmaster 75. **Peter Bull**'s keyboards include a Roland RD 300 and Yamaha DX7. The word on **Jon Schofield** is that he's got two Fender Precision basses, with an Ampeg head and 8x10" speaker cabinet. Finally, the gossip about **Michael Barclay**—that he plays Pearl drums with Remo Pinstripe heads, and Zildjian and Sabian cymbals—is true.

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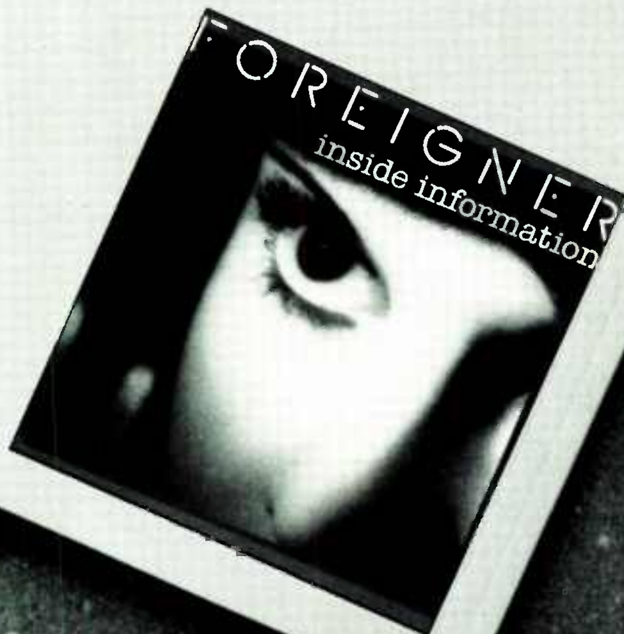

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WENDY AND LISA

BY SCOTT ISLER

SOMEDAY THEIR PRINCE WILL COME BACK—MAYBE

Sisters doin' it for themselves: Wendy snaps, Lisa smiles.

SHEILA ROCK

Wendy and Lisa. Guitarist and keyboard player, respectively. Useta play with Prince.

"We've had some really funny interviews," Wendy says, "where people ask one question about us and the rest of the two hours is about Prince."

Well, let's face it: He's bigger than both of them. Wendy Melvoin and Lisa Coleman, however, were far from talentless bimbos sharing the stage with the mighty shrimp merely for sexist appeal. Besides their audible axe prowess, Lisa co-arranged (with Prince) and both women conducted the string section on Prince's blockbuster *Purple Rain* album. They also wrote two songs ("Mountains" and "Sometimes It Snows in April") on Prince's *Parade.*

And we'll get back to them in a moment. But first: Well, what *about* Prince?

"You want to know what he's *really* like?" Wendy laughs between forkfuls of Chinese food in a New York restaurant.

Actually, a more relevant question concerns Wendy and Lisa's departure from Prince a few months after they flanked him on the cover of *Rolling Stone* and Lisa announced, "We don't want to leave and start our own thing, because this *is* our own thing." Wendy had agreed: "This band is going to be together a long, long time."

Wendy now explains, sort of, that Prince's disbanded Revolution "still is" together. "None of us are playing together right now. But we're all friends. We communicate. We still believe in the same things collectively. And, god willing, we'll still be doing projects together in the future. But it got to the point where, musically and creatively, we just weren't offering enough to the craft. An alternative was to go get some experience, to learn more, to be able to apply it in a different way. It just seemed like a logical step after the last [Prince] tour. Prince wanted to go back and experiment on his own for a while. He didn't want to stifle us. I did mean that, that this band is going to be together a long time. And I'll stick by that."

Prince "got back into doing everything himself," according to Lisa. "*He* wanted to experiment more. We were all leaning on each other to a certain extent. We just got to the point where we said, 'I wanna do it.' He said, '*I* wanna do it, and you guys [*sic*] are getting so good I don't wanna hold you back, just keep you for the touring band.'"

A member of the Prince camp offers a less rosy scenario: Wendy and Lisa would often threaten to quit to get their way. After Prince and the Revolution finished a tour of Japan, in September 1986, the tension came to a head and Prince agreed to let them go. Wendy and Lisa deny ever threatening to quit.

"It's a mutual decision between Prince and all of us in the band," Lisa says of the Revolution's dissolution. "We had reached a real high, a plateau. We got the best I think we could get for the time being. We all came to the conclusion that we wanted to try something else. It wasn't like we said, 'Let's go start our own thing.' That *was* our own thing. This is just a continuation of it, minus one."

"This" refers to *Wendy and Lisa,* the duo's album released last August. The record makes an impressive case for Wendy and Lisa on their own: They played virtually all the instruments themselves (there's some percussion assistance, mainly from Wendy's brother Jonathan). Even more impressively, they wrote the album's 11 songs with co-producer Bobby Z, the ex-Revolution drummer, during their 10 weeks in the recording studio.

Wendy says the three of them "decided we just wanted to go right in and start experimenting." "We weren't even signed until way after the album was done," Lisa adds. They're on Columbia—*not* Prince's own Paisley Park label, distributed by Warner Bros. "Prince is like our friend and everything," Lisa says haltingly. "It would just be weird to deal with him on the level of president of the record company!"

Their songwriting method might be called organic collaboration. "We switch phrases," Wendy says. "She'll play a phrase and I'll try to finish it. Or I'll begin a phrase and she'll end it. We try to build it that way, back and forth." That applies to lyrics too, where Bobby Z helped out. "We'd be struggling to express our feelings," Lisa says. "He'd clarify a lot."

The result is a batch of tunes with sophisticated changes and rhythms mostly dealing with romantic themes. "We like to write about things that we know about," Lisa says. "One thing I know about is a broken heart." One track, "Song About," seems to address Prince specifically with its reference to "the end of the parade." "We were just sitting around tossing memories back and forth," Lisa recalls. "It's kind of nice

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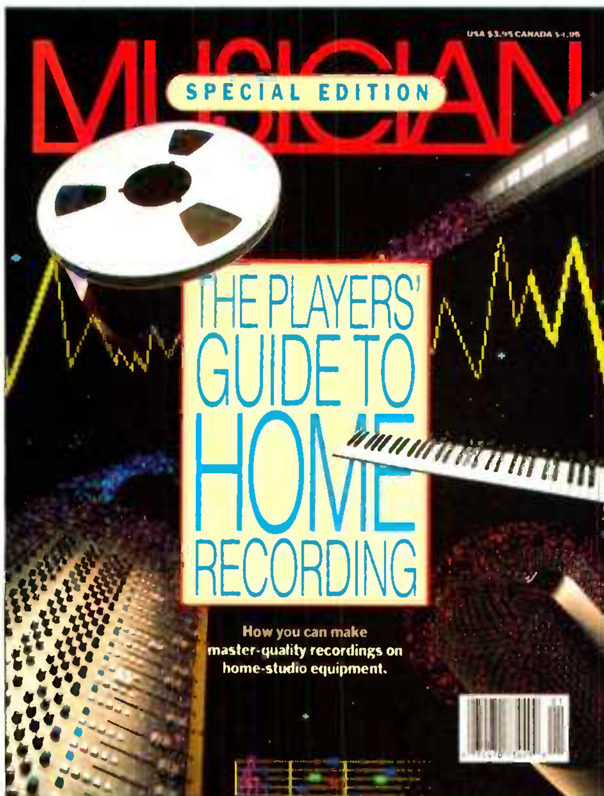

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to communicate with people in an abstract way, through a song. It's easier to sing things than say them," she giggles. Have they heard from Prince since the break-up? "He's proud of us."

They must be on good terms with the post-purple one, since they say they're providing music for his next film—the one after his Revolution-less *Sign o' the Times* concert movie. "We're all still involved," Wendy maintains. "It's just that we're not his touring band."

She doesn't hesitate when asked if they'd like to get back with Prince: "Sure. Absolutely." "We didn't plan to leave him," Lisa says. Wendy resumes: "We're not planning to stay away."

Whatever happens (or happened), *Wendy and Lisa* is another feather in the women's collective cap. Their album didn't get much of a debut lift-off in *Billboard*'s Top Pop LP chart, but Columbia showed confidence by releasing a second single in January. "It's not an immediate-response record," says Bob Wilcox, the label's West Coast vice-president of marketing.

As for Wendy and Lisa, these childhood friends reveal no disappointment

continued on page 129

PAISLEY PARTS

Wendy Melvoin plays Gibson 335s, Ibanez jazz guitars and a customized six-string Rickenbacker. On the acoustic side, she favors Guild. She also has a five-string baritone/bass guitar made by Michael Tobias. Her strings are GHS Boomers on the electrics, Dean Markleys or Martin Marquis on acoustic. And make that heavy-gauge: "You don't get the right kind of tension from light-gauge strings." To get her "round" sound, she plays through Bob Bradshaw gear and a rack built by Andy Brower holding a Lexicon PCM-70, Yamaha SPX90, Yamaha REV7, Rocktron Hush compression, spatial expanders, two slope units and a Cry Baby pedal. For amps, Wendy uses Boogie heads through small cabinets, and (for distortion) a Marshall head. Keyboards? Wendy dabbles with a Fairlight and Yamaha DX7. She also has a Fostex multi-track recorder and not enough time (yet) to use it. Her guitar picks are mediums, though she "used to use dimes when I was desperate." "If you have a dime," Lisa responds, "you're not that desperate."

Speaking of **Lisa Coleman**, she plays a Fairlight, Yamaha piano, Oberheim Matrix 12 and "the usual" DX7 with MIDI. She hasn't used her Oberheims (OBX-6, OB-8) in a while. In the studio she plugs her electric keyboards directly into the board.

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DANIEL PONCE

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

AN "UNDESIRABLE" PERCUSSIONIST BECOMES A WANTED MAN

In early 1980 Daniel Ponce was 26 years old. He had a steady job as a bata drummer with a quintet called Watusi in the tourist hotels and cabarets of Havana. He had no desire to emigrate; his only ambition was to play his Thursday-to-Sunday gig and collect his government paycheck. But as he says, "It seems that wasn't my destiny."

That spring the Cuban government allowed American boats to evacuate refugees from the port of Mariel. Fidel Castro also used the occasion to rid his country of "undesirables." Ponce had not served in the army or participated in the activities of his neighborhood block association. He considered himself apolitical—not a joiner—but to the Cuban government, that made him a rebel. He was designated "not socially integrated" and ordered to leave.

Today Daniel Ponce is an internationally renowned conga player who has performed in London, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo, and recorded with Mick Jagger, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Nona Hendryx, Yoko Ono, Sly & Robbie, Yellowman, Kip Hanrahan and his fellow *Marielito* Paquito D'Rivera, among others. Ponce is the percussionist of choice for New York performances by Latin legends like Mario Bauza and Celia Cruz, and last summer he toured Europe with Dizzy Gillespie. "He's been like the American Dream," says Verna Gillis, who has guided his career since he first arrived in the Big Apple less than six months after landing in Florida. And with the release of his new album, *Arawe*, this stocky, balding "undesirable" stands on the brink of crossover stardom.

Despite a deep immersion in Afro-Cuban tradition—Ponce had virtually no exposure to American music before leaving Havana—*Arawe* features a remarkable variety of cultural ideas, from American jazz to rock to Trinidadian soca and Dominican merengue. "Daniel's into combining things," says pianist Steve Sandberg, who co-wrote and arranged most of *Arawe*'s material. "He's really into new sounds." The album's superb cast of players includes Venezuelan saxophonist Rolando Briceño, fellow Mariel refugees Orlando "Puntilla" Rios (on vocals) and trap drummer Ignacio Berroa, New York salsa stalwarts like bassist Andy Gonzalez and timbales player Nicky Marrero, seasoned jazz hands like trumpeter Lew Soloff and trombonist Steve Turre, and guest soloists D'Rivera on alto sax, Yomo Toro on the guitar-like Puerto Rican cuatro, Tito Puente on marimba and Vernon Reid on electric guitar. The result is a sonic montage, intercutting and overlapping Latin jazz, funk and pop with the hypnotic drum and chant rhythms of Afro-Cuban cult music and street song.

"I think this album was really an exploration," says Sandberg. "That's how it started out. Daniel would come over to my house, we'd start jamming, and then he'd go, 'Okay, fine. Write it.' And I'd write out the lines. But our concepts work well together; we have a very similar feel for the kind of fusion we want to make."

"We wouldn't be interested in a traditional Cuban or Puerto Rican album," agrees Jean-Pierre Weiller, who signed Ponce to Antilles on the strength of two demo tracks, "Oromi" and "No Comprendo." "My idea was to make an album that reflected New York today. That's what makes Daniel's musicians so great; you can hear their heritage through every part of the music. But they are translating modern concepts."

Ponce finds the U.S. Latin music scene curiously outdated, a frozen image of the pre-Castro past. "Cuban dance music is much stronger and more original than anything that's happening here," he declares. "The people [still] playing salsa are veterans of the First World War. Latin people here should be opening things up, not sticking with old music. They need something new." In Cuba the word "salsa" meant merely "sauce." "I only think about salsa when I sit down to eat," Ponce jokes. "Every time I hear that word it makes me hungry.

"Cuban music," he elaborates, "is *son, guaracha, son montuño*. Salsa is the *son montuño* of 1950. The difference between *son montuño* and salsa is that *son montuño* is conga and bongos, but with salsa it's the timbales and cowbell. In Cuba they don't play the bell, they play the side of the drum. Here the *timbalero* plays the bell, which transforms Cuban music into salsa." Today's Cuban dance music, he says, is based on the older *son*, or Afro-*son*. "It is the same *son* even from 1910, but with synthesizers and different contemporary arrangements to keep it modern."

Records by Latin New Yorkers like Eddie Palmieri, Ray Barretto and Tito Puente were unavailable in Cuba, so the

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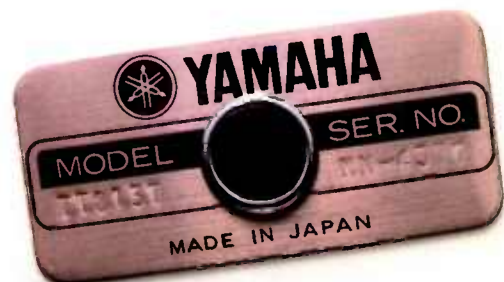

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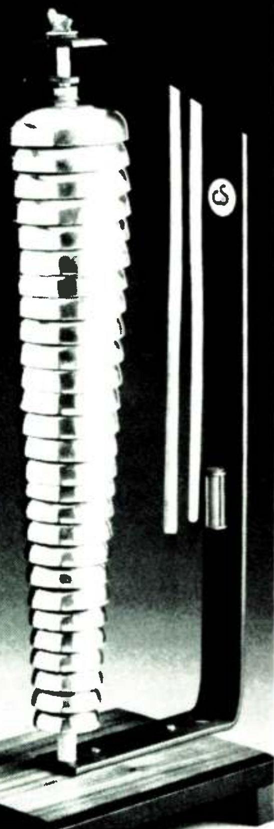

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only salsa Ponce heard growing up was by Venezuelan Oscar D'Leon—"because there are good relations between Venezuela and Cuba."

What little American music Ponce heard in Cuba was mostly rock, which he still appreciates now that he has played with some of its biggest stars. "Rock is understandable music," he says. "It's danceable, and I like to dance." He also likes New York's hip-hop sound, which he compares to Cuban *décimas*—improvised or satirical verses sung in rural areas: "It's a good way to find out what's going on socially." But when asked whether Cuban music offers anything like hip-hop's scathing social criticism, he responds acidly: "In Cuba they're only going to sing about how beautiful the system is. They're not going to sing anything against the system. They have a new style of democracy in Cuba."

Ponce has more natural affinity for American jazz, forging another link in a tradition that includes Paquito D'Rivera, Mario Bauza and Chano Pozo. Performing at the Blue Note Latin Jazz Festival in Greenwich Village, for instance, Ponce led his band through a short but intense set of Coltrane-style modal tunes. In his brief solos he used his palms, his fingers and the heels of his hands to coax an amazing variety of percussive sounds from his six melodiously tuned congas. Without pounding or obvious effort, he produced deep, luminous tones and arrestingly sharp accents, displaying an artistry that was not merely rhythmic but fully musical.

"Jazz gives you the opportunity to show what you can do on your instrument," he observes, "because of that element of improvisation. Jazz has one beat, one tempo, and into that tempo you can fit the 'clave' [the basic Cuban rhythm pattern] easily. Rhythmically, I could understand it perfectly, and I feel very comfortable in it."

Unlike most salsa musicians, Ponce is unconcerned about the current popularity of merengue among Latin fans, perhaps because his wife is Dominican. "I love Dominican women—forget about it. And I love merengue. Some people may find the rhythm boring because it's so repetitive, but the Dominican musicians have been able to take it to an international level." For the moment, he says, "I like to play it all, but my expression is Afro-Cuban."

Daniel Ponce was born in Old Havana and grew up in the same barrio as Mongo Santamaria, whose music he never heard until Mongo visited Cuba in 1978. He says he acquired his musical bent before birth—"inside my mother," he explains, "because while I stay inside she go to carnivals, to party all the time." As a child he absorbed the rhythms of the rumba and *guaguanco* (the basis of modern salsa) in their original folk form, and also picked up the music and lore of Santería, a voodoo-like religion that identifies the deities of the Yoruba people of Nigeria and Benin with Catholic saints, or santos. His mother and grandparents were Santería devotees, but Daniel remains skeptical.

Like many barrio youths, he began drumming in the streets at an early age in dance bands and carnival parades, eventually landing a job with Watusi, which consisted of three bata drummers and two dancers. Before the Castro revolution, the sacred, hourglass-shaped batas had been reserved for Santería ceremonies; afterward, unconsecrated bata drums called *abbericulas* were integrated into secular music. Ponce, whose grandfather played batas, says the material on his 1983 debut LP, *New York Now!* on Celluloid, is similar to Watusi's repertoire, except for Bill Laswell's electronic effects.

After leaving Cuba, Ponce spent three months in Miami, but found the Cuban community there uncongenial and old-fashioned. A Cuban-American organization arranged for him to move to Newark, New Jersey, and then to nearby Elizabeth, where he found a sponsor and a job as an assistant garage mechanic. Before long he was taken to the Club Elegante in Elizabeth to sit in with bandleader José Fajardo, a popular favorite from pre-Castro days. At a street fair in Harlem, he sat in with the Gonzalez brothers—bassist Andy and trumpeter/percussionist Jerry—who brought him down to the Village Gate to play with their band, Conjunto Libre. They also took him to the weekly Afro-Cuban jam sessions at Soundscape, whose proprietor, Verna Gillis, became his manager and concert promoter.

Many Cuban emigrants are unprepared for the frustrations they encounter in the U.S. and become disillusioned with life here, Ponce says. But Ponce was accustomed to hard work—he used to march through the streets of Havana for miles with a heavy parade drum around his neck—and he feels comfortable in New York's frenetic atmosphere.

"I love New York," he says. "I'm from here now. In Cuba nothing was easy. There are some words that don't exist in Cuba—'smooth,' 'easy' and 'I'll do it.' But I'm a worker. I like to do it." M

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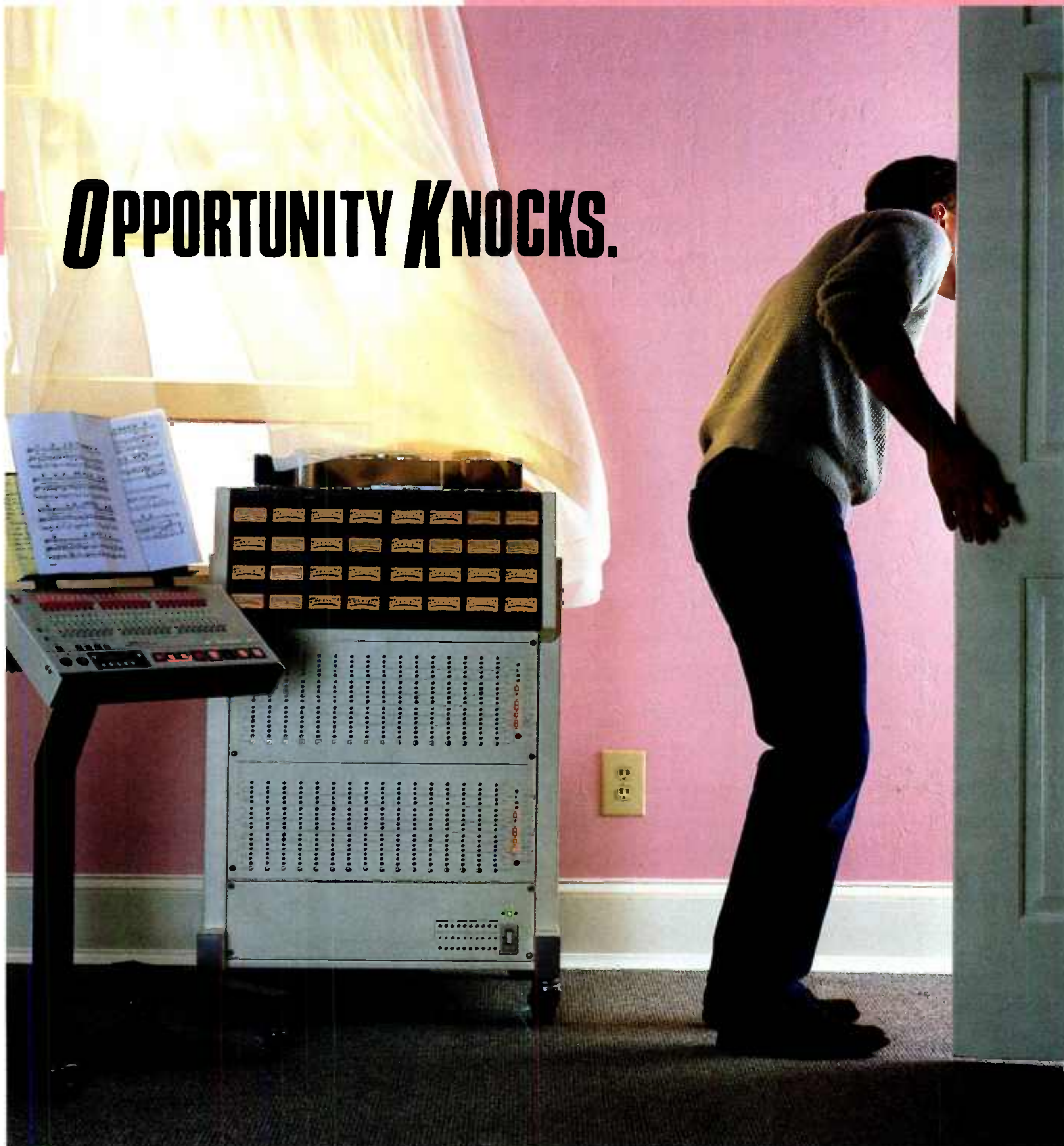

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World Radio History

REKINDLING EARTH, WIND & FIRE

BY ROY TRAKIN

SHARED SPOTLIGHTS & TRUE GRIT THIS TIME AROUND

Maurice White, Andrew Woolfolk and Verdine White in back, Philip Bailey center.

"We never really broke up," insists Maurice White during a break in Earth, Wind & Fire rehearsals at a nondescript studio located in a Burbank mall. "That was just stuff to sell papers. We went on hiatus to work on individual projects. Phil just kept dropping the idea of getting back together in my ear. Like, 'Reece, time to do it...'"

"I didn't ask myself 'why do it?' as much as 'why not?'" chimes in Philip Bailey. "With all the great people I had a chance to work with, there's still a certain magic that me and 'Reece have which is like nothin' else. And I didn't see why we couldn't work together as well as have our separate things. We just wanted to make it as simple as possible, without any long-term marriage-type commitments."

Five years after their last album, *Electric Universe*, White, 46, and Bailey, 36, have revived Earth, Wind & Fire. The new EW&F also includes bassist Verdine White, guitarist Sheldon Reynolds and sax player Andrew Woolfolk. They plan to follow their LP, *Touch the World*, with a tour in '88.

This time, though, the emphasis has shifted. Main man Maurice has divested himself of his West L.A. Complex studio-offices as well as his custom ARC label to concentrate completely on music. After a hit duet with Phil Collins on "Easy Lover," Bailey has emerged as a star in his own right, and his mentor 'Reece is more than happy to share some of the spotlight—as well as the responsibility—for the reformed group.

After guiding the fortunes of Earth, Wind & Fire since its inception more than 16 years ago, Maurice welcomed the opportunity to give up some of the workload. "The guys are taking more of a part this time," he admits. "So I get a chance to do what I do best and everybody else has the opportunity to make a contribution, which is different than it was the last time. I brought all of them into the industry back then, so I had to show them the ropes myself."

For Philip Bailey, his solo success was a necessary prerequisite for asserting himself in the reformed band. "Earth, Wind & Fire is like a family," he says. "Getting away and cutting my teeth working with other people gave me a lot of confidence in my ability to contribute. Not that Maurice didn't let me contribute then, it's just now that I've had a chance to go out there and waste, er, spend my own money, I can come back with an objective opinion based on experience rather than just conjecture."

Of course, cynics might point out that Philip Bailey's solo efforts were also a tad more successful than Maurice White's self-titled 1985 LP.

"It wasn't quite as disappointing as it might have seemed," insists Maurice of his record. "I wasn't looking to become a big star as a solo performer, because I was already a star. The most important thing is the effort. As long as you give honestly and do the best you can, that's all you can do..."

Which brings us to the new album, where White tries to incorporate some of the modern technology he learned from working with the young Scotsmen Martin Page and Brian Fairweather on his solo record.

"The whole thing is to blend the acoustic and the synthesized sound," he explains. "The challenge in the studio is to create that atmosphere you get when

World Radio History

someone is playing live, to do certain things EQ-wise with the synthesizer which will bring out that vibration."

In fact, the LP's first single, "Systems of Survival," with its scratching collage introduction and hip-hop beat, nods to rap, a musical form which barely existed the last time Earth, Wind & Fire recorded. The track was written by a young Bay Area fusion bassist named Skylark, and was brought to the attention of White and Bailey when its author attached a demo tape to the door handle of 'Reece's car while the band was working in the studio.

The song's litany of society's ills is in stark contrast to Earth, Wind & Fire's usual cosmic homilies. "It doesn't reflect a personal change," insists White. "It deals with the issues of the day, what's real. I've always tried to reflect what I've lived and seen going on around us. It would be real tough to write upbeat songs when there's such degradation."

This use of outside songwriters showed a flexibility Maurice didn't exhibit on previous band efforts. The album's title track was penned by Philip's collaborator on his gospel records, Reverend Oliver Wells.

"I think it was very important to bring in new energy," says White. "Instead of trying to do it all, as we usually do."

"Touch the World" is a no-holds-barred prayer for a world blighted by "hungry starving people," crack junkies and pregnant teenagers, offering solace in the knowledge that "God gives hope and Jesus is the way." The performance is carried by Bailey's soaring falsetto and background vocals from the Edwin Hawkins singers.

"When I first heard the song, it had such amazing universal appeal, I wanted to play it for Maurice right away," explains Philip. "It's the kind of material we look for, something that touches us and, hopefully, other people."

"Even though it was written as a gospel song, it had overtones of universality," adds Maurice.

While the new LP is being trumpeted as an Earth, Wind & Fire comeback with the presence of Maurice's brother Verdine and Andrew Woolfolk, there are some differences. Funk guitarist Al McKay, whose chunky, rhythmic playing highlighted the group's work until he left in 1980, was apparently asked back, as was Philip's old pal, keyboardist Larry Dunn, but both were busy with production projects. Also missing are the Phenix Horns, long associated with the Earth, Wind & Fire sound.

"We didn't want to feature just the horns this time," explains White. "I think everybody and their mama took our sound and tried to capitalize on it. We're not trying to sound like anybody else. The horns are there; they're just not the primary feature. *We* are..."

Considering the way acts like Genesis used the EW&F approach to great success, it's no wonder Maurice is a little touchy when questioned about this record's crossover possibilities. In their '70s heyday the group earned seven Grammies, six double-platinum albums and nine gold singles. At their height, Maurice White's band was probably the most popular group in America, an arena-packing black act with a multiracial audience. At the time crossing over didn't seem to be a problem.

"What ultimately crossed us over was the live presentation and the kids who requested our songs on pop radio," Maurice says. "It wasn't the record label or the disc jockeys."

"We wanted to give them something they couldn't get listening to the record at home," agrees Philip about the band's onstage spectacles. "We were fascinated with theater. Even when we didn't have the finances, we began using

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smoke pots and fog machines..."

When the group goes out this year, expect a similarly lavish presentation. "We can't do it any other way," says Maurice. "We are an event...And I wouldn't want to disappoint anybody..."

As for whether the new album can attract the same kind of across-the-board following, that's another story. Even the optimistic Bailey, who rode to pop success with "Easy Lover," knows the pitfalls.

"The black/white issue certainly put a damper on that," he says about his hit. "It all turned a little sour when the media got involved, conjecturing on why Phil Collins and I had gotten together in the first place. And while that single got on all the radio stations, it was kind of disheartening when the second single wasn't touched by a lot of 'em. At that point, I became a black artist again. It was like, I had to start all over..."

For the Colorado-born Bailey, it was hard enough becoming a black artist in the first place: "It was almost like I didn't know I had soul. When I joined Earth, Wind & Fire, I began to learn by osmosis from artists who were actually doing it. I picked up a lot about playing drums from watching how Maurice would play with his whole body. The hardest thing 'Reece had to do was teach me how to pronounce words. Being from Denver, I'd say stuff like, 'We've got you,' and Maurice would go, 'No, we *gotcha!*' I actually learned to be black being in Earth, Wind & Fire..."

Bailey now combines a Grammy-award-winning gospel music career with his pop profile. "I don't see myself as a Christian artist or an R&B artist or a pop artist. I'm Philip Bailey, who happens to have a gift. My beliefs are in Christ, so I sing about what I believe in. I don't have any problems with it and I don't worry about people that do. We're in the world, though not of it. It's probably more consistent for me to do Christian material being in Earth, Wind & Fire than it would be in some other band. The messages go hand in hand, whereas, if I were in Black Sabbath, it might be different."

The only question that remains is, can Earth, Wind & Fire take up where they left off more than five years ago? To do that, the band will have to re-establish its black audience first, which won't be an easy task. Is that kind of massive acceptance even important to a newly mellow Maurice anymore?

"I don't think Earth, Wind & Fire has gotten its due yet," he says. "The only thing I'm after is to make a contribution

continued on page 121

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THE TECHNOLOGY THAT PERFORMS

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"The way I used to make my living was I would get five or six guys, we would pile in the back of a Dodge Ram van and we would travel all over these great United States opening up for heavy-metal acts in hockey rinks. Oh, it was the life, let me tell ya..."

Buster Poindexter, a.k.a. David Johansen, is seated comfortably on a stool at New York's Bottom Line, telling a Wednesday night crowd of devotees the story many of them have heard three, four or more times—how he came to turn in his Beatle boots and rocker's frippery for the pumps and tuxedo he now wears. Many in this audience were with him when he heaved his fist in the air with the best, and a few were around the nearby Mercer Arts Center in '71, when he flipped a fey wrist as front man for the New York Dolls. The face that looked out from the Dolls' *Too Much Too Soon* LP with a titanically cynical and sexually

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Personality Crisis! Buster Poindexter and David Johansen: Two Singers, Two Careers, One Heart of Gold

By Fred Schruers

threatening sneer is now grinning openly. It's a face set off by a slick pompadour as he lights a cigarette one-handed (mike and martini glass in the other) and dawdles on with his tale. "I'll never forget. I got back to New York, it was freezing out, snowing, I'm standing on the corner with 47 dollars in my pocket and a bloody nose and I'm trying to get into my old

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apartment. And it seems that while I'm away my girlfriend has sold the apartment, all the furnishings, and run off with a photo-realist..."

He's in absolutely no hurry. His four-piece band plus percussionist and three-man Uptown Horns section (collectively known as the Banshees of Blue) are on a break. Drummer Tony Machine is still at his kit, reading a paper but available to hit a rim shot if Buster ventures a particularly excruciating one-liner. "This is a true story," Buster had announced with a fibber's smirk. As usual with this bifurcated popster, you can't really trust him to be lying to you. So we follow him to a chilly room in a crappy hotel off Washington Square: "Cracks on the ceiling, bare light bulb, and I'm lying there watching the cockroach races and like a schmuck I'm taking bets with myself; 'So Buster, which one do ya got this time? I dunno Buster, you pick.' Which is nice when you're all alone, to have someone to talk to, although one invariably ends up drinking twice as much..."

He's warming up to nothing less than the story of a foiled suicide, a story whose locale will move to Jamaica and include as guest stars "the reggae superstar" Eek-A-Mouse and Noel Coward. The monologue culminates in a prolonged, literate ("I've had Pilsener Urguell/ Brewed in a Communist hell") and celebratory self-penned vaudevillian number called "The Worst Beer That I Ever Had." "Has the Orwellian prophecy finally come to *this*?" he demands in the penultimate line, when the audience's heads are pounding with the joyful silliness of it all and they're squealing like primary school kids. "Have they actually got us drinking..."

He stops short of the obvious rhyme. A long pause ensues while Buster gathers himself somewhat primly—a compound of Jack Benny and a Las Vegas hack—and wags a finger: "I don't do blue." The song closes with a piano flourish and emphatic beating on the snare as the audience sings the chorus and Buster, in full baritone cry, interpolates "Ave Mar-ia," "Sweet Ad-el-ine" or some similar nonsense. And just when the audience applauding frenziedly for an encore is wondering what to expect next from this man who moved out of the giddy dark night of proto-punk gender-bending into suavely macho saloon music, he's back onstage. A violin sends out the intro to his signature song, "Heart of Gold." He first recorded it in the winter of 1981, for David Johansen's third solo album, at a jogging tempo that almost made it sound like he was daunted

"The idea was, 'Let's start an act that can only play New York, so they can never ship us to the hinterlands again.'"

by its very emotion. Recently, Banshees musical director Joe DeLia helped him with a slower arrangement, and now he belts it out at a stately pace, letting each line sink home: "You think I'm a whore but I gotta heart of gold/ You're locking your doors and leaving me out in the cold/ But I been bought and baby I been sold/ And I need protection from the cold."

Johansen seemed locked out of the big time for a long while. Though the Dolls' landmark albums (with Johansen's jabbering, street-smart vocals and Johnny Thunder's chattering guitars, they really did sound like the subway trains almost every critic compared them to) were rock monuments, they never made anybody rich. After drummer Billy Murcia overdosed and died in London, things took a slightly sinister turn, and Johansen arrived in the mid-'70s with a wrecked marriage (scenemaker Cyrinda Fox went off with Aerosmith's Steve Tyler, who seemed to have beaten Johansen for the "Next Jagger" crown) and an albatross of an obsolete management contract. For about five years, he couldn't record, and thus began his years on the road. Tony Machine had been the Dolls' road manager (after early duty in a Rascals-era band known as the Rich Kids) and was hired by Johansen to do stadium dates in Japan that they privately dubbed the New York Dollars tour. The concept of touring to pump record sales is still slightly alien to Johansen. "I'm a guy who always went on the road to turn a buck," he says. "You know, to get food to eat."

As his contractual hassle ended, Johansen went into the studio with producer Richard Robinson to cut his classic, self-titled debut. The test pressings went out the first week of

On his video director: "Whattya want a limey for? We wanta make this thing a beautiful multi-racial extravaganza, not like some rich white guy went overboard."

March 1978; a month before, he was guest DJ on WPIX-FM and at the height of his well-earned cynicism. Asked when he started professionally, he replied, "Oh—am I doing this professionally?" But he remembered his first band, the Vagabond Missionaries, and the first songs he loved—Fats Domino's "Whatcha Gonna Do" and the Everly Brothers' "Wake Up Little Susie." He played a few cuts—an Anita O'Day tune, Ritchie Valens' "C'mon Let's Go," Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity," and left promptly at midnight: "I gotta get in drag and go to the Village now."

The solo album *David Johansen*, a yowling barrage of rockers with each side closed by a ballad that sped up as his honest passion and hurt spilled out ("Donna" and "Frenchette") wouldn't be out of place on anybody's list of 50 great rock albums. But records are a money business, and his solo act never topped small-hall scale (though he opened at Shea Stadium for the Clash/Who extravaganza). What's always been best about Johansen in any incarnation is his overwhelming heart, and when he would close sets with the Dolls' greatest hit—"Personality Crisis"—there was no more compelling performer in rock. With the bass and tom-tom hammering, Johansen finished the set with his fist in the air—"You've all got personality—you! you! you! Use it! Every day!" It was quite clear that he was stating the prescription that kept him alive.

Chez Poindexter—well, let's call him Johansen for now—is high up in a monolithic building off Seventh Avenue in midtown. The apartment he lives in with his wife, photographer Kate Simon, has been hers for years, while he used to live downtown. He's found a congenial local bar where we meet to talk over lager-and-stouts prior to some business calls. He prefers to leave his emoting to the right of a G-clef, and present and future tense interest him much more than the past: "They don't really wanta know what Santa brought me for Christmas, right?" Years of Luckies (note the pack at his feet on the cover of his Dolls and solo debut albums) have combined with booze and road work to give him a rasp he modulates from longshoreman-gruff to bon-vivant fluid as the moment requires.

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He's traded his Beatle boots for shiny pumps, and Jack Daniels for amaretto.

Today he's wearing a black suit, black shirt and lab-assistant glasses well down on his nose. Thirty-eight this January, he's still very much in touch with his Staten Island family (his dad died two years ago; he took his mom, an office worker, out for dinner on her birthday and afterwards at Buster's Bottom Line gig she was the center of Tony Machine's weekly crowd-invading routine). With the release of Buster Poindexter's first album, the singer's public identity switch is complete. Fully aware that his record label, RCA, wants to punch every possible button to make his LP a hit, he's mildly trepidant about coming out of two years of relative rest and seclusion. "I was on the road from after the Dolls until a year or two ago—12 years or something—and I haven't come to grips with traveling again." For a while, he was a stranger even to his old crowd. "I used to come to New York with the Johansen group, playing the Ritz like a band coming through town. I would see people on the street and they'd say, 'David, what happened to you? Did ya get out of the business or something, I haven't seen ya lately.' And I'd go, 'Are you nuts? For the last 23 nights I been out busting my balls.' It wasn't conducive to relationships and things that you need to just hang on to the planet—anchors. The ideal when we started this happening was 'Let's start an act that can only play New York, so they can never ship us to the hinterlands again.'" He pauses for a moment and comes up with a candid addendum. "In the Dolls days we were kind of the kings of the scene at one point. It wasn't much of a scene but...I just wanted to kind of reclaim my turf in a way."

As we get ready to push off, he says, "Let me get this one." Beat. "I'm doin' pretty good now." Irony that's been stacked up in delicate layers over the past decade prints through his grin. The press has never held any terrors for Johansen—it has, in fact, courted him like so many Boswells and been amply repaid in sarcastic zingers—but they have judged him from

"In the Dolls days we were kind of kings of the scene at one point. It wasn't much of a scene but...I just kind of wanted to reclaim my turf."

time to time as Boston writer Mark Moses recently did in summing up his transfiguration into Buster: "...a cagey survival tactic, albeit one with an unmistakable undertone of retreat from a pop destiny that had become as heartbreakingly, frustratingly elusive for Johansen's staunch fans as for him." Thus Johansen's pre-emptive jab (explaining the Johansen songwriting credits for "Cannibal" and "Heart of Gold") in the interview he cooked up for the Poindexter album's press kit: "I figured, he has to do something 'cause he's such a bitter man since his career didn't work out."

So whoever is in the black suit today begins an easeful promenade down Broadway towards RCA, with the slouching-

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walk-from-the-hips of a man who does not hustle about the city for a living. A woman from Boston approaches him. "Buster," she says, "I mean David—you're playing Thursday night, right?" Johansen had greeted her with great cordiality, but he's taken aback. "In Boston this week? I hope not. I dunno. I may be. They haven't told me yet. I'm in the paper? I'll be there." He mulls the news over momentarily, then says, in his somehow unobjectionable way, "They love me in Boston."

We stop by Right Track Studios to pick up Hank Medress, producer of the Buster album. A sandy-haired, loquacious man in his early 50s, Medress came out of Brooklyn to go to school down South on a basketball scholarship. He's the point-guard, Coffee Achiever type, and he got the job after some weeks of diligent attendance as a fan at Buster gigs. A member of the Tokens when they cut "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," Medress produced a succession of chart hits by the Happenings, the Chiffons, Tony Orlando, and, most recently, Dan Hill (he has a number six today, in fact, with Hill's "Can't We Try" duet with Vonda Shepherd). "I was the guy who sued George Harrison," Medress will tell you (the Chiffons' "He's So Fine" allegedly inspired "My Sweet Lord"), but that's just one of his many tag lines. "I told you what Phil Spector said about me, didn't I?" Uh, no, Hank. "Who?"

"You mean because I was on TV I walk into the OTB and say, 'Hey, any of you wackos see me on *Saturday Night Live* last night?'"

It had been Bottom Line owner Allan Pepper's idea that Medress see Buster, but fixation came on its own; Medress told Steve Paul, who had managed Johansen for nearly a decade, "Just put me in a room with the guy and let me talk to him." Johansen saw in Medress "a very suitable New York kind of character," full of contagious enthusiasm. As they worked he found the producer to be "a Jerry Wexler kind of guy, 'cause he can take anything he likes and make it sound great." Medress says he listened to 1500 songs in search of proper material for the man Tony Machine touts onstage as "America's foremost ethnomusicologist," but together he and Johansen quickly cleaved to a much smaller group: "He had to teach me the parameters of the Buster project, which meant that it really had to fit the character."

That character's early history, per the label bio, has Buster as the only child of Beauregard and Beulah Poindexter, a song-and-dance team out of Bogaloosa, Louisiana; after his dad was murdered for cheating at cards, Beulah went to work for Tallulah Bankhead, and Buster grew up in the maid's quarters on Park Avenue. This is only slightly more fanciful than Medress' breakdown of the project—"Bobby Darin meets Ricky Ricardo at Allen Toussaint's house"—but no one doubts the musical sincerity of Johansen's intentions. In keeping his eight-piece band employed, he's cut his own take from the live shows down to a mere slice of what it might have been. The Buster LP is all over the musical map. He grabbed "Smack Dab in the Middle" from a Ray Charles album, "Bad Boy" from the Jive Bombers (bring up the Willy DeVille cover version and the producer/singer team gives you a studiously blank look), and "Hot Hot Hot" from his soca hero, Arrow. The show-stopping "Are You Lonely For Me Baby," whose Stax-style horn line and full-throated vocal trade-offs between Buster and Soozie Tyrell make it the most inviting cut, was a memory from young David's monitoring of Newark soul station WNJR; Tony Machine reminded him of it, then bought a copy of the old Freddy Scott hit for 50 bucks, clinching the deal. Jimmy Lunceford's tap-dancing "Screwy Music" came out of the big-band '30s, Wynonie Harris' "Good Morning Judge" from the R&B '50s, and Lulu's lachrymose "Oh Me Oh My" from the pop '60s. Lieber-Stoller's "Whadaya Want" is perfect wise-guy fare for Buster, and "House of the Rising Sun" got included over his slightly recumbent body, as RCA strove for a line back into Johansen's chart success with a 1983 Animals medley.

He's grown content with the cut, though: "That's one of the first songs I used to sing as a kid—in a big basso. When I was 13 I sang that song on a TV show with the Ventures; I sang that song all over the world with the Ventures. Hardened cynics I've played it for say in the beginning they go, 'Here he goes again,' but by the middle they think, 'This is worth putting down,' because I got a handle on that side of things—I been around the block two or three times. What it boils down to is I sing the shit out of the song."

"When we were mixing the album," says Medress, "I was sitting outside the control room and he came out to me and said, 'How would it sound if we just started with my voice?' We originally had a buildup to his opening line. He said, 'Come listen to it,' and I said, 'Man, I don't have to. That's it.'"

The album's closing cuts are Johansen's "Cannibal" and "Heart of Gold." The former finds the singer, as he puts it, "in a Calypsonian bag." The novelty number usually finds him burlesquing the act of eating his own wrist. "Whaddya think of the morality of that song?" he asks in one of his feasibly straightforward moments, "I mean, everybody's eatin' each other..."

From Medress' studio to RCA is a walk made very short by Johansen's knowledge of midtown shortcuts, and he strolls into RCA's corporate offices with a good deal of panache, greeting product manager Allan Grundblatt amiably. Grundblatt is a witty, seasoned man, but with Medress setting up opposite

SCREWY MUSIC

I'm a very high-tech guy," says the singer. "I'm still alive, ain't I? I learned one thing: Have good people working for ya—like, never get the guy who did the grounding for Stone the Crows [whose lead singer Les Harvey was electrocuted onstage in 1972]." Buster's studio mike is a Neumann U-87.

Brian Koonin used a Gibson L-400 (with its thinner hollow body) on swing-ier rhythm tracks like "Smack Dab in the Middle" and "Screwy Music," and a Gibson 335 and Fender Stratocaster elsewhere. On "Fool for You Baby" he plays a Coral Electric Sitar.

Tony Garnier plays upright bass onstage and on most studio tracks (miked with an Electro-Voice RE-20 on the body and a Shure SM-57 on the neck), but plugged in a Fender Precision for "Are You Lonely for Me Baby."

Joe Delia played the Power Station's seven-foot Yamaha Grand, miked with AKG 451s, plus a Hammond organ.

The Uptown Horns were miked by album engineer Bill Sheniman at the Power Station, where he was staff engineer for six years. Crispin Cioe's alto and baritone saxes, and Arno Hecht's tenor, were caught by Neumann U-87s, Bob Funk's trombone by an EV RE-20, and Hollywood Paul Litteral's trumpet by an RCA 7726 ribbon mike. ("You don't have to EQ much," says Sheniman. "A trumpet sounds great right off that mike.")

Tony Machine's stripped-down stage kit (bass, one small snare and cymbal) gave way to the Power Station's Ludwig set (with Zildjian cymbals) for recording. Buster still insists Machine got his gear "at a garage sale when Spooky Tooth broke up."

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him pit-bull style, Johansen roaming his office tossing out wry asides, and manager Steve Paul due, he seems outnumbered. First they want to know why he missed last week's Buster gig. "We went to the Big Kahuna," explains Grundblatt. "Had this drink called 'Sex on a Beach,' and..."

"You get post-coital depression from that thing?" asks Johansen in his gargling rasp, adding, "Don't come tonight if you have sex on a beach. Unless you bathe first..." There's plenty on today's agenda—product reels from video directors, ad copy for print outlets, the cover of "Hot Hot Hot"'s 12-inch sleeve, the B-side of its seven-inch disk. "I got that nice song 'Insurance Man' I made on my home machine," says Johansen, almost straightfaced. "The reggae-dub side?"

He does this to tease Medress, who has counseled the business sense of putting one of Johansen's own compositions on the B-side and is now barely subduing himself. "We should pick one of your tunes, my friend, don't even discuss it with me, 'cause you ain't throwin' money away." He suggests "Cannibal." "And then if the single bombs," says Johansen brightly, making Grundblatt nervous now, "we put out another single with 'Cannibal' on the B-side again?"

Medress jumps in, making sure everyone gets the joke. "You know how many B-sides [Medress' song] 'Girl Named Arlene' was on? Everything I did in the '60s. Even on girls' records—had 'em sing like 'Mrmmph Named Mrrrpphh.'" Johansen has wandered behind Grundblatt's desk and picked up a large gift bottle of single-malt whiskey. "Al—when ya gonna open this bottle? Ever think of opening this?" Appropriate styrofoam cups are arranged for, and the discussion moves to video directors, even though Ken Nahoum, the photographer who shot the LP and 12-inch covers as well as Buster's slick Amaretto ad, is the front runner. The director of Heart's videos is instantly vetoed by Johansen: "Those things are so melodramatic," as is a well-known Britisher: "Whattya want a limey for? What do they know about hot? We wanta make this thing a beautiful multiracial extravaganza, not like some rich white guy went overboard."

Several issues are left hanging, but all hands are pleased with the album art, and as the group heads for the elevators, RCA president Bob Buziak and executive VP Rick Dobbis turn up in the hall. Buziak is still gimpy, having torn ligaments in his right leg tripping over a step in the darkened Bottom Line during a Buster gig. Dobbis' black cocker spaniel, Mickey, is barking frantically as Johansen looks him over Jack Benny-style. "That's a nice-looking dog," says the singer, seemingly currying favor for once. "Dumb, but nice-looking."

A Saturday night at the Bottom Line, and Johansen is packing some kind of weird pomade into his pompadour, combing it back as he listens to a soca song whose refrain is "I gotta popular name..." The presence that's served him so well onstage is now being deployed in films—he's second male lead to Bill Murray as a cab-driver ghost of Christmas past in *Scrooge*, shooting now, and he has small roles in a Rudy Wurlitzer/Robert Frank film, *Candy Mountain*, and in Jonathan Demme's *Married to the Mob.* His regular spots on *Saturday Night Live* will continue as time permits, but Johansen won't quite admit to his growing celebrity status. "You mean," he says, "because I was on TV I feel like a big shot at the OTB

continued on page 129

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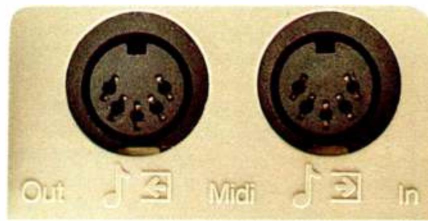

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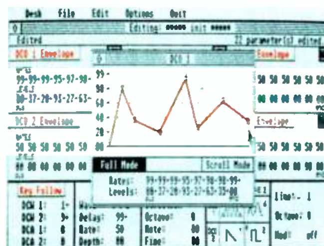

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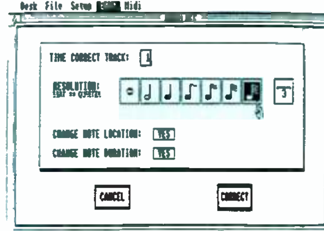

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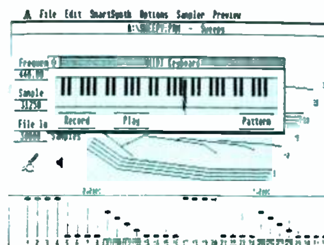

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World Radio History

FAREWELL TO THE

AFTER YEARS OF EFFORTLESS SUCCESS, PAUL McCARTNEY HAS TO WORK FOR A HIT.

"I RECENTLY took my kids Halloween trick or treating in America," says Paul McCartney, as he reclines in the darkwood-and-artwork-lined den of his London townhouse headquarters. "We went door-to-door to perfect strangers in a residential area around Los Angeles. I had on a black top hat and a big rubber mask that made me look like a ghoulish goofy."

No one guessed that the dad behind the false face was a rock legend, although a few gave him quizzical glances. "I did start off with me own brown bag, but the look I was getting off some people was, '*Here*, buddy, wait a minute. This *is* for kids!'"

The holiday season always makes McCartney feel wistful and vulnerable. It spells change, transition, the onrush of winter, the cold requisites of growth. He copes best by plunging into the next cycle, even if he must travel incognito. What bothered him most about the Halloween jaunt was the fact that he needed to be present at all.

"These days, I'm *not* sending the kids out there alone," he assures. "Because of the safety and security thing, a lot of people won't play trick or treat. Instead, a lot of doors just close, residents being very unwelcoming, Dobermans growling in the yards."

The world has changed since James Paul McCartney awoke to its vagaries on June 18, 1942, in Walton Hospital, Liverpool. The first son of sometime dance band pianist James McCartney and the former Mary Mohin, a visiting nurse, Paul led a blissful adolescence in the suburb of Allerton until his mother succumbed suddenly to cancer. He, brother Mike and their father pressed on despite the emotional devastation that often seized the parent. You do what you must, and Paul's fierce affection for skiffle music, Little Richard and the Everly Brothers soon led to professional feats that beggar superlatives.

He was a Beatle from 1960 to 1970, but his career as a solo artist has now spanned *two* decades, beginning with outside movie soundtrack work in 1967, and leaving the Beatles behind with the April 1970 release of *McCartney*. Now, with the appearance on both sides of the Atlantic of a two-record collection entitled *All The Best*, a 20-year drive for artistic autonomy has come to a close.

For the first decade-and-a-half of his post-Beatles career, everything Paul McCartney touched turned to gold. His critics said that such effortless success kept McCartney from pushing himself as hard as he should, but the public clearly loved the man *and* his music. Lately, though, the hits have not come so easily. His last several albums, *Pipes of Peace*, *Give My Regards to Broad Street*, (the final CBS LPs) and *Press to Play* (the first under a hefty new Capitol pact) met with a quiet commercial reception. The inner and outer pressure to demonstrate his viability in the rock landscape of the dawning 1990s is clearly mounting. "Paul's out there searching," says

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

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FIRST SOLO ERA.

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"I started doing some writing with Elvis Costello. Rather than just jump in the deep end, he played me a couple of songs he had trouble finishing and said, 'Tell me what's wrong with these.'"

Capitol president Joe Smith, "and I told him to please don't be in a rush, because he's right where Paul Simon was before he came out with *Graceland*."

McCartney's already made his own African trek, returning in the early 1970s with the splendid *Band on the Run*. This time, he's seeking songwriting renewal through a grassroots generational alliance with another son of a Liverpudlian, Declan Patrick McManus, a.k.a. Elvis Costello. The immortal Lennon-McCartney epoch, as well as the McCartney-McCartney era of collaboration with wife Linda, could soon make way for McCartney-McManus.

"A fair bit of thought went into Paul's decision to approach Elvis Costello," says Richard Ogden, McCartney's personal manager. "Paul felt it was helpful that they had both an Irish heritage and Liverpool family roots in common. But one of the things Paul liked best about Elvis' songwriting was his strength as a lyricist. Paul sensed his own melodies and ideas could be excitingly compatible with Costello's literate style."

The possibilities inherent in this Anglo-Irish pairing of pop checks and petulant balances are provocative. The man who once had the good sense to recast a song called "Daisy Hawkins" as "Eleanor Rigby" now suspects he can learn something from the chap who retitled an album *This Year's Model* instead of *Little Hitler*. But come what may, the Paul McCartney anthologized on *All the Best* will never be quite the same again.

At 45, McCartney retains the features of a bantling, but a trace of soft wrinkles accents his sad eyes and frames his smile-bent lips. His character is like his complexion: supple but staunch, ruddy but unblemished. There is solidity in his natural air of openness, but a subtle fatigue from its cumulative toll.

"What's 'e got 'er onstage for?"

What Paul has excelled at all his life is the ability to adapt, to match inexorable change with creative resolve. When something as sure as winter is approaching, he counters the seasonal shift with a chipper measure of control.

But the matter most on Paul's mind this bracing afternoon in London town is what the New Year will bring. After months of diplomacy, Paul McCartney finally agreed to confront the calendar of his later career, giving himself over—on the eve of an uncertain new chapter—to an unprecedented discussion of all that was and can never be. Listen to what the man said.

MUSICIAN: *This feels like a pivotal time in your career. And because it's never been done before, I'd love to examine your entire solo pilgrimage. The British version of* All the Best *has material not on the American collection. "Once Upon a Long Ago" is a track you did with producer Phil Ramone.*

MCCARTNEY: The English market, or so they tell me anyway, likes compilation things and "Hits" albums; they're very popular. Whereas in the States, even if it's something like Springsteen's live compilation, apparently they reckon the market isn't as keen on stuff like that. So over here people put your hits together and then put a new song on it for a bit of interest and added enjoyment. In America the record company was more concerned with just having the hits. I like the extra song, "Once Upon a Long Ago," but America for some reason didn't want it. Who am I to argue?

MUSICIAN: *The flip side of "Long Ago" is a track you wrote with Elvis Costello, "Back on My Feet."*

MCCARTNEY: I started doing some writing with Elvis—[*breaking into a brogue*] or Declan McManus, as 'is real name is; 'tis a real Irish name for a Liverpool lad. We originally said, "Well, look, let's not *tell* anyone we're working together, because if it doesn't work, we're gonna look like idiots." You do that; you get excited about a collaboration, and then nothing really comes of it. But we've now written quite a number of songs together, and this was the first.

How we started off writing together was that, rather than just jump in the deep end, he played me a couple of songs he'd been having trouble finishing, and said, "Tell me what's wrong with these." And then "Back on My Feet" was one where in *my* case, I wasn't totally happy with my lyrics, though I'd pretty much written it. So I fixed up his two songs, he fixed up this one of mine, and we were off and running. The next song we wrote from scratch, which was better yet!

There's now about nine of them that we've written together and some will show up on the next album. I'm not worried now about saying I'm writing with him because we're both quite happy with the standard of the work.

MUSICIAN: *Was there any contrast between the way you and Costello write? Does he write with a piano? A guitar?*

MCCARTNEY: I think he normally writes with guitar, but he's a bit like me and will do either. We wrote on guitar, mainly, with two where he played a bit of piano. You just ring the changes, really. The minute you get into a formula, you're *goosed*—it's the truth! So when we found one way of working, we'd say let's do another thing. We tried to keep each song different, because you fall into ruts easily. You think you've got the hang of something and you say to yourself, "Ah, we write upbeat numbers." So we'd say, "Okay, on the *next* one, let's try to write a soully ballad, or a rocker."

MUSICIAN: *Using* All the Best *as a guide to your post-Beatles body of work, let's talk about "Maybe I'm Amazed" and the rest of the 1970* McCartney *album. Rod Stewart and the Faces immediately made that song a feature of their live concerts and then formally covered it.*

MCCARTNEY: Oh yeah! It's *always* a compliment that some-

MICHAEL PUTLAND/LFI

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Wings over the world: A boy raised on Tin Can music.

body does your songs or likes them enough to put one in their act. The Faces liked that album and I remember a couple of the lads telling me later on that they'd been on tour when it came out and they'd got into what they called the "freshness" of it a lot. It was a great album to make, because I just made it in me living room with a four-track machine, and plugged into the back of it directly, without a mixing desk. I just got the noise right in front of the microphone like this—[*he repeatedly snaps his fingers*]—hearing then that, "No, that level's not too good," so I'd move off the mike a bit more. I'd physically adjust myself in the room rather than through a mixer.

It was a very *free* album for me to do, because I'd get up and think about breakfast and then wander into the living room to do a track. It's got that feel on it, and there's a lot of stuff that you, the listener, might have thought twice about, but I didn't. Like crazy little instrumentals like "Momma Miss America"; I like them when I hear them now, thinking, "Did I do that? Boy, that was cheeky!" Generally you wouldn't think I'd do an instrumental; McCartney things tend to always have a vocal.

DAVID REDFERN RETNA

It all was probably occasioned by Linda saying to idle me, "Come on, you know you play good guitar. *Play* it!" She always likes to hear me playing guitar, 'cause I don't really play much guitar, though I started off on rhythm guitar like everyone who came from that Beatles era. I've always admired people like Hendrix and I like playing nice *loud* electric guitar. It's one of my top thrills in life. So she encouraged that on that album. That's probably why certain instrumentals crept in that I might have saved otherwise for B-sides or throwaway things.

MUSICIAN: *Was "Maybe I'm Amazed" expressly for that record?*

MCCARTNEY: Yeah, that was very much a song of the period. When you're in love with someone—I mean, God it sounds soppy—but when you are in love and it's *new* like that, as it was for me and Linda with the Beatles breaking up, that was my feeling. Maybe I'm amazed at what's going on—maybe I'm not—but *maybe I am.* "Maybe I'm amazed at the way you pulled me out of time, hung me on the line." There were things that were happening at the time, and these phrases were my symbols for them. And other people seemed to understand.

MUSICIAN: *Another song on the album I liked was "Teddy Boy," which you had started writing back in the Beatles days. It took an image of adolescent street toughness and turned it into a lullaby.*

MCCARTNEY: That was the intention! And it *was* from the Beatles period. There was always a song that'd lie around for a coupla years with one good part and you'd mean to finish it one day. The words "teddy boy" to English people had always meant what you might have called a "hood" in America, a motorcycle-type guy. To us, it was these fellas in Edwardian long coats, a big fashion when I was growing up. I also have a cousin Ted, so he was the other meaning.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me about "Another Day," your first solo single in February of 1971.*

MCCARTNEY: Anyone who was around back then was bored with stories of the Beatles breakup, the business disputes, and all these negative things that were going on. It was really difficult to know what to do, 'cause you were either going to say, "Okay, I've been a Beatle, and now I'll go back to the sweet shoppe or do something else with my life." Or, "I'll try to continue in music!" But then the thought came, "Yeah, but you're gonna have to try and *top* the Beatles," and that's not an easy act to follow.

It was intimidating to even think of staying in the music business. But I had a talk with Linda. If she's a singer, she's very much a Shangri-Las type singer; I don't think any of them could get into opera, but I *prefer* them to opera. Linda wouldn't put herself up as a great vocalist, but she's got a great style—I think anyway.

So she just said, "If it's gonna be kinda casual and we're not gonna sweat it, we could maybe do something together." So we started it on that basis. [*Pause, sly grin*] Of course the critics didn't see it like that. They said, *"What's 'e got 'er onstage for?"* Between ourselves, it was, why not? What's the big deal? She's just singing with me, for Chrissake. She's not exactly taking over the lead in *La Traviata* or anything. It's just a bit of background harmonies here.

That was the kind of spirit we approached it all in, and it was the only way we *could* have done it, I say. If we'd have gotten too paranoid about it we wouldn't have even dared stay in the business! So we ended up in New York, and "Another Day" was one of the first tracks we released with that attitude.

MUSICIAN: *There was a hurtful controversy at first with Northern Songs Publishing about your material together....*

MCCARTNEY: Because nobody believed we'd written them! See, I had a contract with Northern Songs for me and John as writers. As I wasn't collaborating with John anymore, I looked

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for someone else to collaborate with.

I assumed that there wouldn't be any sweat, and I would say to Linda, "How do you like the words?" She'd say to change that little bit, only minor changes, but they were denying she was a co-writer when she had actually changed a few lines. But you can see what they thought: *"Hallo! He's pulling a fast one 'ere!"* And, in fact, they were so wonderful to me after all the success I'd brought them with me and John—more than they ever dreamed of earning anyway—they immediately slapped a million-dollar lawsuit on us here and in New York! So they were charming pals who shall be remembered ever thus.

MUSICIAN: *Listen, people do have a strong proprietary instinct towards the Beatles.*

MCCARTNEY: Well, I suppose it's like, what would you say if Mick [Jagger] brought Jerry Hall onstage? Now, I wouldn't mind—particularly if she could sing a bit. She looks all right to me. I think whatever artists wanna do is fine. Art is sufficiently broad that if you want to lie on the floor and wriggle like a snake, that's art. Merce Cunningham's made a career out of it! But you wouldn't have passed any Royal Ballet School exams with that stuff.

The rarest McCartney record: the Country Hams single "Walking in the Park with Eloise."

MUSICIAN: *It is ironic that people had such a rigid perspective on Lennon-McCartney. They fail to realize that creativity is a very organic thing. You work with what's going on in your world.*

MCCARTNEY: Exactly. I said, "Well, look! If my wife is actually saying 'change that' or 'I like that better than that' then I'm using her as a collaborator." I mean, John never had any input on "The Long and Winding Road," and Yoko still collects royalties on it. You've gotta flow with these things.

The joke at that time was that Linda was the only one getting paid in our household, 'cause we were all held up with Apple being subject to litigation! I wasn't seeing *any* money. I was literally having to say to all the Wings members, "Don't worry, lads. One of these days we'll see some money." It was ridiculous! Every businessman who had ever known me was suing me. I felt, I'm damned if *she's* not gonna get paid for it; I'll put in a bill for her services! The money still came through. They weren't major checks, but they were the only checks we were seeing because she was the only one free of all contracts in our house.

The main thing about it all was that we managed to stay positive and keep the old Beatle philosophy when our heads were on the ground. 'Cause in early days with the Beatle music, no one wanted to know. We were up in Liverpool meeting the train every day and when Brian Epstein would come we'd say, "Have they signed us yet, Bri?" He said, "I'm sorry chaps, they don't want you." Between saying "bloody hell!" we had this little thing we always used to come out with, which was "Well, *something* will happen." It was real *dumb*—but it always worked! And me and Linda, we got over those lawsuits, because all things must pass, as the man said.

MUSICIAN: *You did the 1971 sessions for* Ram *in New York City, with the New York Philharmonic helping out.*

MCCARTNEY: Right, and then in L.A., too. We worked at the CBS studio and at Phil Ramone's old A&R Studios. We did "Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey" there with the Philharmonic. I didn't realize they were so wonderful and revered. I thought they were just a bunch of guys. At one point Phil said, "Why don't you conduct them?" I hadn't actually written the score, but George Martin and I had talked about it, so I ended up doing it. One of the Philharmonic guys walked out during a moment when we all had to work a little later one evening. Phil managed to persuade everybody but this one guy who got humpy and took the hoof.

The Philharmonic types were always pulling that on the Beatles. We had the orchestra who played on "Hey Jude" in England in 1968 all together and said, "We've got this bit at the end of the song that goes, 'Na-na-na...,' and we'd like you to chant and clap along." A couple of them said [*haughtily*], "We're not clappers, we're fiddlers." "OOOOOO!" we said, "Off you go then, dearies!" [*laughter*] There's just some people who aren't up to that stuff.

MUSICIAN: *Was there an Uncle Albert who inspired that song?*

MCCARTNEY: I *had* an Uncle Albert; I was sort of thinking of him. He was an uncle who died when I was a kid, a good bloke who used to get drunk and stand on the table and read passages from the Bible, at which point people used to laugh. *A lot.* It was just one of those things—"Ohh, Albert, don't get up and read the Bible again! Shuttup! Sit down!!" But he's someone I recalled fondly, and when the song was coming it was like a nostalgic thing. "I think I'm gonna rain" was the wistful line, really, and I thought of him.

I say, I never can explain why I think of a particular person when I write. "We're so sorry, *Auntie Edna*"—you know, it could have been her. As for Admiral Halsey, he's one of yours, an American admiral. I could have gone, "Gen-e-ral Ei-sen-how-er," but it doesn't work as well. And then people say, "Ah-hah! I know why he used Halsey! In the Battle of Salaami in Nineteen-Forty-Hee-Hee he was instrumental in—" *None* of that sort of bit is hardly ever true. I use these things like a painter uses colors. I don't know where I got Halsey's name, but you read it in magazines and sometimes they just fall into your songs because they scan so well.

MUSICIAN: *"Girls School," the loopy, memorable rock track on the flip side of your huge "Mull of Kintyre" single, also came from some intriguing newspaper scanning, right?*

MCCARTNEY: True. It was from the porn ads, which I always *have* to check out—just to see what's going on. [*smirk*] I don't approve, of course. I just love all those titles of the girlie movies, they're so mad. There's a girl in the song called Roxanne, which came out of a porn movie, and because all the titles were very bizarre I jumbled them all together and made this idea of a kinky girls' school where all these people like

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"One minute you're in love, next minute you hate each other's guts. I don't think any of the Beatles really ever got to *that* point, but the business people were always pitting us against each other."

Roxanne and The Seductress would be characters, one of them being the teacher, another the head girl, and so on. There's a metal group called Girlschool, isn't there? I always wondered if they took it off that song!

MUSICIAN: *What was the origin of the name Wings, when you formed the band in 1971?*

MCCARTNEY: Linda and I were having our second baby. She was doing most of the work on that, I must admit, but I was there in attendance. It was a difficult pregnancy and I had to be with her a lot. I used to get a camp bed and kip in the hospital. When one of the matrons told me no, I couldn't sleep there, I said, "We're gonna use another hospital!" and we did, until we found one that'd have us.

So finally we were in Kings College Hospital and our baby was in intensive care. She's now a 16-year-old girl named Stella, so everything worked out great, but it was dodgy at the time. So rather than just sitting around twiddling my thumbs I was thinking of hopeful names for a new group, and somehow this uplifting idea of Wings came to me exactly at that time. It just sounded right.

MUSICIAN: Wild Life, *the debut Wings album of '71, was done in a pretty compressed span of time. The track that still stands out is "Dear Friend."*

MCCARTNEY: That was written for John—*to* John. It was like a letter. With the business pressures of the Beatles breaking up, it's like a marriage. One minute you're in love, next minute you hate each other's guts. I don't think any of us really ever got to the point where we *actually* hated each other's guts, but the business people involved were pitting us against each other, saying, "Paul's not much good, is he?" or "John's not all that good, heh, heh, heh."

It's a pity because it's very difficult to cut through all that, and what can you do? You can't write a letter saying, "Dear pal of mine, I love you"—it's all a bit too much. So you do what we all seemed to do, which was write it in songs. I wrote "Dear Friend" as a kind of peace gesture.

No matter how much all the business was, whenever we did have a good phone conversation or anything, maybe one or two of those things, those gestures, got through. And luckily before John died we had got it back to that, thank the Lord, because otherwise it would have just been terrible. I would have brooded on the fact that we were always bitching with each other forever. We ended up with a good relationship, which was something. Some consolation.

MUSICIAN: *I think many were shocked, certainly over here, when the first Wings single in the U.K. was "Give Ireland Back to the Irish." It was written about the Bloody Sunday Irish massacre of January 1972 and I'm sure you sensed there would be a strong reaction to it.*

MCCARTNEY: Up till that point, whenever anyone said, "Are you into protest songs?" I'd say I liked Bob Dylan but I'm not. I didn't like political songs; such songs can be boring. Particularly if the thing being written about didn't happen in your country. I always vowed that I'll be the one who doesn't do political songs, but what happened over here was they had this massacre when some people had been doing a peaceful demonstration. Our soldiers, my country's army paratroopers, had gone in and had killed some people. So we were against the Irish; it was like being at war with them. And I'd grown up with this thing that the Irish are great, they're our mates, our *brothers*. We used to joke that Liverpool was the capital of Ireland, there's so many Irish living and working there. And if you didn't have that image, you certainly had the one of John Wayne as a "fair broth of a boy" in all those films where he goes back to the Auld Sod as the American cousin.

Suddenly we were killing our buddies, and I thought, "Wait a minute, this is *not* clever, and I wish to protest on behalf of us people." This action of our government was over the top! And in nobody's language could it be seen to be a good move, I don't think. I'm still shocked. And now we've reached the point where the IRA is just "terrorists." "We're the Goodies, they're the Terrorists!" No one seems to remember we nicked Ireland off 'em. That seems to have gone by the bar. Hey, fellas, we *robbed* their country! Is no one gonna remember that?!

McCartney and the businessmen: The Beatles publishing was lost forever.

DAVID REDFERN/RETNA

I did that song and was rung up by a lot of people who said, "Please don't release this, we don't need this right now." And I said [*firmly*], "Yes we do. *Gotta* have it." It was number one in Ireland and, funnily enough, Spain! I can't quite work that out, unless it was the Basque separatists. Then I went to Austria and this sincere fellow comes up to me and says, "I've written a cover version, 'Give Bavaria Back to the Bavarians.'" [*chuckles*] You've gotta laugh. But seriously, it was something I had to do and I'm glad I did it.

MUSICIAN: *"Hi, Hi, Hi" was a single from the same year. I liked the energy in it.*

MCCARTNEY: I think "Hi, Hi" now is kinda dated. It's got words and phrases in it like "bootleg" and "we're gonna get high in the midday sun," and it's very much a song of the times when there were festivals and everyone had long hair, flared trousers and macramé jackets: very '60s. To me, that was my parting shot at those days.

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It got banned over here—a sex and drugs song; can't have it! There was the controversy over a supposed phrase in the song, "body gun." But in actual fact I had used a really mad word from a surrealist play by a man called Alfred Jarry, a French playwright who wrote around 1900. He was a real nutter who used to cycle around Paris on his bike, and he used to have this thing called the Pataphysical Society. It was nothing but a drinking club, but to be a Professor of Pataphysics sounds great. I used that term in "Maxwell's Silver Hammer"—"he studied Pataphysical."

At any rate, Jarry wrote this theater sketch called *Ubu-Roi*, which has this character Ubu, who's always going around worried about his "polyhedron." Which I think is actually a geometrical figure. So I put a line in "Hi, Hi, Hi" where I said, "Lie on the bed and get ready for my—" I wondered what should I put here, so I said, "polygon," which was another daft geometrical figure, all of this being influenced by Jarry. The people taking down the lyrics for us thought I said "body gun," which I thought was *better.* And that's the basis the song got banned on!

In Beatles days we used to throw saucy little things in, but most of it was stuff the critics made up, although when you read it, it seemed very feasible. That's how the times were anyway, all colored by acid and pot. Mainly those songs were very straightforward, but our image was so bizarre.

MUSICIAN: *Giving rise to things like the "Paul is dead" theories.*

MCCARTNEY: [*Nodding*] Like me walking across the crossing on Abbey Road [on the album cover] with no shoes on. The truth was, it was a hot day and I had sandals on, and I slipped 'em off for the photo session. That got blown up out of all proportion. I mean, there was a Volkswagen that happened to be parked in the street which had 28 IF [on the license plate, purportedly inferring Paul would have been 28 if he'd lived to see *Abbey Road*'s release]. That Volkswagen has just recently been sold for a fortune. But it meant *nothing,* you know.

So much of our music has been taken to mean *deep stuff.* We did throw one or two things in. When we were filming *Magical Mystery Tour* the Walrus head didn't fit John, who obviously wrote "I Am the Walrus," so I wore it. In "Glass Onion" on the White Album, John put in the line about "the Walrus was Paul," knowing that people were gonna search our lyrics for clues. What do you want from young lads, purity? You're not gonna get it. That's just the way we are, having a laugh that flowed into our lyrics. Your reputation walks ahead of you, and legends are created.

MUSICIAN: *"Live and Let Die" in 1973 was the most commercially successful James Bond theme up to that time. Interestingly, even before the* McCartney *LP, you did music in 1967 for a film called* The Family Way. *Do you like writing for movies?*

MCCARTNEY: *The Family Way* was quite a nice little British film, with Hayley Mills and her dad John. I like films and film music. Before rock 'n' roll you thought of your heroes as Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hammerstein, people from that generation. I've always thought of myself with the idea of a songwriter being someone who could turn his hand to this or that as a craftsman, rather than be stuck in one rock 'n' roll mode or ballad mode.

When I was asked to do a Bond film, I thought, "Why not?" I said, "Look, give me a week. If I can't do it, I'll back out of it." I don't normally write to titles, for instance. But I read the Bond book the next day, on a Saturday, because they hadn't finished the film, and I wrote the song on a Sunday. I was ready to go with George Martin the next week. I found it came easily.

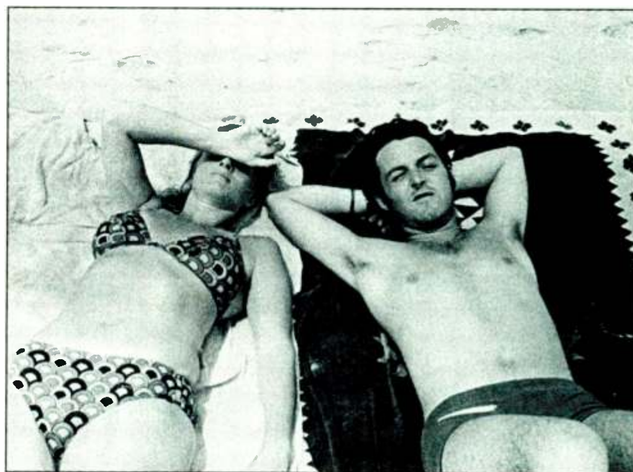
But when George took it to one of the producers, he said, "That's fine for the demo. When are you gonna record the real thing?" George said, "That's *it,* boys!" It was one of the best demos we ever made. But it was hard to do, the trick being how to combine my writing with the "Bondiness" of the soundtrack orchestration riffs. I'll tell you who liked that song, and I was always surprised: Neil Young! He told me, and I said I wouldn't have thought it'd be to his taste [*laughter*].

MUSICIAN: *Well, it's true that in most creative areas in order to succeed you've got to completely invent your job.*

MCCARTNEY: You've got to. And you do tend to listen to other people, but every time, honest, man, you think, "Why the hell did I?" When I made [the film *Give My Regards to*] *Broad Street* in 1984, I listened to *them.* About everything. See, I thought "they" knew.

MUSICIAN: *There are no infallible rocket scientists out there.*

MCCARTNEY: But you think there are, don't you? Particularly in movies. As a kid growing up you think there's a big man up at Twentieth Century Fox with white hair and he's gonna sort of bless you, my child, saying, "This is a good movie, and we're gonna put all our people on this one." It's not like that. And so, with humbling experience, you learn.



Hot as sun: Paul and Linda lay back and count her royalties.

GODLIS/RETNA

MUSICIAN: *I wanted to ask about 1973's* Red Rose Speedway *LP, an interesting mix of ethereal love ballads and coarse rock, rosy fantasies and harsh realities.*

MCCARTNEY: Yes, and it wasn't named after Rose, my housekeeper, to debunk another myth. I remember the evening we did the album cover, Linda took that photo of me as I sat next to a motor bike with a rose in me mouth all evening, listening to *Innervisions,* Stevie's album. At one point while I had some of the tunes going, we were up in Scotland at my sheep farm—which all seems very lovely on the postcards, until you get to lambing. Of course a few of them die; it's life and death and a lot of farmers just don't want to get involved. They say, "Right," and just chuck them over the wall.

But you can't help it if you're a bit sensitive—particularly in a household full of children—and there was one lamb we were trying to save. The young ones get out into the weather and collapse from exposure; you find them and bring them in. We stayed up all night and had him in front of the stove, but it was too late and he just died. I wrote a song about it, "Little Lamb Dragonfly," and the line was "I can help you out, but I can't help you in." It was very sad, so I wrote my little tribute to him.

MUSICIAN: *For* Band on the Run, *how did you come to record in Lagos, Nigeria, in the autumn of 1973?*

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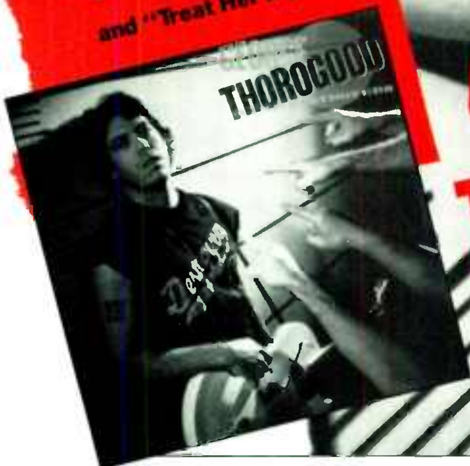

GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS

BORN TO BE BAD

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"Mine is the 'old' style of bass playing, but people like it because it anchors the song. Jeff Beck said, 'Don't undervalue it, man.'"

MCCARTNEY: I'd written "Band on the Run," "Jet" and enough other songs to go into the recording phase, and I got this feeling that it would be boring to record in England. If you record in the same place all the time, music can become work, and you want it always to be play. I think you get the best results that way. We didn't all get into music for a job! We got into it to *avoid* a job, in truth—and get lots of girls.

I rang up EMI, my record company, and asked where else they'd got studios. The list included Rio de Janeiro, China and Lagos. I thought Lagos sounded *great*: Africa, rhythms, percussionists! On that basis, without knowing anything more about it, we went off.

They were building up the studio in this place called Apapa when we got there. They didn't use booths or separation barriers, so they were constructing booths just for us, and the guy was saying, "Do you want glass in them?" They were just gonna make big wooden things with holes in them! [*laughter*] We did a little work in Ginger Baker's ARC Studio as well, because there was a little political thing which we hadn't realized, in that Ginger was slightly in competition with EMI. I thought, we can't let old Ginger down, so we went and worked there too just to show no favoritism.

We got mugged out in Lagos. Linda and I were on foot, in the middle of darkest Africa, and we got mugged one night and they took all this stuff—a lot of tapes, the demos of the songs! We got to the studio the next day and the head guy there said, "You're lucky you didn't get killed! It's only 'cause you're white you didn't. They figure you won't recognize them."

You know, there were public executions in Lagos back then, before their oil boom. They had an execution one day on the beach! They just take this guy out, tie him to an oil drum, and go, "pop." And then they sell wooden souvenirs of the dead guy, little carvings. We said, "Er, we're not used to *this*, lads." The next day it was a beach again—"Hooray! Come and swim!" *Weird.* It was pretty different from all we expected. I anticipated great weather, and it was monsoon season, the sky peeing down all the time. [*laughs*] Great recording weather, though, great weather for being *in*doors. When we got back to England, we got a letter from the managing director of EMI, saying, "Dear Paul: Would not advise you going to Lagos, as there has just been an outbreak of cholera." *Ahhhh!!!!*

Still, out of the adversity came one of our better albums.

MUSICIAN: Band on the Run *was such a smash both sales-wise and critically, yet you were down to a trio at that point—only you, Linda and Denny Laine.*

MCCARTNEY: The night before we were due to go on the trip, two of the guys in Wings, the guitar player [Henry McCullough] and the drummer [Denny Seiwell], rang up and said they're not going. I said, "Thanks for letting us know..." Your jaw just hits the ground and you go, "Ohhh dear me."

They didn't want to come to Africa, got cold feet. Reduced to a trio, we went and did it like that. Actually it was good because it meant I could play drums—or that we were *stuck* with me as the drummer, depending on your outlook. I've just gotta be simple in my playing, because I can't *be* complicated. Fleetwood Mac-style is my kind of drumming: dead straight, right down the stropping!

MUSICIAN: *You've done some respectable drumming from* McCartney *onward.*

MCCARTNEY: The best compliment I got from that was when I was out in L.A. in 1974 visiting John when he was doing his *Pussy Cats* album with Nilsson, and they were having *one* wild time out there. It was boys on the rampage, that was. John and Nilsson, and Keith Moon was staying with them. What a crowd! But I remember Keith saying, "Say, who was that drummer on *Band on the Run*?" [*grinning*] That was the biggest accolade I could get. I mean, my favorite drummers are Ringo, Bonham and Keith. Moony had more flash, and Bonham was a *bit* more flash, but Ringo is right down the center, never overplays. We could never persuade Ringo to do a solo. The only thing we ever persuaded him to do was that rumble in "The End" on *Abbey Road.* He said [*sourly*], "I hate solos."

I agree with him. Those moments in a concert where everyone goes off for a drink and you're left with this drummer going *dabadubba dabadubba*, with lights flashing, are a total yawn. A quarter-of-an-hour later, the band return, out of their skulls [*laughter*] to play the last number, with the poor drummer left sober as a judge.

MUSICIAN: *Where'd you get the* Band on the Run *LP's prison break theme?*

MCCARTNEY: There were a lot of musicians at the time who'd come out of ordinary suburbs in the '60s and '70s and were getting busted. Bands like the Byrds, the Eagles—the mood amongst them was one of desperados. We were being outlawed for pot. It put us on the wrong side of the law. And our argument on the title song was, "Don't put us on the wrong side, you'll make us into criminals. We're *not* criminals, we don't want to be." We just would rather do this than hit the booze—which had been the traditional way to do it. We felt that this was a better move; we had all our theories.

So I just made up a story about people breaking out of prison. Structurally, that very tight little intro on "Band on the Run"—"Stuck inside these four walls"—led to a hole being blasted in the wall and we get the big orchestra and then we're off. We escape into the sun.

MUSICIAN: *"Helen Wheels" was written before Lagos.*

MCCARTNEY: "Helen Wheels" was my Land Rover. That song described a trip down the M6, which is the big motorway to get from Scotland down south to England. So that song was my attempt to try and put England on the map. All the Chuck Berry songs you ever heard always had things like "Birmingham, Alabama!" shouted out, these American places like "Tallahassie!" But you couldn't put the English ones in. It always sounded daft to us. "Scunthorpe!" "Warrington!" It doesn't sound as funky.

MUSICIAN: *You went down to Nashville in the summer of 1974 and did the "Junior's Farm" hit, "Sally G" and other things.*

MCCARTNEY: We went there mainly to get out of town and rehearse the new band lineup with a new guitarist [Jimmy McCulloch] and drummer [Geoff Britton]. We met up with quite a few local people: Johnny Cash, Chet Atkins. I sorta look up to Chet and certain people like that who're gents; not snobs but true gentlemen, or what I call toffs. One day, I was talking to Chet about a song my dad had written—the only song he ever wrote.

MUSICIAN: *You mean, "Walking in the Park with Eloise"?*

MCCARTNEY: Yes! Chet said, "It'd be really nice to make a record of that, Paul, for your dad." Chet got Floyd Cramer to

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come along to play piano, Chet played guitar, I played bass—and then washboard, which had them in hysterics. And I named the band the Country Hams. I liked that Hams single.

MUSICIAN: *New Orleans was the next stop for Wings' recording jaunts, in the winter and spring of 1975. You did* Venus and Mars *at Allen Toussaint's studio. Do you have a favorite track from those sessions?*

MCCARTNEY: I would say "Listen to What the Man Said." I really liked what Tom Scott did on there with sax. We just went for it live. I also liked "Letting Go." And then there was "Medicine Jar," written by the late Wings guitarist Jimmy McCulloch and his friend Colin Allen from Stone the Crows. Jimmy wanted to write an anti-drug song. As to *why* he wanted to, I'm not sure, but I'd say he'd seen the personal warning signs. That song, I think, was Jimmy talking to himself. Listening to it now and knowing the circumstances of how he died, I'm sure that's what it is. He's really saying to himself, "Get your hand out of the medicine jar." I don't think he managed to. He was a great guitar player, but he was into a little too much heavy stuff. But if I'm reading too much into it, then let's just say I'm just as bad as the fucking critics, okay?

MUSICIAN: *I recall a portion of the '75-'76 Wings world tour when the stage lit up like an English music hall marquee, and you performed "You Gave Me the Answer." There is that strong song-and-dance music-hall tradition in your material.*

MCCARTNEY: See, what you've got to remember is that when people of my generation were growing up, rock 'n' roll hadn't been invented yet. Blues had started, but that was nowhere near as popular; you had to be a real folkie to be into blues. Anything up to the 1950s was the old traditions, and in Britain that was music hall, or vaudeville as you call it. My dad, sitting around the house tapping out things like "Chicago" on the ivories, used to get told off by his dad for playing what his dad called "tin can music."

MUSICIAN: *Come clean, what was the intention behind that oddball* Thrillington *album, that lush instrumental version of* Ram *that you issued in April 1977?*

MCCARTNEY: Well, you always see these albums like *James Last Does Tchaikovsky* or *Nelson Riddle Plays Mantovani.* I thought it'd be amusing to have your own tunes from an album and take them to the middle of the road as a mischievous way to infiltrate the light TV programs and things that use such fluff. It was another silly idea along the way, but we scoured the world for orchestra leader Percy "Thrills" Thrillington. [*winks*] Finally found him in Ireland! He and a friend of his did some arrangements and laid this album. Now, I think it should all have been done up *louder!*

MUSICIAN: *The 1979 Concerts for the People of Kampuchea that you sponsored with the U.N. were a pre-Live Aid benefit.*

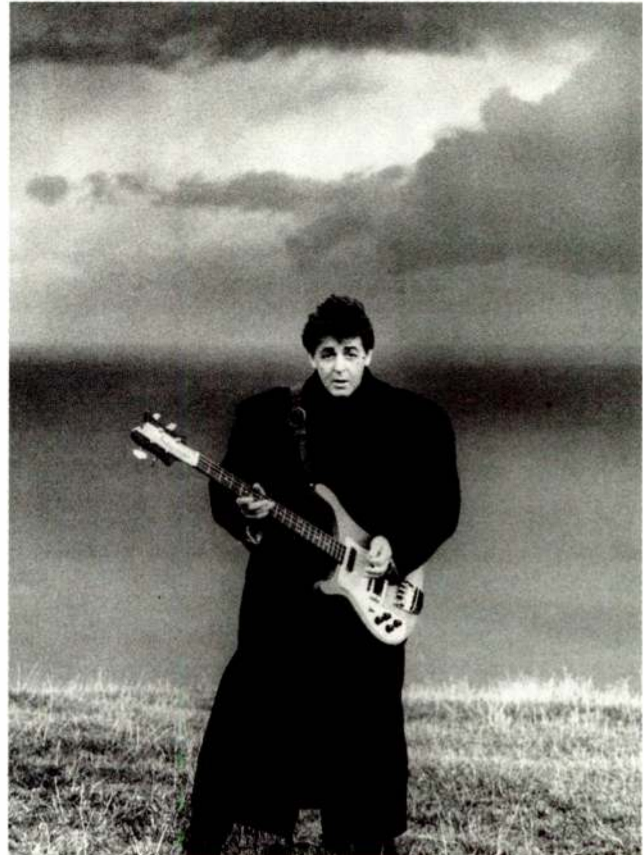
MCCARTNEY: That was an early one, yeah, but it was a much smaller event. I think that show was the last thing we did with Wings, and a lot of it was the fault of the monitors onstage, because if you can't hear yourself you think you've done a terrible show. My bass sounded like a *squeak*. It gave me the cold sweats.

But historically, George's Bangla Desh show was the real forerunner of ideas like Live Aid—which was great too, fabulous. It was nice to see the music guys that you thought were just wallys being so concerned. It's become quite a thing now, with the Amnesty International concerts centering attention. Often you find your musicians do more good than your bloody government does. Certainly on Live Aid, they did.

MUSICIAN: *Had you gone into "Goodnight Tonight" intending to create a contemporary dance track?*

MCCARTNEY: That's what it was. I like dance tracks, and if I go to a club there's no point in hearing ballads all night. You need something to get you up on the floor, and I'm into a lot of that stuff. We recorded it in a long version, as opposed to stretching it like they do now. I think I got fed up with the remix mechanizing, the dub stuff; I think it'll date very quickly.

It's not that I'm following the crowd, but if there's a lot of people into a thing I generally check it out to see why they all like it. When reggae came out and all the skinheads in England bought the great early *Tighten Up* albums in the late 1960s, early 1970s, that was the first time I'd heard of it, but I learned of it *through* the skinheads' interest. It's like rap now. There's some people that I really like: Eric B & Rakim, and B Fats.



PAUL COX

Drafted into being a bassist, McCartney was a huge influence on rock bottom.

MUSICIAN: *You did* McCartney II, *your second completely solo LP, in the summer of 1979. How different do you see that from the first* McCartney?

MCCARTNEY: The second one seemed less sophisticated in my mind. I don't know whether it is or not. The second one was done not with all the home comforts of the first, but in a derelict farmhouse in the countryside in southern England that was about to be knocked down. I recorded in what had been the front parlor, with a tape machine, a couple of sequencers, and some amps, bass, guitar and drums.

The overriding memory of making that album was that I did some songs in their original versions in about 10 minutes. Then I'd have to go back and add, say, the maraca part for 10 minutes, too. Bloody hell! I'm alone in the middle of the country and it took, like, *self-hypnosis* to keep going shaking the maracas like a baby after about eight fucking minutes!

For "Coming Up," I believe I heard something on the radio

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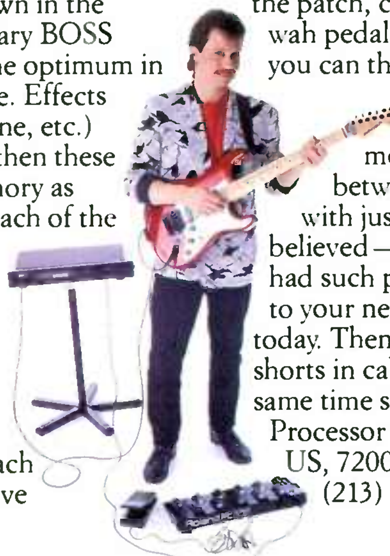

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by Sly Stone or Sister Sledge; it was pre-Prince, for certain, and the song I heard might even have been "We Are Family." But I went into the tape machine with that vibe and began to make something up around my own groove. The sax sounds on it are Mellotrons sped up like tight little munchkins. "Temporary Secretary" I also liked. The story behind it was sex, I suppose, [*chuckle*] but that's always the story.

MUSICIAN: *Which albums did you spend the most time making?*

MCCARTNEY: I think *Tug of War,* from 1980 to '82, and then *Pipes of Peace.* I was working with George Martin at the AIR London and Montserrat studios. We took a *lot* of time on those two albums. In fact, we took so much time, when I saw the bill for it all I thought, "I could have made an entire studio for this!" And that's in fact why I've since made my own new studio. As for the songs on those two albums, I favor the title tracks. "Pipes of Peace" has a solid mood to it, an undercurrent that grabs you, and "Tug of War" worked as a commentary on my career thus far, an accurate summing up.

MUSICIAN: Press to Play *in '86 was your last new studio album, arriving three years after* Pipes of Peace. *The standout tune was its title single, "Press."*

MCCARTNEY: That was what Jerry Marotta used to call the "Massage Song." [*sly smile*] That *was* the inspiration. Everybody loves a massage, touching each other. I like the groove but the lyrics leave a little to be desired. And the line, "Oklahoma was never like this!"—no one ever understood that line. It meant a lot to me, either referring to the boonies, the sticks, or to the old movie itself, where the "corn is as high as an elephant's eye" was never like *this* song.

MUSICIAN: *Michael Jackson's recent surprise purchase of the ATV Music company that controls your song catalogue remains rather shocking. As our talk here makes plain, you've been incredibly prolific, but this shrewd incident sealed the only chance you might have ever had to own your own musical offspring.*

MCCARTNEY: [*Grim*] Here's what I really think. When John and I came down from Liverpool we didn't know anything about songs, didn't know what a copyright was—and no one was about to explain it to us, either. They *saw* us coming. There were big, big grins on their faces when these guys who were good writers turned up and said, "I don't know, doesn't everyone own songs?" They said, "Yes, step this way. Come into my parlor," as the spider to the fly.

We were very naive and I think it was fair enough to take advantage of that, since young writers will do anything to get published. But after you've made millions, and after, let's say, a decent period of three years, I think it would be nice if you could go back to them and say, "This is a slave deal. Let's change it."

John and I ended up with the first deal that we had in the beginning, which was that the publisher automatically took the copyright. So we never saw anything. I think that was the unfairness. These days, kids see half of the copyrights if they're lucky and they've got tough lawyers.

They came to us originally and said, "We're gonna make you your *own* company." Me and John went, "Wow!" In actual fact, it was *their* company within a company, and they kept 51 percent for themselves and gave us 49 with no control anyway. It was all a fake. Then when we went to India with the Maharishi, Dick James, who held the publishing, sold it behind our backs. So we were well and truly screwed. And the guy who bought it next was Lew Grade.

But it's not so much the financial thing. "Yesterday," for example, I wrote on my own; here's this Liverpool kid falling out of bed and writing "Yesterday." I took it to the guys in the band and they said, "There's no point in drumming or playing anything on that. You just be on the record on your own." Then I take it to my publishers. They say, "Great, that's a Lennon-McCartney." I said, "Wait a minute. Couldn't it be a McCartney and Lennon?" "No, no, no."

The Beatles catalogue was thereafter bought from Lew Grade by an Australian, Robert Holmes à Court. And *then*

ALL THE BASS

Even avid fans tend to forget that guitarist Paul McCartney took up the bass out of a sense of duty rather than desire. His epochal instrumental segue occurred in June 1961, as the Beatles, on their third trip to Hamburg, were wrapping up a three-month stint at the Top Ten Club. Short-lived Beatle bassist Stuart Sutcliffe, known for his enigmatic stage manner (he played with his back to the German tipplers to hide his very modest skills), suddenly declined to return with his scruffy mates to Liverpool, lingering instead with fiancee Astrid Kirchherr to enroll in the Hamburg Academy of Art.

"So with Stuart staying in Hamburg," McCartney explains, "I became the bass player—I kinda drew the short straw and got lumbered with bass. It was not really the instrument people liked to play in those days; you wanted to be a big guitarist.

"I got myself the little Hofner violin bass because it was symmetrical for left-handed playing, meaning if you turned it upside down it still looked alright. I worked with that and in the beginning I was doing what everyone else in bands did, which was basically rooting the songs with bass. Then 'round about the year before *Sgt. Pepper,* Rickenbacker gave me a new bass and I started to record with that. On the *Pepper* stuff I got into the more melodic basslines. In fact, some of the best-paced bass playing I ever did was at that time, but more recently I can say that 'Goodnight Tonight' has got quite a good bassline, and the bass underpins 'Silly Love Songs' quite nicely.

"Really, my stuff is the 'old' style of bass playing, because I didn't make the leap into thwacking with the thumb. I do a little bit of the thumb trip, but it's not really what I'm into. A lot of the young guys now, that is where they *start* with bass. It's something I tend to leave to others—having worked with Stanley Clarke, for example, who's done that for me.

"A lot of guitar players and singers like the old style of bass because it *anchors* the song. I was talking to Jeff Beck, who likes my style for that kind of thing, and he said, 'Don't undervalue it, man, just because these other people are into their percussive stuff.' Whereas when you've got all that percussion-style bass within the rhythm, it can be everything but the kitchen sink and yet there's still no bottom. There's no *ass* down there!"

McCartney's approach could be termed a foundation style, since most of his songwriting, especially in his modern solo/Wings eras, sounds as if it's been built from the bassline upwards. Would he agree? "Yes. I think that's the main thing, and I'm still into that foundation vibe, really. I prefer bass that's impressive not percussively but *musically,* where it's more a melody thing than the actual style of playing. I'm not really into a million notes a minute. It's more important to me what notes are played, and what they do to the song.

"Bassists tend to use the root note, so if you're in 'A' they're playing 'A.' But my inspirations are people like Brian Wilson on *Pet Sounds,* because he always puts an odd note against the chord. For instance, if he's in 'A,' he'll often play an 'E' as the bass, which sort of stands the song on its head, and for certain sections that's great. I did stuff like that as early as 'Michelle.'"

Does Paul still automatically assume the bass role in his recording? "I went through a period where I let other people play bass on my records, but I prefer playing it for the studio work I'm currently doing. I'm using a Fender Jazz of medium age at the moment, 'cause it just records great. But, listen, I'm not one of those fellows who talks on and on about certain amps and things. I went into some shop in America recently and this guy at the counter said, 'Hey, I'm a bass player! What kind of strings do you use?' I said [*confidingly*], 'Oh, I prefer those shiny ones!'"

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Michael came along. Michael rang me up way back in the late 1970s and I said, "What do you want?" He said, "I want to make some hits!" I said, "Great, come on over."

He did, and he was keen to do stuff, so I wrote "Girlfriend" for him, which I did later on *London Town*. Then we wrote "Say Say Say" and "The Man" together, and then he wrote "The Girl Is Mine." It was fun and he was a nice guy to work with and everything. But it always used to keep coming up that he'd say, "Paul, I *need* some advice." I'd give him that advice and say, "Look, get good financial people, people you can trust." I took him under my wing and we'd always be in little corridors discussing this stuff. I thought it was just fine, but he used to do this little joke; he'd say, [*mimicking Jackson's meek tone*] "I'm gonna buy your publishing, ya know."

I'd go, "Ha! Good one, kid!" Then one day I get phoned up and they said, "He's just bought your stuff!" I thought, "Oh, you *are* kidding." But that was it, really. He had the money to buy it; he was rolling in it after *Thriller* and had it to burn.

As you say, I could have bought it, but in actual fact there were complications with Yoko which prevented me from getting it. That's a whole other story. Anyway, Michael's got it, and all's fair in love, war and business, I suppose. But it's a little galling *now* to find that I own less of "Yesterday" than Michael Jackson! It's a thorn in my side, and I keep thinking I should phone him up.

[*Grinning fiercely*] I don't hold a grudge, but if you're listening, Michael, I'll have "Yesterday" and "Here, There and Everywhere" back—just for a laugh—and a couple of others.

MUSICIAN: *So the legal and aesthetic disputes over the commercial exploitation of the Beatles catalogue continue to grow hotter. But you're the custodian of Buddy Holly's songs.*

MCCARTNEY: It's very difficult, because I do feel differently in both cases. As far as the Beatles' stuff is concerned, in actual fact what has happened is some people have used it without the *right* to use it. People who haven't got the right have been giving away the right. So it's a different affair than with the Buddy Holly stuff, where I do have the right to let people use it because we're the publishers of that.

But the most difficult question is whether you *should* use songs for commercials. I haven't made up my mind. The other day I saw "Something," George's song, in a car ad, and I thought, "Ewww, yuck! That's in bad taste." Earlier I saw "Twist and Shout" in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, which I liked as a film, but they'd overdubbed some lousy brass on the stuff! If it had needed brass, we'd have stuck it on it ourselves.

Generally, I don't like it, particularly with the Beatles stuff. When 20 more years have passed, maybe we'll move into the realm where it's okay to do it. That's a little bit why I feel it's not so bad with Buddy. There may be people out there who say you shouldn't do it with Buddy. I've done it once or twice with him, but I don't really like doing it, I must admit.

One thing I can't do with Buddy is ask him. One thing they can do with us, since there're still three of us alive, is ask *us*. That'd be a good move, to say, "Do you fancy being a car ad?" And we'd say, "No."

Yet you get your advisors saying, "So you're gonna turn down all that money, are you?" If I was being a purist, I'd say no one should give the songs to ads. My *heart* says that. [*pause, eyes downcast*] But, you know, you're not always as pure as you think. ▣

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Ron Carter

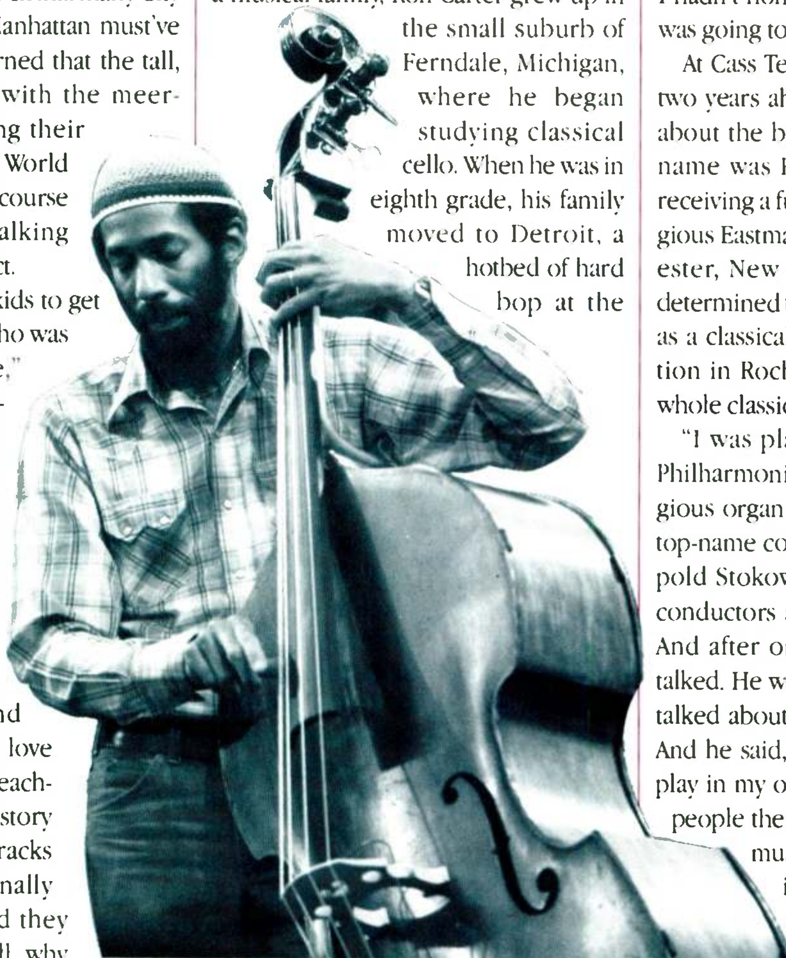
The Elder Statesman of the Bass Keeps Swinging Without a Safety Net

By Bill Milkowski

Imagine signing up for a college course entitled "20th Century Abstract Ballet," only to discover on the first day of class that the teacher is George Balanchine. Or registering for "20th Century American Drama" taught by Eugene O'Neill.

That's the kind of shock that many City College students in Manhattan must've gotten when they learned that the tall, slender gentleman with the meerschaum pipe teaching their "History of Jazz from World War II to the Present" course was Ron Carter, a walking textbook on the subject.

"It's nice for these kids to get to talk to somebody who was actually on the scene," says the quiet, unassuming bassist who has appeared on countless jazz albums since joining the Miles Davis Quintet in 1963. "Some of them don't really know who I am at first," he laughs, "and that's great. Because I love to be just another guy teaching theory class or history or whatever. And it cracks me up when word finally does get around and they come to me with, 'Well, why didn't you tell us?' And I say, 'Man, 'cause my job is to show you this C7th chord, not to talk about this or that session I did 25 years ago. It's not important. What's important is making sure you play these notes right.'"



DAVID REDFERN RETNA

Born in 1937, one of eight children in a musical family, Ron Carter grew up in the small suburb of Ferndale, Michigan, where he began studying classical cello. When he was in eighth grade, his family moved to Detroit, a hotbed of hard bop at the time, though Ron was too immersed in his studies to be aware of what Barry Harris, Kenny Burrell, Tommy Flanagan or the Jones boys (Hank, Sam and Thad) were doing at the time.

"I knew there was something other than classical music out there. I'd seen Bird on TV and heard a few records. But I hadn't honed in specifically on what I was going to do."

At Cass Tech in Detroit, a young man two years ahead of Ron dropped hints about the burgeoning jazz scene. His name was Paul Chambers. But after receiving a full scholarship to the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, Ron seemed more determined than ever to pursue a career as a classical cellist. But one conversation in Rochester soured him on the whole classical scene.

"I was playing with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, a very prestigious organization that attracted some top-name conductors and soloists. Leopold Stokowski was one of the guest conductors at the time...this was 1958. And after one rehearsal we met and talked. He was very complimentary and talked about his orchestra in Houston. And he said, 'I would love to have you play in my orchestra, but I'm afraid the people there are not ready for a black musician.' And I really had no intentions of going on a crusade. I didn't have the time, inclination nor

Photograph by David Stewart ▶

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interest to become an 'uncaped crusader' for the rights of those who want to join an orchestra. And that's still the case. Most orchestras still are reluctant to hire qualified black players, and that amazes me. So I came to New York City. I knew that there was a music that would accept a qualified, quality black player. And that music was jazz."

So Ron packed his bags and headed to New York City in 1959, hooking up with the Chico Hamilton Quintet the very day he hit town. "Eric Dolphy was in the band then," he recalls in his City College office. "So was guitarist Dennis Budimer. We made a record for Warner Bros. that was so far out that they never released it."

After five months of road work with Chico Hamilton, Carter enrolled in the Manhattan School of Music to work on his master's degree. He freelanced as a jingle and soundtrack session man, while also working on and off in the clubs with Bobby Timmons, Jaki Byard, Randy Weston and a whole list of other jazz musicians around town. He continued freelancing frantically up until the time he joined the Miles Davis Quintet in March 1963, replacing his old schoolmate Paul Chambers.

"I don't want to hear the safe notes. I wanna hear notes that you didn't play yesterday. I don't wanna hear a *safety net* bassline."

When drummer Tony Williams (then 17) and pianist Herbie Hancock joined the band a couple of months later, the rhythm section was cemented. Together they went on to make jazz history, recreating the excitement of the Red Garland-Paul Chambers-Philly Joe Jones rhythm section Miles had previously employed, while matching the sensitivity of the more introspective Bill Evans-Scott LaFaro-Paul Motian trio.

Carter remained with the group through 1968, culminating in the landmark album *Filles de Kilimanjaro*, a provocative session that suggested a new direction for Miles and ultimately pointed the way toward the explosive, seminal jazz-rock record, *Bitches Brew.* Miles made Ron play electric bass for the *Kilimanjaro* session; at that point the bassist decided to pack his bags and move on.

Carter recorded for the CTI label during the early '70s and enjoyed a fruitful relationship as a leader with Milestone Records from the mid-'70s until the early '80s. In 1976 he introduced his own creation, a piccolo bass, which he used exclusively in his quartet with pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Buster Williams and drummer Ben Riley.

In recent years, Ron Carter has continued to stretch and search, always remaining open-minded. He played upright on one track of a Billy Idol record. He performed on a Billy Joel album. He did a date with Paul Simon. Last year he recorded an album of Bach cello pieces transcribed for pizzicato string bass (on the Nippon/Polydor label). And his latest project may well be his most ambitious undertaking—scoring the music for a French film, directed by Bertrand Tavernier (of *Round Midnight* fame), about violence, suffering and incest during the Hundred Years War. All that and teaching too.

MUSICIAN: *What was it that initially turned you on to classical music as a kid?*

CARTER: I went to a concert and heard Gregor Piatigorsky, one of the world's greatest cellists. And I couldn't believe that this guy was making all that sound with this one instrument. To this day it seems unimaginable. I had an incredible viewpoint way up in the cheap seats, so far away that all the guys onstage looked like penguins. And here was his little bald-headed guy playing this piece by Saint-Saëns...incredible! So my focus from that point was to try and get the same unimaginable warmth of sound on the cello that he got. Jazz just wasn't part of my thought-frame at that time.

MUSICIAN: *What was Eastman like?*

CARTER: A very intense professional music school. I was there from 1955 to 1959. The emphasis at Eastman was strictly on classical performance. There was no jazz in the school while I was there. There were jazz gigs happening around town, though. I joined the house rhythm section of a place called the Ridge Crest Inn in Rochester. That was a place where they had a local rhythm section playing with jazz singles coming to town: Sonny Stitt, Slim Gaillard, people like that on their way to dates in New York City. So I got a chance to play jazz in that context, but never in school.

MUSICIAN: *Was Paul Chambers a kind of mentor figure when you came to town in August of '59?*

CARTER: I never really saw that much of him 'cause he was always on the road with Miles. Our paths did not cross as often as I would have liked. So I was kind of on my own. But there were some nice bass players I met, like Milt Hinton, who introduced me to the Broadway show business, which at that point not many black musicians were involved in. Milt and Joe Benjamin and others were instrumental in getting me involved in doing shows like *West Side Story* and *Skyscraper,* maybe two or three others.

MUSICIAN: *Let's reminisce about your early freelancing.*

CARTER: I got my master's in bass from the Manhattan School of Music in June of '61 and started working around town, playing with various guys who were calling for one-nighters. Mondays were off-nights and there would always be some jam sessions going on. I miss those days. I saw Thelonious Monk at the Five Spot, the early Jazztet, Ornette Coleman's first band. I had a chance to hear and learn a lot of music, and work with some great people. I worked with Randy Weston at the Five Spot for about nine weeks in a row, then worked with Bobby Timmons for a while, Betty Carter for a while, Monk for a couple of weeks, Herbie Mann. And then Miles.

MUSICIAN: *Did Miles know of you before he hired you?*

CARTER: I met him after a concert in '57, but I doubt if he knew who I was, other than a friend of Paul Chambers. If he remembers that, I'd be surprised. But he had been running around town doing his own kind of homework as to who would take Paul's place when the band broke up. And he decided I was the guy to fill that role.

MUSICIAN: *Did you have to audition for Miles?*

CARTER: No. I was working with Art Farmer at the time and he came down to the Half Note, which was then on Spring and Hudson, and asked me to join his band. I said, "I'm working with Art for the next two weeks. I'm not available. But if you ask Art and he says it's okay, I'll be glad to join the band." He asked Art, got the okay, so I left for San Francisco the following week to play with Miles at the Blackhawk.

MUSICIAN: *Did you meet Tony and Herbie on that gig?*

CARTER: No, they didn't join the band until late March. At the Blackhawk we had a sextet with George Coleman on tenor, Frank Strozier on alto, Jimmy Cobb on drums and Harold Mabern on piano. And that band only lasted for that tour, which was six weeks. When we came back to New York, Miles did not rehire Frank or Harold, and Jimmy quit to go play with Wynton Kelly and Paul Chambers. That's when he hired Herbie and Tony.

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"It was one of the more important rhythm sections in jazz history. I'm still not comfortable saying that."

VERYL OAKLAND/RETNA

MUSICIAN: *Did you feel an immediate chemistry with them?*

CARTER: Well, we all knew the library because we all knew Miles' old records. That was part of our upbringing. We had played other people's versions of "Bye Bye Blackbird" or whatever the hot tune was at the time, and here we were thrown together with the guy who had been responsible for these tunes. So we spent the first few gigs trying to get a handle on his view of the tunes. At the time, it was like school, man. No one thought about the excitement it was creating. We weren't aware of any historical significance. And yet, the rhythm section of that group—Herbie, Tony and myself—was one of the more important rhythm sections in the annals of jazz history. I'm still not comfortable saying that, but that's what it is. All those records we did with Miles, given the context of the day's music, are important records. According to historians, that was a very important band. I believe it.

MUSICIAN: *The* Filles de Kilimanjaro *album of '68 was a particularly interesting project.*

CARTER: Yeah, that was probably the first jazz-rock record...certainly the first electric piano on a jazz record. Not the first electric bass, though. Monk Montgomery had played Fender bass with Lionel Hampton's jazz band before that. But it was the first use of Fender bass in that context.

MUSICIAN: *How did you feel about playing electric bass on that session after having dedicated most of your career to developing your sound on the upright?*

CARTER: I did the best I could. That's what the job called for. I had no impression that it was going to be another step in the ladder of musical worlds or anything like that. Miles first used electronics on that album, that device that altered the sound of the trumpet. Made him sound like a tuba player. And he asked me what I thought about it. I said, "Man, why don't you hire Bill Barber? He plays tuba. Plays real tuba, not one of those things you got there." He just told me to be quiet.

MUSICIAN: *Do you get much call to play electric bass these days?*

CARTER: I do, but I try to discourage it. I'll bring both my string bass and my electric bass to a session and play them both for the producer to give the guy a choice. But four out of five times he'll accept my view and pick the upright.

MUSICIAN: *Do these instruments require different attitudes and approaches?*

CARTER: Oh yeah, they're not the same animal at all. No way. I would say it's easier for an upright player to play electric than the reverse. They're totally different instruments. With the electric bass the sound comes from somewhere else...little bitty box, man. You gotta learn about pickups, about treble and bass, foot pedals and boosters and what's the best amp for this pickup and all that. There's an awful lot to learn, so I really admire these guys who have taken the time to learn how to operate the electric bass so that it sounds best for them. 'Cause there's too many options, man. You get an upright, you're stuck with the upright. Whatever it is, that's it. It's not gonna change too much from when you first pick it up. You gotta make it work for you.

MUSICIAN: *Do you play with fingers or a pick on electric bass?*

CARTER: Fingers, man. I wanna feel the string. I wanna feel what's going on there. A pick doesn't allow that feeling.

MUSICIAN: *On electric bass, do you play fretless or fretted?*

CARTER: Fretted. Fretless is just like an upright and that's kind of cheating to me. I like that kind of risk of trying to hit the note right near the fret where it belongs. For me, fretless electric is like an imitation acoustic upright with a pickup. And I choose not to use that instrument. I'd rather use a fretted. To me it's more of a gamble, and I love that kind of stuff.

MUSICIAN: *Who are some of the electric bassists you admire?*

CARTER: Tom Barney, Anthony Jackson, Jerry Jemmott has his own sound. I don't know Abe Laboriel, but he sounds great on record. Jaco took the bass to another level.

MUSICIAN: *A lot of young players were immediately attracted to Jaco's soloistic approach to bass. Your philosophy of underpinning the group sound and subtly affecting the events around you is a lot different.*

CARTER: Totally different from Jaco's. Although we didn't talk often, we acknowledged the differences of our approaches with no rancor. Our view of it was just what it was...different. I acknowledged what he had done for the bass and he graciously always acknowledged that I was one of his early influences. So it was always a positive kind of confrontation of styles. Jaco did influence a lot of players, and music too. He was an important player.

MUSICIAN: *Who were some of the upright players you admired as a young man?*

CARTER: George Duvivier was very, very musical. Israel Crosby caught my ear. A lot of people have slept on what he was into in the early '40s, playing melody lines long before Scott LaFaro. Milt Hinton, Oscar Pettiford, Ray Brown...cats who had a sound, man.

MUSICIAN: *That idea of establishing your own voice is a point that, perhaps, many young musicians fail to grasp.*

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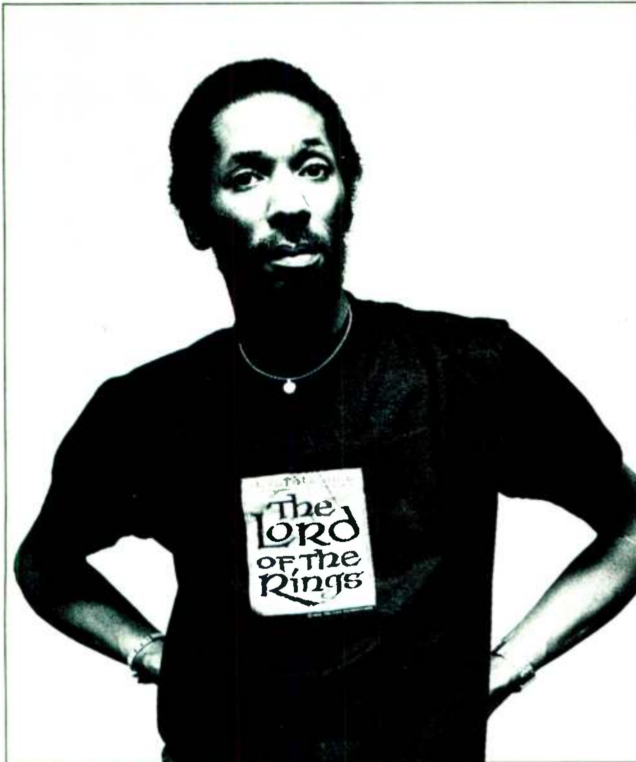

"String bass is the only instrument they haven't sampled correctly at all."

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

CARTER: Well, you know, when we came up there were no helpers. There were no amplifiers, no pedals, no devices available to alter your sound. So we had to play and make our sound...not only be heard but make it our own sound. Now today you got pickups and amps and everything. All you gotta do is plug in, and it's not only loud but they can make it sound like anything with all these knobs. At my lessons with my students, we don't use an amp. So at least for three hours a week those young bass players are playing without a helper. I tell them, "Make *your* sound on the bass. Don't give me this little bitty box with these numbers. Make your sound fill the band. I want you to have your personality. I want you to make your bass respond a certain way when you play." See, an amplifier does all the work for you and it also makes you sound like everybody else. Takes away all the highs and lows and leaves you a nice big fat middle range with no character at all. With an upright, just you and the wood and the strings, you make the character with your hands. You make the sound wave as long or as short as you want. It's all in your hands.

MUSICIAN: *When did you feel that you had your own sound?*

CARTER: Three days ago. [*laughs*] Ah, probably 1970 when I realized what was happening. I started making a lot of records by then and I got a chance to hear the sound I was producing on the playbacks. And with each playback you pick out odds and ends, sound wave variations and stuff. You train your ears and you begin to be aware of all these possibilities when you hear it played back clearly.

MUSICIAN: *How do you know that when you're hearing it back it isn't being treated with EQ or reverb or whatever by the engineer?*

CARTER: I tell them to take all that off. I want to hear it back clean. I don't want it to sound like a computer. Bass isn't like that. A bass has got all these highs and lows built into the wood that have been developed over a period of time. Imagine having a bass sound mechanically perfect. I want it *musically* perfect. That's more important for me. I mean, you work with the inherent flaws of the instrument. I'm playing an instrument that has no frets, that has a 44-inch string length, no keys...you're on your own every time you play a note, man. I like that risk. And I'm very complimented when people hear that risk and know that I tried something today that I didn't try yesterday or on the last take or the last tune. That's important to me. 'Cause I'm trying to develop that. I don't want to hear the safe notes. I wanna hear notes that you didn't play yesterday. I don't wanna hear a *safety net* bassline. That's not what bass is supposed to do, for me.

MUSICIAN: *How significant are factors like humidity?*

CARTER: There are a lot of variables. It depends on how the person plays the bass, how much his hands sweat, how often he travels, how often he practices. I've never had a problem with humidity. I feel that the bass kind of takes care of itself. Wood knows what's happening. The bass will make its own adjustments as far as humidity and temperature are concerned. The thing that does change is the height of the bridge. As the weather gets hot the bridge goes up, and when the weather gets cold the strings get lower so you have to raise the bridge. Other than those natural phenomena, I don't do anything to the bass. I keep it in shape. I get all the cracks patched up if I can. I get it French polished twice a year. I'm very careful with it. I change the strings every 15 months. And if they're really good to me I try to stretch it a couple of months. And I don't throw them out. I save them and give 'em to my students. They cost $80, man!

MUSICIAN: *What do you think of all the digital technology that has emerged in recent years?*

CARTER: I admire all the guys who deal with that stuff. It truly amazes me. And I keep promising myself to sit down at some point and take some classes to learn how this stuff operates, 'cause I still want to know about it, whether or not I eventually use it. That's just another project to do in the future.

MUSICIAN: *What do you think of sampling people's signature sounds and selling them on discs for other musicians to use?*

CARTER: Yeah, well, the string bass is the only instrument they haven't sampled correctly at all. There are so many different qualities of bass sounds available on these samplers, but they haven't been able to get a real full sound, a true bass sound. The sound wave of a bass is so wide and it gets compressed down in the sampling process. The instrument is not really conducive to sampling. And I think that my sound would be even more difficult to sample because it uses all the undertones and overtones of the note, not to mention the vibrato and the decay. I heard a Roland machine the other day that had the best sampled strings I ever heard. A real rosin sound. A great fake sound. Ain't like an orchestra, but it may be the next best thing to it. Give me an orchestra any day,

continued on page 130

ALL IN HIS HANDS

Ron's main upright, the one he uses for most recordings, is a Juzek string bass made around 1900. It has Labella 7700 nylon wound strings and a Barcus Berry pickup built into the bridge. His piccolo bass, a half-size string bass tuned C-G-D-A, is a French Tyrolean made in the early 1800s. It has metal wound Labella strings with the same Barcus Berry pickup built into the bridge. He uses a small French-made Pentatonic amplifier with both instruments. His Juzek string bass also has an extension on the head that allows the low E string to go down to a low C. His electric bass is an old Rickenbacker with flat wound Labella strings.

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More comfortable with his past now, a one-time bass *wunderkind* plunges on into the future–with some surprise help from Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland.

Perched on a plain, wooden stool in his home studio, Stanley Clarke inclines his lanky, angular form forward to make a small confession: "About three or four years ago, I was really getting bored with the whole thing. This is the first time I've mentioned this to anyone but my wife, but I was actually considering not making records anymore. I thought about taking a hiatus, maybe getting into teaching or something. I don't feel good when I go out to play or make a record and it's not inspiring even to me. So how can it be inspiring to anyone else?"

These days, the long-reigning Lord of the Lower Frequencies has little time to be bored. In the company of two new cronies, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland, he'll be entering the studio with vocalist Deborah Holland in the early months of 1988. Together, they'll cut an album that—no matter *what's* on it—promises to have fans and press buzzing about the New Police and Sting's Hip Replacement. In the meantime, having just produced Brenda Russell's new single, "Gravity," he's working feverishly to complete his new solo album, tentatively titled *If This Bass Could Talk*.

World Radio History

STANLEY CLARKE CONQUERS FUSION GUILT

By Alan di Perna

In one sense, Clarke has conquered his ennui by rediscovering and reaffirming the jazzier side of his musical makeup. Apart from a Charles Mingus cover and a few other things, Stan wrote most of the album himself. Clarke says his new record also marks his triumphant return to the instrument he started on: acoustic bass.

"The music on this album is more 'composed' than my past few records," he adds. "I used to do a lot of composing with Return to Forever. But I sort of abandoned that because of the bad feelings that went down at the end of the fusion era. Now it's coming back. I feel good about it. But I don't want it to come back in a way that messes with the groove too much."

This last qualification elicits heartfelt sighs of relief. Here we are, after all, in the midst of that vast Return to Boredom media and marketeers have tagged "The '70s Revival." It's all too easy to envision Clarke taking his place alongside blissed-out New Age instrumentalists and recycled Prog-rock Punk sidemen, lining up for his slice of the new post-Woodstock/pre-punk demographic pie.

But Stanley Clarke has always had a saving grace that set

Photograph by Chris Cuffaro

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Stanley at home in his 24-track MIDI stúdio: "Keyboard players rule right now—which is why I have so many keyboards."

him apart from the hyper-arpeggiating mob. He is one of the few fusioneers whose bluesy rock roots go just as deep as his jazz ones. Who better embodies the original fusion ideal—perhaps naive in retrospect—of fusing the energy and attitude of rock with jazz instrumental techniques? Clarke has always been proud to point out that he began gigging, at age 16, with a group called the Blues Demonstration and went on to play with a few local Philadelphia acid rock bands. "We didn't call it heavy metal then. I have photos of myself with headbands on and all that shit. But you'll never see them."

And while Clarke was defining the fusion genre with Chick Corea's Return to Forever, his own solo albums and projects with people like Airto, George Duke, Deodato and Al DiMeola, he also took time out to work with seminal rock and blues guitarists like Roy Buchanan, Jeff Beck, Keith Richards and Ron Wood. So there's nothing surprising in his joining up with rockers like Copeland and Summers—whose own jazz roots sometimes show beneath their bottle-blond locks. And like his new bandmates, Clarke has recently started selling his talent to Hollywood, having penned music for an episode of *Pee Wee's Playhouse* and a show called *Kung Fu: The Next Generation.*

Skeptics, wags and critics will no doubt accuse Copeland and Summers of taking a cue from their former bandmate and enlisting a black jazz player to enhance credibility. But actually, it was Stanley who initiated the collaboration.

"I was planning to do a tour in Brazil. I've been there every year for the past three years, and I was thinking it might be nice to bring something a little different down there this time. So I called Stewart. I knew he was getting kind of bored just doing film work, and that he wanted to get back to playing. It just so happened he was in the process of putting his own band together, so he said, 'You play in my band and I'll play in your band.' Then we called Andy, because we were looking for a guitar player. I think Stewart and Andy had talked about possibly doing something together anyway."

Copeland also brought singer Deborah Holland into the project. The quartet played a string of dates in Brazil under the less-than-inspired name Rush Hour—a handle that Clarke assures us *will* be changed. Things went so well that the foursome decided to record together. But Clarke is still hesitant to say whether the people involved view the whole thing as a full-on, regular band or a one-off project. "We'd like it to be regular. We're going to record in January. And hopefully, if everyone likes it, we'll like it.

"There was a lot of hysteria down there," says Clarke of the Brazilian junket. "It just happened that Sting was there doing his tour while we were doing ours. One paper wrote that I was the mediator to bring the Police back together. You know, this old jazz guy coming in and saying, 'Okay, look...Stewart, Andy, Sting, come on now. Shake hands.' They *really* thought that!"

By choosing a woman, and a relative unknown, to sing *and* write most of the material, Clarke, Copeland and Summers hope to deflect some of the inevitable comparisons between the new band and the Police. "Once you hear her, there's really no comparison," he explains. "And we did figure on that as a definite tactic. Because there were a couple of really well-known [male] singers—I don't want to give their names—who wanted to join the band. We passed on them, because we knew there'd be comparisons to Sting. But actually some of these guys were pre-Sting. If anything, Sting got his shit off some of these guys. Some real serious cats. I think [Stewart and Andy's manager] Miles Copeland had a good perspective. He said, 'Aww, get a girl.'"

By way of describing the music, Clarke says, "Deborah's songs are traditional pop songs—great tunes with great lyrics. And we've made them as progressive as we could without losing the integrity of her material. Stewart's rhythms are very African-oriented. Andy is a very chordal player, basically; and my thing is just all over the place. It's also fun to play real deep, bottom bass again. See, I've been carrying another bass player with the bands I've been taking out lately. He plays the bottom and I play tenor bass, piccolo bass—things like that. But this is

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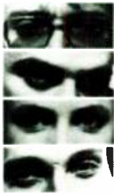
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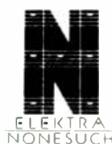

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a situation where I'm playing the bottom again, and I'm enjoying it."

So at least one aspect of the Police formula remains: Summers and Copeland are again playing in a three-instrument lineup, which gives each player plenty of territory to stake and explore as his own. Within this framework, Clarke says he and the Policemen have already evolved their own musical dialect. He recalls the first hesitant steps with a broad grin.

"When I first met Andy down in Brazil, he started playing me these Brazilian standards with all the heavy jazz changes—flatted 13ths, sharp ninths and all that. I think he was trying to show me, 'Hey look, I'm not just some rock 'n' roll guitar player.' And I was saying, 'Okay. Alright. [*laying on the jive*] You're bad. You can hang.' We developed a real nice musical friendship on the road."

But it's with Copeland that Clarke has really clicked. Prior to the Rush Hour project, the drummer played on Clarke's 1986 *Hideaway* LP and will appear on Stan's new album as well. "Stewart's a fun guy to have in a band, because he's real strong. I prefer being in a band situation with people who are real strong. We may have to bump heads every now and again, but your chances for survival are better that way. That's what we were all like in Return to Forever."

Comparisons to RTF come up frequently when Clarke discusses his work with Copeland, Summers and Holland. "For me, it's kind of a *relief* playing with those guys. In Brazil I never ever had to think about something like page three of a Chick Corea arrangement. When you play with Chick, you enjoy yourself—but not *really.* Because you always knew some line was coming up that you could barely play. You'd work on it for five weeks and then, onstage, that moment came when you had to play it all together. It almost didn't matter whether the audience was there or not. But Brazil was a complete gas, and it got me back to *the* reason why I started playing music—which was to have fun. I didn't start playing for any heavy reason, like trying to figure out the world or some amazing technical thing...although that came later."

Clarke is the first person to admit that the wet blanket of instrumental overkill smothered the fusion conflagration he helped ignite with RTF. "But it wasn't just the musicians who overkilled it," he adds. "It was also the industry. I remember when Return to Forever, Weather Report and the Mahavishnu Orchestra started selling—for jazz—an amazing amount of records. The business people said, 'Let's sign each of these guys.' Everybody got a solo deal. That's actually one of the reasons why I have a contract today. Then I put a band together and *those* guys got solo deals. There were so many records that the music just got watered down. You were hearing things like the third violinist with Mahavishnu's brother had a record deal!"

Many younger players picked up on the 64th-note arpeggios rather than the musicality of the better fusion groups. It's something that still has Clarke shaking his head in wonderment. "Some of these new heavy-metal guitar players *kill* me. Most of them have learned this one technique: Take Alan Holdsworth and Al DiMeola, squash them together and take away the musical knowledge. There's a physical way of playing fast on a guitar; once you've got it, you can play so fast that it doesn't matter what notes you're landing on. So you see these guys. Some of them do it well. Like...who's that guy whose name begins with a Y?"

Yngwie Malmsteen?

"Yngwie! He's a little overkill, but I actually don't mind him because I can hear a *little* bit like he knows *something* about music. But some of these other guys...."

Clarke grew up on a more varied set of influences—everything from Ron Carter and Richard Davis to Jack Bruce and Paul McCartney, with whom he was later to work on the *Pipes of Peace* LP. "I admire Paul not so much for his technique, but for his concept of playing the bass. He went beyond traditional bass playing. You see, I consider someone like James Jamerson, who played all the Motown stuff, a very traditional bass player. If anyone ever wanted to learn the basics of the electric bass and how it reacts with pop music or rock, he could get it all from Jamerson. But Paul was getting into different kinds of sounds on the bass. Like putting echo on it, which was unheard of when I was coming up. Then Pastorius came out. Jaco had echo up the kazoo on his bass, and I thought it was great."

Also high on Clarke's list is Larry Graham, the former Sly & the Family Stone/Graham Central Station bassist who has played with Stan on several tours and on *Hideaway.* "Larry is Mr. [string] Pop himself. A lot of guys think that I started it, or that Louis Johnson popped first on the bass. But it was Larry. He didn't do it the way I do. But I saw him do it first and I took it from there. What I hear is that he saw Sly do it."

Clarke recalls a time when he wasn't quite as open to the potentialities of the electric bass. When he began studying at the Philadelphia Music Academy, he banished his electric and returned to the acoustic he had begun playing in school.

"I developed a nasty jazz purist attitude. Very nasty. I put my electric bass in the closet and barred it from my presence. Then, years later, actually one of the best things Chick Corea did for me was force me to play electric bass again. He just

STANLEY TOOLS

Stanley Clarke uses a number of different Alembic basses, mostly custom-made, including a tenor and a piccolo bass, each with active stereo electronics. Pickups are all Alembics. His piccolo bass has recently been fitted with a Photon MIDI system. Among the standard Alembic basses he owns is the new Stanley Clarke model.

Strings are Rotosounds. Since, with Rush Hour, Clarke has gone back to being the only bassist in the band, he has returned to the heavier string gauges he used with Return to Forever. "That would be a 105 for the E, and it goes up from there. On my tenor bass, which I tune ADGC, I have a 65 for the A, so it goes way up from there. On the piccolo, the strings are so thin that I don't even know the gauge. 'Gimme an E, A and a G' is all I say."

Stanley's main acoustic bass is "an old German flatback. I can't recall the brand. And in the house, I have a rare Italian bass. It's a Carcasi, although I can't give you the spelling." It dates from somewhere between 1693 and the early 18th century.

In the studio, Stanley uses H/H V600s to amplify his electric basses. But he finds they're too heavy for his roadies to handle. So, ever the obliging gentleman, for his Brazilian tour with Rush Hour he used Gallien-Krueger amps. His cabinets are all Electro-Voices in various models and combinations.

Clarke's home studio revolves around an Otari MTR-90 24-track with remote transport controls, and a TAC Scorpion console. He uses Jensen mike preamps in lieu of the TAC's mike pres, and, for recording most tracks, a Massenberg EQ in place of the TAC's onboard EQ. Monitors are UREI 809s and Yamaha NS10Ms. On the keyboard/synth/sampler front, the studio is equipped with an Emulator II, Yamaha DX7, DX100 and TX7, Roland D-550 rack-mount, Korg Poly 61 and 8000 rack-mount. Drum machines are a Korg DDD-1 and an old LinnDrum. All the MIDI gear is switched, routed and otherwise kept humble by a J.L. Cooper MSB+. Stanley runs Mark of the Unicorn Performer software on an Apple MacIntosh to sequence the whole menagerie. A Roland SBX-80 locks the Mac and Performer to SMPTE time code on multi-track tape or video.

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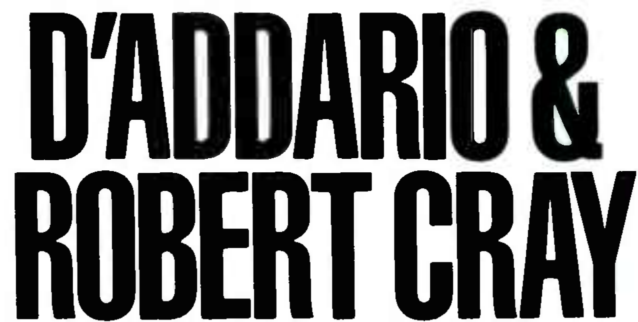

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said, 'Look, we're going to go electric. We need an electric bass; you gotta do it—or you're fired.' I looked on it as an inferior instrument at first. But once I realized it is an actual musical instrument it led me to have some pretty major cognitions on the idea of being an electric bass player.

"Prior to that, when I thought of the electric bass player, I'd always seen Bill Wyman on the stage, just kind of vibing, not really audible. All due respect to Bill, he's a good friend, but that was *the* view people had. I was just thinking about this the other day. When I'm dead and gone, all I'd like people to say about me as a bass player was that I at least got people to realize you can do other things with the bass than stand in the corner and look bored to death."

"Chick said, 'Look, we need an electric bass; you gotta do it—or you're fired.'"

The once-revolutionary techniques Clarke used to bring the electric bass out of the shadows have now become a standard part of nearly every bassist's repertoire. But for Stanley, it was a return to some of these techniques, and the discipline behind them, that helped him beat the sense of boredom that overtook him a few years back.

"I've been practicing a lot over the past year, and I think that's the thing that saved me. You get to a point where you win all these awards, and every time you walk onstage somebody's screaming, 'Stanley, you're God!' So you stop practicing. But I realized it was ridiculous to think I could go the rest of my life without practicing or learning anything. So I've been checking out some different techniques on the bass. I'm tempted to put these things out on my new album. See, I made a mistake. When everybody started jumping on the bandwagon with popping, for example, I stopped. If you listen to my records, you know I just let it go. Well, on this record I'm going to put it back. [*gleeful laugh*] I have a different twist on it. All I can say is I know it won't be like the other guys. It will sound like me.

"In other words, I feel good about that. There are a lot of things I used to do in the past that I let go. I even let the acoustic bass go. But lately I've been feeling better to be doing these things again."

Although Clarke now seems more comfortable with the works he wrought during the '70s, he shows no sign of wanting to lose the high-tech ground he gained during the '80s. Many of the basic tracks for his new album were cut on the mountain of MIDI gear in his 24-track home studio. Over these electronic templates, Stanley plans to lay his own bass tracks, as well as tracks from his band (drummer Gerry Brown, keyboardist Steve Hunt and bassist James Earle) and guest artists like Copeland and Wayne Shorter.

"Keyboard players rule the music industry right now," he says. "That's why I have so many keyboards. I've read the manuals in and out. And it really helps when I'm producing records. I use sampled and synthesized bass riffs all the time on records. Also I've just added a Photon MIDI system to my piccolo bass. I'm working with that now. It's difficult when you start MIDIing things up. The thing I hate is when guys—especially guitarists—MIDI their instruments and it just sounds like a synthesizer. What's the point in that? So what I want to do is sample one of my regular basses. Then I can have a low sound coming from the sampler and combine that with the high sound coming straight from the piccolo bass."

Clarke admits that he has found synth bass riffs concocted by non-bassists pretty hilarious on occasion. "It's funny when the bass line sounds like a keyboard line. Dum-de-dum-da-dum. [*Imitates wedding band keyboard bass.*] Really funny. You can tell right away. And I think it cracks everyone up—not just bass players or musicians. People may not know what they're listening to, but I'm sure they perceive it. They'll say, 'This ain't groovin',' or 'This is weird,' or whatever. Because, even though the bass has come a long way, there are still traditional things that you do as a bass player. And you have to know those things to build a good synth bass part."

Like his chosen instrument, Stanley Clarke has come a long way. Spend any time around him and it becomes clear that the Afro-lidded wunderkind of the '70s has become a seasoned veteran at 36, an elder statesman in his own right. Clarke has reached a point where he can draw on the best aspects of his naive and exuberant past and apply them to the present.

"Actually, I feel sorry for the younger guys playing bass today," he offers. "Because there *is* a lot of history there. I'm in a different kind of situation. I've made a lot of records. I've probably won every award that a bass player can win. So I don't really have that drive to always be the best. I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing, but I'll be honest. That animalistic thing—I guess they call it the 'eye of the tiger' thing—isn't a part of my personality anymore. I'm not always telling myself, 'I've *got* to come out with something new.' Although I do have some new stuff I've been working on that will knock you out." M

MARK BRADY

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Introducing the ne

You said you wanted a DX7 with more voice memory. And function memory. We heard you. You also wanted a split and dual tone system. And much more extensive MIDI implementation. We heard you. Micro-tuning and a larger backlit LCD? We heard that, too.

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If that's not enough on the new DX7IIFD (and minus the disk drive, the new DX7IID) to get you out of this ad and into the store to do some listening of your own, read on. There's more.

One of the most important considerations in making a new DX7 was making it compatible with the current one. So even though there are a lot of new things going on with the DX7II, there are still six operators waiting to hear the sound of your voice. You don't have to tear things down and start over. Just build on what you already have and know.

Compatible as it is with the original, the II has taken on a whole new personality. Dual and split play modes give you the power and sound of two DX7s. Any two

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xt generation DX7.

voices can be combined and played as one in the dual mode. Combining similar voices with slightly different timbres can greatly enhance vibrance and realism as well as adding thickness to the sound. Combining completely different voices can make for some very interesting and novel effects. Split mode, of course, lets you assign different voices to the right and left sides of the keyboard.

The dual FM tone generators in the II give true stereo output. This allows you to expand the sound field. It also opens up some exciting new possibilities in the realm of digital panning. The parameters for this new pan feature let you determine the position of the voices in the stereo field according to velocity, LFO and key number. There is also a pan envelope for reshaping the dynamics to create even more special effects.

More memory was an important consideration in the new DX7II. So we doubled the on-board single voices to 64.

But perhaps more important, we added 32 internal performance memories to the II. These memories store voice position data with function (or what we now call performance) parameter data including modulation, pan, aftertouch, foot controllers and continuous sliders as well as dual, split and single play modes.

We've also greatly expanded the new DX7II's data storage capacity. In two ways.

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First, with the new RAM4 cartridges. One of these babies will store the DX7II's total memory including 64 voices and 32 performance combinations, or 63 micro-tunings. Both the DX7IIFD and DX7IID also come with a ROM cartridge containing 128 pre-programmed voices, 64 performance combinations, 11 micro-tunings and fractional scaling data.

But the really big news in expanded storage capacity is the DX7IIFD's built-in 3.5″ disk drive. One 3.5″ disk equals the storage capacity of 40 RAM4 cartridges. So you can have a massive voice, performance, micro-tuning and fractional scaling library ready for virtually instant use and access. And a MIDI data recorder for recording and storing external MIDI equipment information.

Speaking of MIDI, the new DX7IIs have much more complete MIDI implementation than ever before for extensive system control capability. Much more than we have room to talk about here.

And speaking of room, the new larger 40-character by 2-line backlit LCD and two alpha-numeric LEDs make operating and programming the II a lot easier. You get a full status display of current modes and names while playing and a simultaneous display of all parameters while programming.

How about if you've ever wanted to explore quarter or eighth tone tunings instead of the usual half tone tuning? Play Bach in the tuning of his era? Or combine two voices with slightly different tunings for a natural detune effect across the keyboard? The II's new micro-tuning feature lets you do all that and more. There are 10 preset alternate tunings besides the standard. And two on-board memories let you create and store your own.

The II's all-new fractional level scaling function lets you precisely adjust the output level of each operator in three-key groups. This gives you unheard-of control over volume and/or timbre. So voices such as piano and woodwinds sound much more authentic.

Also adding to acoustic voice authenticity (as well as being able to create a thicker, fuller sound) is the new random pitch shift feature.

Heard enough? There's still more.

In the multiple LFO trigger mode, for instance, a totally independent LFO cycle can be started for each note to create incredibly realistic vibrato and tremolo or subtle voice thickening effects. The new Unison Poly mode combines four tone generators for each key so you can detune to achieve a fatter sound. Assignable controllers now include foot controllers and switches, continuous sliders and control wheels. The optional BC1 breath controller adds pitch and EG bias as well as amplitude modulation to the original pitch modulation. Aftertouch can also now control EG bias and pitch bend.

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MIKE WATT'S ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE

PROTO-PUNK'S BRIGHTEST BASS HERO IS A SADDER BUT WILDER MINUTEMAN. BY TED DROZDOWSKI

CHRIS CUFFARO

Mike Watt is about to commit sacrilege. "I don't know about this rhythm section crap," he says, cavalierly dismissing that venerable bastion of bassmanship. "It's funny when I hear that term, because in the Minutemen we always thought it was a three-way tie: guitar, bass, drums. Every man for himself. But I imagine the bass and drums probably is a rhythm section somewhere outside the universe I play in."

Not that Watt's universe is such a strange place. Anyone can get there simply by flipping a radio dial to the corner where college stations hide or by stepping into the nearest hip record store. But Watt *lives* there: right at the top of the underground, just outside the mainstream, in constant motion. In little more than a year, his hot new band Firehose has released two albums and played 500 gigs. S.O.P. for a guy whose last band, the Minutemen, bagged 11 albums and EPs in six years. Up the score to include vinyl dalliances with his buddies in Black Flag, Sonic Youth and Saccharine Trust, and side projects like the bass duo Dos, and it's obvious this Fender bender is no slouch.

Nonetheless, Watt's universe almost came to a black, calamitous end in December 1985 when his lifelong friend and musical compatriot, singer/guitarist/Minutemen co-founder D. Boon, died in a van accident. Watt's grief was paralyzing. He couldn't attend Boon's funeral, and for months he rarely left his San Pedro, California home or saw other friends. His bass gathered dust.

> **"Part of the power you have at a live gig is that people don't know what the hell you're going to do."**

Watt says he would have given up music if not for Ed Crawford, a 21-year-old busboy and Minutemen fan from Ohio who'd heard wrongly that he and drummer George Hurley were auditioning guitar players. Crawford became a pest, cramming Watt's answering machine with calls, even flying out to L.A. before Watt invited him to jam. "I couldn't believe the audacity of this kid, fumbling through our songs," Watt recalls. "I thought he was a hack, but there was something about his spirit. I had to try it out, so, there was Firehose."

Now Firehose, whose *Ragin' Full On* hit the bins in December '86, has some history and Crawford has some chops, but Watt allows that it's still "kind of hard on Ed, because musically I'm like an old pervert, all twisted and shaped a certain way, and I can't change. I never counted on being like that, but when you grow up just playing with one person, you develop your own language." For this 30-year-old, largely unsung bass hero, that's a rubbery syntax of melodic riffs, punchy lead licks, outright power chords, karate chops, flat-handed slaps, neck-wiggling vibrato, ringing harmonics and—in moments of pure rapture—bonking the bass off his head until his amp's gently singing with feedback.

Mike Watt was a Navy brat whose family settled in San Pedro 18 years ago. Soon thereafter the girthy Dennes Dale Boon, while playing army with some pals, got his enemies confused and leapt from a tree onto his new neighbor. When the dust cleared, the boys became fast friends. And when puberty moved in, they found a mutual infatuation with rock 'n' roll.

"D. Boon's mom made me play bass," Watt 'fesses. "I played guitar when we first tried to do music, and after about a year she just gave me a bass one day. You couldn't really play it because the nut didn't have any notches, so the strings were just floating and rattling on top. But we didn't know any better. We'd try to learn songs off records: Blue Oyster Cult, T. Rex, Alice Cooper, Black Sabbath...Actually, all we had was this shitty 8-track, so we'd have to wait for the song we were learning to come around again. The sound was so lousy I could never hear the bass, so I would play guitar lines—which I still do.

"In those days concerts were mostly these big arena things, so you never got to see a musician up close. We didn't know how it was done. I think we were 18 or 19 when we realized you were

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supposed to tune with each other. We just used to use the 'Down on the Corner' riff—da da da dum dum—and if it sounded good we were in tune. We never knew your 'Down on the Corner' had to sound like the other guy's.

"Eventually we got tired of trying to find people who played lame enough on records so that we could replicate them, and we started writing our own songs. That's how I got expressive as a player. We developed a style. Problem was, I didn't actually hear how a real bass was played until I was old enough to get into clubs. Then I saw that separate parts and writing lines was very important. When kids come up to me and ask how they can stand out as bass players, they always talk about amplifiers and stuff, but I think it's the parts. With four strings, you don't have to worry about a lot of notes. You just have to write something that sticks out."

As he and Boon grew musically and literally, "it got so that when we played it was like we were talking," says Watt. "He'd get real trebly and give me a lot a room. He would not use power chords, which helped me a lot. It was like we had our own little fiefdoms. We got into using a lot of counterpoint and doing some modal things to give us a chance to get louder and softer. Mostly it was a lot of Buck Dharma's lead guitar licks, a lot of Jack Bruce and, later, George going wild doing his Billy Cobham."

But playing live was a whole 'nother smoke. "Our first gigs were at keg parties, keggers, in San Pedro," Watt says. "You'd get up there, start the one riff from your tune and just play solos. There was never any singing. No microphones. You'd get everyone's attention and after about 15 minutes they'd start playing records to drive you out. Or what would be worse was that other dudes who could do it better would come up and take your instruments away. That's where George was great because he's a real good fighter and would never let anybody take his drums. But we were lucky we even got to do the keggers. D. Boon was real heavy then, we had long hair and I was tall and geeky. We looked like real dorks."

But then, to paraphrase Watt's "History Lesson (Part 2)," punk rock came along and changed their lives. "We heard Wire, and their idea was that you were always in control. You could start and stop the music, play just one chord, do anything. It didn't matter. That was a real eye-opener for us. We started going to Los Angeles to see all these punk bands, like the Germs. These bands were great. They didn't tune up; they were learning to play right on stage. In fact, for a year or two D. Boon didn't want to get involved with playing out because he thought they were too lame to play with. I told him, 'No shit, man. That's why *we* can do it.'"

So they did. "We started opening at

WATTAGE

Mike Watt is unflaggingly faithful to his hybrid Fender. It has a '68 Telecaster neck, EMG pickups, jumbo frets and a Fender Claw bridge. "The guy I bought it from had it done up funky: a BadAss bridge, DiMarzios, all stained. I took all that stuff off and painted it white, and I moved the jack to the front because I used to bust it off with my thigh a lot." He also has an Alembic, which he says is "only good for that Grateful Dead shit." So much for testimonials.

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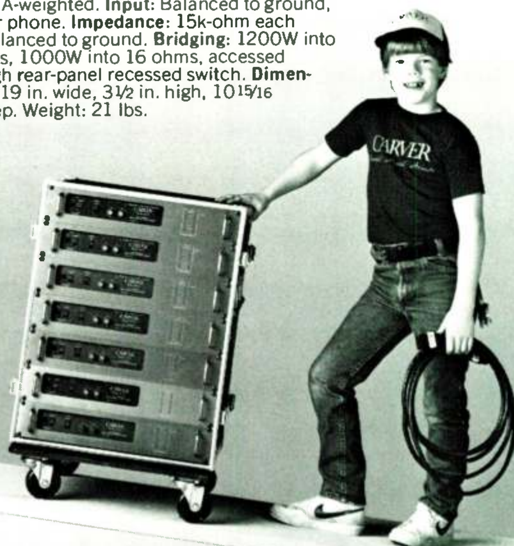

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hardcore shows," he continues. "I couldn't even look at the audience, I was so scared. We wouldn't stop between songs. We'd just charge through. For our first two gigs we had a polka drummer named Frank Tonche. George had left, but we talked him into coming back because Frank got scared of the punk rockers and wouldn't play anymore. They'd wait until we'd sing, 'cause then you couldn't block your mouth, and they'd hock a clam right in your fuckin' throat. In a way, it was funny.

"After getting over the fear of playing these gigs, we started to open our eyes and watch reactions, and we learned what worked. Part of the power you have in a live gig is that people don't know what the hell you're going to do, so you just define yourself in a way that people aren't used to, like stopping a note. That's why Boon and I started doing fast stops and starts. We figured the silences would be louder than cymbal crashes. We were always evolving, taking little bits from things we heard and interpreting them. That's how I got into sliding notes and using slaps to make the bass sound more intimate, almost like a trumpet player. Boon and I really thrived on tension, so we tried to cut it—give everything an edge. That's what Jimi Hendrix and the Who and other bands we grew up on always tried to do. We found that as long as George had a heavy backbeat happening, it would work."

When Black Flaggers Greg Ginn and Chuck Dukowski saw the band put its churn 'n' burn theory to practice, they asked the Minutemen to make tracks for their then-fledgling SST label. The *Paranoid Time* EP was promptly recorded and mixed in a single July 1980 night. "To us, making a record was just amazing. And the idea that you could do it yourself like Greg and Chuck did blew us away," says Watt. "All you had to do was pay the man who owned the pressing plant."

So the Minutemen started a label, too. Distributed by SST, New Alliance became a friendly port for post-hardcore punks like the Descendents and acquired tastes like Slovenly, put out Husker Du's *Land Speed Record* and its owners' *Joy* EP, and has been godparent to the offspring of Watt's extra-band affairs.

So far the most promising and challenging of his musical love-children has been Dos, a double dose of bass-in-yer-face. Watt and ex-Black Flag bassist Kira Roessler danced an eight-stringed tarantella through dark, powerful (and sometimes whimsical) places on the duo's eponymous 1986 debut, and now another record's on deck. "Dos is so limiting in a way, because we're working with shades of black," Watt offers. "But sometimes being a bass player you feel a kind of class consciousness. Dos is us creating our own state, and that's why we like it.

"Kira and I had already written a few songs before Ed came along, so some of those Dos songs became Firehose songs," he explains. "I write on guitar or bass. I've got a Fender Coronado acoustic I use for song demos. I use my left thumb over the neck like Townshend for bar chords and to get intense reaches. From there, that kind of technique spills into my bass playing sometimes, too."

Watt's trusty Coronado was his main blackboard for *If'n*, the new Firehose album, making his songs all the more translatable for Ed Crawford's Telecaster. Not that the pushy kid from Ohio needed help. Early on Watt and Hurley discovered they'd adopted a raw-but-prolific songwriter who shared their—and the late D. Boon's—love of snarling licks, pop hooks and political invective.

But "playing with Ed in Firehose is a whole new thing for me," Watt stresses. "It was scary. We didn't even know how he sang for the first couple of months. Then when we made him open his mouth it was like R.E.M., which blew my mind because my last tour with D. Boon was with R.E.M.

"To work with Ed is kind of hard because he gets into power chords sometimes and has different influences than me and Boon did, like U2 and R.E.M., and I don't always know how to react to what he plays. That's good though. He makes me deal with the '80s, redefines me."

Firehose has also redefined Watt's lifestyle. "In the Minutemen, we were working side jobs all along. We were always living close to the earth, in econo. Firehose is different. I used to write down all our gigs in this little book, and for the Minutemen, the first year is all on one page. But this band has played over 500 gigs so far. It's great."

He pauses, reconsiders, then lowers his voice: "But that's hard for me to say. I mean, I'm glad this happened, but it's weird for me, 'cause D. Boon ain't here." M

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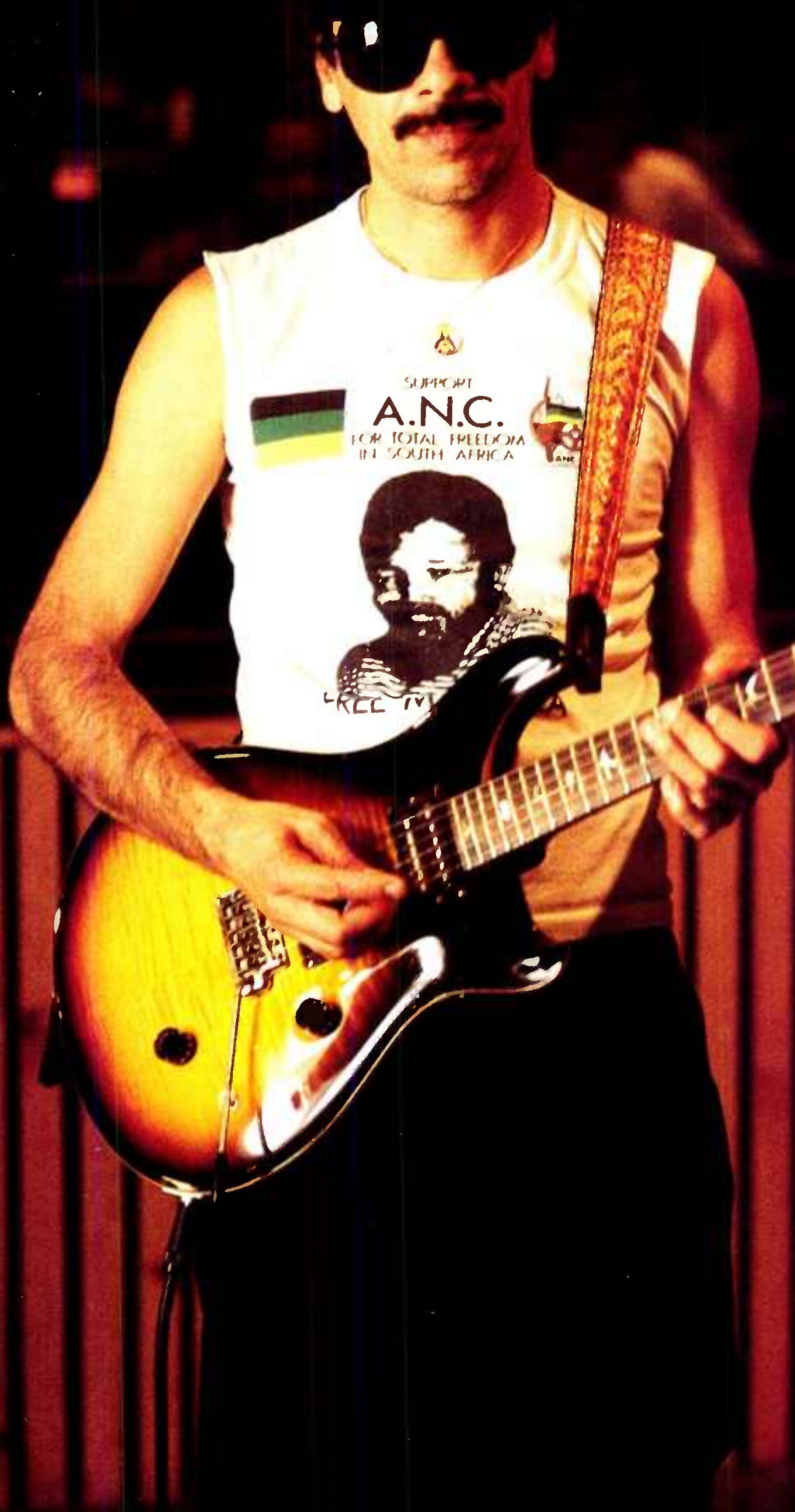

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HOW TO THINK LIKE A BASS PLAYER

THE NON-BASSIST'S GUIDE TO WRITING BETTER BOTTOM LINES BY J.D. CONSIDINE

Like many an aspiring songwriter, the first thing my friend John did upon buying a four-track cassette recorder was try to flesh out some of his ideas with full-band arrangements. Being a drummer, he had no trouble laying down the percussion, and his experience woodshedding made the guitar and piano parts a snap.

But when it came time to lay down the bassline, he was frankly stymied. He could get around on the instrument well enough, but what threw him for a loss was trying to figure out *what* to play. "I just don't get it," he said, frustrated. "I just can't figure out how to get these parts to work. "How do you learn to think like a bass player?"

Good question. Bass isn't a glory instrument; people may call Eric Clapton or Eddie Van Halen guitar gods, but few people ever talk about "Bass Heroes." And when was the last time you caught somebody at a concert playing air *bass*? Often as not, bass is seen as the instrument for those who aren't good enough to play anything else. Richard Butler, of the Psychedelic Furs, once joked that his brother Tim "figured bass was easier than guitar 'cause it has less strings."

"I found out it's not," was Tim's deadpan rejoinder.

Indeed, there's a lot more to minding the music's bottom line than simply keeping the beat and playing the root. But how much more? Is it a matter of using harmonic analysis to sketch out a line, or should the emphasis be more along the lines of rhythmic support? Or is there some deeper concept beneath it all? Looking for answers, we decided to poll four of America's better-known bassists about life on the bottom.

According to Marcus Miller, who has held up the low end for the likes of Miles Davis, Luther Vandross and David Sanborn as well as his own group, the Jamaica Boys, thinking bass thoughts "is something that you learn to do early on, and you do all day, all the time. I mean, there are so many subtle things that you kind of assimilate from just doing it so long, [things] that a guitar player or keyboard player would never know."

Ask Randy Jackson, the bassist with Journey who has also done studio stints with Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston and many more. He describes laying the music's foundation as being "a different thing, you know? Because it's not necessarily a melodic instrument, but it *is*; it's kind of off in-between things."

"Shaping time, that's where the fun

JIM HOPKINS

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is," says Marc Johnson, the master of Bass Desires and frequent collaborator with John Abercrombie. "That's something that comes from...I don't want to say years of playing, but that generally happens after years of listening and doing music."

But if all that makes playing bass seem like a low-profile position, listen to former Weather Reporter Alfonso Johnson: "I tend to think of the bass as like the quarterback on a football team.

CHRIS CUFFARO/VISAGES

Alfonso Johnson: "Help it move."

He's the one who's really controlling the ball, in the sense that the bass is kind of controlling the harmonic and rhythmic destination of the song." But gee—does that make playing bass as much a starring role as playing quarterback?

"Being a bass player, I think so," he smiles. Still, there's a difference between leading an arrangement and grandstanding on it. Says Jackson, "What's confused a lot of people is, you listen to Jaco and probably half the bass players going to Berklee and all these different schools, and all they want to do is play melody and solos.

"See, as much as the Jacos and Stanleys and all of these guys helped, they did a lot to hurt. People now want to play all sorts of things, over the beat, before the beat...like you have your Billy Sheehans, and they're great, too, but it sounds like a guitar solo."

"You have to realize what the role of the bass is, or at least what's expected of it," adds Miller. "In traditional R&B, the bass is there to supply a foundation for the rest of the music, and you've got to do that. The guys who excite me most are the guys who can supply the foundation and still be interesting. Alfonso Johnson can do that. He can supply you with all the bass you need, and you wouldn't want to hear anything else."

Okay, so how do you do it, Alfonso? "When I'm putting together a bass line for a song, I want it to be real strong, [have] a real determined movement," he says. A bass line should not be "so rhythmically complex that it clashes with the melody or where the chords are going; it [should] help those chords move along. That's the approach I take. Melodic and rhythmic, not just melodic.

"Of course, it depends on the song," he adds. "I think part of the reason I work with a lot of different styles [of music] is that I don't make any difference between the jazz or the pop or the rock type of recording dates. It's either a good song or it's not.

"I listen to the composition, the song, first, and then try to determine what it needs, what my role is going to be. Am I going to be a timekeeper? Am I going to support the melody? I try to figure out what my specific role is going to be and then, within that context, try and find what works the best."

Preconceptions can be a big problem, especially for a session player. "That's why I always go into a session with an empty, clear mind," says Randy Jackson. "I did a session a while back with Steve Jordan and Danny Kortchmar for this Bob Dylan date, and we had no idea what this guy was going to play. He just walked in and started playing, literally. We didn't know the songs, he didn't show 'em to us; we had to follow him.

"So what do you do? Are you going to just pull out a barrage of notes—'Aw, Bob, I can play this G mixolydian and then I can play the phrygian dominant, and I can play like this...' I think you really have to wait and see. Patience is a big thing. I don't know what Jordan's going to play, you know? To me, when I go into a date, I'm there to play *music*. I'm not there to impress anyone."

Okay, so a bass player shouldn't show off, but should try to understand the bassline's role in the song being played. How, though? Obviously a certain knowledge of harmony is required—if you don't at least know that in Gm7 the root is G and the fifth D, you may want to consider switching to drums. But is it necessary to know the difference between Jackson's G mixolydian and phrygian dominant?

Not necessarily. For bassists, harmony is less a matter of theory than application. As Miller puts it, "When you play bass, you learn early on what the most important notes are. When you play keyboard or a guitar, sometimes you don't really know what the most important notes of the bassline are. It's more than just the root and the fifth. Of course, those are important notes, but there are other important notes."

"A bass player can get by; they can fulfill their function with a lot less information at their fingertips," Marc Johnson points out. "You can stay down on the lower end of the instrument, the bottom of the four strings and maybe the first couple of positions, and if you're a tasteful player anyway, if you just have a talent for music, you can do your job and do it well without knowing a lot.

"I first started playing bass in orchestra," he adds, "and the bass parts in the orchestra are a lot of whole notes. They're not fast-moving parts. For one thing, the lower register has a sound that doesn't move that fast; it gets garbled and muddy-sounding. You play the root of the chord and usually the harmonic motion isn't quick, so you don't have to have a lot of technique in order to do your job. Mostly it just becomes a matter of placement, how you feel the time."

Thus it's easy for a beginning bassist to get the job done by playing things safe. Still, as a bassist develops, it becomes more and more obvious just how much

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Marcus Miller: "Don't analyze."

harmonic and rhythmic freedom is available down under the melody.

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So you can, by process of elimination, figure out what's a strong line."

Work with it a while, though, and other possibilities begin to turn up. "Somehow I started figuring out that I could anticipate the harmony by a beat, and that would be okay," Johnson continues. "And I could delay sometimes, landing on the strong chord tone on the downbeat, and that would be okay in certain contexts. That was the start of stretching and playing over the bar line, not always being glued to the downbeat.

"In a big-band context, it was sometimes perplexing, because a lot of the players would be listening for the harmony to arrive at such-and-such a time in the bass, and if it wouldn't, it would screw them up. I got in trouble a few times, [with them] saying, 'You gotta play a little more inside.' I really wasn't playing *outside*, just a little differently.

"It wasn't really so much that I was leaving the arrangement; I was just screwing around with the harmonic mode of rhythm. And I was doing that to create interest, mainly—not just for myself, I was trying to create interest for the music, for the listener. 'Cause it's fun to do something unexpected. That's the way harmony's been for me. It hasn't been a real analytical process; it's been more trial-and-error."

SIDNEY WASSERBACH

Marc Jonnson: "Create interest."

There's one other thing Johnson believes about a walking bassline: "The sound of that just doesn't sound right on an electric bass. Marcus Miller gets a good sound, he approximates the acoustic bass as well as it can be done on electric bass, better than anyone I've ever heard. It has something to do with the way he hits the strings. Will Lee is another one; he gets a lot of different sounds out of the electric bass."

Johnson, mind you, hasn't played an electric bass "for I guess about 10 years now. At times I feel very limited, because the acoustic properties of the bass, the string bass, just don't do it for some rock music. It doesn't have the cut, the bite, the sustain."

Nor are acoustic bassists the only ones whose playing style is determined by the sound of the bass itself. "The sound of the bass can help fill up a track, and make you play very differently," observes Jackson. "If you'll notice, most bass players today are really into the Jaco sound, with the Jazz bass kind of thing, and most of the manufacturers are making basses that sound like that 'cause that's what the kids want."

Back 15 years, though, bass players went "more to the P-bass, more the old James Jamerson sound," Jackson adds. "It helps to fill up the track."

That's one reason why Jackson, when he's playing a keyboard bass part, prefers his old Memory Moog. "With the DX7 I want to play a busier part; to me, the DX7 is a little too transparent. It's not as meaty. [So] with the Moog, I just want to play a simpler part. Like on the Aretha records and Whitney Houston records. When you think about a synth bass, you think about a certain sound, and that's it."

Fair enough. But, adds Miller, although "a Moog is a real good sound, if you have to have one synthesizer and all you have is a Moog, when it's time not to play bass anymore you're stuck. There's only one thing a Moog can do: play that single voice. If you have a DX7, you can play the bassline and then you can do something else when the next song comes in."

Sound isn't the only consideration in how lean or busy a bassline will be; rhythm is also a big factor, because a bassist has to know how to further the beat of a song without getting in its way.

Unfortunately, it's a lot easier to spell out harmonic advice or prescribe an appropriate sound than it is to explain what to listen for in the rhythm. Some bassists, like Will Lee, will summarize their approach as simply following the kick drum. But in practice, it isn't quite that simple. Ultimately, a bassist's sense of time is largely instinctive. As Miller puts it: "I think if you have to figure it out, you're in trouble already."

What should you do, then? "You just have to close your eyes and let the feeling hit you," he says. "Experiment—play, and then don't play, and see what feels best. When you start analyzing this stuff too much you get in a lot of trouble, because you start trying to generalize, and you can't generalize a lot in music. You have to sit there and play, and just figure it out."

To a certain extent, it's a matter of aesthetic orientation more than anything. Jackson says the reason he "wanted to be a bass player in the first place is that I can hear the bass line before I hear anything. Or I usually hear the bassline and the drumbeat together."

JIM BUSH

Randy Jackson: "Don't impress."

And when he says the drumbeat, he doesn't mean just the kick or snare, but the whole kit and caboodle. "I hear the bass drum, I hear the snare drum, I kind of hear the whole groove in figuring out what part I want the bass to play. It's like being an arranger—you can decide if you want the bass to go with the bass drum or if you want it to play a melody to what the drummer is playing."

Knowing where to leave spaces is every bit as important as knowing where to drop in accents. Miller cites reggae bassist Robbie Shakespeare as a prime example of knowing when *not* to play. "Robbie is mean. He plays serious foundation and he leaves holes because he knows how important those holes are. A lot of reggae guys know about that. They laugh at Americans who try to play reggae, because it's so funny to hear the guys not know how to play the spaces. Space is important."

Equally tricky is knowing when to "pop." Look at Larry Graham, the grandfather of slap-and-pop bass. As Miller points out, Graham thought of his bass as a drum kit: "His thumb was the bass drum and his pluck the snare drum.

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Omar Hakim

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He always considered his bass a fundamental instrument. See, the problem with guys who are playing with their thumbs lately is they don't realize what function the bass is supposed to play. They play with their thumbs, but it sounds like a low guitar."

As for popping, Miller says he usually ends up doing that "when things have cleared up musically and something is needed. Basically, you're playing and you hear an opportunity, or you hear a place where it would be nice, and you put it in. And you do it until it starts feeling like it's not appropriate anymore, and then you stop. It's a real personal thing."

But then, many bass mannerisms are. For instance, one of the favored bass tricks of the '60s was an R&B lick that had the bassist dropping from the root down to the third and climbing up by half steps to the fifth. Harmonically it was a great tension-builder, because it effectively suspended the chord without really moving away from the basic root-fifth axis. But like so many great licks, it was overused until it turned from inspiration to cliché.

What's the best way to avoid a trap like that? "You ever hear an R&B singer sing the same thing over and over again?" asks Miller, by way of answering. "He goes, 'I need you! I need you!' and he keeps saying that over and over again. *He* knows when to stop. He knows that if he does it five times, that sixth time people would have just started yawning. They would have said, 'Enough of the "need you."'

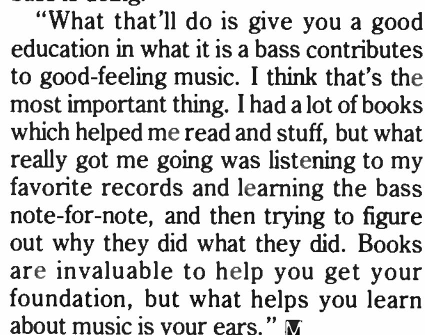
"The same with bass. I was playing with Bryan Ferry the other day, and we were playing one of his tunes. I started off doing stuff like that and it just seemed right. You've got to come off of it before it starts sounding trite. They're not the most interesting notes in the world: the third, the fourth, the fifth. The way you put them is what makes it interesting, and the man for that was Jamerson, boy. He knew how to lay that stuff in there.

"The other thing is conviction. A lot of guys don't mean it when they play. They're playing something because that's just supposed to be hip on the bass. Other guys, they feel stuff and they play it because they mean it."

Overall then, what is the best way to think like a bass player? Try to learn as much as you can, says Jackson. "I think it's necessary to know everything, but gradually, so you make sure you get fundamentals down and never forget them.

"And learn some blues guitar. Start your soloing by trying to play blues, like B.B. King, Albert King, Lonnie Mack. On the bass. See how their phrasing is going; see what they're doing. It's a very slow technique. Speed, anyone can learn that. But to get the true emotion from your soul, that's the key to being a true musician. So someone comes to hear you as opposed to the exercises that you've learned."

"What I would tell them to do," says Miller, "is get all the records that make people dance. Get all the records that people feel the rhythm on, and more importantly, get all the records that *you* feel, that make you feel good. Not because the bass is fancy or anything, but



buy records that make you feel good, that you don't even know why they make you feel good, and figure out what the bass is doing.

"What that'll do is give you a good education in what it is a bass contributes to good-feeling music. I think that's the most important thing. I had a lot of books which helped me read and stuff, but what really got me going was listening to my favorite records and learning the bass note-for-note, and then trying to figure out why they did what they did. Books are invaluable to help you get your foundation, but what helps you learn about music is your ears." M

WHAT'S NEW IN BASS-LAND

The latest rumble in bass amplification systems is coming from the U.K.'s **Trace Elliot**, and it's unashamedly aimed at the high-end low-ender. We're talking MIDI-programmable preamps, power amps of up to 500 watts, multiple stereo wedge cabinets...some serious weaponry here. The star of the lot has to be the MP11, which saves and recalls 20 setups for in/out gain structure and an onboard 11-band equalizer, all accessible through

MIDI. There's an effects buss out and in, plus a balanced DCI output for high-gloss studio work. It also comes with an illuminated footswitch that can do quick output adjustments.

The $1800 MP11 is only a preamp, of course, as is its $550 unprogrammable cousin the GP11. To get those truly bone-crunching lows, Trace Elliot has two new power amps: the $719 RA 250 and $1100 RA 500 Super X. The latter is a stereo version of the former, with the ability to run in mono, bridged and even biamp modes. Why would you need 500 watts? Well, how about to run a couple of these new Trace Elliot speaker cabinets, all rated at 200 watts into eight ohms. They're more compact than most, with different porting to compensate, and designed in a wedge shape to either use as a stage monitor or to stack. Varieties include the ever-deadly 2x10 configuration, single 15 and 18s, all $735, and a $450 "bright box" of four five-inch speakers for upper-frequency clout. And if you can't be bothered with separate components, just pick up the $2875 combo, non-programmable version, the C500, with its 4x10 speaker emplacement. That'll pin their ears back.

If you're really a maniac about your high frequencies, you know that attack transients are the name of the game. There are those who believe a speaker cone made out of paper will always take an extra couple of microseconds to pass along the pluck of the string, and for these hardy few, only aluminum will do. Hey, it's light, strong, stable and doesn't absorb any sound at all. Nor does it absorb moisture, so your sound won't change on a foggy day in Londontown. As you may know, only **Hartke Systems** makes aluminum speaker bottoms. What you may ***not*** know is exactly what's available and what they cost, so here goes: The king-of-the-heap 4x10 cabinet is a cool grand, the 1x15 job is $800 and the 2x10 is $700. Not cheap, I know, but Hartke guarantees them for three years to take the sting off. Marcus Miller, Gary Tallent, Will Lee and Darryl Jones all are aluminum partisans—you might want to find out why.

Bass Shorts: **Seymour Duncan** has a bass version of its new humbucking Underground series, this one called the Hawkbucker. Rather than uglying up your instrument with a full-size humbucker, you can install this streamlined, double-blade-magnet tone-

continued on page 110

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And the DZ-1 isn't limited to inputs from electronic pads. It accepts trigger inputs from mixing boards or from pickups attached to acoustic drums as well. This means you don't have to throw out the old acoustic kit you love to benefit from the incredible creative freedom that MIDI now offers.

Another nice touch is that the DZ MIDI drum system, with all it offers, is roughly $200 less than the nearest comparable model. If you feel like you're stuck playing the same old drum sounds, get your sticks on a Casio DZ drum system and play the whole band.

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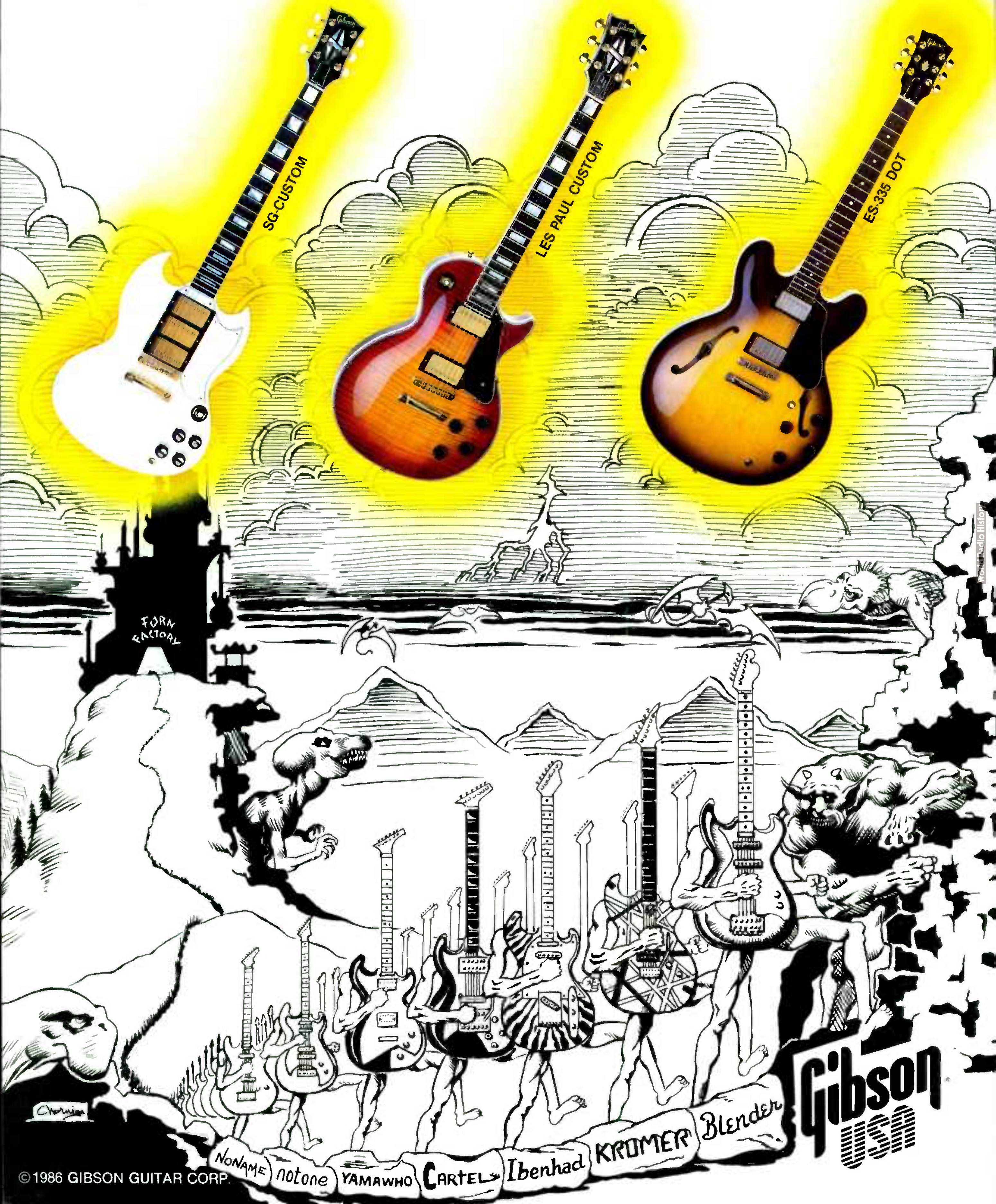

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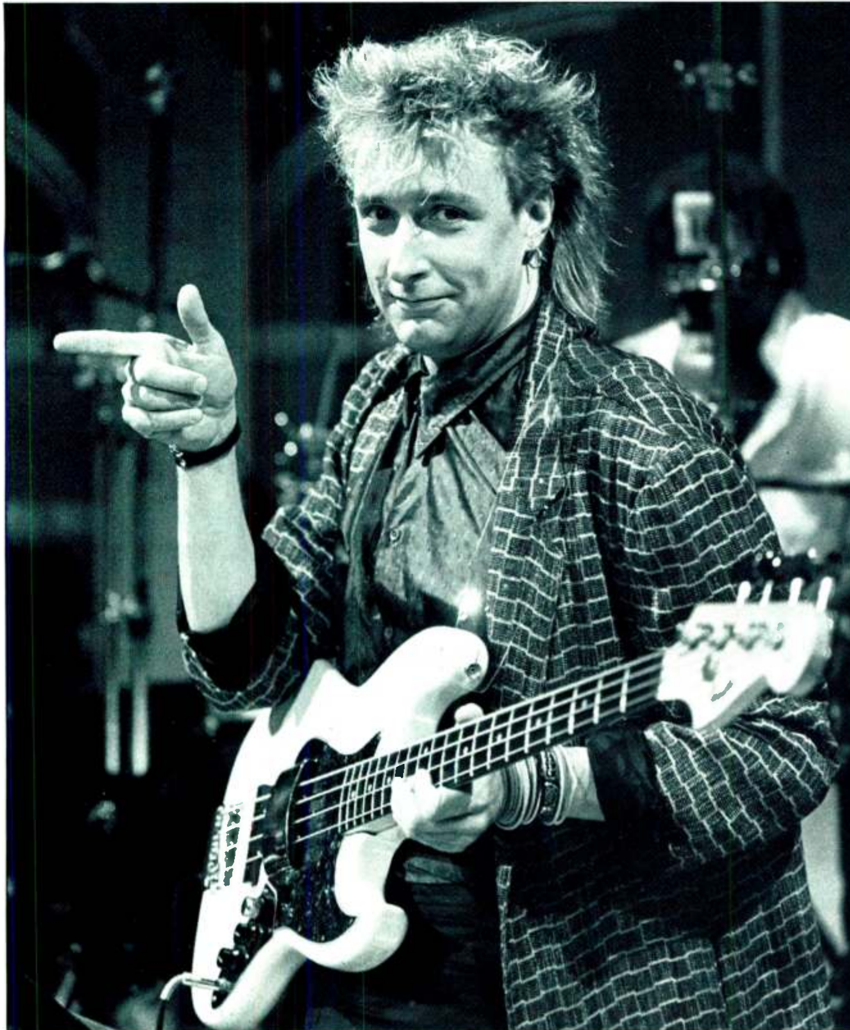
LATE NIGHT'S WILL LEE: BASS WITH THE SPACE

PLAYING "DEEP DOWN IN THE NOTE" WITH TV'S GURU OF THE GROOVE **BY J.D. CONSIDINE**



EBET ROBERTS

After almost six years of playing bass for the *Late Night with David Letterman* band, you've got to figure Will Lee has some wicked stories to tell, right? Not only has he been there for all the funny stuff we, the folks at home, saw, but he's probably been privy to some hysterical off-camera antics as well, right? You know, Paul clowning around, Dave making cracks unsuitable even for late-night viewing, Sandra Bernhardt doing impromptu renditions of Butthole Surfer songs, things like that. Will Lee must have a million stories like that, right? *Right?*

Uh...wrong.

"It's really weird," he says. "Every day people will ask me who's on the show. And I really just concentrate on doing the music, so even after the show's over I still usually can't tell people who's been on. Because the music is the thing—we're over there in kind of our own world."

Besides, he adds, "we can barely hear Dave in the speaker, anyway."

"I thought, 'If I switch to bass, I'll probably be working for a while.' So far I've been lucky."

Monitor problems aside, it's hardly surprising that Will Lee's attention should be so completely focused on music, for, in a way, that's been the story of his life. He grew up in an extraordinarily musical household—"My mother was a big-band singer," he says, "and my father is an amazing be-bop player."

Nor is that all his dad is. William F. Lee III is, as Leonard Feather's *Encyclopedia of Jazz* puts it, "one of the foremost figures of the jazz education movement." He was director of music at Sam Houston State University when Will was born, and became dean of the school of music at the University of Miami in 1964. In fact, says Will, "he pretty much changed the whole scene around. When we went there from Texas, it was just a basic kind of a school; before, it was just 'Berklee, Berklee, Berklee.' Now it's 'Berklee or the hip school, Suntan U.'"

For William F. Lee IV, though, the Beatles, not be-bop, held the greatest allure. "I remember sitting in front of the tube in Huntsville, Texas, when the Beatles came on Ed Sullivan that first night that changed everybody's life," he says. "They played close-ups of Ringo playing, and I was really excited. All of a sudden I started getting really interested in the drums and I started playing them. They'd been sitting there since I was six, and I was already 12 years old by this point. So I ran, and I started whaling on those drums.

"Before that I'd taken piano and trumpet lessons and not really enjoyed much of that. I'd actually been a trumpet player in junior high school band, and all the way up until almost the end of high school, when I switched to French horn and entered college as a French horn major. I was doing horribly on that instrument. I was enjoying playing it until I had a teacher who tried to make me switch my embouchure. Then I stopped digging it at that

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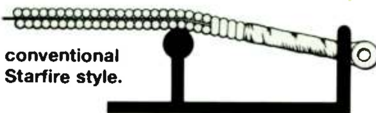

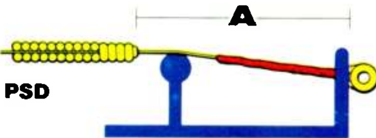

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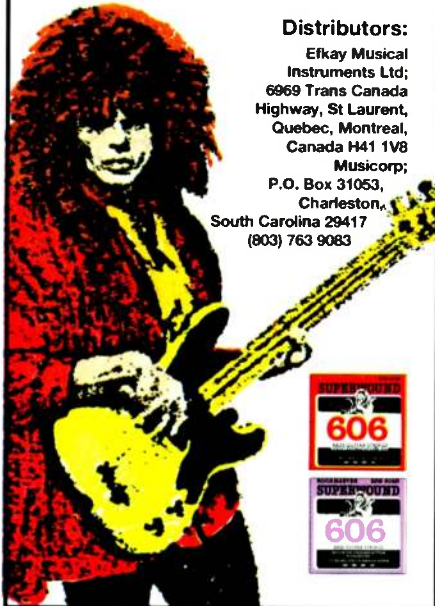

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point. But I'd been playing bass every night anyway, on gigs."

How did Lee wind up on bass? Sad to say, it was an old story: Nobody else would play the damned thing.

"There was just a need for bass players," he shrugs. "When I was growing up in Miami, everybody was picking up on guitar and drums. Not many people were into playing bass. We had this band called 'Chances r,' named after a Chicago peanut-shell-on-the-floor hamburger and beer restaurant I had been to when I was a kid. I thought it was a hip name—I loved painting that name on my bass-drum head. Anyway, it got to the point where I was sick of hearing the music without any bass, and we couldn't find any bass player. So we just hired another drummer, and I decided to play bass. I thought, 'If I switch to this instrument, I'll probably be working for a while.' So far, I've been lucky."

That's understating it a bit. First off, playing bass ended up saving Lee's ass academically; just as he was about to flunk out as a French horn player, one of his instructors, associate dean Ted Crager, happened to catch him playing bass in an after-school band. "We had a really hip experimental band called Gold Rush, and the music was like 'I'm beautiful and we're all beautiful and let's make music'—those were the kinds of lyrics we used to write. It was around the time of Chicago, and a lot of acid. We were this six-piece horn band with three horns, guitars, bass, drums, and Joe Galdo was the drummer. He's now in Miami Sound Machine."

Crager, says Lee, suggested a change in majors. "Instead of wasting my time doing this French horn thing, why don't I go ahead and major on bass because that's what I did every night anyway, and that's what I was really good at." Lee laughs. "I said, 'Do what you like in school? What a concept!'"

Lee's academic average improved to the point that he actually considered becoming an academic like his father, until one day, while he was sitting in big band class, a message was put on his amplifier: "Call Randy Brecker."

How did Brecker even know about this college kid from Miami? "That's the weird thing," says Lee. "There had been a little jam at the Coconut Grove Arts

UNSTUPID BASS TRICKS

Will Lee's bass is a Fender Jazz. "It's probably about a '63. I think you can get heard a little bit better on a track with a Jazz bass. Especially with any kind of acoustic instruments, you can always cut through pretty good with a Jazz bass without having to play with a pick. I don't play that far back on the bridge, so it helps me to have a bridge pickup.

Lee's bass was modified "a bit. I have a custom neck on it, in maple. It was made by a guy named Mike McGuire out at Valley Arts Guitars. I had mandolin fret wire put on it, and that was a suggestion of Leland Sklar, for good intonation and less buzz. I also had a hip-shot D tuner put on my E-string machine head, because you can easily tune down to any note between E flat and a C in a split second. They're really good for people who are used to playing four-string basses and haven't found a good five-string that they like yet. That's the case with me."

His machine heads are Yamahas, "but I'm looking to switch those soon to something else, because they slip a lot if you don't keep them tightened. Roger Sadowsky does all my work, so he'll put the best thing on for me. I have a pre-amp that he put in; I'm not sure what kind of pre-amp it is. I exclusively use Dean Markley strings, because there's no other string. There are cheaper strings and I could get strings for free, but I'd rather pay Dean Markley and get those strings."

As for effects, Lee uses Boss pedals: an Octaver, an Overdrive, a T-Wah, a chorus and a digital delay/sampler. His amp is a Gallien-Krueger 800-watt, with Hartke bottoms. "I use the 4-10 cabinet and one of the 15s or 18s.

"What I'm really looking for is a MIDI controller. That's what I've been looking for for five or six years. I need to find a piece of bass-shaped hardware that I can really swing on, that I could stretch and play live and go nuts."

In the meantime, he relies on a set of standard synths. "I started out with the Mini Moog a long time ago, and I still have that. I guess the next synth I bought was the DX7, and I've since gotten a couple of TX7s to go along with that so I can fatten up the sounds. The next thing I bought was an Ensoniq Mirage, because I thought it was a nice, cheap sampler. A bass player should have a cheap sampler, nothing really great. But I started getting frustrated with that, so I finally bought an Emulator II, for which I've just purchased the CD Rom. And I have the MacIntosh, which I use to store sounds and sequence with, and I also just purchased the RX-5 drum machine, and the D-50 Roland keyboard, which is really a lot of fun. And of course I have my Casio CZ 101 and some other goofy things, a couple of DX-100s." For drums, he has "Octapads coming from the drums, and I have some Simmons pads. That's a good drum controller situation."

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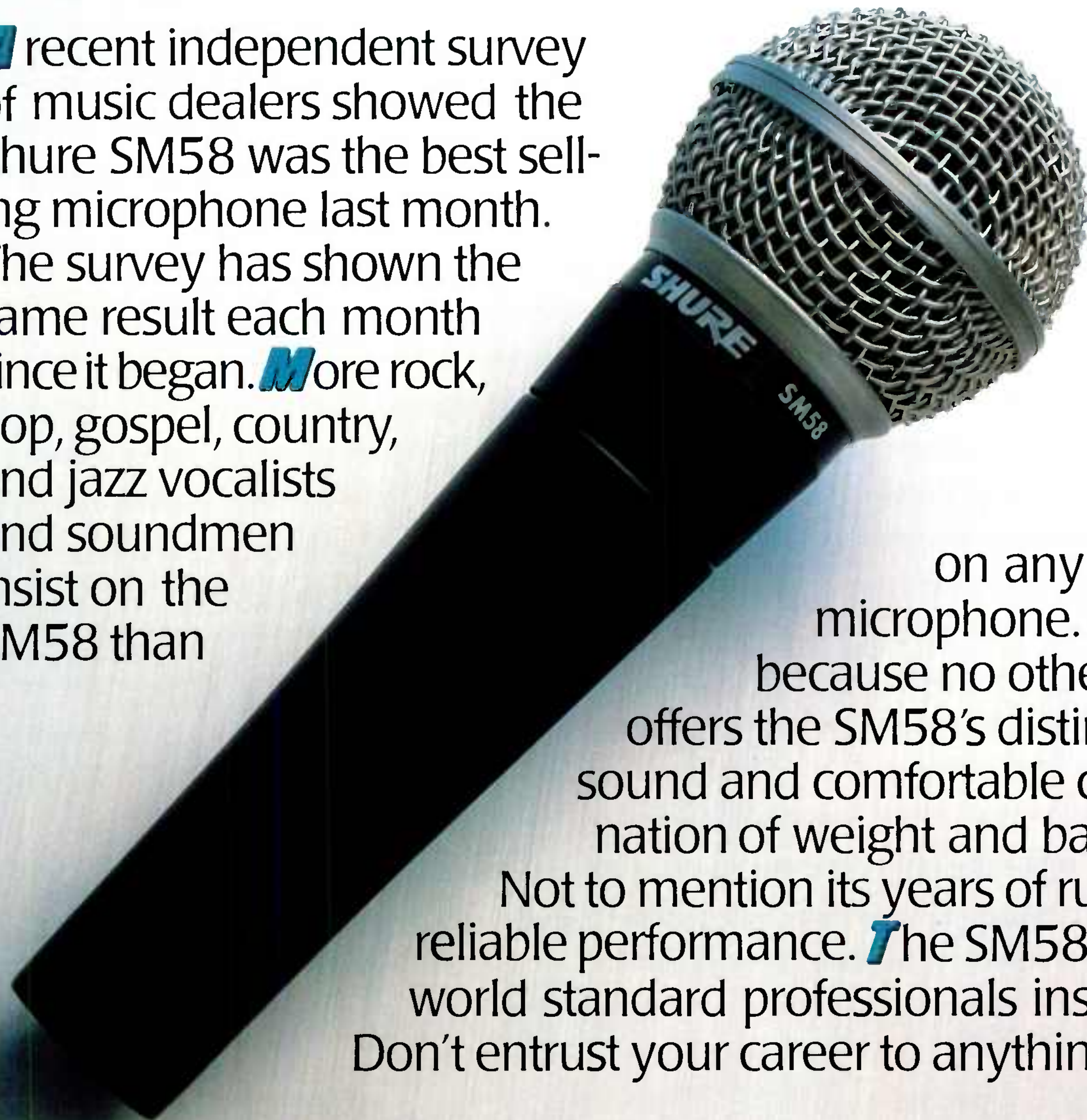

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Festival one evening, and there was a sax player, Gary Campbell, who had come down to do a seminar or something at the university. He co-wrote a book, *Patterns for Jazz*, with Jerry Coker."

Campbell knew the Brecker brothers, and knew that their band, Dreams, was looking for a new bass player. So Campbell told the Breckers about the young bassist he'd jammed with in Miami. "They had auditioned everybody in New York that they wanted to try," explains Lee, "so they took a wild shot and just paid for my plane fare." For Lee, the call was a dream come true. "I had been listening to Dreams every day, every night, as were all my peers," he says. "To me, they were like the next Beatles or something."

You'd think the young bassist would have been petrified, but, as he puts it, "I had no fear. I knew the material from the first Dreams album inside and out, and it was a plus because I sang. They needed that, they were trying to get more pop-oriented to please Clive Davis. I was real cocky."

So cocky, in fact, that he didn't even think to ask who it was he happened to be replacing. "I assumed it was the guy from the record," he says. "If I'd known I was replacing Chuck Rainey, I probably wouldn't even have bothered to get on that plane. I didn't find out who he was until about a month after I was already here, and I just said, 'Holy shit, who do you think I am? What is this, a joke?'"

Rainey is the bassist Lee describes as "my main mentor." Why? "Because the way he makes a bass sound is just unbelievable. He played some real ear-catching stuff. I guess the first obvious Chuck Rainey thing I ever heard was 'Reverend Lee' by Roberta Flack. That was really incredible stuff. Chuck has got a feel that's unmistakable. Do you know 'Dancing Machine' by the Jackson Five? That's him. You can pick him out a mile away—his touch is just incredible."

That lightness of touch—the sly hesitation, the telling pauses—is something which Lee has incorporated into his own playing, although he sums up his approach rather succinctly, claiming that "my thing is just being with the [drummer's] right foot and keeping the groove solid." As Anton Fig, the drummer in the current *Late Night* band, puts it: "It's a real treat to play with a guy like that on a daily basis. He's a very simple player, and he plays deep down in the note. He really plays *bass*, and he leaves a lot of space. He makes you really think about where you fill in the gaps, because he's quite prepared to play a note and just sit there and let the note ring. It's good to play with him, it's good discipline."

"It's probably just laziness," laughs Lee. "I'm a singer, so I don't see any reason to fill things up where things don't need to be. Plus my history of practicing hasn't really taught me that many things to put in the middle of spaces. I don't think I ever wanted to be one of those fusion, note-maniac guys. I probably wouldn't have been able to keep my head above water for very long."

Instead, Lee went for the groove, and that kept him in jobs long after Dreams fell apart. In addition to his own 24th Street Band (a jazz/pop outfit which included original *Late Night* band members guitarist Hiram Bullock and drummer Steve Jordan), Lee's ability to find the pocket rapidly made him a favorite on the studio circuit. From dates with the Brecker Brothers and scenemates David Sanborn and Bob James, to folkies Laura Nyro, Judy Collins and Melanie, to rockers Elliott Randall and Ace Frehley, Lee has covered the waterfront.

"I like to think that I can play with every drummer," he says. "There's such a gap between Steve Jordan and Anton,

continued on page 102

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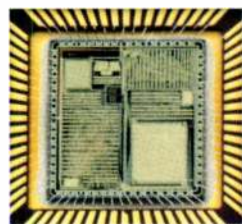

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JOHN PATITUCCI, BASS ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

CHICK COREA'S ELEKTRIC SIDEKICK HAS HIS EAR ON THE MELODY. BY JOSEF WOODARD

I don't consider myself someone who's going to change the face of bass," notes John Patitucci modestly. "That only happens a few times over the space of 50 years. I guess what I'm trying to do is be a real improviser on the bass and be able to play through changes like a horn player.

"I think it's important to keep developing the bass role—of accompaniment and foundational creativity, putting a nice time feel into any band you play in. That's the bottom line you have as a bass player in a band. But I didn't like the fact that when everybody else in the group soloed, the solos really went somewhere, and then I'd hear these bass solos that were terrible. All of a sudden the whole tune died when it came to the bass solo. I thought, 'That's not right. Why can't we do what they do? There's no reason why we shouldn't be able to contribute our weight as much as the rest of the band.' So I really went after it."

John Patitucci seems to have gotten it. Having effectively swept over the jazz scene in the last few years, the 27-year-old has changed from the bassist to watch for to the guy to listen to. News of his rising star began five years ago when he started circulating in studio and jazz/fusion circles in Los Angeles. After playing with Freddie Hubbard, David Sanborn, the Crusaders and other jazz marquee grabbers, Patitucci was lifted into yet greater visibility as an able low-end foil in Chick Corea's Elektric Band.

If he isn't out to redefine the bass for a new generation of player/listeners, Patitucci still boasts a particularly '80s virtuosity. Clarity of purpose, fluidity of chops, responsibility to the musical team and respect for elders mark the bassist's approach. He is technically adroit, sober, religious and an avid champion of the bass as an expressive vehicle. Plus, he has no aversion to getting on the radio. Egad, a bass hero for our times!

Add to that resume a demonstrated ability to play solidly and sincerely in the face of almost any chart or genre. "People ask, 'How is it that you play electric bass and can play funk, then you turn around and play bop and all that stuff, and then after that play with a bow?' In a lot of ways, I don't think it's that special. It's just that I really wanted to do it and I love those musics. A lot of guys just don't care about that many kinds of music and they'll just do one. But being a musician is narrow enough."

> **"Here I was, this little kid, thinking, 'I'll get these bebop heads together on the electric bass and everyone'll think I'm hip!' Then Jaco did 'Donna Lee.'"**

His broad musical palate may have been a hereditary condition. At the Patitucci home in Brooklyn, where John was born and musically weaned, his parents didn't discriminate between opera and the Beatles, between Motown and Mario Lanza. After his big brother Tom took up guitar with a passion, John was handed the bass by default so he could play along. "My brother and I were always kind of schizo. We had bands in high school where the kids at the school hated us. We'd play a Johnny Winter tune and then a Crusaders tune, a Clifford Brown number and then a James Taylor song. Totally schizo."

The family moved west when John was 12. Landing in northern California, Patitucci began to get serious about his instrument at the urging of teacher Chris Poehler. "He conned me into learning how to read music; I didn't want to because I was lazy. At that point I was practicing a lot, practicing playing blues scales as fast as I possibly could. I was really into rock 'n' roll and I was really upset that the guitar players thought they were so great. When you're 12 years old, you don't really think in broad musical terms yet."

They began record-swapping: Patitucci's Humble Pie for Poehler's Miles Davis. One of the first solos he copped during this period was Willie Weeks' on "Everything Is Everything" from Donnie Hathaway's live album. "It was the classic R&B solo of all time," John waxes. The excitement spiraled when the impressionable bassist heard Stanley Clarke's solo on "La Fiesta," from Return to Forever's first record. Humble Pie be damned. Jazz fever was setting in.

"Here I was, this little kid, thinking, 'I know what I'll do. I'll get these bebop heads together on the electric bass and that will be something different and the kids will think I'm hip.' And then there it

CHRIS CUFFARO

World Radio History

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World Radio History

was: Jaco did 'Donna Lee' on his first record, for the whole world to hear."

Fusion was not the end-all for Patitucci. Hearing Ron Carter and Ray Brown, he was attracted to the upright at the ripe age of 16. He remembers the physical rigors and the new calluses required for this new tool with one word: "pain." And he also listened closely to great players on other instruments. Among his self-imposed transcription lessons were solos by John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, a Tete Montoliu solo and some of John Scofield's work from *Rough House*. "I wanted to be fluid and flowing like all the horn players and guitar players. I was listening to piano players; I listened to a lot of Chick and Herbie Hancock and Oscar Peterson and Keith Jarrett early on in my life. The phrasing killed me."

"That was one nice thing about my being left-handed. I developed a lot of legato phrasing and pull-offs. Those were also borrowed from my brother, who studied classical guitar in college, got his degree and taught me slur and hammer exercises—some that Segovia had written."

The family moved to SoCal in 1978, and Patitucci moved from the outlying Huntington Beach to the heart of L.A. in 1982. Word of mouth began to spread almost immediately.

Working his way into the session scene, Patitucci played on pop and jazz dates as well as gospel records. Realizing his gameplan, he had brief stints with Chaka Kahn, Glenn Frey, Harry Nilsson, Hubert Laws, and on TV and film dates, while honing his jazz chops in the evening and off-hours.

Chick Corea took note when looking for some hot young blood for his new band. First Corea played a loose and vital set at the Queen Mary Jazz Festival in 1985 with Patitucci and drummer Dave Weckl—the beginning of what appears to be a long association. Then the debut Elektric Band release revealed a new, more streamlined Corea ensemble than the Return to Forever of old. But the following *Light Years*, replete with fade-outs and near-danceable groove etudes in 4/4, had a commerciality that rubbed some fans the wrong way.

"We were trying to, for once, get it so that people could hear Chick's music on the radio," Patitucci admits. "We didn't want to compromise musical integrity at all. If anything, the only thing we regret is that we didn't get enough blowing in on the record. There could have been a little bit more of that. But the tunes are interesting and we spent a lot of time working on it."

For all the renown of his straightahead and fusion attributes, less known is Patitucci's fondness for free jazz ventures, which he indulged in college but only rarely in the professional sphere. On a recent tour in Europe, Corea, Patitucci and Weckl got to explore more of a free context in an acoustic (or is it akoustic?) setting.

"I really liked Chick's record *Circle in Paris*. For a while there, I was very serious about the avant-garde. I like that kind of music if it's honest. You've got to make sure you get players who are doing it because they have the choice to play that way and not because they can't play any other way. Otherwise it can be very self-indulgent and it doesn't express any desire to communicate much. In other words, there are many guys who play out music very well, and there are other guys who are shucking and jiving, too."

Patitucci might be saddled with the reputation of being mainly a jazz player, but he also lays down a mean funk backing, a product of his Motown roots. "When you say funk, people almost automatically associate it with slapping. I love to slap; on the *Light Years* record I

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do it a lot. But I think people have to be careful they don't miss out on a whole kind of funk that I grew up on, which comes from the Motown way of playing—with your fingers. Those guys were incredibly funky and they never had to pop. I hear guys playing now who can play great with their thumbs, but can't play with their fingers that well. It was the opposite for us. And I'm left-handed, so it was a little tricky to get my right hand as loose as my left."

But to slap or not to slap is not Patitucci's biggest decision this winter. A week after this interview, done the day before Thanksgiving, John will go into the studio to cut his debut album for GRP. Given his healthy diversity of musical inclinations, Patitucci was faced with some tough choices: Would he, his first time out, record the acoustic band he fronts—in the Blakey/pre-electric Miles/Marsalis vein—or his separate electric band with synthesists John Beasley and David Witham framing his six-string playing? Or would it be a smorgasbord approach? Eventually Patitucci opted to go with the electric band, augmenting it with drummers Peter Erskine, fellow Elektrician Dave Weckl, Vinnie Caliuta and tenorist Michael Brecker. Plus, of course, "Uncle Chick."

"It's not going to be your run-of-the-mill, sequenced fusion record, which is fairly popular with some people these days," he says a tad defensively. "On the other hand, I'm not going to go totally left and leave all radio listeners in the dust. I want to make the music totally clear and with a strong direction, hopefully by making the melodies real strong and trying to get a bit more interesting with the changes. I'm going to stretch out and play some solos on the record, because it's my first record and I have to put myself out there on the line.

"It's funny. I'm now getting feedback from people who have actually transcribed what I've done, which is kind of strange, because that's what *I've* always

continued on page 129

ELEKTRIC HARDWARE

Ever one to try out new instruments, Patitucci's musical life changed when he gained two strings. Inspired by Anthony Jackson's use of the Ken Smith-Jackson bass that Jackson helped design, Patitucci took to it immediately. To go six-string would seem a logical move for someone who had started buying basses with 24 frets to gain more notes in the high range, but the attraction went further. "When you look at it analytically, how many notes more can you go higher and lower; it doesn't seem like that much. But then you add all the chord voicings that are possible. You also have the ability to play things more musically, because you can play *across* the bass, as opposed to four-string players."

Because of the pervasive Jaco influence, Patitucci keeps the frets on most of his elektric basses. Also in the stable are a Fender Jazz bass, a French LAG bass with EMG pickups and a custom neck by John Caruthers, a Yamaha BB3000 bass with EMGs, and a Yamaha 350F fretless. For amplification, he mostly uses two Yamaha 2002 power amps and a Yamaha PB1 preamp with an Ashly crossover. He also uses the Swedish RSL and Walter Woods amps on occasion. For effects, SPX90s and an Ibanez HD-1500 harmonizer combine with his pedal board—Boss Octaver, analog delay, volume pedal and a Korg DT1 tuner.

LEE from page 96

for example. Those are two worlds that have nothing to do with each other."

Could his secret be that, having started out on drums, he's able to think like a drummer? "I think drummers are nuts," he answers. "I don't know if I could ever think the way a drummer thinks. Every drummer I've known has been so nuts—I should say 'eccentric.'"

Still, for all the visibility it provides him, Lee's bass playing isn't his only meal ticket. These days, in fact, he gets more work as a jingle singer than a session player, something which poses a bit of a quandary for Lee. "I see myself as a guy who wishes he had a lot more time, so I could get behind the synthesizers more often." But it isn't an instrument shift he has in mind so much as a role change, going from player to writer.

"I have a whole lot of writing I want to do, and all I need for that is some time," he says. "The thing that's keeping me from getting too involved with that is the velvet trap of jingles, singing those commercials. I've done quite well from them. It's getting to the point where I'm going to have to make a decision. Do I want to give up all this wonderful monetary success? Do I have enough to keep me going for the rest of my life in case I can't ever get back into this jingle thing?

"It's going to be a heavy decision and I'm still testing the waters as to what kind of writer I am going to be. That's where I'm at right now." That said, though, Lee doesn't sound especially worried. "So far, I've been lucky," he smiles. "I've always been lucky." ■

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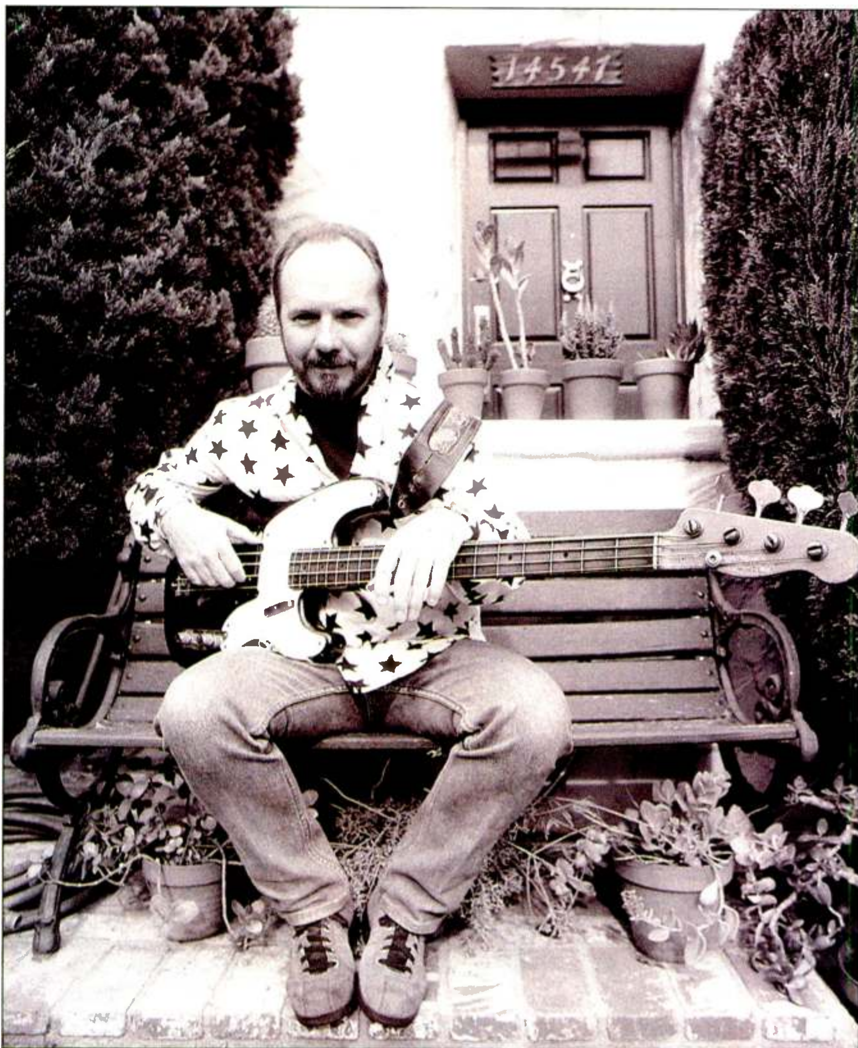
TIM DRUMMOND'S SOUTHERN FRIED FEEL

IN THE POCKET & ON THE BUS WITH JAMES BROWN, NEIL YOUNG & PLENTY MORE. **BY BEN SANDMEL**



CHRIS CUFFARO

Flashy playing don't mean squat!" Tim Drummond states emphatically. "I don't trust anyone in a jump suit." There certainly are no jump suits in evidence at Austin's Cedar Creek Studio, where this earthy, eminent bassist and I are combining an interview with a cut-throat game of darts. Elsewhere in the building Stevie Ray Vaughan and Lonnie Mack are punching in guitar parts. The rest of the band is relaxing in the lounge, ducking dart shots as they head for the beer-filled refrigerator.

"Lonnie and I go way back," Drummond says with feeling while "Double Whammy" blasts from the control room.

> **"I wasn't going to play two-four country bass all night. I wanted to play R&B, 'cause you could stretch out and fire up the singers."**

"I wouldn't put these big stars on hold if his album wasn't important to me. I guess besides Lonnie's records my favorites that I've played on are Don Henley's last one, Dylan's *Slow Train*, *Bop Till You Drop* by Ry Cooder, *Harvest* with Neil [Young] and Graham Nash's *Wild Tales*.

Not a bad list of credits—and it hardly stops there. Drummond has also played on three J.J. Cale albums, including the debut classic, *Naturally*; Dylan's *Saved* and *Shot of Love*; five other Ry Cooder sets, including the soundtrack for *Streets of Fire*; seven Neil Young albums; various Crosby-Nash efforts, including one with Steven Stills; and miscellaneous sets by such diverse talent as the Beach Boys, Rick Danko and John Mayall. What's more, this list only covers Drummond's career since he moved to California in 1974. Before that he was deeply involved in both soul and country music, working with James Brown, Hank Ballard, Conway Twitty and others.

Such gutsy schooling surely helped shape the muscular, no-frills approach which distinguishes Drummond today. It's not his playing that you notice, per se, but the rhythmic certainty of songs that he plays on—songs like "Heart of Gold," "You Got to Serve Somebody" and J.J. Cale's "Magnolia." "When you're a young junebug," Drummond explains, "you like to get your rocks off and play a lot of fancy stuff. But when you find out what it's all about, you realize that it's the value of the note that matters. Anyone can play fast—but you can also take a solo and hit only three notes. Like Vladimir Horowitz says, 'Simplicity is wisdom.' I love that!

"When people hire me," Drummond continues, "they hire me to hold it steady, lay it in the pocket and hold the groove. My job is to be the bottom and make people comfortable so they can sing or solo."

Drummond has been filling such a role for some 25 years now. In the late '40s, as a fifth-grader in Canton, Illinois, he scored highest in his class in a music aptitude test. "I tried sax for a while, but I couldn't take all that discipline from the band teacher." It was a

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good while before Drummond played again, but a year in South Carolina hooked him on down-home funky music.

"The army transferred my dad to Charleston, which was another world for me. They had a black radio station there, WTMA, which totally blew me away. I had never heard any R&B. Then Elvis hit, and it was all over." Returning to Illinois, Drummond fronted a band called the Trojans, playing "proms, sock hops and an American Bandstand-type TV show in Peoria. Those farm kids would freak when we'd start playing Hank Ballard's "Sexy Ways."

At this point Drummond was playing guitar. "Then a guy named Eddie Cash called, and asked if I could play bass. I said, 'Let me call you back.' I went down to the music store, looked at the bass in the window, and thought, 'Shit, I can play that.' So I took the gig with Eddie Cash & the Cashiers, and we stayed on the road till 1961."

Next, Cash's drummer turned Drummond on to a brief fill-in gig with Conway Twitty. "Conway was doing rockabilly then. Black suits and skinny ties. Six guys riding shoulder-to-shoulder in a Cadillac, hauling the instruments in a tear-drop trailer." By the time Twitty's bassist returned, Drummond had tired of the road. "I got a job with International Harvester, making plow bottoms on the assembly line. I figured I'd play on weekends. Then Conway called again, offering a permanent gig. Harvester wouldn't give me a leave of absence, so I quit—and that was my very last day job."

When Twitty eventually decided to go into country crooning, Drummond figured it was time to leave. "I was young then, full of piss and vinegar, and I didn't want to sit there and play eat-shit two-four bass all night. That's how you have to play country bass, to do it right, and it's a challenge in a sense, to keep it simple. But I wanted to play R&B, 'cause you could stretch out and fire up the singers.

"I remember Conway was driving me home from our last gig, and James Brown's 'Papa's Got a Brand New Bag' came on the radio. Conway was asking me, 'Tim, what's that mean?' It seems real ironic now, since my next big gig was with James."

Drummond spent a year in Indianapolis—occasionally crossing paths with Wes Montgomery—and then moved to Cincinnati. At the time, 1965, the Ohio city was a major soul and country recording center—the home of King Records—with a club scene to match.

Drummond worked club gigs with Troy Seals (now a prominent Nashville songwriter), Lonnie Mack and Roger "Jellyroll" Troy (later with the Electric Flag). "We'd get off around two in the morning and go cut sessions for King Records. My first one was with my old idol Hank Ballard [who wrote and first recorded "The Twist"]. That was really a thrill. Then King called me in to overdub a bass line on James Brown's 'I Can't Stand Myself When You Touch Me.'

"James wanted me to join his band,"

continued on page 129

BRAND NEW BAG

I hadn't bought a new amp for years, playing all that Vox stuff with James," Drummond explains. "Then Neil [Young] had all kinds of stuff that I used—one rig was a combination of Heil speakers, a McIntosh power amp and an Olympic pre-amp. That's when I used a wall of 16 12-inch speakers for stadium gigs. My club amp was a Fender Bassman head and a custom cabinet with eight 10s.

"But what I use now," he says excitedly, "is an SWR, 200 watts. I swear by it; it's the best I ever had. I'm using a Dietz cabinet with two 15s, made by Heart of Texas Music in Austin. My bass is a '65 Fender Precision with EMG pickups that have a pre-amp in them. I use GHS bright flat strings."

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World Radio History

DEVELOPMENTS: THE $2000 STANDARD HEATS UP

TWO NEW KEYBOARDS FROM ENSONIQ LEAVE LITTLE TO THE IMAGINATION. BY JOCK BAIRD

The Ensoniq Performance Sampler

Ever since it began with the Korg Poly 61, was immortalized with the Yamaha DX7 and has lately been reaffirmed with the Roland D-50, the $2000 live-performance master keyboard has been the pro synthesizer standard. Getting under that price barrier is not as big an issue to working keyboard players as what they can expect to get for two grand in 1988. The sounds should be fantastic, aftertouch is de rigueur, a sketchpad sequencer would be nice, some MIDI mapping abilities couldn't hurt and don't forget the disk drive. It's a daunting, very competitive arena, but as Anaheim NAMM rolls around, **Ensoniq** is making a determined bid to hit that $2000 point with everything they've got.

Ensoniq, of course, are those guys from suburban Philadelphia who walked in and took control of the $1300 market with the Mirage and the ESQ-1. Looking for new worlds to conquer, they've unveiled two keyboards that build on the sound architecture (and large patch libraries) of the Mirage and the ESQ-1, but are anything but Mirage II and ESQ-2. Meet the Ensoniq Performance Sampler, or EPS, and the SQ-80 synth.

For starters, both have a redesigned keyboard that features *polyphonic* aftertouch. Polyphonic? Well, on a DX7, if you play a chord and engage the aftertouch on one key, all the other keys playing will be modulated as well. Polyphonic aftertouch means that only the note you apply key pressure to will be altered, and that's just what happens on the EPS and SQ-80. Both have sequencers and disk drives that save not only patches, samples and sequences, but can also set up a whole system through MIDI exclusive. And both are multi-timbral in the most up-to-date implementations. Beyond this, the similarities between them end.

First, the SQ-80. The ESQ-1, as you may remember, is a digital synth that uses 32 waveforms in a ROM to create its sounds. Some of these are samples, with a few even multi-sampled across the keyboard, but all of them are just one wave-cycle long. By assigning these waveforms to any one of three oscillators and combining them creatively, a lot of wonderful sounds have come out of the ESQ-1. The SQ-80 is organized in a very similar way, and even starts with those same 32 waveforms so that all patches written for the ESQ-1 work in

The $1900 SQ-80 synth

the SQ-80. But added to those are 43 more types of digital waves for a whopping 75 sonic salad ingredients. And not all of these are mere one-cycle waveforms. Among them are 11 sampled "attack transients" and five "inharmonic loops," far more complex ingredients which make the SQ-80 a very different animal than the ESQ-1.

Basically by cross-fading real-world attack samples with synthesized waveforms, a hybrid synthesis emerges which the Ensoniq people have dubbed "cross-wave" synthesis. Those in the know will immediately see a similarity to the Roland D-50 scheme. One advantage the SQ-80 has over the D-50 is the use of the inharmonic loops to make the middle, sustaining portions of the patch irregular (i.e., not one waveform cycling over and over, but longer, more dynamic sounds). These five loops are Breath, Voice, Steam, Metal and Chime, and definitely liven up your patches. As for the attack samples, they come in all manner of bows, thuds, bumps, slaps, plinks, plucks, clicks and chiffs. A separate category of five drum attacks makes it easy to arrange several parts of a drum kit on the same keyboard. FM, L/A, additive, PD or even good old analog, if there's a sound that can't be concocted on the SQ-80, I haven't found it yet.

In addition to its performance strengths, the SQ-80 has an onboard sequencer that goes way beyond scratch-pad status. It's got the ESQ-1's eight tracks with full program-change, mixdown and multi-MIDI capabilities, but adds a whole range of editing and sync goodies—including generating its own tape sync clock pulse and reading MIDI Song Position pointer. Punch-ins and -outs are a snap to do in real-time, and step editing is also available. The SQ-80's sequencer memory holds a whopping 20,000 notes, and that 3.5-inch disk drive makes it easy enough to save and load millions more. The only negative is that the sequencer's resolution is only 24 ppqn, which won't be fine enough for some. Others will find this all the sequencer they'll ever need.

If anything, the EPS sampler is even

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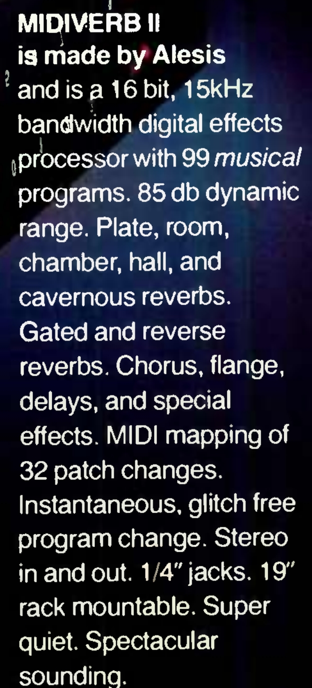
By the way, I was shocked to find out that the digital reverb you used on my vocals was for sale at the same music store I bought my 4 track system from. I assumed that anything used in a 24 track studio would be real expensive. Why didn't you tell me MIDIVERB II is only $399? And easy to use. Are you afraid I'll never come back?

Don't worry, I'm ready to book some more time. After all, you still have 20 more tracks than I do. But I'm catching up with you on MIDIVERB IIs. You have four and I have two.

Best Regards,
Allen



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more impressive. Its data storage format is 16-bit, but it converts samples in a 13-bit floating point system that is the digital equivalent of Dolby, and uses interpolation to smooth rough edges. Although the EPS does use the Mirage library, the sound quality of the new samples is miles ahead. The noise floor in particular is spectacular.

All well and good, but what drives you craziest about taking a sampler onstage? Right, that ridiculous disk-loading time when everything stops dead. The EPS solves that problem by keeping the keyboard active during loading, and creating up to eight buffers for different instruments. You could thus be simultaneously playing one sample, have another waiting, and be bringing a third one up from the disk drive. The way samples are assigned to "instruments" makes it really easy not only to layer or crossfade samples, but to assign them to different zones on the keyboard. And there are a pair of little buttons next to the pitch wheel that give you four other sample variations, or even completely different sounds. You could use it to get more overblow in a trumpet patch or to capriciously play a referee's whistle, depending on how you set up the original program. If there is a more user-friendly way to make samples available for any kind of setup, I haven't seen it.

The EPS' sequencer is also a find. Having more front panel controls makes this a more workable system than the SQ-80's, and the note resolution is a superior 48 ppqn as well, even though it'll only hold 10,000 notes. Somehow I can stand the pain. And editing samples also seems a lot easier—for starters, you no longer have to loop on page breaks like the Mirage—welcome to 1988!

You may notice that there's a lot being written at the moment about these two keyboards in other music magazines besides *Musician*. That's because the Ensoniq launch included a road show that made special visits to every music mag. Hey, we in the press *like* to be taken seriously, and when a major manufacturer thinks enough of us to individually show us how to run these keyboards and leave us alone with them, we're going to sit up and listen. So you *will* see plenty of press on the SQ-80 and EPS in the next few weeks, and cynics will conclude we've all been hyped out of our better judgement or—worse yet—been bribed by all the advertising Ensoniq has purchased. Don't believe it. These two digital machines will be the biggest story at Anaheim NAMM this January, and you'd be a silly cynic indeed not to at least see what all the noise is about. M

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sweetener for a scant $115.... **Rotosound** and **Superwound** have always been two great strings separated by a common manufacturer, **James How Industries**. Now confusion will be ended forever, as JHI has adopted a new logo that combines both brands.... A new videotape from **Homespun Tapes**, *Rick Danko's Electric Bass Techniques*, is not the most high-powered ed-vid of the year, but does work as a beginners' tape. While Danko's strongest suit is still his fretless playing, the most useful tips here are his muffled picking technique, the boogie-woogie "exercises" and a great fill from "King Harvest." For a more advanced video bass lesson, don't miss DCI's *Modern Electric Bass* with Jaco Pastorius, which is among his last recorded works. – **Jock Baird**

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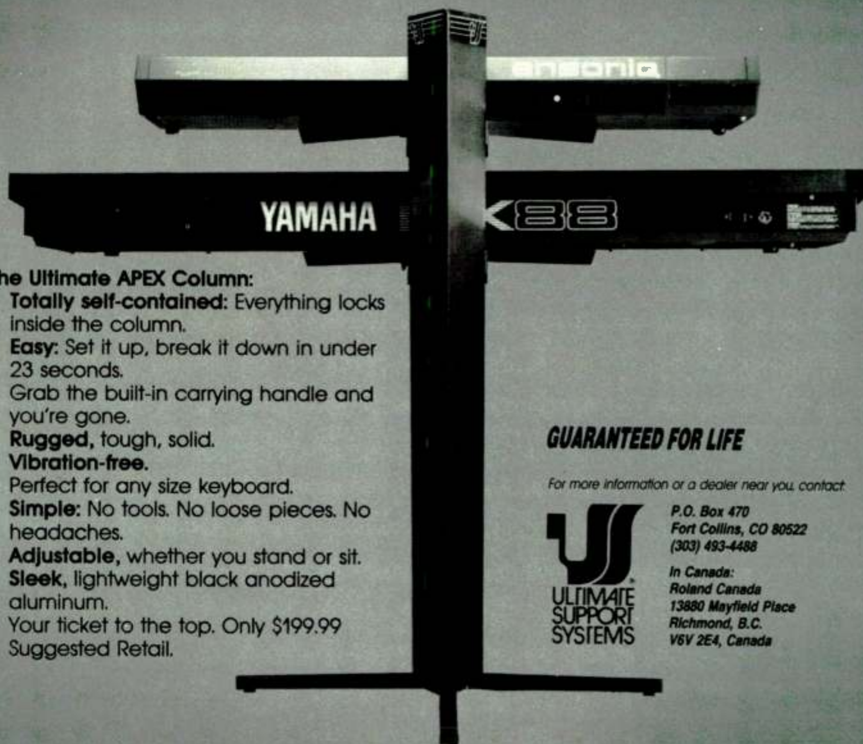

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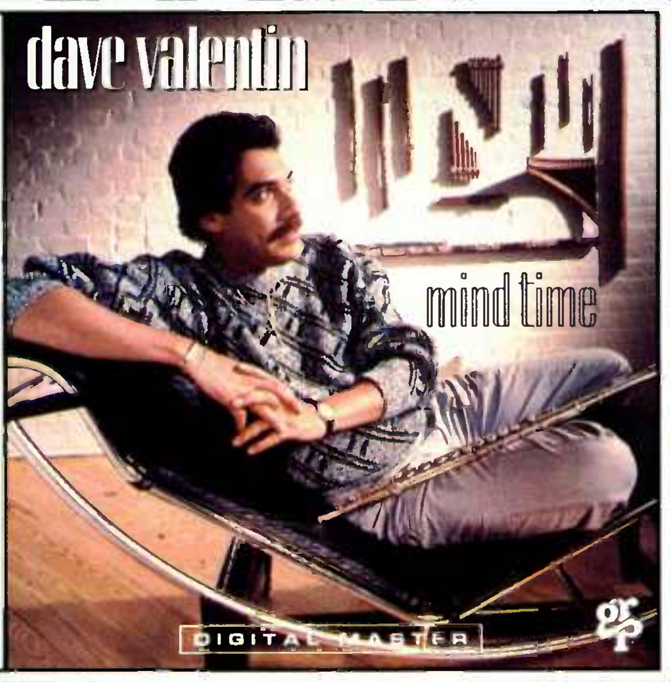

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THE RECOVERY OF A LOST MASTERPIECE

JESSE WINCHESTER

Jesse Winchester
(Rhino)

This is the long-awaited reissue of a rock 'n' roll masterpiece, 15 years after it disappeared. In the last days of the '60s, Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm went to Toronto to record with a young Tennessean, a draft exile whose haunted voice, R&B-tinged songs and upper-class Dixie manners combined to create music as rich as the Band's own. Robertson produced, played guitar and did a bit of cowriting, Helm drummed and played mandolin and Todd Rundgren engineered. Jesse Winchester came up with 11 great songs and sang them in a voice full of the pain of an exile who would never see his home again.

Musically, Robertson and Helm were at their creative height. They had just finished *The Band* and would take Rundgren with them from this project to record *Stage Fright*. Winchester's album is the missing link between those two classics. For example, Winchester's "Payday" combined a snapping Memphis rhythm with a flat, antique vocal sound, creating the prototype for *Stage Fright*'s "Strawberry Wine." But while the two Band albums it fell between are useful reference points, *Jesse Winchester* is a remarkable achievement on its own.

Perhaps because he had rejected a family tradition of military service (in favor of a pacifism inspired by his equally traditional Southern Christian upbringing), Winchester's songs of lost happiness have a resonance that goes beyond ordinary melancholy. These songs have the poignance of Cain describing Eden. Winchester never beats his breast or overstates his case, but sketches quiet, affectionate portraits of disappeared beauty that finally break your heart. He traces a runaway's path from the beach at Mississippi ("Biloxi") to Tennessee ("The Brand New Tennessee Waltz") to Vermont ("Yankee Lady") before settling with shivers and a forced smile into his Canadian exile ("Snow"). Each song finds Winchester saying goodbye to what he loves, until in "Snow" he winds up waist-deep in what he hates, trying to make the best of it.

But this isn't a load of self-pity: Winchester maintains a self-deprecating humor and refuses to go for cheap shots. There is a suggestion that the singer was an exile and a runaway long before he became a literal outlaw (his full name is Jesse James Winchester). When he finds paradise in "Yankee Lady," he deserts with the first hint of winter, breaking a good woman's heart for reasons even he does not understand. In the album's most haunting song, "Black Dog," a (hell?)hound becomes a living symbol of the singer's inability to accept domestic happiness. In a scene unparalleled for pure spookiness, Winchester describes the inner turmoil chewing up an apparently content family man who believes that a stray dog he took in is tempting him to go back to his natural, wild state. While the wife sets the table and the kids play, the father and the dog stare at each other and the dad starts sweating, while martial drums, a disjointed electric guitar and a swirling organ weave in and out of step around them. "My woman lays beside me and the black dog's at my feet," Winchester moans. "She keeps me from my wandering life and he robs me of my sleep." Then he hits the true horror, and the real temptation: "Black dog don't believe in sin." You know then that the singer is going to walk out on his family and head down the road to hell.

Last spring *Spin* magazine ran a collection of what they considered stupid moments in rock criticism. One was a 1972 *Rolling Stone* review that called Jesse Winchester the most important new artist of the '70s. Presumably that was a side-splitter. But this album reminds us that 15 years ago Winchester

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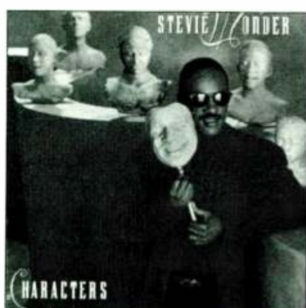
had already achieved greatness. (That he would not maintain it was, of course, unknown.) *Jesse Winchester* stands with *John Wesley Harding, St. Dominic's Preview, Nebraska* and those early Band albums as a work of personal mythology filled with fear of the devil within, the memory of a better life lost and the constant dream of deliverance through an almost impossible redemptive love. By re-releasing this gem, Rhino Records has done a real service to an audience who might have missed it the first time around. – **Bill Flanagan**



STEVIE WONDER

Characters
(Motown)

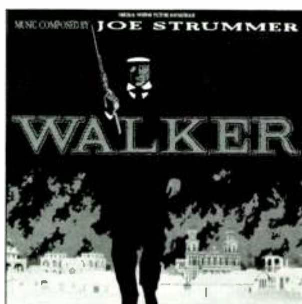
We've come to expect a lot from Stevie Wonder. In the 16 years since he became a legitimate album artist—*Innervisions* (1973), *Fulfillingness' First Finale* (1974) and *Songs in the Key of Life* (1978) all won Grammies—Wonder has shined as a beacon of consistency and excellence. His work—despite the excruciating "I Just Called to Say I Love You" and his wimpy duet with Paul McCartney, "Ebony and Ivory"—has always been charged with emotion, political challenges and musical inventiveness. Stevie is a rare, free bird indeed.

Which brings us to *Characters*, Wonder's first record since the underrated *In Square Circle* (1985). Usually new Stevie albums are causes to celebrate, but *Characters* is cause to consider where Wonder has come to in the late '80s. The record is unfocused, the lyrics are too often trite and, musically, it's another Wonder one-man show; synthesizers dominate and are even used for the sax parts. More disturbing are some of the weak tracks included.

Start with the first single, "Skeletons." While it rails against the invasions of privacy that have become so commonplace lately, Stevie points no fingers; he just muscles up with the only real funk on the album and leaves the true meaning of the song sketchy. The tepid ballad "You Will Know" is worse, about as Barry Man*ilow* as he can go. (Watch it rush up the charts like "I Just Called" did.) Then there are "Get It," which features Michael Jackson, the pointlessly jive "In Your Corner" and "Galaxy Paradise"—all filler at best.

Characters has its bright moments. "Dark 'n' Lovely" takes aim at South Africa ("Hey there Botha/ Yes, we are watchin' you"), though not with the intensity of "It's Wrong." "With Each Beat of My Heart" is the kind of ballad Wonder delivers so effortlessly—like "Whereabouts" and "Lately." "Cryin' Through the Night" and "One of a Kind" have their upbeat charms and "Free," which I'm sure was written circa *Songs in the Key of Life*, is moving, almost gospel. It's Stevie's best vocal performance on the album.

But overall *Characters* is partially drawn, without purpose, merely a bunch of songs. It's Stevie's least ambitious effort in the last two decades (*The Woman in Red* soundtrack not included). Maybe he should have taken a few extra years to mull it over. – **Steve Bloom**



JOE STRUMMER

Walker
(Virgin)

Joe Strummer has always been a politically-minded folkie at heart, so who better to compose the score for a film by punk anarchist Alex Cox about a madman conquistador bent on suppressing the masses in Central America? It's an assignment that calls for a working knowledge of Third World rhythms, an empathy for society's downtrodden and an ability to synthesize disparate threads into a unified whole; as kingpin of that late, great rabble-rousing band the Clash, Strummer has certainly proved himself capable of those things.

Though he's made musical contributions to two previous films by Cox, this is Strummer's first full-length score, and for a beginner he proves himself surprisingly fluent in the vocabulary of movie music. His score does what a good soundtrack should do; not so obtrusive as to upstage the action onscreen, it bridges one narrative sequence with the next, and often functions as a provocative counterpoint to the visuals. Most significantly, this music conforms to the conventions of the genre enough to make the viewer feel that yes, he's at the movies, but is inventive enough to rise above the John Williams school of cornball bombast.

Cox's woefully misconceived film is set in Nicaragua, and that location defines Strummer's musical parameters. *Walker*'s dominant musical motif is the traditional latino music of Central America, and lazy, percolating rhythms wind through the movie like a cheerfully bubbling brook. Much of the music has a "let's have a cerveza and a siesta" feeling that's pointedly out of sync with the rampage of death and destruction chronicled onscreen. Of the 14 tracks included (11 instrumentals and three proper songs), none but the three vocal numbers offer any clue whatsoever that this is a war film. The vocal tunes are rather sunny as well; matey music for manly men, they follow the standard recipe for weepy laments for bummed-out servicemen on beer binges.

Cox attempts to demonstrate parallels between the situation in Central America now and a century ago by patching in brief scenes and visual cues from the present day. Strummer reiterates that point by embellishing his score with quotations from contemporary rock—a Jimi Hendrix riff here, a bit of the Doors there—the point obviously being that the more things change the more they stay the same. (It hardly seems coincidental that the music Strummer borrows is inextricably associated with the Vietnam War.)

Movie scores are selling like hotcakes these days, but it seems unlikely that *Walker* will knock the soundtrack to *Dirty Dancing* off the charts. It doesn't include any Motown classics, there's nothing with hit single engraved on it—there's not even a Clash song to be found. This lack, however, makes Strummer's *Walker* an even more impressive achievement.

– **Kristine McKenna**

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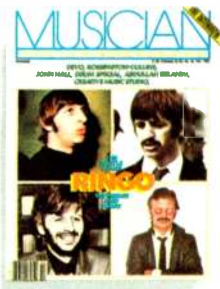

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ARETHA FRANKLIN

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism
(Arista)

And lo, in what could have been the twilight of a grand career, Aretha Franklin looked at her track record and saw that it was still good. Her last album, one of many titled simply *Aretha*, had begat one great tune ("Jimmy Lee") and one big hit ("I Knew You Were Waiting [for Me]"), in which she showed George Michael what true soul singing was all about.

Yet something was lacking, for Aretha often seemed uninvolved in the secular songs she regularly carted to the marketplace like so many cash crops. It was time to get back to her roots in gospel, where she'd first displayed her awesome talents. Aretha's previous spiritual albums—the early *Songs of Faith* and 1972's *Amazing Grace*—ranked among her most moving achievements, rivaled by only a handful of more profane songs.

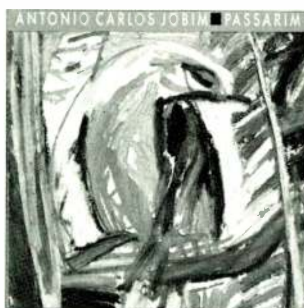
And so it came to pass that Aretha returned to the New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit to record *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.* And the happy difference became clear. Each note of these two discs is richer and more heartfelt than even devoted fans could have hoped, for she projects "Walk in the Light" with a fervor absent from "Freeway of Love." And although Aretha does herself proud on thoughtful solo readings of "Ave Maria" and "The Lord's Prayer," the real high points come when she shares the pulpit, creating a joyful fellowship that emphasizes the communal nature of old-time religion.

And what a glorious noise they make: Aretha joining sisters Erma, Carolyn and Brenda to approximate a gospel girl-group on the bluesy "Jesus Hears Every Prayer," and recreating the deep groove of "Do Right Woman—Do Right Man" for "Surely God Is Able." Teamed with Mavis Staples, she brings new magic to Edwin Hawkins' classic "Oh Happy Day," the two women engaged in exchanges not unlike speaking in tongues. Surrendering to the spirit, Aretha shows no abundance of star ego, letting Mavis lead on the footstomping "We Need Power," then giving Joe Ligon of the Mighty Clouds of Joy plenty of shouting room on "Packing Up, Getting Ready to Go," a kick-up-your-heels finale.

But *One Lord* is more than song. Better than a third of its nearly 90 minutes offer words of inspiration from a trinity of ministers, including Rev. Jesse Jackson. Their remarks make it clear the business at hand is holy, however naive or outdated such beliefs might seem to uncaring outsiders.

Truly there seems little danger of *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism* being taken lightly. Any faith capable of spawning such heavenly sounds deserves respect, even from confirmed nonbelievers. For it is said that only a heart of stone could resist strains so stirring.

– **Jon Young**



ANTONIO CARLOS JOBIM

Passarim
(Verve)

Antonio Carlos Jobim didn't invent bossa nova the same way Chuck Berry didn't invent rock 'n' roll. He just sidestepped the issue by penning hits that have become synonymous with the genre he calls home. "Girl from Ipanema," "Desafinado," "Corcovado" and other Jobim classics define bossa nova not only stylistically (they are cool-jazzified samba at its coolest), but atmospherically as well. They exude the smell of intercontinental money and sophistication that has always been half the fun of bossa nova—and most of its influence on pop auteurs from Bacharach/David to Sade.

Of course, mood alone isn't what drove these Brazilian tunes deep into the Anglo-American musical subconscious. For that you need songs that grab one's attention without shaking it up. Songs whose small but relentless melodic surprises make them one long seamless hook. The typical Jobim creation, in other words. Bounce one off the interpretative genius of a João Gilberto or a Frank Sinatra and there's no stopping its headlong rush to your pleasure centers.

Bounce Jobim off Jobim, though, and you often get the sound of one hand clapping. *Passarim* is his first solo effort in years, and you'd think he might have picked up some wisdom in this interlude, but here he is again, still trying to get by on songwriting gifts alone. Not that he doesn't occasionally pull it off. Your ears may fight against Jobim's wheezing vocals, the Muzak lilt of his five-woman chorus and the syncopation-lite of his band, but I guarantee your resistance will fall to the charm of the record's best compositions. The dipping and soaring title cut, the self-parodic "Chansong" and the vintage "Luiza" all testify to Jobim's winning way with a melody.

Too bad *Passarim* also showcases Jobim's penchant for the sprawling ("Gabriela") and the forgettable (uh, "Bebel," I think it's called). Too bad about a third of the songs come from the untried pens of bandmembers like Jobim's son Paulo. Too bad he didn't just save the good stuff for his buddy Frank or his friend João. – **Julian Dibbell**

DAVID SYLVIAN

Secrets of the Beehive
(Virgin)

While New Age has become a kind of modern easy-listening, David Sylvian's skewed approach makes it eerie listening. With *Secrets of the Beehive*, lovers of yuppie jazz and hot-tub Muzak may be tempted to embrace Sylvian as one of their own. With seemingly relaxed acoustic arrangements and guest appearances by Yellow Magic Orchestra's Ryuichi Sakamoto and Windham Hill vet Mark Isham, *Secrets* could find its way

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into the tape decks of a lot of BMWs—if they could overlook that Sylvian is more an off-center experimentalist than an instrumentalist.

A former member of Britain's glam-cum-art-rock ensemble Japan who's worked with guitar explorers Robert Fripp and Bill Nelson, Sylvian takes his pretensions seriously. Just when you're ready to display the dust jacket on the coffee table, his consciously dark muse rears its shadowy and sometimes challenging head. The wispy, sparse instrumentation bears the earmarks of meditation music, but is deceptively rife with surprise attacks: oddly timed stops and starts, full five-second breaks between song passages, and quirky, dissonant keyboard solos to battle the sweetness of the acoustic guitars and the shimmering beauty of Isham's muted trumpet. And Sylvian's voice, a menacing half-whisper that sounds like one of David Lynch's cabaret nightmares, invokes the Devil and Hell more often than a fire and brimstone televangelist. He takes on weightier topics than dinner music normally allows: "When Poets Dreamed of Angels," a song that starts with an innocent enough flamenco-style guitar, develops into a lurid story of wife-beating: "He kneels beside her once more/ Whispers a promise/ 'Next time I'll break every bone in your body.'" Sentiment like that might even get you to look up from the microwave.

Other *Secrets of the Beehive* are more conventional—songs like the melodic "Let the Happiness In" or nearly straight ballads like "Waterfront" and "September"—and considerably less captivating. Such lifeless moments are proof that if you're going to be an experimentalist, you'd better experiment.

– **David Konjoyan**

SINEAD O'CONNOR

The Lion and the Cobra
(Chrysalis)

With her big brown eyes and bald, bald head, Sinead O'Connor looks like a doe dropped down from Pluto. The debut of this eccentric 20-year-old Irish lass has more to do with the Celtic rock of You-know-who-2, however, as O'Connor mixes personal dramas and mythic metaphors with a musical head that's often just precocious enough to contain them. In "Just Like You Said It Would Be" she whips up gothic grandeur via lots of minor chordings, heavily layered counterpoints and a voice like shaved glass. When she gets close to commercial, she goes pale, but at least two songs here would sound like masterpieces at any stage of a career. The title cut sensually juxtaposes a Gaelic version of Psalm 91 against modal-oriented chants (mid-Eastern? mid-Irish?) that suddenly erupt into primal cries reminiscent of Milton Nascimento's *Milagros dos Peixes*. And "Troy," a ballad of betrayed love buoyed by pounding bass

strings and lots of pregnant pauses, approaches epic rock opera. The song's video makes her look like a screaming banshee, but on disc she sounds like a master of controlled intent: Her voice, sometimes tender, sometimes gruff, traverses at least five levels of vulnerability without even a whiff of victimhood.

On the other hand, O'Connor is still green enough to be embarrassed by having her "very personal" lyrics in print. (They're not in print.) What bodes better for her future is a natural, albeit inscrutable, mysticism, an innate sense of musical economy and the ability to batter out emotion on a voice that can take it. A real baby warrior in the making. Maybe even a seer.

– **Pamela Bloom**

FULL FORCE

Guess Who's Coming to the Crib
(Columbia)

Musicality is back: Synthesizers may still dominate pop production, but they're becoming more sensitively programmed, using real instrument sounds via samples and injecting horn flourishes, guitar fills and subtle percussion to flesh out arrangements. In that respect, some contemporary black pop suggests the creativity of the early '70s, when groups such as Earth, Wind & Fire, Kool & the Gang, the Meters, Mandrill and War stretched mainstream

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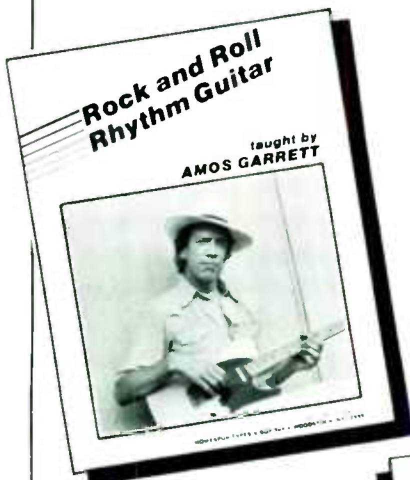

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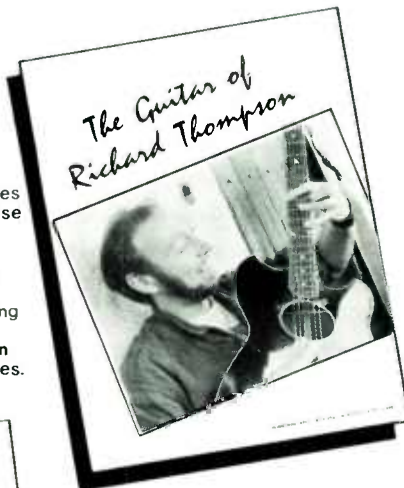

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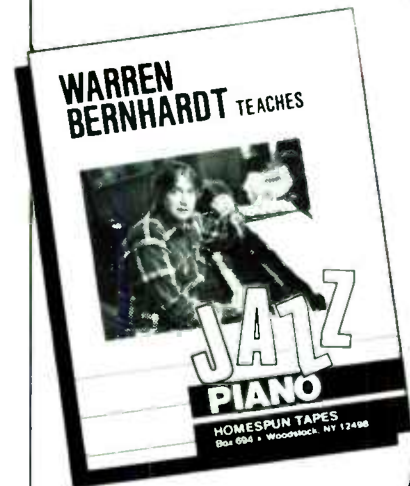

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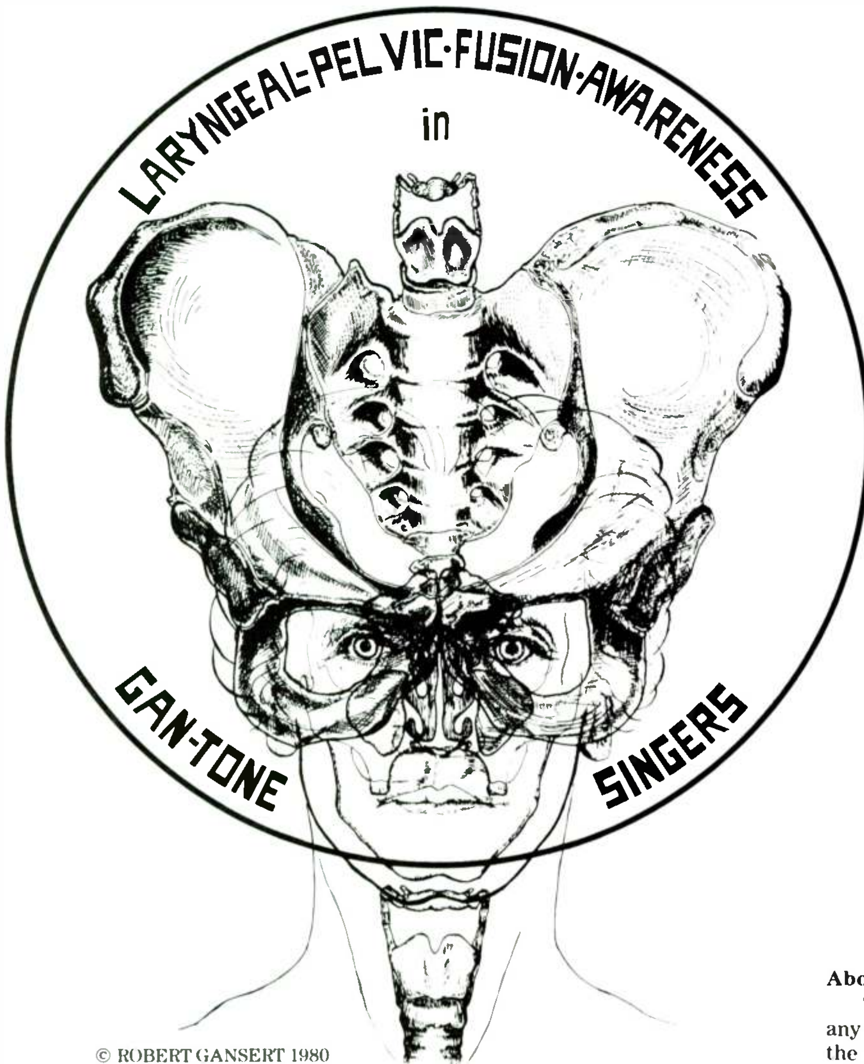

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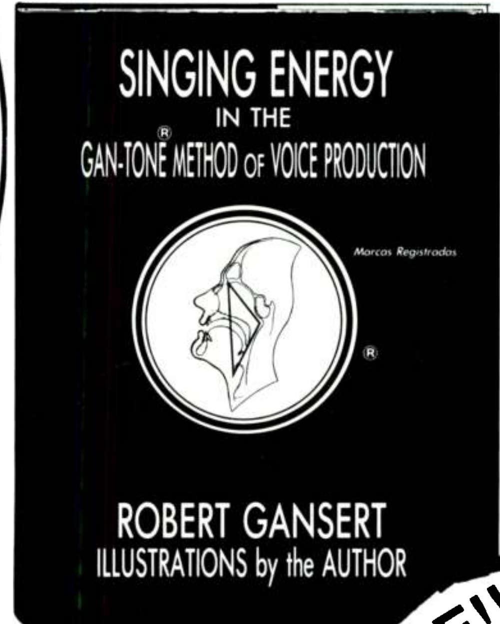

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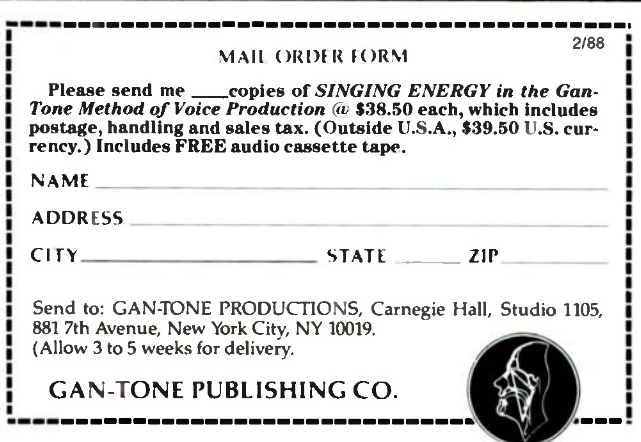

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borders. Full Force, among the best and brightest bands of this generation, has scored mega-hits with its teen-appeal productions of Lisa Lisa while delivering three formula-defying LPs on their own. *Guess Who's Coming to the Crib*, their latest, deliberately eschews crossover with a provocative, energized mix of funk grooves, message lyrics, often Zappa-esque humor and skillful interpolations of pop quotations.

"Homework," the LP's opening cut, sets a high standard for what follows as it cuts basic hip-hop funk with some downright swinging, loosey-goosey cymbal and snare; synth horn bursts and skin-tight guitar lines flesh out a dramatic backdrop for lyrics celebrating sincerity in male-female relationships. Echoes of Stevie Wonder, Earth, Wind & Fire and Sly Stone crop up in the melody—imaginative cannibalizations indeed.

Other tracks on the LP offer equally novel constellations, from a hard-nosed rock guitar solo on an otherwise disposable teen-dream ballad, to satirical dialogue, or quotes from, say, "Reunited" and "Payback" on the same tune. More up-tempo grooves deliver the hardest, funkiest kick this side of Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, suggesting that Full Force may yet break out of apartheid radio's black music ghetto on their own terms. – **Randall F. Grass**

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– **Ted Drozdowski**

EW&F from page 30

to music, to continue the legacy, because that is something we care about. Having hit records and all that is wonderful, but if I had to have a hit without any music involved, I wouldn't do it. It has to be something you feel happy about.

"We make no apologies for being commercial, because, when we started, our sound was not commercial. It was a new form until it became successful and everyone started to imitate it."

And if there's any ill will left over from the pair's competing solo careers, no one's talking.

"I was very happy with Philip's solo success," insists Maurice. "It was like seeing a person from the cradle get a chance to fly. When he has that kind of success, it reflects on me. I just hated to see the press pit us against each other. Because that wasn't the objective. I just hoped the things we shared didn't get lost in the confusion. It's great now because all the guys have grown and can bring their expertise back into what we're doing. And I can be a happier, freer man because I don't have to do everything."

This coup was not just bloodless, it was downright friendly. "I like 'Reece a lot better like this," laughs Philip. "Without all that pressure, he's a lot happier. When I did my own thing and got a taste of what he went through, I said, "Reece, however did you deal with this for all those years?'" M

KELLY from page 16

ple, took five years to complete.

But conquering a pesky piece of material is nothing compared to the trauma of performing before a live audience, Kelly admits. "It's not a natural thing for me at all. Originally, I had to force myself to do it. I figured there must be some value in it if I was so scared. And I still find playing live really nerve-wracking. I wish I could talk more onstage, but it doesn't come easily."

He politely declines to speculate on the future, now that he's getting American exposure and critical approval. "I can see that we're going to be pretty busy for the next two years, but I don't plan for the long term. I'm not that kind of person. I just take things as they come. I don't carry expectations around with me."

When it comes to his career, maybe not. When it comes to his music, the elusive Kelly has decidedly high expectations. "Sometimes I worry about whether what I'm doing is any good. Sometimes I think I'm doing something nobody else is doing. Other times...you know, you have bad days and good days.

"I started late, and developing has been a slow process for me." Kelly allows himself a rare laugh and adds, "At least now I can see that I'm not going backwards." M

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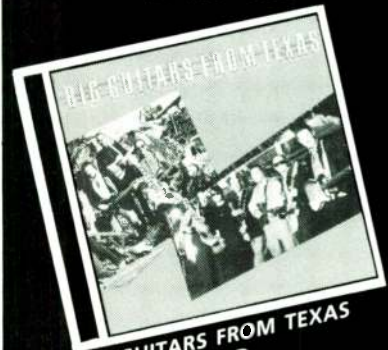

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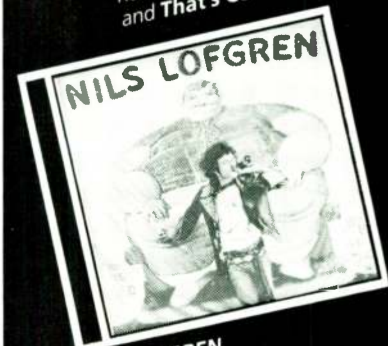

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ROCK

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

Madonna
You Can Dance (Sire)

No, I can't, but I play this all the time anyway. No mere "Greatest Hits," *You Can Dance* radically reconstructs, and at times deconstructs, Madonna's dance floor finest (plus one unexceptional new entry), shedding new light on old favorites while showing how enduring her work has been. Be honest: Who'd have thought "Everybody" would sound as fresh today as it did five years ago? Each of the six remixes adds a degree of reinterpretation—"Physical Attraction" becomes neo-Bacharach, "Over and Over" turns torridly techno—and some inspired additions, like the fevered piano break in "Into the Groove."

Foreigner
Inside Information (Atlantic)

Okay, so Mick Jones' idea of heavy rock stresses the Led instead of the Zeppelin, while his ballads are as assiduously arranged as a state funeral. This *is* a Foreigner album, remember. Fortunately, Foreigner still has Lou Gramm, a singer who pulls power out of Jones' obsession with control. As his voice strains against the rigid walls of guitar and synth, Gramm injects a much-needed humanity into these songs. Still, you wonder about a band whose inner workings are best described in terms of imprisonment.

Linda Ronstadt
Canciones de Mi Padre (Elektra)

Joking about her parentage, Linda Ronstadt once cracked that though she wanted to think like a German and sing like a Mexican, she too often did it the other way around. On this album, she really does sing like a Mexican, and it seems one of the smartest things she's ever done, often recalling Lydia Mendoza at her finest. Not that many of the gringos in her audience will care, but screw 'em—taken as pure singing, this is Ronstadt's best work since *Heart Like a Wheel*.

The Jesus and Mary Chain
Darklands (Warner Bros.)

The Velveteen Underground.

Buster Poindexter
Buster Poindexter (RCA)

Once upon a time Buster Poindexter was known as David Johansen, a raucous, big-voiced singer who translated his love for classic rock 'n' roll into vigorously modern music. Poindexter, on the other hand, translates classic rock 'n' roll into gimmicky camp. When he does so in swank New York bistros, it's reputedly a hoot-and-a-half; here, it sounds like the Blues Brothers with better taste. And frankly, David Lee Roth does a better Louis Prima.

Daniel Ponce
Arawe (Antilles/New Directions)

Though his American debut, *New York Now!*, established Ponce as the most formidable percussionist to hit Afro-Cuban music in years, the recording was so purely rhythmic it verged on the abstract. Not this time. He still builds his music from the drums up, but the percussion patterns here are so tuneful they could almost be hummed, firing the arrangements the way no ordinary rhythm section could.

Chuck Berry
Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll (MCA)

As tributes go, it's hard to top *The Great Twenty-Eight* or either volume of *Rock 'n' Roll Rarities*. Of course, none of those albums feature Linda Ronstadt or Julian Lennon, but that's just one more reason why actual history is always preferable to the movie version. Still, credit Keith Richards for his taste in sidemen (Joey Spampinato, Steve Jordan), and for having sense enough to include Eric Clapton, Robert Cray and a stunning rehearsal outtake called "I'm Through with Love" in the package.

The Reivers
Saturday (dB/Capitol)

It figures that a band literate enough to take its name from a Faulkner novel would wind up trying to sing words like "miasma," "mewling" and "boutineer" (and shouldn't that be "boutonniere," guys?). Still, the band's chiming guitars, purring harmonies and buoyant pulse lend the music such an alluring folk-pop sheen that lyrics seem a secondary consideration, proving once again that, in rock, sound matters more than sense.

Barry Manilow
Swing Street (Arista)

Just as Ronald Reagan believes acting presidential is qualification enough to hold office, so Barry Manilow assumes that playing with jazz musicians makes him one, too. Thus *Swing Street* is populated with the likes of Gerry Mulligan, Diane Shuur, Tom Scott and Phyllis Hyman, doing their best not to show him up too severely, all to no avail. Maybe Manilow should try politics, instead.

Aztec Camera
Love (Sire)

Although he's traded his folkie pastorales for studio-savvy dance pop, Aztec Cameraman Roddy Frame hasn't lost his touch; despite the drum machines, his songs are as unaffected and appealing as ever. From the upbeat angst of "Working in a Goldmine" to the unbridled optimism of "Everybody Is a Number One," the writing is as good as anything on *High Land, Hard Rain*.

Wa Wa Nee
Wa Wa Nee (Epic)

As the Kajagoogoo principle clearly states, any band whose name sounds like babytalk is automatically bad news. Yet Wa Wa Nee won't be so easily dismissed. Sweet and tasty as "Sugar Free" might be, it's no junk food, offering a lithe, guitar-driven groove INXS would have trouble topping. Now if only they'd fix the name...

Tower of Power
Power (Cypress)

Even though the Tower doesn't quite boast the power it had in its prime, the sound of this album—crisp, soulful, punchy—shows that neither has the band lost much ground. Although the group would do well to stay away from ballads like "Some Days Were Meant for Rain," brassy romps like "Ball and Chain," "Baby's Got the Power" and "Count on Me" match their best.

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Mal Waldron

The Git Go—Live at the Village Vanguard (Soul Note)

Anyone who's spent any time at the Vanguard listening to this group knows its greatness: Mal Waldron, Reggie Workman and Ed Blackwell force the music to evolve dramatically. If a good mainstream rhythm section creates a secondary form within the confines of a song structure, then the simple tunes Waldron writes make for even more drastic form construction. Partly because Blackwell has returned march rhythms to straight 4/4, the rhythm section swings with real tension, which pushes Charlie Rouse (this world's most underrated tenor player) and trumpeter Woody Shaw into unusual, knotty territory, where they flourish.

Paul Desmond

The Complete Recordings of the Paul Desmond Quartet with Jim Hall (Mosaic)

From 1959 to 1965, Jim Hall and Desmond, plus Connie Kay and whatever bassist they were using at the time, elevated gentleness to their number one spot—this would make a good children's record. Desmond's tone, laconic and yet tender, gives off the light of understanding. He's humble, almost deferential to the power of jazz, and combined with Jim Hall, the most taciturn (and resourceful) of all jazz guitarists, they spread a wash of self-affirming melancholy over the music. Quiet and sad, though optimistic, the music's like a cloudy autumn Sunday afternoon. Bathed in reverb, it comes on like a dream. It doesn't leave soon, either. (197 Strawberry Hill Ave., Stamford, CT 06902)

Duke Ellington

...And His Mother Called Him Bill (Bluebird/RCA)

Along with *Such Sweet Thunder*, "The Queen Suites" and *The Popular Duke Ellington*, this eliminates any doubts about the excellence of Ellington's last period. Recorded in 1967, three months after Billy Strayhorn's death, it's made up entirely of Strayhorn's compositions. Almost incredibly recorded (the blend of the reeds sounds supernatural), the band plays with a sloppy cohesion that takes years to achieve. The soloists—Clark Terry, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Ellington—play as passionately as they ever did. They take Strayhorn masterpieces—"U.M.M.G.," "Rain Check," "Rock Skippin' at the Blue Note," "Lotus Blossom"—and infuse them with the sort of joy that makes you think they might be paying a last respect to Strayhorn. An essential album.

Willis Williams

House Calls (New Note/N.M.D.S.)

Williams, a tenor player out of the Stanley Turrentine/John Coltrane academies, can slash and burn. He's the real thing, a deep jazz musician who knows his way around rhythms, and whose tone, with its Philadelphia cry, convinces that he's serious. *House Calls* announces the arrival of a player who knows that jazz doesn't begin and end with Miles and Wayne Shorter. (500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

Viorgos Mangas

New Urban Folk Music (Globe Style/Tower)

At first the clarinetist sounds drunk: His pitch wobbles, he flutters around some melodies. Then the guitars, outi (Greek oud) and percussion settle into a groove, and faster than you can say Uncle Ornette, Viorgos is pumping out a mode that totally defies western pitch. It's tavern dance music from Greece; it's also a forum for virtuosity, where every pitch gets bent and lines are tinted by intonation. (1-800-648-4844)

Joe Turner

Joe Turner Rides Again (Atlantic)

Blessed be Joe Turner. The companion piece to Turner's *Boss of the Blues*, *Rides* is one rare record. And a great one too, with Coleman Hawkins (check his tone in the ensemble parts; it's a lesson in sound's function), Vic Dickenson, Jim Hall, Charlie Persip and others, and a good to great selection of tunes. Less bluesy than *Boss*, the album sweats with Turner's voice, Mt. Rushmore-sized, ready to drop a great line—"I'll cut your head like I'd cut a block of wood," for example. Understand this: Turner sang like nobody before or since; he had a melodic sense that echoed his native Kansas City, and he sang the blues of joy. The girls and the party were his subjects, and in his obsession with them, he always kept a sense of humor—just one of the many ways he influenced rock.

Thelonious Monk

Thelonious himself (Fantasy)

Solo piano records, and Monk solo piano records especially, are a couple of reasons why CDs are great. *Thelonious* joins the previously issued solo *Thelonious Alone in San Francisco*, and together they work as an extraordinary document to Monk's knowledge of the piano—not of music, but how the piano sounds. The way he cuts off, or lets ring, the overtones of a run, how he uses silences between notes, show how pianistic his thinking was—and CDs really let the nuances come out from behind the hiss of surface noise. The record is mostly standards, and it includes the 22-minute alternate take of "Round Midnight" (previously released on a twofer and on the Monk box set), essentially a rehearsal where Monk wades through his options for the tune, coming to a final conclusion which was included on the original record.

BY PETER WATROUS

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World Radio History

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SHORT TAKES

Joe Satriani
Surfing With the Alien (Relativity)

Mainstream instrumental rock's been largely hibernating since Jeff Beck rang the last notes of *Wired*, but guitarist Joe Satriani has come along to kick the great beast out of its stupor. From the scalding tone of the title cut to the sweet overdriven nirvana of "Echo," Satriani's combination of hooks, melodic smarts, unpredictable shifts in timbre, tempo and dynamics, and pure unrestrained technique charm and astonish. Granted he's heavy-handed: "Hill of the Skull" never gets past its metal pretensions, and he just can't keep his hands off his whammy. But if you're looking for refined quietude, go to a library. This is rock 'n' roll. (187-07 Henderson Ave., Hollis, NY 11423) – *Ted Drozdowski*

Kahil El'Zabar
Another Kind of Groove (Sound Aspects)

Along with violinist Billy Bang and Art Ensemble bassist Malachi Favors, percussionist El'Zabar makes music that combines the muted lyricism of the traditional jazz trio and the fresh experimental textures and harmonies with which these artists are more "traditionally" associated. From the first bars of "The Opening" Favors drops enough anchor to reveal the underworldly architecture of El'Zabar's compositions, but leaves the line slack enough to explore their cavernous possibilities. Bang's ethereal lines are like those of a tightrope artist dancing along a strand of flax. A record of grace and mystery.
– *Mark Rowland*

Arlene Smith & the Chantels
For Collectors Only (Murray Hill)

Thirty-nine tracks on a three-record boxed set is a lot of Chantels, even for collectors. Normal people remember them, if at all, for one hit ("Maybe," 1957), possibly two ("Look in My Eyes," 1961). The founding mothers of girl-group rock 'n' roll deserve to be more than a footnote. Arlene Smith's blazing soprano redeems the tawdriest lyrics (there are a lot of contenders); the other Chantels follow with often complex vocal lines and harmonies. Unlike Phil Spector's approach, these simply-produced recordings focus unflinchingly on the voices. They should. (225 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10003) – *Scott Isler*

Dixie Dregs
Best of the Dixie Dregs (Grand Slamm)

In light of current '70s revisionism, the question of whether we ever really needed a country-rock fusion band is worth reconsidering. The answer's still "maybe not." But this record's a reminder that these good ol' boys could *play*. And that the Dregs were a unique animal: five ringers who could blaze through chicken pickin', classical licks, bluegrass breakdowns and ferocious rock without flinching—and often in the same song. For evidence, check out "Take It from the Top," the band's sole near-hit, which packs the whole Dregs formula into four minutes flat. – *Ted Drozdowski*

District 6
To Be Free (Editions EG)

Like the best jazz, District 6 is about freedom. But this band of expatriate South Africans living in London has a more literal stake in the game. Songs like "Ke A Rona (Power to the People)," with its defiant lyrics and heavy Afro-beat sound, take the direct approach, demanding that the chains of apartheid be broken. But the essence of freedom—its beauty, joy and open-hearted vision—is best captured in the District's roving instrumentals, playful collages of African roots, pop, free jazz and hard modal blowing. The best examples are the romping "Etlon-Tu" (township dixieland, no less) and a suite for Winnie Mandela that slides seamlessly from peaceful blue melodies to bare-knuckled outside playing; and half the reason is just because it can. (JEM Records, 3619 Kennedy Road, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080) – *Ted Drozdowski*

Tom Cora
Live at the Western Front (No Man's Land)

The cover shows a shadowy warehouse with a sign that reads "Cora Disposables," and although this nimble avant-gardist is one of the instrument's current-day mega-technicians, there *is* extraneous musical info on this somewhat frantic solo cello record. Still, it's a gutsy move: Performing alone is one of the challenges that today's young improvisers have inherited from the '80s' A.A.C.M. gang, and it remains ridiculously tough. But imbuing fleeting ephemera with a conceptual relevance is a job Cora has practiced for the last 10 years, and much of this recital is successful both texturally and rhythmically. As the cellist moves to establish a new language for himself and his axe, his extended techniques tie together scrapes, drones and plucks; this keeps the program intriguing. Speaking of language, Cora's verbose: He has no problems conjuring aural approximations of Porky Pig, the *Psycho* shower scene and Oriental folk music. (N.M.D.S.)
– *Jim Macnie*

Bill Evans
Interplay (Fantasy/OJC)

Joe Goldberg, who wrote the informative liner notes for this album, confesses to enjoying Evans more as an accompanist than a leader—heresy perhaps, but this album bears his point. The tunes—mostly standards from the '30s—are familiar Evans terrain, but the tension between muted stylists like Jim Hall and Percy Heath, and more aggressive boppers Freddie Hubbard and the great Philly Joe Jones, injects those melodies with unusually nutritive fiber. In some respects a throwback to Evans' years with Miles Davis, the blend of personalities, rare trumpet/guitar frontline instrumentation and even rarer (for Evans) blues composition (the title track) make this LP a welcome gem in the Bill Evans canon. – *Mark Rowland*

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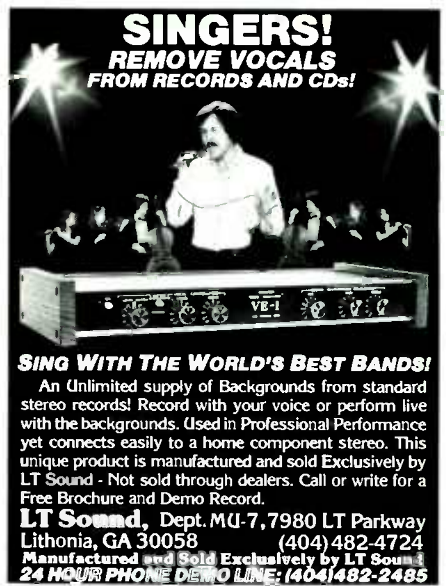

World Radio History

DRUMMOND

from page 106

Drummond continues, "but I really wasn't interested till I heard he was going to do a tour of Vietnam. I wanted to make a patriotic contribution, and show that all colors of people could get along together." To say the least, the tour was rough. "We'd be onstage with guns going off 100 yards away. Our helicopter got shot at. And James was a trip, too, with his rules. You had to watch him like a hawk 'cause he was always moving and giving cues. Each mistake meant a $25 fine, and when you're only making $150 a week it doesn't take much to blow all your pay.

"The kicker was on the DMZ. I had borrowed a Fender bass from a soldier, for a change of pace. James was endorsed by Vox at the time, and he fined me $1,000, as if the Vox rep was going to be there, checking. I didn't pay, though.

"It was a great life for a while," Drummond reminisces. "James was a good guy, though he could be jive at times, and I was working with one of the best bands anywhere, all 22 pieces, playing places like the Apollo Theater. Jimmy Nolen, one of the all-time great guitarists, was my roommate and a good friend. Maceo Parker was one of the sax players. We had some times, living on that bus. But the money was low, and after we played in Africa, I quit. James used to get mad and say, 'You motherfuckers will never have nothin' except your hat and your ass!' but I proved him wrong when I bought my own house."

Soon Drummond was playing R&B sessions in Nashville. "Troy Seals and Lonnie Mack broke me in down there, doing records for Joe Simon, Margie Hendricks, Marva Whitney, people like that. A lot of the sessions were produced by John R from WLAC radio—I used to listen to him back in Illinois, riding around in the cornfields all night." Drummond also played on an album by blues guitar ace Fenton Robinson, of "Somebody Loan Me a Dime" fame.

There was also lots of country work. "I cut demos with Ronnie Milsap, Jimmy Buffet, people like that. Played on sessions with some of the top studio cats—Farrell Morris, Grady Martin, Charlie McCoy. I did some albums with Doug Kershaw, and played with him on the Joey Bishop show. I was on Charlie Daniels' first album, too, the one with 'Call Up Trudy on the Telephone.'

"I was ready to settle in Nashville," Drummond relates. "I had a pretty comfortable scene set up. Then around '71 or so I met Neil Young. He was in town doing a TV show with Johnny Cash, and looking to record, too. I was walking down the street and someone told me that they needed a bass player over at Quadrophonic. Neil and I clicked right away, and we cut 'Heart of Gold' that afternoon. I was definitely in the right place at the right time."

Through touring and recording with Young, Drummond gradually made his prestigious California connections. "I don't like L.A.," he says, "but moving out West seemed like a necessary evil. California was obviously happening more than Nashville." Drummond arrived in '74 and has stayed in demand ever since. "The trick to working with these famous people," he comments, "is not to get caught up in who they are. Don't stroke 'em or bullshit 'em—just treat them like a man and a friend."

Forthright and opinionated, Drummond has blunt advice for aspiring bassists. "You have to want to play *bass*, and that means being a sideman. Be the bottom of the band, keep it simple and do it right, and you'll get your recognition. But play the *bass*; don't be a frustrated guitarist. I hear these young guys doing all this thumb-whacking, popping disco shit and it drives me nuts. No one wants to play *bass* anymore.

"I'm not a big studio cat," he says despite his credits. "I don't want to play shit that I'm not into. I got to have fun. I don't read music. I can spell chord charts, but I don't want to learn a lot of sheet music. I learned my shit on James Brown's bus, and that's the kind of feel I can contribute. They can always get someone to read the written stuff.

"I'm very open to suggestions," he continues. "I love to hear people's ideas, make changes and be spontaneous. With Ry Cooder and J.J. Cale, we do a lot of head arrangements. I love to make eye contact when I gig or record. That's where the magic is. Me and Ry, me and Lonnie, we look right at each other, and that way we can hook it. It's got to be there—I can tell in 10 minutes whether I can play with someone."

An hour has passed since Drummond began his memoirs. He's kicked my ass at darts, and I owe him money. It's all in fun, though, like James Brown's $1,000 Fender fine. One question remains: Drummond's equipment? "I'll tell you something," he says, picking up a dart for a double-or-nothing match. "I'm not big on talking equipment. If the groove is there and the people are moving, screw the technical stuff. You know what kind of amp I like?" he asks rhetorically. "One with an off-on button, a volume control, and a bass-treble knob. Who needs four million buttons and studio sound? I'm not an engineer. If it sounds like a *bass*, that's fine." M

POINDEXTER

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[off-track betting]? Like, I walk into the OTB and say, 'Hey, any of you wackos see me on *Saturday Night Live?*'"

In between replies he's discussing the set list with Tony Machine, but he tries to get through one last answer as David Johansen before Buster takes over. "I've always performed to make money, to live, and this is the way I've been for many years now. Ya see, I got onstage to sing, because..." Percussionist Fred Wolcott comes in, and Johansen presents him with a miniature steel drum the singer bought on Brooklyn's West Indian Eastern Parkway—"See if ya can work it in." Then Buster turns back to his questioner with a where-were-we look, takes one last flick with his comb, resettles his shoulders in his tux and speaks: "I had a song in my heart." M

WENDY & LISA

from page 20

with their maiden voyage. "I'm satisfied with it," Wendy states. "I know it's good music—or fairly good music." "Fairly?" Lisa turns to her.

Nor can it be easy for them as women in an industry not known for its sexual equality. But Wendy says she's not threatened by sexism. Lisa comments, "Nobody seems to be complaining that we're not wearing lingerie on the album cover, so I think things are going fine."

They're even discussing a follow-up. "The next album's called *Lisa and Wendy,*" Lisa announces, and both laugh. "We've already talked about that." M

PATITUCCI

from page 102

done. I'm trying to be not only artistic in what I'm doing, but also practical. If people don't learn how to take care of business on the bass and be accomplished with that role, they're not going to get a chance to play a solo. At the same time, if you can do the job, it's a good idea to go further and be creative instead of putting a ceiling on it and saying, 'Oh, man, I'm just a bass player.'" M

World Radio History

CARTER from page 65

make no mistake about that. But the bass really cannot be accurately sampled. The sound wave is so long and the decay is so uneven and bass players have so many different kinds of attack. You really can't get the Ray Brown sound or the Oscar Pettiford sound or a Sam Jones sound or my sound on a sampler because they're all so characteristically different.

MUSICIAN: *So it's not likely that some producer will be able to purchase a Ron Carter chip for a record date in the near future?*

CARTER: Give him my number and I'll be glad to be the chip.

MUSICIAN: *You've had an ongoing relationship with Herbie and Tony over the years, beginning with Miles from '63-'68, then with V.S.O.P. featuring Wayne Shorter and Freddie Hubbard in the mid-'70s, with the Herbie quartet featuring Wynton Marsalis in the early-'80s and again last year with Branford Marsalis filling out the quartet.*

CARTER: It's a wonderful relationship that we've had going almost 25 years now. March of '88 will be 25 years. We just did the Mt. Fuji Festival in Japan with Branford, then Herbie did a tour of Japan after that was over, with Michael Brecker subbing for Branford. So we were together for 14 concerts or so and it was a great feeling. It's a very special relationship and it continues to grow and prosper over the years because we all maintain our trust in each other.

MUSICIAN: *And Miles?*

CARTER: I don't wanna get into that, man.

MUSICIAN: *Was your parting amiable? Do you stay in touch?*

CARTER: It was an amiable parting. And on certain occasions we have a nice, pleasant, brief greeting. Then I go my way and he goes his.

MUSICIAN: *What about the special rapport you seem to have with guitarist Jim Hall in those duo settings?*

CARTER: Yeah, one of my favorite bands. It's the kind of situation that in order for it to succeed each guy has to trust the other guy's sense of it all. If I play a note, Jim has to know that I mean that note to be there. If he plays a chord, I know he expects me to find a note to enhance that chord because I know he means that chord to be there. And without this level of trustworthiness, in spite of talent, it's not going to be successful musically. One of the finest musical situations that I've been in has been those duos with Jim Hall. He's a magnificent player and a person whom I think very highly of.

MUSICIAN: *That duo has the same level of sensitivity and telepathy that you have with Herbie and Tony.*

CARTER: Yes, only quieter. No drums. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *What about your quintet with pianist Roland Hanna, drummer Louis Nash, percussionist Steve Kroon and bassist Leon Maleson?*

CARTER: It's a great band. It's probably the most successful rhythm section band in history because there's technically no melodic instrument, according to dictionary terms. I play strictly piccolo bass in this band. I wouldn't play it in anybody else's band. It's only seen in my band, where I'm the leader and I'm carrying the melody.

MUSICIAN: *You began playing the piccolo bass in 1976. Is that a different animal than the string bass?*

CARTER: Yeah, it's tuned in fourths. Top string is C, then G, D and A on down. It's a brighter sound so I had to get used to the tonal quality being different than when I'm playing upright. And I have to adjust my thought process in playing it. Can't play it the same way I play my upright. Bass players can think of it as a bass with a C-string added and the E-string taken off. I had been using it exclusively for my quintet, but I also used it recently for a reggae album I did for the Japanese Polydor label. It's a wonderful record called *Very Well*. I hadn't done that kind of music before and I had been listening to reggae of late, so I got Eric Gale and Buddy Williams and Leon Pendarvis together with Hubert Laws and we did it.

MUSICIAN: *You've been involved with some ambitious projects over the years, but the soundtrack for Tavernier's film* Beatrice *was really something else.*

CARTER: Yeah, that was done using only medieval instruments like the vielle, sackbutt, hurdy gurdy, alto and soprano recorders and string bass. I was very reluctant to do it. At first I told him, "Yeah, I'll take it, man. Give it to me." But I was kind of sorry I did that later on because I found out that my knowledge of that area of music wasn't very good.

MUSICIAN: *You had to do research?*

CARTER: Tons of it. I talked to David Amram, who knew some stuff. I spent a lot of time at the library, I had people calling all over for me trying to get information on medieval music. I finally ended up by going to Paris and meeting some guys who played in a madrigal band that specialized in this music. And I spent some time with these guys to find out what the limitations of the instruments were. And as much research as I had done, it was really inadequate compared to what these guys were telling me, 'cause they do it every day. I was pleasantly embarrassed. And now to repay them I'm going to write an eight-minute piece for their madrigal band, if I can find time between teaching and other projects coming up.

MUSICIAN: *Such as?*

CARTER: Well, I did the Bach cello suites, only the dance movements, which I transcribed for pizzicato bass. That record for Nippon/Polydor has become the biggest classical seller in the history of the label. So I'm getting ready for some more. I'm trying to talk them into having me do the first movement of each of the six Bach cello suites. It'll be a lot of work. More than the last one because everyone knows all the first movements of those suites. Maybe not the dance movements, but they all know the first movements from each Bach suite. So it'll be more of a challenge because they'll have something firmly fixed in their memories to compare it to.

MUSICIAN: *How do you prepare for such a challenging project?*

CARTER: Practice four hours every day, seven days a week, for two months, in addition to teaching school full-time and everything else. I grew up playing this stuff so the only mental preparation I need is to clear up enough time to do the work that I know it takes to sound to the level of my satisfaction. And not only do I want to play up to my standards but I want to prove, in doing these projects, that the string bass is a beautiful, musical, valid instrument in its own right. That it has many other functions than to be the so-called workhorse in a jazz rhythm section.

MUSICIAN: *Any other projects in the near future?*

CARTER: I hope that someone calls tomorrow and says, "Hey, man, come and do this." But what I'd like to do, ideally, is stop playing nightclubs and start doing stuff for string orchestra and string quartets. My listening and my hearing has gotten more expansive than a trio can handle or my own band can handle. Next thing I want to do is move up in size of groups and write some quality music for string orchestra. I've already got 80 bars toward a string symphony. That's my next major project.

MUSICIAN: *You haven't been playing in the clubs much lately?*

CARTER: I have been, but I wanna stop. There are plenty of young guys out there who can do that. It's time for them to woodshed in nightclubs and get the experience and meet all the players, just like I did when I was coming up. But for me, it's time to do something else. Time to take it to the next level. ■

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