

ARE GUITARISTS KILLING THE BRAZILIAN RAIN FOREST?

# MUSICIAN

OCTOBER 1994 \$2.95

artists on records that changed their life

# 57

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- Chet Atkins
- Neneh Cherry
- Perry Farrell
- Buddy Guy
- Herbie Hancock
- Lenny Kravitz
- John Mellencamp
- Willie Nelson
- Liz Phair
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*Bean, from D'Cuckoo, whose new "Umoja" CD is on RGB Records.*

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*It's not every day that I get to talk to somebody who invented a whole style of music. When you developed what became bluegrass, was it something that happened out of musical necessity, or just a new way of using the elements you heard around you?*

It was just different sounds and ideas that I had, a lot of 'em, and melodies that I wanted to try out and see how the words would go with 'em. So I taken a lot of time gettin' the music the way that I wanted it. But it's a different sound altogether now from other people's music.

I was just searchin' for somebody who could play a good guitar and could do the lead singin' for me, and get a good man on the banjo. But I always wanted a good fiddle out there leadin', headin' the show, you know? So Stringbean, you know, was my first banjo player and that give me the sound of the banjo there, and I wanted to add that in there.

*I wonder who you think, in addition to yourself, carried the tradition forward most effectively. Whether it would be Flatt and Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, Doc Watson, whoever.*

**"Well, some fellers didn't know much to start with."**

Well, some of them fellers didn't know too much to start with, they were just tryin' to learn how to play guitar, you know, things like that. You gotta be a pretty good man to play the guitar for bluegrass, and I guess they learned.

*The young musicians you trained, even as late as the late '50s, came out of a culture very similar to the culture in which you grew up. That culture has now almost disappeared. How does that make working with today's musicians different?*

Well, you can play with 'em today and they'll still try to play it just exactly the way that you played it down through the years. Keep the time of the music right. Play the guitar right. So it works out good.

*In a lot of circles in the music world today, this is regarded as a young man's game. When you began to create music, was that even an issue?*

Yessir, it goes way on back to the sound of the music and everything. The kind of music they were playing on the guitar or the banjo. Some of 'em played it the old-time way, the banjo, you know, go way on back. But see, that didn't fit in with bluegrass music too good because bluegrass is more popular than that.

*Did you ever dream it would sustain itself for this long?*

Well, back when we first started, I had hopes that it would be played good and well enough that we could just continue on with it. And with a lotta young people growin' up and the old-timers growin' older, they'd want to hear the music and I wanted to do it the best way that I could for them. So a lot of it worked out good.

*Was there any resistance from people trained in the old ways who thought that you were doing something that shouldn't be tampered with?*



## BILL MONROE

That's right.

*What were the objections?*

Well, I don't know. They didn't hear a lot of it, it don't seem like, what we was tryin' to play, you know. A lotta them old-timers, you know, they didn't know much about any instrument. They'd just play the guitar and not put nothin' on it at all hardly. The banjo was really country, the way they used to play it years and years ago. And the fiddle player, he didn't put too much on his fiddle, either, years and years ago.

*What did you think the first time you heard Elvis sing "Blue Moon of Kentucky"?*

That gave me a thrill that he recorded "Blue Moon of Kentucky" first. And he apologized to me one time when he was here, on Grand Ole Opry on Saturday night. I told him if it helped him get his start and everything, and give him the style of music he wanted to do, I was for him a hundred percent. It was all right.

*When Elvis did your song, he was working in a trio with no percussion in it. You've never worked with a drummer. What happens musically when you add drums to bluegrass?*

You can put drums in there and play 'em a little bit loud and everything, and they kinda take over. I don't think they should play that kind of a part in my kind of music, bluegrass music. You don't need that timing too much because bluegrass music has got that timing anyway, you see.

*You've been playing for more than 60 years. You still play in Nashville every Wednesday night when you're in town. Is that out of sustained enthusiasm or is it more like a job these days?*

More like a job, I guess.

DAVE MARSH

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# LETTERS

## DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

The August 1994 issue of *Musician* is the first I've ever bought. You may have lost some advertisers by putting Glenn on the cover but you gained a permanent reader!

Tracy Beales  
Baltimore, MD

While processing *Musician* magazine returns I turned to my co-worker and muttered how disappointed I was that *Musician* magazine covers had been kind of boring over the past year. Within minutes of my remark the postman delivered the August issue. Peeling back the plastic wrap I found Glenn Danzig staring back at me.

Congrats to you for the acknowledgement of one of rock's hardest-working bands. We sold out in one day!

Jim Cummer  
Manager/Buyer  
Madbatter Music  
Bowling Green, OH

As far as I'm concerned Glenn is about the only one who knows what the hell is going on in this world. I'm happy for Danzig's new fame but I would just like to ask this question: What the hell took everyone so long!?

Keith T. Grey  
Junction, TX

Danzig on the cover of *Musician* magazine? Isn't that an oxymoron?

"Rock's last mystery man" sounds more like a pretentious pink poodle with a plastic wolf's mask on and his tail quivering between his legs, not even able to stand up to your trivial questions, or for what *he* believes in. This weenie of an article was quite a contrast to July's challenging cover story on Branford Marsalis, probably the best interview I have ever read in your rag.

Pseudo Satanic Cartoon Metalheads take note: Branford Marsalis is much, *much* more rebellious than Glenn Danzig. Not only is Branford severely pushing the envelope of modern music, he has a *bell* of a lot more to say than Glenn Danzig, and Mr. Marsalis is not fearful of whom he might offend.

Evan Schiller  
Sadhappy  
Seattle, WA

Glenn Danzig is a worthy singer/songwriter. He may have a genius for self-promotion. As a deep-thinker, he's in a league with any metal fan who's read a few books on the occult arts. What he *isn't* is mysterious or dangerous.

If you had genuinely wanted to scare your conservative advertisers and impress your sophisticated readers, you would've put the beautiful, subversive Me'Shell NdegéOcello on your cover. Shame on you for playing it safe with Danzig.

Mary Sanchez  
Albuquerque, NM

I first wanted to say thanks to Vic Garbarini for his intelligent and very interesting article on Branford Marsalis (July '94). It is especially gratifying to read opinions from a musician who, until now, I assumed I had nothing in common with. I stand corrected and will value Mr. Marsalis' opinion and pay attention a bit more closely in the future.

I would also like to thank Jon Young for finally writing an article that paints the band Danzig in an accurate light, in my opinion. And thanks for mentioning my Uncle Tony.

Eerie Von  
Bass Player 4 Danzig

Long live Danzig!

Midge  
Fargo, ND

## STONES AGAIN

Hurray for Dave DiMartino's excellent of the Stones' new album (Aug. '94)! Finally, someone wrote what needed to be said! No one can be around for 30 years and not put out some new stuff! Thank goodness Don Was was there. Even after the review, though, I'm still skeptical. Well, I agreed with everything else Dave wrote, so maybe... Thanks for a terrific mag!

Lauren Pearl  
Key West, FL

Obviously Dave "Joker" DiMartino is in the dark concerning Keith Richards' singing capabilities. Aside from perfect harmonies and strong backup vocals, give a serious listen to Keith's solo efforts. DiMartino should understand history before coming up with creative

nicknames for folks much larger than himself.

Jim Sawvé  
Phoenix, AZ

Predictable tub-pounding? Uniform to the point of distraction? Hey, critic DiMartino, can you remember when it was the drummer's job to "lay down a bottom"? No one does it better than Charlie Watts. Next time you're at a concert and the drummer is wrapped in a million pieces of equipment, watch closely. His sticks never touch half of that shit! Sure looks impressive, though.

Dave Farrell  
Ephrata, PA

## PRODUCTION VALUED

Mark Rowland's piece on Don Was and Glyn Johns (Aug. '94) was brilliant. While most modern mags are focusing on fashion layouts and perfume ads, *Musician's* dedication to professional journalism is a true gem.

Bud Philbrick  
Carrabassett Valley, ME

Don Was' "Beatle connection" to Glyn Johns goes beyond his work on the soundtrack for the movie *Backbeat*. I was fortunate and honored to have Don produce a song I wrote for Ringo Starr's last album, *Time Takes Time*. Just as he brings to

a session a vast knowledge of rock history and the awareness of each artist's influences as he shapes their performance, so will the next generation treasure the recordings produced today by Don Was.

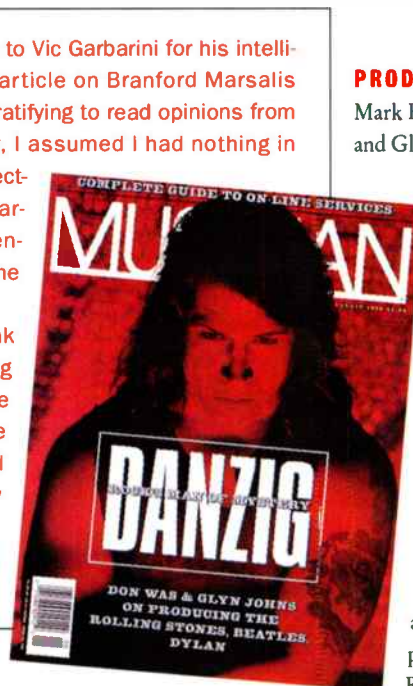
Rick Suchow  
Greenlawn, NY

## ERATA

The following bands were accidentally omitted from the list of semi-finalists in *Musician's* Best Unsigned Band Competition: Monica Pasqual & the Planet Ranch, 2nd Skin, Fetish Ensemble, Inch Blue, New Jazz Ensemble.

Celebrity judges David Byrne, Butch Vig, Sonny Rollins, Rosanne Cash and Flea will announce the winners in the November issue.

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



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### I HAVE A DREAM

"Maybe people will tire of all this electronic wizardry and start going out again to hear live bands. That probably won't happen until a few people get fried by plugging the wrong cable into the wrong receiver while wearing their Walkman and operating the hair dryer at the same time. But let's be patient and just keep hoping!"

—Mark Tully Massagli,  
president of the American  
Federation of Musicians,  
in the June issue of the  
Federation newsletter,  
International Musician

### WHO IS THIS MASKED MAN?

No, it's *not* Adam West, Michael Keaton or Val Kilmer. Give up? Don't do that. The first five correct entries sent to Masked Man, c/o *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, will win a one-year subscription. Answer in next issue.

## Baseball: What's the Score?

by Ken Burns

**MUSIC IS the foundation of my films. I usually record before I start editing, which is the opposite of everyone I know. In my field, music is something you add on after the fact. I score the film *to* the music;**

I time the cutting of the shot to the sound.

For *Baseball* I went into the Baseball Hall of Fame, and got all the sheet music possible. I had someone play each tune on a piano, and anything whose theme struck my heart, I saved. I've got an emotional relationship with melody, and when I'm affected by one, like "Hurrah for Our National Game" this time around, I have them play it in all sorts of varieties: straight, cocktail, symphonic, ragtime, funeral, à la the high school band, whatever. Those become the music beds. We made at least 250 versions of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." It sounds crazy, but I never OD'd on any of them. They have to be used judiciously, and expressed in a variety of ways.

I'm an emotional archeologist, inter-

ested in excavating the social mood of a period. The best way to do that is by letting the music do the work. Take the segment when [baseball manager] John McGraw sings "Danny Boy"; he's an angry and complicated Irishman. If you feel the poignancy of McGraw, "Danny Boy" is perfect for the scene.

I don't think you can equate the older pieces that I might use and something like "Radar Love" or "Theme from Shaft." The old stuff is pliable, reusable, it speaks to the continuity of the film and the underlying feeling of the series. On the other hand, at the moment it's used, there's nothing better than "Radar Love." It makes Cincinnati's Big Red Machine seem totally formidable. Same thing is true about Talking Heads' "Burning Down the House" when Reggie Jackson hits three home runs on three consecutive swings of the bat, off of three different pitchers in the World

# ROUC

### ZAPPA ROCKS

The International Astronomical Union's Minor Planets Center has named an asteroid for Frank Zappa. The honor was the brainchild of Zappa admirer John V. Sciatti, a psychiatrist from Phoenix, who marshalled support on the Internet from fans in 17 different countries and found a sympathetic ear in Brian Marsden, director of the Minor Planets Center, who had himself once prodded his colleagues into naming



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unusual bass tuning and their many original compositions.

"When I started the band I made a prerequisite that everyone who joined had to write songs," Graham said. "I wanted a collective effort, a place where everyone could grow."

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On *Realistic*, Parisian Dominique Durand and New Yorkers Adam Schlesinger and Andy Chase work a bittersweet muse. Unabashedly taking from Velvet Underground, Love and the Beatles, the trio's sophisticated gems are given an atmospheric tilt by Durand's wistful vocals.

"We always have a contrast between upbeat melodies and dark lyrics," says the singer. "Is it happy? Is it sad? It's not clear."

Produced by Kurt Ralske of Ultra Vivid Scene, *Realistic* benefits from concise arrangements and quirky instrumentation—such as rubbing a pencil eraser over guitar strings.

"We're always looking for a sound to steer a song in a stranger direction," says Adam. "We want to keep the music simple as possible, getting rid of what a song *doesn't* need. It sounds silly, but we like short songs and choruses."



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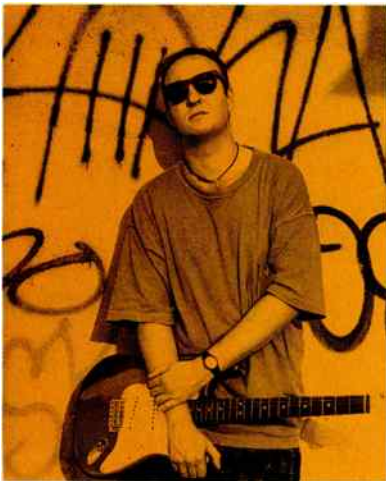
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commercialization of same is born of experience. He began his career as the leader of Hüsker Dü, the much-lauded indie-label punk power trio that crashed and burned after a close encounter with Warner Bros. Records. After a period of soul-searching, Mould signed on with another major label, Virgin, for an artistically fruitful but unhappy two-album stint as a solo performer.

Today, he's back with an indie label—Salem, Massachusetts-based Rykodisc—with his trio Sugar, in which he is joined by bassist David Barbe and drummer Malcolm Travis. The band's first album, 1992's *Copper Blue*, a bracing, typically Mouldian mixture of pop-conscious songwriting and guitar aggression, sold over 400,000 copies. But Mould remains leery about the band's early flush of success.

"Right now, Sugar's primed to be at two million," Mould says with a near-shudder, dragging on the newest of many cigarettes. "This is Smashing Pumpkins, or at least that's how it's being perceived from the outside. *Copper Blue* equals *Gish*, therefore this equals *Siamese Dream*. It's frightening."

So frightening, Mould says, that the recording of *File Under: Easy Listening*—the sequel to *Beaster*, a mini-album followup to *Copper Blue*—came perilously close to breaking up the band.



"I made fun of people

opposed to getting just the songs across."

Asked if the upheaval that went into making the album threatened the existence of the band, Mould confesses, "Yep. It still does. It takes a long time to build back after something like that. The record got finished because nobody in the band was a quitter." He sighs. "It's been a fucked-up year."

Then adds, with a small smile, "I always made fun of people like Peter Gabriel, who had to make the record three times. It's like, yeah, I made fun of it, until it happened to me. Then I realized, 'Well, I can't say that anymore. Now I'm one of them, at least in that end of the spectrum.' I realized how fucked up I was, not only for saying it, but having done it."

He concludes his cautionary tale by laughing a hollow, humorless laugh—"Heh-heh-heh-heh"—a frequent conversational tic that marks him as a guy who has been wised up maybe once too often.

Mould may have first trod on the road to uneasy wisdom in 1978, when, as an 18-year-old, he moved to St. Paul, Minnesota to enroll in Macalester College. He wound up joining a punk rock band. He'd

been fascinated by music since he was a kid in upstate New York. He collected singles supplied by the vendors who serviced both his father's grocery store and the truckstop jukeboxes in the area. He fed on a diet of 45s by the Dave Clark Five, Herman's Hermits, the Hollies and the Beatles, and bought the occasional album at the local Woolworth's. In

his preteen years, he composed songs on a plastic chord organ, and recorded them on a \$15 reel-to-reel tape machine. "A cardboard sign on the door of my bedroom said something like, 'Two And Four Track Recordings, Session In Progress, Stay Out,' done with one of those Dymo guns."

In early adolescence, Mould abandoned music in favor of sports. But he became intrigued by the descriptions of the then-nascent New York punk rock scene in Richard and Lisa Robinson's magazine *Rock Scene*, and started special-ordering the sounds from stores in upstate New York and even Montreal.

"It was like, 'Whoa, there's something beyond what my friends are listening to at the keg party,'" Mould recalls. "The world doesn't stop with Genesis and Gentle Giant and Rainbow and this other crap.' I heard the first Ramones record, I said, 'I gotta get back into music. This is something.'"

"When people start getting you that wound up and start putting

like Peter Gabriel

who had to make a

record three times

till it happened to me."

starting to feel the pressure of what was expected, and what I almost in a weird way thought would be nice—to go for the brass ring. And, about two or three days before we called it quits in there—and everybody retreated to lick their wounds and try to rebuild their egos, individually—Kurt killed himself."

The April suicide of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain—the artist whose massive success blew open the commercial doors for contemporary punk—stopped Mould in his tracks. Also, he explains—his eyes briefly filling and his words strangled with emotion—Cobain's death was jarringly reminiscent of the 1987 suicide of Hüsker Dü's office manager David Savoy, which effectively knocked that band into a loop from which it never recovered.

"I'm in a recording studio, making a record that potentially could reach millions of people, and *this* happens," Mould recalls. "It's like, you better take it as a *sign*. You better *learn*. 'Cause I've seen it before. I was right there once before. It's not fun. If I didn't learn in '87, with David's situation, I learned now."

"When people start getting you that wound up and start putting

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Armed with a healthy punk record collection and a guitar, Mould arrived in St. Paul looking for kindred souls. He found them in a pair of clerks at two local record stores, Grant Hart and Greg Norton. Hart had a drum kit that had belonged to his late brother, and Norton had a bass he couldn't play. Thus was born Hüsker Dü, who would soon be known in the Twin Cities as, in Mould's words, "a pretty fuckin' weird bunch of Midwestern trucker-lookin' fuckers roamin' through town with a big bag of crank and generic beer."

By 1981, Hüsker Dü had embarked on the U.S. tour that was documented in the amphetamine-soaked live album *Land Speed Record*. An astonishing series of albums followed that would help define both the trio's hardcore melodicism (a product of Mould's and Hart's combined songwriting talents) and the scope of American punk's ambition. In one 13-month period in 1984–85, the prolific band released three remarkable records on the L.A. indie label SST Records: the sprawling two-LP bildungsalbum *Zen Arcade*, the seething *New Day Rising* and the melt-in-your-ear punk-pop classic *Flip Your Wig*.

The major labels, their ears finally cocked to homegrown punk, were paying attention to Hüsker Dü. Mould recalls one early phone feeler from an A&R man to the very stoned members of the band: "I said, 'Can you hold on a second?' I was like, 'There's this guy who says he's from Warner Bros. on the phone, and he wants to sign Hüsker Dü. Isn't this the fucking stupidest thing you ever heard?' We're all on the floor laughing, goin', 'Yeah, what're you gonna do for us, man? Yeeeah. Suuuure.'"

By 1986, the laughter had stopped, as Hüsker Dü, amid expressions of disbelief from the punk faithful, signed on with Warner Bros. It was a devil's bargain, Mould intimates today.

"It seemed like an opportunity to get inside the machine and see if we could make a change," he says, with the ruefulness that characterizes his memories of that time. "Not possible at that time. They took

that Hüsker Dü music to the AOR people and they were like, 'What the fuck is this? We can't do a thing with this stuff.'"

By the time the band had finished *Warehouse: Songs and Stories*, its second and final album for Warners, Mould says, "the only thing the three of us had in common was that we were in the same band. Everybody had really vacated the premises. We couldn't get far enough apart... We had different lives. We had different agendas. And the band, it was a cash machine that we all went to, and that's a fucked-up thing."

The early-1987 suicide of Savoy, the band's closest associate, may have been the last straw.

Mould confesses, with visible difficulty, "It only dawns on me now, years and years later, beyond that being such a clear sign that it was over—oh, God, I hate talking about this because it's just going to get everybody all worked up again—but I don't think I can recall the three of us grieving that out collectively at any point in time. The second that happened, everybody retreated, to grieve individually."

When Hüsker Dü called it quits for good in early 1988—after the year-end shows anthologized on the current Warner live album *The Living End*, and after one abortive stab at regrouping—Mould was living on a farm north of Minneapolis, where he would write the songs that formed the basis for his introspective, often delicate Virgin solo debut *Workbook*.

He believes that album to be his finest work to date: "To have that safety net yanked out, to have to come up with something that really said something about myself at the time, after being part of a band, to try to make a singular statement that was coherent and important—that was good."

But *Workbook's* followup, 1990's fearsomely loud, cathartic *Black Sheets of Rain*, met with a frigid response from the powers at Virgin. "That record died the quickest death in the marketing department," Mould says with no little bitterness. "That was the traditional four weeks, and they pulled the plug."

Mould wound up dropped by Virgin, which recently issued *Poison Years*, a compilation of studio cuts and live tracks that he views as a crass cash-in on Sugar's success. "I hope they're happy," he says, laughing his mirthless laugh.

In the aftermath of a second bitter major-label experience, Mould decided to take his career into his own hands. "Everybody got cut loose," he says. "The lawyer went, the accountants went before management went, so I could get what little bit of money was in the fund, and I then proceeded to spend ten months on the road with my 12-string trying to repay the rest of my debts.

"It was pretty liberating. After the web had been spun so wide, encompassing my life, to be able to snip it at the edges, watch it hit the floor, and be able to go through everything and just do it without any bullshit was pretty amazing and pretty refreshing, and it really got me in a good mindset about making another record."

The record—two records, actually, for *Copper Blue* and *Beaster* were both made during Sugar's first sessions—came in a rush. Mould recruited Travis, who had been in the Boston band the Zulus, whose album *Down on the Floor* Mould had produced, and Barbe, an acquaintance from the fertile Athens, Georgia scene. The

## SUGAR CONSUMPTION

**B**OB MOULD uses late-'80s Fender Strats and American Standard Strats with Fender-Lace Sensor pickups. He feeds them into an MXR Distortion Plus pedal and a Roland SDE-3000 digital delay. That unit's wet output is fed to one side of an Eventide H3000 UltraHarmonizer's input, the dry output to the other.

Each side of the H3000's stereo output is compressed using a DBX 166 compressor and routed to two pairs of amplifiers—two Roland JC-120 standalone heads powering Marshall 4x12s and two mid-'80s Fender Concert tube amps with 12" speakers. "What I'm trying to do," Mould explains, "is create a stereo image using a solid-state amp on the bottom end to create a tight, clean bottom end, and using the Fenders to create stereo distortion. That's the main sound." And a loud one—126 dB onstage.

He also kicks in a l.c. electronics Booster Linedriver Distortion (now out of production) pedal for more bottom end on solos. From Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine he acquired one of Jimi Hendrix's old Octavia pedals, custom-made by Roger Meyer.

At home and for solo shows, Mould uses a Yamaha APX12 12-string acoustic. He also owns a late-'50s Kay acoustic (which he likes to play through distortion pedals). He composes with the aid of a Roland R-8 drum machine. And for a change of pace, he plays a Japan-made Fender Jazz Bass. ("I've never changed the strings in six years, because the intonation is really perfect.")

DAVID BARBE plays '70s-vintage Fender Precision Basses. He formerly used a Gallien Krueger 300-watt head, but Mould says Barbe may switch to an Ampeg SVT rig after blowing up the G-K recently. His cabinets are a Trace Elliot 4x10 and an Ampeg 2x15.

MALCOLM TRAVIS's main kit is a Yamaha, which Mould says "is really meant for volume on the road." He uses Zildjian cymbals exclusively.

group played its first gig at Athens' 40 Watt Club within two weeks of forming; a couple of days after that show, Mould, Barbe and Travis were in a studio in Stoughton, Massachusetts, recording their first two albums.

"I had a vision built up as to what I wanted it to be," Mould says of Sugar's speedy genesis. I didn't know it was going to be realized so accurately. That surprised me. But doing it didn't surprise me. I can do anything that I want." Mould laughs, and this time, his laughter reflects the confidence of a man who knows what that is.

Oddly—given the absolute ease with which Sugar's first two records were completed, and the deep anxiety and sheer hard labor that went into completing its third—*File Under: Easy Listening*, which takes its title from the album jacket legends on Mould's childhood LPs, sounds unstrained.

Some elements remain unchanged: Mould's glowering aspect, full of the suspicion that even the best of things might turn to shit at any moment, is present in numbers like "What You Want It to Be," "Can't Help You Anymore" and the album-closing,

Crazy Horse-influenced burner "Explode and Make Up."

"Oh yeah," Mould says, confessing that his darkest side will always be on display. "That's sort of true about life in general, whether it's relationships or vocations or any kind of futures—there is no real certainty."

But there is a new quality in much of the work on *F.U.E.L.* Some of the relaxation apparent in songs like the mockingly funny "Granny Cool" and the blissful "Gee Angel" may be the product of Mould's move last year to Austin, after four-and-a-half years spent in New York.


"I started to get hermetic, and at that point I realized that New York didn't have anything to offer, right now," Mould says. "Stuff like *Black Sheets* and *Copper Blue* and *Beaster* had a certain edge that was unique to my situation at the time. I've calmed down a lot since I got down here, which I needed. I needed a change of some sort. Change is always good."

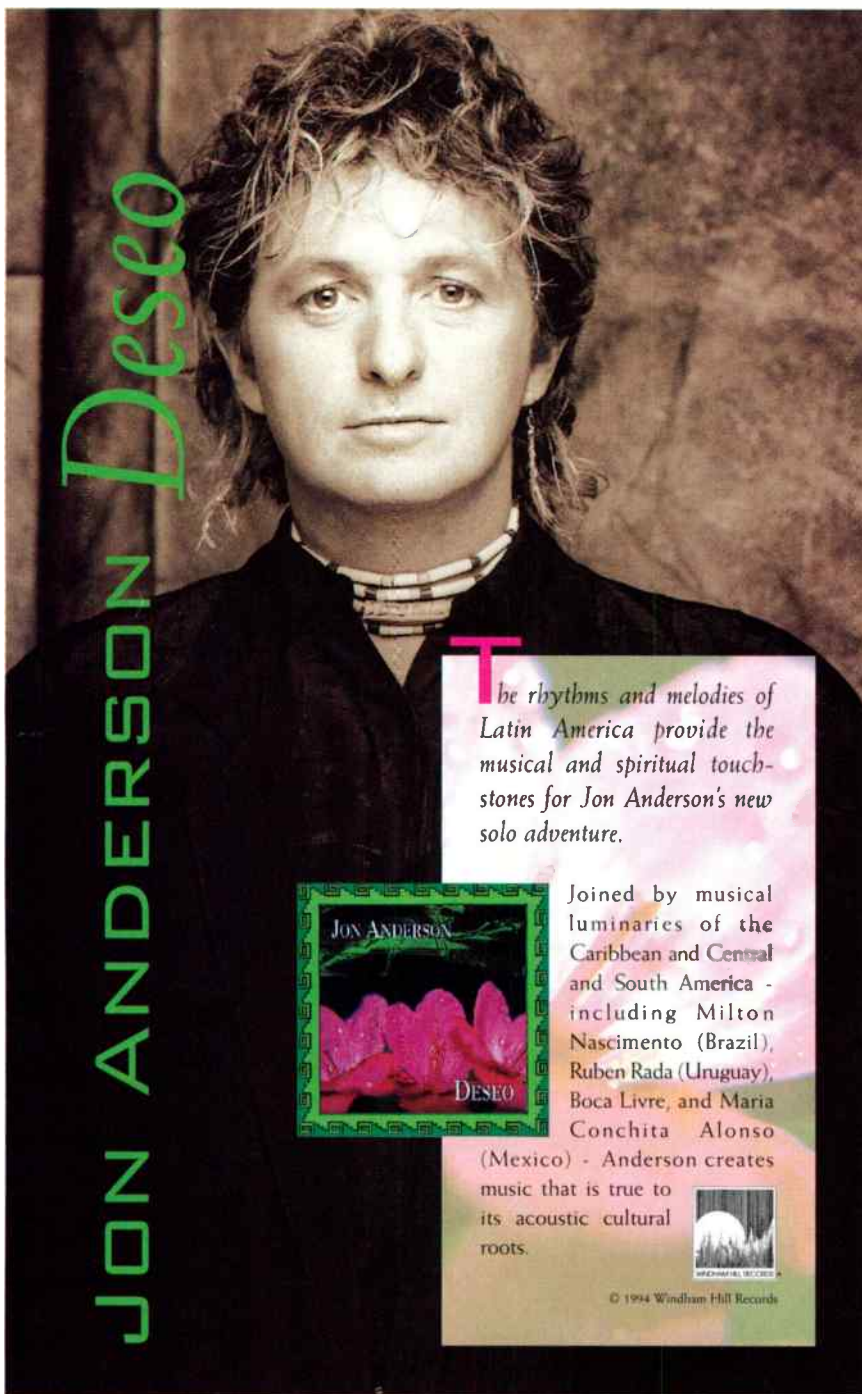
Change, or its lack, is the pointed subject of the new album's sardonic "Granny Cool," a study of a self-absorbed, aging star, which Mould implies is based on his observation of some music luminaries he declines to name.

He says, "I've seen a lot of people—and California actually tends to breed a lot of them—who just hold on too long, and surround themselves with their past, and really don't have a momentum anymore. That could be me as well as anybody. I've been around long enough to fit into that category, too. I'm 33, and sometimes I feel like I should have been gone a while ago."

He's been around long enough for a 13-year, 13-album career to be recycled on such packages as *Poison Years* and *The Living End*. "I have no problem with that, because, believe me, most of the people getting most of the press right now will never have the body of work that size, or that consistent. I'll have my day. Whether it's when I'm alive or when I'm dead, I'll have my say in all of this shit."

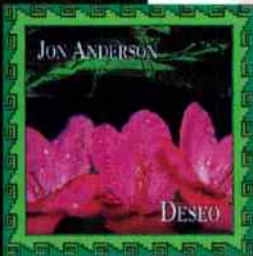
So Bob Mould's day hasn't come yet?

"Nope. Not yet. Not even close. The best is easily yet to come. Yeah, that stuff's important, and, yeah, 'Bob Mould, the trend-setter for the '90s from the '80s, Hüsker Dü's so far ahead of their time and what if it had been five years later,' and blah blah blah'... It's really nice but that's not enough. That's not enough to stop. I don't feel satisfied with my work yet. Those things are all good, but it's gotta get better than that." 




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**WATCHING**  
the  
**DEFECTIVES**

Inside an  
MTV Video  
Acquisition  
Meeting

By Elysa Gardner

MTV headquarters, where executives who look and dress like college students help determine which fledgling musicians will get the opportunity to become name acts, and which name acts—such as Motley Crue, the subject of today's quandary—will be churned into fodder for Beavis and Butt-Head jokes.

The video acquisition meeting is a regular Monday afternoon event here. Videos are screened and evaluated for programming potential, by a panel mostly comprised of twentysomethings with the casual dress, healthy complexions and ethnic diversity of a Benetton ad.

According to Andy Schuon, the baby-faced senior vice president of music programming and program planning for MTV and VH-1, this process entails three options: 1) accepting a video for "general" rotation into the station's regular broadcasting schedule; 2) "conditional" rotation—that is, inclusion on genre-specific programs such as "120 Minutes," "Headbanger's Ball" or "Yo! MTV Raps"; or 3) simply passing on the clip, a course that is usually buffered (at least in the presence of a reporter) by a comment along the lines of "We have a lot of

good stuff still coming up" or "Let's wait a week or two."

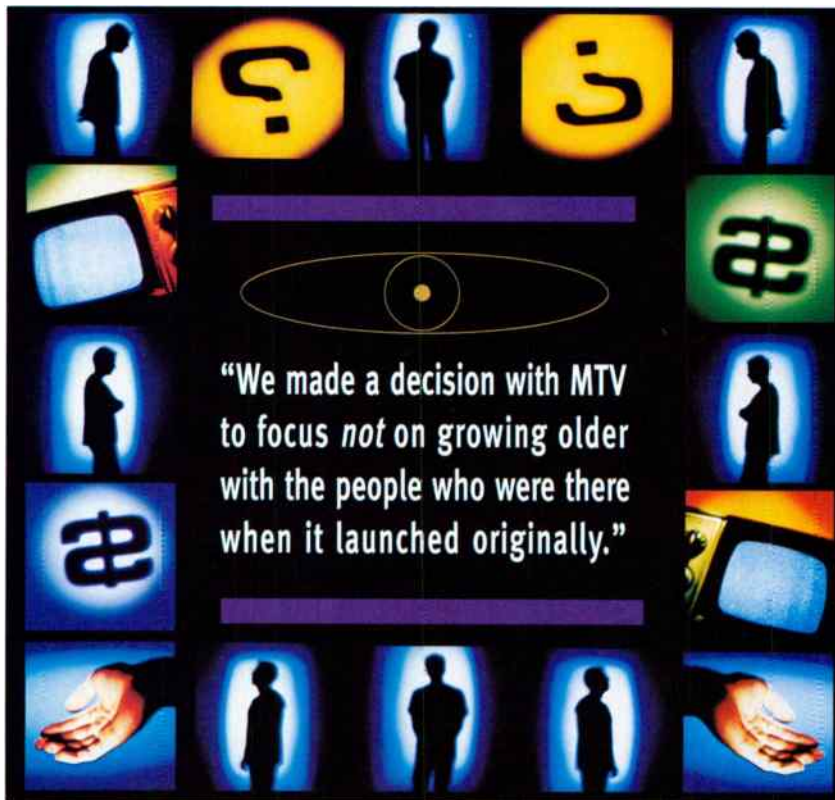
Of course, once a video has been re-submitted one or more times, its chances for approval of any sort have diminished considerably. Today, several recycled videos are scratched off the list altogether, including one for "If '60s Was '90s," a neo-psychedelic, Hendrix-sampling ditty by an indie act called Beautiful People. "It's getting a lot of press," admits v.p. of talent relations Rick Krim, the same fellow who cheekily defended Mick Mars earlier. "But I don't think we've found a home for it yet."

Krim and fellow talent v.p. Traci Jordan, the Heather Locklear enthusiast, are among the more vocal of the roughly ten MTV staffers present at today's meeting. Both work for John Cannelli, MTV's senior vice president of music and talent. Cannelli and Schuon are the two superiors here—both refer to the meeting as a joining together of their respective "teams"—but this afternoon, at least, Schuon takes the more active role in the proceedings. It's his inclination that almost does in the Crue's "Misunderstood" video (eventually he relents, agreeing to give it a shot on "Headbanger's Ball"), and most arguments and appeals are directed to him. Cannelli wanders out of the room occasionally, a quiet, almost paternal presence. Clearly Schuon's senior, he looks older than anyone else in attendance.

Indeed, 13 years after MTV's launch, the channel's course is being charged largely by upstarts who became acquainted with the network as teenaged fans—members of the so-called MTV generation, a.k.a. Generation X. "We do try and create an environment that's young, one close to our audience," says Cannelli, who like the rest of us has grown weary of generational catch-words. He and Schuon prefer to describe their viewership as falling broadly between the ages of 12 and 34, with more on the lower end of that spectrum. "The MTV audience is people who live in the pop culture," Schuon offers. "That

keeps your perspective young. Our work here keeps us young."

The general tone of today's meeting seems to confirm that claim. An air of relaxed avidity prevails. Jokes and observations are exchanged freely during and between viewings, and while no one's playing air guitar, head-bopping and finger-tapping are encouraged. That said, collective choices are seldom based on blind enthusiasm. New entries from super-hot bands like Stone Temple Pilots and Alice In Chains are immediately approved for general rotation. Conversely, a sharp, stylish video by the little-



known R&B group Eternal is deferred with a curiously dismissive air. And when the Greenberry Woods, an endearing guitar-pop outfit, are presented, someone remarks, "Their last one did nothing, right?"

But hip quotients, or even a proven commercial track record, offer no guarantee of success, either. A murkily produced clip of singer-rapper Me'Shell NdegéOcello performing on one of the final episodes of "The Arsenio Hall Show" is rejected, even though NdegéOcello, who is signed to Madonna's Maverick Records label, is one of the most celebrated new artists around. (Interestingly, the clip was submitted by Abby Konowitch, Cannelli's predecessor.) And when Shanice's "Somewhere" comes up for assessment, Jordan insists to a reluctant Schuon, "She always does well for us; she has a history here." Schuon considers her point, but isn't convinced.

"Let's wait a week or two," he says. "Or three or four."

**MANY OF MTV'S TOP BRASS** work out of offices that resemble cramped, colorful adult playpens; Cannelli's is no exception. While waiting to be interviewed, he and Schuon sink into bright red overstuffed chairs. As their visitor surveys the souvenirs and promotional gadgets scattered about, they fiddle with the tape recorder that's been placed between them.



"We're aware that we have an important part in the food chain here. But I don't think many people say we're heavy-handed."

"Testing. Huh huh. Huh huh."  
 "Interviews suck. Huh huh."

Goofy jokes and gaudy tastes in decor notwithstanding, Cannelli and Schuon wield some serious stick. "We're aware that, you know, we have an important part in the food

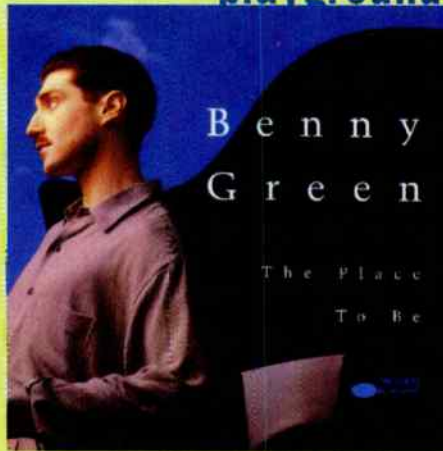
chain here," Cannelli admits, when the subject of MTV's power and pervasiveness is raised. "But I don't think you'd find many people who would say that we're heavy-handed in our dealings with the artists or the record companies. We always try to be fair

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and honest and open in our communication. We sort of pride ourselves on the fact that if you want to know where you stand with us—or with the audience, because it's the audience that's king here—we'll tell you the truth."

As evidence, Cannelli points to the manner in which he and Schuon field the dozens of offers they receive each week, from artists and labels, offering to perform live in MTV's offices. "We wouldn't want to have someone come up here and do that if we don't have a prior sense of what our position's going to be," Cannelli insists, "because that would obviously be a very awkward situation. If we're excited about the band, and if we think the staff would enjoy seeing them, and if we know we're gonna get behind them in some way, and if we know they're great live and don't mind doing it—sure, we'll have them come up and play."

For Schuon, formerly program director at a progressive rock radio station in Los Angeles, video exposure should be one component of an artist's career plan, "rather than the sole means of breaking the artist. I think MTV works best when it's used in conjunction with a whole marketing plan—to help push artists to the top, not to carry them there."

Granted, MTV's role isn't *always* crucial. Surely the network had a greater hand in Madonna's rise than it did in U2's, say, or Pearl Jam's. (In fact, Pearl Jam has thus far refused to release any videos in conjunction with its current album, a move that Cannelli complains is irresponsible to the group's fans.) But it would be tough to name a post-1980 success story that hasn't benefited from the added visibility that MTV literally affords recording artists.

Moreover, several musicians who were around well before MTV began—the visually savvy Peter Gabriel, the videogenic Tina Turner—were able to exploit the medium to advantage in the '80s. More recently, the acoustic-performance showcase "Unplugged" has juiced up the careers of classic rock dinosaurs like Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart, both of whom parlayed their appearances on the program into multi-platinum albums.

On the other hand, the rock 'n' roll highway is littered with the skeletons of former MTV faves. Anyone remember Twisted Sister? How about Cyndi Lauper, once Madonna's more vocally gifted rival, now a woman relegated to telling Joan Rivers how supportive her Japanese fans still are? Or Huey

Lewis & the News, formerly MTV's hip retro-rocking journeymen, presently the objects of its most popular cartoon characters' ridicule? "Beavis and Butt-Head are supposed to be two metalhead kids who aren't very smart," Cannelli stresses. "It's satire. Have a sense of humor."

Well, okay. Pop music is fundamentally ephemeral, and MTV's clout is dependent on changing with the times. In this environment, loyalty is not a virtue. MTV president Judy McGrath elaborates on this defense: "We made a decision with MTV—to focus *not* on growing older with the people who were there when it launched, but instead staying in a place where we can always bring in new people. I mean, I don't want us to be only about what is happening at this very second; we struggle to figure out how to fit in some of those meaningful artists who are not necessarily the flavors of the minute. But I think we've always had a sense of commitment to new music, to music that our audience tells us matters."

Still, McGrath allows that MTV's support has proven a mixed blessing over the years. "The curve of success now reaches a higher point faster because of television and video, I think. Someone like Cyndi Lauper was able to instantly catch people's imaginations, and suddenly you saw her everywhere, on videos and shows and contests. And then the danger, of course, is that it's going to be over as quickly as it happened."


For all that, MTV's current rotation represents the most eclectic roster in the network's short history. "In the first half of the MTV era, it was pretty much a white rock network," McGrath admits. "I think alternative music has been tremendously rejuvenating. The music tends to be more political, and visually, you have different imagery for that sort of music than you do in those bimbo-type videos that I had spent years watching. Rap has been another creative shot in the arm; the hip-hop community has given us extremely influential musicians and writers and videos. Those two movements added a new dimension, I think, to watching MTV; our ratings went up, people became more interested and we made the music more current. We sort of said, let's pretend there's a revolution happening, and maybe it will."

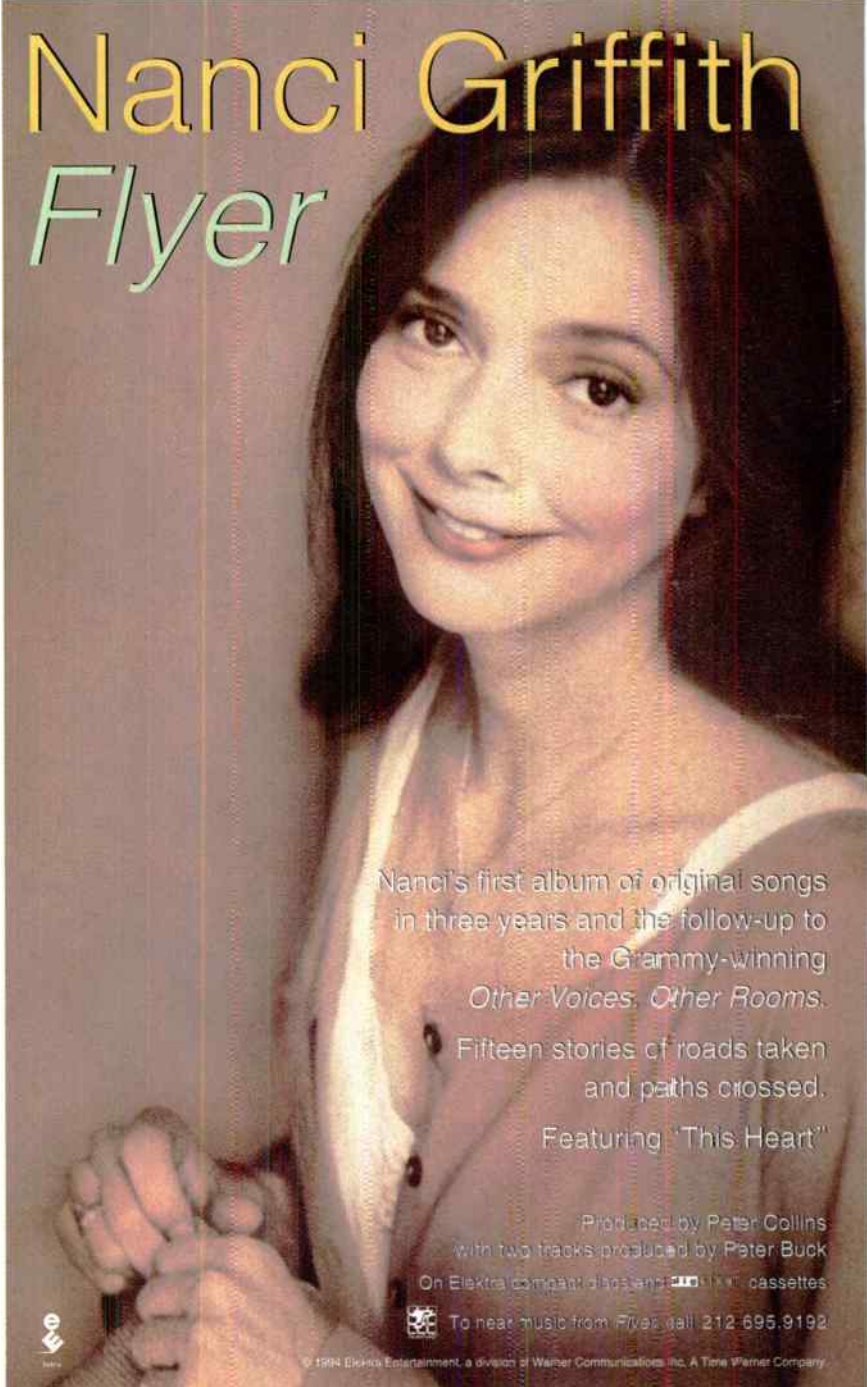
"MTV's format today is like a hybrid of many radio formats," says Schuon. "That wall between rock and hip-hop is falling down, especially with our younger audience.

We've made a concerted effort to promote that diversity. We've created an environment where Aerosmith can be programmed right next to Snoop [Doggy Dogg], and people will accept that.

"We're actually going against the grain of radio, which is always narrowing—you know, all-'80s, all-'90s, all-rock 'n' roll oldies. And that makes our job easier. We used to have to spend a lot of time thinking, well, this video won't go well next to that video. Now we just try and put the best music on."

Obviously, it's a successful formula. In the mercurial music business, where top stars and executives are dethroned almost daily, MTV has proved a durable kingmaker. But how does it feel to swing the sword?

"I don't really look at it in terms of power," says Traci Jordan. "I'm fortunate to work in a medium that combines two elements that are very forceful in helping to develop artists—music and television. I think that everybody that sits around that table is a real music person. That's the bottom line. That's why MTV works." 






# Nanci Griffith

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## DAVE ALVIN

**1** When I was a little, little kid, I'd say "El Paso" by Marty Robbins. At that age you have no idea why, but it definitely influenced me as far as being a story songwriter. The first thing I could operate mechanically was a record player and there was a hobby horse next to it, and I rocked on my horse over and over to that song. Later, I discovered *Anthology of the Blues* by Elmore James, on the Kent label, which was stuff that had originally come out on labels like RPM and Meteor. There was a record store in Downey that was run by a guy with real eclectic tastes, and he'd let you open up the

records and play them for you. In the liner notes Elmore was described as a shy guy, and I was a shy kid, so I could relate to him on a personal level, which is kind of a big thing when you're young. That record became my bible for the next four years. But where those records were major influences, Tom Waits' **HEART OF SATURDAY NIGHT** was really life-changing. He came from Whittier, which is near Downey,

and this record was my first lesson in really appreciating songwriting. The imagery was closer to stuff I had seen, and it made me want to write poetry; it turned me from just caring about who was the best guitar player. (M.R.)

## TORI AMOS

**2** Zeppelin. All of them. I kind of heard **LED ZEPPELIN I, II and III** all at the same time, because I jumped into them around '73, when I was about eight. When I heard Zeppelin, it was like, okay. Now I know why I'm not doing well on my classical piano. Because Jimmy Page was the bridge from acoustic to electric music. He showed me what I could do. I always felt like they tapped into this passion that Mary Magdalene understood, and was the only one in the Bible that represented it. Musically, Zeppelin understood that goddess energy.

Then as things progressed a little bit further, Sex Pistols. When I heard that, I just dropped my teacup, to be quite honest. Do I cross my legs? Do I uncross them? What do I do? And believe it or not, *Pretty Hate Machine*. Nine Inch Nails. When I was writing [*Little Earthquakes*], I began reading the Sandman comics and listening to *Pretty Hate Machine*, going, "Where have I been?" (J.C.)

## CHET ATKINS

**3** I didn't hear many albums when I was a kid 'cause we didn't have a record player. Didn't even have a radio, so I finally built myself one. But the first big influence on me was a **DJANGO REINHARDT** album, a reissue on Capitol around 1950. It had "Mystery Pacific," "Miss Annabel Lee," "Running Wild." He had this unbelievable energy and confidence in his playing. I had a stepfather that drank a lot, and he brought home some blues singles by Lonnie Johnson and I'd steal his licks, too. I loved "Tomorrow Night," which Dylan recorded recently. Now Django hardly ever played a blue note, and that was just about all Lonnie did. But they both played from the heart. (V.G.)

## TONY BENNETT

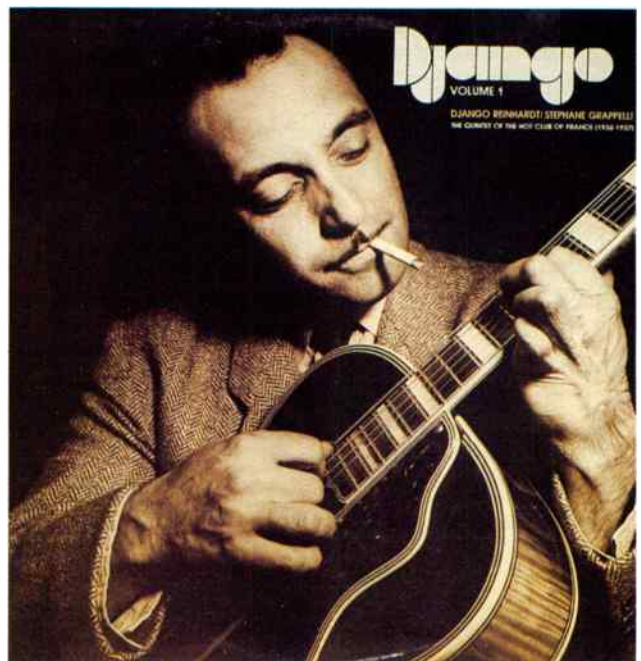
**4** Al Hibbler, "TREES." He was Duke Ellington's vocalist. It's based on that beautiful poem, and it's very touching because of Hibbler being blind. His opening line is "I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree." When you hear a blind man singing that on a recording... I was very young when I heard that, I was 14 years old, and I think that's one of the reasons I'm still in the music business. I just said, what a magic machine recordings are, what a form of entertainment it is to people: It allows you to dream, it allows you to get moved emotionally and intellectually. It was the sincerity of that record, the message of it, that touched my heart. It gave me goosebumps, and led me on a road to singing very sincerely on records, you know, not just making a record to make a buck. I just think it's a precious record. Even now you hear it, it's timeless. Al Hibbler is a wonderful singer, and that's the record that motivated me to sing the way I do. (K.B.)

## FRANK BLACK

**5** I decided to go for a recent life-changing record, **FLOOD** by They Might Be Giants. The first time I heard it I didn't even like it. But somehow when I'd clean out the car, I'd always feel guilty about this tape—maybe because I knew them—and I'd play it, and now I've listened to it hundreds if not thousands of times, especially when I'm driving. I pop it in and go, "Yes!" One aspect of it has to be that they opened up my mind as to popular music in general. Before I got into it, I maybe had a more purist attitude about rock 'n' roll. Maybe my most influential record back then would have been something by Iggy Pop—who I still love. But They Might Be Giants made me realize that rock is only part of *popular* music, because they incorporate a lot of pre-rock 'n' roll and do it well. They really evoke great moods. It doesn't matter if it's blues or jazz or a Broadway musical—a goosebump is a goosebump. (M.R.)

## EDIE BRICKELL

**6** Al Green's **GREATEST HITS, VOLUME 2**. 'Cause I heard it a million times growing up, getting ready for school. My mom used to listen to "Tired of Being Alone" over and over. I'd be



getting ready for school, and she'd go, "Edie, put it back!" I'd run in there and grab the arm and put it back to one. Over and over and over, till we had to leave the apartment to go. So inevitably, I was singing that all day. And that whole album just stuck with me, forever. I thought I didn't like it, you know? But when I went away to college, I went and I bought that album again, because it just made me feel great. And I'll always go back and listen to that album when I want to feel good, or when I want to sing. I never get sick of it. (J.C.)

## JACKSON BROWNE

**7** Several Dylan albums come so close together with the blur of the times, but **BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME** is probably the one that laid wide open. It was that transcendental moment when he sang "Garden of Eden," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "It's All Right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)"—these really long, magnificently crafted literary songs. And then backed it with half an album of songs which were just as literary in their references, and probably closest to beat poetry—"Maggie's Farm" and "Subterranean Homesick Blues"—but backed with that real cacophonous band made up of New York smoothies and Chicago blues guys like Mike Bloomfield and Harvey Brooks. It was an amazing moment, just as he went electric and before he started playing with the Band, the apex of his changes. Though he's gone on to write great and greater things, nothing was ever quite so powerful for me as that moment where he transformed

my world, from the one where you sang these personal narrative folk songs to the world *he* was carving out, a surrealistic portrait of contemporary life. (M.R.)

## PETER BUCK (R.E.M.)

**8** The first record that I just obsessed on was **EXILE ON MAIN STREET**. It's an obvious choice but, hey, I was 15 and was dating a girl who was 17

and could drive. I was the luckiest guy in town, 'cause she came and picked me up and we bought it. I listened to all four sides in a row on headphones. It gave me everything I'd ever wanted in a record. First, it was mysterious—I still don't know what the songs are exactly about on a literal level. And I loved that they were putting all these influences in. I was kind of familiar with country and blues, but I didn't really know who somebody like Slim Harpo was, for instance. It gave me these clues that all that stuff was out there that I had to find, and the feeling that there was this mystery and adventure that went with it. (V.G.)

## LINDSAY BUCKINGHAM

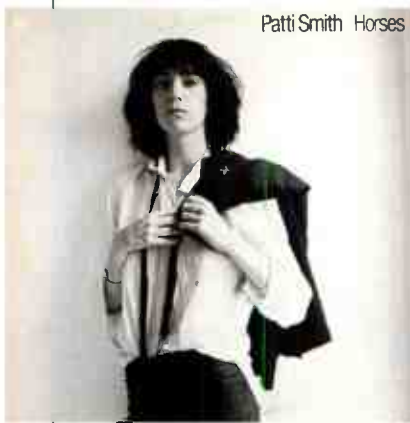
**9** I would have to go with **SMILE** by the Beach Boys, rather than the more obvious *Pet Sounds*. Only because it was more out there. It was a striking example of someone—Brian Wilson—who had followed the commercial path and done what was expected to a point, and saw that it was a dead end, for him. He looked for personal growth outside of that, and with all the politics of it, the deal with his family, no one was really supportive of him—they kind of let him climb out there and then chopped off the limb.



So to cut to [Fleetwood Mac's] "Rumours"... When you get to that mega-level, you question the quality of your music versus commercial success. And I was already uncomfortable about the impending "Rumours 2"—so many forces come into play to "recapture the moment," and you never can, because a success like that has as much to do with the nerve you touch outside as with the substance of the music. To have had this other example to go on gave me more courage to stick my own neck out, to find ways to embrace a personal growth rather than just a musical rehash. That song led me to the conclusions that became *Tusk*—which is still my favorite album. I don't put myself in Brian's class, but I make the connection: You've got to take some chances, and if you try to be honest, you'll learn some things from it. Otherwise, you're just treading water. (M.R.)

## DON BYRON

**10** There really were two things. When I was 15 I heard *Stravinsky Chamber Pieces* on Columbia, especially the "Concertino for 12 Instruments." At that time I was playing classical clarinet-type stuff, I was just starting to look at the scores of things, studying things that compositionally I found interesting. It was this piece where I actually understood what was happening. The second thing would be **DELIGHTFULEE**, by Lee Morgan, in 1980. At the time I was mostly playing in Latin bands, and I hadn't made up my mind to be an improviser. This was the first time I heard Joe Henderson, who seemed to bring a certain eclecticism to improvising that I could relate to better than people that seemed to be coming from just one angle. Since then I've tried to get everything that Joe Henderson has done. I actually stole that record from my parents. (K.P.)





**J.J. CALE**

**11** I never heard one that changed my *life*, but I heard a lot of records that picked my ears up, alright. Probably **"BABY LET'S PLAY HOUSE"** by Elvis Presley. I was real young—and when you're young, that's when you're really into music. That was before he was actually popular. Some people had brought that record up from Florida and some kids were playing it. I'd never heard anything like it. I was 15 or 16, and it was about the first kind of rock 'n' roll record that I'd heard. I think it affected a lot of people. (D.D.)

**RON CARTER**

**12 THE BACH BRANDENBURGS.** Exposure to real string-writing: wonderful orchestration. I was 14 or 15 when I first heard it; I was playing with the orchestras around Detroit and they were playing this occasionally. I was pleased to hear how the bass notes affected the top sounds of the chords; there were no flat nines or flat 13s or real jazz chords involved as we know them today, just one, three, five, seven. Great suspensions, great use of the string bass, great use of the viola and second violin that carried the inner harmony, which made the chords do whatever they could do. And just the sound, the sonority of 45, 50 string players playing this music, or even 12 or 14 as they do during the holidays when they have a small group. Just phenomenal writing, great sound and wonderful basslines. (K.B.)

**NENEH CHERRY**

**13** There's a few big records that I still go back and listen to. *Songs in the Key of Life* by Stevie Wonder, *What's Going On* by Marvin Gaye. But then there's another record that's completely away from that, which was X-Ray Spex's **GERMFREE ADOLESCENTS**, from the punk days. Poly Styrene, who was the lead singer in X-Ray Spex, she was like the only black face on the punk scene, and she had this voice that I could really relate to. She helped me find my voice. I started singing along to her tunes, and it just kind of worked and something clicked. I remember sitting around with my dad at home, and he was always and forever trying to

get me to do things, sing along or whatever, and he started playing that song "Nickelodeon," and I can remember singing it with that kind of Poly Styrene voice—something clicked, and it was just like, yes. (D.D.)

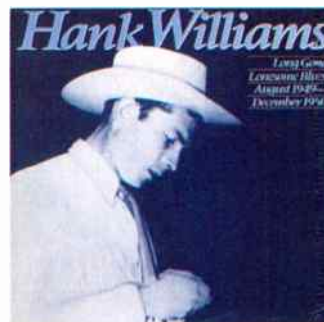
**MARSHALL CRENSHAW**

**14 THE BOP THAT JUST WON'T STOP** by Gene Vincent, *The World Is Still Waiting for the Sunrise* by Les Paul & Mary Ford, *The Sun Collection* by Elvis Presley (British import). These three albums are a primer for what you can do with tape echo. They were released all at the same time in 1974 and really captivated me. One of the reasons I was struck by that sound was that I was a real enthusiastic smoker of marijuana at the time. The tape echo had a hypnotic effect, which might explain why Jamaican dub records sound the way they do.

The day I bought that Gene Vincent record I was on my way to a band rehearsal. We were going to rehearse "Yours Is No Disgrace," "China Grove" or some other gem from that era. I got there, took it out of the bag, and the guys in the band started goofing on it, like I was a weirdo for buying it. Shortly thereafter, I quit hanging around those guys. It made me realize that if you're in a band, it's best to be around people who have similar tastes as you. (R.K.)

**STEVE CROPPER**

**15** I did a little soul-searching, and I would have to say **"HONKY TONK"** by Bill Doggett. It not only changed my life, it probably changed the lives of a lot of young guys who wanted to play guitar. Because it was the number one song, at least in the South, that guitar players who wanted to get



into the dance music business learned to play. You had to know that song. It was incredible, too. The guy who played guitar on it was Billy Butler. It came out in 1956, and I thought, hey, this it—I've got to do this one.

For guitar players the tough thing about it was its key. It's very difficult to play songs in F, because you've got to learn how to stretch that wrist and make that first finger the bar—so everybody learned it in the key of E, because it had open strings. But we later found out the record was in F—and that's where all the horn and organ players wanted to play it. I was really fortunate this year to induct Bill Doggett into the Rhythm & Blues Hall of Fame Pioneer Awards in New York. I'd never really met him or shook his hand. I was kind of on the outside, watching. (D.D.)

**CHUCK D. (PUBLIC ENEMY)**

**16** Run-DMC, **RAISING HELL.** It was the album that said rap was here for good. It pushed hip-hop into the major leagues, where before it was a kids' game, and made me see where I could fit in as someone in their mid-20s. *Raising Hell* was also the first hip-hop album with different songs and sounds that jelled together. Run-DMC are the most consistent and deeply rooted hip-hop group in rap. If it wasn't for them, none of us would be talked about now. (N.B.)

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that beat and applying that rhythm, that thunder, to the guitar. But I loved those Hank Williams crying songs. He was the epitome of a man in pain, and I try to make sounds on my instrument that's part of my crying out. I've written a couple dozen country songs and one day I'll make an album of them and no one will recognize it as a Dick Dale record. But when my mother hears me sing those songs she sits up in bed and says, "That's my Dickie!" (M.R.)

#### DANNY ELFMAN

**18** Stravinsky's **THE RITE OF SPRING**. A friend who was a trumpet player played it for me when I was 16 or 17 in high school. I've no idea what recording it was. Within a year I'd thrown away my entire collection of rock albums, so I guess you could say it had a big effect. It was a whole new world—it was like discovering a whole new planet, one I'd never known. (D.D.)

#### MELISSA ETHERIDGE

**19** I used to listen to **TOMMY**—but not by the Who. It was the record by Pete Townsend with the London Symphony Orchestra, a double record set. I'd get home from school and every day I'd lie there with the big headphones on and be transformed. I think that had a lot to do with the intensity of my music today, that classical big feel. The French horns that would come in on "Pinball Wizard" or the "Acid Queen" sung by Ritchie Havens—he was a big influence on my acoustic guitar playing as well. Later it was Carole King's *Tapestry* for songwriting, and *Born to Run* for its intensity—I wanted to be Bruce Springsteen. But *Tommy* was the first record that totally obsessed me. (M.R.)

#### PERRY FARRELL

**20** The Stooges, **FUN HOUSE**. It's just such an inescapable sound. You could tell they were being spontaneous while being taped—which was what made me realize it would be cool to make records. I could hear Iggy improvising while he was playing, and the same with the soloists. It was the sound of the record, too. Devastating. You followed the guitar as it snaked through all this noise, and it really led you somewhere. At the same time, it was romantic—definitely as wild as youth gets. (T.M.)

#### DICK DALE

**17** The only thing I listened to in the early days was Hank Williams, because he sung from the heart. I wanted to be a country singer, not a guitar player. My first instrument was the drums, and my great inspiration was Gene Krupa, especially his drum solo on "**SING SING SING**." I got my whole style of playing from listening to

#### TOMMY FLANAGAN

**21** It was a record in the **BILLIE HOLIDAY COLLECTION**, with Teddy Wilson and Lester Young. It was on Columbia. I heard it in my home; my older brother was a pianist and was taking lessons and I'm glad he was—jazz was becoming very popular with young folks at that time. Everybody on this record was so great, and to hear them all together at one time; Lester Young played so beautifully. I'm not sure what it was titled, but "Easy Livin'," "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" and "Miss Brown to You" were some of the tunes I remember. (K.B.)

#### BUDDY GUY

**22** I would say that B.B. King turned me completely around with "**THREE O'CLOCK BLUES**." Since I know him now, and we're the best of friends, he told me he couldn't learn to play the slide; neither could I. And that's why he came up with the idea of squeezing the strings—that was as close to the slide as he could come, and that's good enough for me, man. My mama and dad didn't have a radio, no electricity at the time, and when I finally heard that record, I said I gotta work, I gotta pick cotton or whatever, I gotta get a radio because I gotta hear him sing that and play this guitar. That along with Guitar Slim's "Things I Used to Do." Before that, there was a lot of acoustic stuff, but these things have made the hair stand on my head, man. It got me to the point where I couldn't sleep. I didn't play as a teenager, I didn't have no Sundays taking a girl to a movie or long Sunday walk. I had to say, I gotta learn to do this. (D.D.)



#### HERBIE HANCOCK

**23** **MILES AHEAD**. The first thing was my emotional reaction, the record is so beautiful. I'm pretty sure I saw it in a record shop; I remember the original cover and it looked the least like a jazz record. I wondered what it would sound like. I put it on, and I heard this 19-piece group playing stuff that sounded like stuff I'd dreamed—things you don't hear big bands play, using instruments that are unlike a big band, playing counterlines... my mouth dropped open.

Here was a big band improvising like a horn player might. At one point, a tune builds to a tremendous peak and as Miles hits the highest note, the other instruments drop out and there's only a tuba on the bottom! It sent chills down my spine. The ballads are so beautiful. There were concepts that were already familiar to me, but there were totally new things that I never heard before. I thought, how did he [Gil Evans] do that? I learned later on that a lot of things he did had horizontal strength; harmonically, you think of vertical strength. I learned a lot from that album, and I think some of it came through on my album *Speak Like a Child*. *Miles Ahead* was a mark of perfection



that I had never experienced before. Every time I hear it, it brings tears to my eyes. (K.B.)

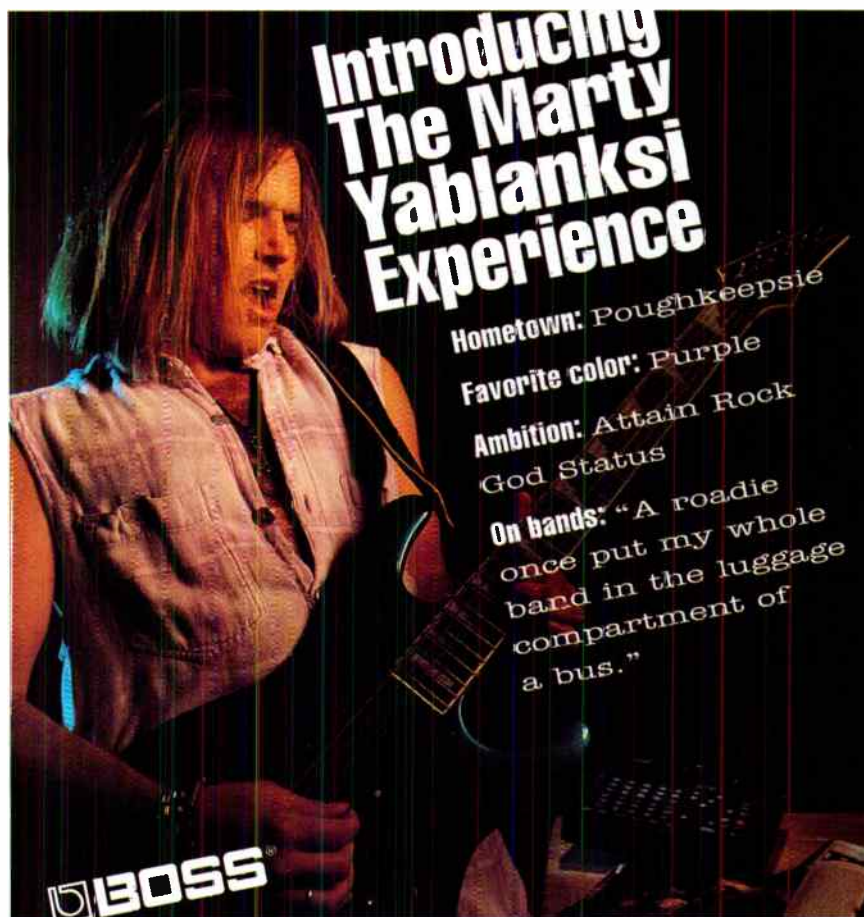
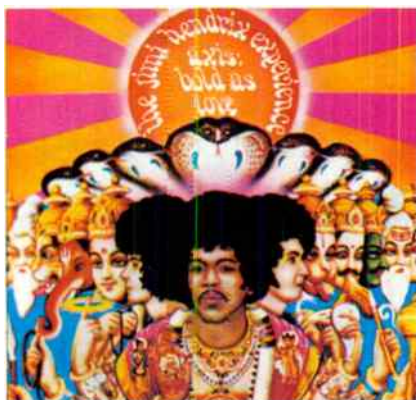
**PAUL HARTNOLL (ORBITAL)**

**24** Dead Kennedys, **FRESH FRUIT FOR ROTTING VEGETABLES.** This album changed my life because I listened to it when I was about 13 and it helped me to realize that most of what adults had been telling me all my life was a load of old bullshit. I was glad that there were some people out there that felt the same way too. I never really got over it! I still play it to this very day! (D.S.)

**JOHN HIATT**

**25** I was thinking it's probably a toss-up between **BLONDE ON BLONDE** and **AXIS: BOLD AS LOVE.** On *Axis*, you know that opening little salvo, where he does that rap and they interview this guy Paul Caruso, and he denies the existence of "space people" and then he says, "If you'll excuse me, I must be on my way," and then all hell breaks loose with his guitar? I just kind of *went with him*, you know? [laughs] I never heard anything like that—none of us had. What a powerful statement—he was just kind of starting to suggest what he had to offer in terms of his musical vision. "Little Wing," "Up from the Skies," incredible. The guy was definitely out there.

*Blonde on Blonde* came out when I was like 13 or 14, and I basically spent those two years in my room. I listened to "Visions of Johanna" over and over again. I guess it just kind of captured the way I was feeling. I didn't have any idea of what he was talking about, except that I kind of built up my own vision of Johanna, if you know what I mean, and I was sure that that was what I was missing in my life, too. (D.D.)



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**BOB DYLAN HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED****JOHN LEE HOOKER**

**26** I'd say Muddy Waters. I wasn't comin' up, I was famous then, but that one stuck in my mind, the one called "**I GOT MY MOJO WORKIN'.**" There's a lot of people that say they got their mojo workin', but it ain't workin', they *think* they got it workin'. I never could get mine to work till way later. [laughs] That stuck in my mind for a while. He was a

great influence on my up-and-coming. He was doing it before I was, and he stuck in my mind down through the years. (D.D.)

**ALAN JACKSON**

**27** We were pretty poor, so I didn't really listen to the radio, then go out and buy records. But John Conlee's "**ROSE COLORED GLASSES**" was the first song I ever sang in public. That song built my confidence up, because when I sang it people really responded. Even before I had a band in Georgia, I'd go places where they'd have a group playing and get up and sing that song.

The first time Deniece and I went to Nashville to look around and see if we should move, we went to the Nashville Palace. I'd heard that's where Randy Travis got discovered. Back then, they'd let you get up and sing with the house band. So I did. I sang "Rose Colored Glasses"—and a couple of the band guys said, "Hey, you're pretty good." I figured to them I was just another ole hillbilly trying to get up and sing, and they were being nice. But everywhere I went, especially somewhere new, that was the song I sang. It always made me feel like I could do it. (H.G.)

**CAROLE KING**

**28** I'd choose "**THERE GOES MY BABY**" by Lieber and Stoller, sung by Ben E. King. Gerry Goffin and I were writing together when I heard it the first time. It had the guts of R&B and the "head" of classical music; it had the string section in a way that was never before used, in my experience anyway, and the passion of an R&B singer. And it worked! Gerry and I had a background in classical as well as other musics, so it gave us a way to do that, too. And we did, with "Up on the Roof" and "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" for the Shirelles. I did the string arrangement myself on that one. I realized you didn't have to write these songs the way you were taught. (M.R.)

**CURT KIRKWOOD (THE MEAT PUPPETS)**

**29** Probably **ABBEY ROAD** by the Beatles. That's the first record I can remember playing over and over. I was pretty young, about 10, and there was that rumor that Paul was dead, and that added to the mystique. I'd been listening to them since the first time I heard "Norwegian Wood" and "Day Tripper" but *Abbey Road* was the first one I bought. The Beatles were odd to a child—they were like Martians. Each LP was a thing. I guess they were an inspiration to live in my own world. Because children do live in their own world, and the Beatles gave credence to that. I mean, they were pretty obviously different from the adults I saw around me. (M.R.)

**LENNY KRAVITZ**

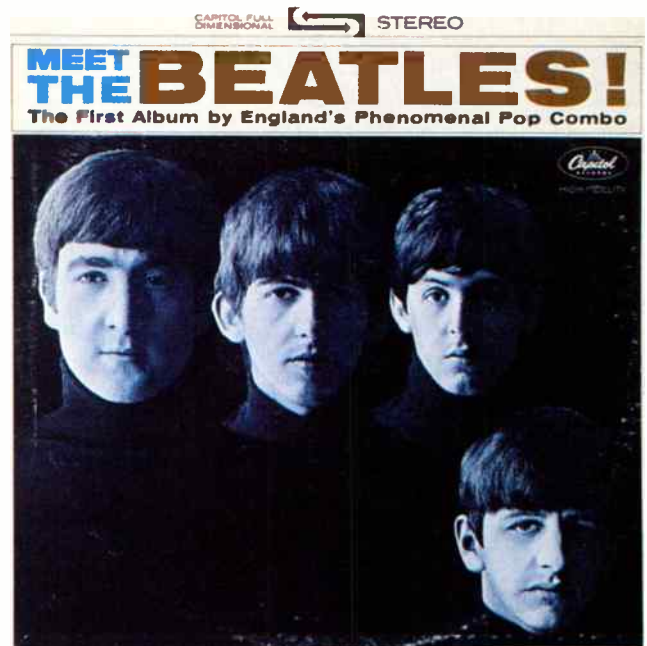
**30** Probably Stevie Wonder's **INNERVISIONS**. I heard that when I was very young, very small. I had listened to the Jackson 5, and all that early Motown stuff blew my mind completely. But that was the first *album*, the first big piece that just completely flipped my wig. It felt so intimate, so warm, so natural and so spiritual. And every song and every melody was a masterpiece—every instrument, every lick Stevie plays. In fact, he's one of my favorite drummers. People don't usually cite him—they talk about his piano playing or his singing or his harmonica playing. That record did it for me. (D.D.)

**BILL LASWELL**

**31** The Jimi Hendrix Experience, **ARE YOU EXPERIENCED**. Just because of the age and the time, and because this was the first album that had a real sound that one would have to attribute to production, as opposed to being just a band and instruments. But even more inspiring to me were some albums that were *never* made: the records Hendrix had a deal with Warner Bros. to make with Gil Evans and Miles Davis, and the album Ornette Coleman made with the Master Musicians of Jajouka but was never released. (N.B.)

**DAVID LOWERY (CRACKER)**

**32** I feel kind of funny because it's fairly current, but it's the last Vic Chesnutt album, **WEST OF ROME**. When I heard that song "West of Rome," it was right after we finished *Kerosene Hat*, and I remember Johnny and I were driving in my truck somewhere in South Carolina. We looked at each other, and I took the tape out of the player and I said, "That's it—I quit," and he laughed. We listened to it about eight times in a row. I think the reason I've listened to it nonstop for the last year is that, in this time of all this punk rock, this Lollapalooza Nation, this trendy, angry rock, it's, like, really cool. This guy is dealing with this simple, mellow music and great words. The way he tells a story is bizarre, and kind of funny—but they're serious. (D.D.)



**JOHN MELLENCAMP**

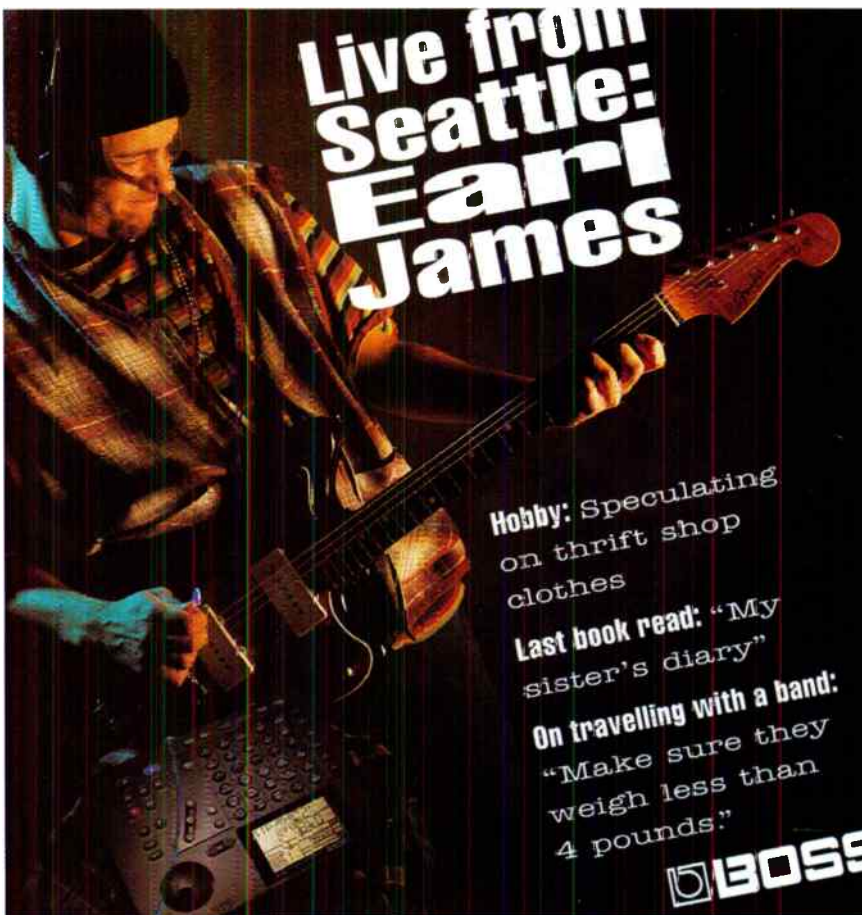
**33** That's easy—**HIGHWAY 61 RE-VISITED** by Bob Dylan. To this day I'd say it's the best record ever made. It combined folk and rock, you could dance to it but the lyrics were listenable and had a kind of intelligence that was lacking in pop music. In an era when hit songs were like 1:58, "Like a Rolling Stone" was six minutes long, broke all the rules and crossed the boundaries. I was about 14, I guess. I remember riding around in this souped-up '65 Valiant with this guy who was five years older, and he had a tape of that record; we used to blast the shit out of it. Later, when I realized what I wanted to do in music, it became my standard for excellence. I'd finish my records and go, "Nope, didn't make it." You always hope you can make a record like that, even though you know deep inside you never could. (M.R.)

**WILLIE NELSON**

**34** I was 10 years old and I heard "BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN" in the movie, I think, of the very same name. I learned it right there on the spot and started singing it whenever I could—"Gots spurs that jingle, jangle, jingle...take me back to my boots and saddle." I wanted to be a cowboy singer. I wanted to be just like Gene Autry. I started singing that song in school during study hall and talent contests—and it's still very much a part of my music, very much a part of me. The only thing is, I'm probably more a singer than a cowboy. (H.G.)

**LIZ PHAIR**

**35** I won the Jesus and Mary Chain's **PSYCHOCANDY** unfairly because I knew the college DJ who was raffling it off. Somebody else really won, but I knew they had two copies. So I called in and used my freshman-girl charm and flattery to get the other one. I lived for that album. You know what it was? I grew up fascinated by the idea of harmonizing with household appliances. I would try and get my voice to the exact right pitch as the fan or refrigerator to make my dog perk up his ears and whine. Then I knew I'd really hit it. And that's what they were doing with the guitar sound on *Psychocandy*, taking a traditional tune and making it marijuana slow. It wasn't super raw, it was beautiful noise pop. It was a big part of my "alternative awakening"—I was being exposed to social



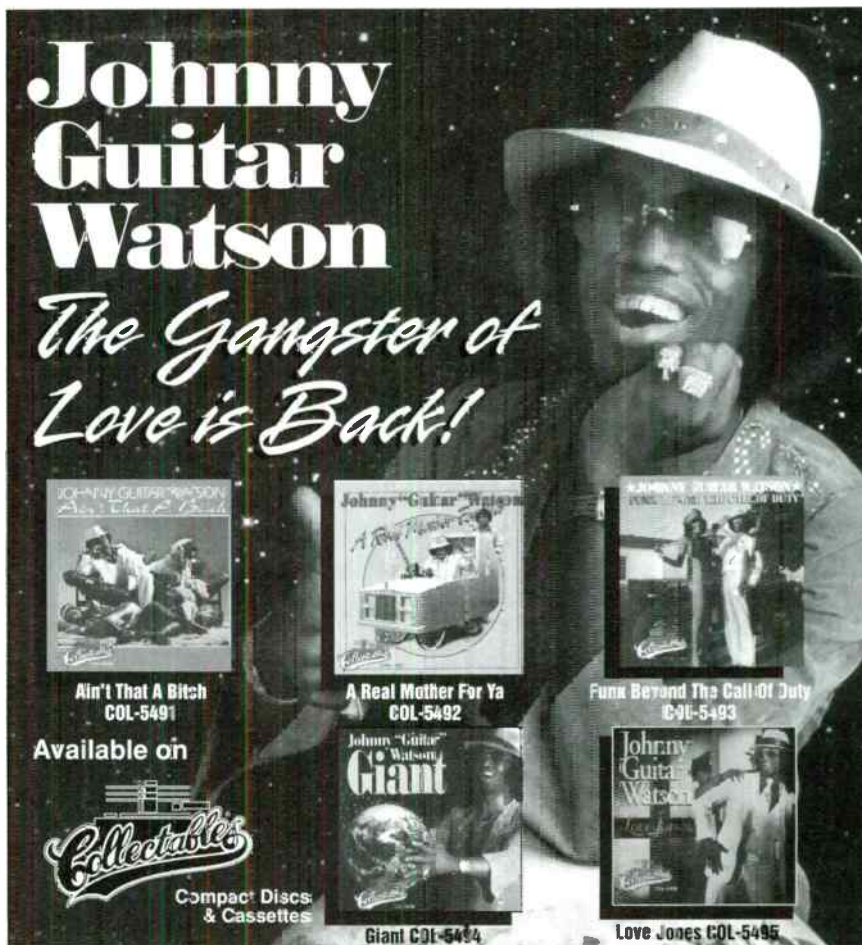
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and musical realms that I hadn't even fathomed were out there. It became my alternative armor when I went home that summer. (V.G.)

### Q-TIP (A TRIBE CALLED QUEST)

**36** Run-DMC, RUN-DMC. I just liked it because it was some ghetto shit. Grandmaster Flash and Sugar Hill Gang were cool, but they were on some band-type shit. Run-DMC came out wearing Adidas, dressed like me. I'm from Queens. I could relate. I think it

was the first hip-hop album that came out that wasn't just a collection of singles. (N.B.)

### BONNIE RAITT


**37** The record that turned me around was **BLUES AT NEWPORT—'63** on Vanguard. It still keeps my taste anchored to the more modal and raw Delta blues as opposed to the slicker, urban sound. Mississippi John Hurt was on there and Dave Van Ronk and John Hammond, who were young white blues guys. I'd never even imagined that white guys could sing the blues authentically—let alone white women. At 14, I sat there literally till my fingers bled trying to figure out all those songs. There was a mournful quality, a dark night of the soul, an aching loneliness that as a teenager you feel intensely personally—whether you're not getting along with your parents, or feel nobody understands you. There was all that, plus humor and bite and everything else I love about the Delta blues, on that one record. (V.G.)

### JOEY RAMONE

**38** **MEET THE BEATLES.** I was coming home from high school one day. I had my transistor radio—I was a big fan of radio, I used to listen to the WMCA Good Guys and Murray the K on WABC—and I heard "I Wanna Hold Your Hand." First I got the single, then I got the album. It was really exciting, something new. They were like nobody before them, even though they were so obviously influenced by '50s music like Buddy Holly and Little Richard, which in many ways was much more primal. But the Beatles were even more individualistic. They were colorful, they had great hair, great songs, great boots, attitude, energy. They had the whole hysteria, the way the girls reacted to them—they brought something new to it for me. It was a revolution of sorts. It was *radical, man...* (S.P.)


### JOSHUA REDMAN

**39** I would choose Stevie Wonder's **SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE**, because it kind of affected me twice in my life, and in very powerful ways. When I was about eight or nine I remember just loving the music; it was so soulful, so rich and full of spirit. At that time I was just becoming conscious of certain social issues, of race and class. Also girls—




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not "relationships" at that age or anything, but the idea of romance. And Stevie's lyric messages were so positive—I don't usually pay that much attention to lyrics but the music was so soulful it made the messages that much more powerful.

Toward the end of my college years I was only listening to jazz. But I remembered how I loved those songs so I thought like, "Well, let's see if this is really any good." So I put it on. And not only did it bring on all those warm memories, but it was every bit as rich and moving and deep as any jazz. So it kind of brought to a close that period, which I needed to go through, and opened me up again to the world of all music. (M.R.)

**JIM REID (JESUS AND MARY CHAIN)**

**40** Sex Pistols, **NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS**. I was 15 when it came out. It brought to my attention that being in a successful band was possible, that anyone could do it. You didn't have to be like Jeff Beck or Eric Clapton—you could just pick up a guitar, and within a month be playing music. A lot of the, like, punk rock manifesto that you were getting then from the likes of the *NME* and *Melody Maker* made perfect sense to a guy like me—working-class, just about to leave school and sign on the dole. On top of it all the Sex Pistols released that record, and that was it—the seed was sown. It was only overcoming my own laziness or lack of confidence that it took so long to get it together. But it was the Sex Pistols that got me off my ass to even think I could do anything other than work in a factory. (D.S.)

**TEDDY RILEY**

**41** I used to go to the Apollo when they used to show a movie first, like *Save the Children*, then the screen would go up and James Brown or Al Green or Gladys Knight & the Pips would perform. I was always there for that. Gladys Knight & the Pips really caught my eye. "**NEITHER ONE OF US (WANTS TO BE THE FIRST TO SAY GOODBYE)**"—just seeing them perform that at the Apollo. On that song, she picked me up and gave me one of her bracelets, a silver bracelet. I kept it—I don't have it now, I think my mom has it—but that's what made me really want to do music, her picking me up and holding me in her arms. I was five years old. (D.D.)

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## TERRY RILEY

**42** The record that probably had the most impact was the **RAGAS OF MORNING AND NIGHT** by Pandit Pran Nath. It's on Gramavision, and it was released about seven or eight years ago. Before it was released, I had a tape of it. I felt that it was kind of like the essence of what music should be: extremely simple and complex at the same time. It brought out some very deep feelings that moved me, and that I could relate to. (D.D.)

## ED ROLAND (COLLECTIVE SOUL)

**43** It would be between Elvis and Elton John. I heard Elvis first of course; "KENTUCKY RAIN" is the one I remember buying as a kid. I think it was my first introduction to rock 'n' roll. It wasn't really rock then, but I can just remember as a kid picking it up and doing that mirror thing. I guess it made me, I don't know, at least attempt what I'm doing today. When I first heard Elton John, it was, like, I want to be a *songwriter* now. I learned to play the guitar to be a songwriter. I can remember "Mona Lisas

and Mad Hatters." So both those songs definitely turned my life in this direction. (D.D.)

## SONNY ROLLINS

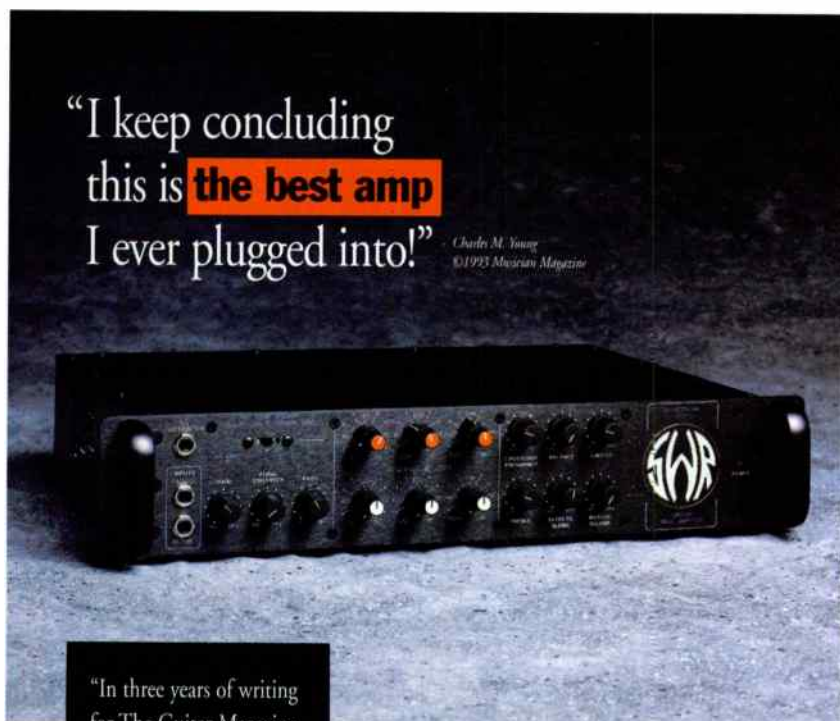
**44** Fats Waller: "I'M GONNA SIT RIGHT DOWN AND WRITE MYSELF A LETTER." When I heard that, I knew I was spiritually home. I was a youngster, it was the early 1930s. It could have been live because I think Fats was on the radio sometimes. It was his rendition, and his inimitable jazz style and manner that, as Prez used to say, "tricked me." It was spiritual, that's the only way I can describe it; it really got me. My next choice is "It's a Low-down Dirty Shame," by Louis Jordan and the Tympani Five. In addition to the music, which was an elemental blues, I went to school on 135th Street in Harlem, and Louis Jordan was playing right across the street. I'd pass the club, and there was a picture of him in the window: The sax was all shiny, and Louis had on his cutaway tails. That picture reinforced my ambition. Then there was Coleman Hawkins, "Lover Man" with Oscar Pettiford on bass. By that time, I had become sort of a Coleman Hawkins disciple. That was one of his really great jazz records, and an inspiring record to me as an aspiring musician. So all of these things sort of coalesce. (K.B.)

## RYUICHI SAKAMOTO

**45** One was the record of **CLAUDE DEBUSSY'S STRING QUARTET AND RAVEL'S STRING QUARTET** played by the Budapest Quartet. The first time I heard that was when I was maybe 13. And the second biggest one was Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*. Both of them changed my musical direction a lot at those points. I was listening a lot to jazz even before, so I knew about jazz before I heard the *Headhunters* album, but then I heard that record, and that made my ears open to grooves and beats—not harmonies or improvisation. (D.D.)

## SLASH

**46** I was in seventh grade and just going through the whole 1978 music thing that was happening for kids—which was like Cheap Trick and the Cars. Anyway, there was this chick that I was going after that was considerably older than me, and she was pretty hot. And I'd been trying to be cool enough to take her out and have my way with her at some point; this went on for months. Finally, I sort of



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weaseled my way into her apartment. So we're hanging out and she put **AEROSMITH ROCKS** on, and I was mesmerized by it. It was like the be-all-and-end-all, best-attitude, fuckin' hard rock record. This was before I had started playing guitar, you know, I'd grown up with music, but this was like *my* record. I must have listened to it about half a dozen times, completely ignored her, and then got on my bike and rode. I was totally *in there*, I was at least gonna get a decent French kiss out of it, and I completely dropped the ball for Aerosmith, and that was that. It's probably one of the records that sums up my taste in hard rock bands to this day. Meanwhile, she's out there somewhere and I missed it. But it was worth it. (D.D.)

**MICHAEL STIPE (R.E.M.)**

**47** I remember the first record my sisters and I bought were *The Parent Trap* with Hayley Mills and *Double Trouble*, which was an Elvis movie soundtrack. We had to buy them together, 'cause all we had was seven dollars between us. But the real record for me was

Patti Smith's **HORSES**. I was too young to experience the Stooges, Dolls or Velvets. I was listening to what was on the radio, Ted Nugent, Tommy Bolin, mid-dreck period Rolling Stones. Suddenly Patti Smith comes along and it was like a fucking piano landed on my head. I was a teenager, and I was so moved I couldn't sleep, I was sick to my stomach from the impact. It was unbelievable—my life completely changed by a rock 'n' roll record. (V.G.)

**RICHARD THOMPSON**

**48** When I was three or four my father brought home some Django and Les Paul records that sounded like they arrived from Mars. It was pretty exciting stuff compared to "Teddy Bears' Picnic"! But I'd have to pick **SCOTTISH DANCE MUSIC BY PIPE MAJOR JOHN BURGESS**. It was both very soulful and kind of spine-chilling at the same time. The harmonic drift, those minor 7th chord shifts, give it a lot of character. It requires a fairly exact kind of playing, the notes are very weighted. Each has a very specific emotional effect,

none are wasted. There's a whole science of Scottish pipe composition as exacting as composing Indian ragas. And it swings. (D.D.)

**LARS ULRICH (METALLICA)**

**49** Three different things were major milestones. In 1973, when I was nine years old, my dad took me to see Deep Purple in Copenhagen. It was him and three of his hippie friends—they had a spare ticket, and I got dragged along. I sat there watching Richie Blackmore throw his black Stratocaster up and down—this wall of noise and the whole spectacle—and the next day I went down to the local record store, reached up and looked over the counter and said, "Give me anything by Deep Purple." They handed me the album **FIREBALL**, which was the first rock record that I got into.

There was one record in 1979—*Overkill* by Motorhead. I'd read about them before, but never heard them. When the opening double-bass-beat-from-hell just came out of nowhere on the song "Overkill," it blew my fucking head off. The other record would be

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Diamondhead's *Lightning to the Nations*, which they made and put out by themselves in 1980. Diamondhead wrote long, riff-oriented songs with a lot of different progressions, a lot of different moods and tempos and so on, but they were all centered around real heavy riffs. A lot of the progressive stuff at the time was centered around ELP-type progressions, but these guys took AC/DC and Judas Priest riffs and put them over eight- and nine-minute songs. That and the Motorhead record really set the course for what became Metallica. (D.D.)

#### JIMMIE VAUGHAN

**50** If I was gonna pick one, I'd pick a record called **FOLK FESTIVAL OF THE BLUES**. It's been reissued several times, as *Blues from Big Bill's Coca Cabana*, with a cheesy black and white photograph on the cover tinted blue. It was a live gig at a club in Chicago, and the band had Buddy Guy on guitar, Otis Spann on piano, Jack Meyers on bass and Fred Below on drums. Muddy Waters sang "Mojo," and Howlin' Wolf sang—and Sonny Boy Williamson too, as if that wasn't enough. Buddy

Guy sounded like he'd got a brand new '57 Strat and a Fender Bassman *that day*, and he'd turned it up to 12. It was so big and mean and the basslines grooved. I learned every lead, every intro, every bass track. And I played it on this Montgomery Ward player with little speakers and the turntable was too slow—that probably influenced the way I play too. [laughs] I mean, it's 25 years later and I'm still playing a Fender Strat and a Bassman, you know? There's nothing else that makes a sound like that. (M.R.)

#### DON WAS

**51** **PET SOUNDS** was the first time that I became aware of "the room" and the emotional importance of texture. Brian Wilson didn't have these synthesizers or samplers to layer things together. He sat 20 guys in this tiny little room—I work in this room all the time now—and he would have the piano play a part, then have somebody playing soda bottles filled with water doubling the piano part. I guess they must have faked the room, because *Pet Sounds* always sounded huge to me. He created this universe full of impressionistic sounds. I really think that he brought technicolor to Phil Spector's approach, which strikes me as a black and white thing. All of a sudden, Brian—he's like Cézanne, he's pouring these oranges and yellows all over it. (J.C.)

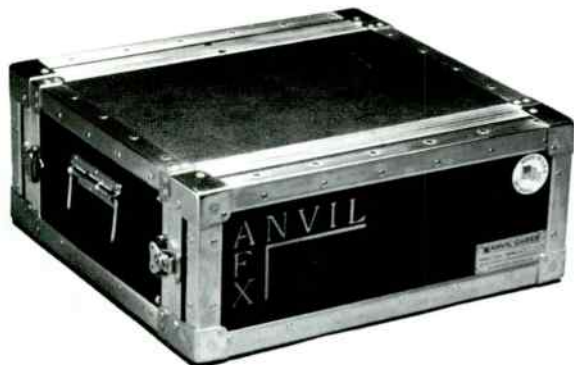
#### PAUL WESTERBERG

**52** **A NOD IS AS GOOD AS A WINK...TO A BLIND HORSE** by the Faces is probably the one that did the most damage to me as an 11-year-old. The Pistols taught me that anyone can do it, and that was the boost I needed to get me going. *Born to Run* obviously taught me that if you're going to do something, do it with passion. But before that, even, the Faces combined both elements. They were not the greatest musicians—they had an air of *anyone can do this*. And there was passion to their music—it was aggressive, but also vulnerable. They had songs like "Miss Judy's Farm" and "Stay with Me," which were sort of rude and aggressive, yet there's the beautiful, tender songs of Ronnie Lane's, like "Debris." Plus, there weren't any songs about elves and dwarves and misty mountains. You could probably find a better-written record, a better-sung one, but it spoke to me, even if I didn't know exactly what they were singing about—say, a labor strike in England. It made sense to me that they were [cont'd on page 71]

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## AHOGANIES AND EBONIES HAVE BEEN JUST AS HEAVILY EXPLOITED AS ROSEWOOD

that "Vintage dealers have always made a pile off Brazilian rosewood instruments," she says, "and they're doing so now more than ever because it's so scarce."

The rarity of Brazilian rosewood, even in the best of times, has meant that it's never been a first option for luthiers. Now that it's been banned, many guitar makers are turning more intently toward another old favorite: East Indian rosewood (*Dalbergia latifolia*). This wood, normally light to dark purple with red and brown streaks, is more stable and thus easier to work than Brazilian rosewood. It's also subject to strict governmental control. "Indian rosewood trees can't be cut down anymore," explains Robert Larson of Vikwood, a wood supplier for manufacturers like Guild and Fender. "But if a tree is felled naturally—by lightning or disease—the government buys it and auctions it off. Then the wood has to be processed for specific purposes in India before being shipped.

Wood meant for guitar parts is cut to a certain thickness, and it's designated for guitar use."

Larson also mentions a more domesticated and sustainable source of East Indian rosewood: tea plantations. "Rosewood trees are used in

### TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

As the health of the world's forests approaches critical condition, environmental responsibility is increasingly demanded of guitar builders. The seven companies listed here make a point of using either non-endangered woods or alternative materials such as fiberglass and graphite in their acoustic guitars. This is by no means a complete list, but it represents the vanguard of eco-friendly guitar manufacture.

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▶ **H.G. LEACH** Box 1315, Cedar Ridge, CA 95924; voice (516) 477-2938.

▶ **MANZER** Box 924, Stn. P., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S2Z2.

▶ **PIMENTEL & SONS**, 3316 Lafayette NE, Albuquerque, NM 87107; voice and fax (505) 884-1669.

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## RECENT SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHS SHOW MUCH MORE CUTTING THAN IS REPORTED

the plantations for shade. Once they've grown to a certain height, after about 40 years, they're no longer useful for that purpose, so they're cut down. New trees are planted every 20 years to replace the old ones. We get a lot of our wood from those managed plantations." This type of wood, however, is different from the wild variety, with less density and lighter color and grain.

Despite the regulations, not everyone is

optimistic about the state of *D. latifolia*. According to Richard Bruné, "Recent satellite photos are showing cutting that's much greater than what's been reported. The Indian government's underreporting their cut of rosewood by as much as 800 percent." Also, it's not unknown for dealers to label Indonesian plantation rosewood (known locally as sonokeling) as wild East Indian rosewood, which can lead some to think the supply in

India is better than it actually is. Keep in mind that because of severe competition between suppliers in India, the price of Indian rosewood is artificially low. "It's going to rise eventually," John Curtis says, "and when it does, you'll probably see some shady operators passing other wood off as Indian rosewood, soaking it in coffee or wine to get the right color."

Rosewood isn't the only acoustic guitar wood in trouble, according to Nick Von Robison, staff editor at *American Lutherie*, the official journal of the Guild of American Luthiers. "Mahoganies and ebonies have been just as heavily exploited. I'd say most of them will be CITES woods by the end of the century." Central American bigleaf mahogany (often called Honduran mahogany), a deep red wood used for guitar necks, backs and sides, is in the process of being added to CITES now.

Clearly, these problems can't be solved by trade bans alone. Sustainable management—cutting that allows the forest to regenerate itself—may be one answer. WARP has helped to investigate different methods of harvesting, like those employed at the Yanessa Cooperative in Peru, where trees are clear-cut in small, non-adjacent areas and *all* the resulting wood is processed for sale. But, as Curtis points out, "Intelligent forest management plans cost money. And while the buying public is crying for sustainably harvested woods, it's not yet willing to pay the price for people to tiptoe through the forest, take out one-third as many trees and work twice as hard."

Another increasingly popular option is the use of non-traditional woods. John Curtis, a proponent of this approach, says, "Guitar makers swear the woods they use have unique tonal properties. But I can't completely believe that. People use the same woods out of habit, and also because they'll help sell guitars. And they make up excuses to justify that, when there are so many other woods out there that can work."

Dave Maize, maker of the Earthtone acoustic bass guitar, has built instruments for Pearl Jam's Jeff Ament and Jefferson Airplane's Jack Casady using black walnut from dead trees in Oregon, redwood salvaged from a sawmill, and zircote from a sustainable source in the Yucatan. "I look for two elements in woods," he says, "environmental

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## ANOTHER INCREASINGLY POPULAR OPTION IS THE USE OF NON-TRADITIONAL WOODS

alities, and I don't compromise when it comes to either." Linda Manzer also keeps an eye out for salvaged woods. "Some of the guitar tops I've made came from a hunk of cedar that I found washed up on a beach on Vancouver Island. I've gotten about 18 guitars out of that." Harvey Leach, a luthier based in Cedar Ridge, California, makes a point of using

"non-endangered" woods in his guitars, such as maple. "You can say that every wood's endangered, more or less. I'm not that strict an environmentalist, but I try to be as smart as I can about what I use."

Independent luthiers aren't the only ones looking at non-traditional woods. A major manufacturer, Martin, is getting involved, thanks in part to the efforts of advertising

director Dick Boak, a WARP advisor. The company's put out a number of limited editions using woods such as ash and walnut. "Those two were especially successful, and they got a good response from players."

Richard Bruné believes one of the next major trends in the guitar trade will be recycling. "The oldest guitar in existence was made in Lisbon in 1581. It's still playable, and it has the same back and sides it had when it was made. Recycling guitars is completely viable. It's just a question of whether players will accept it."

Synthetic materials in place of wood are also being explored, with Ovation's fiberglass bowl design at the forefront. "Experimentation has always been in our nature," says Ovation's Don Johnson, another WARP member. "We've played around with alternate neck and top woods for years; I've been pleasantly surprised by North American cherry."

Massachusetts-based luthier William Cumpiano has been working on guitar tops made of a carbon-fiber composite. "It's the same material that you see in most tennis rackets today," he explains. "I think you'll see it more and more in industries that have normally used wood, for products that are under stress and also must meet acoustic standards." Then there's the first all-graphite acoustic guitar, the Kuau RainSong. Rick Pimentel of Pimentel & Sons in Albuquerque helped design the instrument: "We wanted a guitar that was environmentally responsible, that wouldn't be affected by weather changes, and that would sound great."

These developments are encouraging, but are they enough? That depends on us. Until now, few of us have been aware of the problems we help to create simply by picking up a guitar. Today, in the wake of the destruction of the tropical forests, this innocence is coming to an end, as it must. No longer can we afford to ignore the environmental impact of the decisions we make as players and consumers. The days of buying a guitar for its look, feel and tone, without regard for its materials or origin, are over.

Scott Landis offers this advice: "However small the amount of wood that's used for guitars, it's still part of the business. With use comes responsibility. These are complicated issues, and there's no easy fix. But fix it we have to do, or live with the consequences." ♪

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# ACOUSTIC/ELECTRIC HEAVEN

**M**OST DAYS, I'm surrounded by enough stuff to serve my technical needs. Practically none of it serves my soul. All of this changed one fine Thursday morning when Jim, my kindly UPS delivery man, dropped off the first of six acoustic/electric guitars. Now, after several weeks of living with these gorgeous instruments, I may not be in heaven, but I sure hear the angels' strings.

All of them are six-strings in the \$1700-to-\$2300 range, equipped with active piezo pickup systems and cutaway bodies of more or less "grand concert" size (at least, smaller than a large-waisted dreadnought). Our sampling includes a Guild F65CE, Taylor 612C, Larrivee C-05, Ovation 1994 Collector's Series, Takamine PSF-94 Santa Fe Limited Edition and Yamaha APX20D.

★ **GUILD F65CE** (\$1899, deluxe case \$175; available in amber or sunburst with maple top, or blonde or sunburst with spruce top): Guild promotes their F-series instruments as having a "natural, acoustic sound—plugged or unplugged." But when you consider that their bodies are just over three inches deep, it's obvious that even the top-

of-the-line F65CE isn't going to conjure a full-blooded acoustic tone. No matter. Over time, its unique charms and strengths become clear.

The U.S.-built F65CE would look at home in a 1930s supper-club orchestra. Its beautifully figured blonde maple body is matched with a glossy lacquered spruce or maple top. The somewhat rounded maple neck is comfortable and fast. Adornments are few but tasty: The ebony fingerboard is position-marked with large mother-of-pearl rectangles, each containing an abalone triangle. The body is bound with white ivoroid and, along with the elliptical soundhole, is trimmed by thin back and white stripes that also race down both sides of the fingerboard. A stylish mother-of-pearl "G" sits pretty atop Guild's trademark scalloped headstock.

The F65CE's thin, quiet acoustic sound is no surprise (though it does record quite well using microphones). But to reveal its true beauty, you need to use the under-saddle pickup. It's made by Fishman, as is the onboard preamp/controller, which offers gain, four bands of EQ plus a set-it-and-forget-it sub-bass control.

Amplified, the instrument's range is impressive: an exceptionally natural "acoustic" sound, a credible jazz tone and the brightness needed to cut through a band. There's also a phase reversal switch; throwing it reduces feedback immediately—but unlike a notch filter, you may have to throw it again if you move in relationship to your amp or P.A. speakers. The unwound B and E strings do have a percussive "snap" when played hard (as is common with piezo pickups), but that's a minor flaw compared with the high quality of the F65CE's overall sound.

The secret to happiness with this guitar is to keep it electrified.

★ **TAKAMINE PSF-94 SANTA FE LIMITED EDITION** (\$1849, hardshell case \$139): Inspired by Pueblo Indian designs, a flock of mother-of-pearl eagles soar across the fingerboard of Takamine's latest Santa Fe guitar doing double duty as position markers. Inlaid pairs of eagle heads grace the perimeter of the soundhole, made of

**Plugged and unplugged with six mighty fine acoustic/electric cutaway guitars**

BY BRENT HURTIG





ebony, maple and padauk. A black/green/black stripe follows the white binding of the satin-finished cedar top and the relatively deep, beautiful koa body.

The PSF-94's Japanese craftsmanship is the cleanest of all six guitars: Fretwork is impeccable, joints are even, interior work is marvelous. The two-piece angled split saddle actually does improve intonation for the G and B strings. Finished with a rosewood fingerboard and brown pearlescent tuning buttons, the PSF-94 looks striking and feels very nice to boot.

Does its acoustic sound match its craftsmanship? Unplugged, the PSF-94 sounds reasonably balanced, but surprisingly thin for a full-depth guitar. Like the Guild, it works well with mikes: There's no boominess, and chords project the right tonal balance to cut through a mix.

The onboard pickup/preamp system makes up for the guitar's acoustical shortcomings. If that full Luka Bloom-like bottom end is what moves you, then crank the PSF-94's bass slider and stand back! Amplified or recorded direct, there's enough kick in this beast to help you digest your lunch. The treble slider imparts more than enough high end. The sweepable midrange control can be used to cut an offending feedback frequency or shape the instrument's basic tone into a reasonably natural sound. One precaution: The midrange control covers a broad range for such a short fader. It's difficult to get a setting back once you've changed it.

Although it looks lovely, the PSF-94 needs juice to come alive. If Southwest references are in order, then with the Santa Fe think Georgia O'Keeffe for unplugged and jalapeño for plugged in.

★ **LARRIVÉE C-05** (\$1875 with Fishman Acoustic Matrix pickup; includes deluxe case): Can a relatively small luthier compete with the big-name manufacturers? This Canadian-built guitar has "yes" all over it. The Larrivée C-05 is not ornate, but its Zen-like simplicity is a sight to behold. The ivoroid-bound ebony fretboard is solid black, free of inlay, and feels like home to me (though barre-chord players may have trouble with its near-flatness). The auburn, moderately deep mahogany body is bound neatly with dark rosewood. A clear pickguard, nearly invisible, protects the Sitka spruce top. The wood rosette is tidy, if somewhat dated-

looking. A scooping cutaway slashes these calm features to a sharp edge.

Which is to say nothing of this instrument's glorious sound. One strum unleashes the Larrivée's substantial low-end *oomph*; a second reveals it to be a notch above the Taylor, a jump up from the Ovation (see below) and a league above every other guitar tested in terms of overall body and clarity. It doesn't quite have the perfect note-to-note balance of the Taylor and, if pressed, I'd wish for slightly deeper tone from the high strings. Still, the C-05 is something special.

◆ **Guild** c/o U.S. Music, 2885 South James Dr., New Berlin, WI 53151; voice (414) 784-8388, fax (414) 784-9258. ◆ **Larrivée**, 1896 Victoria Diversion, Vancouver, BC, Canada V5N 2K4; voice (604) 879-8111, fax (604) 879-5440. ◆ **Ovation** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102. ◆ **Takamine** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102. ◆ **Taylor**, 1940 Gillespie Way, El Cajon, CA 92020; voice (619) 258-1207, fax (619) 258-1623. ◆ **Yamaha**, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9832.

For solo work, it mikes beautifully. In a full-band mix you may want to roll off some bass to avoid muddiness. The model I played came factory-equipped with an optional Fishman Acoustic Matrix Natural pickup, sans controls (onboard Fishman controls, identical with the Guild's, are also available), but *avec* trouble: a hum and no response from the low-E string, both of which indicate uneven pressure on the pickup. After loosening the strings, reseating the saddle and retuning, the guitar delivered a well-balanced plugged-in tone both through an amp and direct to digital. To see what one could expect if this guitar came with onboard controls, we connected Fishman's \$169 Pro-EQ (which offers the same controls as the Guild F65CE). I was able to tweak up some very believable "acoustic" tones.

While it happens to record and amplify nicely, the Larrivée was built first to be a living, breathing, full-sounding acoustic guitar. It succeeds beautifully.

★ **TAYLOR 612C** (\$2273 with Fishman Acoustic Matrix pickup, deluxe case \$225):

Taylor's popularity is on the rise and the 612C shows why. From the amber-stained flamed maple body to the gentle curves, from the simple abalone rosette to the petal-like fingerboard inlays, the 612C is unusually pretty. (I'd remove the faux-tortoise shell pickguard, though; the pickguard-free 912C looks so much cleaner.)

For all of its good looks, the U.S.-built 612C is made to be played. It boasts a delicious, slender low-action neck—in fact, I've never felt a more comfortable neck, even on an electric. Given its lightweight, mid-depth maple body, it isn't very loud, and the tone is a bit bass-shy. Which is not to say that it's thin-sounding. What marks this instrument's tone is the incredibly consistent balance from note to note and its timbral complexity, in a wide range of styles. Positioning mikes is a cinch; place them almost anywhere and you'll get the goods, without boom or brittleness.

Like the Larrivée, the Taylor I saw came with an optional Fishman Acoustic Matrix Natural pickup (onboard Fishman controls are available), which faithfully captures the instrument's balance. Digitally recorded or through an amp, the sound is natural, especially in the low-end, though with some characteristic "piezo snap." Plugging into Fishman's outboard Pro-EQ provides a spectrum of sonic possibilities.

True, this guitar is the most expensive of the bunch, but you do in fact get what you pay for. The 612C is a player's axe and a recording engineer's dream.

★ **OVATION 1994 COLLECTOR'S SERIES** (\$1695, deluxe case \$150): If the name Ovation brings to mind multicolored, raised rosettes and fancy epaulets, you might be as surprised as I was when I opened the case of the U.S.-built Ovation 1994 Collector's model. Inside I found an eloquence of understatement: a light spruce top embellished by a simple mauve and white binding, and an elegant rosette of ash, maple and ebony with tiny mother-of-pearl diamonds. The 1994's jumbo-fretted ebony fingerboard, decorated with a "1994" inlay at the 12th fret, is complemented by ebony tuning buttons and a subtle black/purple/black inlay racing through the mahogany headstock and neck. It's nicely put together (despite some glue oozes in the interior), and the fingerboard feels comfy.



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## TEST CONDITIONS

All guitars were restrung with D'Addario Phosphor Bronze Light strings. Live acoustic/electric performance was evaluated using a fine-sounding Guild Timberline Aspen acoustic guitar amp and a Roland Cube 60 combo. Guitars were miked in a variety of positions using two AKG C391B Blue Line cardioid condenser microphones and a low-noise dbx 760X mike preamp; direct signals were routed through a Mackie 1604 mixer. All signals were recorded using a Digidesign Pro Tools digital audio workstation, allowing for random-access and automated A/B comparisons of miked tracks and direct recordings of each instrument's active pickup.

The APX20D is a comfortable guitar, though a bit heavy, with a rounded, moderately thick neck, nearly four inches of depth and a nice arch in its sycamore back. While its Taiwanese workmanship is otherwise excellent, our review model had disconcerting problems: small gaps in the binding, a loose-fitting battery holder that rattled in sympathy with the low strings, a tangled mess of internal wiring and wood shavings left inside. For two grand you expect better.

Unplugged, like the Takamine, the APX20D doesn't quite live up to the promise of its looks.

There's just not much presence (though it does have more bottom). As for the loose battery holder, a piece of tape stopped the rattle, after which I miked it and got decent results, particularly with flat-picked leads and chords.

But give it a cable (or two), and the APX20D's personality shines, thanks to a stereo piezo pickup under the saddle and two piezos under the top. Using just the bridge pickup, odd-numbered strings can be switched to the right output and even-numbered strings to the left. A very cool sound! Alternately, you can split strings 1, 2 and 3 right, 4, 5 and 6 left, or go mono. A mix control lets you blend the "woodier"-sounding under-top pickup with the bridge pickup. The APX20D's electronics convey a remarkably acoustic tone, though they could be more versatile. Even with the bass cranked there's not much bottom, midrange control is absent, and there's no notch filter or phase switch to combat feedback.

All in all, Yamaha's APX20D is a hot-looking, fine-feeling guitar that deserves better quality control. Acoustically, it leaves something to be desired, but it comes on quite strong once it's plugged in.

Naturally, I can't evaluate certain traits of these high-end acoustic/electrics, including how they'll feel in your hands, how you'll like their looks and to some degree how they'll sound to you. It seems certain, though, that anyone in the market for an instrument with these features and in this price range ought to shop around, and spend as much time as possible with each guitar. The options are very rich indeed.

The tone was my second surprise. Aside from the Larrivé, it has the warmest, deepest acoustic sound of any of these instruments. But it lacks sustain. The sound of a strong strum decays faster on the Ovation than the others, almost as if an invisible compressor were at work.

In front of the microphones, however, the 1994's tight sound actually works well for fingerstyle and lead playing, keeping each note distinct. The six-piece piezo bridge pickup fares just as well both on tape and through an amp, providing a solid acoustic tone. The *coup de grâce*, though, is the instrument's Optima preamp. In addition to gain control and four-band EQ, there's a very effective feedback-killing notch filter. The ¼" output jack is accompanied by an XLR jack (no direct box needed), via which a mixer's phantom power can be used to run the preamp (instead of the battery). And in the "why didn't they come up with this before?" department, the preamp includes a built-in, easy-to-see chromatic tuner!

All in all, very impressive. If you're looking for a combination of sophisticated on-board controls, roadworthiness, warm acoustic tone and value, this is the ticket.

★ **YAMAHA APX20D** (\$1999, deluxe case \$50; available in antique stain sunburst or cream white): With 24 fat frets, sunburst finish and raised rosette—lopsided over an elliptical soundhole—the APX20D looks like it should be connected to a Marshall stack. This axe's aggressive demeanor is tempered only by generous amounts of abalone inlay and ivoroid binding.

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[cont'd from page 50] speaking about something that meant something to *them*. (D.D.)

### BARRY WHITE

**53** Music changed my life at the age of five. That's when I fell in love with music, through my mother's influences. The song that impressed me most was **"I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU"** by the Flamingos. Their sound was incredible. I'd heard other songs they had made—"Love Walked In" and "Lovers Never Say Goodbye." But "I Only Have Eyes for You" blew us *away*, man. I'll never forget it. And when I hear it today, I think about 1959. (D.D.)

### VICTORIA WILLIAMS

**54** Simon & Garfunkel's **SOUNDS OF SILENCE**—there were so many great songs on that record. It had "April Comes She Will," "Somewhere They Can't Find Me," "I Am a Rock." Oh gosh. I would say that one really influenced me—the whole concept: I am a rock, I am an island. That one was really cool. [sings] "And a rock feels no pain, and an island never cries." I loved that whole Simon & Garfunkel thing. I loved the lyrics to that, they were really deep and beautiful. (D.D.)

### TAMMY WYNETTE

**55** I'd have to say **"TIL I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN,"** because it was released right after George Jones and I broke up. Even now, 28 years later, it's hard to sing because of how powerful those emotions were. We cut it at the Old Quonset Hut, which was known as Columbia Studio B, and I remember it being played back in the session and no one really said anything. They all knew my private life, most everybody knew, so they all knew the song was about Jones. But I hoped it would help other people cope with that kind of pain. (H.G.)

### ADAM YAUCH (THE BEASTIE BOYS)

**56** **BAD BRAINS**, a.k.a. "the ROIR cassette." Perhaps one of the most powerful records ever made. I would say that they were the seed that led to all speed-metal and hardcore band, because they started out as a jazz fusion band and then they started listening to punk records and came out faster and tighter than

any punk band had ever dreamed of playing before. Daryl's bass playing has influenced me more than any other bass player. (N.B.)

### DWIGHT YOAKUM

**57** For me it's kind of a musical trinity: Johnny Cash's **SONGS THAT MADE HIM FAMOUS**, Roy Orbison's "Candyman" and the Rolling Stones' *Get Yer Ya-Yas Out*. Johnny Cash initiated an acute awareness in me that hillbilly music could have an aggressive, hip edge to it. "Candyman" was the B-side to a reissue single of "Pretty Woman" and just hearing that decadently carnal harmonica solo that opens the song, and the way the background singers would chant, "Candyman, candyman..." in that moment my imagination was forever captured.

I heard *Ya-Yas* in junior high. For me that album was an extension of Orbison and Cash. I realized that a hillbilly kid could still communicate in a very contemporary fashion without being ashamed of the cultural influences that were so overtly a part of my musical wardrobe. (M.R.)

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## What Are You Listening to Lately?



## ROGER CLINTON

1. Stevie Wonder—Talking Book
2. Bob Marley—Songs of Freedom
3. Garth Brooks
4. David Byrne
5. Chaka Khan—I Feel for You

## ADRIAN BELEW

1. The Fireman—Strawberries, Oceans, Ships, Forest
2. Kronos Quartet—Pieces of Africa
3. Psychodots—Blotter
4. Jeff Beck—Crazy Legs
5. Ali Farka Toure & Ry Cooder—Talking Timcuktu



## DIAMANDA GALAS

1. La Lupe—Nostalgias
2. The Moments—Look at Me
3. Lifes Group—Living Proof
4. Teddy Pendergrass—Greatest Hits
5. Al Green—One in a Million



is one reason why. It's a jagged-edged saw, a born irritant, a voice that stubbornly refuses to stay within the confines of a given pitch. It's not the kind of sound that welcomes you in and fluffs up the cushions.

Still, *Whack* has a certain persistent charm. As subversive as anything in the Dan canon, it rounds up the old rogue's gallery (drug addicts, cheating hearts, small-time hustlers) and spins out their stories in plain, downright simple sentences, with (of course) a few key details missing. Spare and airy, bubbling and woeful, these tracks offer a reckless flip side to the restrained slickness of Fagen's *Kamakiriad*, which Becker produced. The Steely Dan touches are inevitably there—see the sliding-harmony samba “Girlfriend” or the burbling “Haitian Divorce” guitar on “My Waterloo”—yet remarkably, such familiar signatures never suffocate the themes.

Though he probably could use all the cachet Steely Dan confers, the laconic Becker is primarily interested in simple, carefully plotted song structures—his writing is more *Can't Buy a Thrill* than *Gaucho*. By applying the Dan-isms as window dressing, he puts some distance between himself and his partner, and retires the question of who did what on those much-scrutinized '70s sides. If Fagen assembled the labyrinthine structures and the grad-school harmonies, it was Becker who found the endearing little melodies and the wry, puzzling images to make them stick, and it was Becker who organized the rhythm tracks so that the most convoluted form breezed along like a pop song.

Rendering small songs that will never be confused with *Aja*'s epics, Becker here applies elements of the Dan philosophy to a new, more earthy paradigm, one that prizes the simple ripple of the electric guitar as much as a massive orchestration. Just how loose is he? Towards the end of the sullen “This Moody Bastard,” a man's rumination on the loss of his lover, Becker's grumbling lead voice is offset by an angelic chorale. Together with him, they convey a sense of contrition: Here is a guy who screwed up a good thing. The setting is hypnotic, the sentiment wrenching, but rather than leave it alone and fade, Becker stays in character. “That's it,” he scowls, nearly shattering the tranquility, a moody bastard to the end.

—Tom Moon

## PRINCE

*Come*

(WARNER BROS.)

**Y**ES, YOU ARE READING CORRECTLY. *Come* is not an album by the artist currently known as a symbol, but is rather an album by the artist known as Prince. His Royal Purpleness, as prolific as he is enigmatic, professes to have so many completed works sitting around the house waiting for release that he has apparently decided, in the interest of full disclosure, that anything

he recorded before he became a symbol should, rightfully, be credited to Prince, and not to the guy with the symbol instead of a name. Just so we won't be confused, y'understand. (Right.) Of course, based on the evidence so far—namely, the “Most Beautiful Girl in the World” single—it remains somewhat unclear as to precisely how the music made by the symbol differs from the music made by Prince. But, since it seems to matter so much to him, we'll just let him (whoever that might be) slide on it for now.

In the meantime, slide on this: As another often misunderstood genius, funnyman Lenny Bruce, once noted, “come” is a verb. And, while Prince isn't the rule-breaking comedian (comedian—get it?) Bruce was, he does go for the cutting edge in his own unique way here. Take, for example, the opening title track, a lengthy ode to Prince's abilities in the cunnilingual arena in which, after telling his mate, “Don't cough or sneeze” (ever hear the joke about the woman offering Donald Trump oral sex? “Oh yeah?” he snaps. “What's in it for me?”), this skilled instrumentalist takes a bona fide *tongue* solo—complete with slurps and licks. Surely a first in rock 'n' roll history.

Now admittedly, most of the rest of *Come*



isn't quite as daring as the title track (although it should be noted that “Pheromone” is another pop first—after all, we've never had a song named after an animal hormone before). There are the usual Princely nods towards funk 'n' roll (“Loose” sounds like a musical tutorial for Lenny Kravitz) and big-time R&B (“Dark” sports some neatly retro horns and keyboard),

# REVIEWS

as well as an anti-child abuse song ("Race"), both of which are welcome, though utterly out of place in the moisture-obsessed context of this, er, head-y album.

Besides, everything after cut one is just so much musical foreplay leading up to the album's, um, *climactic* final track, "Orgasm," about which all one can say is that it sure is appropriately titled. Actually, those who have found Prince's rather masturbatory policy of recording virtually all of his music and vocals alone (you know Woody Allen's classic line about masturbation: "Sex with someone you love") will be happy to find out that, even though he's got a great falsetto, he did not attempt to play both parts of the beast with two backs on this track. (Though, judging from the man-woman symbol, he may well have thought about it.) As noted on the album credits—"Partner on 'Orgasm': She knows." Hey, I've heard of mirrors on the ceiling, but this is ridiculous.

—Billy Altman

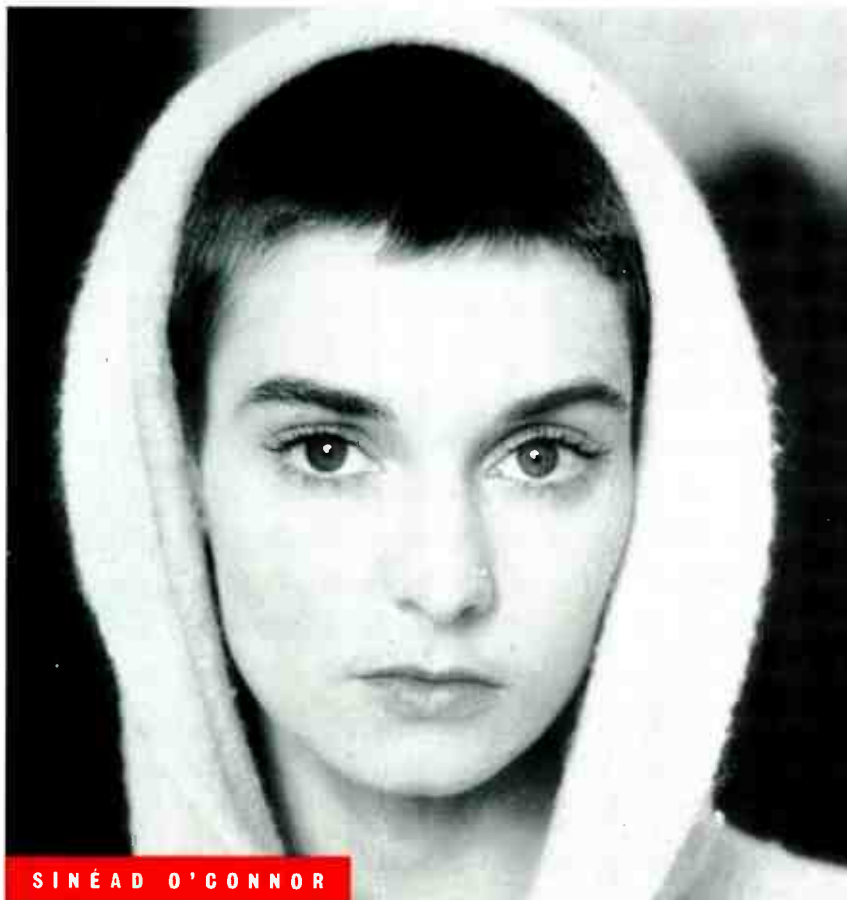
## SINÉAD O'CONNOR

*Universal Mother*

(CHRYSLIS)

**W**ITH *UNIVERSAL MOTHER* ALL OF SINÉAD O'Connor's worst tendencies come to

full flower—internalizing the woeful weight of the world, precious fragility and defensive



SINÉAD O'CONNOR

JILL FURMANOVSKY

# VIDEO

## JORMA KAUKONEN

*The Acoustic Guitar of Jorma Kaukonen*  
*Video One: Blues, Rags and Originals; Video Two*

(HOMESPUN TAPES)

THE FIRST video in this series is so engrossing that I pulled out my guitar, started to play along, and found myself talking to the TV set as if Jorma were in the room. Kaukonen, a member of the Jefferson Airplane who went on to form Hot Tuna with Jack Casady, is a guru to graduates from the granola guitar school. He is also a great teacher.

In a series of precise and insightful demonstrations, Kaukonen breaks down a number of traditional and original blues tunes, including Blind Blake's "West Coast Blues" and "Hesitation Blues," into dozens of eloquent mini-lessons on classic right- and left-hand fingerpicking. Pointing out ways to work cool licks and reusable blues phraseology into standard arrangements, Kaukonen preaches the importance of maintaining "the groove" as the key to an effective performance. In his own composition, "Crystal City," a swampy blues in open E tuning, Jorma suggests exaggerated vibrato, glissando and alternative right-hand rhythms as a way to add drama to slide technique.

This video works particularly well for those who have a bit of a background in blues or ragtime. Be aware, however, that for some reason, *Video Two*, the folkier followup, is much more elementary. Newcomers to fingerstyle will value this measure-by-measure tour through basic chord shapes, rhythm accompaniment ideas, string bending and simple bass runs. (Box 694, Woodstock, NY 12498, (800) 33-TAPES)—Steph Paynes

piss-offedness, bathos and a generally muddled view of things. Musically, she's taken an interesting tack—restraint. Except for one song at the beginning—"Fire on Babylon," a vague civilization-as-dysfunctional-family thing—and one near the end—"Famine," a rap about Ireland as a formerly abused child suffering from repressed-memory syndrome—the music here is sparse: piano, or piano and acoustic guitar, or even, on two occasions, a cappella voice. This has the effect of putting the lyric content up-front, which is unfortunate.

The album's title should serve as warning enough; motherhood and attendant reflections on family relations have given her an all-encompassing metaphor, as suggested in the thumbnail sketches above. Combine this with her keen sense of the diluted spiritual condition of the modern epoch and you have a theme running through the album—Ireland continues to stumble away from its Edenic origin because it has lost touch with the God mother; babies cry (on "All Babies") because they've been newly separated from God and have entered our horrid world of trivialized religion; love is a respite from our ongoing pain, but one destined to end badly (original sin is the subtext—"Thank You for Hearing Me"). It's understandable that O'Connor would feel that the fact that God-the-concept

has grown relatively dim and distant for many reflects a lack in humankind—though personally I would place the burden on God-the-concept. But one feels less sympathetic towards the enormous egotism which turns personal pain into universal malaise—especially when the transference is presented to us so plainly, almost naively and certainly with a minimum of imagination.

What O'Connor does have going for her is her theatrical sense of herself and her voice. The former serves her well on "Red Football" as she moves from a dubious vulnerability to a

solid ferocity, but then scuttles the fine intent of "Scorn Not His Simplicity," a request for compassion toward a retarded child—the tremor in her voice fatally gilds the lily. As for that famous riveting voice, for much of the album she whispers and coos softly, signaling sensitivity. As music, quite apart from whatever she might actually feel, all this soft-spoken delicate stuff comes across as both bogus and boring. She's much more convincing when she sounds like she's on the verge of delivering a swift kick to the crotch.

—Richard C. Walls

## STAN TRACEY OCTET

*Portraits Plus*  
(BLUE NOTE)

**B**RITISH PIANIST, COMPOSER AND ARRANGER Stan Tracey's career has spanned a lifetime (he's in his late 60s) and seen numerous changes—from entertaining the troops to working with dance bands to a seven-year stint as the house pianist at Ronnie Scott's in the 1960s. Previously, much of Tracey's work was documented on his own Steam label; now Blue Note plans to reissue several releases, including *Under Milk Wood*, a suite Tracey based on Dylan Thomas's work.

*Portraits Plus*, Tracey's Blue Note debut, showcases his compositions for octet, four of which are tributes to some of Tracey's musical heroes: Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk, Gil Evans, Duke Ellington. A trumpet, trombone, alto and two tenors are heard. (Guy Barker, Malcolm Griffiths, Peter King, Don Weller and Art Themen, respectively; occasionally, Themen plays soprano.) The arrangements are solid, some of the tunes are punchy, the band is tight, the soloists get plenty of room—and having said all that, I cannot recommend that you buy this CD unless your tastes in *sound* are strikingly different from mine.

Tracey's style, which has been described as "angular" and "Monkish," has a slash-and-burn choppiness about it that makes it kind of distinctive ("Newk's Fluke" demonstrates this amply), but block chords do not a Thelonious make. (As a matter of fact, the only pianist whose style I found genuinely Monkish was the late, great Walter Davis Jr.) The piano here is so upfront in the mix that even when Tracey is comping the horns, his signature becomes more than underwriting. That's not so bad, but combined with the other irritant factors on this CD, it gets overbearing.

If you like sax solos chockfull of feverish glissandos and slurred notes, you'll be happy as a clam. If you like your intonation well on the sharp side, the same holds true. The tenor solo on "Rocky Mount" epitomizes a style of sax playing that makes me crazy, in the pejorative sense. It has its American proponents but it's not fair to name them—and anyway, as they say in the biz, "you'll hear it." The bass player (Dave Green) has chops galore, but most of the time he's just too busy for words, walking, skipping, walking, skipping. The drummer is Tracey's son Clark, who, in a phrase I once heard Ahmad Jamal use to describe someone else, "plays the drums from the top down instead of the bottom up." And that's what's missing throughout this compilation—warmth,



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most of the contradictions of contemporary R&B without totally rejecting it.

Because Joi wants to create a space where she can celebrate R&B's past and explore its future. A strong contemporary black woman, Joi is a voice in search of a vibe all her own, a musical setting that allows her to draw upon a wide spectrum of styles and emotions—and not neces-



DANIEL HASTINGS

sarily what is expected of a black diva. "Freedom to sing what I want," she wails, her voice a blur of angry distortion over a hip-hop rhythm track, blaring through an amplifier like an incarcerated ghost of R&B gone—long gone. Yet just a moment before she was celebrating the black female voice as it came up through the church and the spirituals, à la Sweet Honey in the Rock, and as a prelude to *The Pendulum Vibe's* most sensual event, she intones "Te Adore Christus" with a plainsong grace that is pure spirit.

In co-conspirator Dallas Austin, Joi has found a renegade R&B producer more interested in street grit than slick romanticism. On moody feminist anthems like "Sunshine & the Rain" and "I've Found My Niche," Austin and Joi create a new kind of urban dub; "Find Me" employs jazzy flutes and a collage of very untraditional funk sounds to mirror the singer's search for self, and "Memories" finds her reveling in the Minnie Ripperton-like sweetness of her instrument. On "Fatal Lovesick Journey" her voice takes on a bluesy patina to match the brassy, Memphis underground soul of Austin's chart, but with "Narcissa Cutie Pie" Joi throws sensuality a curveball with a tale of sexual ambivalence and attraction, as a jazzy trumpet offers muted responses to Joi's feline cooing and wooing.

All in all, Joi is a fantastic talent with the nerve to be original in the face of numbing commercial conformity. *The Pendulum Vibe* portrays a new kind of urban diva, who dares to ask for respect upfront, and offers the promise of consciousness, adventure and, yes, romance. *The Pendulum Vibe* is the face of soul to come. —Chip Stern

### SHUDDER TO THINK

Pony Express Record  
(EPIC)

**T**HIS POST-MODERN ROCK THING IS really turning into a regular Name-That-

Tune Pepsi Challenge: With that last Pavement album, I immediately caught lifted riffs from Bad Company, Buddy Holly, Aretha Franklin and Def Leppard during the first cut alone. So pardon me for getting a little pissy when this Shudder to Think album doesn't allow me the pleasure of showing the world how much I know about pop music. It needs a warning sticker to let potential buyers know an advanced knowledge of rock and pop is required to figure out the reference points. I practically went to school for this shit—and the only direct cops I can lamely suggest are Gentle Giant and the Jesus Lizard, though I still come up short when actually trying to name a specific appropriated riff.

Either this album is a mess or I am. It comes at you in seven different directions and is either a complete work of genius five years ahead of its time, or a pretentious piece of stitchwork completely missing the boat. The rhythms constantly shift, guitars alternate between appallingly dissonant chord structures and single notes that never go where you'd expect, and the singer doesn't seem to know whether he's joined Iron Maiden, Iron Butterfly or, for that matter, Iron Prostate. None of which would mean squat...except that my insides tell me that somewhere here lies a great record. But damned if I can find it.

Songs like "Hit Liquor," "Gang of \$" and "No Rm. 9, Kentucky" all have perceivable charms, whether a solid hook or a multi-tracked pop vocal. The instrumentation remains the same—the standard guitar, bass and drums of punk rock. But like preening jazzbos who know too many chords, Shudder seem inclined to defeat every cliché by altering it with a higher musicianship, which while leading to some unexpected stuff, doesn't necessarily catch the pocket. Progressive-punk? —Rob O'Connor



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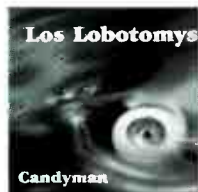
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## STEVE SWALLOW

*The Real Book*

(ECM)

**F**OR MUSICIANS INTENT ON LEARNING the correct path through the standard repertoire—from Charlie Parker's bebop to Jobim's romanticism to the question-and-answer melodies of Wayne Shorter—*The Real Book* has been an invaluable tool, the jazz bible for over 30 years. Usually bought clandestinely from other musicians, this thick looseleaf book contains accurate transcriptions of songs that are often not available commercially. Dog-eared

copies are always present when serious musicians gather to test their wits or to simply find the right chords to a Miles tune.

Bringing together some of today's most formidable players, Steve Swallow's *Real Book* captures the intimate feeling of a thousand sweaty basement jams, with all the ease, energy and risk-taking that scenario implies. Swallow (who began as an acoustic bassist in the '60s with Paul Bley and Jimmy Giuffre, then, as a vital member of groups led by Gary Burton and Carla Bley in the '70s, went electric) penned the ten compositions here to the mood of a typical late-

## SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

### BAC RELIGION

*Stranger Than Fiction*

(ATLANTIC)

ON A stylistic level, Bad Religion are punk fundamentalists, refusing to accept that there's any more to rock than the cranked guitars and double-time drums described in the Book of Ramones. Yet these guys are virtual Unitarians when it comes to songwriting, opting for easily accessible pop melodies and even the occasional cushion of harmony vocals. Taken together, that may not add up as coherent theology, but it makes for a wonderfully bracing album—particularly when the band's tuneful roar is chained to words as smart and funny as these (sample lyric: "Life is the crummiest book I ever read"). Listen, and believe.

### DA BRAT

*Funkdafied*

(SOSO D. F./CHAOS/COLUMBIA)

THOUGH THE rap community complains that Jermaine Dupri ripped off and watered down Snoop Doggy Dogg's sound for this pop-rap crossover, the real gripe against Da Brat is the way she plays gangsta attitude and behavior as mere teen fashion. That ain't def—it's dumb.

### EDDIE READER

*Eddie Reader*

(REPRISE/BLANCO Y NEGRO)

Don't let the calming beauty of her singing lull you into thinking Reader is just another pretty voice. Even as the artfully understated arrangements seem to ease the way for Reader's lustrous voice, the heartbreak and

hard choices described in her songs lend a power and resonance to these songs that keep them from ever seeming like "easy" listening. But it's precisely the fact that it walks the line between raw emotion and carefully crafted artistry that makes *Eddie Reader* worth taking to heart.

### SWING OUT SISTER

*The Living Return*

(MERCURY)

ALTHOUGH THEIR earlier efforts clearly owed more than a little to '70s soul, S.O.S. has never been as blatant about its indebtedness as it is here. Between the wah-wah guitar and analog synth flavoring "Better Make It Better" and the straight-up cover of "La La Means I Love You," it's almost as if the group is playing musical dress-ups—and having a grand old time in the process. True, there's little here that would actually make a *Sounds of the '70s* compilation had it actually been released back then, but that hardly diminishes the post-ironic pleasures to be had here.

### HOODOO GURUS

*Crank*

(PRAXIS/ZOO)

CRANKED WOULD probably be closer to it, given the ease with which their window-rattling guitars flesh out the tuneful likes of "Less Than a Feeling" and "The Right Time." But to their credit, the Gurus are just as convincing on the quiet numbers, filling "Fading Slow" with enough tenderness to suggest that there's more than a touch of sentimentality beneath the ear-bruising bravado.



night rehearsal menu of bebop, blues and ballads.

Jack DeJohnette (who takes center stage throughout) introduces the atonal hyper-bop of "Bite Your Grandmother" with a tumbling drum assault, matched by a brief, crunchy solo from tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano. "Second Handy Motion," a languid blues, provides a short breather before "Outfits," an edgy mambo with a spacious, elevating melody stated by Lovano and flugelhornist Tom Harrell. Late-ly paired together often, their lovely ensemble work and soloing consistently brighten *Real Book's* chewy compositions. Methodical yet wonderfully melodious, Swallow's solos are mercilessly brief on *Real Book*. "Ponytail," a Strayhorn-ish melody played at medium swing tempo, closes, as all good sessions do, in a relaxed, nocturnal fashion.

*Real Book's* cover duplicates the '70s op-art lettering and coffee stains of the original, and the CD booklet includes full lead sheets for each track. Elaborating on a time-tested idea (perhaps "Bite Your Grandmother" will be in the next edition of *The Real Book*), Steve Swallow has made one of the more vibrant and interesting jazz recordings of 1994. Anyone for breakfast?

—Ken Micallef

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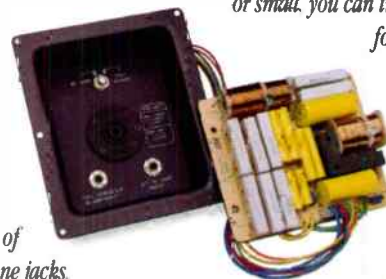
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