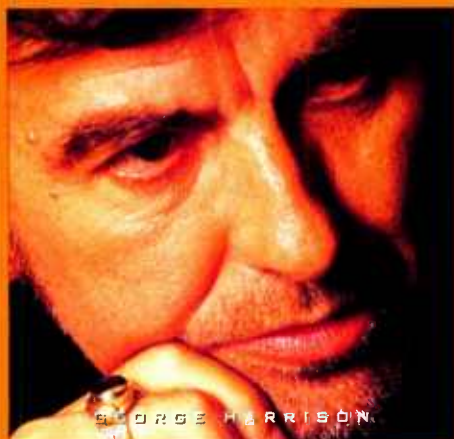


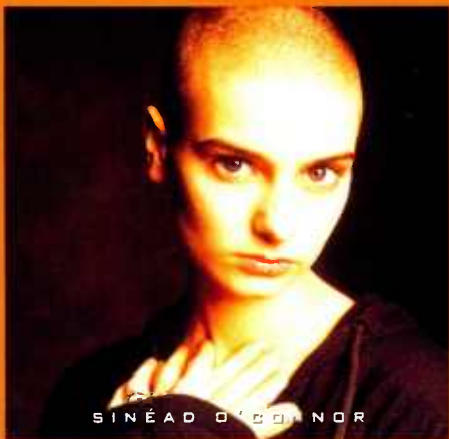
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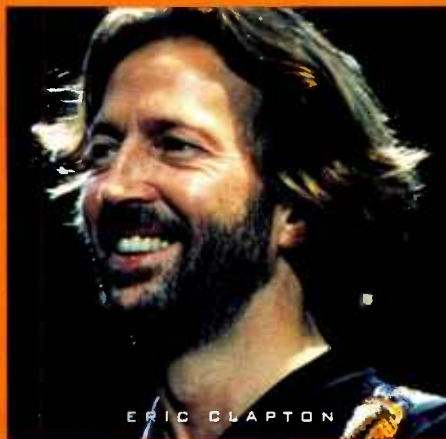
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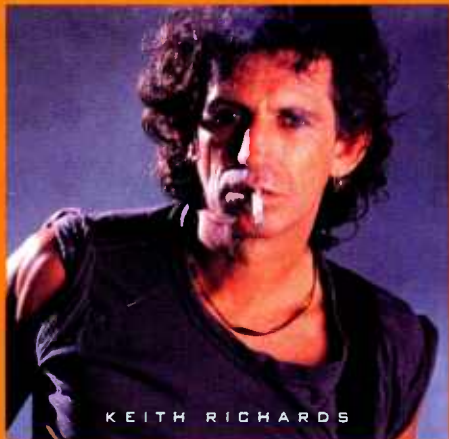
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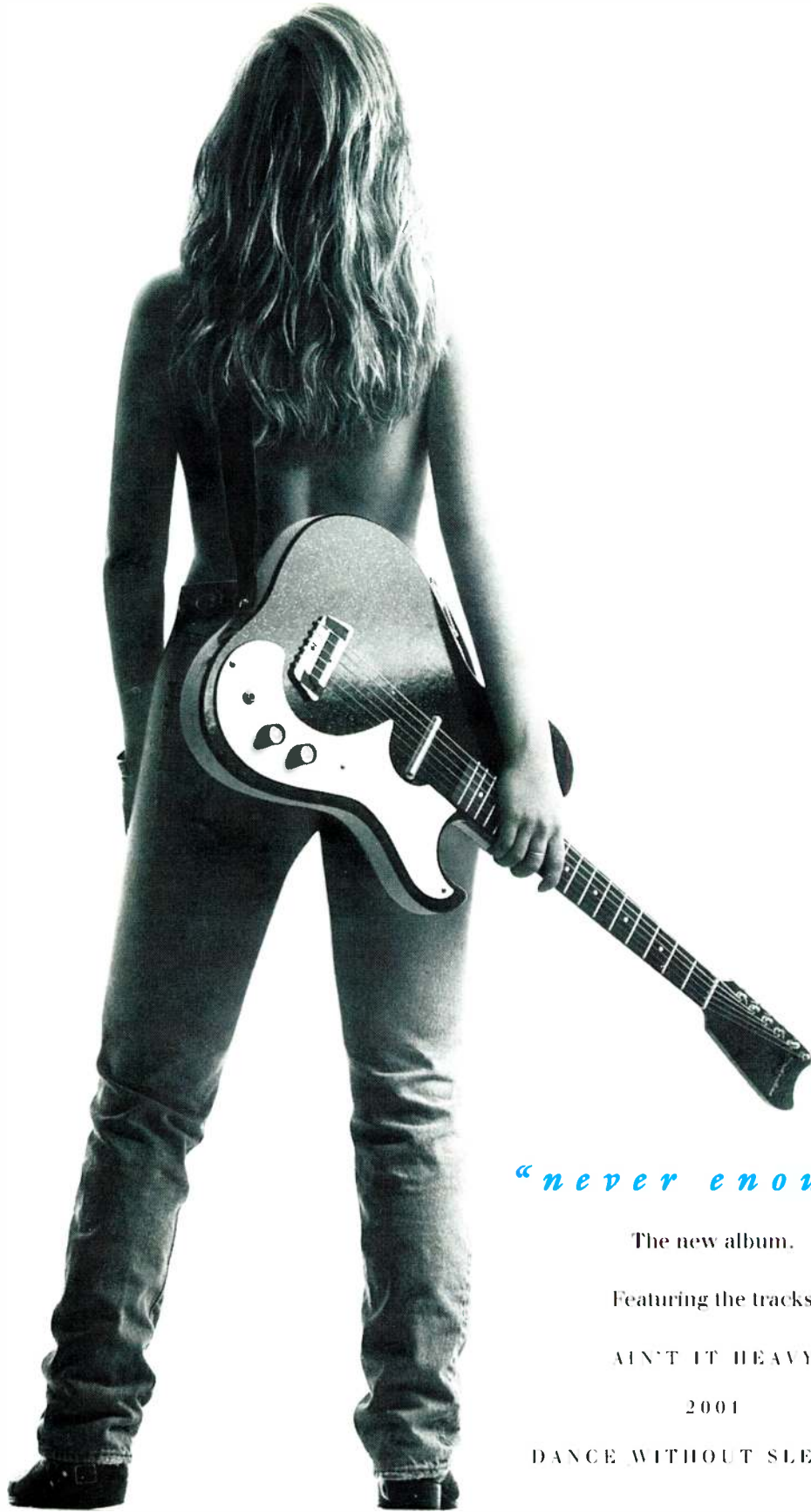
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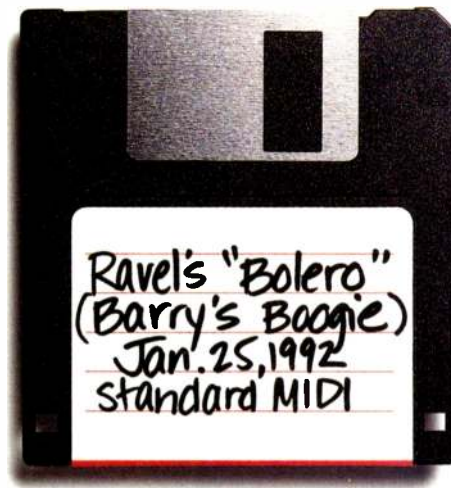




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CONTENTS

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE
MAY 1992 • ISSUE NO. 163

7 FRONT WOMAN **TRACY CHAPMAN**

How does a private musician face up to a public life?
BY CELESTINE WARE

23 **TORI AMOS**

A songwriter strip-mines her memory and imagination to come up with a striking first album. BY PAUL ZOLLO

24 **JOEY BARON**

Searching for the melodies in a drumkit, an accompanist finds self-expression.
BY TONY SCHERMAN

26 **DAVID LOWERY'S CRACKER**

Camper Van Beethoven's leader moves to Virginia to start a new band with a little *Exile on Main Street* and a lot of Southern dirt.
BY PETER CRONIN

30 **LYLE LOVETT: DEEP IN THE HEART**

His new album just about sews up Lovett's rep as the best American singer/songwriter of his generation. But at home in Texas he's still living close to mom and dad...and the family graveyard.
BY GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

42 **LEARNING TO LOVE MOZART**

You know ol' Wolfgang Amadeus was one of the all-time musical heavies—but how do you start approaching music so forbidding? Here's an easy intro to a whole new world. BY DENNIS POLKOW



LYLE LOVETT
PAGE 30

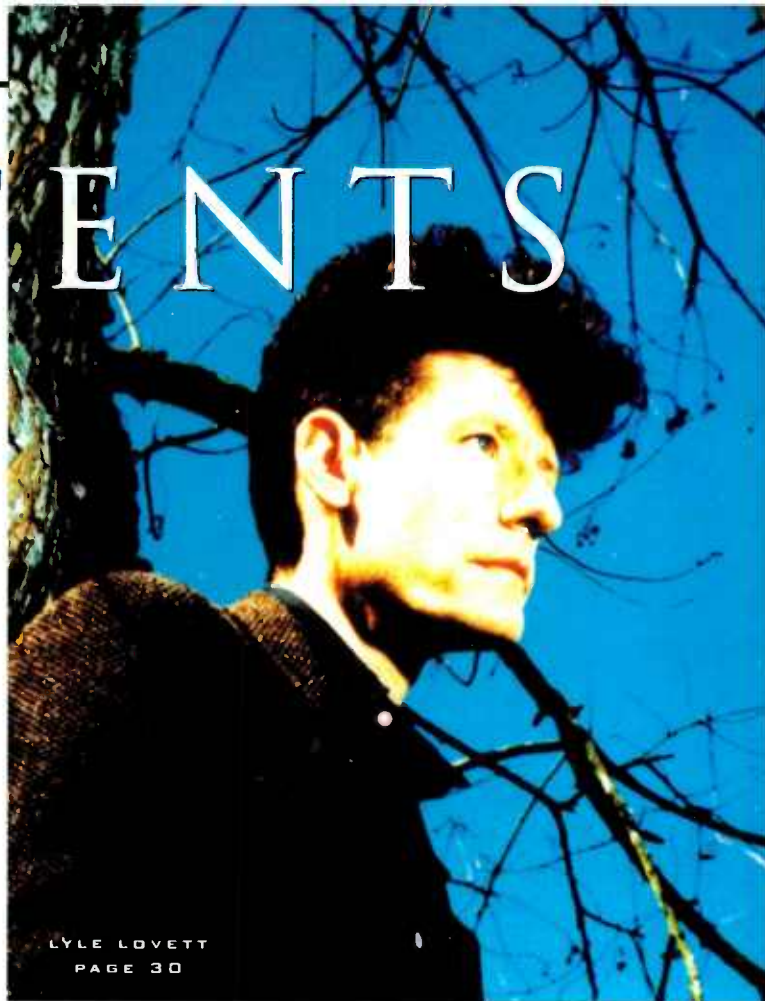


ROGER WATERS
PAGE 51

46 **TALKIN' 'BOUT MY INSPIRATION**

An all-star panel of rock and jazz giants convene to talk about where music comes from, how they compose and improvise, facing writer's block and—the most dangerous subject—whether drugs and alcohol can help the act of creation. Deep thoughts from Joni Mitchell, Eric Clapton, Roger Waters, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, Peter Gabriel, Jackson Browne, Branford Marsalis, Sinéad O'Connor, Tony Williams, Bonnie Raitt, Richard Thompson, Keith Richards and more.

BY JENNY BOYD PH.D. WITH HOLLY GEORGE-WARREN



LYLE LOVETT
PAGE 30

WORKING MUSICIAN

63

IS THIS THING ON? THE MICROPHONE REPORT

It can make your sound or break your sound, it's the closest thing to your instrument and to your mouth. It's your microphone and you better know it better than you know your momma. Top producers and engineers recommend the best buys for the home studio and the stuff the big boys use; Nirvana's Butch Vig on how to mike a drumkit; other experts give you tips on voice, horns, amps and acoustic guitar.

Plus—trends and breakthroughs.
BY THE MUSICIAN MEN'S CHOIR

73

BASS MELVIN GIBBS
There's 144 notes on a six-string bass—but only one of them is going to be right. From Ronald Shannon Jackson to Eye & I, Gibbs has learned how to zero in.
BY MATT RESNICOFF

76

GUITAR GLENN PHILLIPS
You're not playing messy—you're just failing to keep the other strings quiet. Catching the nuances most guitarists miss, with Georgia's hottest hot dog.
BY RICK MATTINGLY

78

DRUMS DENNIS CHAMBERS
Okay, drummers, you don't want to hear this—but you need to hear it. Dennis Chambers passes on the secret Buddy Rich whispered to him.
BY TONY SCHERMAN

82

PIANO CHARLIE RICH
From jazz pianist to country star and back to jazz again—a 30-year trip up and down the keyboard.
BY ALAN DI PERNA

84

PERFORMANCE U2
Making an ally of artifice, U2 test whether glitz can sell substance.
BY BILL FIANAGAN

87

REVIEWS
Bruce Your Illusions. Springsteen offers two new albums to get us through the '90s. Plus, Neville's, Jesus & Mary Chain.

DEPARTMENTS

8 MASTHEAD 10 LETTERS

13 FACES

Cypress Hill, Bill Morrissey, Sir Mix-a-Lot, Sophie Hawkins and Died Pretty

18 CHARTS

The real numbers

90 NEW RELEASES

97 READER SERVICE

98 BACKSIDE

A THOUSAND CLONES

I'm not really Elton John but I play him on TV: the wonderful world of tribute bands.
BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

COVER

Top left to right: John Litzzey/Outline; Deborah Fengold/Outline; Phillip Derenshaw/Starfile; Bottom left to right: Diego Uchitel/Outline; Neal Preston/Outline; Naras/Outline

ARCANGELS



DOYLE BRAMHALL II, CHARLIE SEXTON, AND THE FORMER STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE RHYTHM SECTION, TOMMY SHANNON AND CHRIS LAYTON, HAVE FORGED AN UNHOLY UNION. THEIR SELF-TITLED DEBUT ALBUM, PRODUCED BY LITTLE STEVEN, FEATURES "LIVING IN A DREAM," "SENT BY ANGELS," AND "TOO MANY WAYS TO FALL."



DAVID GEFEN COMPANY

World Radio History

TRACY CHAPMAN

Your second album was about standing at a crossroad. When you're starting out, people don't listen to your words that much, but once you become famous everybody's scrutinizing the songs and sort of crowding you—

I actually kind of think it goes the other way around. I felt people were listening more closely to my lyrics when I was playing clubs and in the folk scene than the larger audience I've acquired does now. Critics are another thing. [laughs]

But people know all the words to your songs—

And they did then as well.

Still in "Crossroads," when you sing, "All you folks think you own my life—" that's what I thought I was hearing.

No. That song was written before I had a record contract. It can certainly be interpreted as some sort of commentary on the record industry, but I also think it applies to lots of other aspects of my life and other people's lives.

There's this constant tension between wanting to get close to people and at the same time wanting to keep your own integrity.

It's partly just a reflection of the fact that we're living in a society now where we have to make hundreds of choices almost daily about how we're going to live our lives and do our work and all those things, and there are all sorts of forces that in that process are pulling you this way or that.

People are encouraged to be consumers and to think that the more you consume, the better the quality of your life. That's not necessarily the case. On a material level that may be true, but if you in any way think that the spiritual, emotional, intellectual side of a person is important and that those things might be neglected in that pursuit...

On your new album Matters of the Heart, "If These Are the Things" and "I Used to Be a Sailor" seem to me to embody some of the ideas that I found in "Crossroads" and "All That You Have Is Your Soul." You got something that you wanted, but somehow it's empty—the apple is "rotten to the core."

That's a fairly recent song. It wasn't so much a commentary on my personal life as it was on what I saw around me. I wrote that at the start of the Persian Gulf war. I just found it rather contradictory that we were going off to liberate Kuwait—and we have people in this country who don't have their civil liberties. We were damning Saddam Hussein for his use of violence and military force when we in turn just did the same thing.

I read that you were eager to get out of Cleveland. Where have you lived since you became famous?

Only really two places. I was living in Boston when I first signed a record contract, and I've been living in San Francisco for a little more than two years now. It's a beautiful city, and there's a lot going on there culturally and politically.

Do you have favorite poets that you read?

When I was younger I read a lot of different poets, but I really liked Nikki Giovanni's poetry.

Did you ever read Emily Dickinson?

I had to read those things.

In "Matters of the Heart," you wrote that if you were reborn, you'd be

FRONT WOMAN



"PEOPLE WERE LISTENING MORE CLOSELY TO MY LYRICS WHEN I WAS PLAYING CLUBS THAN THE LARGER AUDIENCE I'VE ACQUIRED NOW DOES."

"Bronte's bird." Which novel is that from?

It didn't come from a novel but from a poem that Emily Bronte wrote. It was an accident, in a way, that that reference appears. I was in the process of writing, and I remembered a metaphor in a poem, and I actually thought it was an Emily Dickinson poem with a reference to a bird and hope. I went looking and instead stumbled on that poem.

Do you still play guitar every day?

Uh-huh. On this session I used a Martin J-40, an OM-35 12-string with pickups that control panning and volume on each separate string. For most guitars I use two pickups, one near the soundhole, one near the fretboard, through a Demeter tube DS.

Do you listen to any older jazz musicians?

Recently I've been doing that. I was exposed to some jazz when I was younger. My father had some Coltrane albums and that sort of thing, but I guess children don't have the patience. I was very, very little. I've been going to the record store and just picking things up. I recently picked up a Max Roach album and I picked up Duke Ellington's *Money Jungle*. I found some things that are just tremendous.

—Celestine Ware

LETTERS

My compliments to J.D. Conside for his cover article "Fear of Rap" (Feb. '92). Rap is objected to primarily because of its content. Rock music contains as much violence, sexism and offensive language as rap, but rock is not objected to as much. If the motivation is not racial, what could it be?

Alan Koslowski
Seattle, WA

Are "controversial" rap videos more harmful than graphic television violence or the "reporting" of tabloid TV? Are the legitimate, honest messages in rap more harmful than the blatant lies given to us by our political leaders (e.g., "Read my lips—no new taxes")?

As Ice Cube states, rap is entertainment. So if one does not care for it, one should not support it.

Michael T. Kenny
Burlingame, CA

I am a 28-year-old black woman and I find rap music frightening. The depiction of women is appalling! How in the world can they think they are so pro-black? And who gave Public Enemy, Ice Cube and N.W.A. the right to speak for African Americans? I don't know what kind of life the rappers had, but I do know this for sure: Millions of African Americans have been taught self-love and self-respect. Not every African American fears a person just because they are white. Believe me, rappers, when I say that you should be more than just cartoonish characters entertaining thrill-seeking whites. Too many of us have played into the old stereotype and have been negative for too long.

Edith R. Denman
Smithville, TX

I have been listening to music for most of my 31 years and I have

never heard as many obscenities in one style of music as I hear in rap.

Dennis Godshalk
Conshohocken, PA

Your "Fear of Rap" article was interesting. But you still haven't convinced me that rap is real music.

K. McAllister
Blaine, WA

I'm not afraid of rap. I like it a lot, in fact. But I do hate racism, and when Ice Cube tries to tell me that his racist lyrics are just "entertainment" or Chuck D tells me that Flavor Flav's gay-baiting is nothing more than "finding a rhyme," I get concerned. That's like saying that Pat Buchanan's or David Duke's racism is "just politics." Give me the beats and the rhymes, but please—hold the hate.

Rick Anderson
Provo, UT

When is a rapper going to have the balls to forego the all-important "dangerous image" and represent who he/she really is?

Peter Omitz
New York, NY

Anyone who thinks that they are being dissed because they are black artists in a "white male structure" has been thoroughly misled. Write a good song and I'll buy it. If you're lucky enough to write a song that a lot of people like, people will buy it, and then you'll get your due. It's as simple as that. After all, if it's just entertainment, aren't you supposed to be selling records?

Michael A. Cimino
Congers, NY

Regarding the piece on rap, you'll get no argument from me

about the white media, but remember, their intent is to control whites as well as everyone else. Those crazy klowns in the klan have unknowingly taught us a lesson: You cannot elevate yourself by putting down others.

Stephen Talkovich
Woodstock, GA

Pop music can be constructive (how many teens heard of Amnesty International, Greenpeace or Nelson Mandela before U2, Peter Gabriel and Sting introduced them?), destructive or harmless. The anger and violence promoted in much of the rap music in question doesn't offer any constructive solution. In a society where a pair of sneakers or a verbal epithet can be justification for violence, it hardly seems harmless.

Alan Dunst
Grand Rapids, MI

"Fear of a Rap Planet" was an interesting (if too short) view of rap music. One correction which must be made: N.W.A.'s *Efil4zaggin* did not enter the *Billboard* album charts at number one—no rap album has yet pulled this off. *Efil4zaggin* debuted at number two, and did not become the number one album until the following week.

Tomas H. Joens
Lombard, IL

LOOKOUT BELEW

Whoever decided to allow Robert Fripp to review his own record (*Recordings*, Feb. '92) ought to win the Pulitzer Prize, or at least some award for bravery. Giving R.F. any sort of soapbox is hazardous behavior (which you folks

used to do, and should consider doing again) and raises the possibility of interesting reading.

Scott R. May
Berwyn, IL

How could you let Robert Fripp review the King Crimson boxed set? Was it just a coy way to generate some indignant mail?

Budde Larose
Los Angeles, CA

I find it incredible that a review of *Frame by Frame* mentions Adrian Belew not at all. I find it fascinating that someone intimately involved in the band did the review.

G. P. Morgan
Middletown, OH

HOLY PALMER

I was at turns fascinated, enraged and splitting my sides with laughter when I read the Earl Palmer piece (Jan. '92). Such colossal talent in such a humble man! If the greatest all-around drummer of all time is left out by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, then surely such an institution can't be taken very seriously. Yeah, life is usually unfair, but guys like Palmer have made it worth living, if only for the soundtrack.

Rik Helgason
Jupiter, FL

HEY DINO

A letter in your Feb. '92 issue mentions Billy Roberts as the author of "Hey Joe." A letter in *Guitar Player* also names Roberts. In the mid-1960s, the Leaves released "Hey Joe" as a 45 on Mira Records, Third Story Music (BMI). Writing credit is given to Dino Valenti. In the *Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll*, in the bio of Quicksilver Messenger Service, again Valenti is mentioned as the writer of "Hey Joe."

What gives here?

Robert Pasqualone
Geneva, OH

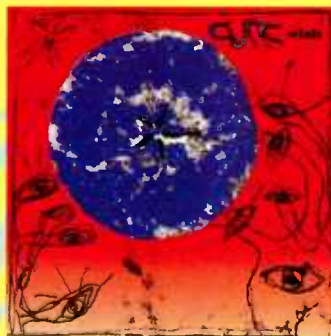


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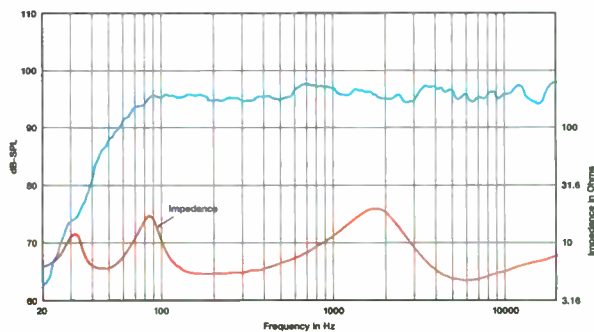
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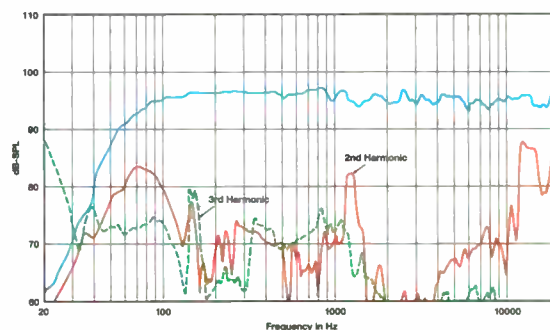
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BILL MORRISSEY

Yankee Values

AT A CLUB CALLED THE TURNING POINT IN Piermont, New York, Bill Morrissey opens with "Barstow." A drifter lands in a freight yard that "sounds like a drunk in a metal shop" and laments: "I can't believe I pissed my 20s away."

Morrissey finishes and pauses. "Well," he says brightly, "I've got time for one more." After catching on, the crowd laughs. Morrissey has been puncturing folk clichés for years, with compassionate sketches of hungry lives in his native New England, leavened by dry Yankee wit. "His songs are very straightforward. They're solid," says Suzanne Vega, who sang on Morrissey's *Standing Eight* in 1990 and this year's *Inside*. "They don't pretend to be overly poetic but are literary. His characters are always people you identify with." With the softly riveting *Standing Eight*, Morrissey moved beyond the role of New England bard. "I didn't mention the word 'mill' too often on that one," he quips, describing an album sparked by the end of his first marriage.

Inside is another turning point. "It was the first record I wanted to do as an ensemble, rather than a singer/songwriter with a backup," he says of his new band, featuring the melancholy fiddle of Johnny Cunningham of the Raindogs—"the only guy I've ever seen pull off solo violin shows in a bar," marvels Morrissey.

The songs' characters "sense mortality," but humor balances the despair. "New Englanders have a defensive sense of humor," he says. "They take a bad situation and respond with a dry comment. It's like comic relief in a horror movie."

THOM DUFFY



PHOTOGRAPHS: (MORRISSEY) HEIDI WELLS; (CYPRESS HILL) JOSEPH CULTICE



Rip-snort funk isn't the only thing cranking on Cypress Hill. You also hear bongwater gurgling, cheeba being hawked and shotguns clacking into readiness—the tribe thang is in full effect. The Cypress Hill, rappers named after their South Central L.A. housing project, are real beastie boys, purveyors of debauchery who understand the appeal of havoc. The chorus in "Shoot 'Em Up," their contribution to the *Juice* soundtrack, comes off like a nursery rhyme. And in "Hand on the Pump" there's a post-carnage, *la, la, la* refrain that suggests serious flippage. But, says rapper B-Real, the violence that Cypress Hill depict is really a lesson in mind over magnum.

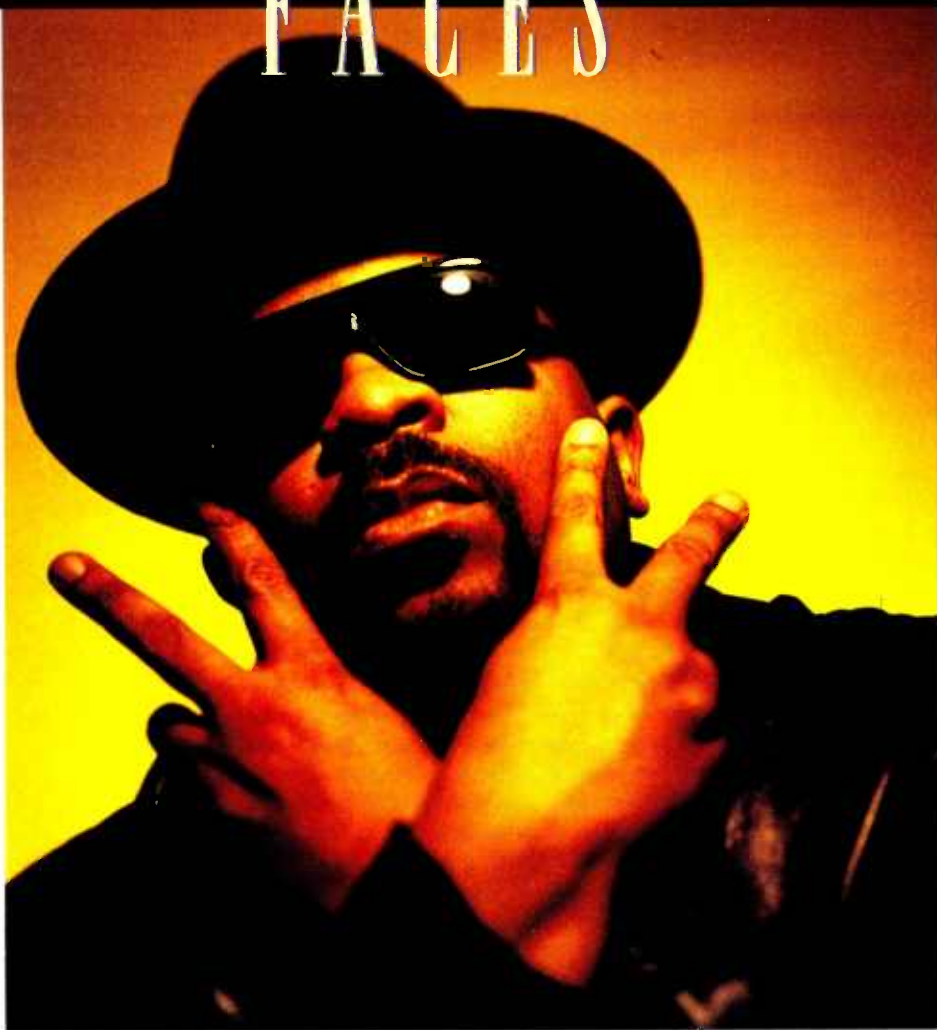
"We don't come off on the gang-banging tip, we come off as kids from around the way. The delivery makes us different; that's where the comedy comes from. When you preach to people, they don't want to hear it. But if you talk shit, like 'Yo, this guy tried to jack somebody and got his ass killed in the process,' it works better. We show 'em the dark side in hopes that they walk away from it."

At this late date, that's a nifty cliché. But the oinking at cops and spraying of lead on *Cypress Hill* is done with shrugged-off panache that takes the sting out of the mayhem. And the beats arranged by DJ Muggs are buoyant, knowledgeable. When shotguns are mentioned, the groovy organ squall from Junior Walker's classic flies by. The whole thing rocks. "When I hear our stuff pumping out of a car, I know we did a good job," says B-Real. "And I hear it every day."

JIM MACNIE

FACES

JOSEPH CULICCI



That's how you pimp the system."

Though Sir Mix-A-Lot has sold close to two million records, he still hasn't really been recognized. Hardcore rap fans consider him a novelty act; mainstream listeners remain largely unaware of his existence. With *Mack Daddy*, his Def American/Warner Brothers debut, Mix-A-Lot hopes to kill both birds with one release—the album leapt into *Billboard's* Top 40. The lyrics hit harder than ever, and with Warner's promotional muscle behind him, Mix-A-Lot stands to make friends in new markets. He isn't abandoning fans of his earlier, goofy style, though: Witness the video for "Baby Got Back," *Mack Daddy's* second single, in which Mix-A-Lot rips *Cosmopolitan's* skin-and-bones, Caucasian ideal of femininity and raps while bouncing up and down on a giant mocha-colored bottom.

"Fuck *Cosmo*," declares Mix. "I'm lettin' women, especially black women, know—curvy is still in. Far as I'm concerned."

SEAN O'NEILL

SIR MIX-A-LOT

Seattle's other, sunnier groove

KILLING BRUTAL COPS MAY BE A SATISFYING FANTASY, but as a plan of action it's a little less than practical. In "One Time's Got No Case" the Seattle-based rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot offers a more realistic alternative to N.W.A.'s anti-cop revenge fantasy "Fuck tha Police" with a story in which the protagonist strikes back within the system. He takes the errant officer to court, where his lawyers eat her up "like catfish" and get her fired from the force. The message may be sensible, but the groove is irresistible, the lyrics sizzle and the phrasing is hilarious. Civic responsibility never sounded quite like this.

"No way is a guy gonna take the street with an AK-47 and just start shootin' cops," says Sir Mix-A-Lot. "We can forget about that. The way you crumble any crooked system is you hit 'em in the pocketbook. Let's take 'em to court, let's get 'em out of a job, let's win 3, 4, 5 million dollars. That's capitalism.

SO LONG, BOX

Is the longbox dead? Not yet, but it will take its last gasps this month, just after the Recording Industry Association of America announced that six major record companies will halt production of the cardboard 12-inchers that house the smaller, ecologically safer jewel boxes. The switch comes after a heated exchange between manufacturers, artists and retailers; musicians unanimously supported the abolition of the wasteful cardboard packages, while store owners had been stubbornly lazy about modifying their racks to accommodate unadorned point-of-purchase jewel boxes. Despite such apathy, recent jewel-box-only releases by Peter Gabriel and U2 continued to fly off said racks, clearing the way for an industry overhaul in political correctness. Here's the formula they must have used: Multiply total Record Warehouse floorspace by every three acres of forest land destroyed between now and April '92 (when the new non-longbox edict takes effect), divide by total units sold and multiply by zero—it should amount to as much as the past three years of corporate whining.

MATT RESNICOFF

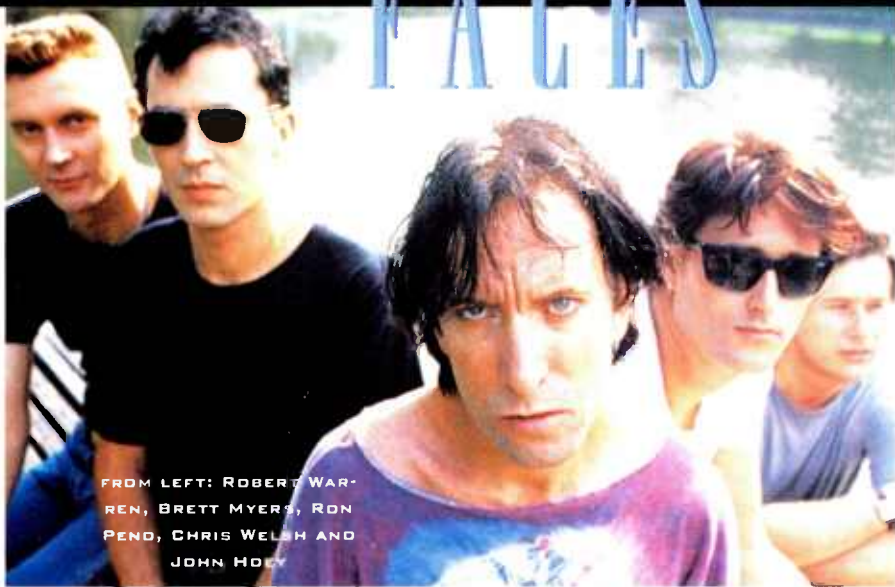


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FROM LEFT: ROBERT WARREN, BRETT MYERS, RON PEND, CHRIS WELSH AND JOHN HOLLY

TONY MOTT

DIED PRETTY

ASK DIED PRETTY'S GUITARIST/SONGWRITER BRETT MYERS why he thinks that, despite a substantial critical buzz, his group is still relatively unknown in the U.S. and he replies, laughing, "It's

probably because none of our records have sold very much in the States."

Back home in Australia, Died Pretty sells enough records to keep them affixed to the charts as well as attract the sort of worshipful reviews that most bands would sell blood for. *Doughboy Hollow* is the five-man combo's third U.S. release, and their fourth overall. It's filled with deeply emotional (courtesy of Ronald S. Peno's urgent delivery), close-to-the-edge, often melancholic rock 'n' roll.

Although Myers cites groups like the Go-Betweens and the Bad Seeds, it's R.E.M. that Died Pretty most often gets lumped in with; Myers shrugs that off. "I think comparison is a lazy thing. We are sort of a guitar band with slightly left-of-center leanings, I guess, but there's about a million others like that in America." He laughs again.

"The music I grew up loving is Television, the New York Dolls, Pere Ubu, plus a lot of English punk—the Clash, the Buzzcocks. But what's an alternative band? It's such an amorphous term. It just means anything that isn't commercially successful.

"We learned to play, so I guess we're not alternative."

AMY LINDEN

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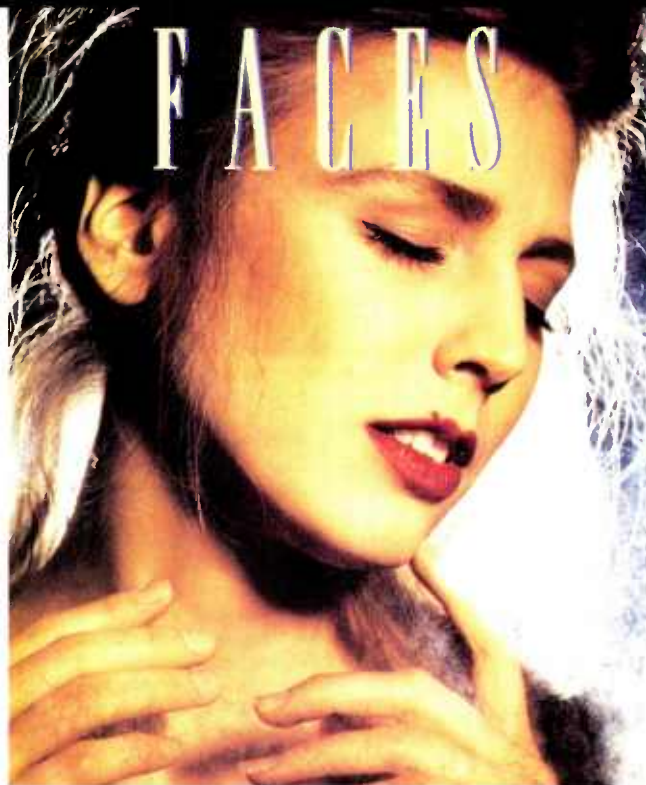
SOPHIE B. HAWKINS

Speaking in Tongues

SOPHIE HAWKINS HAS ALWAYS SWUM OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM. At 14, she joined the musicians who lived with Baba Olatunji at New York's Ansonia Hotel when musician Gordy Ryan made her sit, listen and play the low part on the drum while singing. "I only sing because that's the way I learn music," she says. "I didn't listen to women singer/songwriters—I mean, my dad played Billie. At 13, I listened to *Brilliant Corners* every night, especially 'Pannonica.' Monk gave me courage to start writing, which I did on the drums."

Informally, Hawkins was a producer on her new *Tongues and Tails*. "I was involved in every important editing decision. If any element wasn't perceptive, I turned it down. It's a performance-oriented set," says Hawkins about the dense collages with sustained synths and layered vocals. The witty *Tongues* bursts with ideas from Hawkins' self-education. She fought for her musicians, whose heterogeneity—fusion-era Miles Davis, Weather Report, Cameo and Captain Beefheart—is a gloss on the breadth of her interests. For her video, she says "the pressure was to get the C&C Music Factory's choreographer. I don't want that. My dancers come from years of downtown contacts—very improvisatory, very moody. Now I have carte blanche to work with these incredible people. I hope to change the way they do videos."

CELESTINE WARE



NIGHT ON EARTH

Original Soundtrack Recording

a film by JIM JARMUSCH



TOM WAITS has created the perfect musical environment for *Night On Earth*, the delirious new comedy from director Jim Jarmusch (*Down By Law*, *Mystery Train*).

The Soundtrack includes thirteens instrumental compositions that lope, stumble and careen along a jazzy track like a circus train about to derail.

Also included are three new vocal tracks performed by **WAITS**.

music by **TOM WAITS**

original songs by TOM WAITS & KATHLEEN BRENNAN



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FEATURES

A Division of New Line Cinema

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month.

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1 • 1 | Garth Brooks <i>Ropin' the Wind/Capitol</i> |
| 2 • 3 | Michael Jackson <i>Dangerous/Epic</i> |
| 3 • 2 | Nirvana <i>Nevermind/DGC</i> |
| 4 • 5 | Garth Brooks <i>No Fences/Capitol</i> |
| 5 • 8 | Michael Bolton <i>Time, Love and Tenderness/Columbia</i> |
| 6 • 11 | Color Me Badd <i>C.M.B./Giant</i> |
| 7 • 7 | Boyz II Men <i>Coolioyghbarmony/Motown</i> |
| 8 • 15 | Bonnie Raitt <i>Luck of the Draw/Capitol</i> |
| 9 • 6 | U2 <i>Achtung Baby/Island</i> |
| 10 • 4 | Hammer <i>Too Legit to Quit/Capitol</i> |
| 11 • 16 | Natalie Cole <i>Unforgettable/Elektra</i> |
| 12 • 17 | Genesis <i>We Can't Dance/Atlantic</i> |
| 13 • 9 | Metallica <i>Metallica/Elektra</i> |
| 14 • 10 | Mariah Carey <i>Emotions/Columbia</i> |
| 15 • 12 | Prince and the N.P.G. <i>Diamonds and Pearls/Paisley Park</i> |
| 16 • 69 | Mr. Big <i>Lean Into It/Interve</i> |
| 17 • 18 | Bryan Adams <i>Waking Up the Neighbours/A&M</i> |
| 18 • 21 | Garth Brooks <i>Garth Brooks/Capitol</i> |
| 19 • 13 | Guns N' Roses <i>Use Your Illusion II/Geffen</i> |
| 20 • 24 | Amy Grant <i>Heart in Motion/A&M</i> |
| 21 • 26 | Erya <i>Shepherd Moons/Reprise</i> |
| 22 • 22 | Jodeci <i>Forever My Lady/MCA</i> |
| 23 • 64 | Pearl Jam <i>Ten/Epic Associated</i> |
| 24 • 38 | Soundtrack <i>Juice/Soul</i> |

| | |
|---------|--|
| 25 • 28 | Ozzy Osbourne <i>No More Tears/Epic Associated</i> |
| 26 • 14 | Guns N' Roses <i>Use Your Illusion II/Geffen</i> |
| 27 • 33 | Naughty by Nature <i>Naughty by Nature/Tommy Boy</i> |
| 28 • 30 | Harry Connick, Jr. <i>Blue Light, Red Light/Columbia</i> |
| 29 • 53 | Soundtrack <i>Rush/Reprise</i> |
| 30 • 27 | Soundtrack <i>Beauty & the Beast/Walt Disney</i> |
| 31 • 19 | Various Artists <i>Two Rooms: Songs of F. Jobn & B. Taupin/Polydor</i> |
| 32 • 29 | Reba McEntire <i>For My Broken Heart/MCA</i> |
| 33 • — | Sir Mix-A-Lot <i>Mack Daddy/Def American</i> |
| 34 • 37 | R.E.M. <i>Out of Time/Warner Bros.</i> |
| 35 • 35 | C&C Music Factory <i>Gonna Make You Sweat/Columbia</i> |
| 36 • 25 | Keith Sweat <i>Keep It Comin'/Elektra</i> |
| 37 • 20 | Paula Abdul <i>Spellbound/Captive</i> |
| 38 • 44 | Red Hot Chili Peppers <i>Blood Sugar Sex Magik/Warner Bros.</i> |
| 39 • 32 | Travis Tritt <i>It's All About to Change Warner Bros.</i> |
| 40 • 48 | Tevin Campbell <i>T.E.V.I.N./Qwest</i> |
| 41 • 98 | Vanessa Williams <i>The Comfort Zone/Capitol</i> |
| 42 • 60 | Soundgarden <i>Badmotorfinger/A&M</i> |
| 43 • 23 | Marky Mark & the Funky Bunch <i>Music for the People/Interscope</i> |
| 44 • 82 | Blacksheep <i>A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing/Mercury</i> |
| 45 • 40 | John Mellencamp <i>Whenever We Wanted/Mercury</i> |
| 46 • — | Ugly Kid Joe <i>As Ugly As They Want to Be Star Dog</i> |
| 47 • 62 | Cypress Hill <i>Cypress Hill/Ruffhouse</i> |
| 48 • — | Soundtrack <i>Wayne's World/Reprise</i> |
| 49 • 39 | Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble <i>The Sky Is Crying/Epic</i> |

| | |
|---------|---|
| 50 • 78 | Gerald Levert <i>Private Line/Atco East West</i> |
| 51 • 41 | Vince Gill <i>Pocket Full of Gold/MCA</i> |
| 52 • 36 | Ice Cube <i>Death Certificate/Priority</i> |
| 53 • 49 | Lisa Stansfield <i>Real Love/Arista</i> |
| 54 • 43 | Rod Stewart <i>Vagabond Heart/Warner Bros.</i> |
| 55 • 50 | Queensryche <i>Empire/EMI</i> |
| 56 • 34 | Public Enemy <i>Apocalypse 91... The Enemy Strikes Black/Def Jam</i> |
| 57 • 31 | Mötley Crüe <i>Decade of Decadence/Elektra</i> |
| 58 • 42 | Van Halen <i>For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge Warner Bros.</i> |
| 59 • 72 | Luther Vandross <i>Power of Love/Epic</i> |
| 60 • 47 | P.M. Dawn <i>Of the Heart, Of the Soul & Of the Cross/Gee Street/Island</i> |
| 61 • 73 | Original London Cast <i>Phantom of the Opera Highlights Polydor</i> |
| 62 • 63 | Rush <i>Roll the Bones/Atlantic</i> |
| 63 • 51 | Alan Jackson <i>Don't Rock the Jukebox/Arista</i> |
| 64 • 54 | Trisha Yearwood <i>Trisha Yearwood/MCA</i> |
| 65 • 70 | Dire Straits <i>On Every Street/Warner Bros.</i> |
| 66 • 85 | Salt-N-Pepa <i>Black's Magic/Next Plateau</i> |
| 67 • 45 | D.J. Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince <i>Homebase/Interve</i> |
| 68 • 58 | Tanya Tucker <i>What Do I Do with Me/Capitol</i> |
| 69 • 59 | Collin Raye <i>All I Can Be/Epic</i> |
| 70 • — | AMG <i>Bitch Beta Have My Money/Select</i> |
| 71 • 56 | George Strait <i>Ten Strait Hits/MCA</i> |
| 72 • 57 | Mariah Carey <i>Mariah Carey/Columbia</i> |
| 73 • 52 | Firehouse <i>Firehouse/Epic</i> |
| 74 • 76 | Michael Bolton <i>Soul Provider/Columbia</i> |
| 75 • — | Luke <i>I Got Shit on My Mind/Luke</i> |
| 76 • — | CeCe Peniston <i>Finally/A&M</i> |
| 77 • — | Marc Cohn <i>Marc Cohn/Atlantic</i> |
| 78 • 66 | Richard Marx <i>Rush Street/Capitol</i> |
| 79 • — | Pam Tillis <i>Put Yourself in My Place/Arista</i> |
| 80 • 68 | A Tribe Called Quest <i>Low End Theory/Interve</i> |
| 81 • 65 | The Black Crowes <i>Shake Your Money Maker Def American</i> |
| 82 • 67 | James Taylor <i>New Moon Shine/Columbia</i> |
| 83 • 55 | The Geto Boys <i>We Can't Be Stopped/Rap-A-Lot</i> |
| 84 • 88 | Gloria Estefan <i>Into the Light/Epic</i> |
| 85 • 74 | Madonna <i>The Immaculate Collection/Sire</i> |
| 86 • — | Patti LaBelle <i>Burnin'/MCA</i> |

| | |
|----------|---|
| 87 • 75 | Michael Crawford <i>Performs Andrew Lloyd Webber's Atlantic</i> |
| 88 • — | Van Morrison <i>The Best of Van Morrison/Mercury</i> |
| 89 • 90 | Tracy Lawrence <i>Sticks & Stones/Atlantic</i> |
| 90 • 94 | Digital Underground <i>Sons of the P/Tommy Boy</i> |
| 91 • — | Seal <i>Seal/Sire</i> |
| 92 • — | Cowboy Junkies <i>Black-Eyed Man/RCA</i> |
| 93 • 100 | 2nd II None <i>2nd II None/Profile</i> |
| 94 • 46 | Bette Midler <i>Music from "For the Boys"/Atlantic</i> |
| 95 • 97 | Bonnie Raitt <i>Nick of Time/Capitol</i> |
| 96 • 95 | Live <i>Mental Jewelry/Radioactive</i> |
| 97 • — | Simply Red <i>Stars! Atco East West</i> |
| 98 • — | Shanice <i>Inner Child/Motown</i> |
| 99 • — | Lorrie Morgan <i>Something in Red/RCA</i> |
| 100 • — | Little Village <i>Little Village/Reprise</i> |

The musician album chart is produced by the Billboard chart department for Musician, and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the Billboard computers in the month of February. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for February 1992. All charts are copyright 1992 by BPI Communications.

Is Country Music the Heartbeat of America?

Periodically America's periodicals effloresce into near-identical cover stories to the effect that Americans are flocking like never before to country music to escape a) nerve-jangling urban life and b) the latest trends in black music. Right now is such a time, with Garth Brooks on the cover of *Forbes* or *Fortune*, I can't remember which, and Sunday newspapers running their mandatory think-piece. How big is country music right now?

Though Soundscan, the firm that gathers data for *Billboard's* charts, can't yet say if the percent of country sales to total album sales is rising or falling (the company only started tracking overall country sales a few weeks ago), country's chunk of total unit sales is about 13% so far this year, according to Soundscan's Michael Fine. Not too big a chunk, that. After Garth Brooks, whose three albums were 1-2-3 on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums in the March 14 issue, the numbers tail off pretty fast. Numbers 10, 20 and 50, by Hank Williams, Jr., Sawyer Brown and the Judds, sold 13,000, 7,100 and 3,100 units respectively; their Top 200 counterparts, Metallica, Ugly Kid Joe and Paula Abdul, moved 57,000, 35,000 and 19,000.

What's changing, says Fine, is not the numbers of country albums sold, but country's music-biz credibility. Prior to the Soundscanning of the charts, says Fine, country sales were probably underreported; the jump in country albums on the Soundscan-era Top 200 (there were 30 in the week we're looking at) doesn't mean country is selling more, but it's definitely raising country's profile. For his part, Fine ascribes the buzz to Garth Brooks, "a special case unto himself."

So much for country music's new preeminence. On the other hand, just out of curiosity I took a cursory sampling of pre-Soundscan *Billboards*, just to see if there was any significant change in the number of country albums in the Top 200. Here's what I saw: On March 21, 1989 there were 4; on January 13, 1990, 5; on June 9, 1990 the number was up to 11, and on February 9, 1991 it was up to 16. Looks like something might be going on, no? So my whole previous argument could be completely wrong. —TS

Top Concert Grosses

| | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1 | Clint Black, PRCA Rodeo <i>Astrodome, Houston, TX/February 21-22</i> | \$1,749,023 |
| 2 | Neil Diamond <i>Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI/February 10-12</i> | \$1,528,125 |
| 3 | George Strait, PRCA Rodeo <i>Astrodome, Houston, TX/February 25-26</i> | \$1,192,868 |
| 4 | The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber <i>Chicago Theatre, Chicago, IL/February 4-9</i> | \$1,062,681 |
| 5 | Gloria Estefan & Miami Sound Machine <i>Palacio De Los Deportes, Mexico City, Mexico/February 7-8</i> | \$1,057,739 |
| 6 | Metallica <i>McNichols Sports Arena, Denver, CO/February 6-8</i> | \$1,000,418 |
| 7 | Neil Diamond <i>Richfield Coliseum, Richfield, OH/February 4-5</i> | \$943,474 |
| 8 | Rod Stewart <i>Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI/February 1-2</i> | \$870,863 |
| 9 | Neil Diamond <i>MECCA, Milwaukee, WI/February 14-16</i> | \$852,378 |
| 10 | Reba McEntire, PRCA Rodeo <i>Astrodome, Houston, TX/February 20</i> | \$634,644 |

BACK ISSUES

- 8 9/77 VSOP, Jarreau, Mingus
- 13 7/78 McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard
- 15 12/78 Chick Corea, avant-garde jazz, Big Joe Turner
- 21 11/79 Brian Eno, Talking Heads, Weather Report
- 34 7/81 Tom Petty, Dave Edmunds, Wayne Shorter
- 36 10/81 Grateful Dead, Zappa, Kid Creole, NY Dolls
- 45 7/82 Willie Nelson, John McLaughlin, the Matels
- 64 2/84 Stevie Wonder, X, Was (Nat Was), Ornette
- 70 8/84 Peter Wolf, King Crimson, Sly + Robbie
- 71 9/84 Heavy Metal, Dream Syndicate, Tina Turner
- 77 3/85 John Fogerty, Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
- 79 5/85 Jeff Beck, Alison Moyet, John Hiatt-Ry Cooder
- 93 7/86 Peter Gabriel, Steve Winwood, Lou Reed
- 94 8/86 Jimi Hendrix, The Cure, Prince, '38 Special
- 101 3/87 Psychedelic Furs, Elton John, Miles Davis
- 102 4/87 Robert Croy, Los Lobos, Simply Red
- 104 6/87 Springsteen, The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
- 108 10/87 U2, Tom Waits, Squeeze, Eugene Chadbourne
- 111 1/88 R.E.M., Year in Rock, 10,000 Maniacs
- 112 2/88 McCortney, Stonley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
- 113 3/88 Robert Plant, INXS, Wynton Marsalis
- 115 5/88 Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cosh
- 116 6/88 Sinéad O'Connor, Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
- 117 7/88 Jimmy Page, Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole
- 118 8/88 Pink Floyd, New Order, Smitherens
- 119 9/88 Billy Gibbons, Santana/Shorter, Vernon Reid
- 120 10/88 Keith Richards, Depeche Mode, Steve Forbert
- 121 11/88 Prince, Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
- 122 12/88 Guns N' Roses, Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns
- 123 1/89 Year in Music '88, Metallica, Jack Bruce, Fishbone
- 124 2/89 Replacements, Fleetwood Mac, Lyle Lovett
- 125 3/89 Elvis Costello, Jeff Healey, Sonic Youth
- 126 4/89 Lou Reed, John Cale, Joe Satriani
- 127 5/89 Miles Davis, Fine Young Cannibals, XTC
- 128 6/89 Peter Gabriel, Charles Mingus, Hüsker Dü
- 129 7/89 The Who, The Cure, Ziggy Marley
- 130 8/89 10,000 Maniacs, John Cougar Mellencamp, Jackson Brown/Bonnie Raitt
- 131 9/89 Jeff Beck, Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
- 132 10/89 Don Henley, Rolling Stones, Bob Marley
- 133 11/89 The '80s, Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
- 134 12/89 Grateful Dead, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Paul Kelly
- 135 1/90 Aerosmith, NRBQ, Richard Thompson, Max Q
- 136 2/90 Eric Clapton, Kate Bush, Buddy Rich, Del Fuegos
- 137 3/90 George Harrison, The Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
- 138 4/90 Tom Petty, Lenny Kravitz, Rush, The Silos
- 139 5/90 Paul McCartney, Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
- 140 6/90 Robert Plant, Suzanne Vega, Soul II Soul, Drums
- 141 7/90 Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie, Bob Clearmountain
- 142 8/90 Sinéad O'Connor, John Hiatt, World Party
- 143 9/90 Steve Vai, Michael Stipe, Malmsteen/McLaughlin
- 144 10/90 INXS, Neville Bros., Lou Reed/Vaclav Havel
- 146 12/90 Slash, Replacements, Waterboys, Pixies
- 147 1/91 Robert Johnson, Bruce Hornsby, Soul Asylum
- 148 2/91 Pink Floyd, Neil Young, Art Blakey, Black Crowes
- 149 3/91 Jerry Garcia/Elvis Costello, NWA, Pink Floyd
- 150 4/91 R.E.M., AC/DC, Top Managers, Jim Morrison
- 151 5/91 Eddie Van Halen, Fishbone, Byrds, Chris Isaak
- 152 6/91 Stevie Ray Vaughan, Morrissey, Drum Special
- 153 7/91 Bonnie Raitt, Tim Buckley, Sonny Rollins
- 154 8/91 Sting, Stevie Wonder, 15th Anniversary Issue
- 155 9/91 Paul McCartney, Axl Rose, David Bowie
- 156 10/91 Dire Straits, Jesus Jones, Paul McCartney
- 157 11/91 Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Primus, Eddy/Fogerty
- 158 12/91 Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
- 159 1/92 Super Deals!, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
- 160 2/92 Fear of Rap, Eric Clapton
- 161 3/92 U2, Harrison & Clapton, Songwriting Report
- SP1 Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones
- SP2 Masters of Metal, Metallica, Def Leppard, more



BACK ISSUES

8 13 15 21 34 36 45 64 70 71 77 93 94 101 102 104 108 111 112 113 115 116 117 118 119
 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142
 143 144 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 SP1 SP2

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TORI AMOS FINDS HERSELF



IT ALL COMES FROM THE CENTER," SHE SAYS, POINTING TO HER NAVEL. Tori Amos is explaining where her songs are conceived. "It's like a constant birthing process all the time. One kid drops and then another one fills up the belly and you wonder, 'When can I get into that bikini?'"

Tori has been going through this birthing process for four years to make her album *Little Earthquakes*, and it's produced an array of distinctive children: There's "Crucify," about religious repression, "Me and a Gun," an a cappella excursion into the mind of a woman being raped, and "Happy Phantom," about fearlessly embracing death. The centerpiece, though, is "Silent All These Years," a song about an artist finding her voice after keeping it buried.

"This is about self-expression," Tori says in a sunny Venice, California loft, wearing shoes that resemble ruby slippers. "I realized that there's a lot of power in the simple truth. People respond to things that are truthful, and they can detect when it comes from the deepest part of you. So I put away the tar and feathers and started writing these songs." The songs that emerged, some in a tiny apartment behind a church in Hollywood, some during an English exile, confronted issues Tori had been evading for many of her 28 years. A song like "Me and a Gun" makes the listener wonder if some subjects aren't simply too painful to deal with in words and music.

BY PAUL ZOLLO

"Yes," Tori answers softly. "It was painful to go through but it's about passing through to the other side. Sometimes writing songs is the only sense I can make out of anything.... This particular issue was something I had buried for six years. While writing it, I was caught up in the trauma and the euphoria. I was finally able to cry about it. When you're walking around tripping over your intestines you've got to do something, and writing songs is it for me."

Born in North Carolina, she says she started composing melodies at the age of three, before she could complete a sentence. When her parents heard her playing piano renditions of Rodgers and Hart by ear, they sent her to Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory to be trained as a classical pianist. It was a shock to her system. "I was playing the scores of Gershwin and Rodgers and Hart, and suddenly they're trying to teach me to read music by playing 'Hot Cross Buns.' I was bored out of my mind." She tolerated the classes for a few years, but her passion was saved for the songs she continued to write in secret. "It wasn't safe for the puppy to come out. You know that little pet you keep in your room? I had to keep him hid."

The Beatles convinced her that she'd rather be a Lennon or McCartney than a Horowitz, a decision which entirely bewildered her parents.

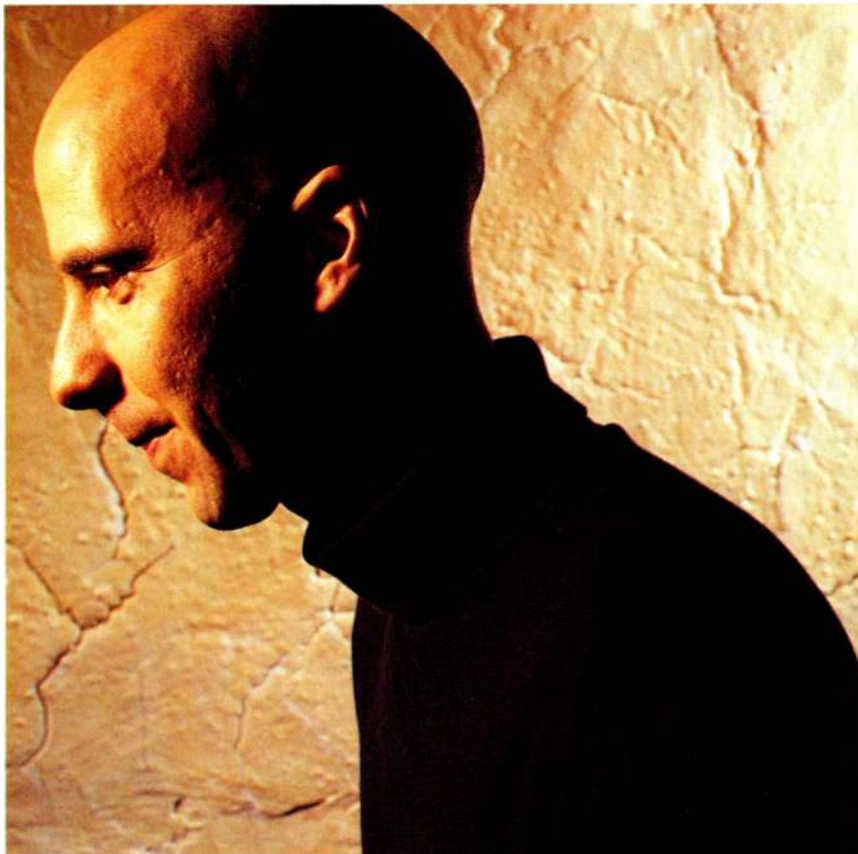
*Music from
the belly and the
spheres*

"It didn't take a genius to see that they felt they had a failed prodigy on their hands. But I knew that a classical musician has three choices: compete and perform, teach or become the church organist. I chose none of the above. It's one thing to listen to Bartok and be excited by it. It's another thing to devote 12 hours a day to playing it better than anyone else in the world."

Tori's studies, both at home and at school, resulted in a songwriter who writes in movements more than verses and choruses, structuring songs like orchestral suites. Her bridges are consistently remarkable counterpoints of voices in every audible octave, with a Lennon-like blend of fantastic imagery: "...limitation dreams with the flying pigs turbid blue and the drug-stores too...."

"Bridges are my strength because I have so much material that doesn't [cont'd on page 28]

JOEY BARON'S SLEIGHT OF HAND



JOEY BARON'S SHAVEN HEAD GIVES HIM A PROTRUDING-EARED, elfin look; if he took his shoes off, his feet might be cloven. He is, in no special order, 5'7" and 135 pounds, a huge eater, the favorite drummer of musicians as different as Carmen McCrae and Bill Frisell, a greedy laughier, a composer who writes from a drum kit, and an amateur magician. Rummaging through his tiny home studio a few weeks ago, he made a pencil wobble, a penny disappear, an inset diamond vanish from a black plastic stick.

"In Richmond, Virginia, where I grew up, I became fascinated by magic very early. I always wanted to perform. My parents had a rough time and I'd see them pulling their hair out to just get food. I guess I wanted to do something for them, make them laugh.

"When I was nine I bought a neighbor kid's snare drum. That was my whole drum set for a long time. I'd put a brush on one lug and that was my cymbal; I'd pat my foot. That's the basis of this thing I can now call a trademark—getting a lot out of a little. I'm fascinated by how something that's at bottom just a noisemaker can make music. It's really just an extension of a magic trick." And it's tempting to see Baron's drumming as lit by the spirit of sleight of hand, of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't. Loping along easily behind a soloist, he'll launch into a staggered, across-the-bar fill that leaves you

BY TONY SCHERMAN

floundering and guessing—where's the one?—just as he lands, via some sneaky back door, smack on a funky backbeat. Or he'll drag a wet finger across his tom-tom to pull out a human-sounding moan. It's an aesthetic of wit, minimal resources and fast hands.

In the late '60s Baron, now 36, played everything: soul, jazz, rock 'n' roll. He left Virginia for Boston's Berklee College of Music, dropped out, hung out, worked his way to L.A. with a lounge band and one burning goal: to accompany Carmen McCrae. "This was when everyone was fusing out, but I went the other way: I wanted to learn how to accompany, how to get inside a tempo, four quarter notes and no filler, and make it feel fascinating. Carmen brought that together in a practical way—she wasted no notes." Tracking the singer across Los Angeles like a monomaniac in a Truffaut comedy, he finally auditioned for her. "She looked at me and said, 'You got the gig, motherfucker.'"

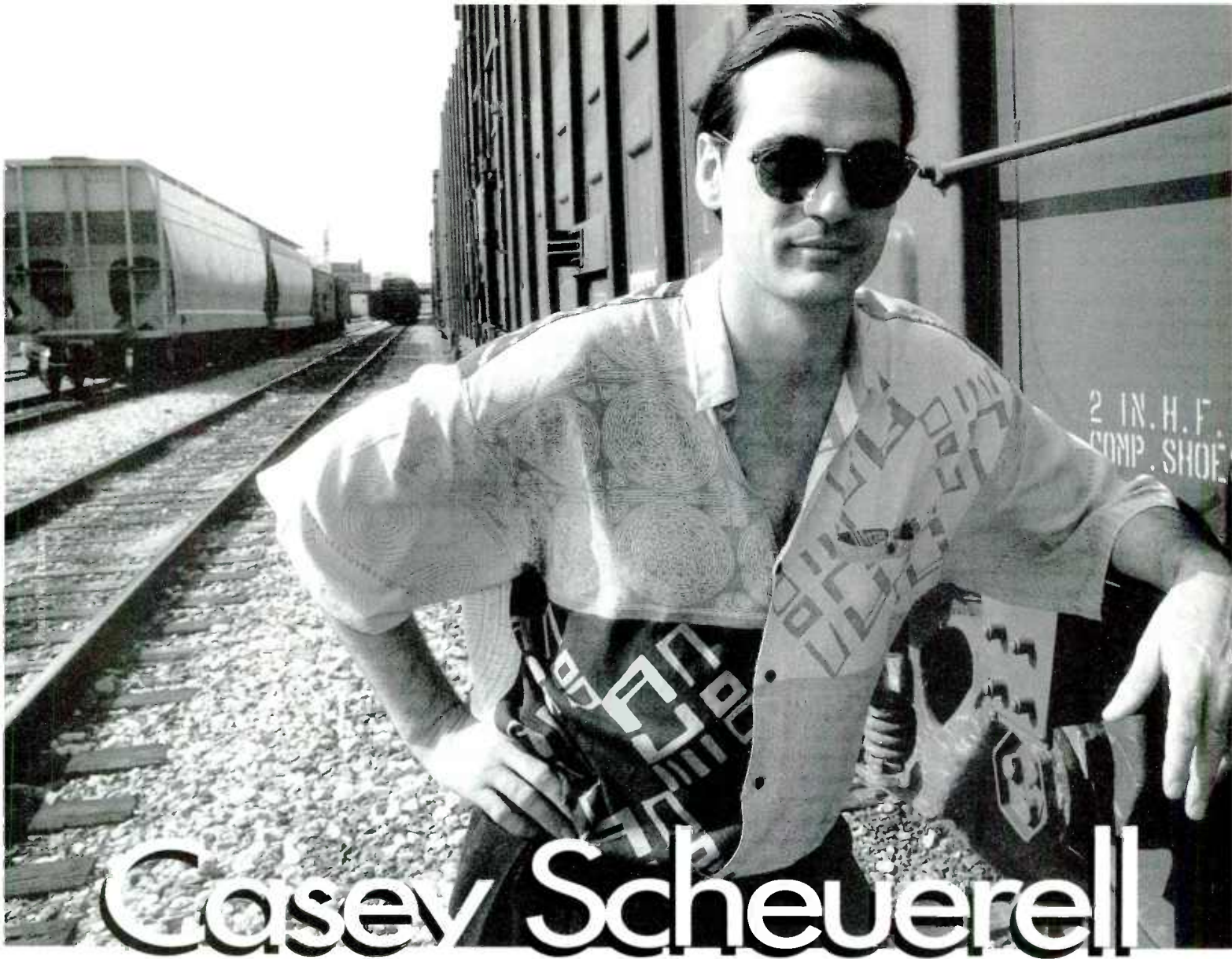
Joey toured with McCrae for three years, spent three more with Al Jarreau and freelanced with everyone from Big Joe Turner to Lainie Kazan. A pianist named Carl Schroeder "was the guy who got me to go outside. Up to then I didn't know what 'self-expression' meant; when

*An
aesthetic of wit,
minimal resources,
fast hands*

work came, you took it. But there's no support in L.A. for outside playing," so he headed back east.

"In New York I couldn't buy a gig, it was that bad." He played bar mitzvahs, file-clerked on Wall Street, soaked up wisdom from Mel Lewis and Elvin Jones (his other drum hero is Donald Bailey) and caught on with Red Rodney and Ira Sullivan, guitarist Jim Hall and pianist Enrico Pieranunzi. By the mid-'80s he'd found his community: the youngish electro-acoustic voyagers Bill Frisell, Tim Berne, John Zorn and Hank Roberts, whose missions into everything from tone rows to country are an increasingly attractive alternative to their contemporaries' staid neo-bebop.

"Some of the things I do, like playing cymbal stands, playing the shell of the drum, might seem real outside, but it's just part of the palette. Besides, lots of people do it: *[cont'd on page 29]*



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The best reason to play drums.

CAMPER TO CRACKER



THIS PLACE HAS A GREAT JUKEBOX," DAVID LOWERY SAYS. SURE enough, from Flipper to Patsy Cline to Gwar to "Rock the Boat," we are looking at one heck of a song selection. The singer/songwriter/guitarist and former guiding light of college radio sweethearts Camper Van Beethoven is sitting in the Village; not *the* Village, this one's a bar in Lowery's new hometown of Richmond, Virginia. In addition to the mutant jukebox, this establishment sports a hipster-goateed bartender and a resident transvestite. Down the street there's a state prison, a Confederate graveyard and a fillin' station. Sounds like a perfect home for the man who implored us to "take the skinheads bowling," and a fitting crucible for Cracker, Lowery's new rock 'n' roll band.

"Cracker's bass player and guitarist and I all grew up in Redlands, California," says Lowery. "After Camper broke up the first thing I did was track down Johnny Hickman." Hickman, who'd been playing country guitar around Bakersfield, was happy to pack it all into Lowery's '64 Valiant station wagon and head east. "We worked for about four months writing songs," Lowery says. "When our demos got picked up by Virgin we started playing with some people around here trying to get a band together. Then I found out that Davey was willing to play with us." Davey Faragher brings 20 years of bass-playing experience to Cracker, having dropped out of school at age 15 to tour with his siblings (the Faragher Brothers had regional hits in the '70s and were the first all-white band to appear on "Soul Train"). With the serious rhythm section of Faragher and drummer Joey

Peters to steady his dirty-dog lyrics and desperate delivery, Lowery rocks harder today than he ever did in Camper; the Arabic reggae stylings that characterized that band are nowhere to be found on this record, replaced by a cranked-up, guitar-driven rock that Lowery refers to as "cracker soul."

"I was interested in doing something more direct, narrowing the field of influences I was drawing on," he says. "Camper was like the quintessential California band. Out there everyone is from somewhere else, so California doesn't really have a culture. Surf music drew on everything from movie themes to country tunes, and in a way, that's where Camper had its roots." In Cracker, Lowery's familiar West Coast-grungy vocals are way up front, and he's still got his writer's eye wide open for the kind of low-rent character that populated Camper songs like "When I Win the Lottery" and "Wasted." "Growing up in Redlands, our role model was the cool older brother with the red GTO with one black fender and an eight-track tape of Ted Nugent," he laughs. "It was fully CalJam, our neighborhood." That huge '70s

*Camper Van
Beethoven's David
Lowery jams on*

rockfest was Lowery's first concert, and he still has a clear affection for the Quaalude-fueled stupidity of that gonzo era. That guy with the GTO, all grown up now with no place to go, is celebrated in Cracker songs like "Mr. Wrong" and "Can I Take My Gun to Heaven?" "The parking-lot music at my high school was ZZ Top and Little Feat," he says. "I love that stuff!"

That may come as yet another shock to Camper fans who held them up as underground heroes and were crushed when they signed to a major label. But Lowery is more concerned with keeping a musical attitude than with being alternatively correct. "Camper may have come off as being weird, but really we were just trying to be a pop band," he says. "People say you're betraying your audience, but the way that a record gets from a band to a store to you—does that change the music? I don't understand that shit."

No matter. All those considerations got washed away in the feedback the minute Cracker started putting this record together. "We were

BY PETER CRONIN



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CRACKER BOX

DAVID LOWERY plays Fender Squier Strats (“Korean please, pre-Taiwanese”) and a Yamaha acoustic/electric. On the record he played through a Vox AC-30, but onstage prefers to plug directly into his Peavey Classic (“you can *not* kill it”). In the studio JOHNNY HICKMAN plays his ’69 Les Paul through an Ampeg Reverberocket or a “weird” Peavey Stereo Chorus. Live, he goes from his guitar to an Ibanez delay pedal into four Fender Twins (“He doesn’t always use ’em all, but he turns the lights on so it looks good”). Hickman also plays Mohner Echo Harps, and both guitarists use GHS strings. DAVEY FARAGHER plays a ’58 Fender Precision with Rotosounds through a Gallien-Krueger 200-watt biamp head, which plugs into two Ampeg 8-15 cabinets with the hole in the top sealed up. JOEY PETERS plays Tama drums and Paiste cymbals.

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playing a song one day at rehearsal and I looked at Johnny and said, 'There is nothing *to* this song, it's just got to be all attitude.' So we played it a few times until we were totally laughing and had to stop. And I said, 'That's it! That is just fully Ted Nugent at CalJam!'"

AMOS

[cont'd from page 23] make it into other songs, so it gets thrown into my bridges! The bridge is the moment in a song that can take you someplace new, so that when you return to the chorus for the third time, you'll never hear it like you heard it the first time.

"The songs make certain demands. And they take on their own personalities. It's like I'm creating monsters, like making *The Thing*! They follow me around. I have some that hang around for years."

"*Silent All These Years*" hung around for six years, starting with a solo piano pattern Tori calls "that little bumble-bee thing" that led her into the heart of the song. "These songs demanded to be written. They are what they wanted to be. I wouldn't allow fear to get in the way. Because it's fear, after all, that kills us."

What triggered Tori's desire to face her fear and end this silence of the heart? "Mostly it was reaction to my last album," she answered, referring to a group project called *Y Kan't Tori Read?* in which she played synth and concentrated more on surface than soul. "I was afraid to confront a lot of things and I was not going to expose myself. So I got out the hairspray. And I had some good hairspray."

She quickly tired of people responding more to her hair than her songs, and eventually returned to the instrument where she first discovered her musical soul, the acoustic piano. "When I started playing piano again, it was like I remembered who I was. I found myself again."

TORI'S STORY

According to TORI AMOS' boyfriend Eric Rosse, who co-produced some of *Little Earthquakes*, most of the songs were recorded on a Yamaha nine-foot grand, with two songs cut on a Kawai Grand. A Yamaha Electric Grand CP-80 was also used, and this is her instrument on the road. Her vocal mikes include a Steven Paul-modified Telefunken 251, an AKG 414 and a Neumann U-87. She played the sampled strings for "Girl" on a Kurzweil Acoustic Expander. An Eventide HD-3000 was used on her vocals.

BARON

[cont'd from page 24] Han Bennink, Gerry Hemingway. If I had to describe my sound, I'd call it loose and slow, the way Southerners are slow. And soulful, hopefully. What stirs me is some sort of soulful move—hearing a singer sing a phrase that's just—*pow!*—and trying to get that kind of emotion out of the drums.”

Baron started composing five years ago; today his group Baron Down, with its eccentric lineup of tenor sax (Ellery Eskelin), trombone (Steve Swell) and drums, plays 20 of his chordless, keyless songs, scrappy little shards that evoke Albert Ayler's skewed folk-gospel. The band's first album is due this spring.

“I'm not a keyboardist, I play the drum set. So I'll sit and play something. After a while I hear a shape and a melody on the drums. I'll keep singing it in my head until I can really zero in on the pitches, and I write them down. Then I check them on the piano to make sure they sound like what I was hearing.”

He hears melodies when he plays drums?

“Oh yeah; it goes back to taking what's potentially a noisemaker and making music with it.”

Why not just take up piano?


“Because I play drums. To evoke the effect of tonality on the drums is just as serious, just as challenging to me as learning to play through changes is to a pianist. The thing about the drum is, it's got indefinite pitch. If I hear a certain melody, maybe someone will hear another, or they won't hear a melody at all, just the rhythmic attack. But that's the beauty of an unpitched instrument: Not by tuning, but by inflection and timing, you can create the illusion of fixed pitch.” Sometimes the magic really works: In performance, Baron will suddenly smack a three-drum phrase that echoes the horn melody. His drums sound tuned; they're not.

Sometimes he won't even write a melody. “Everything might be notated for sax and trombone *except* the pitches—rhythmic values, dynamics, repeats. Deciding what pitch to play

becomes the improvising. That's where it departs from standard jazz blowing.” Or there might be notes but no chords: “If you heard ‘My Funny Valentine’ without chords, you might imagine a very different song. So someone in my audience might hear a whole other song from the one I hear.” And we're back to Baron's magic show, to pulling melodies from a listener's ear. “But I'm not trying to trick people, I'm trying to draw them in, to let them use their own imaginations.

“For a long time I felt guilty because I didn't know that language of harmony the way other musicians did. I finally just decided to take my

instrument and relate to it the same way those guys related to theirs. Not by tuning 8000 toms. I take the drum set exactly as it is: This is what I've got, and this is where I want to get—to be able to project some kind of music.

“Back when I needed encouragement, John Zorn would say, ‘Man, use what you know. You have more background than all of us put together; while we were studying, you were out there with Art Pepper and Chet Baker.’ And I *can* see a certain sound coming out. It's not Stravinsky. It's not Wayne Shorter by a long shot. But I'm really excited by the way I'm going about this.” 



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TRICK BAG

JOEY uses a Yamaha SY-77 synth/sequencer as a writing tool. His drums are Sonor, his cymbals (16" crash, ride and splash; 14" hi-hat) were made by “a brilliant Italian cymbal smith, Roberto Spizzichino.”

On the road it's drums *du jour*—he packs only a stickbag (Vic Firth American Classics, SB). He's got a DW double-bass pedal—“Yeah, I take two pedals and make 'em sound like one.”

Look Homeward

LOVETT

**DOWN ON THE FARM
WITH LYLE
AND HIS RELATIVES,
LIVING AND DEAD**

LYLE LOVETT CALLS A little before 10 in the morning. "I'm going to England on Saturday, and I have to do a lot of things," he says. "Do you mind coming around with me? No? We're going to Austin. I'm planning on coming back by tonight, but you might bring a shaving kit. Bring the essentials. I'll pick you up in 20 or 25 minutes, depending on the traffic."

Courteous, gracious, precise... and punctual too, I think, as a gleaming new van pulls into the driveway of my Houston hotel at 10:20. In the back are three guitar cases, and a black duffel bag stuffed,

it turns out, with cowboy boots. The driver is unmistakable. Lyle Pearce Lovett, 34, is dressed in a tweed jacket, dark shirt, beige pants and ostrich cowboy boots. ("A real popular dress boot among cowboys," he will explain. "I got these

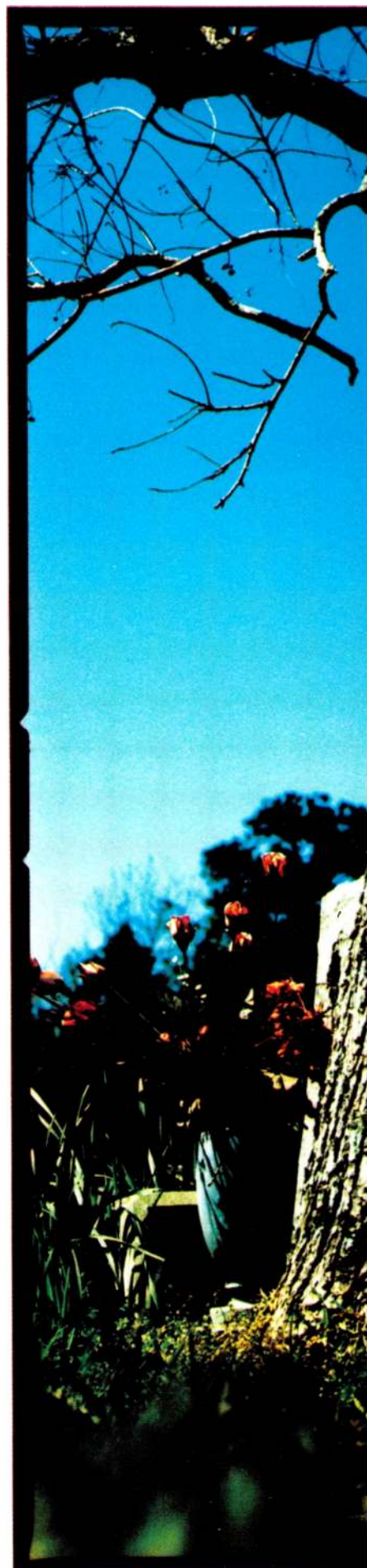


because they're supposed to be cool, but I haven't worn them very much. My personal cool hasn't

lived up to the cool of the boots.") He's clearly excited about taking his new wheels on their inaugural road trip: Austin is some three hours away. "John Hiatt called me a few weeks ago and said he had been shopping for a Chevy Suburban,"

BY GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

photographs by michael lavine





World Radio History



"WE'RE ALL GONNA BE
HERE FOREVER." —LYLE IN
HIS FAMILY'S GRAVEYARD

Lovett says as we pull out. "But he'd found out that they ship most of them down to Texas, they were really difficult to find in Tennessee. So I made a few phone calls and started checking these things out for Hiatt." He grins and pats the steering wheel. "Well, here we go." Hiatt, meanwhile, is still shopping.

"I've always been a Ford pickup man, so it was a real trauma to buy Chevrolet," continues Lovett. "I move my record deal from Nashville to L.A. at the height of this boom in country music, I buy a Chevrolet truck just as G.M. is laying off 16,000 workers. Timing is everything."

It's the morning after the Grammy Awards. Lovett had originally been nominated in the song-written-specifically-for-a-movie category for his reworking of "You Can't Resist It" from the *Switch* soundtrack, but since the song had already appeared on his first album, he called to withdraw it from consideration. "I think they were surprised to hear from me," he says. "But the worst thing in the world would be for anyone to perceive that you thought you were wrongly nominated but left yourself in there anyway." So he watched on TV—aghast. "I called Willis [Alan Ramsey, the songwrit-

er] during Michael Bolton. I said, 'Can you believe this?' And he said, 'You know, it's singers like Michael Bolton who give Daryl Hall a bad name.'

Lovett won a Male Country Vocal Grammy two years ago, but now that he's switched to MCA's pop division, the label is anxious to play down his past. MCA can relax. The new album, *Joshua Judges Ruth*, has exactly one bona-fide country song on it. Rather, Lovett's fourth release is an extraordinary mix of gospel, ballads and blues, more reminiscent of *Dixie Chicken* than of, say, Hank Williams. Synth-free, with intimate live vocals, *Joshua Judges Ruth* was produced by George Massenburg along with Lovett and his longtime co-arranger, Billy Williams. It is, as Massenburg puts it, "a great Lyle record. Billy and I were just there to make it easy."

What the album—which is named after three consecutive books from the Old Testament—shares with its predecessors is songwriting craftsmanship, musicianship and dark humor. "I work in traditional forms of music," says Lovett. "I love blues, and I love the straightforwardness of the country lyric. And you can be sneaky with both, which I enjoy."

With *Joshua Judges Ruth* out, a tour (with an even larger Large Band)



“YOU’RE JUST LUCKY TO BE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME AND HAVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES ON FRONTWARDS.”

underway and an auspicious deadpan acting debut in Robert Altman’s brilliant new film *The Player*—Lovett lurks around its fringes looking like Buster Keaton’s creepy first cousin—the stage seems set for a national bout of Lylemania.

In the meantime, we’re tooling toward the area outside Houston where Lovett grew up and still lives. He asks reporters to be “nonspecific” about the geography. “I have had people *drop by*,” he says.

The family farm is half an hour from downtown, and the road there goes past churches, fast-food shops and lube centers. “When I was a kid, this really was all just cow pastures. You get attached to a place, it’s hard to watch it change. I frequently run into people who say, ‘What are *you* doing in town? Are you doing a show?’ And I just say I’m visiting.”

Lovett’s great-great-grandfather on his mother’s side was a Lutheran weaver from Bavaria who helped establish a German farming community here in the 1840s; his father’s family is from a town in East Texas, about 70 miles away. Although there’s been a smattering of ministers in the clan over the years, each generation has produced at least one farmer. Lovett’s Uncle Calvin started as a vegetable farmer and now raises cattle. His parents used to work for Exxon; now, with Lyle, they raise quarterhorses and race them in Texas and Louisiana. “The race is over in 20 seconds,” says Lovett, appreciatively. “You can lose so *fast*.”

Lovett is an only child, but he grew up surrounded by “a lot of family.” He remembers his grandmother’s house as a center of activity, even while he and his parents lived in Houston, until he was five. “We’d come out every weekend and stay with Grandma and Grandpa,” he says. “They had an old plough horse—Dolly was her name—and she’d pull a sled that would drag along the ground in between the rows of corn. And I remember they’d let me ride in that. They’d pitch ears in and I had to duck.”

“Did you ever consider farming yourself?”

“Not really. I never liked to work that hard.”

He went to a small parochial school with “pretty much the same 12 people in my class,” and then to a large public high school where, “more quiet than shy,” he ran track and was, briefly, a Future Farmer of America. Mostly he indulged a passion for racing motorcycles.

“My dad became my pit crew,” he says. “Instead of going to the high school football game Friday night, we’d be stuck in the garage taking my bike apart and putting it all back together to get it ready for the race on Sunday. And Mom took super-8 movies of every race I was ever in.”

Lovett graduated a semester early and went off to Texas A&M, where he majored in journalism. He covered the city council but mostly wrote about music (he was also playing gigs by this time). His parents put him through school and didn’t pressure him to get a job when he got out. So he kept writing songs and worked freelance. “I had a list of regular clients,” he says. “I

would teach proofreading, basic usage skills and business letter-writing and report-writing. That’s how I paid for my demos.”

We’re now approaching the old neighborhood—flat farmland, but hardly rural. After Lovett’s grandmother’s death in 1979, the family property was divided up among her seven children, and some was sold off. He narrates the unfolding landscape:

“This is our church... This is where I went to grade school, where my mom went to grade school, and all her brothers and sisters—that school right there... Some people still farm here, but you can see the subdivisions are encroaching... Our church cemetery is down this road... This was my Great-Uncle Johnny’s house... And these were his two children... And this house was built by a younger brother of my grandfather, Alvin... This house *here* is the house that my grandfather was born in... This was my Uncle Eugene’s house, he’s dead now... My Uncle Calvin’s place is right back *there*... and this is my Aunt Jeannette, my mom’s younger sister... Grandma and Grandpa’s house used to sit right in here, but this property was sold out of the family after Grandma died, and I was able to buy the house back after a few years and move it, so this is where I live. Grandpa built the house in 1911... That’s my parents’ house—*there’s Daddy*.”

We pull in. The Lovetts live in a brick house just a few paces from Lyle’s white clapboard house, with a barn and stable nearby. Mr. Lovett has been jogging up and down the driveway, but he comes over.

“Suburban’s running real smooth,” says Lyle.

“I like it. Might have to borrow it sometime.” His father winks.

Lyle’s parents are the sort of people who, when they meet you, ask straightaway which of them you think Lyle takes after—and then stand still so you can decide. (Subjective answer: both.) From them you get an idea of where Lovett’s soft-spoken confidence comes from. When you consider also that he’s worked with many of the same musicians for several years and that his business manager is a buddy from first grade, it’s easy to fathom his strong sense of who he is and where he’s from.

None of which keeps him from setting off the car alarm as we climb into the van to head for Austin.

“In high school we had the usual dances,” Lovett says, guiding the van west on 290. “But I never learned to dance, really. And I just think it’s *so important*. I *still* want to learn how to dance.” He seems almost agitated. “It’s just such a... such a *nice* thing for a man to be able to do. Because one of my universal truths about women is that women love to dance. And my *life* would be different if I’d only learned how to dance.

“See, my folks are *good* dancers. Everybody at weddings always comments on what great dancers they are. They’re really... it’s just... it’s a dignified skill. To have. I would watch them dance and think, ‘Aah, I can’t do that. I’ll never be able to do that.’ Plus, who was I gonna dance with?

"But I was always interested in music. I played guitar starting in second grade, though I was never ambitious about it. I was the only guy in the whole school that *had* a guitar, so I felt very satisfied just being able to play a few chords. I had *done* it. I had nothing to aspire to. But my mom was one of these moms that wanted their kid to have every opportunity, and I had some opportunities that I really, at the time, wished that I didn't have to have. Such as piano. I still get a fright when I walk by a piano. I always felt like I was inadequate, 'cause I was. My mother had me doing painting one summer, which I was a complete disaster at. And the next summer I took speed-reading, which I cite as the reason I'm so illiterate. She thought that it'd be good preparation for me going into high school. I read *1984* and *Animal Farm* each in about 30 minutes—those were the culmination, the climax of the whole program. *Animal Farm* was really confusing at that speed. Later I read it at normal speed, and I had quite the wrong impression the first time around."

Outside it's still flat: pine forests, oil wells, cattle grazing, hawks sitting on posts, occasional Southern Pacific Railroad cars. Lovett explains how he started playing in clubs when he was 18 and doing his own songs at 20.

"I always thought that if someone was gonna be interested in me as a performer, it was because of my songs—not so much the way I sang 'em," he says. He listened to all the Austin-based singer/songwriters of the time—Jerry Jeff Walker, Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, B.W. Stevenson, Michael Murphey, Rusty Weir and Willis Alan Ramsey, with whom he eventually cowrote the gorgeous "North Dakota" on *Joshua Judges Ruth*.

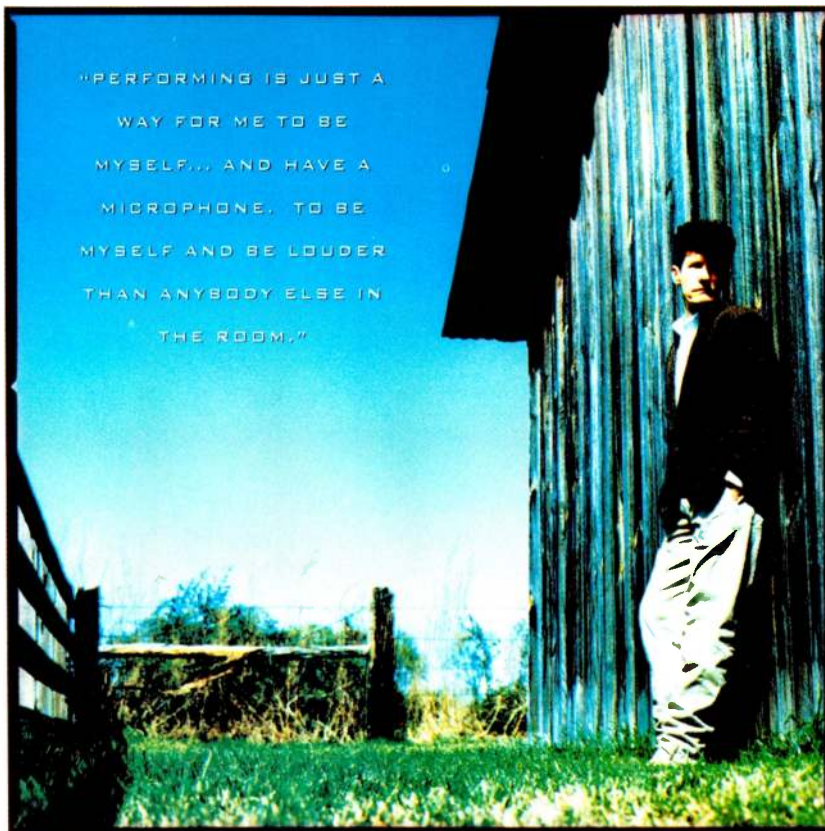
"Back then, I went and bought some tennis shoes like Willis used to have," Lovett says. "I used to try to stand like Willis. Used to try to sing like Willis." (Ramsey's first and only album came out in 1972. Says Lovett: "Willis is a meticulous guy, and he has this reputation for being a perfectionist—to the point where he's never *done* a second album.")

In 1984 Lovett cut some demos—18 songs, 10 of which became the first LP. Some of the other songs ended up on later albums, and even the new collection has at least one song ("Since the Last Time," the "funeral song") that dates to 1979. Because all his albums tend to be half new and half older songs, Lovett says that the apparent evolution away from country toward a bluesier sound has less to do with songwriting than with song selection.

"In my listening experience—look at the river! That's the Brazos. It's really high. It's *way* up. Anyway, I enjoy records that don't pull you from one extreme to another, that establish a feeling and leave you there for a while. On the new album, I felt it was important to have the death songs, the Death Trilogy, all together, so you could either listen to them or skip 'em all at once."

"How do you feel about having left Nashville behind?"

"It was an easy transition," he says. "With the second album, *Pontiac*, the Los Angeles office started helping, trying to do things with my record. Because it didn't take MCA Nashville long to figure out that my main audience wasn't really the core country audience. But they always let me do the singer/songwriter thing and were very supportive. Actually, I got good response from country radio on my first album, but by the third one my luck was not very good. Country radio—not Nashville—is the reason I officially moved my deal out to Los Angeles. Nashville's a very open place; country radio is not a very open place. I didn't get played in *Houston!* Places



that could have really helped me, I didn't get played."

"Why do you think that was?"

"I really don't know what it was. Whether they were aware of me as kind of a local folk singer, or what. Maybe it was that perception."

We stop for gas, pick up some bottled water. After Lovett accidentally sets off the car alarm again, we proceed toward Austin. The terrain is getting rockier. "Poetically, it would have been nice had I grown up in the country," he says. "That seems to be the ideal country artist: when you finally go to town and it's a big deal. Country music seems to want you to have this 'Gee whiz, I can't believe I'm here' kind of feeling. But when you get in your truck, and you drive somewhere, it's *really easy to believe that you're there*. It's *really* no big surprise."

"There's the tower," says Lovett, pointing out sniper Charles Whitman's infamous 1966 perch. "We made very good time."

First stop is the Governor's Mansion. Lovett's favorite video director, Wayne Miller, is married to Governor Ann Richards' chef. Because the governor is off in some auditorium watching Arnold Schwarzenegger exhort the youth of Austin to exercise, we slip into the kitchen to scarf a plate of Sarah's delicious oatmeal cookies. We're also treated to a tour of the Greek-revival mansion, with Lovett asking polite questions, admiring the rugs and observing, quite correctly, that in one famous painting "Davy Crockett looks a little like Keith Richards."

Fortified, we set out to get things done. After triggering off the car alarm one last time—he finally just turns it off—Lovett drives to his bootmaker, Lee Miller of Texas Traditions. The shop was opened by the legendary Charlie Dunn immortalized in the Jerry Jeff Walker song, and now Lee runs it with his wife Carrlyn. Lovett empties his duffel bag and explains what he needs. The three of them do a lot of walking back and forth, waving swatches of material around and holding boots aloft. They confer frequently. Terms like "variegated," "scaloped" and "receded French toe" eventually give way to appreciative murmurings—"Oh, that'll be *pretty*"; "It'll be *real*

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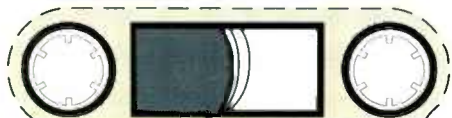


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nice"; "Those'd be gorgeous"—as key decisions are reached. All is well until someone notices a small hole in one of Lyle's stage boots.

"Oh, man."

"How long are you gonna be on tour?" asks Lee.

"Two weeks."

"Those'll last two weeks."

Lovett takes the boots with him. He'll do the British tour with the hole.

"I hope no one notices," he says in the van. "I'd better hold my dancing down."

Now we're headed for the outskirts of

Austin. "I enjoy the idea that they're hand-crafted," says Lovett, who has ordered a couple of new pairs. "Lee takes such pride in what he does. It's the same thing with this guitar maker we're going to see."

Lovett has known Bill Collings since 1978 and, judging from their two-hour encounter this particular day, it's been a relationship based equally on a shared affection for custom-built acoustic guitars and for deadpan one-upmanship. At times they seem to communicate telepathically. A typical exchange:

Lyle: "Sunburst."

Bill: "Could."

Lovett picks up a guitar Collings has been building for him and starts to play.

"Wow. This feels like a guitar. Wow. It really pops."

"Yeah, there's plenty of notes in that guitar, Lyle."

"It's really nice, Bill."

Lovett compliments Collings on the new digs; Collings tells him he hopes to turn out 20 guitars a month.

Lyle: "How many did you used to make?"

Bill: "Maybe a dozen a year. In between mood swings."

While Lyle pulls out, in succession, the three guitars he's brought from Houston and explains what he needs done with them, the conversation bounces from Lyle's new album to Bill's new sports car. Around the time the baby photos come out, Lyle tries to get down to business again.

"Help me decide this," he says urgently. "I would like a sturdy guitar that I could play on tour and hand to the crew and know it'll hold up."

More discussion, about types of wood and what they'd cost. Then Collings leads him into another room where a man is working at a table.

Bill: "He wants Brazilian, Bruce."

Bruce (barely looking up): "A little stuffy, don't you think?"

Bill: "Well, we could give him the cheap stuff."

Lovett is laughing hard. He implores Collings to take some notes about what he wants done to each guitar. Collings grudgingly reaches for a pad.

"Are they gonna let you play this year, or just plug you in and turn you off again?" Collings asks, casually.

After Lovett announces he's thinking of getting himself a stage suit to match his guitars—"something in a curly maple, perhaps"—he departs, empty-handed. The guitars cannot be repaired before Saturday. He'll do the British tour with a hole in his boot and without his favorite Gibson. "Thanks for taking care of me," he tells Collings, who has stepped outside to admire the new van. "I'll call you every day until we get this figured out."

Twenty minutes later, we're waiting in the bar of a Mexican restaurant for cellist John Hagen to join us for dinner. Lovett sips iced tea and proof-reads the CD booklet for the new album.

"I feel an added pressure with the record," he says. "With a record, you have every opportunity to do it right, and it will be treated as if everything about it is intentional. I feel a tremendous responsibility. I always try to do a good job with whatever I'm doing, but I can cut myself a little more slack on some things. If I have a night

GARY MOORE

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onstage when my voice isn't up to par, I can struggle through it and feel okay about the show. But if I spell someone's name wrong on the god-damn album, I could beat myself up forever."

Hagen arrives, everyone orders enchiladas, and the two of them discuss the upcoming shows. (Lovett says he likes touring except that it's not conducive to writing: "You're just lucky to be at the right place at the right time and have all your clothes on frontwards.") The young woman in the booth next to ours taps Lovett on the shoulder and says, "Excuse me, what's your name?" He signs her napkin, and thanks her. During the evening he will sign another half-dozen autographs; he always says "thank you" before the fans do.

"Lyle's got an adventuresome streak in him," says Hagen, when Lovett is off making a call. "You'll be up in front of two or three thousand people and he'll pull out a song that you *may* have heard a few years ago. Or you may have not."

Later, after Hagen heads home, Lovett drives us by the house his old girlfriend once lived in. They've split up, she's left town, and now her new boyfriend lives there. "It just doesn't feel like home anymore," he says drily, as we cruise past.

It's nine o'clock and we're finally headed back to Houston, but Lovett, trapped in his van, still faces some questioning.

"Would you act in another movie?"

"With Altman? In a second. But I'm not actively seeking this kind of work. You have to be careful. There's a certain dignity, I think, in being happy with what you do, as opposed to all of a sudden having *too much fun*. So much about my songs and the recording process and the video clips that I've been involved with reflects my judgment, which I feel is very consistent.

And it's really easy to undo what you've worked to establish by doing something stupid. I'm verging on that now, doing all this press."

"Are you comfortable performing, at this point?"

"I don't feel like I have the kind of personality that walks into a room and commands attention. Quite the opposite. I never felt very successful at getting anyone interested in talking to me. So I really think this whole performing thing is a way for me basically to just be myself...and have a microphone. To be myself and be louder than anybody else in the room. The songs are a vehicle

for getting attention. I just hope, in the long run, they're good enough to be worth all the trouble."

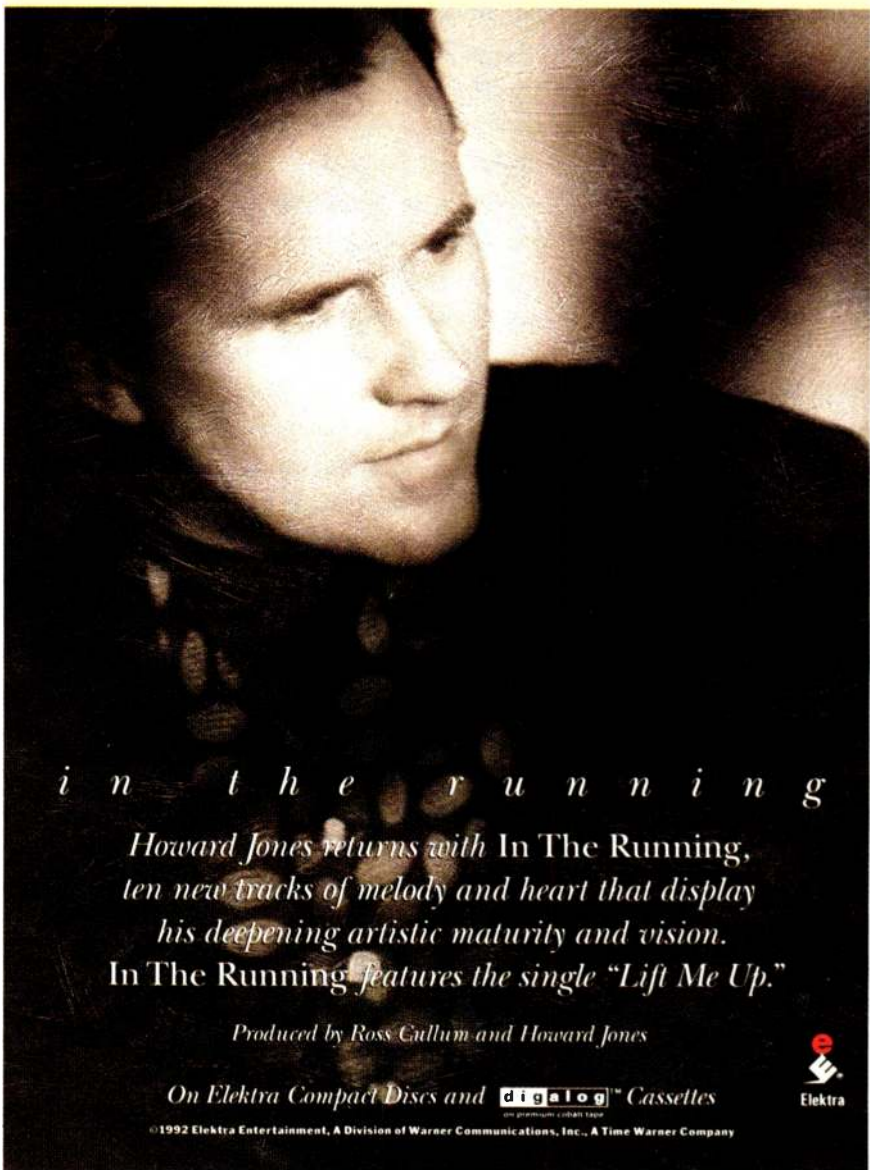
"Which ones are you happiest with?"

"The songs about small bits of life. The songs that point out something that exists in human nature. Those are the kind of things that I enjoy writing about. Those are the kind of songs that move me."

"Let's talk a little about the new album. Where does the deathbed scene in 'Baltimore' come from?"

"It's sort of a divine retribution/flashback/dream sequence. The song's about the last time I

HOWARD JONES




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LYLE STYLE

LYLE LOVETT became a Gibson fan this year when he picked up a 1940 J-45 that he says sounds great on tape. He also plays a Martin and a Collings that's "sort of styled after a Martin." He'll pick any medium-gauge, phosphor bronze strings, but his favorites are Guilds. Lovett uses Sunrise and Lloyd Baggs pickups on his acoustics, putting them through a Demeter tube direct box. His electric is a Gibson Super 400 played through a '64 Fender Twin with Electro-Voice speakers. Producer George Massenburg says that *Joshua Judges Ruth* was recorded using lots of cool microphones, among them Bruel & Kjaer 4011s and 4003s, AKG 414s, C24s, C12s and D112s and a Neumann KM54.

saw my grandmother alive. I was going away for the summer. And Grandma was always really supportive, always wanted you to go and do things, so this was really uncharacteristic of her. The day I left I was headed for the airport—we changed planes in Baltimore—and I stopped by to see her as I was leaving. She was sick, but we didn't think she was near death. But she asked me to not go. So it was really a weird thing—a hard thing. And she died the day before I came home.”

“Family Reserve?”

“The names and stories are all real. The only inaccuracy is the date that my Uncle Eugene died.

He actually died in 1980, but I needed another syllable. I feel kinda funny about that. I wrote more verses about different people, and I kept the ones that I thought worked best for the song.”

“You mention members of your family in a number of songs. How do they feel about that?”

“They seem to be okay with it. The reaction that I've gotten so far seems to be positive. People seem to be pleased. Although in ‘The Family Reserve,’ the reaction of course is from the relatives—because all the people that are mentioned are gone.”

“Okay, the love songs. ‘I've Been to Memphis.’”

“A naive song written from a naive point of view. It's more of a joke. *Me* singing a song like that is ironic—a song about going on the road and meeting lots of women. In a way it's the same kind of attitude as in ‘Give Back My Heart,’ which I wrote when I was 17—that's one of the first songs I ever wrote, and it's from this wise, older point of view of some guy who's been nabbed by some girl...you know, I hadn't even been on a *date*. It was strictly wishful thinking. ‘I've Been to Memphis’ is in the same vein.”

“‘She's Already Made Up Her Mind’ is so sharply observed. When she was ‘looking at me without moving her eyes,’ were you taking notes across that kitchen table?”

“I'm glad you mentioned that verse. To me that song is just an expanded setup for that one scene. My hope is that the listener can put a narrative together from that. There *is* a story here. I'm not spelling it out, but I hope I'm giving enough clues.”

“How did you come to cowrite ‘North Dakota’?”

“Willis played some ideas into a tape recorder and sent them to me. This was a chord progression and melody that I found I could latch onto. I wrote the lyrics.”

“And Rickie Lee Jones' guest vocal came out of the tour you did together?”

“That's right. I enjoy those collaborations that come out of real relationships. That was the case with every guest artist on this record, like Leo Kottke [‘Baltimore’]—I've done a whole tour with him. And the same with Emmylou Harris—she sang on my second album.”

“And she sings on ‘She's Leaving Me Because She Really Wants to.’”

“It was important to me to hear this female voice saying, ‘That's right, buddy, she *is* happy. Don't you forget it.’ This song is supposed to be funny. I was trying to be really pathetic. It's like the way we did ‘Stand By Your Man,’ telling the joke but keeping a straight face. If Albert Brooks were a country singer, this would be his first single.”

“‘You've Been So Good Up to Now’ sounds like a cheating-with rather than a cheated-on blues. The ‘one bad move’ is you.”

“Yeah. It's more like draggin' somebody into something and then laughin' at 'em because they went for it. [*bastily*] I had to rely on imagination for a lot of this. It was based more on an *inkling* than some of the other songs.”

“If you don't listen closely, ‘She Makes Me Feel Good’ almost sounds like a love song.”

“A love song in the way ‘She's No Lady’ is a love song. It's my version of you-can't-live-with-'em, you-can't-live-without-'em. One week I

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spent in Austin with my old girlfriend I wrote like five songs, which I never do. I wrote 'L.A. County' and 'Pontiac' that week. I was hanging out at her apartment during the day, and she'd come home from work and I'd play her a song. It was a great feeling, I didn't know what was *wrong* with me. So we're having dinner one of those evenings and she said, 'You never write a song about me.' And I thought, 'Well, I'm on a roll here.' So I took out a napkin and jotted down those words: 'She's got big red lips/She's got big brown eyes/When she treats me right/It's a big surprise.' She said, 'Oh, thanks a lot.'"

"'Flyswatter/Ice Water Blues'?"

"Really my only attempt at writing a tender song between a man and a woman that has a less than dismal outcome. It's about being with your husband or wife just a few minutes before you leave the house for work."

"Can you think of any other love songs you've written which don't end badly?"

"No, that's it."

"Does that reflect your own experience?"

"Well, that song reflected a good day."

"What makes you steer away from love songs that don't have a twist?"

"Fear of being boring, stupid and just showing your ass in general. That's the biggest fear. I certainly have heard enough songs like that to make me want to puke. Maybe I'm overreacting. But I am happy with 'Flyswatter/Ice Water' because it's a bittersweet moment *in happiness*. So I guess I'm trying to search out that bit of misery that we can all savor in the midst of an otherwise good situation."

"Do those songs all come from the same experience?"

"They weren't all from the same experience but they all came from specific experiences. Each of my songs has a specific audience. It really is just a way to express feeling, like writing somebody a letter. But somehow I feel that if you write a song for somebody, they feel it more. I could be wrong. Maybe it's that the emotional impact for *me* is greater. It could be a selfish thing, because I feel that I've retained something from the relationship."

"Let's say you get married someday..."

"Right!..."

"Can you imagine writing songs about that?"

"Yeah. Maybe so. God, I...I just don't wanna be *boring*. 'Cause if you're really happy, who wants to hear about it? Why do you want to tell anybody?"

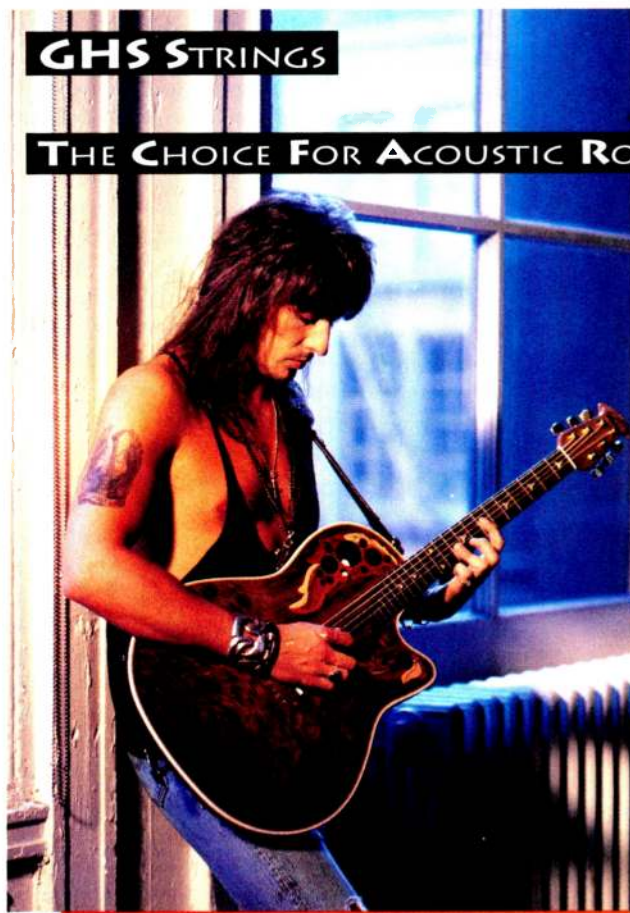
There are typos—*several* typos. They are circled in red on the proofs of the *Joshua Judges Ruth* CD booklet that lie scattered around Lovett's

kitchen table the next morning. Also, that photo of him grinning, the one on the page with the "She Makes Me Feel Good" lyrics? Well, it doesn't work. The song is ambivalent, true, but suppose people just looked at the title, and then at him grinning? They might think he was happy; they might think he was *earnest*. His mind is made up; he dials a number and the photo is history.

For Lovett—who has said, "I want to do well, I want to sell as many records as I can"—this particular promotional ordeal is almost over. But first he has to leave his house, which, incidentally,

is as spare and tasteful as his songs, and go stand in the local cemetery for an hour while a photographer snaps away. (Yes, his unfortunate cousin Callaway—see "The Family Reserve"—is buried there, among others.) Then it's back behind the house for still more photos.

He seems game, even if he looks a little forlorn. You get the feeling it would all be a lot less fun for Lyle Lovett if his parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends, touchstones and memories weren't all right there for him—if the soil his boots are planted in, as he squints under the mid-day Texas sun, wasn't so very much his own. **M**



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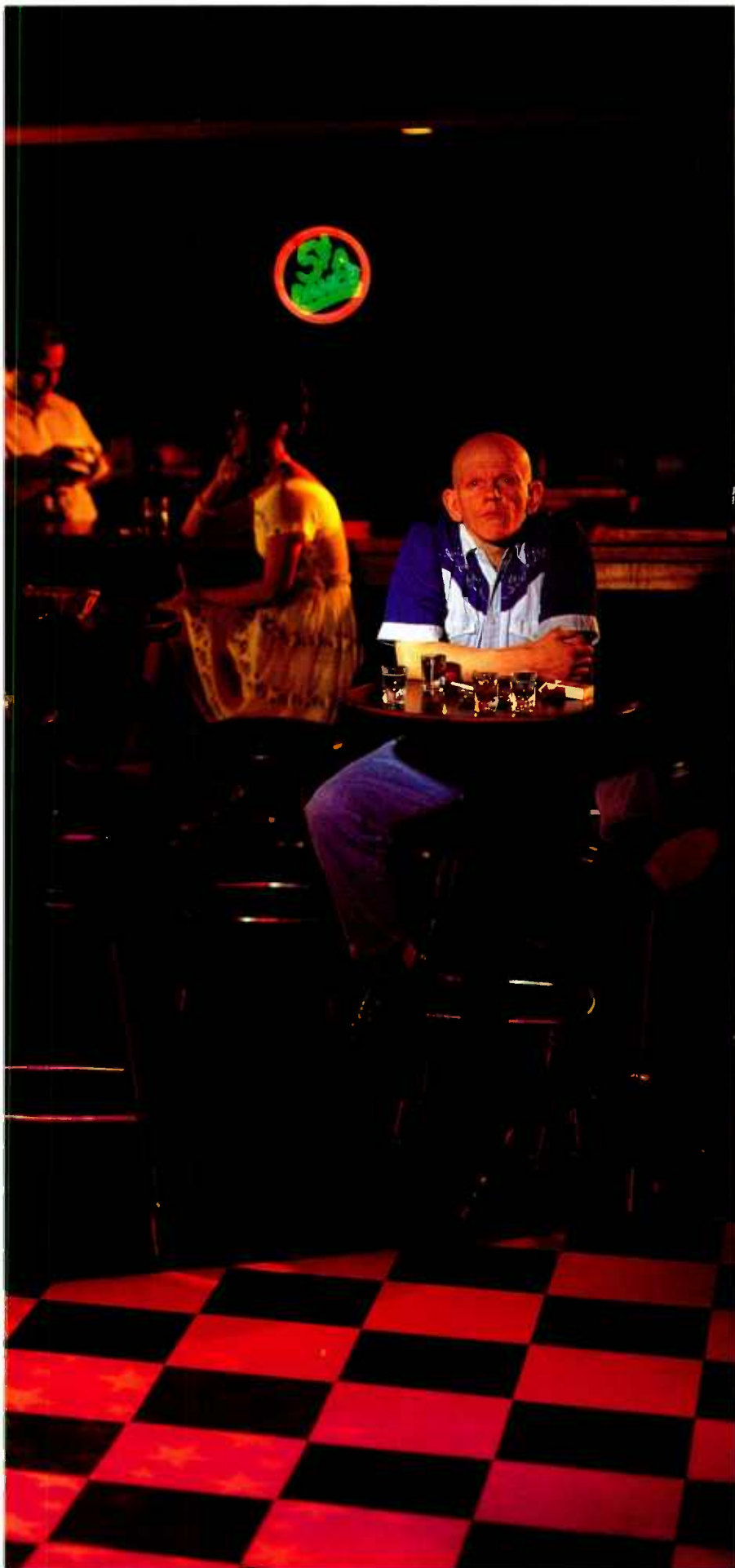


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WILD ABOUT

Wolfgang

STEWART COPELAND recently admitted to me that, despite his newfound love of opera and classical music, he still has a hard time getting into Mozart. I know what he means. Despite having grown up loving Bach, Beethoven and Wagner, Amadeus' appeal remained a mystery to me throughout my adolescence and early adulthood.

My disinterest had largely to do with the way the music was being performed. Mozart's greatest strength is also his greatest weakness: his accessibility. Musicians of any and every level can and do perform Mozart, and at the base level, it is not especially difficult music to play or to listen to. Yet it is precisely this deceiving appearance of simplicity that is responsible for so many of the bland Mozart performances that have shaped many of the aural images that the would-be Mozart lover has to endure. Artur Rubinstein, who began concertizing as a child,

waited until he was in his 40s to begin performing Mozart in public. "Mozart is too easy for children, and too difficult for artists," he said.

Yet penetrating the inner layers and deepest musical meaning of Mozart is not difficult for the listener, and is rewarding beyond measure. But with the plethora of new recorded releases for the Mozart bicentennial, to say nothing of the thousands of performances already available, charting Mozartian waters can be a daunting task without some guidance. Here then is a subjective survey that may offer some insight—if not an invitation—into the worldwide contingent of those of us who are still, 200 years after his death, wild about Wolfgang.

Concertos: Although Mozart wrote a fabulous concerto for clarinet, five for violin and four for horn, his 27 piano concertos reign supreme. Mozart invented the piano concerto as we now know

it, using the piano and orchestra as equal protagonists, rather than spotlighting the solo instrument surrounded by mere orchestral accompaniment. These are the model pieces of the genre, and are wonderful introductions to the art of Mozart. The last eight concertos are memorable and popular, and are often available collected as a set. Particularly recommended are two complete sets, the first by Viennese pianist Alfred Brendel performing with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields—the most consistent and poetic performances available—just reissued as the 10-CD Volume 7 of the monumental 45-volume Philips Complete Mozart Edition. For an entirely different and refreshing approach, try Malcolm Bilson performing the works on the fortepiano, a hybrid between the harpsichord and the modern piano, and the same instrument on which Mozart conceived and performed these

pieces. John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists—a period instrument group—also perform, on a nine-for-the-price-of-seven Deutsche Grammophon Archiv set.

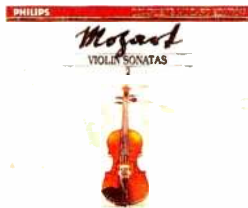
Symphonies: In his film *Mannhattan*, Woody Allen cites Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony (No. 41, his last) as one of his reasons for living. There is a wide variety of Mozart orchestral works, including breathtaking serenades, divertimenti and, of course, symphonies. Keep in mind that a truly Mozartian orchestra is a chamber orchestra. Beware of conductors who use full modern orchestras and plodding tempos with the idea that bigger and slower is better; this approach obliterates Mozart's original balance and scale. The best overall recordings of Mozart's orchestral pieces on modern instruments are by Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, which make up the early volumes



Learning to love Mozart

BY DENNIS POLKOW

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID JOHNSON



(1 through 5) of the Philips Complete Mozart Edition; the set includes some chamber music as well. Christopher Hogwood spearheaded a movement in the early '70s that sought to perform Mozart with the timbres, textures and balances that Mozart himself knew, by resurrecting the instruments of Mozart's own time and using what modern scholarship could tell us about eighteenth-century performance. The results revealed a refreshingly transparent Mozart, stripped of centuries of interpretive pretensions (wobbly vibratos, stodgy tempos), and reemphasizing the pulse, improvisation and ornamentation that were initially vital components of the music. Hogwood has recorded many standard Mozart works and all 41 of the symphonies (many of which are available individually, as well as complete in a 19-CD set or across seven volumes of two to three CDs each) with his Academy of Ancient Music on the L'Oiseau-Lyre label.

Sonatas: Mozart's piano sonatas are intensely personal works, and the staple of any pianist's repertoire. There are probably no ideal sets, but the Daniel Barenboim set on Angel (six CDs) is a good overall modern piano version, while the sheer virtuosity and brilliance of the new Anthony Newman fortepiano set on Newport Classic (four CDs, available individually) is stunning, although many would consider Newman's approach too idiosyncratic for repeated listenings. For the Sonatas for Violin and Piano, the new Deutsche Grammophon set by Daniel Barenboim and Itzhak Perlman (four CDs, available individually), even with its excessive Romanticism, blows away anything else in the catalog.

Operas: The word "opera" frightens a lot of people, but opera is simply sung drama, and was meant as entertainment for the masses, much like *Les Misérables* or *Phantom of the Opera* today. Mozart revolutionized the form, and his are the cream of the genre, but remember that listening to them at home is like reading Shakespeare: valuable, but only part of the overall picture. For musical comedy (or opera buffs), *The Marriage of Figaro* tops everyone's list, an opera which sent shock waves in its time with its lampooning of class relationships of the eighteenth century. The very human problems of its characters have never gone out of fashion, and Mozart's music brought forth real, down-to-earth characters who are just as relevant today. RCA has just released a fine new *Figaro* conducted by Sir Colin Davis (three CDs).

On the darker side is *Don Giovanni*, considered by most opera lovers to be the "perfect" opera by which all others are measured. Among the classic Mozart opera recordings that get four stars in everyone's book is the Angel recording of *Don Giovanni* conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini, with a stellar cast. Mozart's last opera, *The Magic Flute*, is arguably his greatest, with its elements of comedy, fantasy and intrigue. Two superb new performances have just been released for the bicentennial of the piece, a Sir Georg Solti-led Vienna Philharmonic version with a spectacular German cast that tops Solti's classic earlier recording, and a Telarc recording that features Jerry Hadley as Tamino and the breathtaking coloratura of June Anderson as the Queen of the Night. If you're put off by modern opera singing, you may prefer the purer and softer


approach of sopranos Emma Kirkby and Arleen Auger who, like Hogwood, strive for historically informed performances. The singing style is beautiful, and with an emphasis on purity of tone, allows for flashier ornamentation and firmer technique. Mozart opera on period instruments is still a wide-open field, but L'Oiseau has released *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* by the Drottningholm Court Theatre Orchestra and Chorus, with glorious singing that is true to Mozartian style. Also, don't forget to check your video store, since there are several video versions of each opera, and some—such as those directed by Peter Sellars—even have modern twists: *Figaro* set in Trump Tower, for instance. The Ingmar Bergman film of *The Magic Flute* is a "must see."

Masses: Mozart wrote many Masses under the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, before being booted out of his service—literally. Yet ironically Mozart's two most famous Masses are associated with key events in his life, and were left uncompleted: the "Great" C minor Mass, written in thanksgiving for his wedding, and the infamous *Requiem*—arguably his greatest work—and written in a race against time that Mozart ultimately lost on December 5th, 1791. It had been commissioned anonymously by the eccentric Count Walsegg (hence the infamous "gray messenger"), who fancied himself a composer and who routinely hired "ghost" composers to write music that he would pass off as his own. Mozart worked on it on his deathbed and came to believe he was writing his own Requiem. (There are many legends about the cause of Mozart's death at age 35, but few facts. Since his economic situation dictated that he be buried in an unmarked pauper's grave, and inclement weather kept mourners from going to the grave itself, no one knows to this day where the body is, a situation which helps fuel rumors of every sort.) The work's most famous modern use was at the funeral of John F. Kennedy; it has a haunting and sublime beauty never to be equaled in the genre. Because both the C minor Mass and the *Requiem* were left unfinished (although second-rate Mozartians have filled in entire movements), special performance problems need to be solved, and here the Richard Maunder editions by Hogwood and the Academy are second to none. Teldec has also re-released a collection of the important Masses in an attractive four-CD set, by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and the Concentus musicus Wien, pioneers of period instrument performances, although relative latecomers to Mozart.

Chamber Music: There are trios, quartets and quintets for various combinations, and here again, the complete Philips set—which features, for instance, the Beaux Arts Trio performing the piano trios and the Quartetto Italiano performing the string quartets—is magnificent. Haydn was creator of the string quartet as we know it, and the undisputed master of the genre, even though Mozart surpassed him in virtually all other forms. For Mozart quartets on period instruments, the recordings by the Quatuor Mosaiques on the French Astree label feature superb playing. Note particularly the set of six "Haydn" quartets, dedicated to the master (three CDs). The Mozartian Players is a first-class group, featuring period instrument virtuosos—fortepianist Steven Lubin, violinist

Stanley Ritchie and cellist Myron Lutzke—who have recorded the complete piano trios (two CDs) and the piano quartets on Harmonia Mundi. Spectacular performances and sound.

Anthologies and miscellaneous: If you want to test the waters with your toes rather than jump in all the way, there is a 75-minute sampler from the Philips Complete Mozart Edition which gives a sense of the variety of Mozart's various sound worlds, and includes a detailed Mozart booklet; from there you can see which types of pieces you might like to explore in detail. The soundtrack from *Amadeus* on Fantasy is a superb compilation, featuring Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and complete movements and arias from fine performances across all genres; there's even a special three-CD bicentennial edition with a detailed color booklet about Mozart and the film. (The film, despite containing much historical fiction, is not a bad place to begin with Mozart, since his music is really the "star" of the film.) London Records has issued a 20-CD series called "The Mozart Almanac," an outstanding chronological anthology of works and performances chosen by world-renowned Mozart scholar H.C. Robbins Landon, featuring complete pieces (except for the operas, which are excerpted) from London's immense catalog of both modern and period instrument performances. There are more "hip" compilations, such as Sony Classical's *Mozart Goes to a Party* and RCA's *What if Mozart Wrote "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,"* and even a fun jazz vocal collection of a cappella Mozart by the Swingle Singers, on Virgin Classics. Chick Corea has recorded a couple of piano concertos on Teldec with his own improvisations.

Sir Georg Solti once told me that he thinks of Mozart as a "meteor" who passed quietly in and out of this world, leaving it so much more enriched than before he came, yet asking very little of it. Erich Leinsdorf recently remarked that his having been active long before the 1956 bicentennial of Mozart's birth through the present commemoration of Mozart's death makes him all the more astounded that a phenomenon such as Mozart could occur across such a short span of time, producing over 600 masterpieces. How and why did he do it? Mozart's own view, written in a letter to a friend only a few months before his death, says simply, "I continue to compose because that fatigues me less than resting." We honor that rest, with gratitude. 

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HANK MARVIN, DAVID CROSBY,
COLLINS, DON HENLEY, SINEAD
BY JENNY BOYD, PH.D. WITH

ILLUSTRATION BY TERRY ALLEN

World Radio History

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ORGE HARRISON, RINGO STARR,
MITCHELL, JACKSON BROWNE,
RS, TONY WILLIAMS, BRANFORD
NNE CASH, PAUL HORN, TEDDY
NON REID, RICHARD THOMPSON,
PAUL KANTNER, ICE-T, PHIL
O'CONNOR AND PETER GABRIEL
HOLLY GEORGE-WARREN

PART ONE

SINGING WITH THE ANGELS

Music and Transcendance

FROM WHAT SOURCE does creativity spring? Like many psychologists, I believe that it comes from the innermost part of us, the unconscious, defined by Jung as: "Everything of which I know but of which I'm not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses but not noted by my conscious mind; everything of which involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want and do; all future things that are taking shape in me and will sometimes come to consciousness. All this is the content of the unconscious."

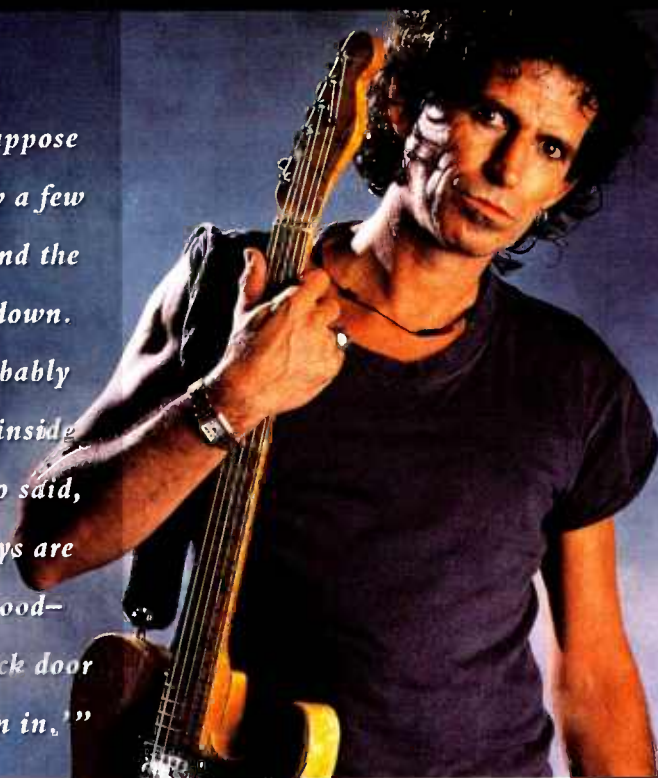
The conscious mind acts toward the unconscious as a filtering system, bringing order and preventing an overwhelming feeling of the unknown. The unconscious is raw and communicates through images, as in dreams, and through feelings, insights, and flashes of inspiration.

According to Jung, the center of the total personality lies midway between the unconscious and the conscious. The creative act enables one to reach the midway point. Artistry can give form to a whirling dervish of ideas, where the unconscious and conscious meet and chaos is given over to form and order.

One reason the songs that spontaneously emerge from the unconscious are so meaningful to the artist is because they are sometimes made up of images or ideas from unresolved conflicts the artist has buried within. Sinéad O'Connor described such a song and its effect on her. "It only happens occasionally, where it doesn't come from me, it comes from somebody else. It's really only happened with me on three songs, in particular 'My Special Child.' We were recording this after I'd been pregnant and had decided I wasn't going to have the baby, although I had really wanted to. I'd had an abortion, and I was very fucked up by this and really upset about it. But I was glad I had done it, and I wrote this song. We recorded the song, and when I was in doing the vocals, I really, really felt as if the child was there. I really felt its presence. I know that sounds mad, but I felt it was up there and it was coming from her. I was sure it was a girl and that it was coming out of me from her, because the song turned out to be something I wasn't expecting. It became a song that was basically saying, 'Don't be upset—you've got your son, and your son loves you and he's really special, so don't worry.' It was very moving. Any time we ever listened to the song afterward, it was really shocking."

Keith Richards described his own submission to the creative urge:

"I don't suppose Joshua blew a few trumpets and the walls fell down. It was probably some cats inside Jericho who said, 'Those guys are playing good—open the back door and let them in.'"



"[The drive to create] is just something I obey. I hear something and I've got to learn how to play it. Once you know that, then you have no choice. You can't turn it off. This is a one-way tap; once it's on, it's on. You can try and ignore it, but it's far more powerful than you are. It's not a controllable thing; it just keeps coming from inside. You're a slave to it in a way."

Rosanne Cash pointed to the destructive result of ignoring her artistic urges. "It's almost like a survival instinct—it's that primitive. If I ignore my work, I start having anxiety attacks, I can't really sleep well, my eating habits become erratic, I get irritable. It starts taking its toll in a very physical and mental way. It's almost like the energy is there, and if I don't use it as it was intended, it turns toxic."

Joni Mitchell detailed the differing mindsets necessary—and detrimental—to creativity. "Creativity comes from an urgency to communicate; the gift can be developed in people. Anybody can make something; in that way I think anybody can be creative. The net with which you capture [creativity] is made up of the threads of your alertness. If you could walk through the world with the same attentiveness as you played a video game, for instance, so nothing could bomb you, that's kind of Zen Mind. If you're really playing well at a video game and you say, 'Oh, I'm playing really well,' that will get you, because that's the entrance of the ego. Up until then, you haven't had an ego, you've been No Mind. And in No Mind, time is huge; but the entrance of one thought, then time is small. So, making yourself attractive to creative inspiration, you have to train your ears to be as alert as possible and your eyes as alert as possible, it's a finer tuning.

"If you're too rational, you're not very well equipped [to create]. You need to be able to surrender to the mystic to be good, to be great, to have one foot in divinity, which is the only place that greatness comes from. You can be good, you can write a nice song; there's a lot of nice songs on the radio that don't have one foot in divinity. They can even be huge hits; it depends on your standards of creativity, what that means to you.

"If you're too reasonable, then creativity won't come around in you, because then you're not intuitive, and it requires a great deal of intuition.

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You need a bit of all of it: you need to be emotional, otherwise your work will be chilly. If you're too emotional, your work will be all over the place. You need to be rational for linear, architectural, orderly, structural work, but if you stay there too long, the stuff will be chilly. You need some clarity to make the thing pertinent. Dylan will write a song and it will have abstract passages and then it will have a direct phrase, like bam, directly communicate, and then he'll go back into something more surrealistic."

Jackson Browne said, "There's a great phrase in Dylan's 'Subterranean Homesick Blues': 'hanging round an inkwell.' To me, it's one of those phrases that really meant *everything*—because you really can't stand around waiting for inspiration. You can try to be a disciplined person and be in shape to handle inspiration effectively when it happens. If you stand around looking for it, it never happens.

"There was an experience when I was trying to write. I hadn't written in a while; I was about 19. I did at one point kind of surrender. I thought, 'Okay, I know it's not me that writes this stuff, so I'm at your service.' It was like a little prayer. I then wrote something that I felt was my first song that was very good. If you have a flash of inspiration, it comes from within you. I think there is something like a current—to tell you the truth it's something I believe without spending too much time thinking about it. Mainly I spend a lot of time standing in line trying to get a little of it, trying to tap into it."

"I think you plug into this electricity," Peter Gabriel said. "It's like a river in a way; no question. When the magic's there, everyone in the room feels it. You're a bit like a radio aerial and you quiver when you're on to something. One of the things we try and get a lot more conscious about now is to make sure we record those moments in whatever form possible at *that* moment. You don't take an hour trying to get sounds right, trying to get all the bits and pieces operational and then find you've lost it. Immediately you put the red light on and catch whatever is around, and then even if it's only on two tracks of the 24, you can always pull them back up again, even if it's not usable in its own form. It will then speak in a language of magic to the musicians."

Paul Horn, who has practiced meditation for decades, spoke of displacing the busy mind in order to create. "In playing, what I have transcended is my self-consciousness, my mind drifting into other things. I'm unaware of myself, I'm totally absorbed in the music, and as I get more absorbed in the music, then more can happen in the music. I turn out to be a channel; my mind doesn't say, 'Me, I'm playing good tonight or I'm not playing good.' It's not judgmental, it's a happening that's taking place and that's enough, and it's exciting to be caught up in that."

Joni Mitchell said, "When I paint for long hours, my mind stills. If you hooked me up to a meter, I don't know what you'd find, but maybe it's like a dream state. It goes very abstract. The dialogue is absolutely still. You hear electrical synapses, which could be cosmic electricity, snapping, and occasionally up into that void comes a command, 'Red in the upper-left-hand corner.' There's no afterthought, because ego is the afterthought; you

*"First you
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players."*



paint red in the upper-left-hand corner, and then it all goes back into the zone again. You achieve that sometimes in music. I think I achieve it in the loneliness of the night just playing my guitar repetitiously, the mantra of it, the drone of it will get you there. In performance you're going down deep within and then you're coming back out to receive your applause. There's a more self-conscious art form in performance—people are applauding you.

"With writing, you have to plumb into the subconscious, and there's a lot of scary things down there—like a bad dream sometimes. If you can extricate yourself from it and face up to it, you come back with a lot of self-knowledge, which then gives you greater human knowledge, and that helps. So in that way, the writing process is fantastic psychotherapy—if you can survive—but it is tricky."

Sinéad O'Connor uses her intense emotions to "dictate" her songwriting. "My life is very turbulent emotionally, and that's not necessarily bad, but things happen constantly from one end of the day to the other, so I'm constantly in the state of having to figure out what's going on or what kind of thing I'm supposed to be getting from it or what I am meant to learn from a specific situation. Usually it's when something turbulent is going on that you have to work it out in your head and then get it onto a piece of paper, so you can look at it and say, 'Yeah, that's how I feel.'"

Eric Clapton said he no longer requires pathos to write but finds that other moods are just as valuable. "I've always put it down in the past to emotional turmoil [that drives me to create]. That's more like a trigger; it sets off something that is actually dormant. It can be something that is triggered off by an outside stimulus like joy. A lot of people think it has to be from something particularly nasty or a problem of some kind, but it isn't necessary, I don't think. It's just something a little out of the ordinary in terms of a mental stimulus, something that makes or breaks your day."

Just as these musicians described getting the unconscious mind out of the way when writing, others pointed to the equally powerful effect this process can have on performance. Only after the performer stops "conscious-

ly” playing or singing can he or she tap into the unconscious. Often what follows is the artist’s ability to overcome technical restraints, which can result from the fear of making a mistake. Soul singer Teddy Pendergrass explained, “In my performances I don’t consciously perform. I find when I consciously do it, I make mistakes. When I don’t think and I just go for it, it all works out and it’s basically flawless. When I second-guess it and think, ‘Well, what am I going to do here, or what note am I going to sing or which place am I going to move?’ ultimately I always mess up.”

Guitarist Albert Lee said he has learned to let go of his conscious mind during performance: “I’ll be playing something really fast, it’ll just go by because I play the guitar very fast, and I don’t have time to think of every move I’m making. It seems as if I’m skating over the fingerboard. I believe it’s in the subconscious what’s happening there, between my mind and my fingers.”

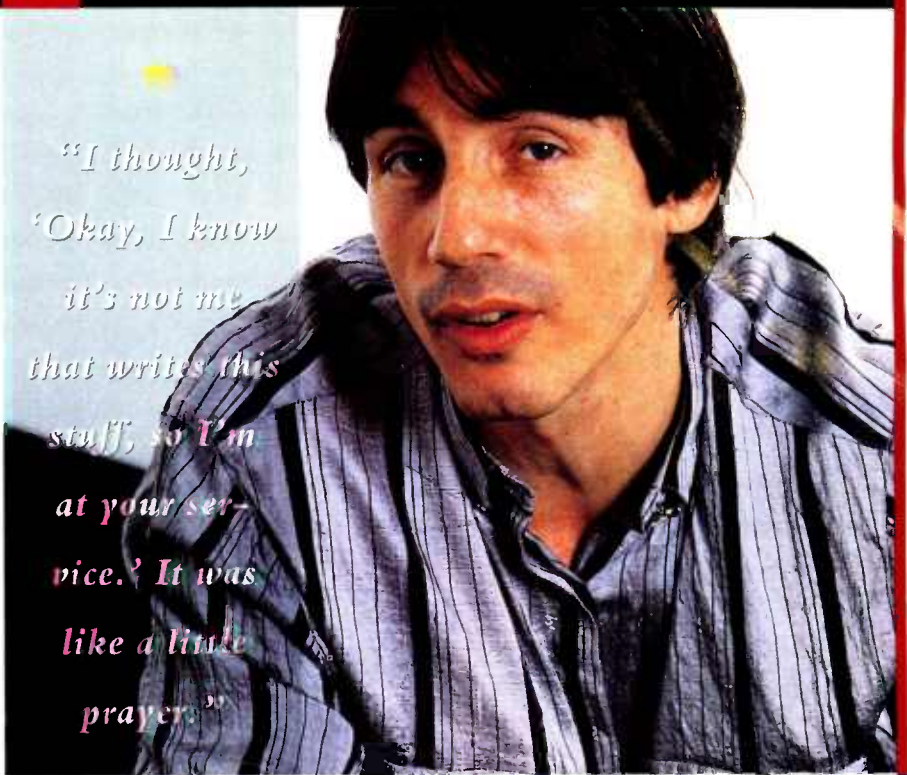
Guitarist Vernon Reid described the freedom inherent in this style of playing: “There have been moments when I felt I really latched onto something. I’ve had those feelings when I’ve been improvising or playing and I feel like the music is playing me, rather than I’m playing the music. You’re in the flow of something and you’re not conscious but you’re aware. You’re not making decisions on a conscious level; you’re guiding it, but it’s guiding you at the same time.”

The most pronounced aspect of the peak is a sense of unity with the art form. Guitarist Richard Thompson described this transcendent feeling: “It’s very hard to talk about because you’re not really there when it happens! It happens on most shows I play, I think. You get inside the music to such an extent that you kind of *are* the music, or the music’s you. You’re thinking about it but you’re not thinking about it. Sometimes I think it’s almost a flashing backwards and forwards of intellect and intuition: One minute you’re thinking G flat, seven five, and then it’s gone and you’re doing something that you’re not aware of really. You’re just sort of flying along, and then you have another conscious moment where you think, ‘Oh, yes, two bars left.’”

The physical effects of the peak can be overwhelming. Sinéad O’Connor said, “When I’m singing, what I’m aiming for is of not particularly being there, of just the sound being there. I sing with my eyes closed. When my eyes are open, I’m too aware of everything that’s going on around me. A lot of times I shake uncontrollably, and it’s not because I’m nervous, it’s because I’m singing. It’s because it’s coming out and it’s making me shake. It feels like being drunk, it’s like an out-of-body experience.”

Although for some artists, the peak experience occurs quite frequently, Branford Marsalis told me that he’d had such experiences while playing just three times in his life. He explained what it was like: “High, you feel high. It’s easy to do it physically, but it’s hard to do it mentally. I feel that musicians who say it happens every time they play are full of shit. The sublime cannot be routine. Three times, and you never forget them. It’s [with] a combination of musicians; it’s never just me.”

There was a chemistry between George, John, Paul, and Ringo, which



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like a little
prayer.”*

resulted in the Beatles’ experiencing many peaks, according to Ringo, who said, “It feels great; it’s just a knowing. It’s magic actually; it is pure magic. Everyone who is playing at that time knows where everybody’s going. We all feel like one; wherever you go, everyone feels that’s where we should go. I would know if Paul was going to do something or if George was going to raise it up a bit, or John would double, or we’d bring it down. I usually play with my eyes closed, so you would know when things like that were happening, but it took a lot of years of playing together till it got to that.

“First of all you’ve got to trust each other, just trust each other in life, never mind as musicians, then you trust each other as players. There’s really no words for the emotion you feel with it. You can play for hours and it’s not working, so you have the downer, but when it works, when it clicks, there’s really nothing like it I’ve ever experienced in my life.”

Peter Dinklage is very sensitive to the vibes given off by the audience and reacts to it accordingly. “Performers feed off the audience; sometimes you can tell how a gig’s going to go at the moment you walk out onstage. You know what sort of electricity and energy is being put up toward the stage. I respond to that a lot. Sometimes you can generate that from nothing, but it is a lot harder.

“Music is spiritual and is a doorway into that world. Its power comes from the fact that it plugs directly into the soul, unlike a lot of visual art or text information that has to go through the more filtering processes of the brain.”

Ringo Starr distinguished between those performances in which the band and audience connect and those where there is no unity. “When you’re on tour—and it doesn’t happen all the time—sometimes you and the audience connect, just connect. Some nights, besides us [in the Beatles] being connected—and we weren’t connected every night either—we’d just go on there and do the numbers, and we’d be the only ones who’d know if it had been good or not, but we’d still get the same applause. Sometimes, though, you would feel this presence together with the audi-

Something is triggered off in each of us when we listen to certain songs, a feeling so intangible that it might only whisper, yet is recognized. Roger Waters explained how he thinks music does this: "As an audience, we look at the painting or hear the music and recognize truth of some kind that affects us deeply. It explains our universe to us in some way that is reassuring. It is that which makes me feel there may well be something to be in tune with."

Roger's description of his school illustrates how the traditional educational process seems designed to squash creativeness, a theme that he later explored artistically in *The Wall*. "My father was killed in the war when I was three months old, and I was brought up in Cambridge, England, by my mother, who's a school teacher. She didn't encourage my creativity. She claims to be tone deaf, whatever that means, and has no interest in music and art or anything like that. She's only interested in politics. I didn't really have a happy childhood. I loathed school, particularly after I went to grammar school. Apart from games, which I loved, I loathed every single second of it. Maybe toward the end when I was a teenager, going to school was just an 'us and them' confrontation between me and a few friends who formed a rather violent and revolutionary clique. That was alright, and I enjoyed the violence of smashing up the school property. The grammar school mentality at that time had very much lagged behind the way young people's minds were working in the

"We hear
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on mad rides out into the country. We would have races at night, incredibly dangerous, which we survived somehow. Those days—1959 to 1960—were heady times. There was a lot of flirtation with Allen Ginsberg and the beat generation of the American poets. Because Cambridge was a university town, there was a very strong pseudo-intellectual but beat vibe. It was just when the depression of the postwar was beginning to wear off and we were beginning to go into some kind of economic upgrade. And just at the beginning of the '60s there was a real flirtation with prewar

romanticism, which I got involved with in a way, and it was that feeling that pushed me toward being in a band. I used to go with friends on journeys around Europe and the Middle East, which in those days was a reasonably safe place. How

ROGER WATERS

Building the Internal Wall

late '50s, and it took them a long time to catch up. In a way, grammar schools were still being run on pre-war lines, where you bloody well did as you were told and kept your mouth shut, and we weren't prepared for any of that. It erupted into a very organized clandestine property violence against the school, with bombs, though nobody ever got hurt. I remember one night about 10 of us went out, because we had decided that one guy—the man in charge of gardening—needed a lesson. He had one particular tree of Golden Delicious apples that was his pride and joy, which he would protect at all costs. We went into the orchard with stepladders and ate every single apple on the tree without removing any. So the next morning there were just apple cores. That morning was just wonderful; we were terribly tired but filled with a real sense of achievement.

"Syd Barrett [the cofounder of Pink Floyd with Roger]—who was a couple of years younger—and I first became friends in Cambridge. We both had similar interests—rock 'n' roll, danger and sex and drugs, probably in that order. I had a motor bike before I left home, and we used to go

much all that experience had to do with my eventually starting to write, I've no idea.

"The encouragement to play my guitar came from a man who was head of my first year at architecture school at Regent Street Polytechnic, in London. He encouraged me to bring the guitar into the classroom. If I wanted to sit in the corner and play guitar during periods that were set aside for design work and architecture, he thought that was perfectly alright. It was my first feeling of encouragement. Earlier, I had made one or two feeble attempts to learn to play the guitar when I was around 14 but gave up because it was so difficult. It hurt my fingers, and I found it much too hard. I couldn't handle it. At the Polytechnic I got involved with people who played in bands, although I couldn't play very well. I sang a little and played the harmonica and guitar a bit. Syd and I had always vowed that when he came up to art school, which he inevitably would do being a very good painter, he and I would start a band in London. In fact, I was already in a band, so he joined that."

ence and the band, which was just such a mind-blower. It felt better than the other gigs. You felt some sort of connection, where there was a whole wave of five or ten thousand people coming at you; you felt that you and the audience were actually one. At Shea Stadium there was no contact. We just happened to be playing; they were screaming, dancing, doing what they did, which they did in all the other places. So we didn't get it every night, but when you did, you just felt so ecstatic—that's what made me realize why all musicians keep playing."

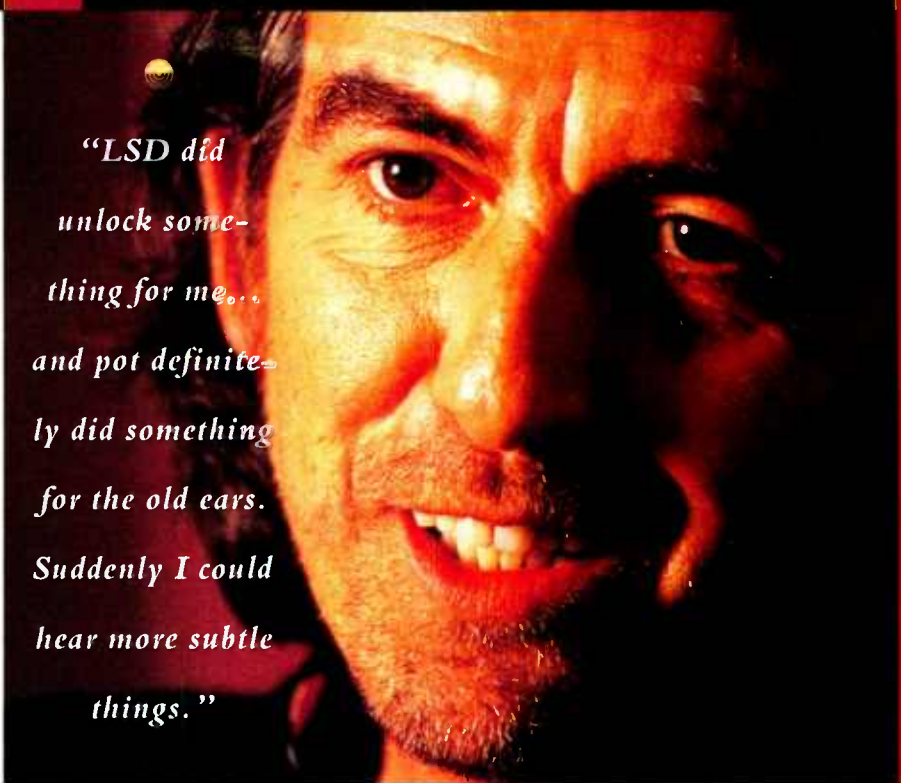
For Eric Clapton, it is essential that both artists and audience "surrender" during a performance. He passionately described this concept: "I can't really explain what it's like except in a physical sense. It's a massive rush of adrenalin which comes at a certain point. Usually it's a sharing experience; it's not something I could experience on my own. It has to be in the company of other musicians onstage, and of course with an audience. It's not even just the musicians, it's everyone that's involved in the whole transaction or experience. Everyone

in that building or place seems to unify at one point. It's not necessarily me that's doing it; it may be another musician, but it's when you get that completely harmonic experience, where everyone is hearing exactly the same thing without any interpretation whatsoever or any kind of angle. They're all transported toward the same place. That's not very common, but it always seems to happen at least once a show. That's what you hope for; you start out with the framework of songs you're going to do and hope it's going to happen in this one, and if it doesn't you wait for the next one and see if it'll happen in that. You don't really know what it's composed of; it's just a point when everyone has got exactly the same momentum. There's a lot concerned with timing, but beyond that it's hard to describe. You could call it unity, which is a very spiritual word for me. Everyone is one at that point, at that specific point in time, not for very long. Of course, the defeating aspect is that the minute you become aware of that, it's gone. Music demands surrender; everyone there at some point are all going to surrender at exactly the same time to the same thing—musicians and audience included."

Joni Mitchell turned to a Jungian idea to help define the mystical nature of the peak experiences she has had while playing with other musicians, particularly in the studio. "For me, the spiritual experiences are synchronicity. You can't beat it. For instance, in live performance, the synchronicity is the beauty of everybody being really Zen—everybody not only hearing themselves while they're playing, but hearing everybody else and creating spontaneously. This happens more on recording dates than in live performance, because by the time you get to live performance the music is somewhat composed. When you're in the studio you're still in the searching mode, so you're dealing with the unknown. Therefore luck has to come into it, and synchronicity is good luck."

The unconscious is the part in oneself that comes through in what musicians describe as the "feel" in music, or as drummer Tony Williams calls it, "the spirit that touches people." Technique is something different altogether. Obviously an important element to musicianship, technique is

*"LSD did
unlock some-
thing for me...
and pot definite-
ly did something
for the old ears.
Suddenly I could
hear more subtle
things."*



the actual craft of performing music that is developed through years of practice. Its importance is analogous to that of the role played by the conscious mind in giving structure to images that flow from the unconscious.

Hank Marvin, legendary guitarist from the Shadows and hero to many British guitarists, explained that technique is what gives musicians the ability to master their instrument so that they need not rely entirely on the conscious mind while playing: "I practice more now than I ever used to; I feel by improving a technique and by listening to a variety of kinds of music, not just guitar players, I'm putting more into my mind from which I can draw when I'm being creative. Obviously, the more technique you have, you can go for things you couldn't hope to if you didn't have the technique—so it does give you more options, more opportunity to be creative."

Some musicians work hard at their craft and are technically brilliant, yet something is missing. One could call it "the feel," or the intuitive quality of their musical expression. As important as technique is, many of the musicians I interviewed valued this feel in playing even more. Some held the opinion that regardless of how technically brilliant a player may be, unless he or she has that feel, the music is almost meaningless. One can appreciate the technique, but at the same time, not be moved at all by the playing. Technical playing appears to come from the conscious mind, whereas the feel springs from the unconscious. Phil Collins explained: "You can't buy it, or learn how to do it. Someone like Carl Palmer to me is a very unnatural drummer. He was taught, and it just sounds like it when I hear him play. There are other guys out there, you can tell, who just picked up a pair of sticks and started playing. Without putting down Carl Palmer, I've never heard anything from him that sounds convincing to me, and yet there are other drummers who can do far less but move me far more—like Ringo for instance."

Ringo confirmed Phil's comments about his own playing: "I play with some sort of beat going on within me. It can be fast or slow; I just feel it."

Another drummer, Tony Williams, also emphasized the importance of feel: "Some people are creative, but it's a self-conscious creativity. To me,

[artist Salvador] Dali was very self-conscious. He lacked the spirit, though he was a great technician. You could say, 'Wow, it's a nice image, but it's self-conscious.' He just did things for effect."

Perhaps it is pressure from the music business that forces some musicians to move toward technique over feel, to go for glitz rather than guts, in order to get a hit or follow up a successful album. Keith Richards pointed this out: "Music represents the unconscious feelings of the people—of musicians and their audience—but at the same time it represents what the record companies think they can maximize their profits on. And so they'll stuff things down people's throats that they don't really want. A majority of what you hear is formula shit; it's what record companies find easiest and cheapest to produce and get the maximum profit. They like cats who go along with that, and now they've got the possibility with all the toys. They'd love to get rid of musicians entirely, those bothersome things that talk back and want to do it better."

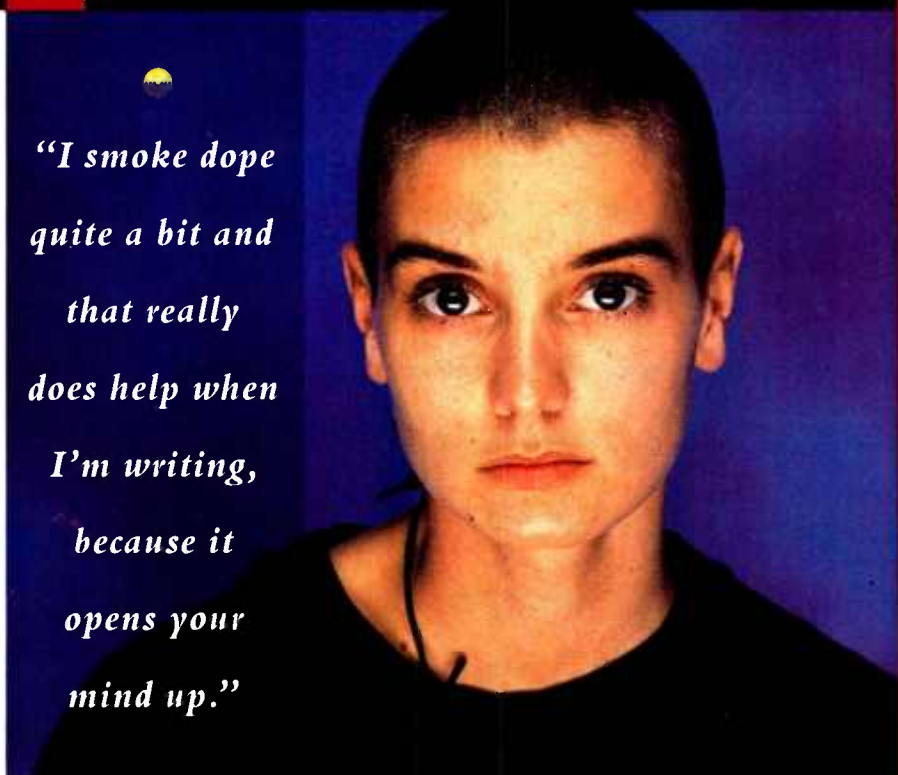
Vernon Reid remarked that some established musicians don't live up to their artistic promise. "Some people don't allow themselves to dream beyond just the mundane, even some people who are artists don't allow themselves to dream and just do things. They are afraid of the avant garde, doing something that will cost them their gig, cost them a regular pay check, or make their record fall off the chart. Creativity is not concerned with any of that—it really isn't."

A good description of the artist's role in our society, which also helps to illustrate the concept of the collective unconscious, was devised by psychologist Rollo May, who maintained that artists "give us a distinct early warning of what is happening to our culture." It is the spirit of the time that comes through artists; it is their job in life to impart whatever is coming through them. As Sinéad O'Connor said, "I think the function of art is to reflect God and to try and remember all the knowledge that we had before we were born, of how powerful we are and what God is. I think that's the drive to create, to fill the space, to fill the emptiness, even for just two seconds, so as to achieve the sense of having reflected, of having opened up and connected, with whatever it is that is above us."

Whatever it is that artists are tapping into, though, they are often unaware of it representing anything larger than their own expression of themselves. George Harrison told me that he found the Beatles' huge influence on society quite baffling at the time. "I thought it was pretty strange why we made the enormous impact that we did—or have still. It's strange how the chemistry between the four of us made this big thing that went right through the world. It just blanketed everything, and that amazed me more than anything. We always felt that if we could get the right record contract, we'd be successful. But our tiny little concept of success that we had at the time was nothing compared to what happened. It does make one think there's more to this than meets the eye."

Ringo Starr concurred. "I don't think we were actually there thinking

"I smoke dope quite a bit and that really does help when I'm writing, because it opens your mind up."



we were tapping into this great God-given consciousness for everybody. I don't know if you think like that when you're a teenager or [in] your early twenties. You're just playing the best you can."

"As a musician, I just want to make some great records," Keith Richards said. "Unwittingly and unknowingly, it can happen that what you're doing can be interpreted or you're taken to represent everybody—not just authorities or record companies, but the whole mass of the people. You can find yourself being involved without any real intention. In a way they write the songs for you. 'Street Fighting Man' was just a mere comment, but all of that stuff turned us into—which was unbelievable to me—a threat to the British government. You'd think a couple of guitar players are really going to topple the Empire! That's the important thing about music, because it can. That's when you realize it has social and political overtones.

"You can get biblical about it: You have a power, but I don't suppose Joshua took his band and walked around Jericho and blew a few trumpets and the wall actually fell down from that. It was probably some cats inside Jericho who were saying, 'Jesus, those guys are playing good—open the back door and let them in.' That's how I think Jericho's walls crumbled. It's like the Iron Curtain now—this whole thing that's happened in Russia is probably an analogy in the same way. The one thing they couldn't stop [was creativity] and it was the one channel that was always open when everything else was 'no way.' Music is very powerful; it's uncontrollable. Some people think you can lessen the power of music by trying to preach with it, but I think that it has its own power. If you want to write a great tract and put it to music, that's alright too, but I think the real lasting power of music is on a far more subtle and indefinable level than what people say—it's the total thing."

Bonnie Raitt described the changes she has seen in society expressed by the music. "For a while, especially in the so-called disco and Reagan era, there definitely was a turning away from moral and political content in pop music at least. Progressive radio all but disappeared, and even Jackson Browne had trouble getting his songs on the radio.

"Then the punk movement came along and blew the lid off all that cultural and moral complacency. Groups like the Clash, U2, Midnight Oil, artists like Peter Gabriel, Sting, Springsteen, and especially the emergence of Tracy Chapman, all broke through with some great soul-inspiring music of conscience. People started to get sick of all the homogeneous formula pop and began to appreciate the more homegrown sounds of folk, blues, reggae, world beat, and especially rap. Springsteen and U2 are the most unifying people I've seen since the Beatles."

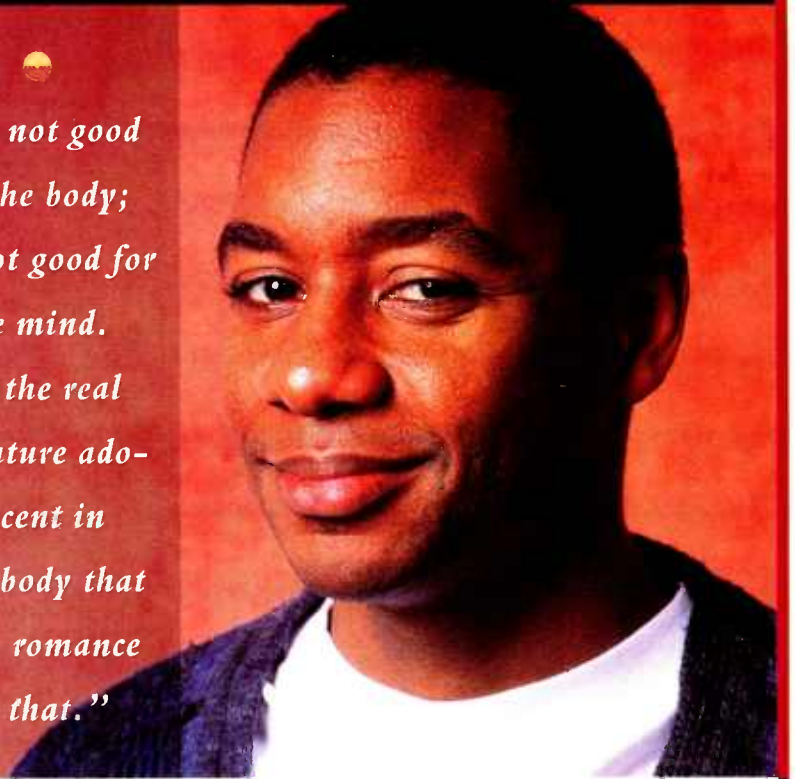
Tony Williams elaborated on his own role as an African American musician. "I don't have to write a song about war or racism, that's not what music is to me. Music is above all that. Just me being here, being a jazz musician, is [in itself] a political statement. Because jazz comes out of the experience of being black in America—and that is a political statement."

Ice-T described his role as one of the major progenitors of rap. "My drive to create is really to help my friends. I'm not driven like some artists who say they have to make this stuff; I'm really driven by the results. Rap is nothing hard for me to do because it's my life—it's easy. I used to try to make stuff that I thought people would want to hear, and my friends'd say, 'No, man, tell them that shit about the neighborhood.' I would think nobody would want to hear that, that's depressing. And they would say, 'People want to hear that; everybody don't live like you, they don't see what you see, you've got to wake people up.' What I do is very easy for me to do, because all I do is absorb shit during the year and I just speak on it."

George Harrison agreed that musicians, with insights drawn from their own experiences, can help those who listen to their music. He also cautioned, "You have to be very careful, I suppose. In one way, we all have a duty to help each other—to help ourselves and then help each other in whatever way, whether it's just to get through the day. I think it's important to share experiences. For instance, if Dylan hadn't said some of the things he did, nobody else was going to say them. Can you imagine what a world it would be if we didn't have a Bob Dylan? It would be awful. There's that side of it. But then there's the other side, where you can start mistaking your own importance. I think I've been in both of those at various times. You suddenly think you're more groovy than you are and then usually something happens to slap you down a bit, so it all has to be tempered with discretion."

David Crosby said, "The music is the central issue, and there are a number of peripheral issues that will pull you away from the music. One of them is 'Gee, I must be intelligent. Look how many people are listening to me.' Or 'Gosh, I'm powerful, I can influence things this way or that way.' Or 'Gee, I'm great. Look at all those people giving me all that adulation.' Or 'I must be the sexiest thing on earth; look at all those girls wanting me.' All of these are mistakes. They are all ways to misperceive ourselves. What you are is incredibly lucky. You're a human being, regular and normal, you put your pants on one leg at a time, same as everyone else. You've been given a gift, and if you understand you've been given a gift, you work very hard at it. You don't abuse it."

*"It's not good
for the body;
it's not good for
the mind.
It's the real
immature ado-
lescent in
everybody that
finds romance
in that."*



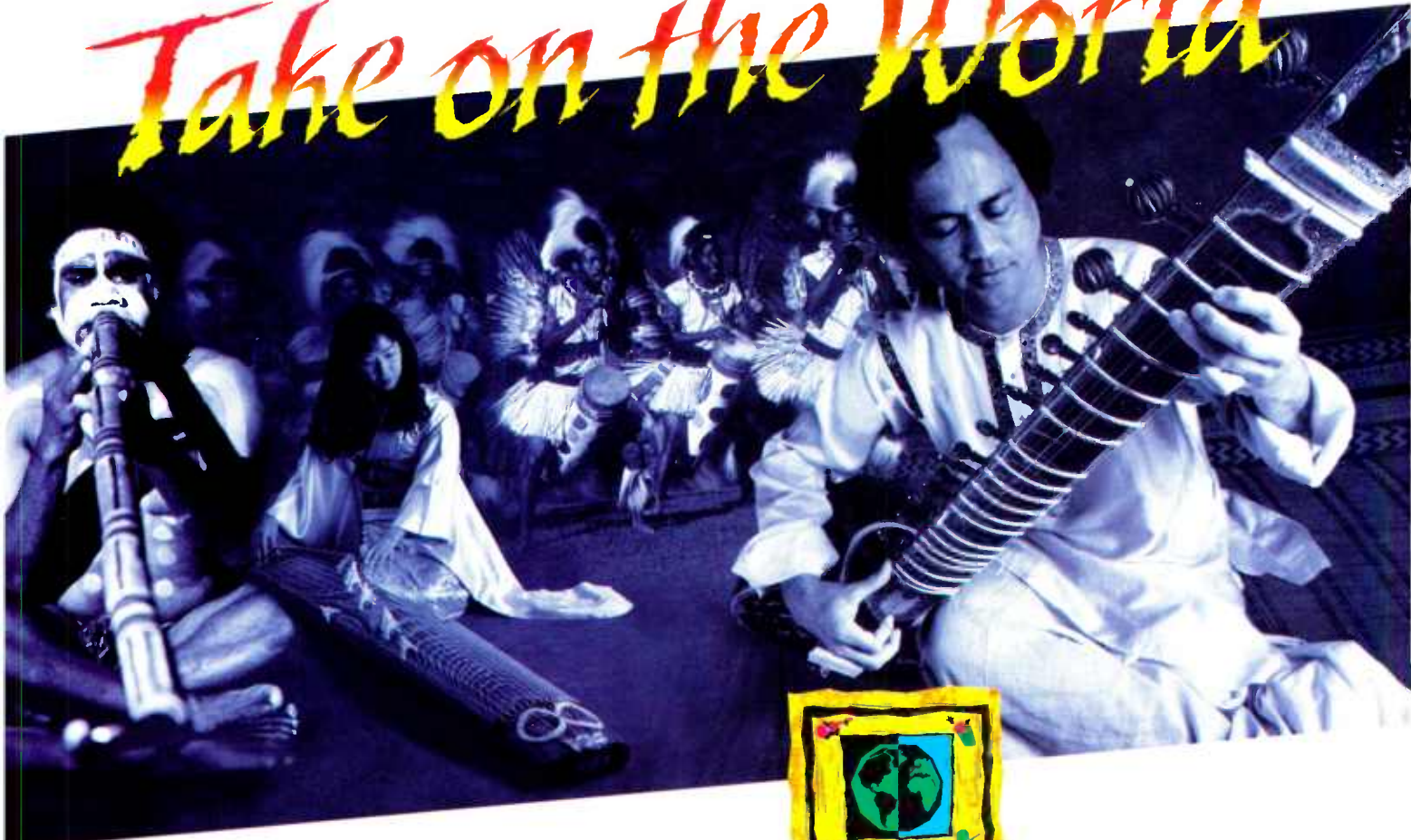
Keith Richards acknowledged that musicians become heroes to their audiences, but he accentuated that the "hero" is only human with his or her foibles. "People have the need to set people above themselves. The stage is the illustration of that—the demigods. The god thing is an illustration of that very need of a greater power. In lieu of finding out what that greater power is, people set up their own earthly version of it in order to express it. I stand on the stage and I'm thinking, 'What are you looking at me for, a damn old junkie hacking away at the guitar, what is this?' This must be a primal need."

George Harrison added, "Although we have this divinity, or creativity, within us, it is covered with material energy, and a lot of the time our actions come from a mundane level. We're like beggars in the goldmine, where everything has really enormous potential and perfection, but we're all so ignorant with the dust of desire on our mirrors. While the Beatles were in India, I wrote a song called 'Deradune' about seeing people going along the road trying to head for this place called Deradune. Everyone was trying to go there for their day off from the meditation camp. I couldn't see any point in going to this town: I'd gone all the way to Rishikesh to be in meditation and I didn't want to go shopping for eggs in Deradune! The verse of the song said, 'See them move along the road/In search of life divine/Unaware it's all around them/Beggars in a goldmine.'"

"Not always the most popular music satisfies the collective unconscious of the most people," Richard Thompson said. "Popular music is basically crass and appeals at a crass level. I think a lot of the less [commercially] successful writers are really tapping into the collective unconscious, but people won't realize it for another ten years or so. The audience is slightly behind. I don't think someone like Madonna taps into the collective unconscious; I think she calculates, extremely cleverly, and she figures out her symbology and the right moves."

Sinéad O'Connor said, "Not everybody is open to Van Morrison, so they'd have to get their information from Janet Jackson or Madonna. Pop music has just as much a function to perform as anything else. There are

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certain types of people that will only be able to receive information from that kind of medium. There's a person there for every section of society. We've got Janet Jackson, who's basically pop, but who is, for some reason, managing to communicate incredibly with people by the way she writes or the things she says in a pop format. Van Morrison would get another type of people; I would get another type; George Michael would get another type. I think there are different musicians for different mentalities."

For Eric Clapton, pop music can be formulaic and superficial, but it can lead listeners to other forms of music that are more meaningful. "There's a lot of gloss, a lot of facade in music today. Fortunately, underneath the surface, there's good stuff going on, which supports the chrome up on top. People who are interested in music, or interested in what's being communicated, will always start out with the veneer and then dip down and find out what's underneath. They're the ones who will get the reward."

PART TWO

DEALING WITH THE DEVIL

Alcohol, Drugs and Creativity

Eric Clapton observed, "To begin with, drink is very baffling and cunning. It's got a personality of its own. Part of the trap [of drugs and alcohol] is that they open the doors to unreleased channels or rooms you hadn't explored before or allowed to be open. A lot of my creative things came out first of all through marijuana. I started smoking when I was about eighteen or nineteen, and that would let out a whole string of humorous things as well as music. Then drink allowed me to be very self-pitiful and opened up that whole kind of sorrowful musical side of myself. Unfortunately after that, the booze becomes more important than the doors it's opening, so that's the trap."

"I think in a lot of cases people do have an inhibition about expressing themselves; most people are very shy and very neurotic and nervous about even meeting other people, but are fine after having a couple of drinks—and that's the same with being creative, I think. But anything that distorts your awareness or any mood-altering chemical will actually impair your thinking, because you tend to be just *wanting* rather than *servicing*. You're not really in tune with anything at all other than your drug, and that works on your nervous system to a point where you are really at the mercy of it, so the only thing you can do is beg and ask all the time. At the beginning there can be an opening up and then you move on to the next phase where it all becomes confused, and then the final phase where the drug or whatever it is has actually got control of you and you've lost that original thing."

Lindsey Buckingham now eschews alcohol and cocaine, but has found that marijuana can help his creativity: "I do smoke pot...it's not great for things like memory, but within the relative security of the studio, in the womblike atmosphere where I know what's going on, it's very helpful. It breaks down preconceptions you have about something; it allows you to hear it fresh. If you've been working on something for a few hours and you smoke a joint, it's like hearing it again for the first time. You walk away for ten minutes and come back, and it allows you to keep coming back in for more and enjoy it. It seems to open a lot of the right-brain stuff. You're never going to do a good piece of work if you're just imposing your ego on something. But the other side of that, the alcohol, is

something I've stopped doing. That and cocaine are not creative things."

Joni Mitchell said, "Writing is a more neurotic, a more dangerous art form, psychologically speaking [than performing music], because there you have to make the mind crazy. It's the opposite of Zen Mind; that's why a lot of the great writers used stimulants. *Alice in Wonderland* was written on opium, all the great Welsh alcoholics. With writing, you need to create the chaotic mind, insanity almost, overlapping thoughts. You have to plumb down if you want any depth to your writing. During the introductory period to a new drug, it can screw on a different consciousness. Any change of consciousness is refreshing. Pot tends to make you tactile, sensual. It warms the heart, for about the first fifteen minutes. Then it starts to log you over. You've got about fifteen minutes of really condensive creative thought and then it can flatten you. If you smoke that on a regular basis, you'd just be flattened, and it's anti-creative. But if you do it knowing, 'I'm stuck here,' take some pot and you'll swing into the opposite of where you are and ideas will open up. Cocaine can give you an intellectual, linear delusion of grandeur, makes you feel real smart. It can create great insanity very quickly. My definition of insanity is chaotic mind—too many thoughts in it, overlapping. For a writer, that's a lot of choices; epic thought can be very good, but if you do [too much], then it takes over and then it's anti-creative, almost immediately. For me, sake is a very warming elixir, but [with] all these things, you can't even do them two days in a row before they turn into a deteriorating effect. I think they almost have to be done with a spiritual, ritualistic [feel], like a prayer."

Bonnie Raitt described how she began using drink and drugs in the '60s, to rebel against society and also to shut out painful things about herself: "I was anesthetized by drugs and alcohol and also the lifestyle. At an early age, I became 'Bonnie Raitt' at a time when I was still very unformed. I had to crystallize this personality before I was really ready to do it. At that point, the schism between the young girl and the professional person made it very difficult and insulating for me. I think the responsibility for being rewarded for something I didn't feel I deserved made me hide behind the alcohol. I got sucked into the lifestyle of a 'Rock and Roll Blues Mama.' It was also a very exciting, dangerous, and rebellious thing to get involved in—celebrated by all the cultural heroes we in the Woodstock Nation looked up to, as rejecting all the violence, hypocrisy, greed, and shallowness of the 'straight' world. It was an affirmation of real human values to adopt the counterculture drug lifestyle. I couldn't wait to get out of school and drink and stay up playing music all night."

"But aside from having all that fun, I got out of touch with the person who's underneath all those layers. I built myself a personality. I think it worked in the beginning, but then as I got older, it didn't serve me as well. I think the life style encouraged the music somewhat. I don't think it always got in the way. It's just that the drugs and alcohol part of it became physically and creatively debilitating and started running me at the end. I

*"I'm afraid
of being
mediocre,
which if
you're loaded
you don't
have to worry
about."*

-BONNIE RAITT

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managed to put a halt to that and got in touch with why I'm here in the first place—a spiritual center—and how important it is to be clear and to be able to open that up.”

Bonnie pointed out that as she becomes more aware of who she is, this self-knowledge is expressed through her music. “I think if you're getting closer and closer to who you really are, who you really are has an awful lot to say.”

Paul Kantner also recalled drug use in the '60s in relation to creativity: “In our generation, some drugs got out of control and were bad;

some were quite good. It affects people differently. As it goes into artistry, it probably helps people achieve moments that they might not have otherwise achieved. I don't want to put this out as a prescription to indiscriminate drug use, hoping for the creative. You've got to be creative and work at that too. You can't just sit down and smoke a joint or drink a bottle of wine and expect creativity to just happen. You have to have something else before it. Some people use marijuana to loosen them up; some people use alcohol, some people use meditation,

some people use jogging. Whatever gets you through the night, in moderation.

“Particularly in our generation, drugs presented a real problem with moderation and they got out of control, as alcohol did with our parents' generation and some of our own generation as well. LSD was as close to God as I ever got, one step above the rock and roll experience. It adds another element to it and drops a lot of doors that you normally keep closed. You just got close to people in ways our parents' generation wouldn't have even considered, would have been horrified by. Grace [Slick] pointed out at one point that we took it upon ourselves to test ourselves with all these drugs, having no other tests to go through the fire.”

Jazz bandleader Frank Foster has found that certain drugs, particularly marijuana, can be useful to help open doors while creating, although their use can impair performance. “I've found that some of my most meaningful or deepest ideas have come through inspiration gleaned from marijuana—not that I think it makes me perform better. It makes me feel I'm in touch with forces I'm not usually in touch with when I'm cold sober. I can get out of myself what the Creator has given me to produce whether I'm high or sober. I don't think I could do anything behind alcohol; alcohol generally interferes with the motor function. People who get drunk can't perform up to their ability, unless they've been doing it for years and years, like saxophone players who've been drinking all their lives and who can go on all night, their systems have become sort of immune to the impairment caused by alcohol, although they are going to die from drinking it for so long.”

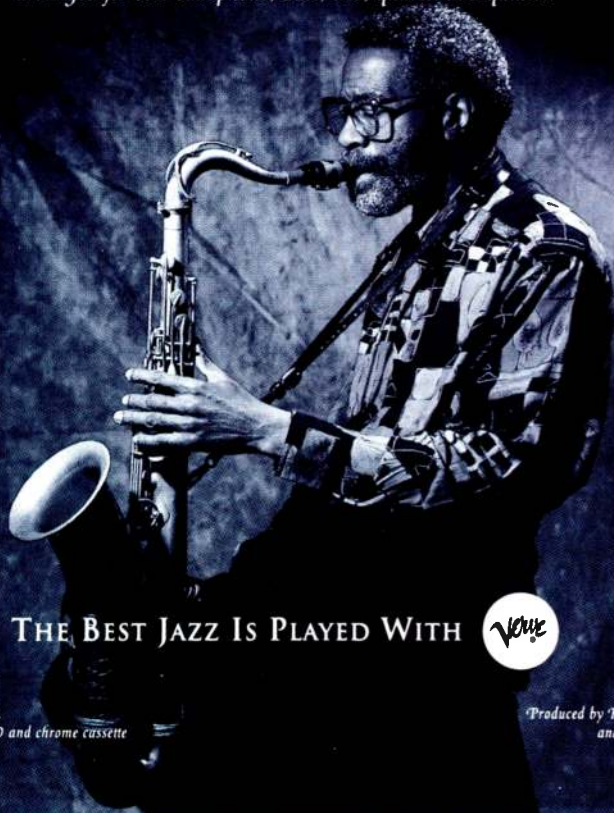
Sinéad O'Connor, like Foster, uses marijuana in moderation to open herself up for writing music, but has found it impedes performance and recording: “I smoke dope quite a bit and that really does help—not when I'm onstage or in the studio performing—it sort of fucks you up—but when I'm actually writing, because it opens your mind up. I mean you mustn't do it all the time because then it has the opposite effect. You can't open yourself too much because the human mind is only capable of receiving a certain amount of information. There are certain things you're not exposed to because you can't deal with it, so you shouldn't open yourself up too much. Look at all the poets—Blake or Coleridge or Wordsworth—they were all opium addicts. Your life is so difficult, it's very hard to open yourself up. If you smoke a joint, you're much clearer, you realize what your thoughts are, but

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you've got to write it down really quickly before it all goes through your head."

George Harrison agreed that initially LSD and marijuana can be used beneficially, but explained why he's discontinued using both: "LSD did unlock something for me, and it released all this stuff. I used to spend time looking at myself in the mirror, and the face kept changing, from looking like a Mongolian and then to a Chinese man. I just kept looking, thinking, 'Who are you?' I think that with pot, it definitely did something for the old ears, like

suddenly I could hear more subtle things in the sound. But now I've found it's actually better not to do it while working. I need to be a bit more clear, because my mind is such a scramble at times, and all that does is scramble it more."

Peter Gabriel disparages the use of drugs, as giving a false sense of enlightenment. "Mind-altering substances of one kind or another have been traditionally part of many cultures and have a place in shaping creativity. But I don't think it's something I would recommend to anyone nor that it is necessary. I think it's possible to

get to wherever you want to go without it. Perhaps sometimes it does short-circuit longer routes that maybe allow you to look through a window, perhaps at a state that might be arrived at through spiritual work. I'm not sure you actually get there. It's a very dangerous road."

Other physical problems related to alcohol and drugs are well-known to all who've overindulged. Of course, musicians are not exempt. George told me about a particularly raucous Traveling Wilburys session that occurred the night before our interview: "It's like if you have a few beers and you get all excited—like last night. We had great fun and it sounded groovy, but at the same time, the next day you've got a hangover and you're all messed up."

Jackson Browne said, "I always thought [the drugs] enhanced [creativity] at the time, but you pay heavily. Out of all the drugs that I took, the experiences that I'm consciously aware of valuing are psychedelics. In the mid-'60s when people began turning on to psychedelic drugs, it was revolutionary. It was something that had been talked about by Aldous Huxley. It was a scientific thing; it was a breakthrough. When I took it, I was real careful; I set up the whole experience. I've never been able to understand people who did it every day or took it casually, or do it and go to a concert or something."

"Escaping the busy mind" was frequently cited by musicians as a requirement to being creative. The busy mind, or the conscious mind, is a sort of roadblock to that deeper, creative unconscious mind, which artists rely on to make music. Therefore, many musicians have used drugs or alcohol to sedate the busy mind, in hopes of allowing the inspiration to come forth from the unconscious while the busy mind falls asleep.

Roger Waters pointed this out: "Alcohol in reasonable quantities has the same effect as lying in a bath; it deprives you of the jagged edges of your perceptions and senses. That's why I think it's such a popular drug, because it removes the nagging edge of life and consequently may well free the bits that are concerned with relating to the natural order. It may release your ability to confront your feelings on a more artistic level, because you stop worrying about, say, the mortgage. I know a lot of friends who are writers who use alcohol to write, just because it dulls the senses."

"Out of frustration, you do drugs when you can't write," drummer Steve Jordan said. "You've got to do something, so you hope for a different perspective. On occasion that might work, but usually what happens once you've

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had one drink, you just want another drink.”

Joni Mitchell has also experienced this trap. “Out of desperation, when you have no inspiration, [you may try] to stimulate it with the addition of something artificial. But with the straight mind, the little shocks of daily existence can be enough; you go out the door of your house in one mood and you run into something that either elevates or depresses that mood; that change of mind could be the stimulation needed for the creative process. The straight mind is ultimately the best because it’s the long-distance runner of them all. With the others, the road is too dangerous; it can burn you out, and kill your talent.”

Don Henley explained how he had used intoxicants to buffer feelings that bothered him. “I’ve been creative on alcohol and marijuana and cocaine. I’ve also had my creativity completely blocked by all three of those things. It depends on how often they’re used and how much of them you use at a given time. I think ultimately all the ability is there; the music is there inside. I think the only reason I ever used drugs was to overcome shyness or self-doubt, because writing sometimes requires spilling some of your innermost thoughts and feelings to somebody else, sometimes to somebody you don’t even know very well. I think those substances were merely used as a little ‘instant courage,’ to overcome those feelings of ‘Who am I to be doing this? Why do I deserve to get my feelings and opinions on this blank piece of vinyl that a million people are going to hear?’ I think some of the drug-taking was to blunt that feeling of undeservedness, because when you do coke, it makes you feel that everything you’re saying is worthwhile and that everybody ought to listen. I didn’t use drugs actually to create, but simply to buffer those feelings of inadequacy.”

Keith Richards, whose past addiction to heroin is notorious, discussed the way drugs become part of a musician’s life: “I never took drugs with the idea they were going to make me play better, and I think for most musicians the drug thing is a high-risk hazard of the game. If you’re working 350 days a year and you’re absolutely knackered and there’s a little old guy on the show with you playing in the other group and you’re thinking, ‘I’ve got to drive five hundred miles tonight and do two shows tomorrow,’ you look at him and say, ‘How do you do it, man?’ ‘Well, you take a couple of these.’ And it starts off like that. Charlie Parker used to have to deal with guys who shoot up and were thinking how that’s going to make them play better. And that always bothered him.

“It’s just a matter of knowing yourself,

which most people don’t—they want to emulate somebody else.”

Just as young musicians often embrace the musical legacy of certain artists, some, as Keith pointed out, try to take on their heroes’ self-destructiveness as well. These fledgling musicians mistakenly think they have to do the drugs their musical heroes did in order to play like them. Sideman Robert Warren said he has seen this problem among players he has known: “Some people think they have to take the same drugs as their favorite musician did, so they can be more like them. If they can’t *play* like their idols, they

can at least get the drug addiction right.”

Tony Williams said that drug use creates inertia rather than art: “At some point drugs and alcohol can loosen a person up and you can get ideas. But on a regular basis, no, I think that those things can be really destructive. You can have a drink and get loose and get funnier and get friendlier with people, and in music you can think of ideas—but I couldn’t write music drunk; I couldn’t play drunk. I have played after three or four glasses of wine and gone onstage, and I don’t really like that. With drugs, too, there was a time when I used to smoke grass, and I thought grass [cont’d on page 95]



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Miking the Voice

"When a mike is great and it suits the singer, you get an instant vocal sound." Shelly Yakus knows all about making singers sound great. Working with producer Jimmy Iovine, Yakus has engineered classic sessions, with John Lennon, Tom Petty, Stevie Nicks and U2, to name a few. "I have a philosophy," Yakus says. "I listen to a singer and I put up a microphone with a sound that is the opposite of that singer's voice. Otherwise you're accenting the negative aspects of the artist's voice, and over a screaming rock track that is not a pretty sound." For the raspy vocals of Tom Petty and Don Henley, Yakus goes with the wide-open warmth of the Neumann 47FET. Maria McKee's full-throated wail requires a different approach. "Mikes like the FET47 and the AKG C12 inherently have a crystal-clear sound like Maria's," he says. "You put her and those mikes together and it'll start screeching." McKee ended up singing through the thicker-

sounding, tube-driven Neumann U67. Yakus prefers to record his singers on a bare floor, but if the room reflection gets to be too much he'll put down a rug and cut a hole in it around the singer to keep the sound from getting too dead. "One more key to getting these great vocals is to pad down the preamp *before* the sound goes into it," he says. "A lot of preamps place the pad after the input and the singing will break up that input." For Yakus, a great microphone is an important investment, and he recently spent a pretty penny purchasing his latest pride and joy, Les Paul's original Telefunken 251.

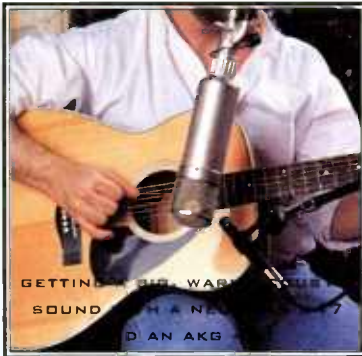
But for about a hundred bucks you can pick up a Shure SM57, the same microphone that Yakus used on John Lennon and Bono. "When the 57 is the right mike, you get the personality, the essence of the singer," he says, "and because of its presence, it takes to effects in an amazing way."

Producing cutting-edge bands like the Pixies, Pere Ubu and Throwing Muses has given London-based producer Gil Norton plenty of chances to turn it up to 11. "There's generally three mikes that I like to put in front of an amp," Norton says, "a Neumann U87, an AKG 414 and my favorite is a Shure SM57." When it comes to grunge, Norton likes to use Marshall stacks in conjunction with a little Fender Champ. "We split the signal with a junction box and then put it into two amps at the same time and mix them together," he says. "In front of each amp I'll use an SM57 and an AKG 414 just slightly to the side of the speaker, about a foot away." For Norton, a great guitar sound has everything to do with the room he's recording in, so he'll generally have a 414 up as an ambient mike. Any time you're using more than one microphone you run the risk of getting into phase problems, but Norton has turned this problem into an advantage. "There are times when I'll move the mikes around slightly to put one out of phase with the other in order to cancel out certain frequencies," he says. "It can be a great way to get the sound



Miking the Guitar Amp

BY PETER CRONIN



you want *before* you touch the EQ at the desk. So much for a lot of these books.”

Miking Acoustic Guitar

Among the most subjective and elusive miking tasks is capturing the sound of an acoustic guitar. To record Leo Kottke’s percussive playing, producer (and Los Lobos sax player) Steve

Berlin used a Schoeps. He placed the German-made tube mike between the soundhole and where the neck joins the body, about a foot in front of the guitar. Slightly farther away, he placed an AKG C24 stereo microphone “with one of the capsules broken, so it was essentially a C12.” Berlin describes the AKG C12 as the microphone he’d most likely take to a desert island. “For some reason the C12 gives acoustic guitars, and everything else, a misty, three-dimensional quality,” he says. Ambient room sounds were picked up with the flat, un-mike-like Crown PZM mounted to the wall.

Producer Don Gehman used the uncommon “Church mike” to get John Mellencamp’s acoustic sound. “It’s essentially a Neumann 47 capsule with new electronics,” Gehman says. “That particular microphone has a bristling quality that an acoustic guitar needs to stay alive against a rock track.” Bluegrass producer/dobro king Jerry Douglas pretty much lives and breathes acoustically, and goes with what he hears. “I’ve had some

success putting a microphone up above the player close to his right ear, because when I’m playing that’s where I really connect with the tone.” Whether he’s experimenting or going with more traditional mike placement, Douglas likes using AKG 414s, Bruel & Kjaer 4006s and the “very warm-sounding” AKG 451s and 452s. On mandolins he prefers Neumann’s cigar-shaped KM84s. “A lot of people like to get a pickup-y, stringy tone, as if the instrument was plugged in,” he says. “I really make an effort to get the whole guitar.”



Miking Horns

New York-based producer John Snyder has had to deal with some head-strong players, recording people like Freddie Hubbard, Gerry Mulligan and Dizzy Gillespie. “Some artists come in with a preconceived notion of what mike sounds best,” he says. “We’ll try it out and experiment, but we usually return to a fairly standard repertoire of microphones.” For Snyder these include Neumann U87s, Bruel & Kjaer 4011s and Sennheiser’s MKH40. “When I recorded Dizzy he wanted to use the radio-controlled mike that he uses onstage,” he says. “It was no good because of RF interference and because in the lower frequencies the sound would spread.” Snyder ended up going with the clip-on, uni-directional Audio-Technica ATM35 plugged directly into the board. “Dizzy would get tangled up in the wire every night,” he laughs, “but it sounded better, and he knew it from the first minute.” A more common strategy for Snyder would be to

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Photo by Michael Fritel

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At right: James Strong
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BUTCH VIG ON MIKING YOUR DRUM KIT



The first thing Butch Vig learned upon entering a recording studio in the mid-'70s was how *not* to get a good drum sound. "I just bummed out," says the drummer/producer. "The whole kit was taped up and dead, and there was carpeting on the walls and floor. The engineer would say, 'You gotta hit the drum real hard to make 'em sound good,' but to me they just sounded like *Hotel California*. The drums in my own basement sounded much better, with all that natural ambience." We caught up with Vig in a lower-Manhattan studio where, fresh from his success with Nirvana, the producer was busy tweaking the drum sound for his latest project, Sonic Youth. "I don't like to use any tape on the drums if I can help it, and I try to get the hottest, most direct signal I can."

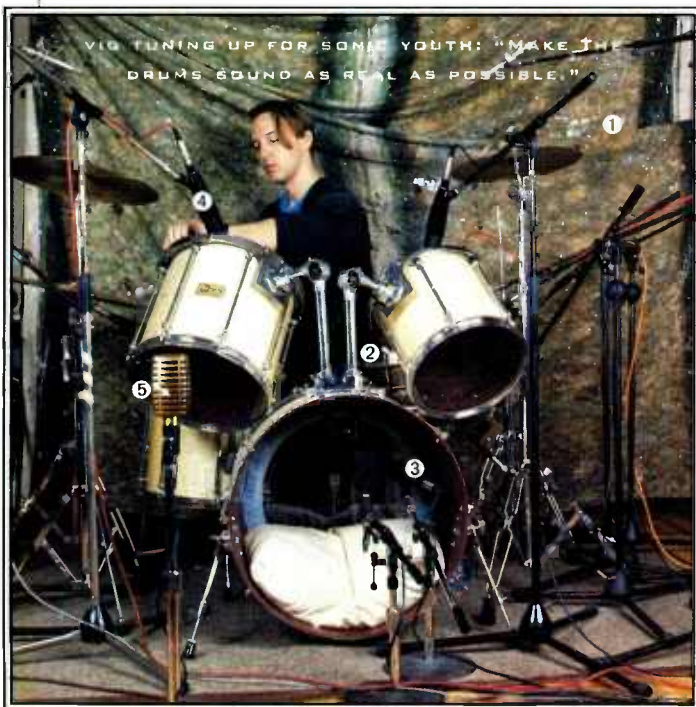
On this vintage Ludwig Black Beauty snare, ② Vig combines the reliable Shure SM57 with two AKG 451s. "The AKGs are out of phase with the 57, so that they'll sound *in* phase," he explains. "Having the top 451 off-axis, pointing straight down at the drum, sounded totally thin. I flipped the phase button on this top mike and it put the weight back into the drum and gave it a nice kind of knock." The other 451 (barely visible) is positioned underneath the drum. Vig EQs some of the mid and low end out of the lower mike in order to pick up the crackle of the snare. On the hi-hat (not pictured) Vig uses an AKG 414 padded down 10 dB.

The rack and floor toms ④-⑤ are miked with Sennheiser 421s, angled so that the stick contacts the head right at the mike's pickup point. "It really depends on the drummer," Vig says. "If he's smashing them and

there's going to be lots of cymbals crashing, it's not good to use condensers on the toms. In that case I'd stick with a 421 or use a 57." Although he sometimes mikes the tops and bottoms of the toms, Vig tries to stick with a less-is-more approach. "In general, the fewer mikes you use, the better the drums end up sounding," he says.

On the bass drum, however, he'll usually go with two mikes, ③ in this case a Sennheiser 421 close to the beater head and an AKG D12 farther away. "You want to be able to control how much snap you're getting from the kick pedal," he says. "For the aggressive things I'll use more of the Sennheiser to get an attack-y sound, but the farther you move mikes away from that inner head, the more low end develops. That's why the D12 is in the back. Right now I have them at about 50/50, but moving one of them just an inch can make a huge difference."

That cool-looking overhead cymbal mike ① is a Neumann KM56, a '60s-vintage tube microphone. "I'll sometimes use AKG 414s, but these are just a bit warmer," Vig says. "I also like the Bruel & Kjaer 4006s." That gold-colored beauty to the left of the bass drum ⑤ is an old Beyerdynamic M380 broadcast mike that Vig uses to pick up some of the room. "I'll also sometimes use Neumann 47s or 48s to capture room ambience." Vig is open to experimentation, but feels that initially, it's a good idea to spend as much time with the microphones as possible. "Get the mikes sounding really good before you start EQing and processing them," he says. "Some people will set up a snare mike, process the hell out of it and then move on. They get some good sounds, but I like my drums to sound as real as possible."



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line of wireless systems similarly marketed, from its inexpensive non-diversity 101 systems to its best 1200 line. Prices range from \$349 for a standard lavalier system to \$1699.99 for their 1200HT hand-held. Nady is just about to smash through the UHF price barrier with a new system, the 301 UHF, priced at \$899 for a standard hand-held. Further, the 301 offers four user-tunable synthesized channels, and a choice of mike capsules and body-pack configurations. Not to be outdone, the good folks at Telex have introduced their ProStar system. This built-to-last, true diversity unit comes in three low-priced configurations: guitar (\$360), lapel (\$380) and hand-held (\$490)—and it's designed, manufactured and assembled right here in the USA (Lincoln, Nebraska no less). Audio-Technica's new ATW systems incorporate six-stage frequency filtering for better-than-most reception, and an ultra-quiet companding circuit that really eliminates the "pumping" you can get from some noise reduction systems. Prices range from \$710 for an industry-standard lavalier/body-pack unit to \$990 for their high-quality hand-held condenser system. Shure has developed an interesting VHF system based on combining true diversity technology, rather than the typical switching version. Called MARCAD (Maximum Ratio Combining Audio Diversity), the system combines both RF section outputs in the Shure L4 true diversity receiver for improved signal-to-noise. The MARCAD system is a terrific innovation because it means that both RF sections are constantly working to improve signal-to-noise and eliminate drop-out problems. Shure drop-tests all of its systems prior to shipment: with Shure's surface-mount technology, you are assured a rugged long-life system. They range from \$495 to \$749. At the truly top end of the spectrum, Beyerdynamic, Telex, Sennheiser and Sony offer

TESTING: AUDIO-TECHNICA'S AT4033

I'd heard the hype, but it was when I heard the high-end response that I realized I'd got my hands on something really special in Audio-Technica's new studio-quality mike, the AT4033. A transformerless condenser microphone patterned after classics like the venerable Neumann U87, the 4033 is extraordinarily sensitive. Maximum sound input level is 140 dB SPL, says the spec sheet, and nothing I could think of doing to the 4033 gave me any reason to doubt that. Strumming my old Guild acoustic in front of this mike induced a momentary state of euphoria: silky transparent treble presence, going up higher than my poor ears can, gave incredible breadth to the sound.

At \$699, the AT4033 retails for significantly less than all the other top studio condenser mikes. But the fresh-air transparency it brings to just about any instrument or vocal makes it sound like there should be another digit somewhere in that price.

ALAN DI PERNA

systems with improved frequency filtering and studio fidelity and, of course, price. Sony has the most expensive systems which feature up to 168 user-selectable frequency synthesized channels, either VHF or UHF. Prices range from \$3200 for a standard VHF system to \$6500 for their best UHF hand-held units.

Listen to a variety of systems, not just for drop-outs, but also for fidelity. If possible, try one or two in performance before you buy. In short, involve your ears as much as your wallet in the selection process.

BRENT HURTIG WITH ROLF HARTLEY

SOUND BITES

AKG's new Tri-Power series of microphones was designed with the strange demands and heavy perils of roadwork in mind. Overall power output has been cranked substantially, a moving-magnet suspension system minimizes handling noise and a triangulated body makes them so nice to hold. The proximity effect (that bass buildup you get when you move near a mike) is nixed by separate, matched high- and low-frequency transducers. Some models also have a lo-cut switch for rolling off ultra-woofy frequencies.

Nady's new top-of-the-line wireless, the 2000, has new mute-hiss circuitry for a strong, clean signal, even in the outer limits of the system's operating range. The 2000 comes in instrument, hand-held and lavalier configurations. Sony's new 800 Series is a UHF synthesized wireless with 94 channels to solve tricky on-the-road interference problems. In multi-mike applications, the 800 Series receivers automatically select frequencies that work together: All the harmonic computations are done for you. The newest addition to the series is a transmitter with a condenser, the WRT830A, a hand-held mike capsule suitable for vocal work.

Electro-Voice's new N/Dym Series III mikes are designed for vocals and instruments, though the top-of-the-line models can cross over into recording and sampling. E-V's pneumatic AcoustiDYM system cuts down on handling noise. There's a built-in EQ to fight feedback, and neodymium transducers provide high sensitivity and low distortion.

Bruel & Kjaer's studio-standard 4003 and 4006 mikes take on new personality when you screw on their new WA0609 Acoustic Pressure

Equalization Attachment—a simple, 50mm sphere that makes those omnidirectional mikes behave like unidirectionals. On-axis frequency response is increased in the 2-5 kHz range, while off-axis sound gets halted by low-pass filtering. Improved "reach" and directivity at frequencies over 1 kHz are among the other benefits of this clever little companion.

JBL has an affordable new line of processing gear, the M Series Electronics. It includes a four-channel noise gate, the M644, and a two-channel gating compressor/limiter, the M712. Attenuation, attack and threshold are fully adjustable on each of the M644's four compressors. Threshold range is a broad -60 to +20 dBu. The M712 is stereo-linkable and offers user control of threshold, ratio, attack and release, plus a gate with variable threshold for each channel.

Boss's Pro Series line of half-rack processors includes a new parametric EQ, the PQ-50; four bands cover the 20 to 20k front. Frequency level and Q are adjustable for each band; high and low bands can have either peaking or shelving curves. The EH-50 Stereo Enhancer has five preset-enhance modes to sparkle up everything from vocals to five-string bass.



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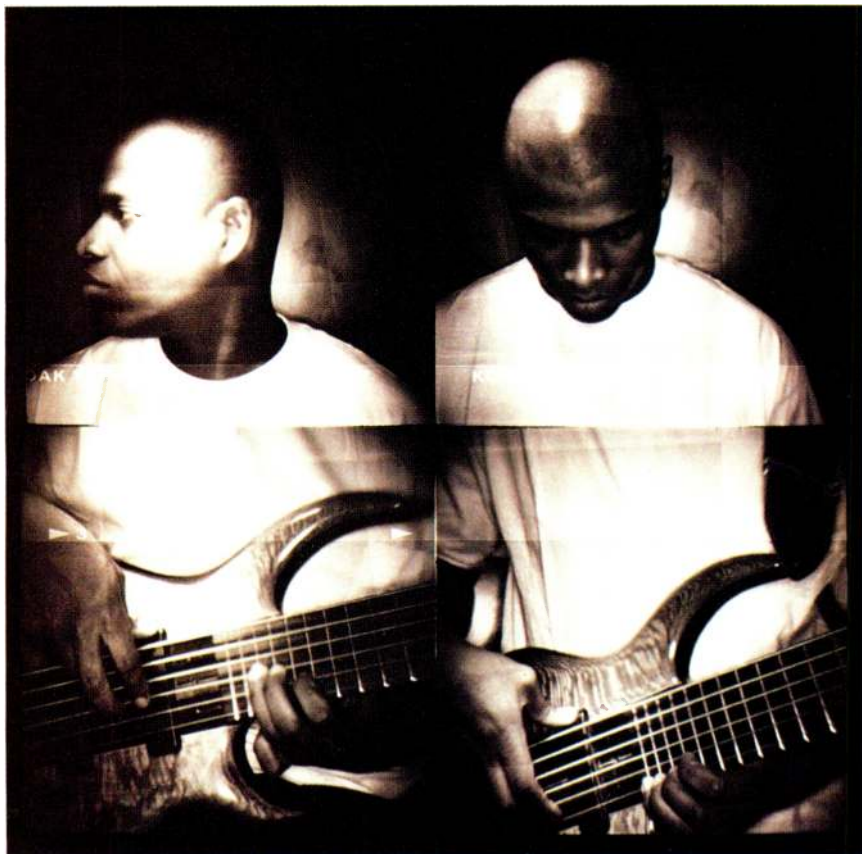
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WORKING MUSICIAN

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE MAY 1992



Bass

MELVIN GIBBS' CULTURAL RELATIONS

Play what you live

by MATT RESNICOFF

THE IRONY IN BEING ABLE TO play anything is that performance becomes a series of doors you *shut*, until you find yourself face to face with that one righteous note. To further blur the grand perception of the "avant garde musician," a guy like Melvin Gibbs tells stories about getting to play nearly three times as freely on R&B dates than

during a set with an improvising drum octopus like Ronald Shannon Jackson. The implication is that the fewer rules there are, the more a bass player needs to impose limitations at the bottom to serve a purpose in the music. Onstage with Pete Cosey recently, Melvin was underneath four of the most spacious notes ever played—for 15 minutes.

"There's always a starting point," Gibbs says between rehearsals with his band Eye & I, "and you expand according to the context. With Pete it's not even a starting point; it's a suggestion.

Like, 'This is my idea of what should happen.' And you say, 'Okay, your idea's cool—for *now*.' But if they start moving from the premise they set up, you can too. There's gotta be movement. When I'm playing with Vernon [Reid] and [Will] Calhoun, they're *all* the way out there, so it's better to just keep a zone. Playing with Shannon and Bill Frisell is like halfway between, because Shannon's way out, but he's playing melodically all the time, and it leaves me room to go into a different place. I usually do the opposite of what everybody else is doing: If they're in, I try to keep it open. If they're out, I try to bring it back. Once everybody's out or in, there's nowhere to go, so you gotta keep some tension so it can keep evolving."

Gibbs may be nationally familiar for the press surrounding his friends' welcome vacation from Living Colour, but around New York (where that trio's upcoming live disc was recorded) Melvin is everywhere, playing everything. His complementary voicings with Cosey, his step-in work at a recent Defunkt reunion, his muscular support with Sonny Sharrock—it all underscores that effective bass has as much to do with melody and harmony as with underpinning. There's a reason why pop bassists in the '70s and rap bassists in the '90s got writing credits for their lines, and it's the same reason Gibbs is a monster. As an aspirant percussionist, he's always maintained that "composing" on the bandstand goes beyond notes.

"People don't realize drums are *tuned*," he laughs. "A conga player's playing rhythm, but he's also playing melody, and that melody's a drone, like bass. It's going all the time. And whenever they change up the rhythm, they're changing the notes as well. That evolving drone thing is something I've developed. A lot of traditional African stuff is like seven guys playing bass—playing this crazy bass part that's always changing, but highly rhythmic. For me, that came from Shannon, because we used to just jam all the time. The bass is there as a melodic function and as another drum, so it's up to you to figure out what notes he needs. No good drummer needs a bass player, because they have all the notes; what they need is a melodic rhythm to go with them. That's what funk bass is, and a lot of the percussion on Cuban records, just recontextualized onto an instrument we use now."


True enough, but when Melvin kicks in his Mutron and reaches into the high registers of his six-string, he's like Bootsy coming through Dophy. He drew heavily from P-Funk's bassists, and from Michael Henderson and Anthony

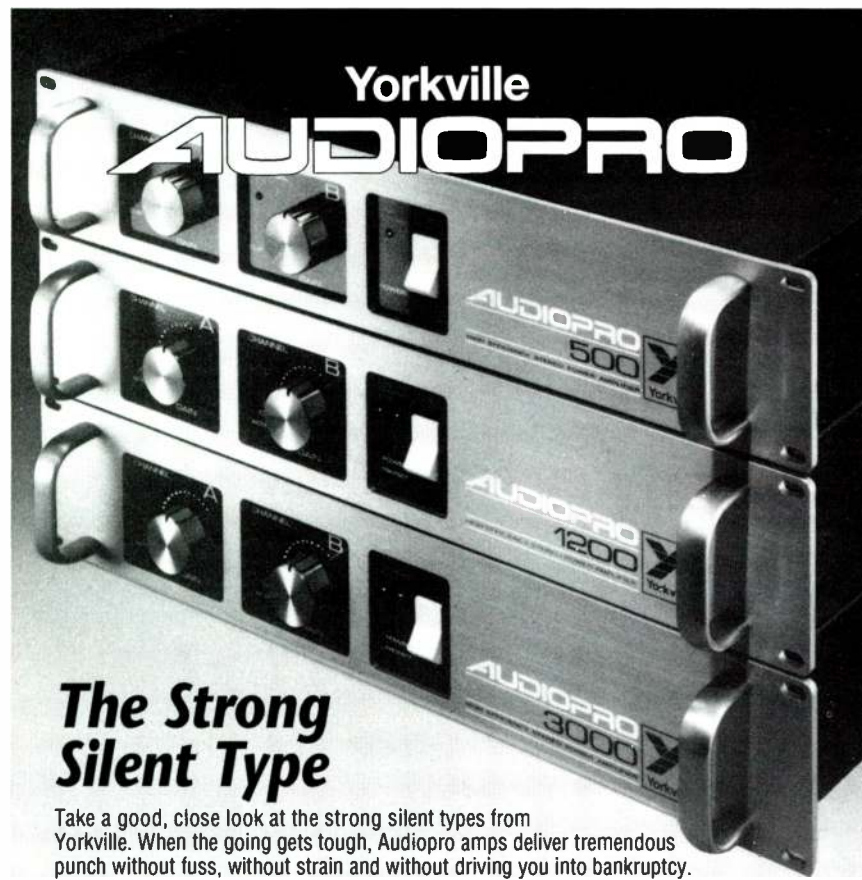
Jackson ("the master on bass, the cat—period"), as well as Motown hero James Jamerson, who epitomized melodic rhythm. "He really developed bass within the context of pop," says Melvin. "You look at it on paper, you're like, 'This guy made this beautiful stuff in his head?!' Larry Graham's the same. His style developed because he played in church bands, where there's no drummer, so he started the thumb thing to get the other rhythms in, and that leads into Bootsy and all the guys we listen to."

It's a concept that young players might not be hip to, that bass is a way of *thinking* as well as

playing. "Yeah, and feeling," Gibbs agrees. "Really, you don't need the notes. There's circumstances where you can use them, but bass is *the note*. And no other note is right but that note! You've got 144 notes on a six-string, but only one is gonna be right. You can be busy trying to figure out the other 143, or you can try to find the correct one and go from there. I prefer to use as few notes as possible. Those notes might be 32nd notes—that might be the fewest notes that work for that circumstance—but it's best to focus in on what needs to be done and set up something solid. When you've got a six-string, people

expect you to play a certain way. I have that available to me, but I concentrate on my role as a musician, as a creative person. If I do the crazy stuff, even in a solo, it's because it's adding to the emotion of the song. Anthony Jackson plays the craziest virtuoso stuff, but it's always *thick*, it's always like, *bass*, and you're always like, 'Damn.' Cats listening to Jaco and Stanley have to realize Jaco and Stanley had a foundation. They knew the cats that came before them, and were breaking rules they knew. People started using synth bass on records because it was easy and it was there, but also because everybody was fused out. Nobody understood how to drop in the hip Bernard Edwards style of bass. Everybody would come in soloing with their Steinberger—that's not what time it is.

"When I started playing I practiced a lot, learned all the scales, and one day I went, 'I'm not even using half this shit.' So I got my chops up with finger exercises and waited until I had a context for what I had: 'Oh, *that's* what the whole-tone scale is for.' Then you're practicing for a reason. Then, every once in a while, you come up with something that feeds off a crazy exercise you should have practiced, so you go home and get it under your fingers. I learned more about playing by telling jokes with Sonny Sharrock, just getting in his vibe. The notes is mathematics—anybody can do that. Everybody's got a certain amount of technique, but what's missing is being in the moment, and that you can't get sitting at home practicing. You can only get that if you've got a good woman or you're deep in whatever your spiritual thing is. Steve Vai fasts before he plays. Look at Trane—as much time as he spent practicing, one of his dopest tunes was for his first wife, Naima. A full existence includes getting beyond your learning process. Read a philosophy book, that's practice. You're relating to the culture, and that's a lot of what music is." 



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I & MINE

MELVIN'S main bass is a six-string Tobias with a high B and a low C; he uses a five-string Warwick for rock and a worn-in Music Man five-string for sessions—"it was on the road with Sharrock, it's got the vibe." His f-hole Fender Coronado, used on Eye & I's "Don't Just Say Peace," is for that Roland 808 bass-drum thump, and he's checking out acoustic bass guitars. Amps are SWR. He steps on a Mutron, a Rat and a Real Tube, and is looking at CryBaby wahs for touring.

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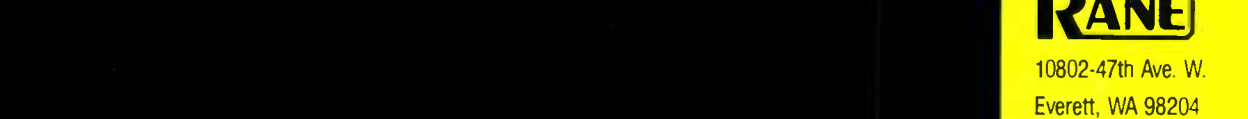
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GLENN PHILLIPS BENDS SOME RULES

Exploring
the left hand

by RICK MATTINGLY

IT SURE DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HARMONICS. For one thing, there are more pitches than the relative few a guitar can produce. Also, a lot of them are bending, and there's all that sustain and a real gutsy tone. Nope, doesn't sound like harmonics.

But as Glenn Phillips sits in the music room of his Atlanta home and plays the melody of "Theme From," a tune on his *Scatched by the Rabbit* album, one sees that he is, in fact, playing it with harmonics, mostly over the 7th fret. It's the vibrato arm that causes the notes to bend, curve and twist around. "I wrote this simple melody," he explains, "and then decided I wanted to use natural harmonics. Trouble is, there's a limited amount on the guitar. So I use my bar to bend them. To get that tone, I've got a lot of sustain on the amp, an overdrive pedal and the gain cranked up.

"Now here's the real problem, and this is what I've worked on. When everything is cranked and you're playing long notes with a lot of sustain, you have to learn how to keep the other strings quiet. If you don't, you'll hear lots of little fuzzy noises. Often, when you hear someone who's pretty good but is kind of messy, it's not what they're playing that sounds messy, but the fact that they're not keeping the other strings quiet."

There are a variety of ways to do that, Phillips says. With his second finger, he touches the G string over the 7th fret, producing a D harmonic. As he picks three quarter notes, his vibrato unit—the handle of which is nestled between his middle and ring fingers—shakes slightly, giving the notes a somewhat nervous quality. Striking the note a fourth time, he uses the vibrato to swoop the pitch down to C#. While that note is ringing he quickly lays his finger across the neck so that as it touches the D string, producing an A harmonic, it simultaneously stops the G string from ringing. "You have to make sure your finger is slanted a little bit," he points out, "so that it only lets the harmonic ring out on the string you're hitting. If the finger goes straight along

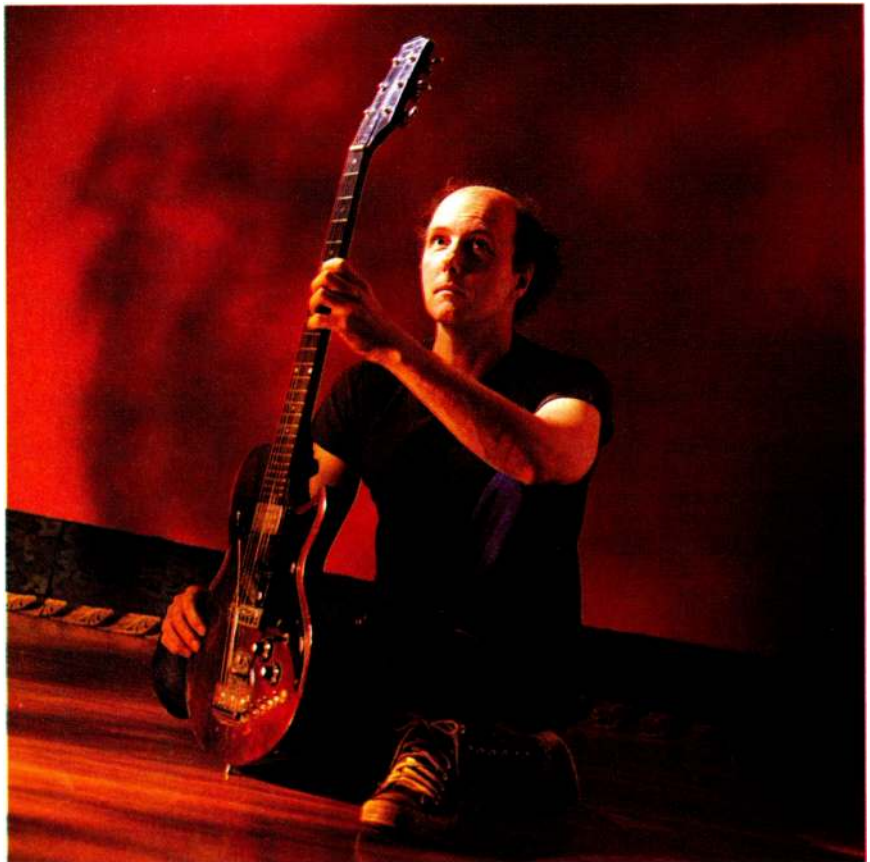
the fret, other harmonics can ring, too.

"Even when I play really quiet," Phillips says, "I use a compressor to give the guitar a clean sustain, and I have to be conscious of string noises outside of the notes I'm hitting. Sometimes in the studio, when I'm playing a section of a song that doesn't involve open strings, I tie a sock around the neck of my guitar, down by the nut, just to keep the other strings from ringing out so much. There's not much I can do that way, because I play a lot of things with open strings. It obviously wouldn't work with harmonics. But it sometimes works for certain sections of a tune.

aggressively with his left hand, producing an intense vibrato. The only point of contact between his left hand and the guitar neck is at his fingertips.

"Every time I shake that note," he says, "I'm also hitting the B string underneath it, so to keep it quiet, I place the middle finger of my right hand on that string, and I've got my ring finger on the high E string. At the same time, the meaty portion of my right-hand thumb is laying across the lower strings, keeping them quiet.

"So the rule is, when you do things with your left hand that make the other strings vibrate, use the palm of your right hand—just below the thumb—to dampen the strings below the one you're picking, and the other fingers of the right hand to damp the strings above it. Of course, on the high E string, I'm not using fingers, just the



Like Jeff Beck, Phillips manipulates harmonics with the vibrato bar.

"Here's something I do a lot, where I dampen with the right hand," Phillips says, playing a third string/12th fret G. He frets the note with his second finger, and as he pulls the string downward towards the B string his first finger helps out. Bending the note up to A, Phillips shakes it

palm. Then, as I go down to lower strings, I may use some fingers to quiet the strings above the one I'm playing.

"You do have to watch it," he cautions, "because it's hard to dampen the string right beneath the one you're trying to play. When I'm



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shaking that G string, I might not consciously try to mute the D string below, because the string I'm really worried about at that point is the B underneath. So you have to make judgment calls when you're damping, and decide where the noise is coming from. Also, if you get too heavy-handed with your right hand damping, you'll make noise by hitting them."

One thing Phillips doesn't do is hook his left-hand thumb over the neck to deaden the bottom strings. "I've seen people do that," he says, "but it's uncomfortable for me. I tend to play with my left hand in a mutated classical position where my thumb is behind the neck. It doesn't reach over real easy. But people's hands are structured differently; I noticed that when I gave lessons. So technical tips work in some cases and not in others. You can't necessarily duplicate the action someone else uses to get a specific effect. But you can pay attention musically to what's going on and don't get hung up thinking you can just do something one way."

Putting his guitar aside, Phillips smiles. "You got a lot of technical information out of a guy who doesn't think too much about the technique of what he's doing. I've developed weird ways to get things, but if you want to discover something new musically, you have to go inside

WORKING MUSICIAN

and find out something about yourself. I've obviously spent countless hours sitting in my room with my guitar, but you're not going to get anything out of practicing technique unless you're equally committed to listening inside yourself. No technique can give you as much to say musically as listening to those weird little thoughts you have just before going to sleep, and finding a way to express those." 

RABBIT SCRATCHIN'S

GLENN PHILLIPS plays a rebuilt Gibson LG-S with new pickups and electronics; five switches change the pickup wiring. The vibrato unit is from an old Fender Jazzmaster, and installing it required a drill with a routing bit. Phillips has a Music Man RD-100 amp, and in the studio, he uses it with a couple of old blackface Fenders: a Super Reverb and a Bassman. His numerous effects include Boss pedals and an MXR Pitch Transposer. Strings are usually Ernie Ball, .009 to .036.

Drums

DENNIS CHAMBERS' PILLOW TALK

The bedroom secrets of a drummer's hands

by TONY SCHERMAN

DENNIS CHAMBERS IS AN OLD-fashioned killer, a monster man, a onetime R&B prodigy whose excellence—perhaps, in a few years, greatness—is rooted less in mathematical precision than in overwhelming power and speed. He's got a bit of hot dog in him (a gesture as utilitarian as switching grips becomes a showy little twirl, offhand but obviously well-practiced) and he doesn't at all mind cutting heads. Watch the battle between Louis Bellson, Gregg Bissonette and Chambers at the 1989 Buddy Rich Scholarship concert; you can buy it on videotape. Bissonette and Bellson labor and grimace, pulling out every lick they know, but Chambers has an extra gear, flicking off blinding sin-

gle-stroke rolls, blurred hands tucked in close, popping his eyes at the cameraman...swaggering sitting down. How would Louie and Gregg react to the news that, as far as Chambers is concerned, his chops were much better *when he was 17*? But more on that later; it's those hands we want to look at, and how they got that way.

Almost everything about Dennis Chambers' musical biography is unusual. A burly, friendly 33-year-old, he sat in his lair, the dark, gear-crammed basement of his suburban Baltimore house, and talked about the past. Born with a heart murmur, he was housebound as a little kid. When he was four, his mother gave him a drumkit and "that was it, man, that was all I ever wanted to do." He taught himself by copying records; at eight he was in Top 40 bands with 30-year-olds. At 16 he was a Baltimore legend. At 18 he joined George Clinton's luridly wonderful P-Funk and stayed seven years, paying visits to Sly



"You wanna be serious?" said Buddy Rich. "Don't rely on rebound."



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Musicians' Edge 

Stone, the Spinners, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, bailing out of R&B in the mid-'80s for his first loves, jazz and jazz/fusion: guitarists John Scofield, Leni Stern and Mike Stern, saxophonists Gary Thomas, Bob Berg and Bill Evans, and the Stanley Clarke/George Duke band.

Though almost completely self-taught (he never learned to read music), the kid chose his mentors wisely. The first was Pernelle Rice, "a phenomenal, I mean a serious, phenomenal drummer that lived around here, an old cat with a hump in his back." The second was Buddy Rich.

It was Rich who, without realizing it, made

the eight-year-old kid a drummer. "When I met Buddy, that was when I made the transition to real exercises, chopbuilders. Pernelle knew all the drummers, and he went up to Buddy before a gig and said, 'This little guy can play.' Buddy says, 'Oh yeah? Show me whatcha know, kid.' I get up there and play and Buddy's going, 'Hmm, yeah.' And he dug it. He said, 'You wanna be serious, you gotta practice your rudiments.'"

Since Rich neglected to say how much, just "a lot," the kid took him at his word and practiced a lot—"like, all day. I'd do a single-stroke

roll for hours. I'd set a goal: 'Today I'm going to work on this,' and I'd do it: a rudiment, a wrist exercise, building up my fingers. I'd spend a day playing the ride cymbal. I practiced single-stroke rolls, double-stroke rolls, five-stroke rolls, rolls you assign numbers to like sevens and eights. Paradiddles—single paradiddles at first; then, when I got older, double, triple and flam paradiddles. And flams and drags. I didn't know what the rudiments were called until high school, but I'd been playing 'em all along."

But Rich (whom Dennis would quiz whenever the drummer hit Baltimore) didn't merely get Chambers started on rudiments. "He said I should play rudiments on pillows. What he said was, 'If you're really seriously into playing single-stroke rolls or rudiments very fast and with a lot of power, then this is what you have to do. Practice on a pillow. Because with pillows'—and I remember his exact words—'you don't rely on rebound.' When you hit a pillow, you gotta pull out of it. The best way Buddy explained it to me was, if you practice on a drum it takes longer to build up certain muscles. On this" (by now Chambers had just bolted upstairs, returning with a big bedroom pillow) "you break those muscles right away; you're working the same muscles twice as fast. See how hard it is? When you get used to *that* and go play a drumkit...you zip. That's why Buddy could get on anybody's drums. That's why I can get on anybody's drums and play exactly what I came to play.

"Some people don't wanna hear about it. It's like telling a Muslim to believe in Jesus. It's just something they never heard of. All the drummers they're into, they practiced on pads and drums. The drummers I'm into—the ones with hands—practiced on pillows.

"Take a pillow. Play it exactly like you're playing a drum. The first thing you realize, of course, is that you can't. When you're not relying on rebound, what are you relying on?"

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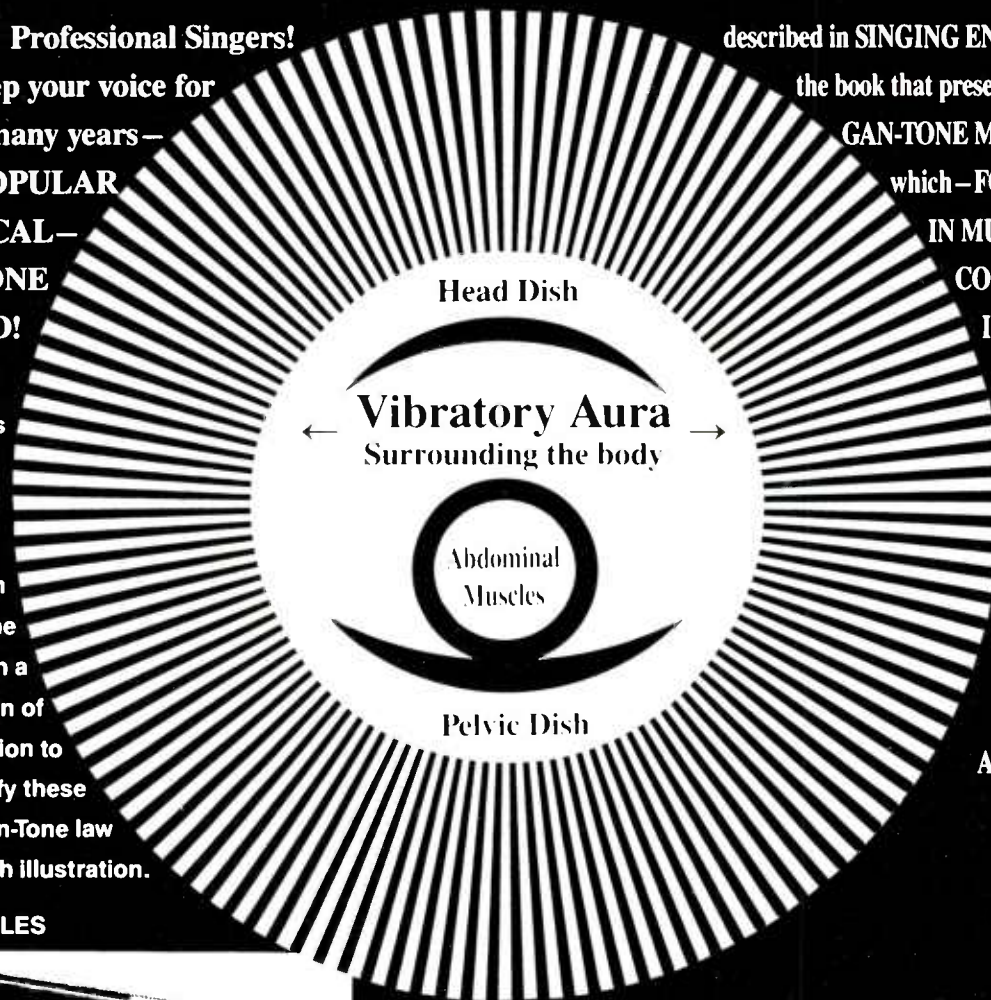
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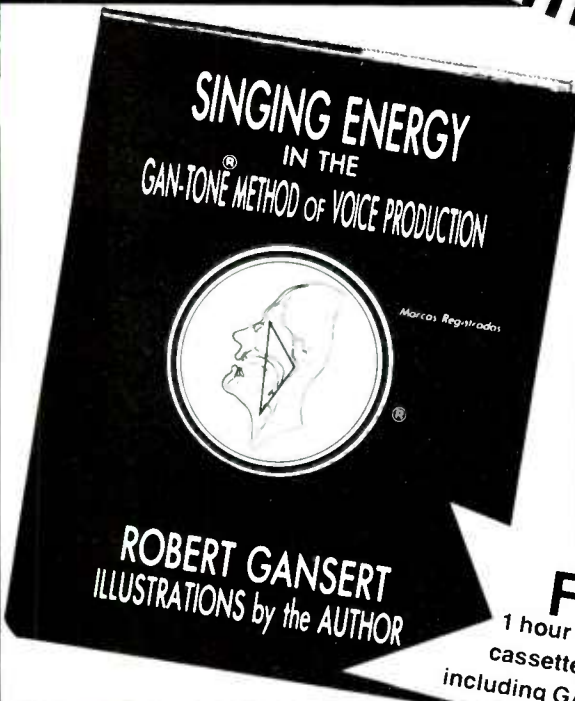
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Wrists and fingers.

"So first I worked with the wrist. Keeping the elbows fairly low, I'd bring my wrist all the way back and play single- and double-stroke rolls. The stick that wasn't being raised, I'd keep it down on the pillow surface. How could I get the motion going nice and even and strong? After I got the right feeling, which took me a long while, I started working on my fingers. Start with the tympani grip, thumb and forefinger. Play two beats, then add the middle finger, play two beats, then take the middle finger off and add the ring finger, then the pinky, taking the ring finger off. One by one, return to the tympani grip. Do the whole thing over and over: thumb, forefinger, plus one other finger. Play two beats up and back, then four, then eight, up to however many you want. Later, when you put all four arms, I mean fingers" (an apt slip for Chambers) "together, then you got something.

"Right now I feel like my hands are not in shape, 'cause I remember what they felt like at their peak, which was when I was 17. When I joined P-Funk, in order to keep the gig I actually had to stop practicing. P-Funk was more of a




groove, a two-four backbeat thing, and I had more to offer than just playing two and four. I had all these technical things; I had some seriously fast hands.

"But if I need to get them back, I know what to do: rudiments on a pillow, about two hours a day, starting real slow and building up into 'em. If I were going to give lessons, pillows are definitely part of what I'd recommend. Guys who've tried them usually feel a difference right away. At my high school, the music teacher couldn't understand: How could this kid do single-stroke rolls for, like, hours? And this teacher had great hands, his hands were like Billy Cobham's. I challenged him. We sat across from each other doing single-stroke rolls to see who stopped first. And this cat, who'd played half his life, he stopped long, I mean, *way* before I did. He was lookin' at me like, 'What's in your wrist? How do you do that?'

"Pillows.' And when he started practicing on the pillow, his hands got better, a lot better."

"You mean, he converted to the pillow technique?"

"Of course," Dennis shrugged, as if no sane person could have done otherwise. 

Piano

BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES

Charlie Rich in jazz country

by ALAN DI PERNA

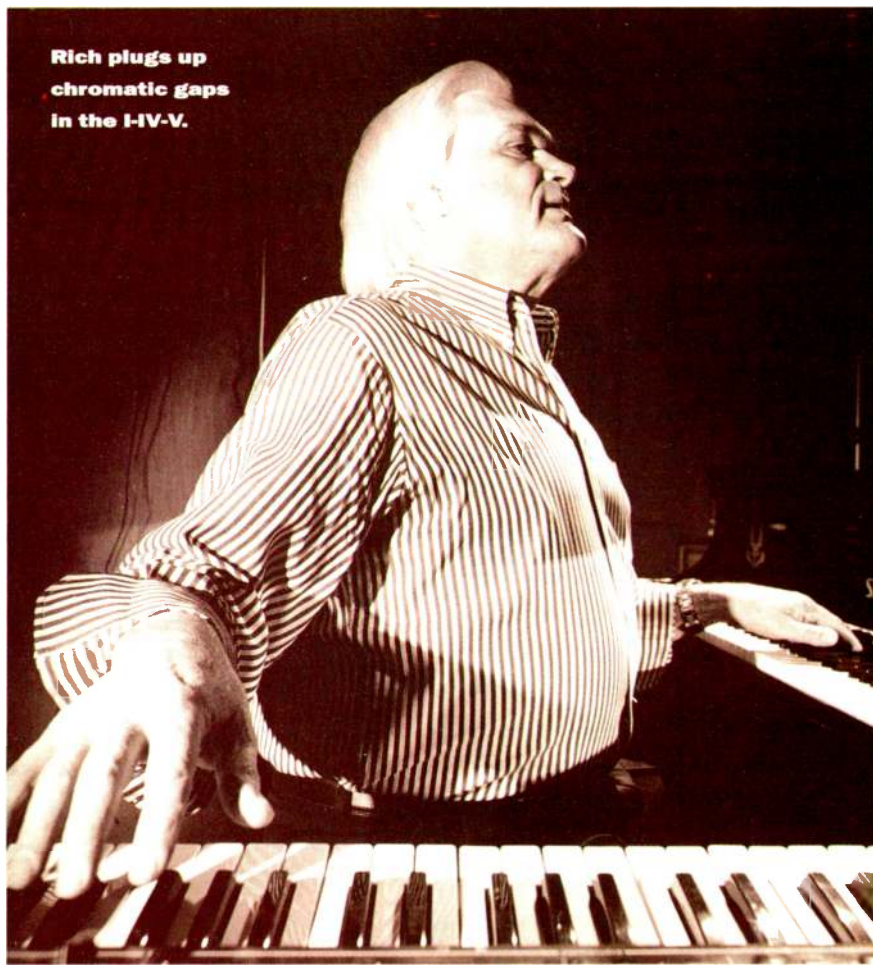
NOW YOU PLAY THE BRIDGE FOR me."

Charlie Rich gets up from behind the big old grand piano at Sam Phillips Recording Studio in Memphis. I've been grilling him about the chord progression on a song from his new album, *Pictures and Paintings*. In keeping with the album's overall mood, Charlie has given a smoky, late-night jazz feel to the Eddy Arnold country standard "You Don't Know Me." He walks me through the bridge changes a few times and then invites me to try it for myself. Of course, there's no more sure-fire

way of intimidating a rock 'n' roll pianist than asking him to play in E flat. Somehow I manage to stumble through the first few bars, trying hard not to disgrace the funky, history-laden studio that has changed very little since ol' Sam built it in 1959 on the money he'd made discovering talents like Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins and Charlie Rich.

"Yeah, you got it," Charlie encourages politely—generously—leaning over my shoulder to correct a few backwards inversions and missed changes. I find myself recalling the story of when Jerry Lee Lewis recorded Charlie's composition "I'll Make It All Up to You." Seems the Killer really dug Rich's tune, but was a bit uncomfortable with the key—E flat again. So Charlie ended up playing piano on the date.

"I guess the changes he was having trouble



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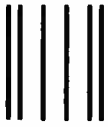
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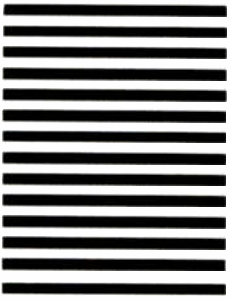
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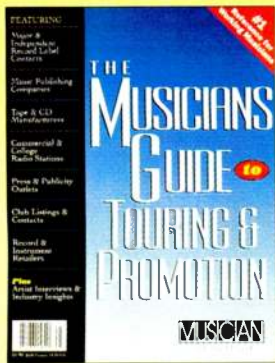
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with were in the bridge." Rich's chain-smoking, self-effacing voice betrays hints of embarrassment at the whole business. "I'm sure he could have learned it, or we could have changed the key, or..."

Rather than finishing his sentence, Charlie starts picking the tune out on the piano, adding a vocal as the 1959 Sun chestnut comes back to him. His left hand plays a root-and-fifth bass, alternating the bass notes with those rolling chordal patterns familiar to anyone who's ever heard Charlie Rich hits like "The Most Beautiful Girl" or "Sittin' and Thinkin'." His right hand drifts along with his voice, adding a harmony in thirds below the melody. The verse progression is a straight I-IV-V, but the major sevenths in Charlie's right-hand harmony tug like stifled teardrops against the flat sevenths in the I and V chords. As the melody ascends, Charlie executes a Floyd Krameresque slip-note move, rolling C, D flat and D with his thumb, first and second fingers below the B flat melody note he's holding with his pinky. The bridge starts out on the IV chord (A flat) just like countless other country bridges. But the twist comes when it swoops down to F before resolving to B flat.

"I'd only just written that tune when we did the session," Rich narrates. "I guess Jerry Lee really needed a song to do. So it worked out fine."

These two bridges in E flat just happen to span Charlie Rich's musical journey—from jazz pianist to rockabilly session cat to country music star, back to jazz pianist again. It may surprise those who only know him as the rhinestone-studded "Silver Fox," but Charlie started out as a devotee of Dave Brubeck, Stan Kenton and Oscar Peterson. This fact comes into clear focus as he improvises a cool jazz rubato. He seems an entirely different pianist—addicted to uptown major 7th chords, chromatic changes and dense tonal clusters—than the one who'd just been playing country a few moments earlier.

The former was Rich's main musical identity till that fateful day in the mid-'50s when his wife and co-writer Margaret Ann brought a demo tape of Charlie's to Bill Justis at Sun Studios. Bill liked the tape, says Rich. "But he gave Margaret Ann a record—I think it was one of Jerry Lee's—and he told her, 'Go home and give your husband this. Tell him to come and see me when he learns to play this bad.' I got the message."

Here began the path that led Charlie to backing Sun greats like Johnny Cash and Roy Orbison, and ultimately wound up in a long line of lavish country megahits for Charlie, starting with 1972's "Behind Closed Doors." When the Number Ones start- [cont'd on page 97]

PERFORMANCE

U2: Silver Mirrors, Gold Suits, Brass Balls

BY BILL FLANAGAN



Remember in *Apocalypse Now* when Martin Sheen finally confronted Marlon Brando's Kurtz, and demanded to know how an American officer could wage war by cutting off people's heads and mounting them on sticks and generally acting like a barbarian? Kurtz looked at him and said that the only way to combat horror is to make horror your ally. On the "Zoo TV" tour (a series of one-night arena shows preceding a stadium tour this summer) U2 have decided to combat the artifice that has been choking rock 'n' roll by making artifice their ally. So here was Bono in shades, strutting like Tom Jones, surrounded by video screens flashing chaotic signals while junk cars with working headlights dangled from the rafters. A few old U2 fans reacted with horror, but the show in Providence on March 15th was the best U2 concert I've ever seen. Hell, it was one of the best concerts by anybody I've ever seen.

Edge set off some sequencers to fatten the sound and U2 made their biggest noise yet. Playing their new songs live has made the *Achtung Baby* material tougher, and they opened the show with a 40-minute blast of it. It was like the Stones in '72. A pair of acoustic numbers performed on a small platform in the middle of the audience provided a transition to the string of hits that made up the second half. Strong as they were, U2 were still not polished. They made occasional mistakes—usually a case of Bono getting excited and jumping in too soon with a vocal line or rhythm guitar part. During those moments the bandmembers immediately switched their full attention to each other, and ignored the show until they had locked back together. Then they would soar again.

In the late 1960s the talented, tortured protest singer Phil Ochs risked his career and lost. Ochs—held by the leftist folkies as their leader after Dylan "sold out" by going electric—announced he was going to play an important show at Carnegie Hall. He came onstage in a gold lame suit, like Elvis wore on the cover of his greatest hits album, and proceeded to try to Elvis-ize the protest crowd. The long-suffering leftist folkies were mortified. They went back to Greenwich Village and declared that Ochs was insane. They were wrong. Ochs had decided that it did no good to be perceived as a sourpuss and preach to the converted. If you really wanted to reach a mass audience, if you really wanted to be subversive, the best way to do it would be to try to communicate as completely and as generously as Elvis Presley did. Give people the showbiz razzmatazz but give them something solid to chew on, too. I don't know if U2 have ever even heard of Phil Ochs, but for their encore Bono strolled onstage in a gold lame suit, mirror balls descended, lasers flashed—and he kept singing the songs from *Achtung Baby*, the deepest, most personal songs U2 have ever written, with his hips twitching and the crowd dancing. Phil Ochs killed himself a long time ago, but his dream has finally come true.



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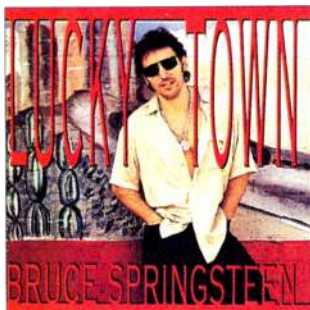
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RECORDINGS



THE LOCAL HERO LEAVES TOWN



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
HUMAN TOUCH
LUCKY TOWN
(COLUMBIA)

On his two new albums, *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*, Bruce Springsteen finally arrives at the place he's been running to (and sometimes from) since his first album came out in 1973. He's rich, he's got a family, his clothes are getting a little tight, and when he goes back to visit his home town he sees his face on a black velvet painting in a shop window "between the Doberman and Bruce Lee." People anxious to fill in the details of Springsteen's biography will not be disappointed (there's a song about his wedding

to Patti Scialfa, another about the birth of their first child, and one about finally doing what he said he was going to do 20 years ago—get out of New Jersey) but it would be a real shame and a big mistake to think of these as albums about Springsteen's life. What makes them good is that they are about everybody's life.

On *Human Touch* Springsteen dispenses with almost all of the specific details that have been a signature of his past lyrics. There are few place names, hardly even any characters named—the people in

the songs are "You" and "I" and the locations are unspecified. That makes the songs seem at once personal and universal. This isn't Joe Roberts or Wild Billy, and it's not Atlantic City or Darlington County. These are men and women in bed, at the bar, in front of the TV—no place and every place.

And in nature. On both albums Springsteen uses nature and weather imagery to suggest the hope for some sort of salvation from the artificial and corrupt. He sings of oak boughs, cottonwood and wedding garlands, snakes, frogs and

catfish, and again and again of rivers and rain, rain to end drought and rain to forgive sins. Springsteen has absorbed his Hank Williams and Louvin Brothers; he won't shrink from using a bluebird to signify happiness.

Lucky Town is probably the better of the two albums. Springsteen reportedly wrote and recorded it in a month in his home and played almost all the instruments, so it's unified in a way that *Human Touch* is not. However, *Human Touch* is fascinating for the fresh musical ground it covers. "Soul Driver" takes off from a gospel base and lilts like Jimmy Cliff. "With Every Wish" is, in form and Springsteen's delivery, out of *Nebraska*, but a Latin drum groove, a beautiful swooping bass and Mark Isham's muted trumpet bring out new colors. The most compelling new color, though, is not part of an arrangement—it's the quality in Springsteen's voice when he sings "Pony Boy" for his young son. We've often heard Springsteen be tender, but never before heard him be gentle. His vocal on "Pony Boy" says more about the wonder of discovering unconditional love than any lyric could.

Where will you miss the E Street Band? Probably on the string of straight rock 'n' roll tunes ("Roll of the Dice," "All or Nothing," "Man's Job," "The Long Goodbye" and "Real Man") that make up most of the second half of *Human Touch*. It took the E Street Band 10 years to find the relaxed snap they brought to tracks like "I'm Goin' Down" and "Working on the Highway." The rockers here could use that easy slap and kick. But listening to this music, you can understand why Springsteen had to break up his band, why he had to move away from the northeast, maybe even why his first marriage ended. These are songs about a man who has stripped away everything from his life to try to get down to who he really is and what he really needs. It's about learning not to lie to yourself, so you won't lie to others.

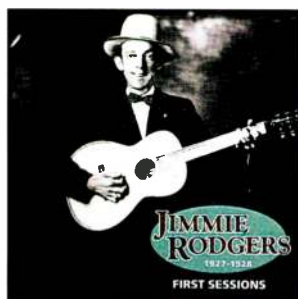
When I first heard this music at the *Musician* office last week I realized that Springsteen would never again have a peak of popularity as huge as he did with *Born in the USA*, because the only way to maintain that level of superstardom is to turn yourself into a cartoon. This was Springsteen's last chance to do that, and he's refused.

When I heard this music at home Friday night, with my kids running around, I realized how good it is that Springsteen is writing about the middle of life in the present tense. His "Better Days" are neither the glory days of the past nor a dream for the future. His better days are right here and now. He sings about carrying the scars and lessons of where he's been, and he

acknowledges that all of life is temporary. But these songs make you feel like that's okay—if you've found a good place to be for the time being, that's plenty. That's good enough.

Today was Sunday and I drove two hundred miles into New England listening to the albums. I spent the evening seeing a band and I started back, still playing the Springsteen tapes. The more times I hear them, the more these records unfold. Now it's 2:15 in the morning and I'm two hours from home. I'm writing this review in a diner on Route 95. I know how corny all that sounds, but distance and detachment will only get you so far. At this point I don't care whether Springsteen fades as a cultural icon or what his business dealings are like or if he lives in Beverly Hills. I'm just grateful for this real world music, and glad he's on board for the whole trip.

—Bill Flanagan



JIMMIE RODGERS

The Jimmie Rodgers Library
(ROUNDER)

JIMMIE RODGERS WAS AN AMATEUR touched by genius. He had no guitar chops and idiosyncratic time; his songs were three-chord homemade ditties. A hardboiled record man from up North heard the gleam in Rodgers' voice: a sunniness of spirit clear as a North Carolina stream, jaunty as a huckster in a straw boater, consoling as your best buddy, and one break was all Jimmie needed: Off he streaked to a near-instant, ultimately heart-breaking superstardom. He died from TB six years after his first sessions and 36 hours after his last; on the final songs you can hear the catch in his shredded lungs. As I listened to this eight-CD collection—no boxed set, it's a whole recording life, and you could call it priceless—Jimmie Rodgers came to remind me of nobody so much as Bob Dylan: Neither folksinger could really play, and each blow-torched through, just ignored, the overdone professionalism of the day and by virtue of raw, unrehearsed directness came crashing through to reach millions. But where Dylan has his roots

in white folk balladry, Rodgers was a bluesman, whose reworking and popularization of black music prefigured the greatest stylistic misc-generator of all, Elvis.

Rodgers' best songs—"Blue Yodel No. 1 (T. for Texas)," "Muleskinner Blues," "In the Jailhouse Now," "My Rough and Rowdy Ways," "Any Old Time," "Carolina Sunshine Girl," "Waiting for a Train"—have become chunks of American culture and if you ain't heard 'em you should. Though one effect of listening straight through is to realize how many of Jimmie's songs were throwaway, boom-chick-chick boom-chick-chick weepers ("heart songs," they used to call them), there are surprise treasures: Louis and Lil Armstrong's cameo on "Blue Yodel No. 9"; two hilarious meetings, with dialogue, between Jimmie and the Carter Family—I was nailed to the speakers to hear Rodgers talk, suddenly a living cat with his pre-hipster slang; a previously unissued outtake of "Let Me Be Your Sidetrack" that sports the blues guitar of Clifford Gibson, a stylish, forgotten black St. Louis musician (whose time is just as eccentric as Jimmie's)... And listen, song after song, to the yodel—tossed-off, virtuosic, winning. It was Jimmie Rodgers' only great skill, as if he needed another.

—Tony Scherman



THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN

Honey's Dead
(DEF AMERICAN)

EVER SINCE THE J & M BROTHERS—Jim Reid, vocals; William Reid, guitar—shaded down the obliterating blasts of white noise which made their debut *Psychocandy* so singular, they've worked their little sub-genre—a sort of doomy and decadent bubblegum music, great hairy elephantine riffs looming over little sing-song ditties—adroitly, without further adjustment or development. Which means that *Honey's Dead* is more of the same, and if you liked *Automatic*, you'll likely think that this one's swell too.

Brother Jim still has the knack for sounding provocative in a non-specific way. Check out

"Reverence," where he croons with typically cheeky lassitude, "I wanna die just like Jesus Christ/I wanna die just like JFK...on a sunny day...in the USA." He's less vague when the deathwish has a sexual element: "She's taking hold and I'm holding on/holding on and my senses gone" ("Teenage Lust"); or "I can't get enough of you...you'll be the death of me... gimme gimme gimme till I'm sick" ("Can't Get Enough"). It's as if the Stooges and the Beach Boys had effected some sort of meld—every pleasure is a pitfall and descent is the ultimate rush.

When not swooning in the deep forest of brother William's gritty but catchy guitar sounds (the hook on "Far Gone & Out" most recently showed up on EMF's "Unbelievable"), Jimbo shows his sensitive side, as on "Tumble-down" ("All I wanted was too much/All I wanted was to touch") and "Almost Gold." But these are thrown in to show *range*—the band's appeal remains the combination of sloppily loud but essentially appealing licks and naughty, unfocused (i.e. druggy) lyrics. By the time we get to the penultimate song ("Sundown") and lines like "the planet is more fucked up than I'll ever be," you're supposed to think, "I dunno, it's a close call, pal." Without, of course, really believing any of it.

—Richard C. Walls



THE NEVILLE BROTHERS

Family Groove
(A & M RECORDS)

LOVERS OF THE GREASY, SYNCOPATED music of New Orleans who've been waiting 17 years for the Nevilles to release a killer album will have to wait a little longer: As is true of their eight previous albums, *Family Groove* isn't quite there. Its heart is in the right place, the performances are fine, and Aaron Neville's frighteningly eerie falsetto flutters through the ballads like a wounded butterfly—and yet, the record never ignites with the magic of their live show.

The Nevilles are among those artists (the Five Blind Boys of Alabama, Clifton Chenier and Jerry Lee Lewis) whose performances have

an extraterrestrial glory that defies being captured in a recording studio. Perhaps it's because theirs is such a richly communal music that it's best experienced in a crowd, perhaps it's because they've simply never been recorded properly (Daniel Lanois came close in 1989 with *Yellow Moon*). The problems with *Family Groove* include slick, homogenized production and material that isn't terribly distinctive. There's a polite rendition of Steve Miller's "Fly Like an Eagle"; a tune called "Other Side of Paradise" that sounds like a Jimmy Buffett reject; "Day to Day Thing," which is evocative of a War outtake; and "Line of Fire," a lite metal tune suitable for Pat Benatar. There's no sex, soul or gumbo in any of it.

The album isn't without pleasures. The title track is a propulsive funk tune arranged and performed with the casual power of vintage Sly Stone, while "Take Me to Heart," an achingly sweet love song, provides an exquisite showcase for Aaron Neville's vocal high-wire act. Most notable of all are the two oddities that close the record and hint at what might have been: a short instrumental called "Saxafunk" (featuring Charles Neville on the horn) that really moves, and a brief snippet of a Maori chant that reminds one of the primitive power of New Orleans music when it's really cooking. *Family Groove* unfortunately isn't.

—Kristine McKenna



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Naked Lunch Soundtrack
Music by Howard Shore, Featuring Ornette Coleman
(MILAN)

PART OF THE APPEAL OF *NAKED LUNCH*. David Cronenberg's film version of the William Burroughs classic, is the artful fuzziness of its reference points—fitting for a tale of psychedelic sci-fi. The same could be said of its soundtrack, featuring Howard Shore's darkly sumptuous orchestral scoring mixed with Ornette Coleman's songwriting and sax playing. Together, film and music suggest an improvised valentine to the [cont'd on page 97]



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NEW RELEASES

ROCK

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

LYLE LOVETT
Joshua Judges Ruth
(MCA/CURB)

LOVETT'S REPUTATION AS a storyteller has always been sterling, and the tales told here are sure to further it. But it's the music that brings these songs to life—uneasy minor chords that underscore the mixture of memory and desire in "Baltimore," for instance, or the gospel-schooled vocal interplay that sets the mood for the wickedly funny "Church." So judge him not by his words but how he sings them. And consider this a winner on all counts.

CURVE
Doppelgänger
(CHARISMA)

CURVE'S THICK, PSYCHEDELIC throb crosses the electrobeat aggression of Front 242 with the blurred guitar drone of Lush, an approach that allows the band the advantages of both styles without becoming openly in thrall to either. And it sounds just fine, in part because of the care with which Dean Garcia tends his soundscapes, and mostly because of the way Toni Halliday's cool, throaty vocals snake melody through the thick-swirling grooves. A singularly entrancing album.

TOM COCHRANE
Mad Mad World
(CAPITOL)

IN PREVIOUS OUTINGS, the former Red Rider has seemed little more than a low-budget Bob Seger, but here Cochrane changes both his sound and his image, adding boogie to the former and bite to the latter. While that isn't enough to salvage the sentimentality of "Washed Away" and its ilk, it works wonders with bluesy groovers like "No Regrets" and "Life Is a Highway." Ride on.

JAH WOBBLE'S INVADERS OF
THE HEART
Rising Above Bedlam
(ATLANTIC)

WOBBLE'S BASS ANCHORED the dub-wise sound of early PIL, and he's been building rhythmic momentum ever since. But as much as his tuneful, hypnotic basslines add to these tunes, it's what gets heaped on top that makes the album memorable,



WEIR AND GARCIA:
CARTOON HEROES

from the buoyant Afro-brass flourishes of "Undogly Kingdom" to Natacha Atlas' ineffably exotic ululations on "Bomba."

AL GREEN
Love Is Reality
(WORD)

WHETHER AL GREEN ever returns to "pop" is almost immaterial at this point; after all, the only thing that sets this album apart from R&B's so-called mainstream is subject matter, not sound. Anyone who has ever thrilled to Green's voice in the past should have no trouble cozying to the brassy insistence of "I Can Feel It" or the impassioned exhortations of the title tune, regardless of lyric content. On the other hand, you're more than welcome to wonder whether a more pop-oriented record company would have let him get away with the kiddie chorus that clutters "Again."

RIGHT SAID FRED
Up
(CHARISMA)

WRONG SAID J.D.

JULIANA HATFIELD
Hey Babe
(MAMMOTH)

NEVER HAVING HAD much patience for the cooing precocity of the Blake Babies (Hatfield's regular gig), I was prepared to write this one off—and

instead was bowled over by its tuneful intensity and unabashed pop ambition. Granted, Hatfield's wisp of a voice doesn't always do her songs justice (Jane Wiedlin is Aretha Franklin by comparison), but that actually works to the album's advantage, adding pathos to "Ugly" and a sweet sincerity to the love lyric in "I See You." Not a perfect album, but well worth hearing.

EYE & I
Eye & I
(EPIC)

THEIR BLEND OF metallic guitars and jazz-savvy rhythm recalls the sophisto-metal of Living Colour. But Eye & I's real focus is D K Dyson, a singer who's at home with the soulful sass of "Don't Just Say Peace," the thoughtful pop of "Can't Live Without Your Love" and the gothic gloom of the Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs." This is one case where the Eye's definitely have it.

LITTLE VILLAGE
Little Village
(REPRISE)

PART OF THE problem with the supergroup approach is that it rarely results in super music. Why else would this quartet—which worked magnificently when it was just Ry Cooder, Nick Lowe and Jim Keltner backing John Hiatt on *Bring the Family*—fizzle utterly when all four write and sing

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as equals? Sounds like what this Little Village needs is a Big Chief.

SOPHIE B. HAWKINS
Tongues and Tails
(COLUMBIA)

AS A SINGER, Hawkins suggests a cross between Stevie Nicks and Mariah Carey. Unfortunately, she takes the worst from both, then exaggerates it. Add writing that does to Laura Nyro what Lenny Kravitz did to John Lennon, and you'll have plenty of reason to give a wide berth to this one.

JAZZ

BY PETER WATROUS

DON BYRON
Tuskegee Experiments
(ELEKTRA)

MIXING CLASSICAL MUSIC, jazz and politics, Byron, in-demand clarinetist on the murky jazz-new music-klezmer scene, has constructed an expansive world view that in no way panders or

apologizes. Bill Frisell, Ralph Peterson and Lonnie Plaxico, who play on most tunes, open up plains-wide music, full of intelligence and possibility, nowhere constrained by the limits of genre.

CAROL FRAN/CLARENCE HOLLIMON
Soul Sensation!
(BLACK TOP)

FRAN AND HOLLIMON have been knocking around the Gulf for the last several decades, never quite hitting but never missing, either. Fran's got a nice voice that would rather not shout, thanks, and as a result is better at ballads; the rest is pure rhythm and blues, pretty much live and not hit-bound—lack of money keeps a club verité feeling to the proceedings—just fine and relaxed, loaded with wit and Hollimon's precise guitar solos.

HAROLD MABERN
Straight Street
(DIW/COLUMBIA)

ALBUMS THAT MIGHT have been perfect at 40-odd minutes are now CDs coming in at 60 or 70, which is not only tiring to listen to, but allows less-than-perfect material to take advantage of the new length. Which is a long way of saying that minus a few tunes, this might have been a perfect album. Mabern, backed by Ron Carter and Jack DeJohnette, is magnificent, the paradigm for a literate and generous mainstream pianist. He's graceful, absolutely assured in his swinging, and able to fill chorus after chorus of harmonic, melodic and rhythmic variations.

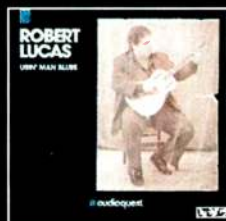
RALPH PETERSON
Ornettology
(BLUE NOTE)

THE SECOND VOLUME of his "Fo'ter" (you know, four-tet) features the same band as the last album, with Don Byron on clarinet, Bryan Carrott on vibes and Melissa Slocum on bass. It's just as great, almost, as the last one. The record is all about space; without a chordal instrument the vibes can really shimmer, and Byron can duck in and out of harmonies. Peterson, as usual, reproduces the sound of a house collapsing. And the choice of tunes is great, from "I Mean You" to "Congeniality," plus originals.

WILLIE MITCHELL
Solid Soul/On Top
(HI/DEMON)

TWO ALBUMS COMBINED make a case for the Hi aggregate joining the esteemed rank of the Meters and the MGs as great rhythm sections. Willie Mitchell, the trumpeter who produced so much good music for Hi in Memphis (Al Green, for one), made instrumental albums for dance parties. Clean and clear, the band does rhythm and blues in a surreal way, all spare and empty. It's an invitation to pro-

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RYAN KISOR
Minor Mutiny
(COLUMBIA)

KISOR WON THE Thelonious Monk Institute's trumpet contest last year, and surprise, he has a contract. The good news is pretty simple: Kisor, at 18, has a lot of promise, and *Minor Mutiny* shows it off pretty well. The bad news is that at 18 almost anybody is pliable, and Jack DeJohnette, who produced the album (why anybody would use DeJohnette, who makes atrocious albums, to produce anything is a mystery), has added synths to a handful of tracks, giving the album as a whole a confused feel. But the straight-ahead tracks, where Kisor and Ravi Coltrane (uh-huh) go at it, swing credibly.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Got My Mojo Working
(FLYRIGHT/DOWN HOME)

A COLLECTION OF hard R&B taken from the fairly obscure New York-based Baton label. Though it acts like pure genre music—jump horns wailing as a guitar knifes through the din—there's some funny stuff, including New Orleans' own Chris Kenner's "Don't Let Her Pin That Charge on Me," and Franie Tucker's "Hey Hester." Ann Cole is a good singer who rocks, and the saxophonist Noble "Thin Man" Watts gets instrumentals going in a chilly way, with saxophone and guitar solos trading off, as if they were arguing who would dictate the future. Which they were.

BOBBY WATSON
Bobby Watson
(COLUMBIA)

ONE OF THE best albums of the year, so far. Watson's a masterful arranger, and his pieces, long and svelte, use riffs, ostinatos, tempo changes and just about anything else possible. His melodies, at once melancholic and optimistic, are unlike anything written in jazz. But the thrill comes from the playing, a hurtling walking bass placed against half-time cymbals, while Watson spills out improvisations that alternately flash anger and care.

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recorded. This doesn't go down that far, but it goes a long way; mixed in with electric new tunes by Tee are all-percussion tracks, a tune with ex-Indian Champion Jack Dupree, some tracks with the ReBirth Brass Band and a cameo by Dr. John. It's wild, no question.

BOOKS

ELTON JOHN: THE BIOGRAPHY

Philip Norman

(HARMONY BOOKS)

ORDINARY GUY REG Dwight was a plain-looking, hardworking piano player capable of sitting down with a pile of his buddy's lyrics, writing an album's worth of tunes in a couple of days and recording them almost as quickly. Remarkably, that workmanlike attitude made Elton John, for much of the '70s, a gigantic rock star—in pure dollar terms perhaps the biggest in the world. The shock, delight and eventual depression that followed so unlikely an ascension makes for a compelling human story. Too bad that Norman is such an unreliable—and at times thick-headed—journalist. *Elton John* is riddled with mistakes so stupid that the reader finally

cannot trust much of anything the author says. Examples: Norman thinks that 1) Linda Lovelace was an author of sexy novels, 2) eight-track players were "quite novel" in 1974, 3) the Beach Boys' lead singer was named "Geoff Love," 4) Steely Dan were a "sex-oriented" band and 5) *Captain Fantastic* was the most eagerly awaited album since *Sgt. Pepper's*. The last is indicative of Norman's efforts to inflate his subject's importance with ludicrous superlatives. Page after page the dubious stats, goofy assertions and out-and-out howlers pile up, along with Norman's obsessive allusions to Elton's bisexuality. It's a shame, because what does become clear as one wades through Norman's debris is that Elton John's life is a fascinating subject. Here's hoping that next time out *Captain Fantastic* gets the biographer he deserves.—*Bill Flanagan*

ENGLAND'S DREAMING:

ANARCHY, SEX PISTOLS, PUNK ROCK, AND BEYOND

Jon Savage

(ST. MARTIN'S PRESS)

THE NOISY RISE and equally cacophonous failure of punk rock is chronicled in the greatest detail imag-

inable in this masterful 600-page text by veteran English music journalist Jon Savage. Focusing on the ascent of the Sex Pistols, the writer peers deeply into the social, political, artistic and commercial forces that forged punk's nativity in the late '70s; Savage also offers an unflinching picture of the way celebrity, notoriety and sheer lunacy tore the Pistols apart. Along the way, the spirited genesis of the English and American D.I.Y. movements is painted in deft strokes. Filled with skillful reportage and commentary and stoked by a wealth of first-hand insights and candid interviews with punk's principal instigators, it's the most comprehensive and involving study of the genre we're likely to see.—*Chris Morris*

24 NIGHTS: THE MUSIC OF ERIC CLAPTON, THE DRAWINGS OF PETER BLAKE

(GENESIS PUBLICATIONS)

THIS COSTS \$375.00. As a book it ain't Hemingway, as art it ain't Picasso—but as a gift for the Clapton fan who has everything, this limited-edition boxed set will buy you a lifetime of gratitude. And as an investment, well, if Eric's plane ever goes down this baby will be worth more than your house. Here's what you get: the two-CD Clapton concert recording *24 Nights* with three bonus tracks, a hardcover book of sketches and photos of Clapton and his pals on and offstage at the Albert Hall, a second book of commentary on the Albert Hall concerts by Derek Taylor, and assorted backstage passes, guitar strings, picks and such. Each set is numbered and autographed by Clapton and Blake. The whole package is beautifully done. Whether it's worth \$375.00 depends on how rich you are. They are only making 3500 of them. You can order one from Genesis Publications, Lynwood House, 51 Lynwood, Guildford, Surrey, England GU2 5NY.—*Bill Flanagan*

THE TROUSER PRESS RECORD GUIDE, FOURTH EDITION

Ira A. Robbins, ed.

(COLLIER)

I REMEMBER WHEN the Lemonheads' first record came out: a limited-edition four-track EP called *Laughing All the Way to the Cleaners*, on the Huh-Bag label. That was back in '86, and now they're on Atlantic and over half the original band's gone, and I was sure I'd never think about that record again. Until I flipped through the latest edition of *The Trousers Record Guide*, and there it was. Each one of these 759 pages is filled with such surprises and discoveries, making it a treasure for the ardent listener. You may not agree with all the reviewers' opinions (in fact, I sincerely hope you don't), but the information, research, attention to detail and obvious care that went into this book are impressive. Absolutely indispensable.—*Mac Randall*

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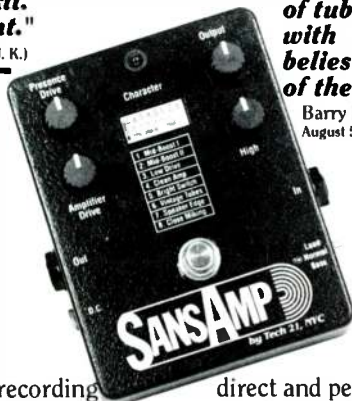
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CREATIVITY

[cont'd from page 61] put you in another head space and you have these wonderful inspirations, but a lot of it is self-indulgence. Grass seems to take away drive and ambition. You become really complacent and self-absorbed."

Branford Marsalis has never allowed drugs to become part of his musical life style. "You can always tell when somebody's high; you can tell, you can hear it in their playing. It's not good for the body; it's not good for the mind. It's the real immature adolescent in everybody when they get caught up in that, find the romance in that shit. That's not part of my program. I'm too vain actually, to be honest, that's basically what it is."

Ironically, many performers who have stopped drinking or doing drugs have found that relaxing and overcoming any fear naturally occurs once they're onstage. Eric Clapton made this discovery. "To play sober, to play straight, is like going to the dentist, I suppose. You're very, very nervous until the actual thing is taking place, then you call on some reserve inside you which is just waiting. Once you've got past the first couple of songs, you've broken the ice for yourself and for everyone else. I always relax after I've played my first solo."

Bonnie Raitt had recently stopped using drugs and alcohol and was on the brink of recording her album *Nick of Time* when she discussed this change in her life: "I am right on the precipice of being about to create something new, to come from this new being that I am. It's exciting but terrifying. I'm afraid of being mediocre, which, if you're a little bit loaded, you don't have to worry about. I think too much and judge too much and alcohol suspended that for a while, so it actually freed me up. Now I have to tap into a wellspring I haven't seen yet."

Ringo Starr gave up drink and drugs after using them for more than twenty years. "I think that what you find is that you've spent so much time and energy, which you didn't realize at the time, getting drunk or stoned. I never realized it because it was a natural thing. As soon as I opened my eyes I was on a roll to eventually black out in the end—that's how bad it got for me—because I couldn't get high enough anymore. I couldn't get drunk enough anymore and I couldn't cope enough to do anything, so I would just fold up and pass out."

"[When you stop drugs and alcohol] you have to learn to live with your emotions, because you're not putting them to sleep anymore. That's all drugs and alcohol do, they cut off all your emotions in the end; you don't have any, or the one major emotion you have is prob-

ably anger. Cocaine is fabulous for anger, you just get into a rage over nothing if things aren't going right in your drunken stupor. In the end, even grass stops your emotions. Grass was the one thing I always thought was safe and everybody should have, because I'm an old hippie from the '60s. But grass is the same emotional blocker as alcohol or cocaine. It just takes you off into another land. For years, I quite liked that land; in fact I loved that land! I got caught in a terrifying trap that to be creative I had to be on some substance. And what happened to me was in the end there was no creativity at all coming

from me, because I was too busy taking the shit.

"What you find out now, which is great, is that you have so much time to live, so much more time to do anything, just getting up in the morning is a thrill—not staying up all night. The two reasons I stayed up mostly all night was one, because I convinced myself I was an insomniac and the other because I was frightened of the dark! Very shortly after I stopped drinking and taking drugs, I realized I wasn't frightened of the dark and I wasn't an insomniac. The best part of it for me is after seven months I put a band together [cont'd on page 97]

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CREATIVITY

[cont'd from page 95] and went on tour, and I've done some sessions with people, and I'm just starting to work again. I proved I could stand in front of an audience again, I can play. I'm painting, taking watercolor and drawing lessons. I just think it's such a beautiful life now, and it's only been twenty-two months. It's a wonderful life if you choose it." **M**

RICH

[cont'd from page 84] ed coming less frequently in the early '80s, Rich retreated to his East Memphis home to retrench. And that's where *Pictures and Paintings* had its genesis. It's a return to Charlie Rich's pre-country roots. He tackles 12-bar blues, gospel, a couple of ballads by Margaret Ann and standards like Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo" and the aforementioned "You Don't Know Me." Charlie makes the latter song his own via touches like those bridge chord changes that gave me such a hard time. Here they are, by the way: A flat maj 7, A dim, G min, C7, Fm, B flat 7 #5 flat 9, E flat maj 7, C min, G min, C9, F, B flat.

"I guess I picked up those changes from playing the song with different people down through the years," Charlie notes. "Cause it seems like when I first learned it, it was something else entirely. That's one song that lends itself to all types of settings—country, jazz, whatever. If every song worked that way, I guess I'd never have any identity trouble." **M**

RECORDINGS

[cont'd from page 89] countercultural '50s, that era of Beats, junk, evolutionary jazz and existential languor. Historical accuracy is beside the point: It doesn't matter that, while the movie's "action" takes place in 1953, Ornette's free-jazz revolution didn't kick in until the late '50s. Or that Shore's writing, which recalls the new angst in certain '50s movie scores, had no parallel in its merging of classical and jazz traditions.

Actually, Shore, whose score for Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* also juggled perversity and pathos and whose music for *Silence of the Lambs* was nicely unsettling, is one of the underrated young lions of film composing. He's respectful of the non-electronic orchestral tradition of such Old Masters as Bernard Herrmann, and avoids the florid heroics of the John Williams school. Here, his music involves gnarled and brooding harmonies, with glints of ironic sweetness, like Alban Berg in a dark alley behind Birdland. Separated by intonation and rhythmic thrust, Shore and Coleman seem to communicate with each other on different planes. (In the liner notes,

Ornette defines the relationship as a truly "harmolodic" one.) At times, Ornette goes it alone with a harmolodic trio featuring drummer Denardo Coleman and bassist Barre Phillips.

The results are like no score we've quite heard before. The weird shimmer of "Interzone Suite" evokes North African village life by way of Jupiter, with Ornette's cheerful phrases bouncing atop a murky rhythm bed recalling Jon Hassell's quasi-ethnic experiments. The orchestra is aptly sardonic and ambivalent on "William Tell"—a scene at the tortured heart of the film. Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso" creeps into a manic collage of Ornette's blowing and Shore's arrangements for the London Philharmonic. In all, the score to *Naked Lunch* is one of those rare soundtracks that increases in interest when decoupled from the film. To hear Coleman again playing in an intimate acoustic setting is itself worth the price of admission. Working in a self-styled idiom now over 30 years old, he sounds fresher than virtually all of what passes for contemporary jazz today.

The sum effect is almost narcotic—cheaper than heroin and with none of the side effects. It's a beautiful, warm, dark, fuzzy thing.

—Josef Woodard

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FANTASTIC, A TRIBUTE TO ELTON JOHN; STRUTTER, A TRIBUTE TO KISS; SOFT PARADE, A TRIBUTE TO THE DOORS

RETRO-PALOOZA

IN PRINCIPLE, what's the difference between the New York Philharmonic and a clone band? Why is it an honorable and unremarkable enterprise for one to cover Beethoven and vaguely contemptible silliness for the other to cover Led Zepelin? In the first case, the vision is supplied by advanced training at Juilliard, and in the other, it is supplied by the vast book racks in guitar stores: "No scales! No music reading! No practice! Jimmy Page's most important solos note-for-note in SUPERTAB! Videotape available for \$49.95!" But why is originality ignored in classical and held as an unalterable standard in rock?

I pondered this question recently at an entire evening of clone bands—"tribute" bands, they call themselves—at the Ritz in New York. The only answer I could come up with is that while a lot of orchestras sound pretty much like Beethoven wanted, rock 'n' roll really can't be duplicated. No one, for example, can sing like Robert Plant. Certainly not the singer in Kashmir, who hit notes during "Immigrant Song" that sent chills up my spine for reasons unrelated to the land of the ice and snow.

And Soft Parade, a Doors tribute, blew massive chunks. Although the singer looked and sounded like Jim Morrison, the sound man had the guitar way up because the organist couldn't play.

Fantastic began to change my mind. Their singer did a fantastic Elton John imitation, working the skeptical crowd with skill and courage. He had a good band and a hydraulic lift in his piano that periodically raised the lid for a blast of smoke and strobe lights. He was probably even bald under the several hats that he wore. Unfortunately, in 1973, I took a train ride during which a five-year-old boy sang "Crocodile Rock" for 53 hours straight, and I have found

Elton John annoying ever since. Even Fantastic could not overcome that foul memory.

Then Strutter came out, and I had one of those I-came-to-scoff-but-left-a-convert experiences. They had obviously put maximum time and ingenuity into dissecting videotapes and assembling their stage set. They did Kiss in their prime *better than Kiss in their prime*. I mean, I saw Kiss 10 or 12 times, and Strutter had them nailed, right down to Gene Simmons' stupendous tongue. If God is in the details, Strutter is God. Paul Stanley's stage rap, Ace Frehley's smoking guitar, the blood-puking, the makeup, the seven-inch platforms, the grand gestures, the Gibson guitars and Pearl drums "because they want the best," the drummer singing "Beth" to a prerecorded tape—it was uncanny, and it was hilarious. The only thing missing was the fire-breathing and the explosions, and that was by order of the fire marshal.

"We were just a local band in Cleveland, playing covers," bassist Bill Sabetta told me. "Everyone said I looked like Gene Simmons, so I just had to do it. It's the same band as before. We all just fit our parts."

Is it lucrative?

"Lucrative enough to get to the next town. The show is expensive to put on and we carry a crew of three. We're really not in it for the money. It's just fun."

Which do the crowds like more—your blood-puking or fire-breathing?

"Probably the blood. They see the green spotlight on my face and they start going crazy, although the clubs don't like it. I'm known for getting blood in the monitors. When we played Milwaukee, they started chanting, 'Dahmer! Dahmer!'"

That's probably the difference right there. You're just never going to see the crowd on "Live from Lincoln Center" chanting "Dahmer! Dahmer!"

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG



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Sure, paint is nice. Look at the picture. That's an RGZ with our Big Flake, Three Color, Sunburst paint job. It's real nice. It's top quality. It protects the wood. We're awfully proud of it.

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That's what the RGZ is for. It's got a stacked single coil and two humbucking pickups. They're high output, noise-free and loaded with Alnico magnets. They deliver a wide tonal range with tremendous sustain. And they do it without using a single naked flaming girl's skull. Impressive.



Clever packaging can mislead the average consumer.

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The RGZ's is a low-profile system so it's out of the way. And it delivers optimum resonance because it's milled from a solid block of steel.

The RGZ body is sculpted alder. And the neck joint is recessed so it's easier to play the higher frets. The neck

is fast and fitted with 24 jumbo Dunlop® frets. If you don't know why 24 is a good thing you shouldn't be reading this

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At the top of the fingerboard is the height adjustable locking nut. It lets you make minor action adjustments without a trip down to the repair shop. Nobody but Yamaha has this. It is good. You will like it.

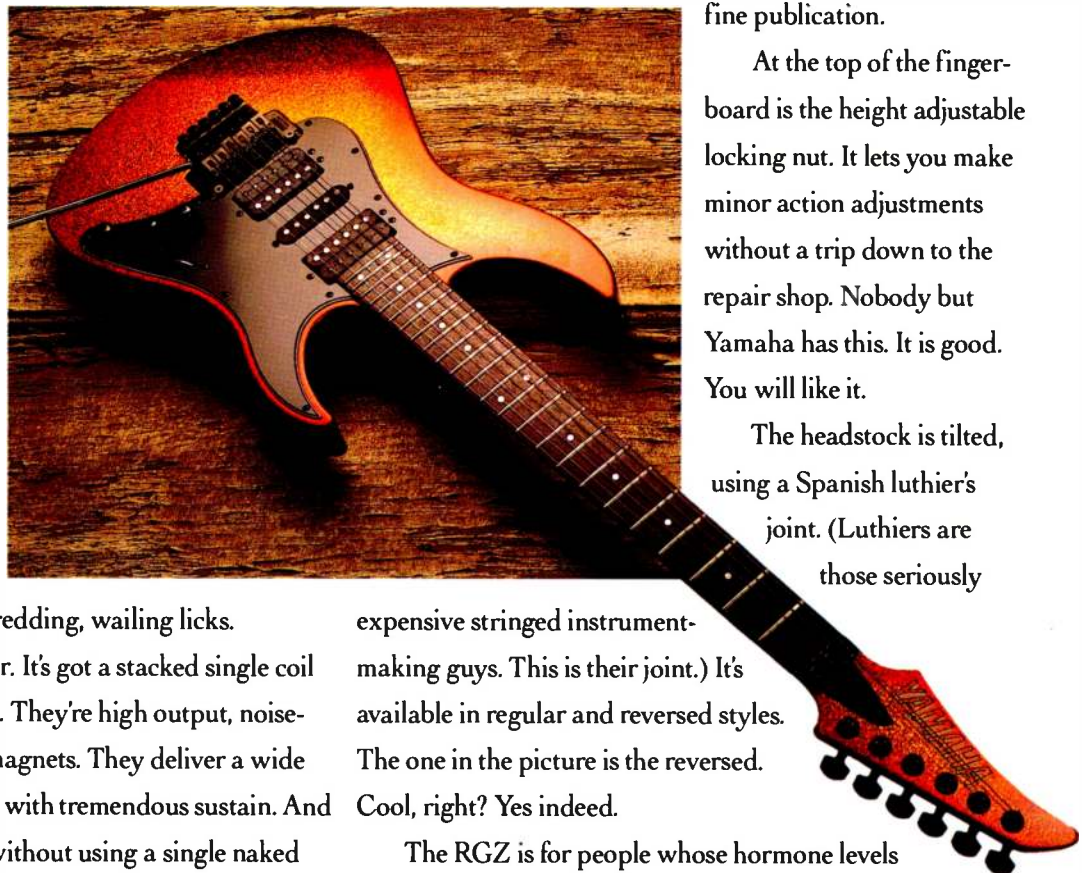
The headstock is tilted, using a Spanish luthier's joint. (Luthiers are those seriously

expensive stringed instrument-making guys. This is their joint.) It's available in regular and reversed styles. The one in the picture is the reversed. Cool, right? Yes indeed.

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