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FUTURE SHOCKS

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Although few people in the music industry publicly admit it, record companies are making plans to sell music directly to consumers via cable, phone and satellite transmission—cutting out record stores. Meanwhile, musicians and managers wonder why they will need the record companies at all. By 1999 an artist will be able to...*(cont. on page 32)*

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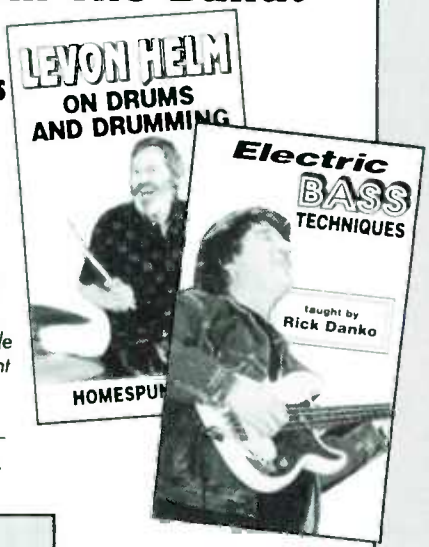

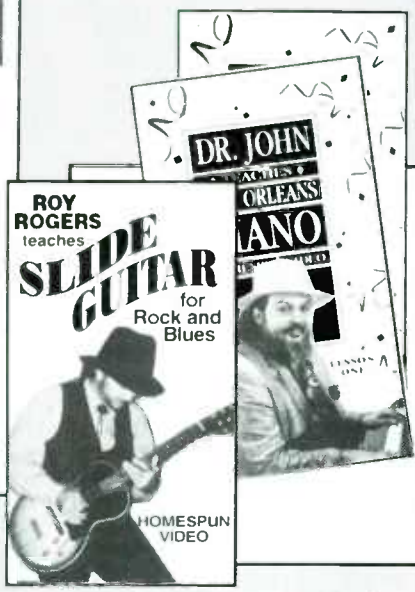

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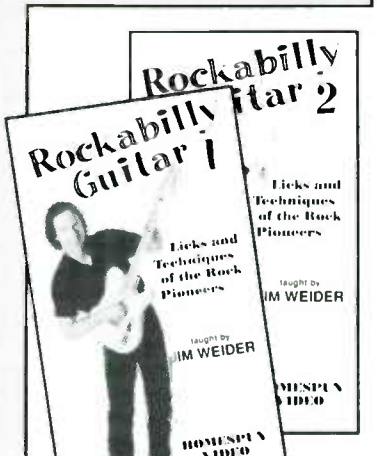

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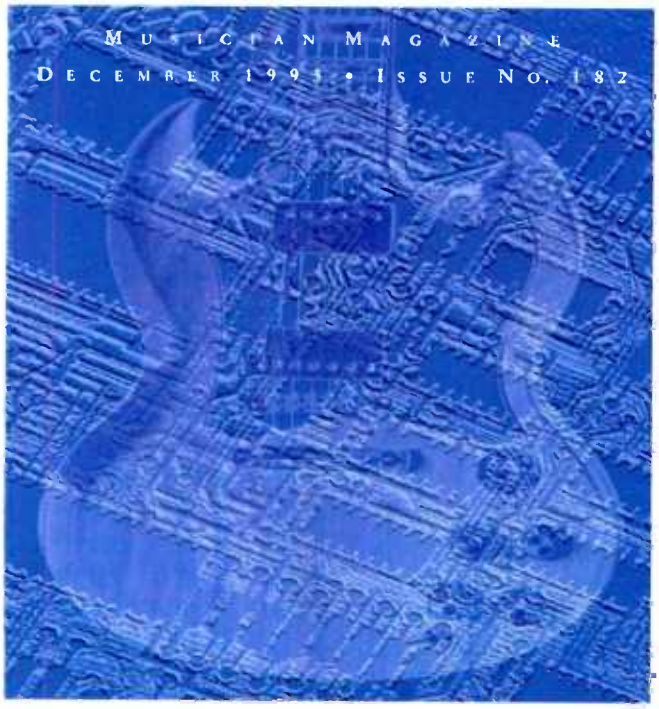

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Everyone can feel the ground shifting under their feet—but what does it mean? As the fourth year of the '90s draws to a close, we get a fix on the big picture.

SPECIAL SECTION

THE STATE OF MUSIC 1993

WORKING MUSICIAN

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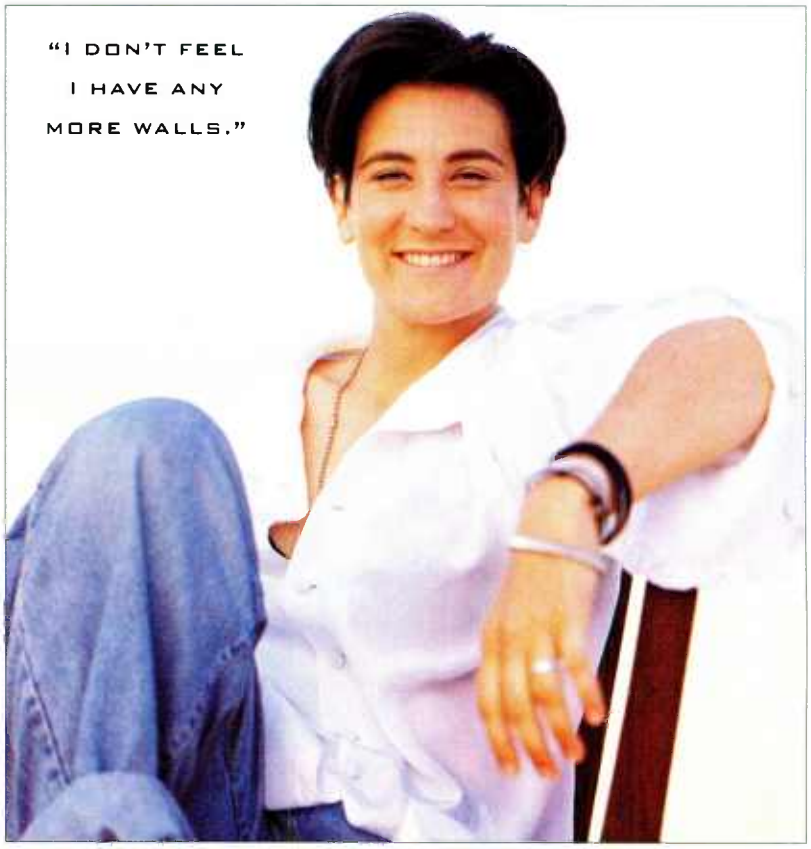

Ingenue *was such a departure for you musically: all torch and no twang. The* Even Cowgirls Get the Blues *soundtrack seems much closer to your earlier work.*

Cowgirls is kind of a conglomeration of past, present and future albums. With *Ingenue*, I moved away from country in terms of the industry's perception. But in terms of what goes on in my system, I still very much love country music. It's my muse. It was really nice to be able to come back and do country again. *Ingenue* was a clear step in a new direction and I hope that this one is as well. I just hope that every record I put out is different.

How did you end up working on the soundtrack?

I met with the director, Gus Van Sant, about acting in another movie and we just started talking about me doing something for *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*—I got all excited because we started talking about polkas and Hawaiian music, stuff that I'm passionate about. The more we talked, the more I wanted to do it and I sort of took over. I said, "You know what? I can do the whole thing if you want."

Was writing for a soundtrack different?

Very much so. I watched the film and I got to know some of the characters. I tried to figure out their emotional characteristics and then I would go through my record collection and play music until I found something that relatively worked. Then I got together with Ben Mink [*her musical collaborator*] and showed him what I'd done and we took it from there. I think the essence of the film influenced us a lot. It's a real period piece. It had to sound like 1973, but we wanted to keep it contemporary at the same time.

What records from your collection did you listen to?

Easy listening, Hawaiian stuff, classical stuff.

You had a hard time in the studio with Ingenue. *Was this easier?*

It was definitely easier. Maybe because it wasn't quite as personal. On *Ingenue* we were overly analytical. With this, our decisions and directions were very instinctual. But I think a lot of it had to do with my attitude as a singer. I'm really trying hard to work on my attitude in the recording studio. I've always been quite frightened by it. Now I try not to get so worked up about it. I just try to go in there and sing till I get it, rather than waiting for God to reach down, or lightning to strike.

Has coming out as a lesbian made a difference for you professionally?

Absolutely. There's nothing I can't talk about. There's nothing that I have to hide. I think I used to be a little defensive. I don't really feel like I have any more walls. It's really made an incredible difference for me as a person and that affects me professionally.

Do you think you've alienated any part of your audience?

I would imagine I lost some fans. But basically, the people who liked me in the first place in country were alternative anyway. They knew that I didn't exactly fit the old-fashioned mold.

Has it affected your songwriting?

Indirectly yes, in the fact that I can access my emotions so readily in terms of not being afraid. But in terms of being able to write about my girlfriend, no. I never do that anyway. My songs are never gender-specific. But in terms of being more free and emotional, yeah.

In the past you've mentioned Patsy Cline, Julie London, Joni Mitchell and Nat King Cole among your musical influences. Are there any that you haven't yet named?

My siblings. When I was growing up, I listened to them practicing piano every day for hours. I listened to so much classical music: Chopin, Beethoven, Schoenberg! Every Sunday my mother would drag us off to the convent 60 miles away for our piano lessons with Sister Xavier. I'd sit and listen to more hours of classical music. I think that's what built my ear.

What did winning a Grammy mean to you?

It meant a lot. I would be lying if I said it didn't. Just to know that you were successful. It's meant a lot in terms of confidence. It meant a lot to be *nominated* in categories like Album of the Year, Record of the Year and Song of the Year. Ben and I are basically goofs who go about our own business. We never in the world expected nominations like that. It gave us a real boost of confidence.

Does that affirmation allow you more freedom now?

It does in some ways. In other ways, it adds to the pressure, because you've achieved a standard that you have to reach again and again. Going higher each time.

SHEILA ROGERS

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE WHITESIDE

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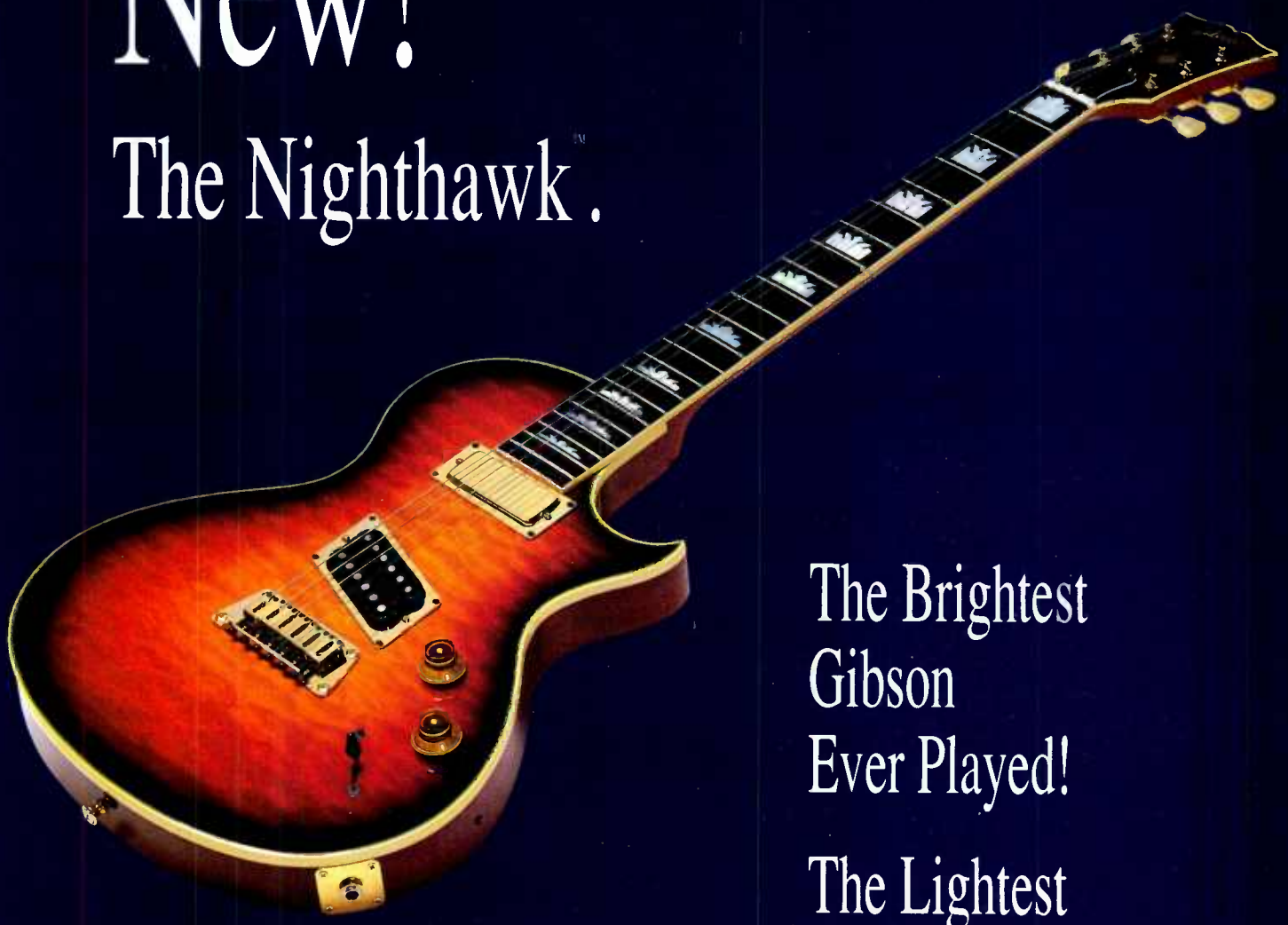

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LETTERS

STEELY DAN

It's been many years since I subscribed to *Musician*, but if the September '93 issue is any indication of the *Musician* of today, you may have won me back. I had grown tired of seeing metal artists on the cover; yes, I know you need to sell issues, but I'd rather you sell to intelligent readers than tattooed teenagers. Anyway, I want to point out the wonderful interviews with Becker and Fagen (but why weren't they asked about the shooting of Larry Carlton and the death of Jeff Porcaro, both longtime Steely contributors?); the piece on Don Byron, one of my main men at the moment; and Todd Rundgren. Finally, I have found a soulmate in Peter Cronin, thanks to his sensitive review of the Beach Boys' boxed set.

Jason M. Rubin
Lawrence, MA

Does anyone else besides me think that Walter Becker sounds a little odd? "They were playing this angry type of music from the '60s... but here are these guys playing it completely out of context." "Out of context?" Make no mistake, any anger those musicians expressed was in perfect context. If anything, that anger has only grown since the '60s. Yes, Walter, we're more pissed off than ever—or were you in the hot tub during the South-Central L.A. riots? If it weren't for jazz, you and Don could have been writing sitcom themes instead of being a *Musician* cover story.

Reggie May
New Rochelle, NY

So Donald Fagen's new album only gets airplay on "jazz lite" stations, huh? And "intelligent pop" is an oxymoron nowadays? No kidding, Sherlock! The music press is forever weeping about corporate-dominated music, but their only real contribution is their service as Pravdas of genre orthodoxy; what's "real jazz," "real blues," "real rock 'n' roll," blah blah blah. *Rolling Stone* has been waiting for *Can't Buy a Thrill Vol. II* for years, and every time they don't get it, they sneer like fourth-graders.

A while back, your big story was the feud between Roger Waters and David Gilmour, the Chuck and Di of rock 'n' roll. I found myself flipping back to the cover to make sure that I hadn't gotten my neighbor's copy of *People* by mistake. Then the letters section started filling up with variations on the same theme: "Bogus, man; like, Pink Floyd is history, are you dudes music journalists or archaeologists?" That set me to wondering if I'd been sent a promo issue of *Spin*. I'm enough of a dinosaur to care about the music itself; it's why I subscribe to musicians' magazines. I bought albums by all three of these artists out of interest in their music. Why else spend the 15 bucks for the disc? Or the bread it costs for the subscription; be warned.

Richard Miller
Albion, NY

Send letters to: Musician, *1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.*

FROM THE EDITOR

We're running our annual "State of Music" special a little early this year to clear the decks for a major revamping of *Musician* that will begin next month.

One big indication of where we're headed is this month's cover story, "Future Shocks" by Fred Goodman, about the enormous upheavals coming in the music business as a result of changes in technology. *Musician* is way ahead of the curve on some of the ideas presented here, and a lot of powerful people are going to scream at us for shooting our mouths off too soon.

But these revolutionary ideas are the topic of *private* gossip, discussion, speculation and argument among the smartest artists, managers, lawyers and record executives from Europe to America to Australia. As one wag said last year when some record stores were complaining about the demise of the CD longbox, "They better worry a little less about the end of longboxes and a little more about the end of record stores."

That is a subject that very few people at record companies want to talk about in print, because they are still dependent on record stores. But while the labels, in private, whisper that soon they won't need the stores, some top artists and managers are whispering that soon they won't need the labels. And that is why Fred Goodman's reporting is going to raise hackles.

There are a dozen more such stories just under the surface of the music world these days, as technology, multinational commerce and legal decisions grow faster than our ability to keep track of them. There is an intellectual landgrab on right now as real as any past gold rush. If musicians don't understand what the real game is, they will not be able to deal from a position of strength. In the coming months *Musician* is going to offer articles about how the rules are changing, and how much musicians have to gain and lose in the coming world.

We've been developing the "Future Shocks" story all year. During one meeting last spring Goodman was asked, "How come none of the other magazines are doing this?" He said, "Who else could?"

And that is a real important point. *Musician* competes with *Guitar Player* and *Modern Drummer* for player features and with *Rolling Stone* for interviews with superstars. We compete with everyone from *Alternative Press* to *Spin* for new artists, with *Billboard* in covering the music industry and with *Electronic Musician* in keeping ahead of new technology. But no one else covers all of it. No one else takes the broad view of what it means to create music—from the spiritual moments of pure inspiration to the frustrations and victories of doing business to the gear you need to the jokes that keep five guys in a van from killing each other.

No one else offers the whole picture.

With our January 1994 issue we are going to be introducing new features and departments, and getting rid of a lot of old ones—including "Faces," "Short Takes" and the "Working Musician" section. What are we going to do with all that space? Come back in four weeks and see. Don't worry—it'll be good.

Our fundamental mission remains the same. *Musician* is here to give a voice to the creative side of music making. That may mean talking about Paul Westerberg's lyrics or Joshua Redman's technique or Buckethead's new fuzzbox. It certainly means looking at the music business from the musician's point of view and being an advocate for the player's perspective. So keep an eye out for our January issue, and let us know where we're getting it right and what we're doing wrong.

Some people tell us, "You can't put an article about a new amplifier next to a philosophical interview with some folksinger next to a piece on playing punk clubs or a profile of Peter Gabriel." But of course we can. And of course we do. Because that is what musicians do. And that is what *Musician* is.

Bill Flanagan

COMMON THREAD: THE SONGS OF THE EAGLES

TAKE IT EASY
Travis Tritt

PEACEFUL EASY FEELING
Little Texas

DESPERADO
Clint Black

HEARTACHE TONIGHT
John Anderson

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The DA-88 is built for production. The integrity of TASCAM's design is evident in every facet of the deck. From its look and feel — to its exceptional sound, unsurpassed features and expansion capability.

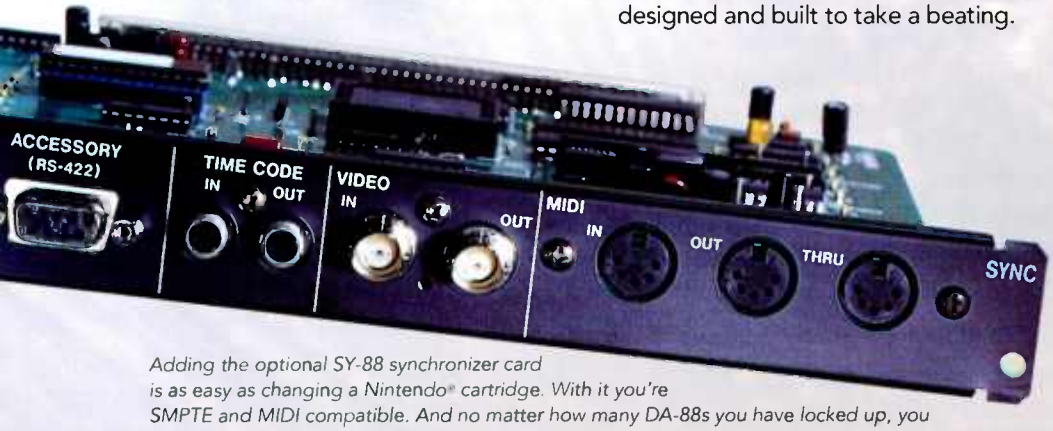
Goes Faster, Lasts Longer And Takes A Beating

While we admit that it's an elegant looking machine, it's tough to see its finest asset. The tape transport. Designed and manufactured by TASCAM specifically for the DA-88, it's fast, accurate and solid. And that's what counts in production — in personal studios, project studios or in those demanding high-end facilities.

You'll notice it uses superior Hi 8mm tape, giving you a full 108 minutes of record time. What's more, the transport is lightning fast and yet so quiet you'll barely hear it blaze through a tape.

We didn't stop there. Because production environments are notorious for constant, if not abusive, shuttling, punching, 24-hour operation — you get the idea — the transport was designed and built to take a beating.

Even more impressive is the transport's responsiveness. Take a look at the front panel. Notice the shuttle wheel? Turn it just a bit and the tape moves at one fourth the normal play speed. Turn it all the way and it flies at 8 times faster. Do it all night if you want. It's quick, smooth and it's precise. Need to get to a location quickly? Accurately? Shuttle a bit and you're there. The location is easily viewed on the DA-88's 8-digit absolute time display — in hours, minutes, seconds and frames. With the optional SY-88 sync card it displays timecode and offset, too.



Adding the optional SY-88 synchronizer card is as easy as changing a Nintendo® cartridge. With it you're SMPTE and MIDI compatible. And no matter how many DA-88s you have locked up, you need only one sync card. Other optional accessories include AES/EBU and SDIF2 digital interfaces allowing the digital audio signal to be converted for direct-digital interfacing with digital consoles, signal processors and recording equipment.

You Already Know How To Operate It

Unlike other digital multitrack decks, the DA-88 works logically and is simple to operate. Like your analog deck. All functions are familiar and easily operated from the front of the deck.

s Machine

Take punching-in and out, for example. You have three easy ways to do it. You can punch-in and out of single tracks on the fly. Just hit the track button at the punch-in point. Hit it again to punch-out. You can use the optional foot switch, if you like.

Or, for multiple tracks, simply select the track numbers you want to punch, push play, and when you're ready, hit record to punch-in, play to punch-out.

Finally, for those frame accurate punch-ins, you've got auto punch-in and out. In this mode you can rehearse your part prior to committing it to tape.

No matter which way you choose, your punch-in and out is seamless and glitch free due to TASCAM's sophisticated variable digital crossfade technology.

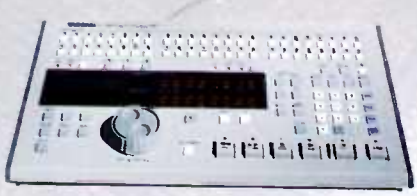
That's not all, you also can set your pitch (± 6%), sample rates (44.1 or 48K), as well as crossfade and track delay times. All from the front of the DA-88.

Complete Synchronicity

There's more. Add the optional SY-88 synchronizer card to just one of your DA-88s and you've got full SMPTE/EBU chase synchronization. The best part is, you can record time-code without sacrificing one of your audio tracks. You also get video sync input, an RS-422 port to allow control of the DA-88 from a video editor, and MIDI ports for MIDI machine control.

A Digital Recording System That Grows With You

The DA-88 is truly part of a digital recording system. Start with 8 tracks today — add more tomorrow.



Adding tracks is as simple as adding machines — up to16 for a total of 128 tracks. They interconnect with one simple cable, and no matter how many DA-88s you have, they'll all lock up in less than 2 seconds.

Controlling multiple machines is made simple with the optional RC-848 remote. With it you can auto locate and catch 99 cue points on the fly. It comes complete with shuttle wheel, jog dial, RS-422 and parallel ports, and it controls other digital and analog machines, too.

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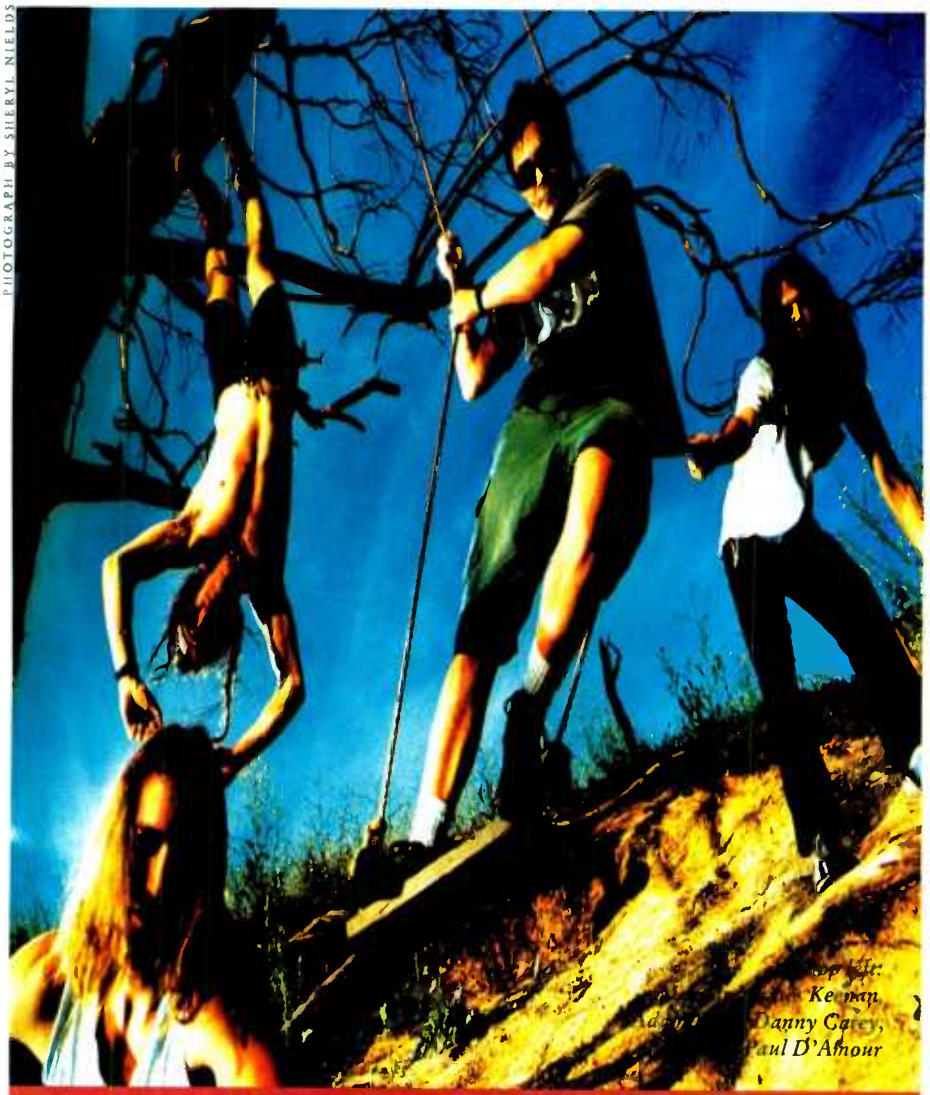


PHOTOGRAPH BY SHERYL NIELDS

Top left: Keenan, Danny Carey, Paul D'Amour

TOOL: TEARS FOR KILLING FEARS

TOOL, THE L.A. band that spent last summer garnering raves for their vicious Lollapalooza performances, comes off as some kind of vanquishing force. "It's a release," explains guitarist Adam Jones, "and kind of selfish in a way. In L.A. everyone wants to be Axl Rose. Our music's strictly for us. And, it's true, the lyrics are passionate."

Which is maybe why Tool comes off so incisive. The observations in "Bottom" could regard storms under the skin or strategies against social inequity. "In order to survive you/I must first survive myself/There's no choice but to confront you, engage you, erase you." It's similar to the conundrum in "Sober," which is "about a guy whose best comes out when he's loaded," continues Jones. "People give him shit for it, but we're saying, 'Why chastise him? Leave him the fuck alone.' It's a poetic interpretation of that conflict."

Whether or not the demons are deep-sixed is hard to gauge. But on *Undertow*, an album of radiant barbs, Tool does manage to sidestep clichés that rank-and-file ranters sometimes immerse themselves in. The creativity was initially spurred when Jones fell under the spell of Ronald Vincent, whose 1949 book *A Joyful Guide to Lachrymology* suggested that tears were cleansing agents, the residue of rising above whatever pain came your way. When Tool cry themselves a river, it's made of lava—thick, fluid, engulfing. Look out for the undertow.

JIM MACNIE

Emmylou Harris

"I'M A MINER, just digging for those nuggets," says Emmylou Harris. "Music should move you... when you hear something, it should change you in a tiny, tiny way. The things you're looking for at 21, though, are different than what you're looking for at 41—and that search is what it's all about."

With the voice of a broken-hearted angel, the silver-haired songstress has romped, stomped and sighed her way through aching ballads, turbo-shitkickers, pop, rock, bluegrass and gospel. Indeed, eclecticism has made Harris the pilot light of today's neotraditional movement. And she's still searching, as her recent *Cowgirl's Prayer* attests. Drawing on songs by Tony Joe White, Leonard Cohen and Jesse Winchester, Harris crosses great musical divides in the name of her muse.

"I still operate in my own small circle; it's like my career's happening on another planet," she observes. "But careers, like records, are built song-by-song. And, to me, the best place to start is how it makes me feel. Because a good song will carry you *so* very far."

HOLLY GLEASON

FACES

Yo La Tengo

IN ROCK-CRIT parlance the word "ethereal" sometimes connotes a certain lack of substance. But when Yo La Tengo get their whispers, drones and haze working the right way, there's nothing but essence all over the place.

Take the gorgeous, near-weightless "Nowhere Near," from the trio's gorgeous, near-perfect *Painful*. As drummer Georgia Hubley's voice wafts through the lyrics, shadows turn corporeal. She's lonely, at a party maybe, and by force of will alone conjures the presence of an absent beau. A pithy riff, some hard-nosed fantasy and voilà. You're surrounded.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HEUNGMAN

L to R: Georgia Hubley, Ira Kaplan, James McNew

"We wished that song was shorter, but we couldn't find a way to cut it and still get the same charge," offers guitarist Ira Kaplan. That last word is key. Whether short or long (usually the latter), the Yo La's sustain the ignition. Even their most explosive feedback forays carry unmistakable threads of intimacy. Kaplan and Hubley, along with bassist James McNew, create the warmest, most humane guitar squall in all of indiedom.

"Well, we've often meant it as an assault," counters Ira, "just not exclusively; maybe it's more malleable than that of other groups. But I'd be disappointed if you thought it was overly warm. We try to keep it...ah...instinctive."

The new disc is a tribute to the notion that poignancy and pandemonium can abide each other.

JIM MACNIE

UNCLE TUPELO

CALLING US country-rock is probably one of the worst things you could do, given today's standards," groans Uncle Tupelo bassist Jeff Tweedy, shuddering at the very mention of Garth Brooks. Of course, nobody would mistake the scrappy sound of this Belleville, Illinois trio for the mainstream ooze he calls "pop music marketed for Midwestern housewives."

Obviously, the boys didn't pretty themselves up for their major-label debut; *Anodyne* was cut live. "We figured we could fix something if we screwed it up, but it became a mission *not* to do that," recalls Tweedy. Bad notes? "There's plenty," he laughs. "And on the louder songs the guitars go sharp toward the end."

Besides providing an excuse to make noise, their fourth album produced a collaboration with the great Doug Sahm on a soulful "Give Back the Key to My Heart." Tweedy says Sahm was as cool as you'd expect, although he notes, "We don't have too many heroes left."

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL CORRIGAN

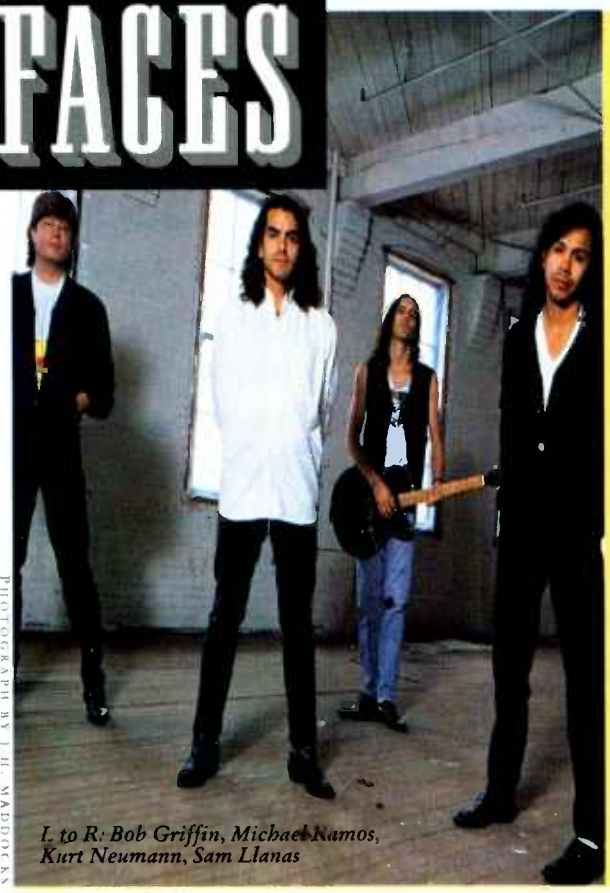
L to R: Jay Farrar, Jeff Tweedy, Ken Coomer

One person they don't revere is Michelle Shocked, who recruited Uncle Tupelo for her '92 tour, which they abandoned. "We've had lawsuits threatened every time we open our mouths, so I'm not sure how much I should say," sighs Tweedy, adding, "If you're gonna portray yourself as open-minded and caring about other human beings, you should be that way. I never got that from her."

Tweedy's disillusionment takes on larger dimensions in the rousing "We've Been Had," a diatribe against show-business baloney. He says, "It seems like everything I ever liked turned out to be a marketing ploy—like rock 'n' roll." He's wrong on one count: *Anodyne* is the real stuff.

JON YOUNG

FACES



PHOTOGRAPH BY J. H. MADDOCKS

L. to R: Bob Griffin, Michael Ramos, Kurt Neumann, Sam Llanas

THE BODEANS

WE GOT CAUGHT up in trying to make something we thought would sell, and ended up chasing our tails," admits BoDean Sam Llanas. "Now we're just trying to please ourselves and we're better for it."

He's engaging in the usual new-album hype, of course, but Llanas tells no lies. The Wisconsin band's fifth record, *Go Slow Down*, is the best since their first, largely because they regained artistic control after submitting to Paisley Park producer David Z. for the disappointing *Black and White*. "The new one's very homemade," he says. "We stressed to the label that we wanted to make it in Milwaukee by ourselves, and they were up for that because it's a lot cheaper."

Llanas and partner Kurt Neumann stuck to basic rock 'n' roll in the tradition of Creedence, emphasizing the upbeat. "Closer to Free" was inspired by Eddie Cochran, while "Something's Telling Me" will provoke comparisons to the Everlys, nothing new for the BoDeans. "That's flattering, but we always thought we sounded more like Springsteen and Steve Van Zandt. Kurt and I both have weird voices, but somehow they work together."

They'll be hard-pressed to escape the shadow of their debut *Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams*, although Llanas doesn't care much for the album's high-pitched singing. "It may get your attention, but it annoys me. I don't know why someone didn't slap me and say, 'Stop that.'

"We always thought our small audience would grow. Our motto has been 'Expect the worst, hope for the best.'" JON YOUNG

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ABOVE: Cesar Rosas (electric and acoustic guitars) mans the Mackies during a session in Los Lobos' garage studio.

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Dwight Marcus: Engineering for Grammy-nominated spoken word version of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home, Mixing/engineering for Emmy-winning score of Dying With Dignity; Soundtrack composition/production: GM, Xerox, Kodak, Cousteau Society, Clio/Addy/IBA winner; Album mixing/engineering: Gatlin Brothers, Michael Tomlinson, Colorblind James Experience, Garry Morris, Wendy Maharry; Currently co-writing with Katey Sagal for an upcoming Virgin album and pre-producing his own group, Chamber of Poets.

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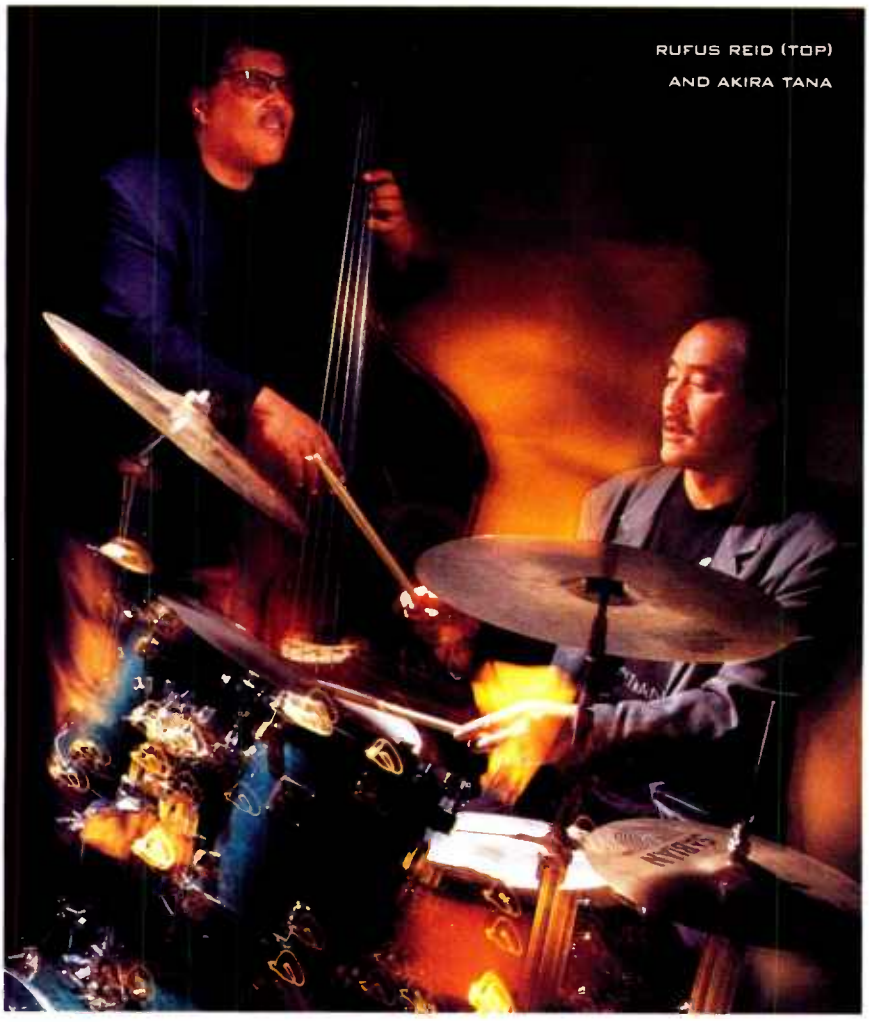
TANAREID: RHYTHM POWER



RUFUS REID (TOP) AND AKIRA TANA

EVER WONDER WHAT GOES THROUGH THE MINDS OF JAZZ RHYTHM sections as they slug out 20 consecutive choruses of "Green Dolphin Street" behind a wailing saxophonist? Bassist Rufus Reid, one of the more patient giants of jazz, hit his breaking point with this type of work a few years back. He was playing in a Dizzy Gillespie all-star band on the European festival circuit, and he couldn't help thinking about the band of young, well-dressed jazzers who were next on the bill. "Here we were, all happy to see these guys having success, but I was also saying to myself, 'Why are *these* guys on the festival?' I'd been doing the sideman thing too long."

So Reid, 49, joined with drummer Akira Tana, 41, and developed a quintet setting that might be called "Revenge of the Workhorse Rhythm Section," in which bass and drums do more than just mark time for soloists. Tanareid—which features pianist Rob Schneiderman and saxophonists Craig Bailey and Dan Faulk—replaces jam session blow-to-exhaustion macho with crisp arrangements, and emphasizes "ensemble" over all else. It's an ambitious concept in the all-star '90s, when every record requires a "name" attraction and even club owners don't trust musicians over 30.

Making that concept succeed is precisely the kind of challenge these two veterans of countless nights in the trenches enjoy. They're sitting in a neighborhood Cuban/Chinese restaurant near the Upper West Side office that doubles as their studio, talking about the jazz record executives who wouldn't listen to their tape because they "weren't 22 years old" and about promoters wary of booking the band because of its relatively unknown personnel. Tana and Reid are not leaders all the time—as members of the New York jazz elite, their services are in constant demand. Tana toured the world with Manhattan Transfer earlier this year, while Reid, who has appeared on over 200 recordings and was Dexter Gordon's longtime bassist, is scheduled to tour Japan with J.J. Johnson in coming weeks. But after years of being

Two veteran jazz sidemen grab hold of the reins

required to meet any request and adjust to any situation, they're happy for a chance to set the main agenda.

Says Tana, "It's great to be able to tell the horn players to play *one* chorus. How many times have we worked for leaders"—he extends his arms to play air saxophone—"who expect us to be enthusiastic about something we might feel is the saddest shit going?"

Adds Reid, "In our past experiences, we've been handcuffed with the strongest chains you can imagine, and we've also been given enough room to choke ourselves. Yet we've rarely gotten the chance to decide on things for ourselves."

As leaders, Reid and Tana seem to favor acoustic improvised music that touches on Ellington, the Miles Davis '60s quintet, Stan Getz's bossa and a few other eras without stopping too long in any one place. Emulating the Ron Carter/Tony Williams model of assertive-but-empathetic support, the leaders frame their arrangements around a disciplined swing, and a sense that the basic timekeeping duties are to be shared by all hands. "So often the rhythm section becomes just a backdrop, where in Miles' groups, it was an integral part of what Miles was trying to present," Reid points out. "There's nothing worse than playing a hundred choruses

BY TOM MOON

PHOTOGRAPH BY RODERICK LEONHARD

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of some standard—the kind of stuff we're writing is what's most satisfying for a rhythm section to play."

This philosophy informs all that Tana and Reid are involved with—and as Tana has become more active as a producer for Japan's King label, the pair has provided backbone for the Asian-American Jazz Trio and for the two-volume *Project G7: A Tribute to Wes Montgomery*, issued last summer by Evidence. On *Blue Motion*, the Tanareid quintet's third album (due in January, on Evidence), originals such as "Blue Motion" and jazz perennials like Gillespie's "Con Alma" have arrangements far more intricate than the average blowing-session fare. The music is a leap forward for this still-young band, and Tana and Reid are equally proud of the way it was made: The two handled every aspect of the release themselves. "We both do enough record dates to know how much time gets wasted," Tana says. "For this, we knew we'd only have two days to record, so we spent two weeks getting the material ready, just playing."

It's a DIY gospel Reid also preaches at William Paterson College in New Jersey, where he's been director of jazz studies for 11 years. Reid says his students are following his every musical move, because he's doing what many of them hope to do someday. Indeed, he and Tana often find themselves in mentoring roles with their own sidemen, who have far less experience. They'd like to treat other members of their band as equals, but part of leadership is the responsibility to shape individual contributions.

"The nature of the music is to be democratic, but you have to keep the roles clearly defined," Reid observes. "A lot of the young kids don't understand that, just because they can play, they can't do whatever they want. You know, Dexter Gordon was loose about some things. But when I was with him, you always knew where you were."

REEDS

RUFUS REID plays a German bass he estimates is 175 years old. He uses a Walter Woods bass amplifier with an SWR Goliath Jr. speaker cabinet. His pickup is made by Barbera Transducers. Depending on the situation, he'll supplement the direct sound by miking the bass with an Audio-Technica AT-35. He uses Eudoxa "Oliv" strings for the G and D, and Thomastik "spiral core" strings for the A and E.

AKIRA TANA plays Yamaha drums and Sabian cymbals. He uses Vic Firth sticks.

RICK DANKO ON THE BAND

AFTER A 15-YEAR DROUGHT, FANS OF THE BAND ARE IN FOR A GOOD hard rain. Levon Helm's autobiography, *This Wheel's on Fire*, is just out. So is another history, *Across the Great Divide: The Band in America* by English writer Barney Hoskyns. Capitol is preparing to issue a boxed set to coincide with the Band's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in January. That box will contain early sessions from the days when the Band called themselves the Hawks, previously unreleased basement tapes and other rarities. There is talk of Columbia finally putting out a live album from Bob Dylan and the Hawks' legendary '65–'66 tours as part of the *Bootleg Series* project. Rykodisc has just released in the U.S.A. a lovely album Rick Danko made with Eric Andersen and Norwegian musician Jonas Fjeld in 1991.

But the biggest news is that Danko, Helm and Garth Hudson have actually put out the first Band studio album since 1976. It's called *Jericho* and if it is not as great as *Music from Big Pink* or *The Band*, it is stronger than *Cahoots or Islands*. Considering that this version of the Band is operating without singer Richard Manuel, who died in 1986, or guitarist/songwriter Robbie Robertson, that's a pleasant surprise. Then again, considering that Danko, Helm and Hudson are three of the most original musicians rock 'n' roll ever produced, it's a wonder it took this long.

A few years ago Sony Music offered them a new record deal and they headed up to Woodstock, New York to get material together. To replace Manuel they brought in Stan Szelest, a piano player who sounded like Manuel and fit like Manuel because—remarkably—Manuel had joined the Hawks as Szelest's replacement in 1961. Now that Richard was gone, Stan had a second shot at the chance he missed. The songs that came out of those sessions had the loose, funky feel of *Stage Fright*. Full of renewed optimism, the Band brought the tapes to Sony—and Sony said, well, gee, maybe you guys should think about covering something by Paul Simon.

New albums, old wounds

Some of the heart went out of the project then. A lot more went out when Stan Szelest admitted that he'd been having chest pains through the recording. One night they got bad, and Stan died. Danko, Helm and Hudson cut some covers for Sony, but were unhappy. Eventually they secured their release from the label and took their tapes to Great Pyramid Records, a small Tennessee record company where no one's going to tell them what to do.

At Sony, explains Rick Danko, the Band's singer/bassist and sometimes fiddler/guitarist, "there was a big indifference in the *art* department, in terms of what they thought was a '10' or a '5.' We're too old to be *groomed*, you know. We are the Band. I'm 50 years old. I play my music. I do what I do. There's no danger of us becoming a heavy metal act or something that we're not, so we kind of fell out. Although we did put [Springsteen's] 'Atlantic City' on the album from those [Sony] sessions. Also, we retained the masters, so we do have some fine outtakes that I'm sure will break the surface eventually. Time is on our side."

One of the best songs on *Jericho* is a rocker called "Move to Japan." Asked what inspired it, Danko laughs, "Well, we were joking about all this money that Sony had given us."

BY BILL FLANAGAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL DELSOL

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The impediment to a reunion between the current Band and Robbie Robertson is not, as many fans imagine, Robertson. It is Helm's contempt for Robertson. In his book, Levon blames Robbie for trying to take over the Band in the early '70s, and then blames him for abandoning them with his *Last Waltz*. An insider who knows all the players in this complex cast once compared Helm's attitude toward Robertson to the old joke about the unhappy ladies at the Catskills hotel: "The food here is terrible!" "Yes, and such small portions!"

Helm's book draws blood with his allegation—long rumored but now made public—that Robertson took advantage of some of the Band members' financial or chemical troubles to buy away their rights to the Band's songs. On the other hand, nasty comments about Robertson's singing seem petty, and Helm's belief that the Robertson-conceived *The Last Waltz* was junk is just nonsense. Helm's central claim is that the soul went out of the Band when Robertson started believing in the myth the Band created, and in his own press.

Danko says, "I think Levon's book hits the nail on the head about where Robbie and [manager] Albert Grossman and some of those people went wrong and when the Band stopped being the Band. This is truly a new Band record and you can tell the difference. I'm truly friends with everybody but, hey—it could happen to Levon, too. When people take themselves too seriously and believe too much in their own bullshit, they usually get in trouble."

Neither Helm's nor Hoskyns' book reports that a couple of years ago Geffen Records, Robertson's current label, floated the possibility of the Band signing to Geffen and doing an album and tour with Robertson. Helm refused. One imagines that Danko (who, like Hudson, has guested on Robertson's [*cont'd on page 30*]

"I'LL BRING OVER MY FENDER"

For basses, RICK DANKO has four Gibson Rippers with different pickups (from Ripper to Fender Jazz to Precision) and a Mark Dan custom-made hollowbody bass with Olympic pickups—"a great bass. One of the greatest basses that I've ever had, till I went to Norway and they gave me a Workshop bass with two different kinds of Olympic pickups; it is by far the best bass I've ever had in my life. It's made by the Norwegian Workshop Guitar Company." He also has his Ampeg fretless with Jazz pickups, and an Ampeg "Baby Standup" bass.

For guitars, Danko plays a Jumbo Guild from 1969 and a '44 Guild Dreadnought. "I have an old Gibson guitar I love and a Takamine they gave me in Japan when I was playing with Ringo. My newest toy is a Yairi guitar I was given in Denmark. I heard K. Yairi's a great Japanese guitar maker. I can get a vibrato by shaking the neck. The neck is that sensitive. I fell in love with it immediately. It has a saddle bridge." His amps are a 1959 Fender Bassman and an Ampeg SVT, "but Fender's about to give us a whole line."

Danko does not play any five-string basses. "I never got used to the balance. I take my four-string basses and tune them down, as low as from an E to a C. When I play guitar on my solo shows I tune down one full step, from an E to a D. I have the sound man exaggerate the bass a little, and it sounds like there's not only a guitar player but a bass, too.

"I use medium-gauge guitar strings. They vary from Martin Marquis to D'Addario to Homespun." Danko's bass strings are round wounds, sometimes quarter wounds. He doesn't know which brands.

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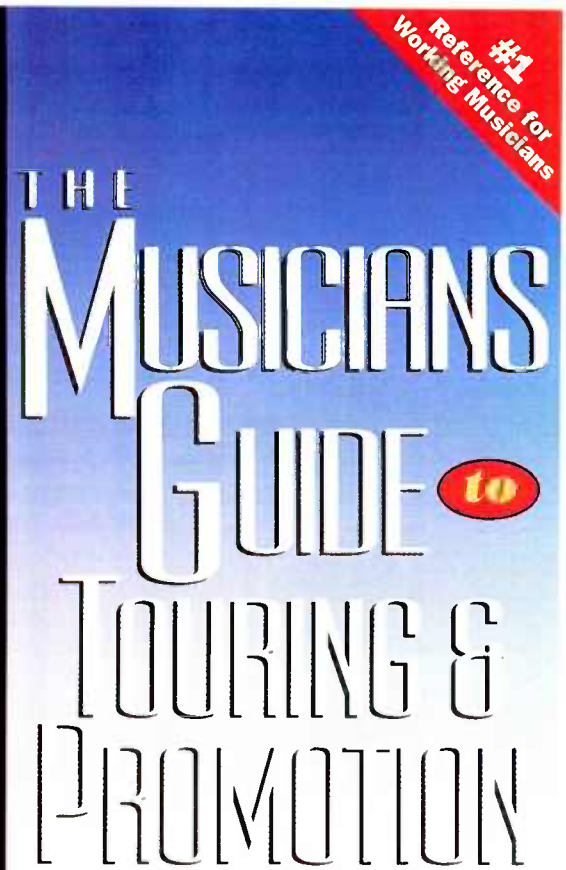

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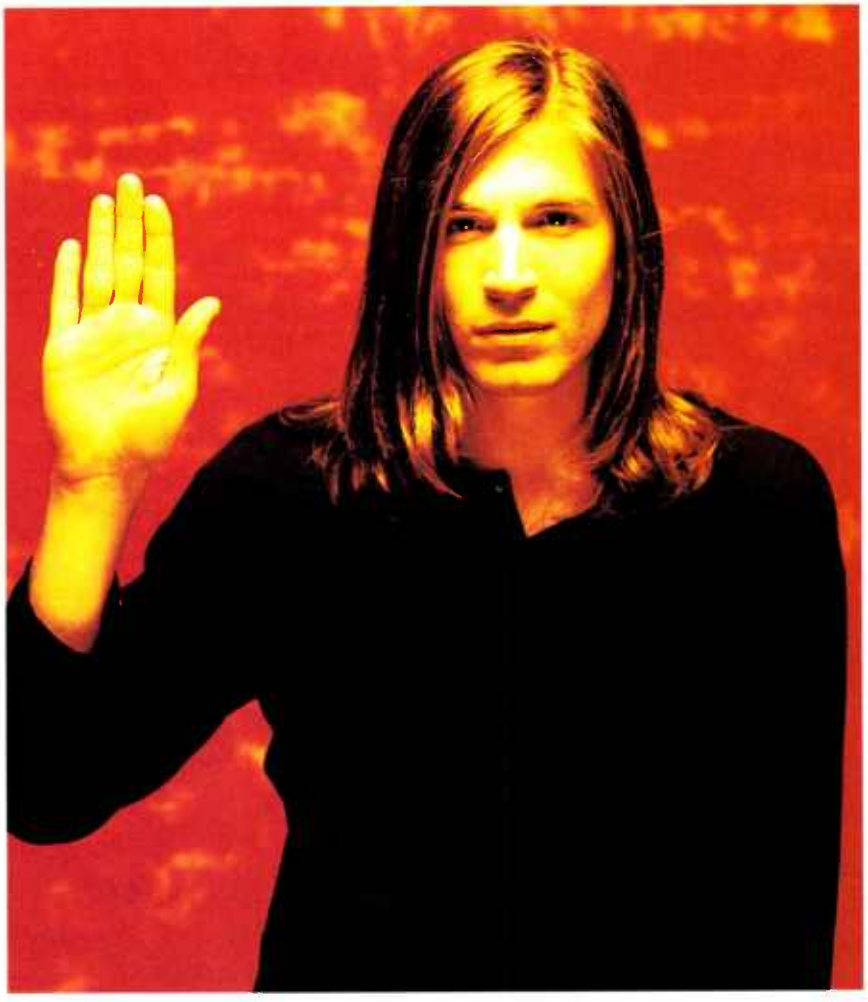
LOOK OUT, YOU LEMONHEADS!



AFTER A RUN OF INDIE RELEASES IN THE LATE '80S, AND A BARELY noticed big-label debut in 1990, the Boston-based Lemonheads finally bounced beyond their college cult last year with a grunge-pop remake of "Mrs. Robinson" and the album *It's a Shame about Ray*. As lead Lemonhead Evan Dando became alternative music's cover boy of the year, the threesome won over radio, MTV and concert crowds from L.A. to London to Sydney. So with their new album *Come On Feel the Lemonheads*, the band certainly has reached a milestone.

"Good morning, The Milestone," chirps a woman at the front desk of a London hotel, named for a historic mileage marker outside its front door. She confirms Dando is registered and a short time later the lanky singer is bounding outside and across the street for a chat in Kensington Gardens.

Dando is the first to admit that he's gained as much attention in the past year for his charming looks and slacker manner as for the Lemonheads' effervescent rock 'n' roll. All struggling young bands should have such problems. "I'll go along with people telling me, 'Do this photo shoot, it'll get your music heard,'" he says. "So I do it, then it ends up just getting my picture looked at."

BY THOM DUFFY

The Lemonheads' shifting lineup (which included former Blake Baby Juliana Hatfield playing bass on *It's a Shame about Ray*) has always centered around Dando, his pithy, power-pop songwriting, and jangly guitar attacks inspired by bands from the Byrds to Big Star. However, with bassist Nic Dalton of Australia's Hummingbirds joining Dando and drummer David Ryan, the Lemonheads are "more of a band than we've ever been. We went out and played for a year straight and then went into the studio and made a record."

There's nothing like success to help make new friends, and *Come On Feel the Lemonheads* features a fair share. Belinda Carlisle (who shares management with the band) duets with Dando on the Go-Go-ish "I'll Do It Anyway."

Sunday in the park with Evan

Slide/steel guitarist Sneaky Pete Kleinow of Flying Burrito Brothers fame adds a country-rock lilt to an anti–gay-bashing ballad "Big Gay Heart," while allowing Dando to play Gram Parsons for a Day. And Rick James lent his funky vocals to the loopy "Rick James Style," one of two album versions of the song "Style," about indecision and mind-altering substances—two topics of interest to Dando lately, as it turns out.

Dando worked on more than half of the new album's 15 tracks in Sydney, Australia with collaborator Tom Morgan, a friend of Dalton's. After the Lemonheads toured Down Under in 1991, Sydney became a favorite retreat, where Dando could drink from the same well as like-minded rockers such as Hoodoo Gurus and the Saints. He and Morgan hit it off.

"The key thing is one guitar between the two of us," he says of their songwriting style. "We have a couple of riffs between the two of us and we fuse 'em together, sort of grabbing the guitar back and forth between us. I think if we both had a guitar we'd be lost."

With four-track demos in hand, Dando and his bandmates returned to Cherokee Studios in Los Angeles where they had recorded *It's a Shame about Ray* with the Robb Brothers—Dee, Bruce and Joe—at the board. The Robbs had been recommended to Dando the first time around by

PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN WESTENBERG

BETA Bio

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER

CURRENT HOME:
Washington, DC

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:
Winner of consecutive Grammy® Awards for Top Female Vocal Performance, Country; consecutive CMA Female Vocalist of the Year awards; and the ACM Top Female Vocalist award.

INFLUENCES:
The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Richard Thompson.

FAVORITE MEMORY:
"I'll never forget the night at Slim's in San Fransisco in October of '92 when the power blew out. It gave new meaning to the 'unplugged' trend. With flashlights as our 'spotlights', we climbed onto the bar and played. It was a blast!"

FAVORITE MICROPHONE:
Shure Beta. "I like the way the Shure Beta lets me cut through loud and clear over the band. It's very consistent — has a wide dynamic range — so the sound is uniform from one octave to the next. And there's almost no handling noise. So my audience hears what they came to hear."

DISCOGRAPHY:
"Come On Come On" (1992), "Shooting Straight in the Dark" (1990), "State of the Heart" (1989), "Hometown Girl" (1987). All on Columbia Records.

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Atlantic Records production coordinator Martha Schultz and the band's A&R man, Tom Carolan.

"It was a completely blind date," says Dando, who was unaware the Robbs once backed up '60s rocker Del Shannon. The brief guitar quote from "Runaway" in "I'll Do It Anyway" makes it clear he later found out. "I sort of feel an association with Del in a way, like I'm the new friend they make music with," he says of the Robbs. "They're seriously no-bullshit people."

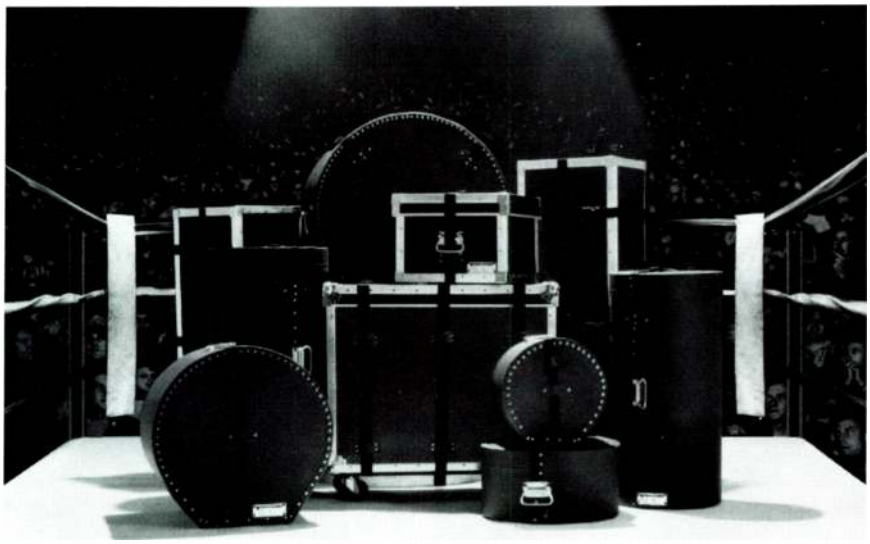
If only the same could have been said of Dando during the sessions for the new album.

"I was depressed and nervous about making the record," he admits, "and I thought I could escape it with drugs. And it didn't work." The sessions in the L.A. studio alternated with sessions smoking crack with unnamed musician pals, and brief tastes of low-grade Mexican heroin. "I just dabbled a little bit," he says, emphasizing that he now has even quit smoking cigarettes.

As if that wasn't bad enough, however, Dando also broke the press silence that normally protects such dumb pop-star exploits. Because his adventures screwed up his voice, Dando spoke to a few journalists about his bender—British journalists at that. "I was, like, 'What have I done?'" he recalls, smacking his forehead. "So since I'd blown it, I had to be completely frank. And it's an annoying domino thing. It's going to come up a lot.

"But I have nothing to hide. I'll talk about what I've done. The only thing I'm worried about is giving the wrong message to kids. I don't want people to think it's cool to take drugs. You overdramatize your predicament when you take drugs and it just gets worse and worse." Sure, just ask Dando's musical hero Gram Parsons.

"It's all about learning to relax, for me," adds Dando. "It's really hard for me to relax in the studio and get a good performance.... Someone might even tell you how to do that, but you wouldn't really learn it until you figure it out for yourself. That's what I did, and I'm glad I came through it. You know, that's usually my style. In the last minute, I come through."



LEMON SQUEEZERS

I play a '67 Gibson Heritage," EVAN DANDO says of his favored acoustic guitar, used for songwriting demos as well as recording and playing live. His standby electric guitars are 1984 and 1986 Gibson SGs with two humbucker pickups and he also packs along a '74 Les Paul on the road, all normally strung with D'Addario strings. For effects, he uses MXR's Distortion Plus and also the Big Muff pedal made by the Russian company Sovtek, and runs the guitars through a Marshall JCM 80 Lead Series split-channel amp. He uses a Shure SM58 microphone, "the chicken soup of vocal mikes." Bassist NIC DALTON plays a brand-new G&L SB2 with D'Addario strings and carries a spare Fender Jazz bass, plugging them into an Ampeg SVT head with an 8x10 cabinet. Drummer DAVID RYAN has a kit from Drum Workshop—a 22" bass drum, 16" floor, 12" rack and 14" snare. He likes his snare double-miked, uses Rockcrusher sticks from Vic Firth, and confesses to playing with his sticks upside-down for a juicy, heavy-ended wallop.

DANKO

[*cont'd from page 26*] solo recordings) might have said, "Oh, come on, Levon, let's let bygones be bygones and go back to the big time." Surprisingly Danko says no—nothing against Robbie but he's with Levon on that one.

"There is more to life than money," Danko says. "I live a comfortable life—as do Robbie and Levon. It's just got to add up to something, you know? There's more to life than a big payday. I guess if I were homeless, if we were des-

perate, it might be different, but thank God for those CD windfalls. Thank God for the half million dollars that Sony just swept under the table and said, 'Go ahead, boys!' I'm very thankful that I have a following—I can go out and play music and keep a petty cash flow that way.

"I'm an optimist. I just want everybody to do their part and not be something that they're not and not be led on by other people thinking that they're something they're not. Everybody knows that they have their own contribution to make. The Band was always a very unique thing. The Band was never one person. There isn't a boss or leader. To go back out and make another Robbie Robertson record...." Danko's voice trails off and then he says, "After the first two Band albums it really wasn't a band anymore. We were on somebody's ego trip. Success can be a very strange thing. It can rear its head like an ugly beast.

"But like I said, time has a way of allowing poetic justice to prevail. I'm in no hurry. Of course I would like to see all the right things happen. But in the meantime I'm not sitting around waiting for it. We all have our lives to live and it's amazing. I foresee good things for the future." Ⓜ

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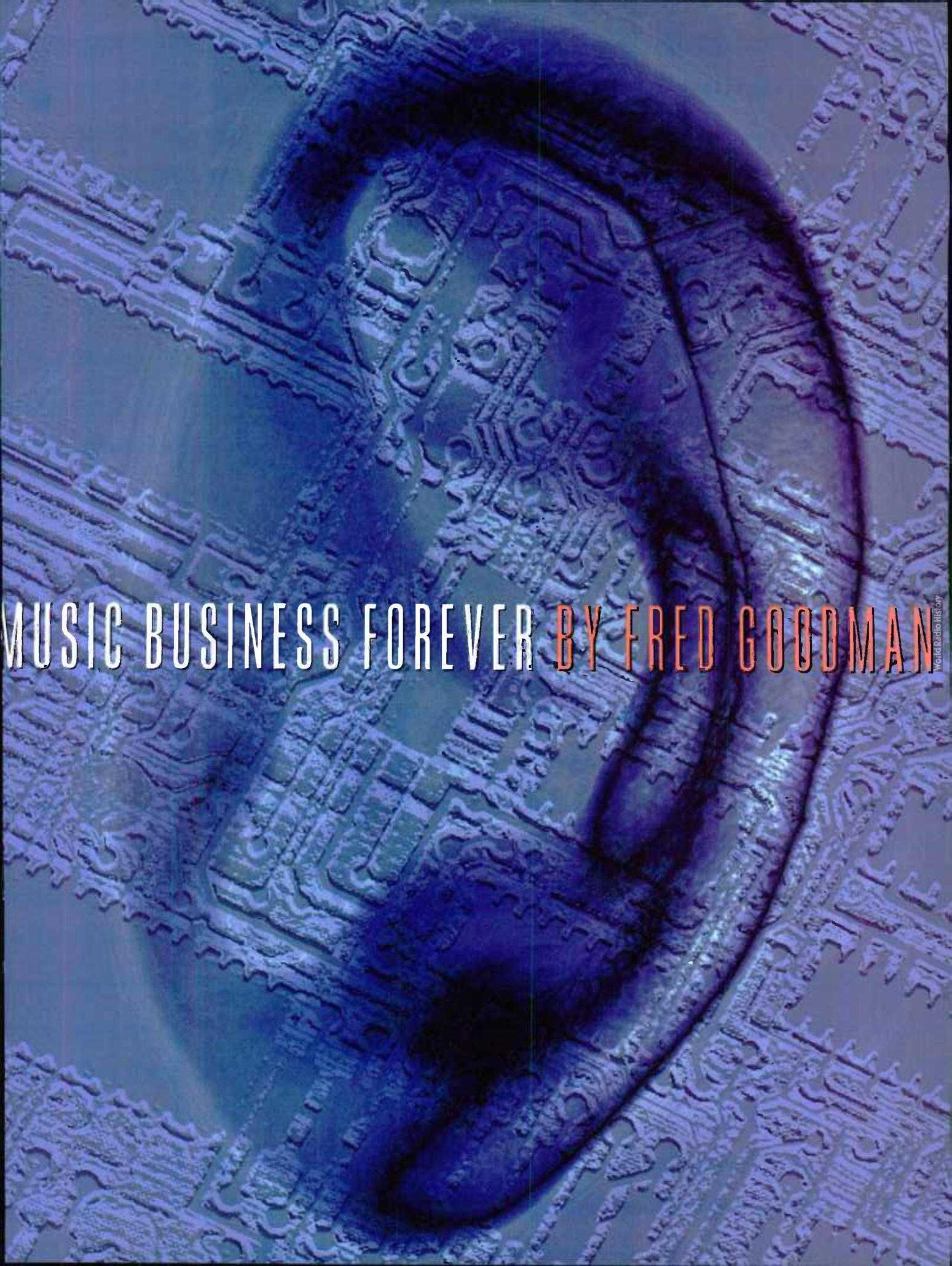
FUTURE

HOW THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES WILL CHANGE THE

SHOCKS



FIFTEEN YEARS FROM NOW, YOU ARE SITTING AT HOME ON A COLD, RAINY Thursday night. You're mindlessly flipping through the 427 cable channels (and, of course, there *still* isn't much to watch), when you notice one of the music channels showing a video for a tune off the new duet album by Evan Springsteen and Neil Young. Wow, Neil's really starting to look kinda old...but that last album of his was all right. Y'know—the one that was a sort of followup to *Trans*. It wasn't bad. Neither is this. In fact, it's pretty damn good and you'd like to buy the album. But who wants to go out on a crummy night like this? Luckily, you don't have to. Instead, you dial up a shopping number through your TV's computer modem and pick the title off a menu of new album releases. The digital recording is immediately transmitted to your computer, where it is

Phoning It In

How Fiber Optics Will Transform the Recording Process

THE ABILITY to buy the latest hit records over the telephone may be a few years away. But the ability to *make* records over phone lines is here now. Fiber-optic telephone services have been used for years to transport the huge amounts of data generated by the financial industry. Filmmakers and producers of broadcast advertising began using them for audio during the late '80s. Now, with improved services and lower rates, record producers, studios and labels are using digital phone lines to erase the distances between artists, facilities and executives.

One early convert is producer Phil Ramone, who has been making intensive use of digital dial-up since last April, especially in the recording of Frank Sinatra's upcoming album *Duets*. "I was at Skywalker Ranch, LucasFilm's Northern California facility," he recalls, "and I heard they were using fiber optics to deliver picture and sound to their studio in Los Angeles. I was interested because I had been flying people from all over the world to play on Gloria Estefan's album *La Tierra*. We were about to start on her Christmas record, so I decided to test it."

What Ramone discovered has revolutionized the way he works. "By the time I finished," he says, "I had recorded a full orchestra in Los Angeles, a vocal in Miami and a rhythm section in New York, shipping the music around the country, adding to it. I guess I've become the magic user of this technology."

The magic of fiber-optic audio transmission has a variety of applications in music production. Notwithstanding the unavoidable delay of current systems, which is at least two frames, the signal travels fast enough to enable real-time interaction among musicians who may be

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE KNOTT

downloaded onto a blank compact disc. You load a sheet of laminated, pre-creased cardboard into your laser printer, and out comes the printed sleeve, complete with credits, lyrics and thank-yous. The price of the album is automatically charged to your American Express card.

Although few people in the record industry are willing to say this is the way people will be buying recorded music 15 years from now, the technology already exists. All of it. And not just recordable CDs through telephone delivery to computers. How about digital music through cable or satellite? And again—recorded onto a blank, digital medium. Kind of makes the idea of a CD manufacturing plant obsolete, doesn't it?

Of course, if we don't need CD plants because people can make the disks at home, will we still need record stores? That's a question that's generating a lot of foot-stomping and finger-pointing in the record industry these days. But here's a question that's just as logical that's *not* being asked publicly: If this is the way music is sold in the not-too-distant future, who needs record companies?

Several giant hardware and entertainment companies spent a whole lot of money during the last five years to acquire the world's leading record companies. One of the most appealing notions driving those acquisitions was the belief that in coming years the profit boom afforded by compact discs would be duplicated several times with new technologies. But consumers haven't been all that quick to show much interest in additional hardware systems like DAT, Philips' DCC or Sony's Mini-Disc—in fact, they haven't really shown *any* interest in them. And CD player penetration in this country and Great Britain is still below 35 percent—a far cry from the kind of popularity LP turntables enjoyed.

There is a growing belief in the record industry that there will not be another significant turn in prerecorded music hardware—at least, not until some kind of home delivery system is entrenched. "It's fair to say the hardware/software paradigm bandied about for so many years is now being replaced by the delivery system/software paradigm," says Al Teller, the chairman of MCA Music.

continents apart, saving both time and travel expenses. Overdubs, revisions, approvals and the like can be completed without regard for the relative locations of the parties involved. Masters can be transported to pressing plants in the time it takes to play them back. Dubbing safety copies and transporting them to a safe location can be accomplished in a single step. As Ramone puts it, "This allows me to do the things that I would do if I could be in five places at once."

Fiber-optic phone services such as Switched-56, ISDN and T1 replace satellite transmission, a costlier and less reliable method of transporting audio that has been used in film and advertising since the mid-'80s. Using fiber optics, digital information is converted into pulses of light, which move from one end of the cable to the other virtually instantaneously. (Standard copper phone cables are capable of carrying digital audio, but at much slower rates. Using a 9600-baud modem, transporting one minute of music takes about four hours.)

The key to transporting full-bandwidth audio in real time is data compression/decompression (*codec* for short). The bandwidth of even high-quality phone lines is far less than 44.1kHz, the standard sampling rate for digital audio, so the amount of data must be reduced at the transmitting end and restored at the receiving end. The phone companies provide only the line, not the codec. Companies such as Entertainment Digital Network (EDnet) provide the missing link.

According to EDnet's founder and president, Tom Kobayashi, the company leases digital lines from the telephone companies wholesale, then installs them along with proprietary codec, synchronization and data-encryption equipment. Installing hi-fi audio service costs between $10,000 and $15,000, depending on quality; video costs another $10,000. Any number of simultaneous tracks is possible, Kobayashi says, although six is as many as he has seen in use. The per-hour charge for two bi-directional tracks is $100—plus studio time on either end, of course. One satisfied customer is Capitol/EMI, whose newly-installed T1 lines allow executives to approve or reject new records virtually as they're being created. (It's a fair bet that the system that pipes music in to EMI executives eventually will be used to send it out to consumers. Kobayashi reports that Capitol/EMI is looking into digitizing its entire archive.)

As might be expected, those with a big stake in the old world are wary of the new one. In the eyes of veteran New York studio owner Howard Schwartz, president of the Society of Professional Audio Recording Studios (SPARS), this technology contributes to an unhealthy decentralization. "If the right tackle were at his house, the left tackle at his, the quarterback at his and the center at his, it would be really tough to play as a team," he observes. "In the old days, all we wanted to do was jam. You know, 'Watch my eyebrows. I'm going up!'"

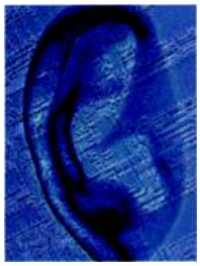
But Phil Ramone feels otherwise. "Most of the time I'm sitting in one room and the musicians are in another," he points out. "There's glass between us, and the lights may be on or off." In fact, digital dial-up can actually preserve spontaneity, that precious quality so often lost in the recording process. "It goes back to something I heard Paul McCartney say back when I was working as an engineer on *Ram*," he recalls. "He said, 'Dammit! When I get up in the morning, singing around the house, I sound so much better!'" Ramone, who already has a digital line at home, dreams of having them installed at the homes of a number of his favorite artists in order to capture just that sound.

Digital dial-up is likely to become much less expensive in the near future, making it available even to players of lesser means. According to David Porter, president of Music Annex in San Francisco, this may spell the end of the recording studio as we know it. "It empowers the home studio, or project studio, to have access to sound resources anywhere in the world. And that's a very big deal." Major studios will exist to augment smaller studios, renting access to specialty items such as high-end signal processing, live echo chambers, rare instruments and the like over the phone. Porter sees his studio, in the future, as "the hub of a network of smaller desktop-type facilities that will use us as a resource."

Porter worries, however, that the new technology will create security problems. "If CBS is moving masters to a manufacturing plant, how can they be sure that nobody is intercepting them? Wouldn't you like to be the guy from Warner Bros. at the other end of the wire, listening to the next Michael Jackson release before it's even manufactured?"

The future of digital dial-up may include teleconferenced recording sessions in the manner of *Nightline*, or even decentralized bands that perform together in virtual reality. The possibilities depend less upon technology than upon what users are willing to pay for. As Phil Ramone notes, "It's not about how unique or novel it is. It's about calling Toots Thielemans or Eric Clapton and having him say, 'Yeah, I'd love to play on your record. I've got the morning off in London. I'll be there!'"

TED GREENWALD



"THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE MUSIC INDUSTRY FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS IS 'WHO OWNS THE COPYRIGHT?'"

As you can imagine, this is setting off quite a scramble. Do you think the people who paid all that money for record companies are willing to see a future in which they have a diminished—and possibly a significantly diminished—role? Akio Morita, the chairman of Sony, which purchased CBS Records for $2 billion just a few years ago, might be tempted to pull a line from Slim Pickens in *Dr. Strangelove* (a film Morita acquired when he later purchased Columbia Pictures). To wit, "I didn't come all the way over here just to drop this baby in the drink."

That said, what kind of fallout could this technological explosion produce?

Distribution and Retribution

BACK IN May the record companies got a shock from an unlikely place. Blockbuster Entertainment, the country's largest video retailer, announced a joint venture with IBM aimed at manufacturing CDs in stores. Although Blockbuster dominates video rentals, it is nowhere near as important in the music business, but its position is increasing. Recent buying sprees have given it ownership of approximately 400 record stores, including Sound Warehouse, Music Plus, Record Bar, Turtles and a stake in the 15 Virgin Megastores around the world.

Blockbuster's announcement was straightforward: Along with IBM, they would sell their system—which would allow consumers to order and receive downloaded CDs in the store after about a six-minute wait—and they would handle all the technical aspects for other retailers, including distribution. That last item is far from a minor point.

Record distribution has traditionally been the province of the record companies—and a defining characteristic of what a record company does. Each of the major record companies—Sony Music Entertainment, the Warner Music Group, PolyGram Records, EMI Music, MCA Music and Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG)—operates a wholly-owned distribution company to handle the sales and marketing of what you call music and they call "product." Some of them are very good at it, and all of them are firmly entrenched. Of course, as their failed recent attempts to stop the sale of used compact discs show, they are not unbeatable.

Still, along comes Blockbuster—a customer, for God's sake!—saying that they have a system in-hand that could conceivably supplant the physical shipping of records. No more packing boxes, no more trucks, no more returns. Sounds great—unless you happen to be in the business of doing those things.

Blockbuster didn't even have to say how much they were going to charge customers, what they were going to charge other retailers who wanted the system, *they didn't even have to demonstrate that they had actually built a working prototype* before the record companies made it plain what they thought of the proposal.

"The Blockbuster/IBM venture into music distribution...does not have the support of the Warner Music Group," Warners said in a press release. The response was similar from other major record companies (except PolyGram, whose parent company has a seven percent stake in Blockbuster). Indeed, there was also a hue and cry of misinformation—including the erroneous suggestion that consumers would be making compilation albums via this system and undercutting album sales the way they did (or didn't) with the failed Personics in-store taping system a few years ago—that further added to the din.

Whose Finger's on the Button?

NOW, LET'S step back a minute and—for argument's sake—take a look at this from another angle. Say you are an accomplished composer/performer. The kind that critics love but that almost never has a big hit record. Or say you are a Maori tuba player who, along with the help of a rich and unusually well-educated rock star patron, has recorded a truly wonderful album of traditional South Sea euphonium orchestral pieces. Either way, you're probably dead meat. Because no chain store with limited space is going to make you a part of their regular stock, and the Harvard Coop—which blows both of these albums out the door whenever they can actually get their hands on them—can't because they're "marginal titles" and therefore hard to get from the distributor.

Well, wouldn't it be great for everybody—even the distributor—to be able to sell every artist through an on-demand system like Blockbuster's? And Blockbuster has also suggested that this kind of system could be used by stores at night to replenish their stock of popular titles as well.

Record companies admit that a system which gave consumers access to hard-to-find titles *would* be great. And executives at Blockbuster say they're sure the record companies will come around when they see it won't cut their business. "We're continuing to have talks with the labels," says Blockbuster's Brian Henley, who adds that the major record companies are all eager to come down to Blockbuster's Florida headquarters to see the prototype. "There's been a bit of positioning that's necessary on their part."

That's being optimistic. The record companies might be willing to go with this kind of system, but why would they let someone else own it?

"I think the industry should take the responsibility for developing this technology," says MCA's Teller. "There's no science involved, it's all engineering. It's marketing and putting stuff in place. My objection to the Blockbuster/IBM announcement is that here's someone else who wants to be the gatekeeper. We, as record companies, are already in the distribution business. Why would we empower somebody else to do that? To take over our distribution business? We should own that."

Teller has been the first record company head to say he's going to develop his own in-store kiosk for manufacturing CDs. "I'd prefer that our finger is the one on the button," he says flatly.

SOME COMPANIES WANT A 35% PACKAGING DEDUCTION FOR A DIGITAL SIGNAL—EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO PACKAGE.

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WHY WOULD A FUTURE U2 OR MADONNA EVER WANT TO TURN OVER THEIR NEW ALBUM TO ANY RECORD COMPANY WHEN THEY COULD SELL THE MUSIC STRAIGHT TO THE CONSUMERS THEMSELVES?

"THERE ARE NO ROADBLOCKS"

INCIDENTALLY, not even music retailers are all of one mind regarding whether electronic delivery systems are an inevitability. But the Blockbuster/IBM plan aims to create a new role for retailers. People like to travel to stores and shop, goes the argument, not just sit at home and order everything off the Home Shopping Network. Hanging around your boyfriend's apartment on a Saturday night to call an 800 number hasn't really caught on as a date; yet going to the movies or the mall or a record store is. It's also hard to find someone eating in a restaurant who doesn't have a kitchen in their home. You get the idea: Buying a recording has to feel like fun. But retailers and record companies are going to have to avoid feeling smug. Big record chains and superstores are a relatively recent phenomenon—until the late '60s, only music nuts went to record stores; everyone else went to the record department in Sears or Korvettes. With home shopping and recording options, record stores might be forced back into specialty retailing.

If that feels like an exaggeration, it is—but maybe not by much. Since the technology exists now to use a computer to manufacture a compact disc in a store, how long will it be before someone can do that at home? CDs can store a lot of information, more than most home computers can download. But problems of power and storage are minor. "Let's not get hung up on storage capabilities," says Teller. "Whatever they are today, two years from now that limitation will be ancient history."

At Bellcore, the Bell research firm in Livingston, New Jersey, Alexander Gelman, a multi-media communications systems researcher, says it is all technologically possible today. "If [the telephone company] has the vendors and the supplies for the system and the economics are right, there are no roadblocks," Gelman says. Although he does a lot of work in video, Gelman is also a musician and has built a system to receive and play digital music in his lab that sounds comparatively straightforward.

"We have a very simple setup," he says. "We don't even have a microprocessor." Gelman, along with researchers at Philips (the parent company of PolyGram Records and the co-creators of the compact disc), has been able to hook an interactive CD player to a telephone line. "Instead of getting movies or music or audio from the compact disc, the player is getting it from a server across the network of telephone lines," he says. By hooking the feed directly to the CD-I player,

"WE, AS RECORD COMPANIES, ARE ALREADY IN THE DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS. SO WHY SHOULD WE EMPOWER SOMEBODY ELSE TO DO THAT?"

Gelman doesn't need any storage capability. Delivery is in real-time.

Pair Gelman's system with one of the home CD recorders about to be offered early next year in Japan by Yamaha, Kenwood and Pioneer, and it's easy to imagine just how quickly things could change.

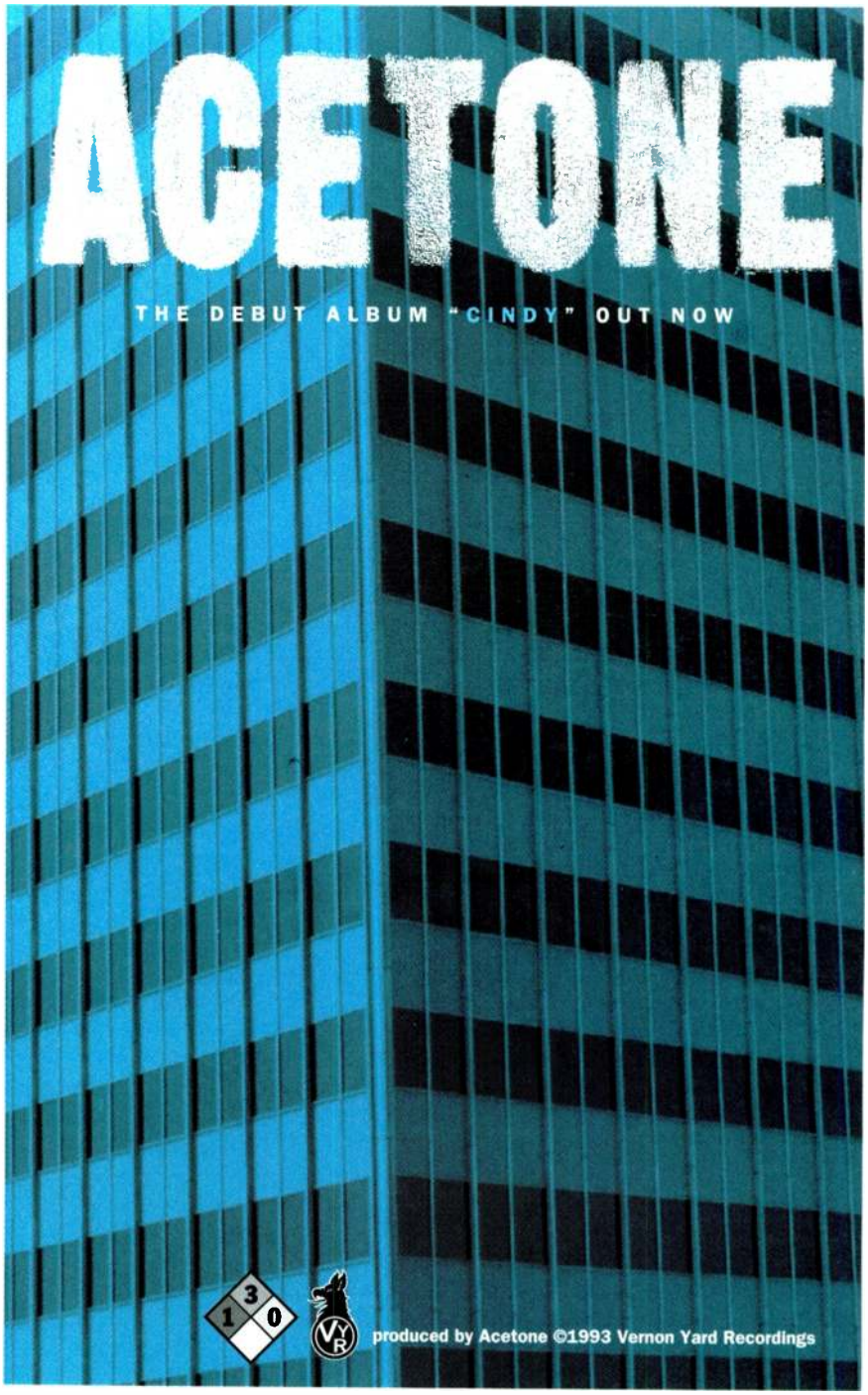
The home recording configuration doesn't have to be compact disc, either. Why not a "black box"—a device to receive, store and transmit a signal to whatever recording device you want—be it a cassette, hi-fi video cassette, DAT, DCC or Mini-Disc? Nor does it have to be delivered by the telephone company to your computer: One of the least settled—and most unsettling—issues is the dizzying proliferation of possible delivery systems. Along with the telephone companies there are satellite and cable broadcasters, all vying to develop *the* super-system.

Drag Racing on the Superhighway

WHILE THE telephone company already has a line into virtually every home in the country, cable operators have proven they can deliver entertainment and shopping services. And, with fiber-optic cable facilitating a much broader band of transmission—the ballyhooed 500-channel cable system—their programming options seem untapped. Recent changes in federal regulations governing cable companies limit how much they can charge for "basic" service; as a result, the industry appears eager to develop more specialized and sophisticated services. Like shopping.

Several test systems are being constructed around the country by some of the larger cable providers. For the last two years, Time Warner Cable has been testing a full-service video network in Queens, New York, featuring entertainment, home banking and shopping services, and is constructing a similar system in Orlando, Florida. When Time Warner recently teamed with regional phone company U.S. West—selling a 25 percent stake in Time Warner's cable operation to them for $2.5 billion—it signaled the creation of a partnership with entree to almost any delivery technology and tremendous financial and political firepower. Another big cable company, Cablevision Systems, is spending $300 million to build a cable "superhighway" to serve over 1 million subscribers on Long Island.

One programming service being offered in the expanded cable menu is digital cable audio networks—audio being easier to transmit than video. Subscribers are given a wide array of music channels, each operating 24 hours a day, broadcasting commercial-free CD-quality music for a flat monthly fee. Subscribers might be able to choose from the pop channel, the classic rock channel, the jazz channel, the grunge channel, the new release channel, and on and on. Add to that a black box and a program schedule telling you what time a certain album or concert will be



"IN A DIGITAL ERA, WITH THE ABILITY TO TRANSMIT AT THE CD LEVEL OF QUALITY DOWN THE PIPE WITHOUT A PERFORMANCE RIGHT, WE [RECORD COMPANIES] STAND VULNERABLE AND NAKED TO THE WORLD."

played, and you have a home recording system with a timer capable of digital sound.

Of course, classical stations have traditionally published their programming schedule, alerting listeners (and, no doubt, more than a few of them own tape recorders) as to what they'll be playing and when. The big difference now—according to record companies—is the digital quality of these new services. The popularity of used CDs is proof that many people value less expensive music over a shiny new package. Will those same people pay a monthly fee for a service that allows them to collect CD-quality tapes and forgo all the "value added" packaging used to help justify the high price of disks? Could be.

It's no surprise that record companies have had two reactions: One, they want a special performance royalty on all digital broadcasts; two, some of them—like Sony and Time Warner—are going into the digital cable audio business.

Pay for Play

UNDER CURRENT copyright laws, performers, producers and record companies do not get a royalty when their work is performed in public, and that includes broadcast use. Songwriters and publishers do receive a performance royalty. The gist of the reasoning behind the law is that record companies and artists are going to make their money when people buy their recordings and go to their concerts, and airplay is an extremely valuable form of promotion—so valuable that it is essentially its own form of compensation.

Jay Berman, president of the RIAA, has portrayed the industry as powerless to control the use of its releases in the face of emerging technologies, and argues that the copyright laws should be amended. "What we want to do," Berman has said, "is add a right and develop statutory language that makes it clear that we can control the performance of the works that we create." Translation: We want a law that says these digital cable operations can't use our recordings unless they pay us. He also says that the U.S. copyright system "operates on the principle that authors will be encouraged to make their works available in exchange for remuneration," suggesting that without such a change to keep pace with evolving technologies, composers will stop working.

Berman's argument is only partially true. Setting aside the fact that artists (real artists, not suppliers of a pop product) are frequently motivated by something other than "mak[ing] their works available in exchange for remuneration," we can all agree that they are entitled, like anyone else, to the most money they can get (unless of course you run

the royalty department at a record company; then you disagree). But Berman's statement is completely true only as long as he is talking about artists—and they are not the only ones he is talking about. In fact, his constituency is really the record companies, who are not the authors of the material in question. They don't write or compose or arrange anything. They become joint copyright holders—and in the vast majority of cases the sole owner of the master recordings—by dint of the services they perform: financing, promoting and selling recordings.

If you're still with us, this is the place where that nagging little voice in the back of your head should be getting louder and louder. And what it should be saying is "Wait a minute—*who is going to need a record company?*"

WHO NEEDS A RECORD COMPANY?

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Who gets the other $12.98?

The members of the RIAA are fighting right now to make sure that they do. Or at least that they maintain a large enough stake in whatever systems develop to continue to participate. Let's go back to the objection MCA's Teller had to the Blockbuster/IBM proposal: "*We, as record companies, are already in the distribution business. Why would we empower somebody else to do that? To take over our distribution business? We should own that.*

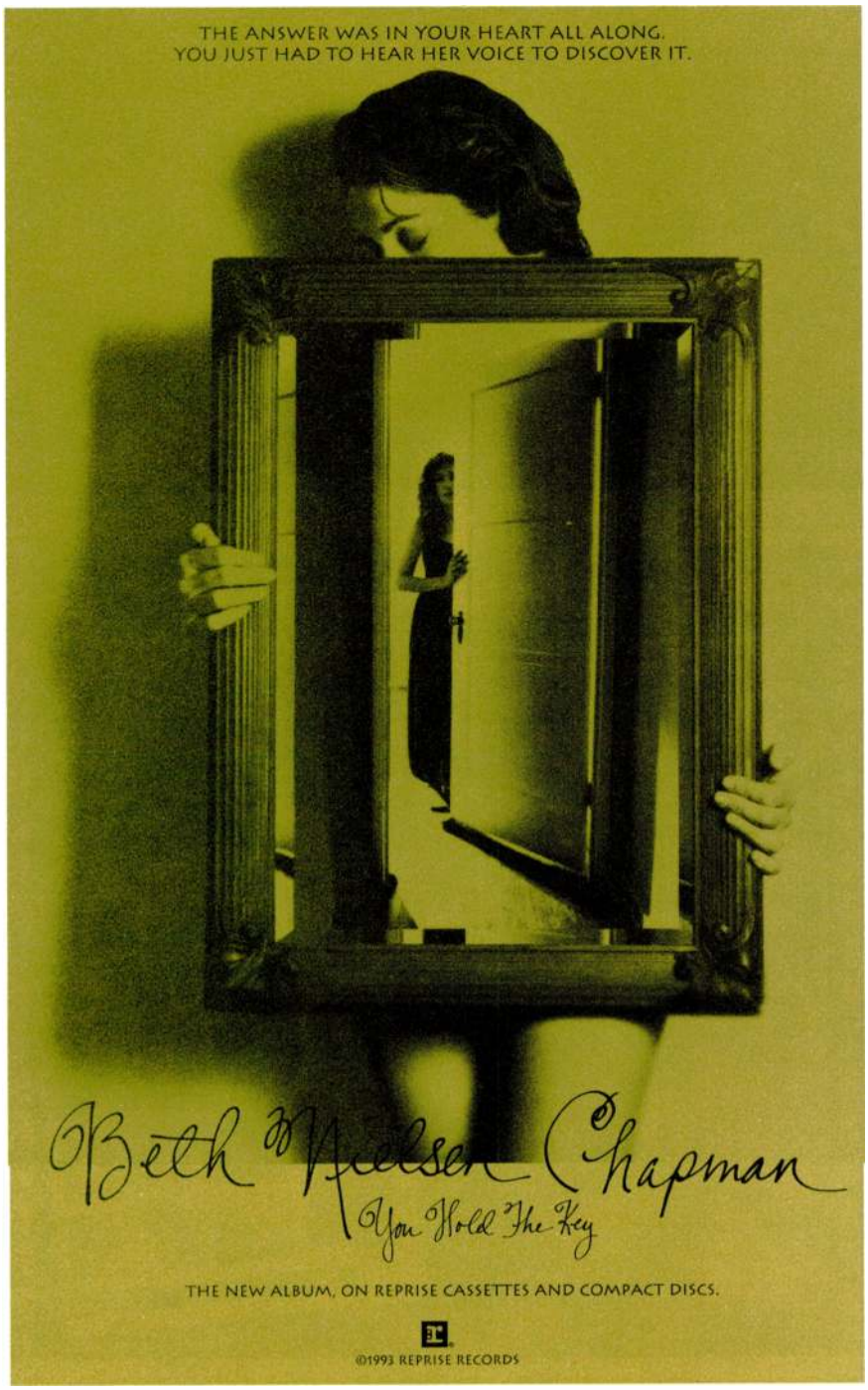
"In a digital era," he adds, "with the ability to transmit at the CD level of quality down the pipe without a public performance right—or the collateral right to determine whether we want our music distributed on a certain medium—we stand vulnerable and naked to the world. These new pay radio subscription services are just a half-step away from being a downloading distribution network."

Of course, you as a superstar have to ask

"IF YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS CAME HOME WITH A TYPICAL RECORDING AGREEMENT, YOU'D SAY, 'DO NOT SIGN THIS CONTRACT.'"

the converse question: Why do I want to give the record company a piece of this? I've been able to negotiate with the label from increasing strength as my career has progressed. I am now free and clear of my contract obligations, and I own my back catalog. Why am I going to give the record company over 80 percent of the sale price of my next album when there isn't even a physical piece of product for them to press, package, ship and collect on? The consumer makes it at home, and the cable company or the telephone company delivers and bills for it.

Well, what about marketing? Somebody has got to promote your new release, and the record company certainly knows how to do that. But so do other people. Advertising firms, notably Lord, Dentsu and Partners, today (and we mean 1993) offer music publicity services. Won't it be a lot cheaper to hire them for a flat fee to promote your new release to press, video and radio outlets? Or how about specialized independent marketing firms, run by former record executives or radio and cable programmers?

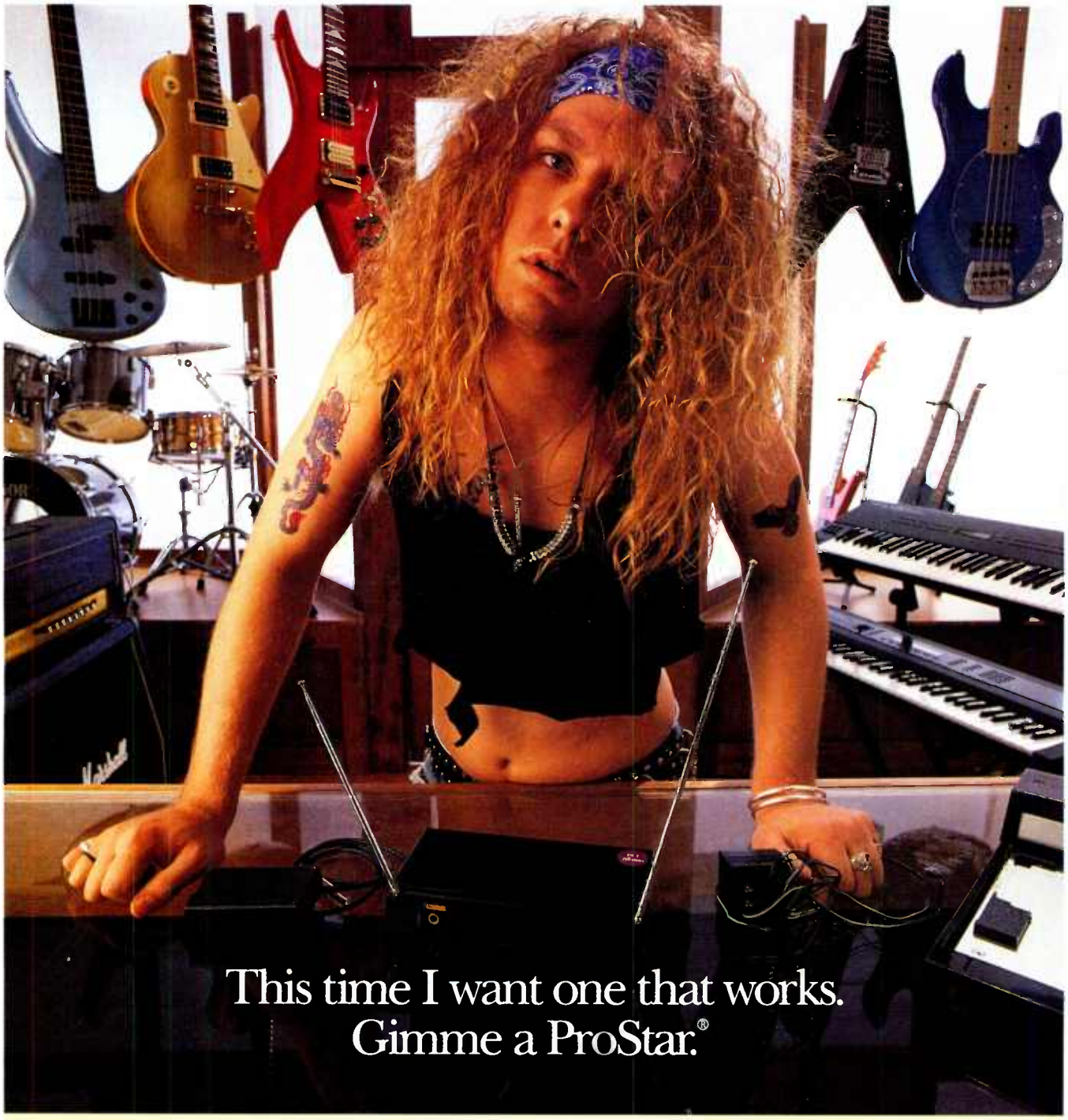


And what about the hegemony the record companies enjoy today? If the electronic superhighway that delivers this product to the consumer is the telephone lines, then it's going to have wide access for any would-be vendors. What advantage is Time Warner going to have over Sub Pop or Rykodisc? Couldn't a smart, focused, cutting-edge label freed from the constraints of today's manufacturing and distribution problems take on any major record company? And why would a future U2 or Madonna want to turn over their new album to any record company if they can sell it straight to the consumers themselves?

WHO OWNS THE MUSIC?

THE STORY might be different if the delivery system is cable or satellite. Most entertainment companies have become obsessed with the notion of "gatekeepers"—industry parlance for whoever controls access to the delivery system. To get a foot in the door, product suppliers like movie studios and record companies have been making deals with cable, broadcast and other communications companies. Bertelsmann Music Group, which owns RCA and Arista Records, has hooked up with cable system operator Tele-Communications Inc. to plan a new channel that is part music video, part music-oriented shopping network. Aside from designing such services, the next step for a big company committed to the hardware/software model is an integrated delivery system/software model.

Time Warner is an excellent example of this. They manufacture and own intellectual properties through a record and music publishing company, a film company, and book and magazine publishers. They own distribution companies to handle these products. They also own HBO (which can show some of their own properties), and cable systems



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MOST ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES HAVE BECOME OBSESSED WITH THE NOTION OF "GATEKEEPERS"—WHOEVER CONTROLS ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM.

for delivering HBO and other programming to the home. Now they've made an alliance with one of the baby Bell phone companies, U.S. West, which means they've covered the table with bets figuring they can win no matter how the dice come up.

Conversely, Walt Disney has eschewed this strategy. Michael Eisner, the company's chairman, has elected not to spend money on strategic technology alliances, preferring to focus on creating more movies. Disney is confident that it will always have something people want to buy, regardless of how it is delivered or consumed. While Time Warner and other companies have tried to gain a stake in the stadium where their game is played, Disney is content just to know it has the ball.

If you're a musician or composer, that's worth noting—because you also have the ball. "The most important issue facing the music industry for the next 10 years is 'Who owns the copyright?'" says Ed Bicknell, manager of Dire Straits and a member of Great Britain's new managers' consortium. "Does the creator own it, or the distributor?"

Bicknell's position, which he admits is a generalization, still points to a traditionally nettlesome area between artists and record companies. The answer is "both." Or at least it is for now.

Record companies do hold a copyright on the recordings they release. But what is copyrighted—the performance or the piece of product? And if there is no piece of product—just a digital transmission of a performance—what then?

All labels and most industry attorneys say the copyright is on the performance. "Since 1978 [when the copyright laws were revised to offer record companies protection from bootlegging], the copyright is in the performance on the record," says attorney Michael Sukin of the New York firm of Carro, Spanbock, Kaster & Cuiffo.

But that doesn't mean that concept won't be challenged. "Theoretically," says Don Engel, of the California firm of Engel & Engel, "the copyright in the sound recording is in the physically manufactured product. I've always taught and understood that the sound recording is in the grooves. Now you've got to amend the law. And the artists will say [of the labels], 'They don't *do* anything.'"

BEAM ME UP, MICKEY

RECORD COMPANIES have already made their contracts remarkably broad and inclusive. The standard contract now goes beyond global rights to *universal* rights. Up until now that's seemed a bit excessive, but when you consider the clause as a possible claim to all future satellite deliveries, it becomes pretty savvy.

Still, entertainment companies entering new areas of technology have to live in fear of having the rug pulled out from under them—*or* of having past contracts come back to haunt them. A suit brought in the late '80s against Disney by singer Peggy Lee may be

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"IT'S TAKEN 25 YEARS FOR MANAGERS TO GET TO A POINT OF EXPERTISE, AND NOW WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THE RUG PULLED OUT FROM UNDER US."

the best example.

In 1952, Lee received $3500 for work she did on the animated film *Lady and the Tramp*. That work included helping to compose the score, supplying the voices of four characters and singing three songs. Since being released as a videocassette by Disney, the film has grossed an additional $80 million. Lee then sued the studio, claiming that even though her contract did not anticipate home video, it also did not give Disney the right to sell a video without her permission. In 1988, Lee was awarded $3.8 million by a California court—an award that was upheld last October despite two Disney appeals.

This is a financial nightmare for any entertainment company, and Disney has to risk a public relations catastrophe to fight it. They are the ultimate family entertainment company—wholesome, good, the home of Snow White and Bambi. And here is 72-year-old Peggy Lee—frail, diabetic, *wheelchair-bound*—pursuing Disney and their team of 12—no kidding, 12—courtroom lawyers through the American judicial system. Looks great on the news, right? Now Disney may appeal the latest decision to the Supreme Court.

But if you think they're being excessively nasty, chew on this: Taking a cue from Lee, the British music publisher for Igor Stravinsky is now suing Disney for $200 million saying the video for *Fantasia* is an illegal use of the composer's music. The rights to use "The Rite of Spring" in the 1940 movie were originally granted for $6000. And the publishers of Irving Berlin's songs have also sued Disney for video and advertising use of such hallowed Disney ditties as "When You Wish Upon a Star" and "Heigh-Ho." "The bottom line," an attorney for the Berlin publisher said, "is in 1937 and 1939 you didn't have videocassettes, so you can't include those rights."

Whoa. If you're a record company—or a large foreign company who recently bought one—this has got to be pretty frightening. Does this mean the back catalog that was signed under the relatively unsophisticated contracts of the past could be subject to substantial financial reevaluation as new uses and markets develop? Are Time Warner or EMI going to get sued by the estate of Frank Sinatra in 2015? Bertelsmann by Presley's heirs?

WHO GUARDS THE GATEKEEPERS?

LET'S BE frank here—despite all those grinning faces in the trade photos, there is not a lot of natural empathy between record companies on the one side and artists and their managers on the other. In London, where Dire Straits' Bicknell and other managers recently appeared in front of an inquiry into the British record industry being conducted by the government's Merges & Monopolies Commission, skepticism is running high.

"I said to the Commission, 'If you, as business people, had your sons and daugh-

Free.

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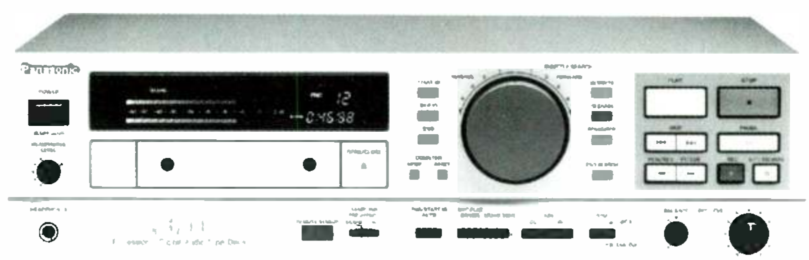
Free.



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ters come home with recording agreements, you'd say, "Do not sign this agreement,"'" related Bicknell. "One thing they are looking at is the possibility that as a consequence of collusion, artists give up copyrights because they have no choice. Artists assign their copyright to the record company for life plus 50 years. It is playing into the record companies' ability to develop the system."

Bicknell says he and other managers worry that new technology could possibly create a situation where the record companies have a much better understanding of what's coming than artists and managers do, resulting in the labels gaining even greater power than they have now. "People don't understand this stuff," he says of rapid technology changes. "Nobody is quite sure where anyone will be sitting in the future. It's taken 25 years for managers to get to a point of expertise, and now we're going to have the rug pulled. None of us understands where it's going to go. We don't have the benefit of hindsight."

One thing managers do recognize about new digital and home-delivery clauses in artist contracts are attempts by record companies to get artists to agree to a reduced royalty rate. A similar "new technology" clause was used around the roll-out of the compact disc, with artists agreeing to take only half their usual royalty on the new configuration to help it get established. Managers haven't forgotten the huge financial windfall labels enjoyed from the new technology—and were often slow to share with artists.

The new clauses, which cover technologies delivered "through the air," also seek a 50 percent reduction in royalties on such sales. But here's a brilliant move: Some companies want a 35 percent packaging deduction for home delivery. That's right—a packaging deduction for a digital signal. A packaging deduction even though there is no package.

The Nature of the System

SO WHAT can record companies do to ensure they'll still be around even if there's no need for a manufacturer?

First, they take comfort in the fact that even though it is technically possible to see these developments soon, it could take a good deal longer for things to settle out. And that interim period provides other opportunities. "In the record business 20 years is like 72 lifetimes," says Teller. Still, record companies will have to be ready.

"There's no question that people will

begin to question the role of the record company," he says. "Obviously we have to continue to prove our place in the world just like anyone else. That's the nature of the capitalist system. We'll have to continue to redefine our role. It will be marketing clout, artist development clout. It will be the ability to distribute in as many places as possible, the ability to add value to the process. Needless to say, along the way with developing artists, we will continue to renegotiate our deals."

Attorney Sukin, who has spent a lot of time in the music publishing business, can see a day when record companies become more like those publishers.

"Twenty years ago it was important for publishers to produce lead sheets and actually be involved in print publishing," he says. "They don't do that today. What do they do? They own the copyright and license it for use."

Even Teller, who is bullish on the industry's future, says the industry has to be ready to see when technology is bringing massive and basic changes to its business and remain on guard against complacency.

"When people say, 'That's silly,' here's the analogy. And if you'd laid this scenario out in the late '70s, people would've thought you were completely out of your mind:

"'Right now there are a couple of guys in their garages in Northern California spending a couple of thousand bucks on a device that, within a decade, is going to bring IBM to its knees.' At that point, IBM probably had an 80–85 percent share of the world computer market. And you would've said, 'This person is completely crazy.' But it's happened."

The host of players who might become new competitors—or partners—isn't limited to system providers and other "gatekeepers." Word around the record industry is that computer software giant Microsoft is nosing around, trying to buy into the business. It is a reminder that in a digital age, when all media becomes information—books, music, photography, even paintings—we're going to have to start thinking very differently about these things.

"We are at the start of a radically different way of life when it comes to the concept of home entertainment," says Teller. "All the industries currently in it are going to have to be very nimble-footed to adapt to these advances and realities in order to continue to give viability to what we're about as corporations.

"Otherwise," Teller says, "they'll be added to the pile of corporate corpses."

Getting Past the

1993 WAS WHEN ROCK 'N' ROLLERS BREATHED A BIG long sigh of relief. In a complete reversal of the situation just a few years ago, long-haired, sloppily dressed bands of people playing electric guitars were all the rage and lip-synching, light-pop dancers seemed as old-fashioned as Olivia Newton-John. After a long period when it looked like real rock was becoming a fringe taste, real rock was back on top. And best of all, another new band seemed to break through every month.

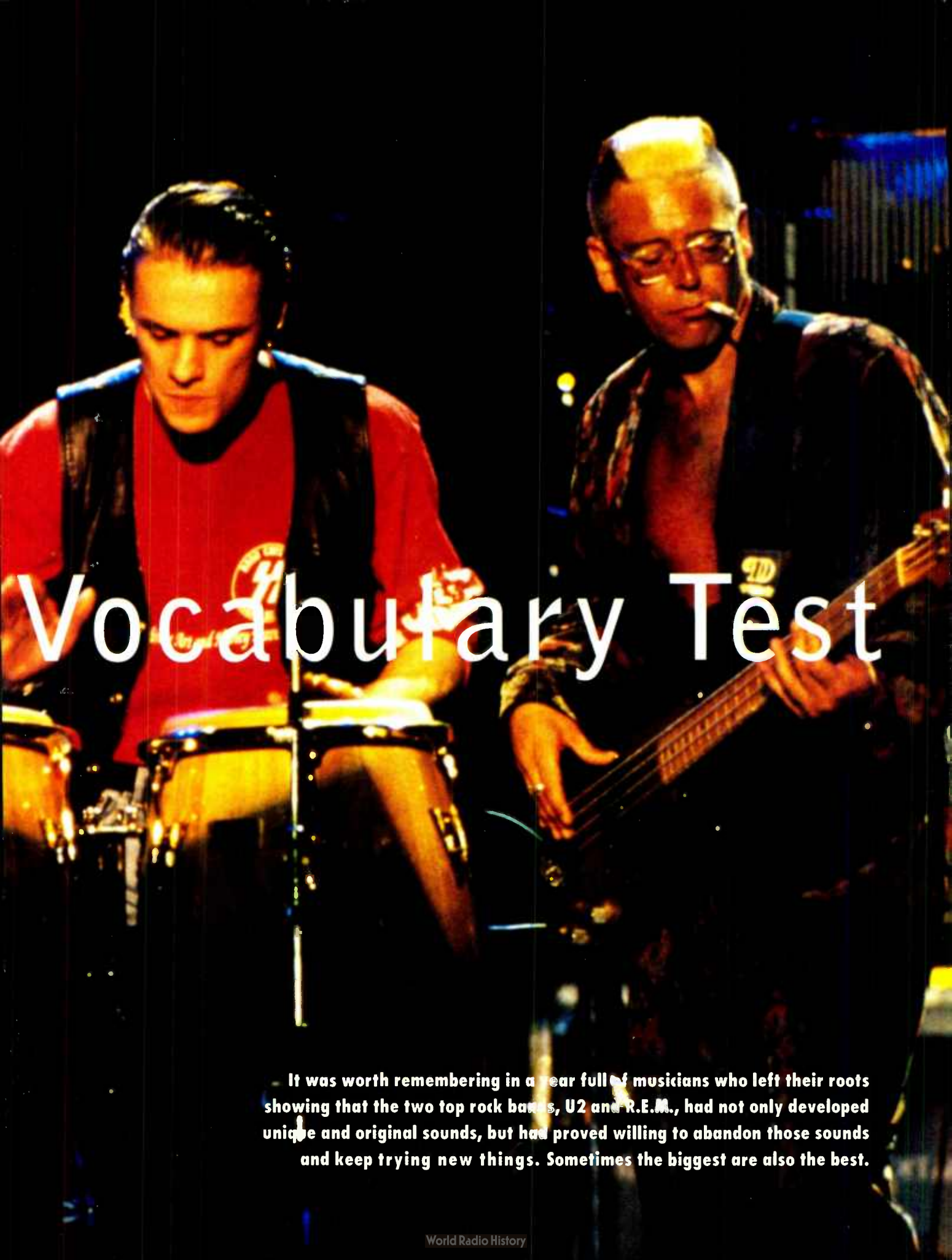
Yes, there was a lot of bitching that these new stars were retreading old styles. But come on, back in the early '60s the moldy figs whined that Bob Dylan was just copying Woody Guthrie, the Beatles were aping the Everly Brothers, and the Rolling Stones were a lame imitation of Muddy Waters. And of course, on one level all those accusations were true, but on a much more important level: So what? One of the big myths about art is that innovation and excellence go hand in hand. The fact is that innovators often cook up good ideas but don't see those ideas through to their conclusion, while the great artists often pick up someone else's innovation and refine it, explore its possibilities and test its limits. No doubt there are kids out there who hate the Rolling Stones who love the Black Crowes. Fair enough, the Black Crowes are adding something to the mix that, for those kids, the Stones don't have. Just as the Stones added something Chuck Berry didn't have and Berry added something Fats Waller didn't have.

This is worth talking about because the immediate complaint you hear about the Spin Doctors is that they sound like Steve Miller, the objection to Lenny Kravitz is that he sounds like Hendrix, the dig at Pearl Jam is that they sound like "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," Stone Temple Pilots are slagged for sounding like Pearl Jam, and Suede are dismissed as Ziggy Stardust wannabes. As with the old put-downs of Dylan, the Beatles and the Stones, there's accuracy in all those criticisms. But it's the sort of accuracy that misses the truth.

The truth is that for a lot of people under 25 the old Us vs. Them polarizations that defined the struggle between the World War II generation and the '60s generation (and was mirrored in the split over punk, the Baby Boomer's own little civil war) are completely irrelevant. Kids who grew up to a needling chorus of ex-hippie uncles and with-it schoolteachers telling them *how great things used to be/why don't you go backpack around Europe/when I was your age I was at the Moratorium* can have only one appropriate response: "Oh well, whatever. Never mind."

If you're 22 years old in 1993, you've probably been watching MTV since you were 10 or 11. You're used to a certain kind of

BY BILL FLANAGAN



Vocabulary Test

It was worth remembering in a year full of musicians who left their roots showing that the two top rock bands, U2 and R.E.M., had not only developed unique and original sounds, but had proved willing to abandon those sounds and keep trying new things. Sometimes the biggest are also the best.

music (short, fairly slick vocal-dominated songs sung by good-looking people) being provided to you for free at any hour. And while you may enjoy that, when you pay the price of a concert ticket you're not going to look for a re-creation of that. So you go to hear something you can't get for free, which might be an all-day Lollapalooza concert in a big field with sideshows, or might be a Butthole Surfers gig with stage-diving and crowd-swimming, or might be the ultimate thing you'll never see on MTV—20-minute songs with long instrumental improvisations played by badly dressed guys with potbellies and beards. Call it Blues Traveler or call it the Grateful Dead—it's music you still have to go looking for.

These days all of the pop culture that has accumulated since 1958 is available simultaneously. People who grew up in the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s all watched "Gilligan's Island," all listened to "Whole Lotta Love," all read Marvel Comics, all share a thousand reference points. So it is ignorant of people raised in the '60s to imagine that they own the sandbox and they get to make the rules. In rock 'n' roll the last great encoding happened with the punk explosion of 1976–77 and the rule-makers have been using that to correct everybody else's papers ever since. So Nirvana is deemed to be good, because they are punks, until some clever critic points out that "Smells Like Teen Spirit" sounds like Boston's "More Than a Feeling," which makes it bad. The Smashing Pumpkins are a four-piece rock band who come out of nowhere (they're good!) but they just sold a million albums and they're influenced by ELO (they're bad!). In 1993 all of these reference-pointing rules are irrelevant. You know what's relevant? One thing: *Is the music any good?* Does it speak to the soul? Does it have a need to exist? Does it somehow reflect a personality worth spending time with? Does it succeed by its own standards? Does it take you someplace worth going?

If it does those things, if the music is good, it can sound like Tony Orlando fronting the Captain & Tennille and that won't really matter. And if the music is bad it can be endorsed by Sonic Youth, influenced by Ornette Coleman, distributed by Mammoth and played on a bill between Liz Phair and PJ Harvey and it still won't be hip.

Four years of the '90s are gone already. Let's forget about shortcuts. Let's hear music for what it is, not for what it reminds us of. Musicians should make music using all the vocabulary at their disposal but expressing themselves. Skipping shortcuts makes for a longer journey, but we learn things along the way.

BAND OF THE YEAR

NEIL YOUNG AND PEARL JAM

The irrelevance of categories and musical subdivisions was never better demonstrated than when this old dinosaur and these young sensations teamed up, first on stages in Europe and then on the televised MTV Awards in the U.S.A. Fierce, fearless and exuberant in the way the best rock 'n' roll always aspires to be, Young seemed to find in Pearl Jam a spark of his younger self, and Pearl Jam might have found in Young a star to steer by.

Pearl Jam had a great year anyway. It opened with them supporting Keith Richards on New Year's Eve, proceeded through singer Eddie Vedder filling in for Jim Morrison as the Doors were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, summer shows in Europe, the U.S.A. and Canada, and included album releases as part of the Bob Dylan tribute, the Victoria Williams benefit and—along with Cypress Hill—the rock/rap crossover *Judgment Night*. Oh yeah, and their first album sold millions while their second surpassed its scope and musical accomplishment.

Neil Young began the year riding the high sales of *Harvest Moon*, and quickly followed that with his fine *Unplugged* album. In the summer he headed out on tour with Booker T. & the MGs (another spin-off from the Dylan tribute) and tore up venues from Ireland to California. It was a great year for both Neil Young and Pearl Jam, but it was in their coming together that both transcended themselves.

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK MICELOTTA/OUTLINE

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duets

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Elton John follows his record-breaking album The One with an unsurpassed collection of TWOs.

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and Leonard Cohen.

The album also features "True Love" with Kiki Dee and the No. 1 hit with George Michael "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me."

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This first-ever collection features all the classics that prompted Rolling Stone to call Petty "one of rock's most vital artists."

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"Breakdown"
"Listen To Her Heart"
"I Need To Know"
"Refugee"
"Don't Do Me Like That"
"Even The Losers"
"Here Comes My Girl"
"The Waiting"
"You Got Lucky"
"Don't Come Around Here No More"
"I Won't Back Down"
"Runnin' Down A Dream"
"Free Fallin'"
"Learning To Fly"

and "Into The Great Wide Open."

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AWARDS & EME

☆ **TEARING UP THE POPE'S PICTURE PUBLICITY AWARD**

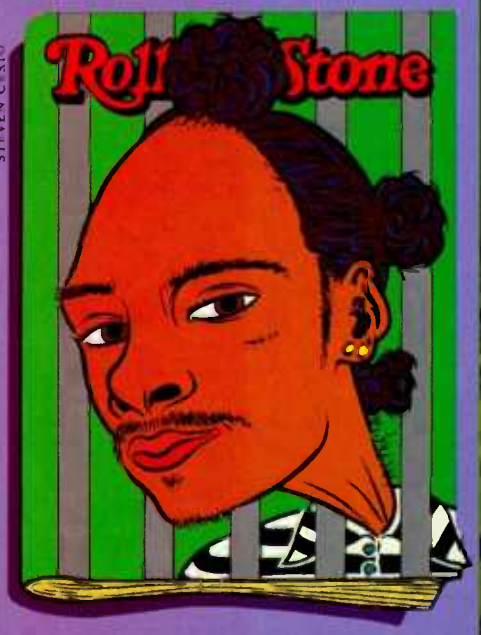
To alternative sex symbol Juliana Hatfield, who told *Interview* magazine she's a virgin and immediately became the most sought-after feature subject of the year. Hope she doesn't end up like Connie Chung.

☆ **LUNATICS' FRINGE**

The 1,954-store Wal-Mart chain refused to stock Nirvana's new album *In Utero*, saying that "fringe" music such as Nirvana was not the sort of thing in which Wal-Mart's customers were interested.

☆ **COLD-HEARTED ORB THAT RULES FOR THE PLAINTIFF AWARD**

Between the domestic disputes and barroom brawls that are its regular fare, "Court TV" treated viewers to live coverage of a lawsuit between Patrick Moraz and Graeme Edge of the Moody Blues and their ex-bandmates.



STEVEN CERIO

☆ **FAME IS A MIXED BLESSING AWARD**

To Snoop Doggy Dogg. Before he was on the cover of *Rolling Stone* he couldn't get arrested!

ARRASSMENTS

☆ Crazy Like a Fox Award

In August, Elaine Potter called in a charge that Swedish guitar hero Yngwie Malmsteen had held her and nubile 22-year-old daughter Amber at shotgun-point in his Miami house. Police surrounded the premises and shouted through megaphones for what seemed like hours, until a freshly showered Malmsteen finally emerged and was taken downtown for questioning. The girl later said her crazy mom had invented the assault accusation when she discovered Amber intended to marry Yngwie.

JOHN NIE MILES/RETNA

☆ Aqua Fresh Flavor Flav Award

To Close-Up, "the toothpaste of the younger generation for almost a quarter century," for sponsoring the CLOSE-UP RAP N ROLL songwriting contest. Yo, Dentist!

HUNGRY DOG STUDIO

☆ Murry Wilson Good Parenting Award

Mariah Carey's step-dad tried to sue her for not letting him manufacture a line of singing Mariah dolls. That doll might have ended up marrying the president of Hasbro!

☆ Messianic Cult Leader

David Koresh with his Carvin X220: "He had quite a bit of our stuff," reports Carvin co-owner Mark Kiesel. "He had a whole bunch of P.A. gear that went up in smoke with him. He started dealing with us in our Hollywood store before moving to Texas; he spent $13,000 on a 4000-watt P.A. He had eight of our guitars—he bought 'em, we never gave him anything. As late as December '92, he'd ordered four more—one of them was going to have a graphic of the White House burning up in hell."

NINE NETWORK AUSTRALIA/GAMMA LIAISON

DAVID GOLDIN

☆ PREDICTIONS '94

The inevitable attempts to duplicate the success of the Broadway version of *The Who's Tommy*: *ELP's TARKUS: The Musical!*

ROBERT MATHEU RITNA

☆ THE WILLIAM ZANZINGER AWARD

To pop punk singer Wendy James, who cut an album of songs written by Elvis Costello and titled it *Now Ain't the Time for Your Tears*. Of that title Wendy said in her press release, "I came up with that line." "Now ain't the time for your tears" is, in fact, the refrain of a Bob Dylan song.

JOHN BARR GAMMA LIAISON

☆ SHE'S A *VERY* FREAKY GIRL

Rick James, arrested for kidnapping, claims his girlfriend made him do it.

☆ THE WEST MONTGOMERY CITY COUNCIL AWARD

MTV reporter Tabitha Soren denies reports that when President Bill Clinton told her he was a fan of Thelonious Monk she asked, "Who's the loneliest monk?"

LONDON FEATURES

☆ I'D RATHER SEE YOU DEAD, LITTLE GIRL

All of us would agree that the spirit of John Lennon lives on—but only author Linda Keen claims to hang out with it. In her book, *John Lennon in Heaven: Crossing the Borderlines of Being*, Keen reports on her conversations with John from the Dakota in the sky. Unconfirmed reports have it that he still thinks he's bigger than the landlord.

NEAL PRESTON/OUTLINE

☆ ANNUAL MADONNA'S DONE IT AGAIN AWARD

To Madonna for trying the one thing she hadn't tried: being boring. *Body of Evidence* was a snooze, her latest singles went in one ear and out the other, and her appearance on the MTV Awards lip-synching with a dance routine based around cross-dressing (shocking!) made her look like one of those Vegas acts you used to have to suffer through on "The Hollywood Palace" while waiting to see the Animals or the Buffalo Springfield. One music-biz bigshot cried, "She's still living in the '80s!"

D. TONGE/RETNA

☆ The "Onward Christian Soldiers" Scapula

When death metal band Deicide played a Stockholm club, a bomb was detonated not far from where the band was waiting to go on. The incident occurred in the wake of a threat letter the band received from the radical anti-vivisectionist organization Animal Militia: "When you signed your contract to perform in Manchester...you effectively signed your death certificate. Not even Satan himself will protect you once you set foot in England." Replied Deicide's vocalist/-guiding light Glen Benton: "Crush the Christians! Kill me if you can. If I meet the guy making those threats, I'll rip the tongue out of his throat." Replied the Militia's next threat: "Benton...is the irritating piece of shit we must scrape off the sole of the world's shoe."

STEVE EICHNER/RETNA

☆ Does This Mean Jeb Bush Gets Janet Jackson?

John Dukakis—son of near-Prez Mike—became Prince's manager.

☆ "Cougar" Is Available

Canadian recording artist Bob Wiseman attempted to acquire the rights to the name "Prince" since ☥ wasn't using it anymore.

GARY PANTER

☆ The Lie Becomes the Truth

Everything about the child molestation charges alleged against Michael Jackson is ugly, but most sickening are the wishy-washy attempts of magazines like *Newsweek* to exploit the story while adopting a tsk-tsking moral tone and to write articles that affect a "How have we come to this?" superiority while desperately avoiding taking any position—lest future facts end up proving it the wrong one. We figure the mainstream press already has its post-trial editorials written, and we can guess what they'll say:

If Michael's Convicted

- What sort of culture is it that looks the other way while an obviously disturbed individual bends moral and social conventions to his whims?
- His songs and videos cried out that this was a maladjusted, perhaps mentally ill man—but those who saw money to be wrung from the rollercoaster refused to admit that the ride was dangerous.
- Hitler loved children, too.
- Where were Sony and Pepsi and L.A. Gear when these kids needed help?
- Alas, we knew it all along.

If Michael's Acquitted

- What sort of culture looks for perversion beneath every gentleness and imagines lust in the kind gesture of a man's hand on a child's shoulder?
- His songs and videos revealed the warm, optimistic beating of a generous heart—but those driven to destroy everything pure saw money to be made in cracking open an idol.
- Jesus loved children, too.
- Where were Sony and Pepsi and L.A. Gear when Michael needed help?
- Alas, we knew it all along.

☆ Future Liz Phair Albums

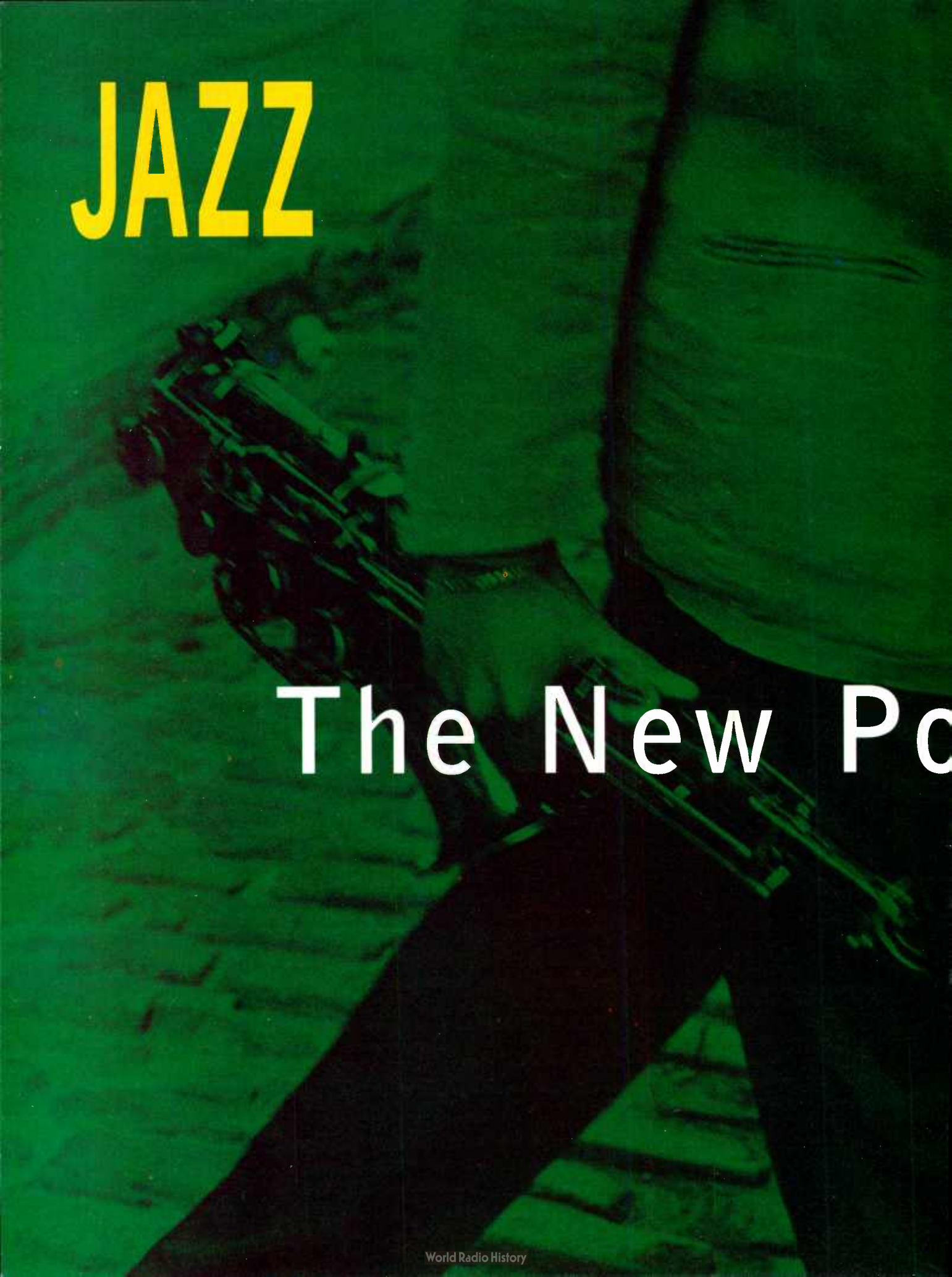
Rocker Liz Phair got enormous attention for her album *Exile in Guyville*, a woman's answer to the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*. Every critic loves a metatext, but how will Phair follow up? We have some suggestions:

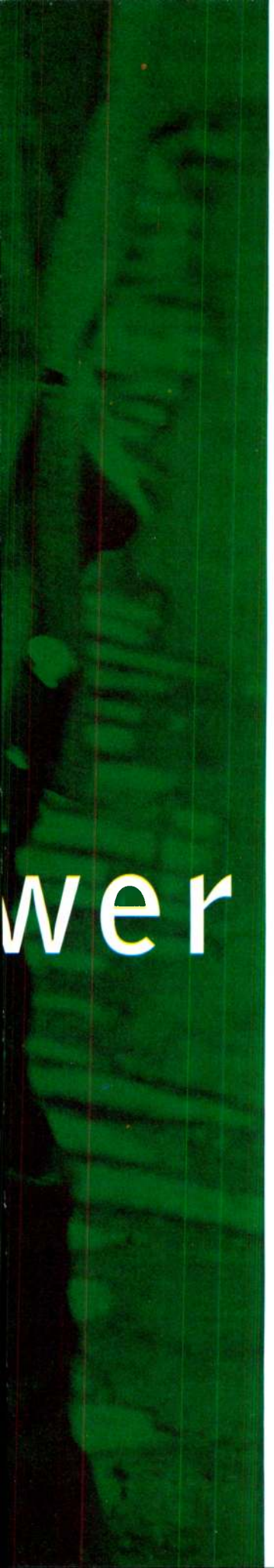
Some Clods—Phair matches the Stones' classic *Some Girls* blow for blow with tracks like "When the Egg Comes Down," "Miss Me" and the "Beast of Burden" answer song, "Put On That Harness and Get Down on All Fours."

Electric Manland—The cover finds Phair surrounded by a crowd of naked men. 'Scuse me while I kiss this guy!

Back in the Stirrups—Liz deconstructs the Aerosmith oeuvre by documenting the consequences on women of sexist, cock-rock behavior.

Mommy—A rock opera told from the standpoint of how tough it is to be the mother of a deaf, dumb and blind boy.





wer Generation

ART TAYLOR (DRUMMER, COMPOSER, AUTHOR)

One good thing is that older, more experienced players are being picked up by labels. You need leadership, people who know how to guide a band. Talent is one thing, but for talented people to develop into innovators is quite a task.

These days it's wise to incorporate everything you know. When I was living in Europe, the so-called avant-garde or free-music people—the Art Ensemble of Chicago and those guys—gave me carte blanche to visit and play. And I found things that they did that were interesting, that I incorporate to this day. But you've got to give it a structure, and I think that might be better understood over the last few years. Last night we played "Mr A.T." and we got to a point where we were taking so many chances that everybody just stopped—no one knew what to do next! I had to laugh—it was a big error, but a great moment. That's risky stuff. Hopefully there will be more of that next year.

JOHN SCOFIELD (GUITAR)

A year means nothing to me anymore, it's too short. But the idea that older guys have been getting chances lately—working with Joe Henderson, and seeing how successful his new records have been, it's refreshing, and a real change from young guys getting all the glory. The world needs living, breathing jazz icons. We all learn more from veteran players. It's important to listen to someone play on record and then, especially in jazz, to go hear them interpret the music. That's the beauty of the art form. It wants to be and benefits from being different every night.

JOSHUA REDMAN (SAXOPHONIST)

The thing I got a kick out of was hearing about a jazz renaissance or revival because the President is into it. It may be a great symbolic gesture to have a horn player in the White House, but to me it's more exciting that he's a Democrat. I guess it's cool that he's into the contemporary arts, though. We live in a mass-media society, so just the fact that the word "jazz" is being disseminated more, it can help the music. It reminds me of the rap/jazz things, collaborations like Guru's *Jazzmatazz* project. It's a chance for jazz to cross over to a younger segment of society, expand its demographic. So those are two symbolic things that have been positive publicity for jazz. But ultimately it will come down to whether or not a jazz artist can establish emotional communication with the audience. Jazz should stop being seen as this elite, chic artiste form. Its value is the same of any other music—it can make people dream, take them on a journey.

BY JIM MACNIE

Russ Gershon (leader of the Either/Orchestra)

One notable event was the year-long stay of the Mingus Big Band ensemble at the Time Cafe in New York. Mingus is a great figure to be emphasized, because even though his stuff was close to the mainstream, it's very eccentric and embodies a lot of values that have been left out of the neo-trad movement—like emotionalism. And not just the emotion of being cool. Mingus's band often sounded like a mess, and while to an extent that's a reflection of his personality, it's also by design. I think he understood that things sometimes have to sound "off" a bit to get to some new place.

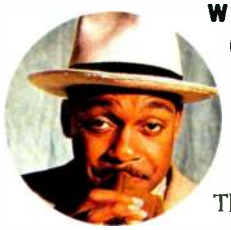
Michael Dorf (owner of New York club the Knitting Factory)

Relative to other years I would say that the fringe music, with offshoots of jazz, is thriving. We just completed a month of John Zorn's music, and we sold out almost every night. There are others negotiating the fringe and being successful. Don Byron comes to mind. It's good to see people remaining true to their artistic goals and still earning a living. The avant-garde jazz guys have also learned a bit about promotions from the independent rock groups. Make a new release a bit of an event: Instead of playing three small shows around a new record, play one big one. Send packages to the press and get that blurb in the paper. It's put some of the fringe people on more equal footing with the competition.

Ned Rothenberg (saxophonist)

One of the big things last year was the time wasted defining "jazz." I don't begrudge any of the younger players their gigs, but don't denigrate my music because it doesn't fit your definition, and don't even waste time trying to argue the question. It's hard enough to talk about music—just start listening.

There's been a lot of genre-crunching, but still, you're only going to have a small amount of music that's profound, regardless of genre. So I'm not asking people to love everything. Just listen to it. Try to hear what's going on.



Wynton Marsalis (trumpet)

I think the music continues to move into a stronger position. There are more young guys who want to play. It gets more publicity. More people want to appropriate the name of it, to give whatever they're doing an air of sophistication.

All the complaints about young guys getting all the contracts? I always felt that was some bullshit. Because most record contracts are being awarded to people who don't play music. How many contracts are awarded in a given year to any jazz musician? Take the market all together and it's two out of a hundred. Madonna has taken somebody's contract more than Roy Hargrove has. So instead of older [jazz] musicians being mad at younger ones, they should be mad at the guys from the other genres.

Plus the older guys are recording, it's just that the younger ones get the most publicity. But that's how our society works. We don't respect age. And the issue of having respect for older players is one I've always raised. People weren't interviewing me because they were interested in talking about older people, and when I get old it's going to be the same way.

PHOTOGRAPHS PREVIOUS PAGE: (LEFT) KRISTINE LARSEN; (TOP) JIMMY KATZ/GIANT STEPS; GENE MARTIN/RETNA; (THIS PAGE) LETTO

OFFICIAL BEST UNSIGNED BAND ENTRY FORM

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- Artist must be unsigned at time of entry.
- No more than 2 songs per entry.
- Entries will be accepted on cassette tape only.
- Entries must be **postmarked no later than December 1, 1993.**

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- Semi-finalists will be selected by the contributing writers, editors and publishers of MUSICIAN Magazine.
- Winners will be chosen by a panel of celebrity judges:
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  - **Flea** of the Red Hot Chili Peppers

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All entries must be accompanied by a complete roster (full names and addresses) of all musicians featured, plus an official entry form or facsimile thereof and a processing fee of **$15.00** (check or money order in U.S. funds only).

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Send your entries to: B.U.B., 33 Commercial Street, Gloucester, MA 01930

"Niggas will do anything for you; do time for you, take a bullet for you, kill somebody for you. You can find that kind of love on the streets."

—SNOOP DOGGY DOGG, months before he was arrested for the shooting murder of a 22-year-old man; his bodyguard was allegedly the trigger man.

"Hip-hop is like a juggernaut, it keeps moving. Once you've stepped off it, you don't ever catch back up."

—OPIO of Souls of Mischief

"You see rap stars way up there that you think are paid as I don't know what, and you go to their house and they're still living with their parents."

—MAGIC MIKE, DJ/producer

"A lot of these groups are just using jazz

BECAUSE

sonic chameleon Miles Davis never turned his taste buds away from a new flavor out of fear of a commercial risk or a bad review, it seems like sheer aesthetic prophesy that his last effort on disc was *Doo-Bop* (Warner Bros.), a posthumously overdubbed hip-hop/post-bop collaboration. Unlike *Bitches Brew*, Miles' seminal jazz-rock album, *Doo-Bop*

The Great Ra

didn't go platinum. It did, however, make enough of a splash to alert jazz and pop record execs alike that the "hip-bop" hybrid had high-charting potential for both genres.

Rappers had been sampling jazz records for well over a decade. But with jazz-purist spokesmen like Wynton Marsalis rap-bashing at every media opportunity, the likelihood of tongue-twisting MCs like the Top 10 pop act Digable Planets sharing the stage with riff-happy cats seemed remote just a couple of years ago. Whoever imagined that some of the jazz world's most gifted instrumentalists (Wynton's brother Branford included) would allow sampled drum loops to undulate their arpeggios?

Thanks to some of hip-hop's most progressive artists—and recently many forward-thinking jazz instrumentalists—the genre-blending is now in full vogue. In fact, rumor has it numerous jazz heavies—including trumpeter Roy Hargrove and saxophonist Steve Coleman—are already in the studio adding hip-hop–inspired flavors to this musical masala. The question at hand now is: Will the newfound union survive its "phase" status to become a full-fledged phenomenon? Many of the musicians involved think so.

Greg Osby, who recently dropped the album *3-D Lifestyles* (Blue Note), says, "I hardly think it's a passing fancy. For one, it illustrates to all the musicians who had a condescending attitude to rap that hip-hop is substantial. Two, it shows a lot of sample-driven hip-hop

BY GORDON CHAMBERS

because it's cheap and there's a lot in the jazz catalog to sample from without getting caught because the stuff is out of print and these companies don't exist anymore."

—GREG OSBY, saxophonist/jazz-rap fusionist

"You're buying something thinking it's natural talent and it's Digitech-reproduced shit where brothers say, 'I'll loop the same beats and do my rhymes over it,' and then the record company will put an ad in The Source and say, 'Brand New!' But it's recycled!"

—AFRIKA BABY BAMBAATAA of the Jungle Brothers

"I loved that song since I was a little kid. It's not like I was singing, 'Gilbert O'Sullivan, suck my balls.'"

—BIZ MARKIE, regarding songwriter Gilbert O'Sullivan's lawsuit against him for sampling "Alone Again, Naturally."

"We don't represent the U.S.A., we represent the United States Ghetto. We ain't really from the U.S.A. because we ain't got no props in the U.S.A."

—FREDRO STARR of Onyx

acts who never had an alliance with musicians that they can work with us and have fruitful projects."

Me'Shell

ACCELERATOR

"It's a natural mix," agrees Guru, who took a hiatus from fronting the rap act Gang Starr to record his solo album *Jazzmatazz Volume I* (Chrysalis), which features special guests trumpeter Donald Byrd, guitarist Zachary Breaux and vibraphonist Roy Ayers. "Both music forms involve elements of improvisation and have a culture that goes along with them. Jazz beats have a similar cadence to rap. When DJs use them, they blend really easily. Plus, rap is the most provocative music out there. And jazz needed a resurgence."

However, Guru's record (like A Tribe Called Quest's 1991 team-up with Ron Carter on *Low End Theory* [Jive]) was not without criticism within the industry. First complaint: The hip-boppers used sampled drum loops rather than real drums. "I thought *Jazzmatazz* was too rigid," says Peter Edge, A&R director for Warner Bros. Records. "To me, jazz is not just hip-hop loops with solos above it. It's the flow that happens when you get musicians improvising as a collective." But Edge agrees that these collaborations are here to stay—at least for a while.

Guru

MICHAEL BENABIB/RETNA

"Right now, so many jazz musicians want to do these records that it's almost a joke. But these records are going to need to be more creative. A hip-hop jazz record with the right spirit stands to triple what a regular jazz record sells. With a vocalist, one of these songs could be a big pop or R&B hit. In fact, this level of excitement could change the whole way jazz is consumed."

Earlier this year, Edge signed Me'Shell NdegéOcello, an acclaimed rapper/bassist/vocalist who he hopes will "take the jazz and hip-hop thing a step further." In a recent *Billboard* interview about her debut album *Plantation Lullabies*, Me'Shell explained her sonic inspiration: "I guess my major influences have mostly been big-band stuff, jazz—I love Herbie Hancock. But when I got into hip-hop in college, I found a voice I could speak in."

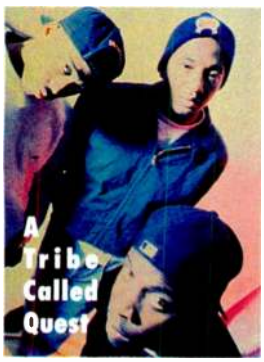
Digable Planets

STEVE DOUBLE/RETNA

Me'Shell is ecstatic that her work is recognized as "new," but she's actually trying her best to offset the hip-hop–jazz label she finds herself associated with in

the industry. "I approach hip-hop in a different way, but I don't call it hip-hop jazz. If a hip-hop artist had instrumental chops, they'd probably do what I do. What Greg Osby did was a bastardization of hip-hop. He shortchanged himself by doing that album. If jazz players really wanted to be creative with hip-hop's technology, that's one thing. And if hip-hoppers want to get young players like bassist Christian McBride and drummer Brian Blade, that would be another. But putting a rap over jazz is not jazz—and vice versa."

Me'Shell sees the Pharcyde's debut *Bizarre Ride II the Pharcyde* (Delicious Vinyl) as rooted in the '50s Blue Note sound. "They rap and sing melodically. They play out, dissonant piano tracks over their samples and they hear jazz harmonies. I think they're very progressive."



RICHARD REYES/RETNA

She also believes that a new, as-yet-unnamed crop of artists is emerging who are collectively resisting music's current convenient camps. "R&B, for instance, has gotten totally stifling," she explains. "Its textures and arrangements are all the same. In hip-hop you can have four keys going on at the same time. It's about the groove. And everyone wants something to groove to."

Pianist/rappers Mark and Scott Batson, whose band Get Set recently released their debut *Voice of the Projects* (Polydor), see this time more as a period for exploring many new grooves, not just hip-hop–jazz fusion. "There's a musical renaissance going on," Mark explains. "But this period is really about live music and hip-hop. That's what we're dealing with. People like A Tribe Called Quest, Guru, Me'Shell and Arrested Development are all bringing the past into the future to stretch music forward. Arrested Development is on the bluesy gospel hip-hop tip. For our debut, we wanted to create orchestrated sound, like Ellington, by making sound collages of the sounds of the diaspora."

GENE GOLDEN/SHOOTING STAR

What's the flavor of the future? "Music is less restrictive now, so musicians and rappers are thinking new thoughts—together," he says. "To me, Rakim raps the way Coltrane laid 'Giant Steps.' And Biz Markie raps in the continuum of Monk—he takes chances. But I honestly think that in the future there's going to be more rappers that actually play the piano and sing. Soon there will be new musics with new names." Guru agrees: "The hip-hop–jazz connection has lasted longer than rap and rock. But who knows? Rap embraces all forms of music.

"Maybe the next thing will be rap and country."

"I hope when people look back on the '80s and '90s they'll know the gangsta reality wasn't the only reality."

—SPEECH of Arrested Development

"White people don't want to hear [hardcore rap], so when groups come along like De La Soul, who were perceived as a group that was talking about hippies and daisy age, they say, 'That's different from the other stuff,' when it's really all the same."

—BUTTERFLY of Digable Planets

"There's no difference between the people that are buying the Dr. Dre album and people that are buying Guns N' Roses."

—MARC BENESCH, Interscope Records

"As far as who won or lost [the "Cop Killer" controversy], the police won. They've frightened every record label, and there's a freeze now on people getting signed."

—ICE-T

***Quotes sampled from* The Source, The Bomb, Rappages, Vibe, Rolling Stone, Sassy, Option *and* Musician.**

COUNTRY

The Price of Su

Rodney Crowell

Last year I fired my management, dissolved my band, let go of my publicist and contemplated retirement. I felt like what I wanted to contribute to country wasn't acceptable. Then, in the stillness and the quiet, I started writing songs again. I thought, "Shit, I'm just starting." I began to pay attention to what was going on in country. I started to get an education about what it is now as opposed to what I thought it might be. Before, I'd felt like it didn't support any kind of experimentation. And it's not like I think that the market does support it now, but what I've learned is that as a format country does offer a springboard for what I call the truth. There's a lot of energy out there, and I want to see if I can succeed in it, doing what I call truthful songwriting.

Travis Tritt

I heard a comment that someone made, that country music hadn't changed all that much, it'd just grown. The influences of some of 1993's shakers and movers were varied: They went from everybody from Waylon Jennings and George Jones and Merle Haggard and Buck Owens all the way to people like the Eagles and Bob Seger and Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers. Lots of different styles there. Until the past several years, many people have said, "I hate that twangy backwoods hillbilly stuff that nobody cares about unless you're a redneck drunk at a bar somewhere." That's changed, and I'm glad. To just sit there and be extremely vague about everything, and just smile and say, "Oh yes, I love everything, every style, every song in the business..." There's not a single artist in Nashville who feels that way. There're a lot of passionate people in country, but it's not always politically correct to make any negative statements.

Tony Brown (president of MCA/Nashville)

Ninety-two was such a banner year because of not only Garth but also Billy Ray and Wynonna. And a lot of acts that were already breaking started breaking big, like Alan Jackson and Brooks & Dunn. There were some major, major breakthroughs. I think '93 was a test of whether we could sustain, or get bigger. We're not getting bigger at a fast rate, but we're definitely sustaining and still growing. I think that we've proved that this is not some passing fad, that country music actually has some substance and depth. The last time it happened, during the "Urban Cowboy" days, there wasn't substance to support the records that made country big, no pool of artistry.

Wynonna

I can't speak for everyone else last year, but I know what it was like for me. I am very much a free spirit, always have been. My mother has always said, "Wynonna Judd, you are such a weird kid." But weird is good. People like Lyle Lovett? I adore him. He's like a breath of fresh air, and we need to have those aspects of country music. Last night, I got to play for 16,000 people, a lot for a girl. I thought, "Country music is being embraced by a lot of people from all walks of life because people are really searching for the truth, something not packaged with a lot of b.s., but that means something to their everyday lives." Country music is feeding people. It's played at funerals. People get married to it.

cce**ss**

KATHY MATTEA

I think the success of country music today is well-deserved and it's been a long time coming. However, I think we need to be really careful to stay focused as an industry on the artist and the song. There is danger in believing your own hype.

KYLE LENNING (PRESIDENT OF ASYLUM RECORDS)

Country is in a pretty confusing state. It's been more difficult to define what a country record is than ever. You can't tell from the sound of it, or the lyric; a whole lot of it sounds like what were considered other genres not too long ago. In the 23 years I've been in Nashville, one of the things we've always said is that we need to open up, not be quite so narrow. And in a way, that's happened, and I'm not so sure I even like it all that much. It's not that I'm prejudiced against music; it's because there's something about the history and tradition of country that I think is special. As an industry, we've avoided a difficult mission, which is to make evolutionary country music instead of drawing from genres that we all know how to do. Dwight Yoakam's new record and Vince Gill's work walk that evolutionary balance really well. Other than that, everything seems to be some other format newly shown up in this world of '90s country.

TRISHA YEARWOOD

Anything goes and there are no guarantees now. In the past, if you'd sold three million records, radio pretty much would play whatever you would put out. That's not the case anymore. It's a good thing, because it makes you put out really good records. I think there's conflict now as to what is and what is not country. Since the whole spectrum got bigger and bigger, there are certain factions trying to define country again. I've seen records of mine do well that weren't that country. It's very unpredictable.

GEORGE JONES

It seemed like country music got better with age in 1993. Of course, we have had much better years, with bigger records. But country music couldn't be better. It's been great to me: Every year, it seems like, there's a little something that I'm up for, and this really thrills me. It's not like the big, big years that we had. But still and all, in this day and time, when you get older and all, just one little thing makes up for a whole year of the other things you used to get. It's just wonderful. I have no grudges, nothing to say bad about it. It's been good to me for so many years, and it just keeps on being good. I'm glad I'm part of it.

STEPHEN BRUTON

In 1993, a lot of what I love about country music—the simplicity, the starkness—seemed to be missing, although real country will endure. The heavily produced, formulaic-à-la-the-'70s production—pop music with steel guitars—that passes for country now, that's going to pass. It leaves the music bankrupt, although it's of course lucrative in other ways. It's a shame that you can't hear George Jones and Buck Owens. That kind of music should be a touchstone. I'm not just being a purist about this: I look other places besides Nashville for country. "Evening Gown" from Mick Jagger's last album? Now that's a country song.

MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER

For me, the most sublime moment in country music 1993 was Aaron Neville singing "The Grand Tour." He moves through so many musical worlds so gracefully. To take the classic George Jones song and inhabit it so completely is a testament not only to the greatness of the song and the genre from which it comes but also to the broad appeal country now enjoys. The most dismal moment, on the other hand, was a network TV special called "Back to the Armadillo." It dragged country music back to at least the "Solid Gold" era. Love those dancers! This was scary-bad...

BY JAMES HUNTER

CROWELL BY ROBERT MATHEU; TRITT BY MARC MORRISON; JUDD BY RON DAVIS; JONES, YEARWOOD, CARPENTER BY BETH GWINN; BACKGROUND BY [illegible] LARSEN

15	12/78	**Chick Corea,** New Freedom Swing
21	11/79	**Brian Eno,** Talking Heads, Weather Report
34	7/81	**Tom Petty,** Dave Edmunds, Wayne Shorter
45	7/82	**Willie Nelson,** John McLaughlin, the Motels
64	2/84	**Stevie Wonder,** X, Was (Not Was), Ornette
70	8/84	**Peter Wolf,** King Crimson, Sly + Robbie
71	9/84	**Heavy Metal,** Dream Syndicate, Tina Turner
102	4/87	**Robert Cray,** Los Lobos, Simply Red
104	6/87	**Springsteen,** The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
112	2/88	**McCartney,** Stanley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
113	3/88	**Robert Plant,** INXS, Wynton Marsalis
115	5/88	**Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash**
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, Smithereens
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,** Mellencamp, Brown/Raitt
131	9/89	**Jeff Beck,** Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
133	11/89	**The '80s,** Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
135	1/90	**Aerosmith,** NRBQ, Richard Thompson, Max Q
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
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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
162	4/92	**Def Leppard,** k. d. lang, Live
163	5/92	**Drugs & Creativity,** Lovett, Mike Special
164	6/92	**Guns N' Roses,** Metallica, Genesis
165	7/92	**Led Zeppelin,** Faith No More, Burnett/Phillips
166	8/92	**David Gilmour,** Robert Wyatt/Bill Nelson
167	9/92	**U2,** Big Guitar Special, George Harrison
168	10/92	**Elvis,** Horace Silver, Producers Special
169	11/92	**Bruce Springsteen,** Arrested Development
170	12/92	**Roger Waters,** Prince, Bob Weir
171	1/93	**Best of '92:** Extreme, Brown, Carey . . .
172	2/93	**100 Great Guitarists,** Paul Simon, Robben Ford
173	3/93	**Mick Jagger,** Hothouse Flowers, Annie Lennox
174	4/93	**Neil Young/Peter Buck,** Henry Rollins, Sting
175	5/93	**World Party,** Stevie Ray Vaughan, PJ Harvey
SP1		**Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones**
SP2		**Masters of Metal,** Metallica, Def Leppard, more

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U2

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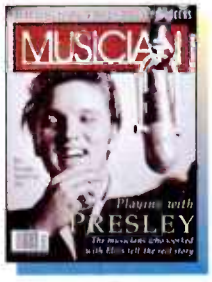
Bonnie Raitt



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Elvis

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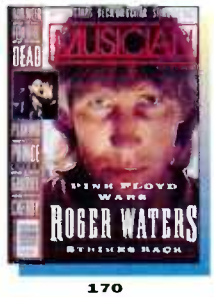

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Best of 1992

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Sinéad O'Connor

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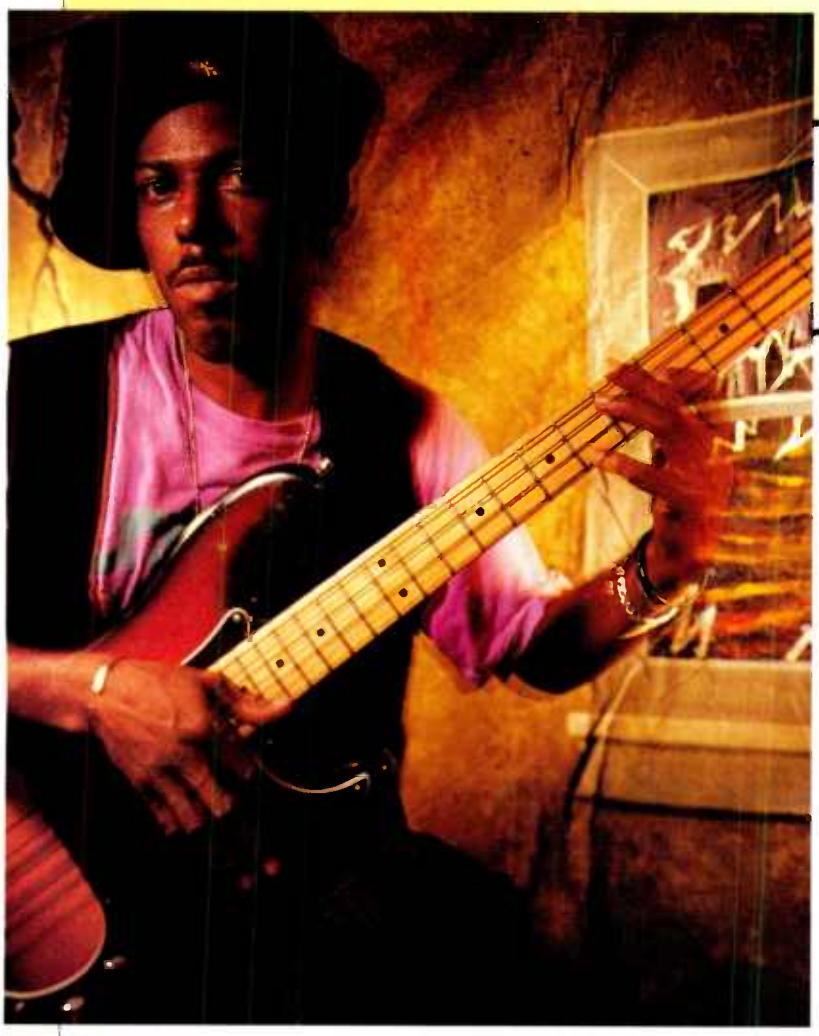


Billy Bass returns

by ALAN DI PERNA

In his book *Flash of the Spirit*, Dr. Robert Farris Thompson tells us that the word "funky" derives from a Ki-Kongo language spoken in what is now Zaire. Billy Bass doesn't take it back quite that far, but as an original member of George Clinton's mighty Funkadelic, he certainly knows a thing or two about where the funk comes from:

"It comes from James Brown. And James Brown got it from the blues. Elmore James had this jam called 'Fanny Mae.' Man, that shit was funky. Or Hank Ballard and Etta James doing 'Annie Had a Baby': oh man, stoopid funk! Funk is not limited to musicians. Because, hey, Michael Jordan's got a funky slam dunk. Funk is probably an environmental thing. There's no way you can tell me you can't see the difference between Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills and the corner of Florence and Normandie. It's funky down there. Funk is a black thing—but white people can learn to be funky too."

I latch hopefully onto that last observation as Billy picks up a five-string Washburn bass, slams a cassette into his tape deck and prepares to flash some grooves from his new Bill Laswell–produced album, *Out of the Dark*. As the disc demonstrates, Billy Bass not only knows where the funk comes from; he knows where it's going. The tracks combine tongue-twisting raps (from Grandmaster Flash vet Melle Mel and others) with splanking jams from Billy's O.G. Funk, which includes keyboardist Bernie Worrell (another original Funkadelic member) and second-generation Funkadelic Jerome Brailey on drums. Billy cues up a track from the album called "Yeah Yeah Yeah" and cranks the volume. A big, wide E-major groove busts from the speakers, the bass whomping on the downbeat like a 200-megaton bomb.

"Recognize where that comes from?" the bassist challenges. It's an adaptation of "You and Your Folks and Me and My Folks," an old Funkadelic tune that Billy cowrote. Cutting the tape machine, he takes up the bassline on his Washburn, gradually changing a few notes here and there, putting a different vocal on top. Suddenly, the old song emerges from the new: an object lesson in funk derivation. "That was my groove," he proudly declares, "my contribution to the original Funkadelic sound."

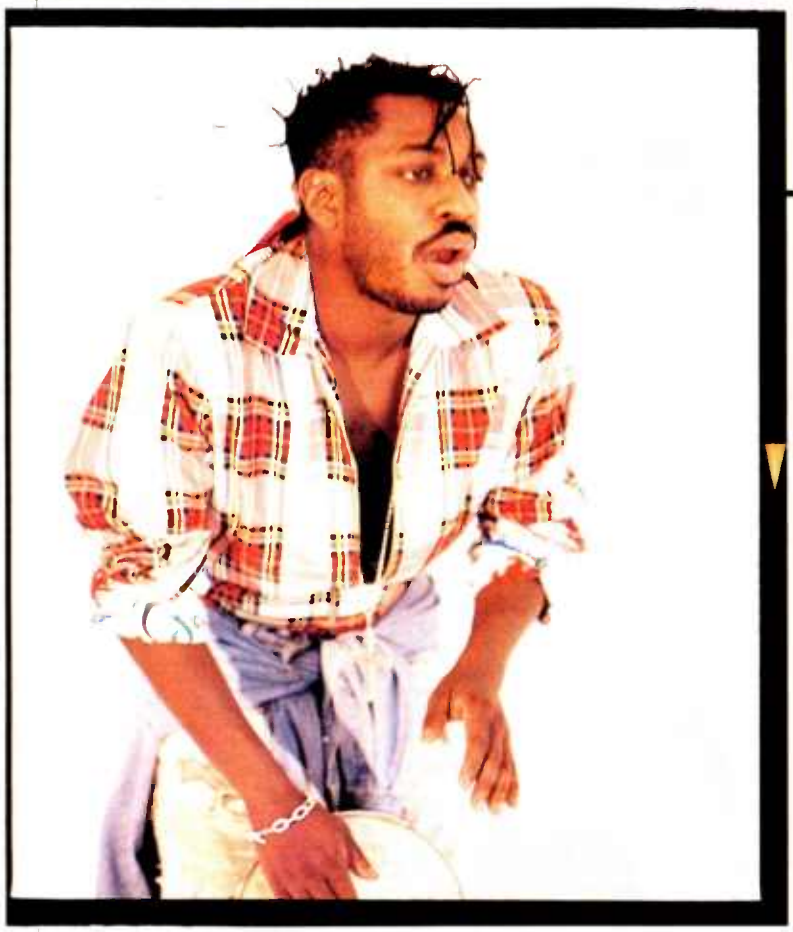
William "Billy Bass" Nelson was one of the Plainfield, New Jersey youths who hung out at the infamous barbershop where George Clinton straightened customers' hair and rehearsed with his vocal group, the Parliaments. A 16-year-old Billy traveled to Detroit with Clinton circa 1966 to play rhythm guitar on the Parliaments' first big hit, "(I Just Wanna) Testify." Many of the other players on that track were culled from the Motown house band, including the legendary James Jamerson. Billy quickly became Jamerson's student.

[*cont'd on page 73*]

PHOTOGRAPH BY MOJGAN B. AZIMI

WORKING MUSICIAN

Steve Jordan Slumming and Slamming with Keith



The Xpensive Wino beats the drum simply

by KEN MICALLEF

Using the skull-squashing power of a 26" bass drum and huge, 17" hi-hat cymbals, Steve Jordan lets the groove do his talking. Whether sticking down and dirty with Keith Richards, adding grit to Billy Joel's romantic pop or layering percussion for the masturbation scene in the movie *Sliver*, he never follows the rules drummers are expected to live by.

On Richards' *Main Offender*, which the Bronx-born drummer co-wrote with the gaunt guitarist, Jordan's drumming is more than a study in simplicity. It's about feel, about finding a drum part that breathes, about playing to the core of what the music needs. On "Hate It When You Leave," a wonderfully loose, Motownish track, Jordan straddles the groove playing four to the bar on the snare drum, eighths lightly on the hi-hats, while the bass drum pulses on three *and* four *and one*. It's sexy and slinky, an easy lope of a beat. At the end of each chorus he loudly cracks *and four and* on the snare drum. BAP-BAP-BOOM! It resolves the tension of the chorus with the authority of a shotgun blast while setting up the verse. It's urgent and damn-near perfect.

"The fact of the matter is," says Jordan, "if a song works correctly you don't need a fill to go into another section. It's more powerful if you let the transition speak for itself instead of having some drummer play a big lick over it."

But don't drummers learn to set up the chorus with a fill, maybe go to the bell of the ride cymbal for the bridge or at least change the bass pattern slightly?

"Those are stock rules that don't mean anything," replies Jordan. "They have nothing to do with music, but a lot of people approach their instrument that way. Well, have you heard the song yet? Maybe that's not what you should do. Maybe you should do the opposite. You have to play the song."

Jordan cut his teeth as a fusion drummer in the '70s. Before his tenure with David Letterman's Late Night band, playing the R&B grooves he loved as a kid, he was hired by the Brecker Brothers, Michael Urbaniak, John Scofield and even the Blues Brothers for his skanky, soulful pocket.

"There were only so many licks that would fit into the fusion stuff," he says. "I grew up wanting to dance. You'd be trippin' over yourself trying to dance to that stuff. Coming from the drummers I was into—Benny Benjamin, Art Blakey, Tony Williams, the J.B. drummers, Clyde and Jabbo, Greg Errico, Ringo, Charlie, Hal Blaine and Al Jackson—I tried to put some groove into the music."

With Richards, Jordan strips his drumming down to a visceral pulse. You hear Blakey's passion, Benny Benjamin's dance sensibility and Ringo's instinctive creativity rolled into one.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAY STRAUSS

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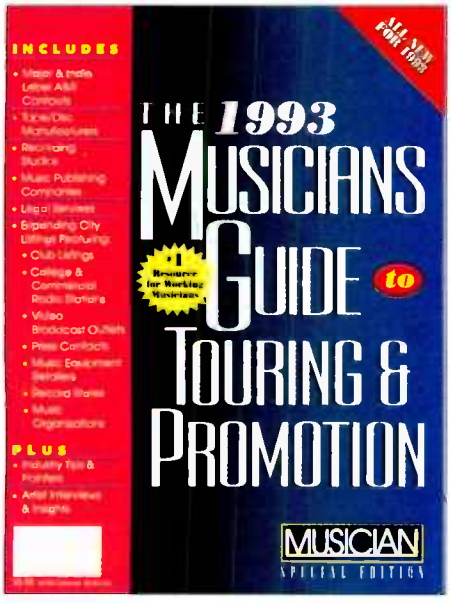

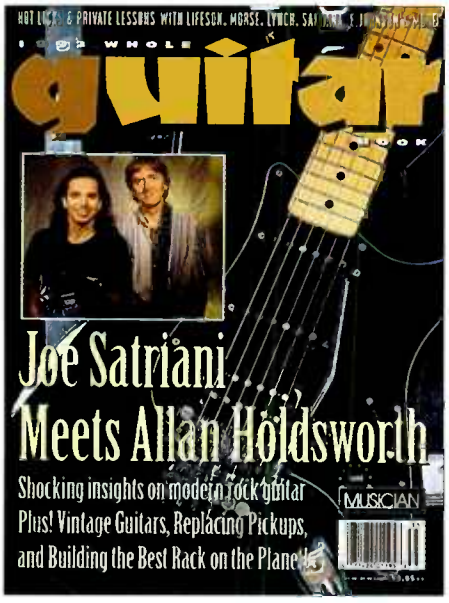

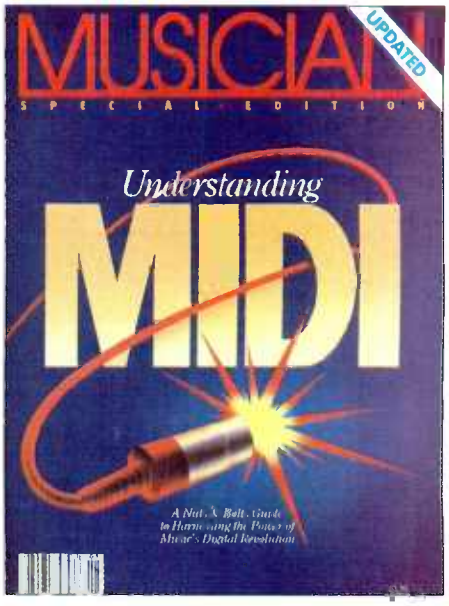

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"I try to keep the primary parts of a song going by finding a common denominator, so when you resolve a section and go back to the groove it's not as obvious as: big fill, blap-blop-blop-crash. Something subtle can make a major difference. The less you play the more you can introduce one thing and have it mean something. If you're playing a lot of shit you have to do a lot more to make it sound different."

Jordan's approach not only makes the music more spacious and flowing, it also lets you really hear the drums: The way he'll play lighter or crash a single cymbal stands out and resonates. Jordan calls his work with Richards "some of the most complex playing I've ever done because it is so simple. It's not easy to do. It's a pure naked groove." On David Sanborn's *Upfront*, Jordan adopts a Clyde Stubblefield edge to his playing. For "Benny," a slow 12/8 blues (a notoriously dull time signature for drummers everywhere), he plays a unique eighth-note triplet figure between snare drum and hi-hat. It deepens the groove as well as giving him something challenging to play. Strong independence and knowing "the full value of the note" make the beat work.

"There, I play the hi-hat with my foot as opposed to my hands so I can work the cymbal. It sounds simple but if you mess that up the take is gone. You can't fix that or punch it in. For it to work, you have to know the full value of the quarter note. If you put it right where the time is, it will sound rushed."

Years spent playing tympani and bass (a 3/4 acoustic bass with only two strings sits in the corner of his Fifth Avenue loft) changed Jordan's entire view of how and what he wanted to play. "Tympani made me realize that you start and stop a note. When drummers play time or practice with a metronome, they know where the beat or note starts but they don't know where it ends. When I play the bass, I'm muting strings, holding notes; it hit me like a bolt of lightning. Drummers think they have good time if they're playing like a machine but there's still no tug, no push and pull. No music is static."

This knowledge of note value extends to the bassist/drummer relationship in that it lets Jordan choose his side of the fence as well as making him a more musical player. "If both the bassist and me are on top of the beat, it'll sound like we're rushing even if we line up with the click. So, if the bassist is on top I'll pull on the backside and we'll sound like one beat. That's how Will Lee has saved so many people's careers. He can adapt to how people play. Some people are determined to play one way and they'll plow through anything.

"I break music down to the art of communication," Jordan summarizes. "A working musician must be able to interpret what people want. There are a lot of talented musicians who can't talk to each other and, consequently, they're not working. Why are you making music if you can't communicate? Music is the universal language and the drum is for communicating. It's not for playing a bunch of shit and cluttering up the messages."

JORDAN'S JUKEBOX

Except for his 18"x26" monster bass ("I want to hear the air move"), JORDAN's drums are not unusual: 13"x13" mounted tom, 14"x14" and 18"x18" floor toms, all in Yamaha Silver Sparkle; Brady, Ludwig and Eames snare drums in 10", 12" and 13" sizes; and Paiste-designed cymbals to meet his specifications. 20" to 35" rides and crashes let him remark with a grin, "I just have to hit it once. That's it." And those 17" hi-hats do have a purpose. "Smaller hats leave a lot more space in the groove. And when I lay into the 17s they aren't so tiki-tiki–sounding."

[*cont'd from page 69*] "'Testify' was based on the Motown sound," says Billy. "It was more pop than funk. But the bassline, unhhh, this is funky." He plays the ascending line: B, D, E, F♯. Every other time, he leaves out the F passing tone, creating a nice rhythmic hole. He switches to steady, chugging eighth notes, calling out, "Now this is Bob Dylan—straight-up rock 'n' roll!" From here he segues to a triplet feel, building arpeggiated major triads off the root of each chord in the progression: "See, the more you play it, the bigger it gets—to the point where it just crescendoes and explodes. That's something I learned from Jamerson, from lines like this...."

Billy moves into the slippery bassline of Stevie Wonder's "I Was Made to Love Her" by way of illustration. Next he shows me the bassline for "All Your Goodies Are Gone," the followup to "Testify." (Clinton revived both songs on Parliament's 1974 Up for the Down Stroke album.) The line starts with a walking bass groove in B minor, but then moves to a triplet feel. "That was a throwback to the triads we used in 'Testify,'" Billy comments. "George and I sat down and plotted that song out. We wanted another hit like 'Testify.'"

With the success of "Testify," Clinton assembled a full-time backup band for the Parliaments, with Billy firmly ensconced on bass, Worrell on keyboards, Eddie Hazel and Tawl Ross on guitars and Tiki Fulwood on drums.

THE MANY BASSES OF BILLY

BILLY BASS's main axe is a '71 Fender Precision. On *Out of the Dark* he used an old Hagstrom eight-string as well. He also owns a five-string Washburn that was a gift from Fishbone's Norwood Fisher. One of his most prized basses can't be played at all. It's his lifetime achievement award from the Black Rock Coalition: a funky old Japanese bass with a brass plaque fit into the body, commemorating Billy's role as a founding father of the funk. He plays through an Ampeg SVT amp and uses Rotosound roundwound strings.

Funkadelic was born. The band soon became an entity unto itself—funkier and freakier, with a heavy influence from late-'60s psychedelic rock. To illustrate the change, Billy plays me the riff from one of his Funkadelic-era compositions, "Super Stupid." The descending blues riff owes as much to John Paul Jones as it does to James Jamerson. It starts on the 9th fret of the G string and works its way down the fretboard: E, D, B, then a bend from A up to B and back down to A again (D string, 7th fret), G, F, E, A, A♯, B.

"Me bein' kinda raunchy, I was just imagining that this bassline was so hardcore and funky, it was cussin' at you. Like this...." He plays the line again, singing along, spitting out an emphatic "goddamn it" on the last three notes. Billy's not a guy you'd want to mess with, and relations between him and Clinton became strained when the bassist pulled a gun on his employer during an altercation in a Detroit hotel lobby in the '60s. Nonetheless, Billy continued playing with Funkadelic and Parliament up through the early '70s. When he left, he bequeathed his successor Bootsy Collins a firm, solid foundation in the funk.

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Hard-Disk Recording vs. Digital Tape

Limitations, hidden costs and creative implications

by CRAIG ANDERTON

In the beginning there was analog multi-track recording, and it was good.

Well, it wasn't actually that good. We all accepted hiss, modulation noise, print-through, frequent maintenance and generation loss simply because there wasn't any alternative.

The digital revolution has provided two good ones: digital multi-track tape and hard-disk (HD) recording. Although both methods digitize analog signals, store them, and convert them back to analog, the similarities pretty much end there. Despite the recent success of eight-track digital tape, the question of whether to commit to a tape- or HD-based system isn't simple. Even the apparent cost parity between the two isn't what it seems, since both have hidden costs. Let's do a round-by-round comparison and see how they stack up.

Cost. The Alesis ADAT ($3995) and Tascam DA-88 ($4499) provide eight digital tape tracks. To get 16 tracks, you strap two units together, which costs an additional $6000 for either brand due to the optional, but recommended, remote controllers ($1499 for the DA-88 and $1995 for ADAT).

As for HD systems, Digidesign's eight-track Session 8 for the IBM (and soon the Mac) is a strong contender. It includes mike preamps, a full-featured mixer, EQ, digitally controlled audio patch bay, D/A and A/D converters and automated mixdown (via MIDI sequencing), all for $4000. Spectral Synthesis' Prisma ($4000), which runs on an IBM, consists of a 12-track digital recording engine and software. Yamaha's CBX-D5 ($3000), a four-track system (expandable to eight), includes digital effects and works with Mac, Atari or IBM software. Akai's DR4-D ($2000) records four tracks, with no additional equipment required. There are also higher-end systems from Sonic Solutions, Dyaxis, Otari and Roland. Waiting in the wings: ART's low-cost DR/8000 and Creation Technologies' RADAR.

Now, the hidden costs. Eight tracks on a hard disk consume approximately 40 megabytes per minute, so a 12-minute dance mix eats up almost half a gigabyte. A one-gigabyte drive goes for around $1800. The Digidesign, Spectral Synthesis and Yamaha HD units all require a computer. The Akai doesn't, but having one allows for additional functions. Factor in $1000 to $2000 for a decent machine.

Digital tape machines win this particular round—but only by a TKO, since HD systems often include goodies that aren't available with tape, such as the Yamaha unit's onboard effects.

Editing. To edit tape, you either bounce to another tape deck or a hard disk system, then bounce back again—not particularly convenient. However, HD systems excel at editing. You

ILLUSTRATION BY MARY FLEENER

can cut out a single bad note as easily as move a verse, and many systems offer signal-processing functions that equalize, compress, gate, slice and dice. A "playlist" option often enables you to mark sections of audio on the hard disk and play them back in any desired order (great for creating dance mixes or ordering songs). Tape can only punch in and out, so HD systems win this round handily.

Speed. A hard disk can locate any recorded moment virtually instantly. Tape must rewind and fast-forward; although digital multi-track decks feature auto-location, it still takes time to get there. Unfortunately, fancy HD functions such as effects require number-crunching that can take several minutes. Overall, though, HD recording takes less time.

Cost of media. The cost of recording to digital tape is the price of a cartridge, while HD systems require a big hard drive—but then there's the ugly necessity of backing up.

Generally, options for HD backup include DAT (if both your HD system and your DAT machine provide digital I/O), magneto-optical cartridges ($2000 for a 650-meg drive and $100 per cartridge), writable CD ($4000 for the deck), or standard computer tape ($1000 for the drive). Magneto-optical is fast because you can just copy a computer file, whereas backing up to DAT or CD is usually a real-time process.

Backing up multi-track tape works best with a second deck (you can use DAT, but backing up multiple tracks one at a time is, well, time-consuming). So, although digital tape boasts a low backup cost, the need for a second deck blunts the advantage. If you have two tape machines already, this round goes to tape; otherwise it's a draw.

Reliability. With either system, mechanical problems can destroy your work. But an HD system has more weak links: hard disk, computer, operating system, software and so on. Although tape may seem more reliable on a day-to-day basis, it's prone to long-term deterioration. Realistically, this round is another draw.

Ease of use. Tape wins here: Set your levels, push record and go! HD systems inevitably require some degree of computer savvy.

Creative implications. Tape's familiarity and ease of use makes it easy to focus on music rather than mechanics, but HD's random-access playback, non-destructive editing and on-screen visual displays provide a mind-boggling palette of creative options. Which you find superior very much depends on your artistic character and production style.

So which is the overall winner, digital tape or hard-disk recording? It really depends on the application. If editing is critical, HD systems are best; those who play one instrument well and others passably can edit their way to sonic nirvana. Audio-for-video and multimedia also demand flexible editing. If your recorder is more a capture medium than an editing tool, tape is best thanks to low media cost, simplicity of operation and speed of getting tracks down.

Of course, combining both lets you have it all. If you already have a computer and opt for digital tape, consider adding a two-track HD system. Digidesign's Audio Media card is an excellent low-cost solution for the Mac; several sound cards for the IBM offer digital recording, synthesis or both (check out the Turtle Beach MultiSound or the Roland TAP-10). The Atari Falcon030 computer comes bundled with a hard-disk recording/editing system, while SunRize makes digital audio boards for the Amiga.

Add a digital multi-track deck and a digital audio interface (such as the Alesis AI-1 for ADAT or the IF88AE for the DA-88) so you can transfer digitally between tape and hard drive, and you can bounce tape tracks to the HD system for editing, then bounce them back for playback without any generation loss. Furthermore, in most cases you can use the tape deck to back up the hard drive.

Exploiting the synergy between digital tape and HD recording is likely to become a common strategy. For example, Digidesign has announced software that transfers Session 8 tracks to ADAT and vice-versa. The digital audio workstation of the future will probably combine HD and tape technology without the plethora of peripherals that characterize today's hybrid systems.

So, if deciding between digital tape and hard disk seems too difficult, don't worry. Go with the medium that solves your current needs; you'll get good use out of it. Prices may well fall to the extent that it becomes practical to pick up the other type of system before long. Meanwhile, digital multi-track systems are becoming sufficiently common that if you need to back up your hard disk or edit your digital tape, odds are that someone in your vicinity has the piece of the digital-recording puzzle that you lack.

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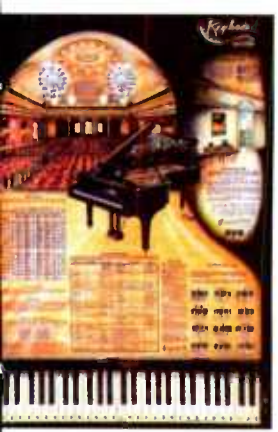

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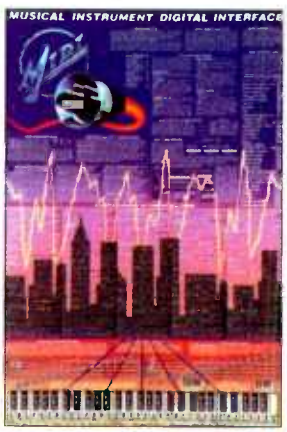

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MOVING FORWARD LOOKING BACKWARD

THE PROPER RELATION between art and commerce is perennially a topic for heated debate. But if there's any place where the two forces properly meet head-on, it's in the marketplace for musical equipment. And for that, there's no place like the semi-annual gatherings of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

When it comes to gear, this year's June NAMM show in Nashville may have portended the major event of 1993. Ever since the word "recession" began popping up in polite conversation, summer NAMM has been an iffy proposition. Fewer and fewer manufacturers saw much point in attending, since less and less business was done there. This year, though, the summer show came on like gangbusters. The floor was crammed with exhibitors and retailers; new products, usually reserved for the winter show, were debuted; and—if the scuttlebutt could be believed—real money changed hands. Maybe, just maybe, the market for musical hard- and software is finally turning around, paving the way for an eventful 1994.

Scholz Rockman A12-50: Warm distortion, long sustain and rich clean tones from a small, affordable solid-state amp.

If so, it's happening on the heels of an ongoing phenomenon that might be called the retro revolution. The revolution continued unabated this year, particularly in the realm of guitars. As in previous years, Jurassic classics dominated virtually every manufacturer's new releases, from the Fender Jazzmaster to the Gibson Citation to the Gretsch Country Classic to the Guild Brian May to the National Style "O" 1929-vintage Resophonic.

So what else is new? What else is old, rather: This year it was guitar amps. Let's see...Marshall's '59 Plexi Super Lead...Korg's '63 Vox AC30 Top Boost...Kendrick's 2112, a copy of the '58 Fender Deluxe...not to mention vintage-style amps from Fender, Peavey, Mesa, THD, Groove Tubes, Matchless, Rivera, Bedrock and Bogner, most bearing modern features such as effect loops. Better yet, many new models blended the old (tubes) with the new (microprocessors). For instance, PS Systems' EB100S placed a muscular tube preamp under real-time MIDI control.

Which isn't to say there were no genuine innovations this year. For one, the long-awaited Parker guitar, which weds ultra-light weight with exceptional tone, finally hit the streets. ART used a space-age carbon-fiber composite rather than wood for the enclosures of their Attack Module amps, while RainSong went so far as to build an entire acoustic guitar out of wood-grained graphite composite. Ibanez built noise gating into their PBC GTX-200H guitar, and Fishman introduced the Acoustic Performer-8, one of several new combo amps from various manufacturers designed specifically for "unplugged" situations.

The retro trend affected bass players only insofar as aspiring rock gods, in the interests of spontaneity and low-tech authenticity, have been abandoning rackmount processors in favor of huge amplifiers and stomp boxes. (Exhibit A: DOD/Digitech's FX69 Grunge pedal. Exhibits B and C: the newly reissued Sovtek/Electro-Harmonix Big Muff and Korg's Vox Wah-Wah.) At the same time, digital designs developed to the point that manufacturers could both pack their rack electronics into floor units and easily design effects specifically tailored for bass. Korg, Roland and ART led the way with the A4, ME-6B and Nightbass respectively. SWR took a unique approach with their Interstellar Overdrive preamp, providing bass players with tube-distortion and tone-shaping capabilities that guitarists have enjoyed for a long time.

"In amplifiers and pro audio, Fender did what we haven't done in 30 years. No technological innovations; we just concentrated on making equipment that sounds good, and that responds in a musical way."
—ROBERT SANDELL, vice president of electronics, Fender

Digidesign Session 8: A digital audio workstation for the rest of us!

Oddly enough, keyboards, the bastion of high-tech progressivism, also went retro in '93. Amid reports of prominent musicians amassing huge collections of Mellotrons, Moogs, Oberheims and Hammonds, players embraced the E-mu Vintage Keys module, packed with samples of the same. In fact, imitating old Hammond organs has become something of an industry in itself, judging by new entries from Hammond Suzuki, Voce and others. As prices of used analog synths rose to all-time highs—thanks in no small part to the techno/rave community—Roland, Ensoniq, Kawai, Peavey and Alesis included analog timbres in their new sample-playback instruments. Tom Oberheim himself

announced a new synthesizer from his latest company, Marion Systems.

Leave it to E-mu to introduce the first truly new synthesizer since Kurzweil's K2000. The Morpheus, scheduled to arrive at year's end, uses dynamically controlled digital filters to mimic natural formants, and—imagine!—to create genuinely new sounds.

Drummers don't have much use for a retro trend, as they never had an era of sustained, rampant innovation. Sure, there's a small community of switched-on percussionists, served mainly by Roland, Yamaha, Kat and ddrum. But by now, just about everyone else has given up on the MIDI percussion revolution. If it ever happens, it may have its roots in the exceptionally responsive Roland TD-series kit released this year.

Perhaps, after all, there's nothing better for pounding on than wood and skin. In which case manufacturers must scramble for something new to do with them, and we're left with such earth-shaking developments as bass drum pedals from Remo and Tama that allow you to adjust the angle at which the beater strikes the head. Speaking of pedals, this year Drum Workshop revived the old-fashioned nylon-strap design, which is more responsive than chain-and-sprocket schemes. There was also a move toward suspension mounting, pioneered by Pure cussion's RIMS line, which enhances a drum's resonance and sustain. Pearl and Yamaha acknowledged the concept this year by launching their own versions.

"As an industry, we now compete not only with each other, but with other leisure-time activities. Dealers have realized that and have really matured in their ability to pull in customers. We've done very well this year as a result."
—RON MEANS, president, JBL

Gibson Nighthawk: Paul meets Tele, one of the few new guitar designs for 1993.

For all that grunge conquered the world and *Unplugged* records glutted the charts, this year the real action, as usual, was in high tech. If nothing else, 1993 proved that the future of personal multitracking is digital. And we're not talking about the distant future: One year from now, there will be little reason to buy the few analog decks that remain in the stores. By then the first wave of low-end digital recorders will finally be available and the second wave will come crashing in. The options will be so diverse as to make analog a thing of the past.

Among them: digital multitrack tape machines, including the Alesis ADAT, Tascam DA-88 and Fostex RD-8. ADAT is at the center of another important development: strategic alliances among competing manufacturers. Digidesign, JL Cooper, MIDIman, TimeLine and Steinberg/Jones all introduced products this year directly supporting Alesis' machine. Similarly, Mark of the Unicorn and Steinberg/Jones are supporting Yamaha's hard-disk system, the CBX-D5, while Lexicon, Apogee and most major Mac software companies signed on with Digidesign's upcoming DAE/TDM system.

The alternative to tape is to store audio on a hard drive, as do Yamaha's CBX-D5, Akai's DR4d, ART's DR/8000 and Creation Technologies' RADAR. The most dramatic such device is Digidesign's Session 8. With its integration of mixing, signal-processing and audio-routing functions, Session 8 rings the death knell for the cassette mini-studio.

Still, Session 8 is an expensive system by mini-studio standards. What's going to drive prices down? Well, if you hold up a finger, you'll feel a stiff breeze blowing in the direction of the data-reduction schemes that made possible the introduction, this year, of Philips' DCC and Sony's MiniDisc. Both data reduction and the compromised audio that goes with it point to a new generation of digital personal multitrack systems that will sound better than cassette-based decks and cost just as little. And for the final mix, why not record to a standard CD? Recordable CD (CD-R) decks appeared around one year ago in the $4000-to-$9000 range. Word is that we'll see them for under $1000 before 1993 is up.

"Our RAP-10 card for the IBM provides two-track digital recording plus synthesis for the multimedia market. Whether for games or sequencing, music production is reaching a mass audience."
—NANCY KEWIN, vice president, Roland

Yamaha TMX: The price point for great drum sounds keeps dropping, and user-friendly interfaces keep improving.

The breeze starts to look more like a gale-force wind when you consider the huge resources manufacturers are pouring into the market for so-called multimedia. Multimedia, as the saying goes, is a concept in search of a market. Nonetheless, it now drives the market for low-priced, high-tech music gear. This year traditional musical instrument companies, notably Roland and E-mu, affirmed their commitment to multimedia with General MIDI sound modules that offer tremendous bang for the buck. In fact, E-mu found itself the property of a company founded on multimedia hardware, Creative Technologies.

But what's multimedia good for? It won't be long before we find out: Multimedia playback devices targeted at consumers finally hit the market toward the end of the year in a bevy of incompatible formats: LaserActive (from Pioneer), CD-I (Magnavox) and 3DO (Panasonic). Throughout 1993, prominent artists were readying products for these formats, among them Todd Rundgren's *No World Order* (on CD-I), David Bowie's *Jump They Say* (a video single on CD-ROM), Peter Gabriel's *Explora* (CD-ROM) and *Freak Show* by the Residents (CD-ROM).

Of course, musicians on technology's bleeding edge are plenty hip to CD-ROM. Proof? Well, this year Akai introduced the CD3000, an integrated sampler/CD-ROM drive; Korg offered an interactive CD-ROM demo of their new X3 workstation; and developers released zigabytes of sampled sounds in the format. East-West went one step further, releasing CD-ROMs that include not only audio but standard MIDI files as well. One such production, *The Original Funky Drummer* by James Brown's legendary sideman Clyde Stubblefield, includes special software, called DNA, that extracts the rhythmic "feel" of Stubblefield's performance, enabling you to impose it on your own MIDI sequences. Ouch! The concept of musical authorship takes another one on the jaw.

Meanwhile, companies entering the musical instrument market through multimedia's virtual back door are too numerous to mention. Most offer low-priced computer add-ons that do sampling, synthesis, effects, mixing and the like. Since most computer owners own IBM-compatibles, most of these products are designed for that platform. The combination of last year's release of the Windows 3.1 operating system and this year's flood of multimedia-oriented IBM peripherals sets the stage for IBM to catch up with the Mac in the near future.

"Surround Sound is built into almost every stereo receiver over $500. This opens an opportunity to create incredible mixes using our CP-1 Pro Logic encoder. Three-D sound is the future!"
—JOEL SILVERMAN, director of sales, Lexicon

Mackie 24•8: The kind of bang-for-the-buck we've come to expect from line mixers becomes available in a professional recording console.

"Wireless has reached the point, thanks to our T-series systems, where it's both affordable and reliable enough to be practical for any working player, from the garage band up."
—SANDY SCHROEDER, director of microphone marketing, Shure

But there's more to the story than IBM. Atari released the Falcon 030 this year, the first personal computer with full-bandwidth audio recording and playback built-in. Hot on Atari's heels, Apple introduced their "av" models (that is, audio/video). They're built for multimedia, but you're sure to be seeing them in rock 'n' roll garages across the land.

Speaking of Apple, what may look like a minor blip on the computer screen could translate into dramatic changes: Following this year's January NAMM show, nearly every developer of music software for the Mac announced their support for OMS (Open MIDI System), Opcode's alternative to the woefully inadequate Apple MIDI Manager system extension. Mark of the Unicorn, whose FreeMIDI software competes with OMS, was the only holdout. Nonetheless, the new alliances suggest that the long-running war of the operating systems, which has caused so many Mac-using musicians so much grief, may soon be over.

Gone, too, may be the days when high-end complexity scared novices away from MIDI software. Opcode, Passport, Steinberg/Jones and Dr. T's now offer entry-level versions of their pro products, particularly sequencing and notation programs. In fact, the emphasis was on integrating the two: witness Opcode's MusicShop, Passport's MusicTime and Cubase Score by Steinberg/Jones. In addition, there were efforts to extend software lines across IBM, Mac and Atari platforms, most obviously Steinberg/Jones' Cubase. This year also saw the first sequencers that support MIDI Machine Control (MMC), a 1992 addition to the MIDI spec that allows tape decks to be controlled via MIDI.

The quest for a similar standard for controlling and metering amplifiers, mixers and signal processors via computer—MIDI for sound reinforcement—took off this year during meetings sponsored by the Audio Engineering Society (AES). Despite competing protocols from Crest, Crown and Intelix, it appears that Lone Wolf's MediaLink will exert a big influence on the final spec.

But the most visible—or rather invisible?—advance in sound reinforcement was the wholehearted embrace, by a number of the year's biggest touring bands, of ear-worn monitors. This technology, introduced last year by FutureSonics and Bross, replaces bulky stage monitors with custom-molded ear pieces, minimizing onstage volume levels and maximizing each player's ability to hear the monitor mix of his or her choice. This year, Circuits Maximus offered lower-priced models that don't require custom molding, while L.R. Baggs introduced a version designed specifically for acoustic guitarists.

Ear-worn monitors are just part of a larger development over the past few years: the gradual emergence of "virtual amplification," in which the sound exists only electrically until it issues forth from the mains. But that's a story for the future, as are many other tantalizing possibilities for 1994. User interfaces, like that of Lexicon's brand-new Jam Man, will be tailored for specific musical activities rather than general functionality. Auto-accompaniment, the province of consumer keyboards until appearing in Korg's i-series workstations and Yamaha's GW50 stomp box this year, will be harnessed as a viable creative tool. And, of course, the musical community will become increasingly involved in producing interactive multimedia, with results unlike anything we've seen on MTV. So keep your eyes and ears open, and start warming up your chops. It's going to be a wild new year.

TED GREENWALD

The 4200 Series. Designed For The Control Room, Not The Living Room.

Today's recording studio has evolved into a multi-function facility which simultaneously addresses the specialized needs of music recording, film and video post, and radio production. In this environment, where the most critical listening often occurs in the final mix, close proximity monitors are often more important than the mains. The problem: most console top monitors, unfortunately, were designed for the living room not the control room. Until now.

With the 4200 Series we're taking our stand from where you sit: right where you work at the console. Designed, engineered and tested from this position, the 4200 Series is the first console mount monitor created specifically for the professional recording environment.

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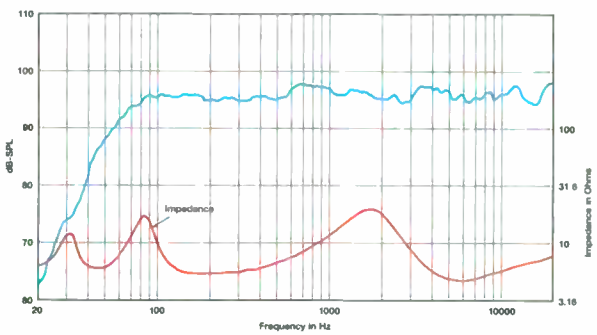
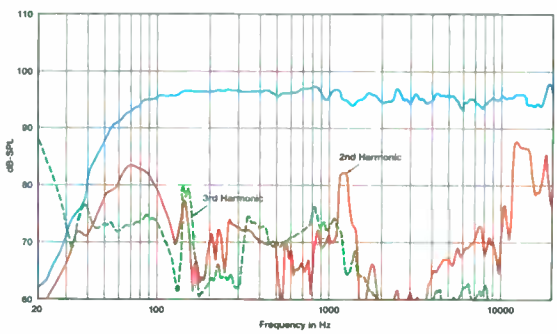


Frequency Response (Model 4206): 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels



Distortion vs. Frequency (Model 4208) 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels (distortion raised 20 dB)

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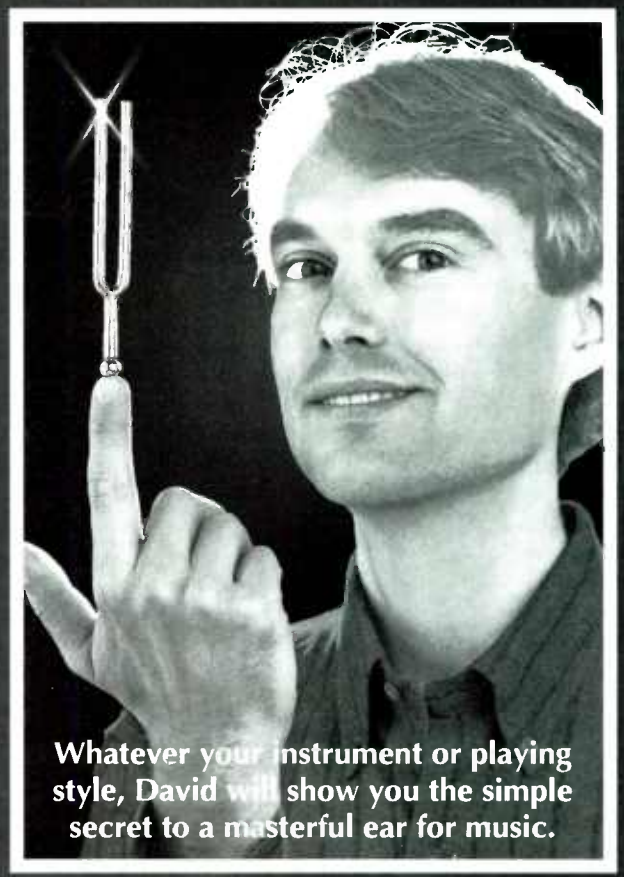

Whatever your instrument or playing style, David will show you the simple secret to a masterful ear for music.

by David L. Burge

IT ALL STARTED in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry.

I would slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda didn't practice anywhere near that amount. But somehow she always seemed to have an edge which made *her* the star performer of our school.

It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend Sheryl sensed my growing competition. One day she bragged on and on about Linda, adding more fuel to my fire.

"You could *never* be as good as *Linda*," she taunted me. "*Linda's* got *Perfect Pitch*."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated over a *few* of Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name any tone or chord —*just by ear*; how she could sing any pitch at will—*from mere memory*; and how she could play songs after only *listening* to them on the radio!

My heart sank. *Her fantastic EAR is the key to her success* I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But later I doubted the whole story. How could anyone possibly know F♯ or B♭ just by *listening*? An ability to recognize pitches would give someone a *mastery* of the *entire musical language!*

Yet it bothered me. Did Linda *really* have Perfect Pitch? I finally got up the nerve and point-blank asked Linda if the rumors were true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "*Can I test you sometime?*"

"OK," she replied cheerfully.

I couldn't wait to make her eat her words...

MY PLAN was ingeniously simple: I picked a moment when Linda least suspected it. Then I *challenged* her to name tones for me—*by ear*.

I made sure she had not been playing any music. I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made certain that other classmates could not help her. I got everything set up perfectly so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as some kind of ridiculous joke.

Nervously, I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene. Then, with silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll *never* guess F♯!)

I had barely touched the key.

"F♯," she said.

I was astonished.

I quickly played another tone. She didn't even think. *Instantly* she announced the correct pitch.

Frantically, I played more and more tones here and there on the keyboard. But each time she would somehow know the pitch. She was SO amazing. She could identify tones as easily as *colors!*

"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled.

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up.

With the barest pause she sang the proper pitch. I had her sing tone after tone (trying hard to make them increasingly difficult). But as I checked her on the keyboard, I found that she sang each note perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "*How in the world do you do it?*" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And to my dismay, that was all I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet from that moment on I knew *Perfect Pitch is real.*

I couldn't figure it out...

"*HOW DOES SHE DO IT?*" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* recognize such basic musical tones by ear? It dawned on me that most people can't tell a simple C from a C♯, or the key of *A major* from *F major*! It seemed weird that a *musician* would not know tones—like a *painter* who doesn't know *colors!* Or a *mathematician* who can't recognize *numbers!* Or an *English teacher* who cannot identify a *dangling participle!*

I found myself even more mystified than before. Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this intriguing problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my three brothers and two sisters into playing tones for me so I could guess each pitch by ear. My many attempts were dismal failures.

So I tried playing the tones *over* and *over* in order to memorize them. I tried to feel the "highness" or "lowness" of each pitch. I devised various methods to learn those elusive tones. But *nothing worked.* I found I simply could *not* recognize the pitches by ear.

After weeks in vain, I finally gave up. Linda's Perfect Pitch was extraordinary—a prized trophy of talent and virtuosity. But for me, an ear like that was way out of reach.

Perfect Pitch method proven by research at TWO leading universities!

Then it happened...

It was like a miracle—a twist of fate—like stumbling upon the lost Holy Grail:

Once I had stopped *straining* my ear, I began to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of *sound*. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever "let go"—and *listened*—to discover these subtle differences within the musical tones.

Soon—to my own disbelief—*I too could recognize the tones by ear!* It was simple. I could hear how F♯ sounds one way, while B♭ has a *different* sound—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and name tones, chords and keys all by ear—*by tuning in to these subtle "pitch colors" within the tones.*

It was almost childish—I felt that *anyone* could unlock their own Perfect Pitch by learning this simple secret of *pitch color*.

In a dramatic declaration, I told my close friend Ann (a flutist) that *she* could also have Perfect Pitch. She *laughed* at me.

"You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted, believing that somehow I always had it.

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I countered. "Not long ago I couldn't recognize one note. Now it's *easy!*" I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too was able to hear the pitch colors. From this simple realization, it was a short matter of time before Ann had *also* acquired Perfect Pitch!

We became instant school celebrities. Classmates loved to challenge our abilities by playing tones for us to guess and coaxing us to sing pitches from out of thin air. We always left them in awe and amazement. Everyone was fascinated with our "supernatural" abilities, but to us it was normal.

Way back then I would not have dreamed that I would later explain my discovery to college music professors. Yet when the time came, I did—only to have many instructors *laugh* at me. You may have guessed it—they said you had to be *born* with Perfect Pitch. But once I showed them the secret of how to hear the pitch colors—*and they heard for themselves*—you'd be surprised how quickly they changed their tune!

As I continued my own college music studies, my Perfect Pitch allowed me to progress far faster than I ever thought possible. I even *skipped over* two required courses. Perfect Pitch made everything easier—performing, composing, arranging, sight-reading, transposing, improvising—and it dramatically enhanced my *enjoyment* of music. I found out that music is definitely a HEARING art.

Whatever happened with Linda?

Oh yes—I'll have to backtrack a little. Time caught up to me at the end of my senior year of high school. Now I was almost 18. In the four years since I had acquired Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. But I was still not satisfied I had truly beat out Linda. Now it was my *final chance* to prove myself.

Our local university sponsored a music festival each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me as the last person to play—the *grand finale* of the entire event.

Linda gave her usual sterling performance. It could be tough to match, and this was my last shot. Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out—*and scored an A+ in the highest possible performance classification.* Linda only got an A.

Sweet victory was music to my ears—mine at last!

Now it's YOUR turn!

These days, thousands of musicians around the world and research at two universities have also proved my Perfect Pitch method (info on request).

NOW I'd like to show YOU how to gain *your own* Perfect Pitch! To start, you need only a few basic instructions. I've had a lot of fun revealing my method in my **Perfect Pitch® SuperCourse**. *It's easy*—and you don't have to read music! It's also *guaranteed* to work for you—regardless of your instrument, your style, or your current ability level.

Try it yourself: Just order your own **Perfect Pitch® SuperCourse** and play the first two cassettes. I promise you will hear the Perfect Pitch colors that I'll start you on—*or you can return the Course for a full refund.* You've got my word on it. You can even read my short handbook and check your progress with no risk. You'll find a *dramatic improvement in your pitch and your playing* in only 40 days, or return the Course and *I'll personally make sure you get refunded—no questions asked!*

Think of the possibilities that Perfect Pitch can open for YOU and *your* music. Imagine how it can improve *your* playing, *your* singing—*your own* creativity and confidence.

And picture your friends' faces when YOU can name tones and chords with laser-like precision!

Please—don't *you* laugh, too! At least not until you give me a *chance* to formally introduce you to *YOUR VERY OWN* Perfect Pitch!

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Research references at two leading universities:: *A study to determine the effectiveness of the David L. Burge technique for development of Perfect Pitch,* M.E. Nering (1991), The University of Calgary; *An experimental investigation of the effectiveness of training on absolute pitch in adult musicians,* M.A. Rush (1989), The Ohio State University. *You will automatically receive research summaries when you order your Perfect Pitch SuperCourse or request FREE Course information!*

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A&M RECORDS

MY BACK PAGES

BOB DYLAN
WORLD GONE WRONG
(COLUMBIA)

This is Bob Dylan's second album in a row of solo performances of old folk and blues songs. Last year's *Good As I Been to You* was a nice tribute to the master's inspirations, but nothing you would go back to very often. This new one, though, deserves to be considered a major Bob Dylan album, the latest in the series of occasional lightning bolts most recently represented by *Infidels* (1983) and *Oh Mercy* (1989). In *World Gone Wrong* Dylan demonstrates that he can say more in someone else's song than most artists can say in their own.

Good As I Been to You was dominated by story-songs, which when sung today emphasize the archaic aspects of traditional ballads. *World Gone Wrong* is mostly first-person narratives of love lost and eternal regrets. Beyond the fact that this gives listeners the illusion of a single trustworthy narrator guiding them on their journey, the song choices emphasize the timelessness of the basic human condition. Rather than dwell on what makes old songs exotic, Dylan finds what makes them universal. Dylan has been saying for a while that there is no need for anybody to write any more songs—there are plenty! This album seems to be his way of illustrating that outrageous point. Had "Blood in

PHOTOGRAPH BY RANDEE ST. NICHOLS

My Eyes" appeared under Dylan's name on *Bringing It All Back Home* or *Street Legal*, we would have praised it and said that no one else can write such lyrics. Which, I suppose, is Dylan's point.

By choosing to record these old songs, Dylan also finds new (and newly appropriate) emotional colors in his increasingly craggy voice. Sinatra adopted a similar strategy in his 50s, turning the disadvantage of a more limited vocal instrument into the advantage of a more expressive emotional range. When Dylan sings, in this version of "Delia," "All the friends I ever had are gone," it breaks your heart. His world-worn voice reveals the cracks behind his stoicism in a way that this most unsentimental of singers would never allow in his lyrics. The weight of nobility and loss are as appropriate to this older Dylan's singing as anger and hunger were to the snarl of his youth.

Bob Dylan is probably the greatest talent to have come out of rock 'n' roll. In fact, rock owes much of its legitimacy to having been the form that Bob Dylan chose to use (Imagine if Dylan had "gone polka" at Newport in '65! All those kids would be hammering on accordions today). However, it has been a long time since Dylan has made the best records or done the best work in rock 'n' roll. It seems that, like a great painter, he can only give us what he is feeling at the moment his work is captured. If the tape recorder is running on a good day, we get *Blood on the Tracks*. If it's a bad day we get *Under the Red Sky*. What Dylan will not do is record a song, even a great song, if it is not true to what he is experiencing at that time. So he will leave "Blind Willie McTell" or "Series of Dreams" sitting in a closet while releasing "Wiggle Wiggle." Dylan may tell tall tales until every last journalist gives up and goes home, but he seems to be incapable of lying in his music.

Like Van Morrison and Neil Young, Dylan cannot be forced to betray his instincts now because he had a lot of success (and achieved financial security) during that brief opening when the businessmen didn't know what was going on and music slipped out of their control for a decade or so. Because he got away with making *art* then, it is too late to convince Dylan that it can't be gotten away with. So he does what he does and we can take it or leave it. In the last decade much of Dylan's recorded work has been for True Believers only. But *World Gone Wrong* is for anyone with ears to listen and a heart to feel.

—Bill Flanagan

DIGITAL UNDERGROUND

The "Body-Hat" Syndrome

(TOMMY BOY)

LAUGH ALL YOU WANT AT *THE "BODY-HAT" SYNDROME*. It's a lot easier than grappling with the knotty subtexts of this fascinating, uneasy head trip. Sure, there's plenty of genuinely funny stuff on the third album from this sprawling Oakland-based collective. With Greg Jacobs a.k.a. Shock-G supervising the master plan and jovial sex machine Humpty-Hump (Eddie Humphrey) furnishing cheap laughs, Digital Underground continues to fashion an absurd cosmology in the image of its spiritual daddy, George Clinton. Built on vintage Parliament and Funkadelic samples, these densely funky jams promise an endless, transcendent boogie, with guest shots from P-Funk vets Michael Hampton, Gary Cooper and Gary Shider adding credibility, not that any was needed.

But the folks who once proclaimed "Doowatchalike" now tend to say "Watchwhatchado." Though Humpty and company celebrate freaky business with tireless gusto, they're so careful not to seem irresponsible the album often resembles a public-service ad for rubbers. Lust and dread come together, as it were, on the hyperactive "Jerkit Circus," a humorous ode to self-abuse that advises, "Hold your sausage hostage," among other pithy phrases.

Periodically, the fun stops for a reality dose. "Holly Wanstaho," a grim antidote to flip views of prostitution, includes a spooky background voice murmuring, "Write out your will"; the sorrowful "Wussup wit the Luv," lamenting police brutality and drug abuse, might ring false if it didn't come from hardcore clowns. Or consider the three part "Body-Hats," proposing condom-style defenses against everything from other people's paranoia to TV lies. The tough beats and blunt rhymes imply bold resolve, but check out the cover, where the guys look downright frightened.

Still, bad vibes don't dominate this exhausting 75-minute epic by a long shot, as rousing grooves such as "Bran Nu Swetta" and "Shake & Bake" keep hope alive. While Humpty's vision of the eternal orgy wears thin, at least there's no malice in his lewd 'n' crude stories. In "Doo Woo You," he brags, "I'm potent/'Cause soul is what I'm totin'," yet that boast seems more like a bluff than ever before. Wired into universal anxieties, *The "Body-Hat" Syndrome* battles despair to a draw, then returns to party mode. If you think it's just a black thing, listen harder.

—Jon Young

TEENAGE FANCLUB

Thirteen

(DGC)

YOU CAN'T READ ABOUT TEENAGE Fanclub without coming across a reference to Big Star. When the pop/rock thesaurus is published, there it will be: Teenage Fanclub: *Synm.* Big Star. The band has even titled its third album *Thirteen*, partly in homage to the Big Star song, partly because there happen to be 13 songs here.

Such comparisons are not as apt as people might think, however. Alex Chilton was a writer of beautifully flawed pop songs that sounded polite on the surface but hid real personal doubts. With Teenage Fanclub, there is nothing particularly painful lurking; this is a collection of superb pop songs that strum and bang and quickly get out of the way. It's the sound of four young men from Glasgow, Scotland who in a world of jackhammer rhythms and cyber-insanity have opted to write catchy melodies, sing fawning harmonies and do so with as little attitude as possible. Where previous albums found them coming up short in the idea department, *Thirteen* seems overloaded with melodic possibilities. Conceptually, they most closely resemble the Beatles (or Spinal Tap), circa 1965–1970, but because the Beatles are such pop monoliths, I think most critics are afraid to lean too heavy on that comparison and fans, in turn, would suspect overhype. But I've said it.

What sets *Thirteen* above the average "melodic grunge"—or as one song would have it, "Commercial Alternative"—is the group's un-

canny ability to make their anonymous, "pretty" voices signify, and a production that says drums are part of the sound and not something to isolate and crank up the reverb on. There's a simple joy to the melodic contours of "Radio," a sly passion in the way the word "fuck" jumps out of "Fear of Flying," and no reason to discuss what these songs are "about," because I don't know, and it doesn't matter. *Thirteen* is great ear candy that we may one day learn is also nutritious.

—Rob O'Connor

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Tribute to the Music of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys

(LIBERTY)

AT A MOMENT WHEN GARTH BROOKS is outselling every artist in the land, you've got to hand it to his label, Liberty Records, for putting out a press release hailing an Asleep at the Wheel album as "the music event of the decade." It happens to be true, however, and Brooks is part of the reason why. Along with Merle Haggard, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Chet Atkins, Lyle Lovett, Vince Gill, George Strait and others, he's part of the widest-ranging lineup of country superstars on one record in memory—which is only fitting, since Bob Wills, the subject of this tribute, was the most eclectic, and arguably influential, figure in the history of country music.

Few have reflected that influence more directly than Asleep at the Wheel's leader Ray Benson, who produced this 18-track tour de force that in many ways suggests a culmination of his own remarkable career. Wills tended to spark unusual loyalty among his fans, and from the first notes struck by Texas Playboys Eldon Shamblin and Johnny Gimble on the instrumental "Red Wing," it's clear that Benson has helped craft a labor of love. What's surprising is the strength of feeling that permeates so many of the guest performances. You'd expect Merle Haggard and George Strait to knock the socks off Western swing classics like "I Wonder if You Feel the Way I Do" and "Big Ball's in Cowtown," and they oblige. But when Huey Lewis, of all people, finds the perfect groove for "Hubbin' It," and Dolly Parton breaks your heart on "Billy Dale" with one of the loveliest ballads of her career, you realize that, amidst the current glut of "tribute" records out today that suggest thinly disguised marketing schemes, this one is the real thing.

Few of Bob Wills' best-known songs are covered here, which is just fine—his various recordings of "Faded Love" and "San Antonio Rose" aren't about to be improved upon. With a repertoire once estimated at 3600 songs, there's still plenty to choose from, and indeed, the songs on this collection are richer musically and more evocative of his legacy than the familiar hits. All of Wills' music is rooted in the blues (sad songs with a happy beat, as it was once described) and you can hear that on covers as diverse as Lyle Lovett's "Blues for Dixie," with its inflections of Louis Armstrong, the Dust Bowl lament "Dusty Skies" and yes, Garth Brooks on "Deep Water," which he snaps off with assured Okie swing. Elsewhere, the instrumental backup from Asleep at the Wheel (with guest ringers like Gimble, Shamblin, Herb Remington and Floyd Domino) is a model of taste and economy, yet capable of surprising emotional force. In the best tradition of country music, these songs aren't just played, they're lived.

Members of the Texas Playboys often remarked that Bob Wills' mere presence had a powerful effect on their music. If he didn't show up for a gig, the band sounded flat, yet as soon as he walked in the door, his spirit somehow lifted everything to a higher level. Ray Benson barely knew Wills, who died in 1975. But when Asleep at the Wheel made this record, Bob Wills was there.

—Mark Rowland

COWBOY JUNKIES

Pale Sun, Crescent Moon

(RCA)

MAZZY STAR

So Tonight That I Might See

(CAPITOL)

MARGO TIMMINS AND HOPE SANDOVAL share more than just a penchant for inarticulation. They're the queens of a peculiar brand of ruminative roots music, based on the belief that a funereal folk song can carry the weight of psychodrama and guitar distortion. In soft, haunted timbres, they croon uneasy but somehow soothing lullabies for restless sleepers reconciled to their own night terrors.

Timmins' band, Cowboy Junkies, has a much more cogent connection to the waking world than Sandoval's Mazzy Star. Margo's songwriting brother Michael is firmly grounded in the classic singer/songwriter

customs, even if the Junkies' defining album, *The Trinity Sessions*, felt as dirgelike and candlelit as a pop album could. Since then the band has warmed up a bit, going for more expansively narrative lyrics and full-bodied instrumentation, but *Pale Sun, Crescent Moon* more closely recalls the sparse, clinically depressed Junkies everyone first fell in love with. It's not retrogressive and never seems self-consciously morose—"Anniversary Song" is as blissful a love song as you'll ever hear in the post-modern age—but it does convey its chilly scenes of winter, the season in which most of the lyrics are pointedly set, by only rarely employing accoutrements like organ and harmonica to supplement the low-key voice and guitar.

Many of these captivating songs, like "Ring on a Sill," are snapshots of people caught up in the hard work of trying to make marriages succeed, distracted by past or future dreams. There's a hard-fought maturity here which refuses to fall terminally in love with the melancholy the Junkies otherwise nurse so well. When Timmins describes a lover's psychic tug as "like a haunting," she undercuts the romanticism by churlishly adding, "irritating as hell." The Cowboy Junkies are drawn to the flightiness of spirits, but finally write great, grounded music for and about real people.

Mazzy Star is the band that a lot of folks graduated to after they decided the Junkies had gotten too inviting and coherent. And you can bet *they* don't find hauntings so doggone irritating; when Sandoval croons, "I look to you and I see nothing" in the gorgeous leadoff track "Fade into You," she sounds less insulting than she does grateful to have found her Zen-like match. Likewise, when she sings, "I could feel myself turning into dust," it's hard to figure whether such crumbling renders mortal terror or seems like a nice way to spend a Saturday.

Or perhaps should we say Sundays, since Mazzy Star tends to suggest that band on 'ludes. Sandoval's mealy-mouthedness, combined with David Roback's minimalist arranging, doesn't exactly brim with substantiveness. Yet there's roundabout satisfaction in hearing this moody duo firmly toe acoustic folk and dirty blues bases without losing their crucial abstraction. With Mazzy Star as dreamy soundtrack, even the literal-minded may feel inclined to sleep in a little longer. —Chris Willman

JACKSON BROWNE

I'm Alive
(ELEKTRA)

JACKSON BROWNE'S FIRST ALBUM IN four years departs from the political/issues orientation of his last three, being a more introspective set of songs about love lost, remembered, obsessed over. From the opening title cut, whose second line "I look around my life tonight and you are gone" asserts the theme, to the closer "All Good Things," which suggests resolution, the focus never wavers.

Such single-mindedness in the hands of another artist could be haunting if not flat-out creepy, but Browne over the years has evolved into quite a smoothie, especially when it comes to the music he chooses to accompany his musings—there's a consistent and rather delicate prettiness, a soothing scrumptiousness about the arrangements that suggests that a pleasing sound, as much as time, is the healer of wounds. At first

this is seductive, as the crafty guitar and organ licks subtly sweeten Browne's melancholy lyrics. But over the course of the album, what starts out sounding like intelligent restraint begins to become indistinguishable from listlessness.

Lyrically it's a hit-or-miss affair. Browne's approach has been, in the main, plainly poetical, achieving its effects with evocative imagery rather than enlarging allusions or cryptic utterance. The exception here is "Too Many Angels," which conveys a complex mix of shame and anger in a beguilingly oblique manner. More typical are "Everywhere I Go" (done reggae-style and one of the few numbers with a little musical bite), which speaks of the elation at the beginning of the affair, and "Miles Away," which tells of a sense of loneliness towards its end. These are good, but "Take This Rain" is klutzy ("Take this rain as your new address"), "Sky Blue and Black" in need of more passion to transcend its maudlin construct (Van Morrison is good at that sort of thing) and "All Good Things" a dull climax. Uneven lyrics, though, could be easily overlooked if the music weren't so determinedly tepid; this song cycle needs something more bracing than tasteful professionalism to enhance its dispirited heart. —Richard C. Walls

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

Time Remembered: John McLaughlin Plays Bill Evans
(VERVE)

MAYBE IT'S QUIBBLING OVER SEMANtics, but John McLaughlin is definitely not playing Bill Evans on this album. Sure, McLaughlin covers 10 of the late pianist's compositions with attractive arrangements featuring the unusual instrumentation of five acoustic guitars and one acoustic bass guitar. But Evans, despite his oft-mentioned conservatory training, was a jazz musician of the highest order. Arguably his greatest contribution to the music was his elastic sense of time and the revolutionary, intuitive interplay he developed in his trios. This Bill Evans is nowhere to be found on *Time Remembered*.

Instead McLaughlin has turned the pianist's winsome and always swinging tunes into pretty, but oftentimes precious, guitar chamber music. Clearly chamber music is what McLaughlin intended, or else why hire the Aighetta Quartet, a classical guitar group that, according to the liner notes, had no previous knowledge of Evans' music? By eschewing Evans' subtle rhythmic sensibility and treating his music as literal written scores, McLaughlin drains much of the life from these works. Evans' compositions hold up when taken at this level, but they are diminished by such narrow fidelity to the written notes. The delicate "Waltz for Debbie," which in Evans' classic version with bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian was an example of almost telepathic group dynamics, is transformed here into a dainty formal dance tune.

McLaughlin's arrangements do retain an Evansian sense of open space, and his guitar work is typically precise and expert. But ultimately, the problem with *Time Remembered* is not implementation but conception. While the recording is intelligent and well-crafted, the spirit of Bill Evans would have been better served if McLaughlin approached his music with playful iconoclasm rather than awed respect.

—Andrew Gilbert

NEW RELEASES

ROCK

BY J D CONSIDINE

PHIL COLLINS
Both Sides
(ATLANTIC)

A SOLO ALBUM in the truest sense of the term, *Both Sides* eschews the glib pop cheer of Collins' most radio-friendly work in favor of a lean, low-key sound that, at its best, recalls the unvarnished emotionalism of *Face Value*. Except that where *Face Value* bubbled with rage and reproachfulness, the mood here is more wistful and contemplative, from the understated passion of "There's a Place for Us" to the soft, stylized blues of "Can't Find My Way." It may not be his most obvious and accessible album, but it's definitely among his most satisfying.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Common Thread: Songs of the Eagles
(GIANT)

AN ALBUM OF big-name country stars covering their favorite Eagles hits is an idea so obvious you can't believe it took this long to be made. Though the lineup is a virtual who's who of contemporary country, there are notable omissions, among them Garth Brooks (can you imagine his "Life in the Fast Lane"?). That hardly diminishes what *is* here, like Trisha Yearwood's Ronstadtian "New Kid in Town," Tanya Tucker's gritty "Already Gone" and John Anderson's beautiful, broken-voiced take on "Heartache Tonight."

SWERVEDRIVER
Mezcal Head
(A&M)

BETWEEN THE LACONIC cool of the vocals and the semi-psychedelic swirl of guitars and rhythm, Swervedriver would seem to be tilling the same stylistic turf as My Bloody Valentine or Lush—particularly when the songs are as blithely melodic as "For Seeking Heat." But where other bands treat instrumental clangor strictly in terms of compositional color, Swervedriver understands the visceral excitement of noise—the ways crunch and distortion imply energy and momentum—and shamelessly exploits it in tunes like "You'll Find It Everywhere" and "Blowin' Cool."

COCTEAU TWINS, FOUR-CALENDAR CAFÉ (CAPITOL)

IF YOU'VE SPENT years wondering what, exactly, Elizabeth Fraser was singing (or, for that matter, in what language), then you'll be happy to know that not only is it possible to make out the words on large chunks of this album, but that many of them make sense. This breakthrough in no way diminishes the group's charm; if anything, the candyland blur of the Cocteaus' sound has never been so alluring, whether in the sly pop appeal of "Bluebeard" and "Evangeline" or the soft, dreamy shimmer of "Essence."

LEMONHEADS
Come On Feel the Lemonheads
(ATLANTIC)

AMAZING HOW QUICKLY head Lemon Evan Dando made the transition from alterna-hunk to alterna-hack, isn't it? What sinks this album has less to do with Dando's eagerness to write playlist-friendly Modern Rock Hits (more hooks, less edge) than with the patent insincerity of genre exercises like "Being Around" or "Dawn Can't Decide." Unlike Nick Lowe, whose affection for schlock makes his satires downright lovable, all Dando shows in his songs is smug superiority. So fuck him.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Born to Choose
(RYKO)

GOOD INTENTIONS ARE no guarantee of good music, and as such even devoted fans approach benefit albums with some trepidation. But even anti-abortionists will have a hard time denying the musical merit of this pro-choice collection. Drawing from a broad pool of talent, these performances are focused and effective, from the Michael Stipe/Natalie Merchant duet on R.E.M.'s "Photograph" to the crisp crunch of Helmet's "Distracted." Add in such delicious morsels as Sugar's "Running Out of Time" and the Mekons' acid-edged title tune, and the album itself will seem an easy choice.

BLUR
Modern Life Is Rubbish
(SBK)

HOW CLEVER, THEN, to imitate modern life.

ALISON MOYET
Essex
(COLUMBIA)

WITH ITS EMPHASIS on guitar over synths, it's tempting to take this as a rejection of Moyet's electro-soul past. But what these arrangements really do is place her husky, expressive voice in a setting that supports its warmth and vulnerability. So

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there's room enough for the pop sparkle of "I Know," as well as a k.d. lang punch she lends torch tunes like "Whispering Your Name."

THE MELVINS
Houdini
(ATLANTIC)

KURT COBAIN MAY hate headbangers, but apparently he has no problem with metal itself. Why else would he lend his name and production expertise (such as it is) to this sludgefest? Granted, the Melvins do push the envelope a bit, opting more for P.I.L.-ish drones like "Sky Pup" than the usual riffarama fare, but it takes more than a little faith to believe that the over-amped excesses of "Night Goat" or "Going Blind" make a meaningful alternative to Motorhead.

ROBIN SPIELBERG
Heal of the Hand
(HEAL OF THE HAND)

DON'T BE PUT OFF by the cover's promise of "*beautiful* piano solos"—this ain't just mood music, bub. Pretty as Spielberg's music is, there's enough fire in the playing and rigor in the writing that it bears up under close scrutiny, something that puts her safely in the class of Liz Story or Philip Aaberg. (22 Upper Mountain Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042)

JAZZ

BY CHIP STERN

JOHN COLTRANE
Expression
(IMPULSE!/GRP)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF Charlie Parker's breakthroughs were classical and intellectual, while those of Albert Ayler were folkish and shamanistic. That John Coltrane should be so moved by both was a contradiction many musicians and some of his oldest fans could not—or would not—fathom. Fathom it? Shit, motherfuckers couldn't *play it!* The visceral energy, elemental tension and exploratory verve of *Expression*—Coltrane's final studio sessions—are a wonder to behold, the vision of a man looking death straight in the eye and living each second as if a millennium. Not that Trane was beyond reproach. His meandering flute filigrees on "To Be" go on too long to no particular effect. But there's a heroic dignity and romantic breadth to "Ogunde" that recalls elegiac ballads like "Wise One," while Trane's mature lyric ardor informs the thematic expositions of "Offering" and the title tune. In the free improvisations which follow, the endless amens of Alice, Jimmy and Rashied billow and foam around Coltrane's feet as he stands tall in the teeth of the storm and crafts each note like a column in the Parthenon, with his cantorish intonation and the sanctified rise and fall of pitch which marks great preachers throughout the ages. No, it won't set your toes to tapping or get you laid, but...I mean, have you ever been in love? Do you know what it means to give yourself over to someone or something? That's the energy the mystical Coltrane was plugged into at the end, and why his magisterial command of the tenor saxophone will stop you in your tracks, as *Expression* takes us to the mountain one last time.

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK
Doesyourhousehavelions: The Roland Kirk Anthology
(RHINO/ATLANTIC)

THIS JOYOUS TWO-CD overview of Roland Kirk's Atlantic years is long overdue, as is a critical reappraisal of this great jazz griot. Kirk's rap and his love for churchy rhythms and bluesy melodic ideas anticipated many of today's trends, and what once seemed an unruly gumbo of influences today seems singular for its instrumental command and stylistic outreach—he's like a one-man Sun Ra Arkestra. Holding notes for an hour and playing parallel lines and counterpoint on three saxophones at once is not a gimmick, man, it's a gift. Kirk's tenor work encompassed a range of technique and emotion from Coleman Hawkins through Coltrane, and tunes like "Blacknuss" and Joplin's "The Entertainer" illustrate his elemental preaching quality, while the ring shouts and vocalized flute work on "Making Love After Hours" hearken to something much older than jazz. This Rhino audio collage captures the flamboyance of Kirk's gifts, the vaudevillian range of entertainment and the ancient sense of ritual contained in a typical Kirk set at the Village Vanguard.

JOHN CLARK
Il Suono
(CMP)

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN captivated by the depth and breadth of John Clark's expression on the French horn, and with *Il Suono* he's finally been allowed to record an ensemble which captures the broad stylistic range of his work. Recorded with spectacular digital clarity, *Il Suono* speaks to Clark's love of dancing rhythms and a challenging harmonic canvas. The furiously original Kenwood Dennard and the redoubtable Anthony Jackson give Clark a turbulent, subterranean groove, as guitarist Jerome Harris' chords open up swinging new melodic possibilities for Clark instead of putting him in a harmonic straitjacket. Clark's boppish facility on the French horn makes it sound like a deep trumpet—never awkward or cumbersome—and no matter how far he stretches (and things get plenty mental on the title tune), there's always a lyrical, swinging air to his improvisations. With its Latin, funk and swing reference points, *Il Suono* hints at where "fusion" could be today if adult contemporary hadn't banned emotional content.

MAX ROACH/CECIL TAYLOR
Historic Concerts
(SOUL NOTE)

BEAVER HARRIS 360 DEGREE MUSIC EXPERIENCE
Beautiful Africa
(SOUL NOTE)

PAUL MOTIAN
Paul Motian and the Electric Bebop Band
(JMT)

A TALE OF three free kings. Roach elevated the drum set to extraordinary new levels with these *Historic Concerts* at Columbia University back in 1979. He responds to Taylor's frailing symphonic variations by reinventing the pianist's music second by second, churning back rhythmic modulations with savage delicacy, like Bud Powell paraphrasing *Finnegans Wake*. Drummer Beaver Harris is a great unsung rhythmic innovator, and his 360 Degree Music Experience distills the history of jazz into 40 minutes on *Beautiful Africa*. Harris invokes his ancestors in a cavalcade of body riddims, from funky third-world vamps like "Aladdin's Carpet" and the Coltraneish dances of "African Drums" (featuring Ken McIntyre on bassoon) to the ritualistic fantasies of "Baby Suite," where the drums step way out of time but never stop swinging. This was Beaver's particular gift, set forth with astonishing virtuosity on "Drums for Milano," as his bass drum and snare drum trade places, the cymbals dronin' and stumblin' unaccountably, given the density of his tom-tom rumbles. Paul Motian often seems to be tripping over the beat and his own feet, spazzing about like Buster Keaton taking a pratfall until he suddenly rights himself by doubletiming into the out chorus. Zowie. But given the free nature of Motian's trios and his work with Keith Jarrett, and the impressionistic invention of his discoveries with Bill Evans, Motian's swing/bop credentials have been underdocumented until now. He doesn't adapt the classic works of Birks, Bird, Bud 'n' Monk to contemporary trends, rather he adapts electric bass and guitars (Joshua Redman is the acoustic ringer) to modern jazz without patronizing anyone. Groovy.

MARK O'CONNOR
Heroes
(WARNER BROS.)

JEAN-LUC PONTY
No Absolute Time
(ATLANTIC)

King Kong
(BLUE NOTE)

ON *HEROES* Mark O'Connor shares the stage with his favorite fiddlers, illustrating not only his extraordinary technical and emotional gifts, but the rich history of the fiddle in improvised music. Whether playing jazz/fusion with Jean-Luc Ponty,

western swing with Johnny Gimble and Eldon Shamblin, blues with Vassar Clements, jazz with Stephane Grappelli or Indian classical music with L. Shankar, O'Connor's taste and lyric intensity shine through, yet the most gratifying performance is also the simplest: "Ashokan Farewell" (the theme from PBS's "The Civil War"), here given a poignant, timeless interpretation by O'Connor and classical master Pinchas Zukerman. It's O'Connor's most satisfying recording by a country mile. Virtuoso Jean-Luc Ponty discovered an outlet for his underutilized talents when he joined African musicians on their turf for the joyous *Tchokola* (Columbia). With *No Absolute Time* the Africans meet the violinist on European soil, for a lyrical, upbeat recital far removed from the kind of romantic synthoglop Ponty used to regularly churn out. Still, there's an icy rhythmic sheen to these performances, as if the African rhythmic "feel" had been quantized through a sequencer. By contrast, Ponty's command of Frank Zappa's quirky polymetric arrangements on *King Kong* have aged gracefully, thank you, and while I doubt Ponty cherishes nostalgic memories of his time with Zappa, his airborne melodic abandon on tunes like "Idiot Bastard Son" makes us long for the days when we believed a violinist had arrived who could blow modern jazz in tune, and with feeling.

INDIES

SWEETHEARTS OF THE RODEO
Get Rhythm
(SUGARHILL)

BLOOD HARMONIES, BLUEGRASS arrangements, strong song selection are the turpentine that strips the radio sheen off Sweethearts of the Rodeo, a Top 40 country duo that's gone back to its roots. With Christine Oliver's deep alto and sister Janis Gill's tenor harmonies, they give Johnny Cash's rockabilly chestnut "Get Rhythm" a plucky coat of polish, even as their stark, voice-oriented treatment of Robbie Robertson's "Broken Arrow" leaves you breathless.—*Holly Gleason*

TRILOK GURTU
Crazy Saints
(CMP)

MORE SEAMLESSLY THAN on his past efforts, the stunningly fluid percussionist Gurtu finds post-fusion happiness along that crazy border that hops between his native India, Austria—courtesy of guest Joe Zawinul—and other cross-hemispheric stopovers. Gurtu has found a logical ally in Zawinul, who appears on two duets that bristle with interactive panglobal gusto. In addition to the indigenous Indian textures of vocalist Shobha Gurtu and the wonderfully twisted cellist Ernst Reijseger, Pat Metheny makes a valuable contribution to the mix, bringing lean lyricism to "Manini" and a singing synth tone to the title track. Easterners going west sometimes seem—at least to Western ears—to lose their bearing and musicality along the way. Gurtu may not know where he's going, but, this time out, that wanderlust translates into a tough, ear-opening beauty.

—*Josef Woodard*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Back to the Streets: Celebrating the Music of Don Covay
(SHANACHIE)

DON COVAY'S CLASSIC R&B tunes combine a storyteller's knack for great yarns with deep, greasy soul grooves. This well-conceived salute plumbs his rich catalog of cheatin' songs and party raveups, highlighted by Bobby Womack's ultra-dramatic version of "Checkin' Out," Ron Wood's shaggy "Chain of Fools" and a searing Iggy Pop performance ("Sookie Sookie") that matches anything on his latest LP. Other cool folks stepping up to testify include Robert Cray, Corey Glover, Billy Squier, Ben E. King, Jimmy Witherspoon, Mick Taylor, etc. Now it's time for Atlantic Records to do right by Covay and reissue his gritty mid-'60s gems. As Mr. C. himself once observed, "Have mercy!"—*Jon Young*

DAVE HOLE
Working Overtime
(ALLIGATOR)

SLIDE GUITAR PLAYING has been mired in familiarity for so long that the average version of "Dust My Broom" is enough to send a blues fan into an instant nod. Fear not—Australian Dave Hole has the chops and the smarts to transcend decades' worth of Elmore James clichés. Maybe it has something to do with unorthodox technique: Hole, a southpaw who picks right-handed, plays with a slide on his index finger and frets over the top of the neck. This curious style apparently gets his mental juices flowing, for Hole's work displays bruising power and bewildering invention. The band cooks at a boil, and Hole's vocals ain't too shabby, but ultimately it's the playing here that will leave you slack-jawed with wonder.

—Chris Morris

ROB LAUFER
Swimming Lesson
(EYE)

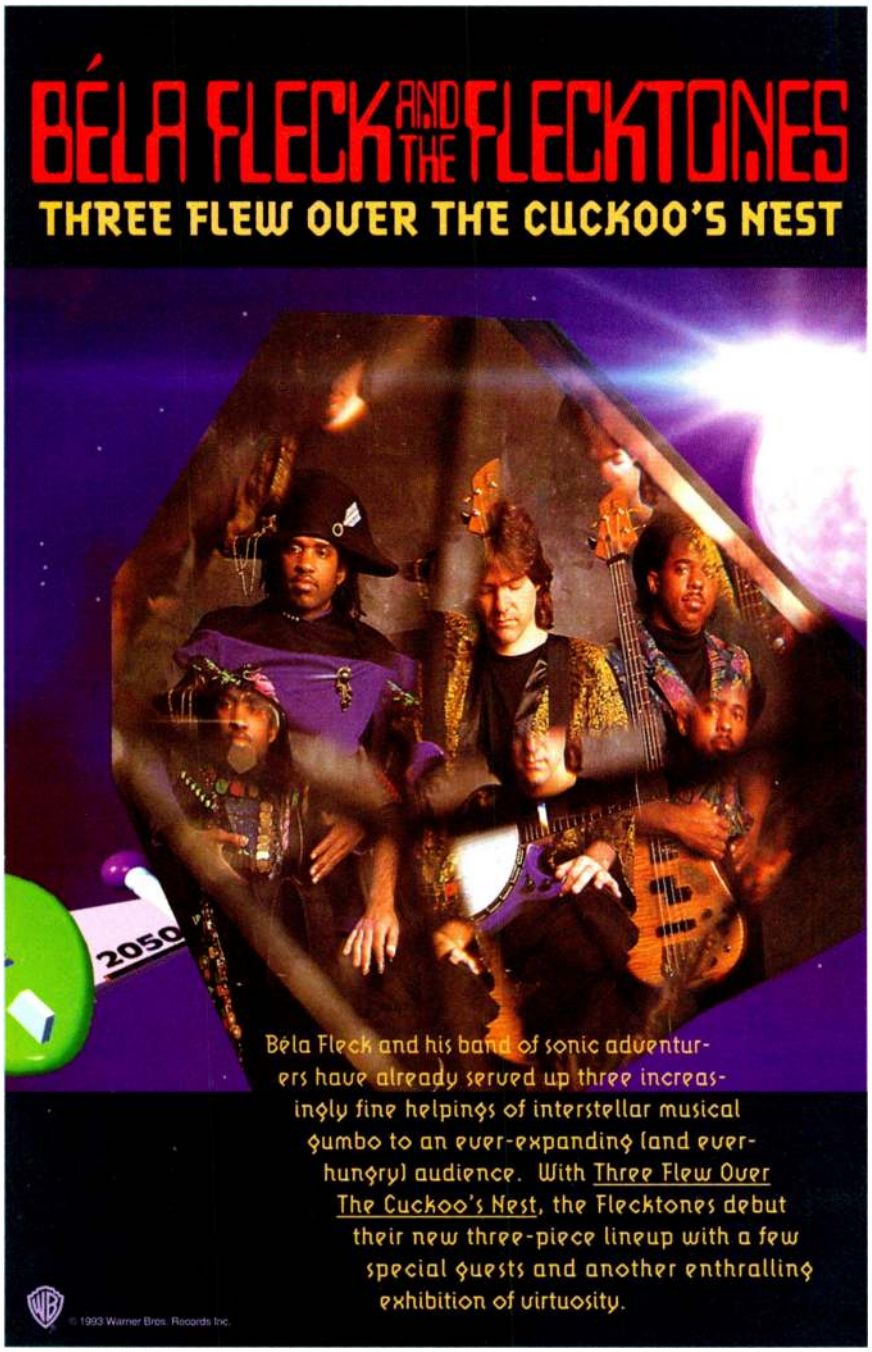
AN L.A.-BASED songwriter whose "Reactionary Girl" provided a terrific kickoff to Robin Zander's recent, underrated (make that unheard) LP, Laufer turns out to be a rangy and compelling talent on this solo debut. And we do mean solo: He plays more or less everything, produces with an ear for concise, spacious pop textures and sings with soulful conviction and an appealingly timbral twang from the Buckingham/Petty/Burnett school, with melodies to match. Like L.A. itself, it's a record full of breezy pleasures and subtle addictions. (8391 Beverly Blvd. #263, Los Angeles, CA 90048)

—Mark Rowland

THE HANGUPS
He's After Me
(CLEAN/TWIN TONE/RESTLESS)

UNDULATING FALSETTO HARMONIES and choppy guitar rhythms from this Minneapolis quartet suggest edgy Brit poppers from the Woodentops to the La's, but the Hangups boast creamier melodies, grungier guitars and—heck, they're just better, that's all. And more American; squint your ears and the bridge over "Waltz" sounds like "Over the Rainbow." They dream, they groove, they rock. Catch 'em while it's still cool.

—Mark Rowland



REISSUES

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Sounds of the South
(ATLANTIC)

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME: In 1959, folklorist Alan Lomax took a two-month swing through the Ozarks, the Mississippi Delta and the Georgia Sea Islands, and taped over 80 hours of field recordings. The material, repackaged here on four CDs, originally appeared in 1960 on six Atlantic albums, and became the rocket-fuel of the folk music revival. A few of these performers, most notably "Mississippi" Fred McDowell, went on to achieve worldwide fame. This was not the case with Charles Everidge's Arkansas mouth-bow, the fife and drum combos of northern Mississippi or the evocative Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. But modern ears are friendlier to "world music," and perhaps better prepared to hear these strange and mysterious sounds of America singing.—*Michael Tisserand*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Blues: A Smithsonian Collection of Classic Blues Singers
(SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION)

THE LATEST GENRE collection from the Smithsonian exhibits many of the same strengths and weaknesses of past sets devoted to jazz, country and popular song. On the up side, the four-CD set is a generous, intelligently annotated 93-track overview that covers country blues, "classic" female vocals and urban blues of the pre- and postwar periods with a keen notion of individual artists' importance, and without any perceptible regional bias. On the down side, licensing problems have left important artists, most notably B.B.

King, absent. Even more troublesome is the Smithsonian's persistent timidity about music of more recent vintage—only two tracks represent the '70s, while just one cut stands for the '80s! No Son Seals, Jimmy Johnson or Robert Cray. The blues has flourished in the last 25 years, but you'd never know it from this package.—*Chris Morris*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Complete Stax/Volt Singles Volume 2: 1968–1971
(FANTASY)

A SUCCESSOR TO Atlantic's gargantuan 1991 compilation of Stax/Volt's 1959–1968 singles, this nine-CD set depicts a company in transition. By the end of 1968, Stax's reigning star Otis Redding was dead, and the dynamite duo of Sam & Dave had departed the label. While such surviving talents as Rufus and Carla Thomas, William Bell, Booker T. & the MGs, and bluesman Albert King continued to craft gritty hits, the Stax sound became cooler and more heavily produced as it moved into the '70s. Gospel-based wailers like Eddie Floyd and Johnnie Taylor still made their mark, but the commercial mainstays of the era were the groaning erotica of songwriter-turned-performer Isaac Hayes and the funky homilies of gospel group–turned–pop group the Staple Singers. Major smashes became fewer and farther between. Casual listeners might be entertained by the chart-toppers here, but *Stax/Volt Volume 2*, with its high-ticket price and its plethora of lesser-known names and numbers, will be of most abiding interest to collectors and musicologists who value names like Judy Clay, Jimmy Hughes, Margie Joseph and J.J. Barnes.—*Chris Morris*

MILES DAVIS
On the Corner
(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)

THAT OLD SAW claiming an artwork to be "ahead of its time" has been used, almost literally, to death. For many of these reputedly prophetic statements, the time never comes. But if any album epitomizes the phrase, it is Miles Davis' *On the Corner*, which has come of age 21 years after its initial release—just in time for CD reissue. If there is justice in the world, it should make many a Top 10 list of "new" jazz albums for 1993.

At the time it was released in 1972, not many noticed—not the critics, not the funk fans that Miles hoped the album would attract—that the man with the horn was onto a new mode of expressionistic funk-jazz, one that owed as much to his heroes James Brown and Karlheinz Stockhausen as it did to African notions of collective musical organization. With its hypnotic post-soul grooves and its sound collage aesthetic, *On the Corner* can now be appreciated as a seedbed of hip-hop, M-Base and other post-modern byways. Check out the funky swagger of Corky McCoy's cover art if you want further proof of retro hipness.

On the Corner is more about the mesh than about the egos who weave it; it's village music, street corner music. Drummers Billy Hart and Jack DeJohnette stick to the business of an airy funk groove, alongside bassist Michael Henderson's simple, cementing role. Meanwhile, strange, transglobal percussion—Don Alias, Badal Roy and Mtume—swirls around the organism, with added exotic sound bites from Collin Walcott's sitar and elliptical synth foot-tones by Herbie Hancock and Harold Williams, Jr. Structurally, the album plays like an undulating suite framing its one discrete "tune," the fiendishly catchy "Black Satin." However intentionally, Miles came upon a vital concept at the two sessions making up the record, one more indigenous to ethnic and experimental traditions than to mainstream jazz, where the soloist reigns supreme. Although John McLaughlin gets off some beautifully scabrous guitar licks and Dave Liebman's soprano sax is aptly spiky, *On the Corner* is not primarily a soloist's playground. Miles limits himself to occasional mutterances, often with a wah-wah-fied trumpet. But the wah-wah's effect, besides a funkifying resonance, was to humanize the trumpet, not to cloak it in electric goop. Despite Miles' limited presence as an improviser, his spirit envelops the project.

Shamelessly myopic, purist jazz critics have tended to dismiss the last 20 years of Miles' output as some kind of hiatus from *the real thing*. But it doesn't get more real, or more exploratory, than *On the Corner*. Of course, Miles couldn't care less about critical nattering: He was too busy chasing some kind of internal voodoo that, thankfully, resulted in late-blooming works of genius such as this. What made Miles Davis the greatest jazz musician ever was his belief in his music as an ever-experimental mission into the dark reaches of the heart. And the heart beats on its own time.—*Josef Woodard*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
In Yo' Face! The History of Funk, Vols. 1–5
(RHINO)

SERVING UP 75 tracks over five CDs might seem like a case of doing it to death—until you experience the surprising variety and unflagging humor of this enduring genre. While some anthologies foster the illusion that styles develop in a vacuum, *In Yo' Face* celebrates common threads, from echoes of '60s soul (Otis Redding haunts King Floyd's "Groove Me") to parallels with disco, funk's less-witty '70s sibling, to harbingers of rap and more—Prince's roots show everywhere. Though not quite definitive (no vintage Ohio Players), this mutha of a lode rarely fails to satisfy, unearthing less obvious pleasures by George McCrae and Graham Central Station along with the mandatory stuff. Some may question the inclusion of Natalie Cole or *four* Average White Band cuts, but any set offering the Isleys, Bar-Kays, Sly Stone, P-Funk and James Brown, among others, rests on solid ground.—*Jon Young*

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