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MUSICIAN

SEPTEMBER 1995 \$2.95

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How Record
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\$2.25 UK \$3.75 CANADA ISSUE No. 202

World Radio History

Twin Sons of Different Mothers

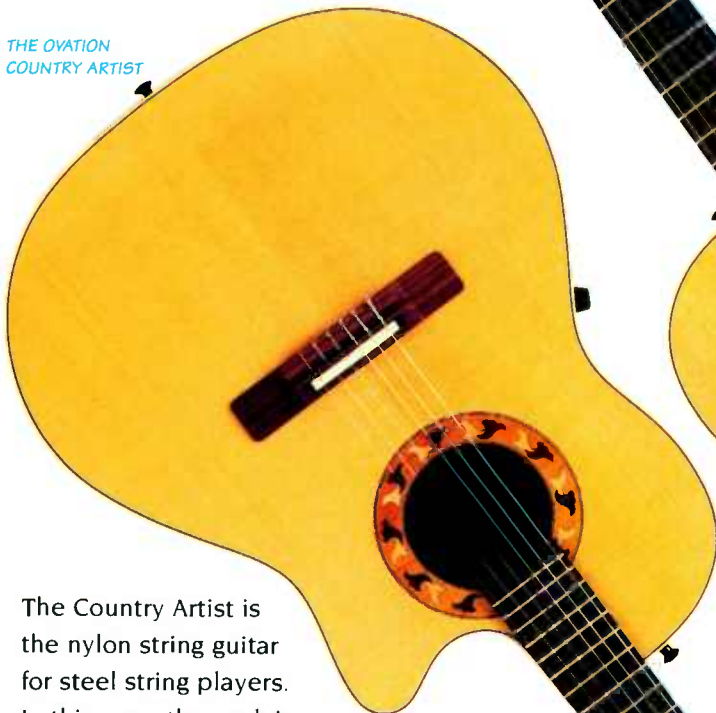
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THE OVATION
COUNTRY ARTIST



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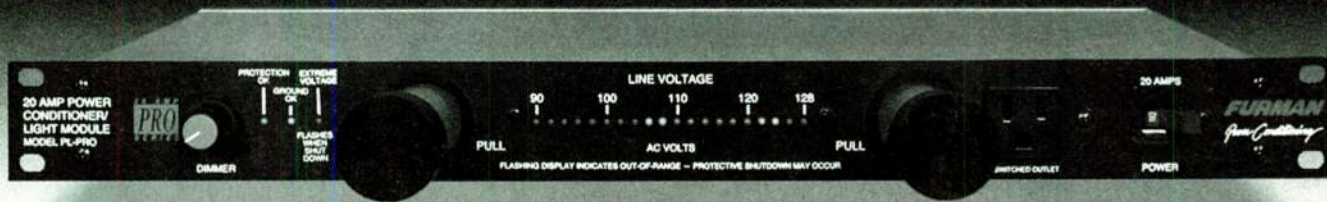


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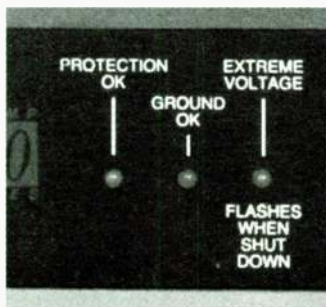
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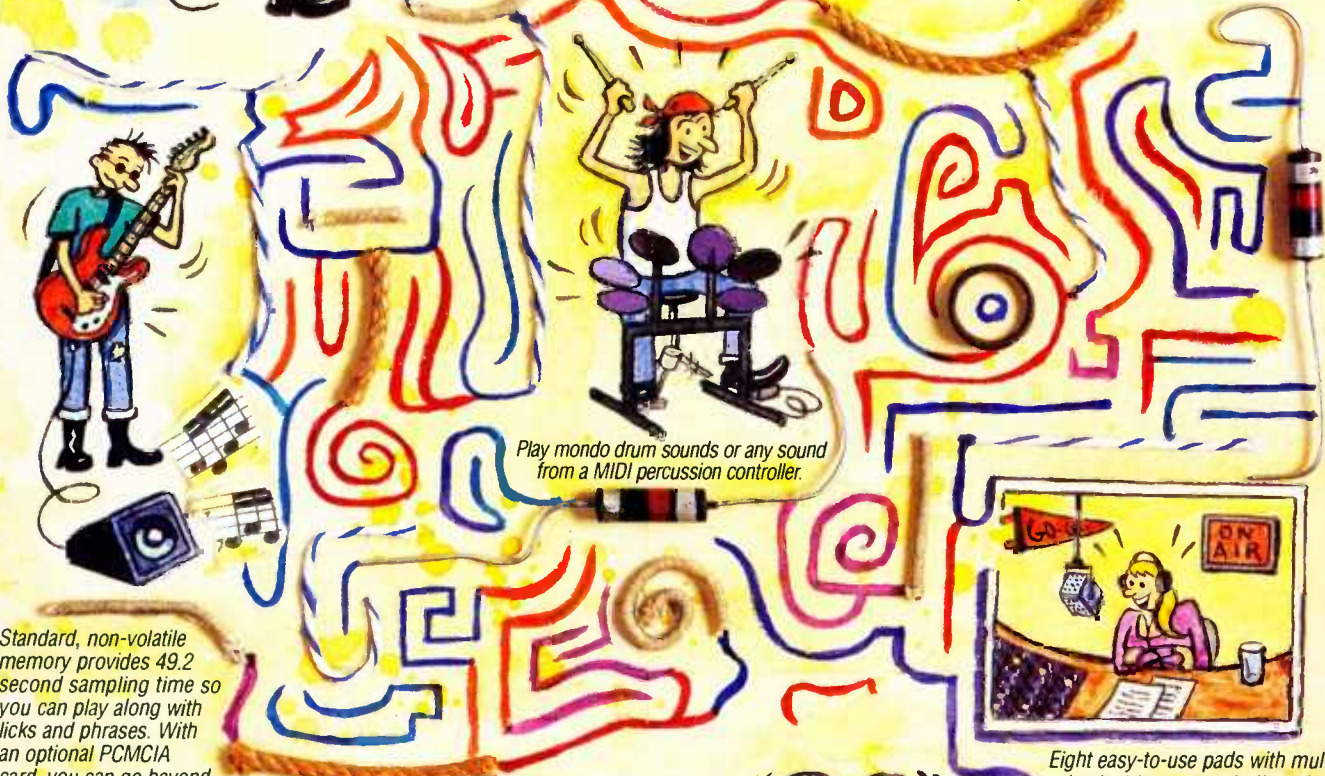
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BANG THE DRUM ALL DAY

Enter the International Drum Month Sweepstakes—see pages 50/51 for details.

The Yamaha QY300. It makes fun of music.



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up with ideas for chord progressions or even entire songs. It's like inspiration on call.

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Once you're happy with your phrases, put them all together with the QY300's extensive 16-track sequencer. There's plenty of room to lay down all your parts and arrange them just so. Then add music using the QY300's built-in mini-keyboard or an external MIDI keyboard. (The QY300 is entirely General MIDI and Standard MIDI File compatible.)

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And the screens aren't just big. They're helpful. The QY300 will lead you along and give you access to all the information you need as you need it.

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portable, battery powered General MIDI tone generator that gives you the same general capabilities as the QY300

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FRONTMAN

You've been the subject of two recent tribute records, Mama's Hungry Eyes and Tulare Dust. What was your reaction to bearing them?

Tulare Dust surprised me. I didn't know about it until after we'd gone through the acceptance of this *Hungry Eyes* thing; which was great, you know, I was overwhelmed by *that*. But somehow the songwriters' tribute, coming from the other side of the country, having to do with different songs, and with people who chose to make their own approach rather than try to do it my way, there were some things in there that made me maybe a little more emotionally appreciative of it all.

And I discovered an artist on this tape I'd never heard before—Iris Dement—who knocked me out. I gotta say this, I didn't come 58 years to have a girl knock me out as a singer. [laughs] Girl singers are not my favorite thing in the world. But boy is she great! She's like a female Jimmy Rodgers or Lefty Frizzell or something.

You're making a record now?

We're closing in on an album that's been in the making for two, three years. It's got a little truck driver theme in it. The road life that we live is so close to that of a truck driver, which makes it easy for me to adapt.

"A Bar In Bakersfield" sounded like your dream of what could have been if you led a regular life. I get the feeling you wonder about that guy sometimes.

I know that guy. His name's Red Simpson. He probably could have been a major player in this business, but he didn't seem to want to. We never understood it. But he's smarter than we thought he was. He's lived like a millionaire for thirty years and never been worth a dime.

You decided to learn the fiddle in the middle of your career. Was that confidence, nerve or blind faith?

Well, a lot of people start out on an instrument—most people in fact—and they don't have any mark on the wall that they intend to arrive at. I knew where I wanted to go. I wanted to play the fiddle just exactly like Bob Wills did. Because I wanted that sort of fiddle in my band and I couldn't find anybody in America who could do that. So I thought, by god, I'm gonna do that and I've got seven years and here I go! I slept with it, day and night. It's amazing that I had a band and a wife, or a friend even. There's nothing more irritating than a guy trying to play fiddle.

The band seems to have provided one area of stability in your life—you've been playing with Norm Hamlet, Biff Adam, Bonnie Owens and Jimmy Belken for decades.

It's kind of like a family, and it's moving along in its last successful, top-drawer days. Which we don't know how long will last. The older guys of this crew are just enjoying this cause we know it's gotta be close to being over. I want to go like Tiny Moore did—just as I step up to the mike.

How do you literally compose a song?

There are diagrams and methods and theories that I've tried to make myself aware of. But I believe in help from the other side. I get messages

"I want to go like Tiny Moore did—just as I step up to the mike."



MERLE HAGGARD

sometimes, I believe, in the form of music. They just kind of come through me and I'm as turned on with the message as people are that I'm sings to. I don't really understand where they come from.

Then you sit with a guitar to flesh it out?

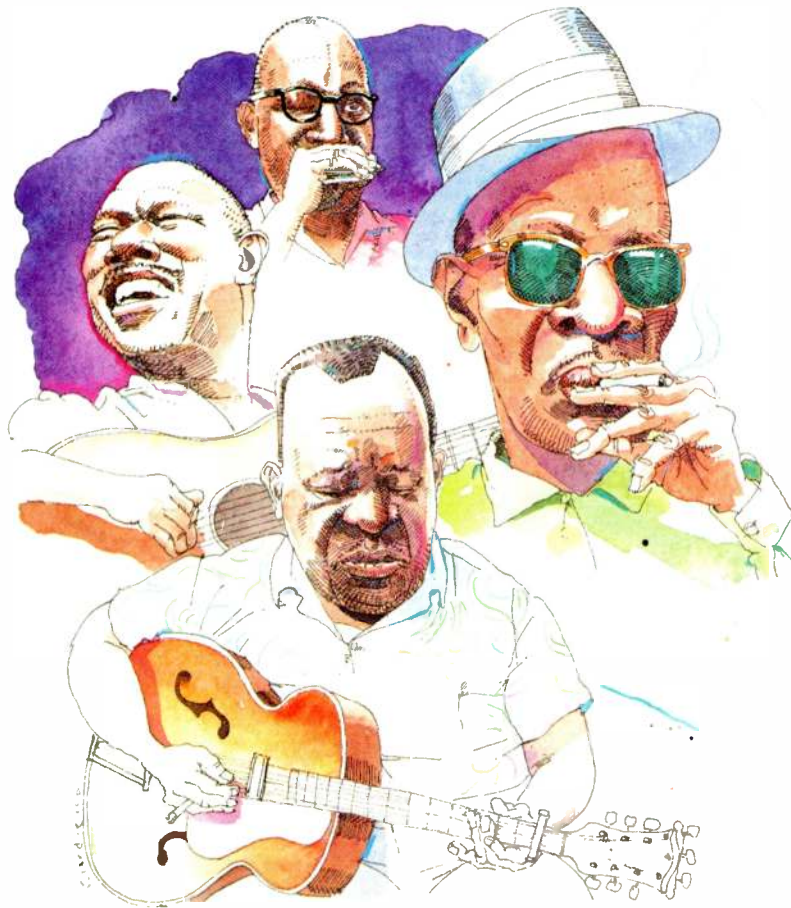
Oh no, it usually comes all at once, in a matter of 15 or 20 minutes. I'll have two or three people in the same room writing it, trying to get it before I forget it. I don't even understand what I'm saying sometimes—like Edgar Cayce. I'm asleep half the time when things start to happen. I've written some really good songs that wound up being recorded as I was headed to the stage being introduced!

Have the reasons you write, perform and sing changed over the years?

My reasons now have nothing to do with the ones I used when I was starting. I started because I wanted to keep from being on the wrong end of a pick or a shovel. I didn't have a good education. I needed to have a specialty. And it worked. And I took it for granted and mistreated it and farted it off and did all kinds of things wrong for my career—over the years I've had three or four great careers—and now I'm having to try harder because I'm older and what used to come easy now comes hard—or vice-versa, depending on what you're talking about. [laughs] Now I'm trying to stay alive. There's no reason for Merle Haggard to be alive if he doesn't sing and doesn't write. And I'm healthy. The Lord must be approving of me at this point.

MARK ROWLAND

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LETTERS

STONE TEMPLE

Thanks for featuring Stone Gossard (May '95). It's about time someone realized what a musical genius he is. Figures it would be you.

*Leslie Greathouse
Niagara Falls, NY*

Until I saw (sexy) Stone Gossard on the cover, I never bothered to pick up your magazine. But this time I did and I enjoyed the interview that Vic Garbarini did. I also read "Who Killed The Hair Bands?" by Alan di Perna. I always wondered whatever happened to those bands...

*Vanessa
Colorado Springs, CO*

Stone Gossard is my biggest inspiration and I'm glad he's getting the coverage he deserves. Saying that, I'd like to correct something in your piece. Green River's debut album wasn't released on Sub Pop: Their first EP, *Come On Down*, was released on Homestead a year before *Dry as a Bone* was released on Sub Pop.

*B.E. Kellogg
Fairfax Station, VA*

I'm glad to finally see an article about Stone Gossard and not you know who. Viva Stoney.

Steve Seighman

ON THE OTHER HAND

While I admire Steve Albini's attitudes, he obviously has some learning to do on some technical matters:

1) In the real world, "every hack engineer's best friend," compression, allows mass-marketed recordings to sound reasonably good on a wide range of playback machinery, from pro-level monitors to clock radios. (Anyway, "the quiet parts" of compressed music still sound quiet—ever hear of psychoacoustics?)

2) What the hell is this about digital tapes becoming "useless" in ten years? Steve, if you've really lost "many, many tapes," you're doing something very wrong.

Snobs like Steve Albini are sure at odds with Kurt Cobain's vision of music for kind, *unpretentious* people. How'd these two ever end up working together?

No name in Texas

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

One friend of mine claims that Charlie Watts is an all but useless drummer who has the timing of a '72 Nova with a tank full of sugar. The other friend swears up and down that Watts is a living (compared to Keith, I guess anyone is living) metronome with absolutely infallible rhythm. I need some kind of tie breaker here.

*an unconvinced non-drummer
Jeremy Sale*

HOOT THERE IT IS

I've been a loyal reader for about three or four years now. One of my favorite departments in the

about Veruca Salt, right? You accuse him of not being objective. Can you possibly understand that Wyman became "a major player in the Veruca buzz by plugging them week after week in print and on his talk show" because *he liked the band*? What's wrong with that may I ask?

*Derek Mok
Oakville, Ontario*

Veruca Salt = Wilson Phillips + teeth
P.J. Harvey = Hole + taste 'n' subtlety
Ginger Baker ≠ John Bonham
Any questions?

*Mutch and Richard Messum
(a cat and his
human)
Stratford, Ontario*

In your May '95 interview with Stone Gossard, you incorrectly stated that the free show at the Moore Theatre was titled "The Piss Bucket Boys." It actually read "Piss Bottle Men." Thanks.

*Love,
Adam Prince*



PUNK ISSUE

It's about time Tom Verlaine, Mike Watt and Malcolm McLaren got some press (June '95). However, nowhere do you mention Generation X, Billy Idol's band. Why are

they significant? Because Green

Day cloned their sound and sold millions of records. And Hüsker Dü is given dysfunctionally brief mention, considering it is the true parent of all that is known as "grunge."

*T.J. Segrest
tsegres1@uafixua.edu*

In Seattle checking out the grunge scene. I'm getting a bit confused with the distinction between punk, post-punk, punk-pop and can't fathom a punk revival at this stage. Let's get back to pre-punk. Back to basics blues and be-bop.

Funk

magazine is the section on home studios, as I am currently putting mine together. I've just recently gotten home from a tour with Toad the Wet Sprocket, where I learned that the band is doing a lot of recording at lead singer and guitar player Glenn Phillips' home studio. I'd love to see a piece on Glenn's studio. I feel that Toad is one of the better American bands, and we had a blast on tour with them.

*Mark Bryan
guitarist, Hootie and the Blowfish
Columbia, SC*

EXPERTS

I applaud Mick Jones for his remarks in "Expert Witness" (June '95). After all it's the artist who wrote the song and makes the money for the record companies. By the way Mick love the new Foreigner album!

EVILWIND2@aol.com

PASS THE SALT AGAIN

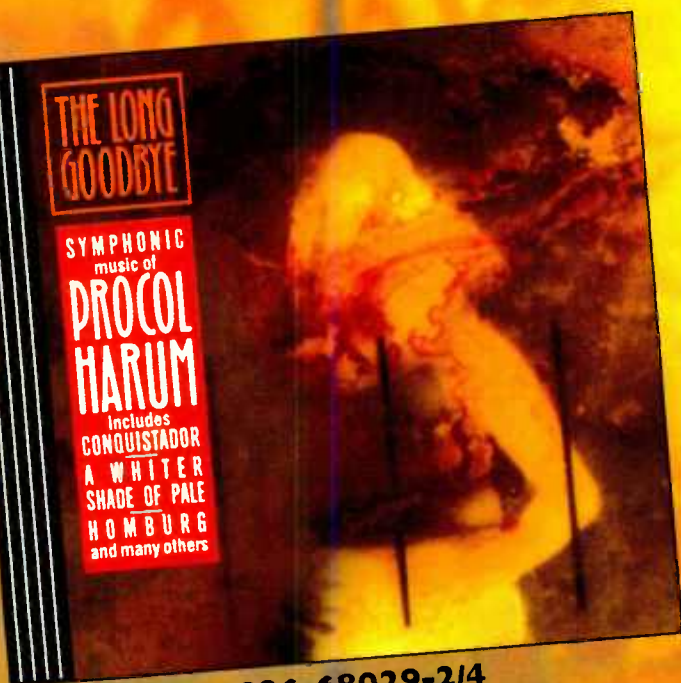
Hello Willie Wonka of Chicago. You accuse Bill Wyman of not writing anything nasty

Billy Joe is way off when he says, "Early punk was about art and fashion, really, because everyone who was a punk was in art school." Gee, Billy Joe, did you ever hear of the Ramones? To say that early punk was about art and fashion makes early American punk seem superficial and trivial, which is definitely *not* the case! I know, because I was the only teenager into punk in my Queens high school which had over one thousand

[*con't on page 28*]

THE LONG GOODBYE

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DIGITAL TAPE REBATES—GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

The Audio Home Recording Act, signed into law in 1992, requires manufacturers and importers of digital audio recorders and blank tapes to pay royalties to the U.S. Copyright Office, for the purpose of rebating record companies and artists for income supposedly "lost" due to home taping. This legislation, based on the questionable premise that home taping significantly depresses sales of CDs and tapes, was viewed by many at the time as a record industry grab for legal kickbacks by exploiting fears of foreign competition (e.g. Philips and Sony) in what was shaping up as the new frontier of audio technology. Ironically, DAT has yet to take off as promised or feared, so rebate royalties for 1994 barely cracked half-a-million dollars—chump change in an industry whose domestic income for the year exceeded \$12 billion. Still, the question remains—who gets the money?

Basically, anyone can petition the U.S. Copyright Office for a chunk of these royalties. The law requires litigation or arbitration to settle disputes—a formula pretty much guaranteed to transfer most of that money into the pockets of lawyers and arbiters. According to Executive Director Linda Bocchi of the Alliance of Artists and Recording Companies, a non-profit industry group that is in charge of hammering out a settlement among all claimants, the money—\$350 thousand in 1994—is parceled out on the basis of records sold, with about 60 percent to record companies and 40 percent to individual artists, but only among claimants. Musicians currently not affiliated with AARC are invited to contact the organization at (202) 775-0101. Also for the third year in a row, no settlement has been reached regarding royalties earmarked for the "Musical Works Fund." Those monies—\$175 thousand in 1994—remain with the U.S. Copyright Office.

EXPERT WITNESS

How We Wrote That Hit Song

by Mark Bryan, guitarist, Hootie and the Blowfish

SONI [DRUMMER JIM SONEFELD] is the original concept man behind "Hold My Hand." But the way we write our songs, everyone's involved, so I was in on it from Day One. Soni brought the guitar part over to my house one day, and we started jamming. And

I started figuring out that little lick that I do with the acoustic, and we thought "Hey, this is pretty catchy—we've got something going here!" So we brought it to Darius [Rucker; vocalist] and Dean [Felber; bassist], and Darius took off on it, just really started singing it, and then he came up with all those ad-libs on the chorus. Soni already had "I've got a hand for you" and the chorus part down, so we all put some harmonies in, and everyone wrote their own little parts—I wrote the lead guitar stuff. We were playing the song live for a while before we recorded it on our first [concert-sold] tape; it was also on our third

CD, because it was a really popular number for us in concert. Then for "Cracked Rear View," [producer] Don Gehman edited a little bit to fit radio more, to fit a single slot, and he just knocked the arrangement down; we ended up liking it better after he was done, although we still do it live the old way. So although "Hold My Hand" has gone through a couple of different arrangements, it's still one of the first songs we ever wrote together.

But for any given song, I have an entirely different story. "Let Her Cry" was Darius' song that he brought in—he just had the acoustic and the lyrics and we put all

ROUGH

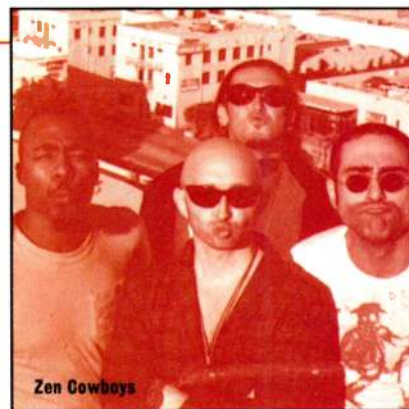
RECENT SIGNINGS

Zen Cowboys Musician Best Unsigned Band contest winners disqualify themselves for next year. (Moonshine)

Tab Two German acid jazzers hit the States. (Virgin)

Neal Casal Jersey-born, L.A.-based singer/songwriter. (Zoo)

Ash Crunching guitars and funny song titles. (Reprise)

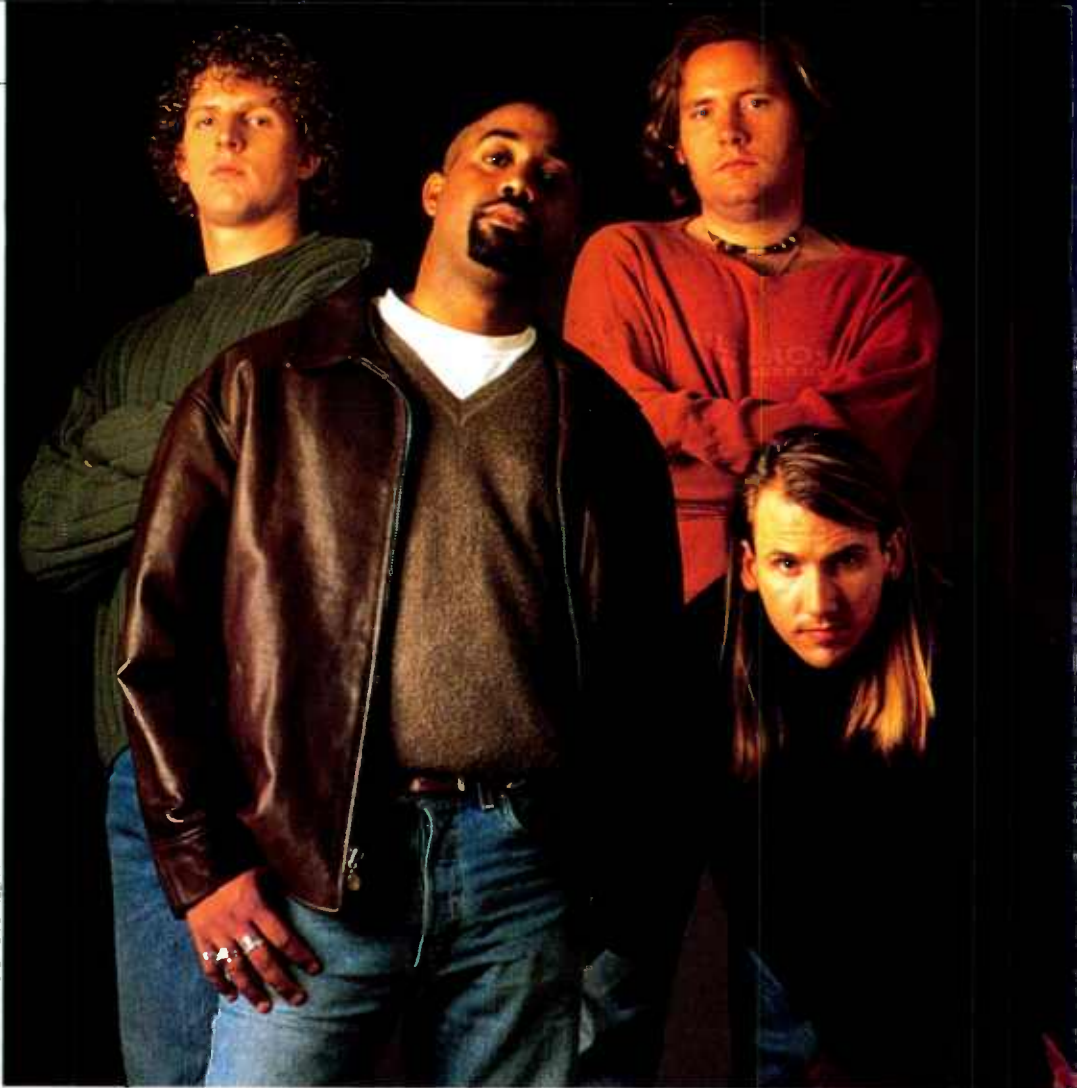


the rest of the music behind it. And the tambourines you always hear—well, we like to add that little rhythmic touch in the chorus sometimes just to keep it hoppin'. It fills it in nicely, and we've been doing that for a long time, ever since our first producer tried tambourine and we really liked the sound of it. We all play a little piano too, so we write that way, with that in mind, that you can add parts later. We had a Hammond organ player come in and play all that stuff. But with any song we write, we keep an open mind about instrumentation. It just so happens that organ is a good one that fits our style.

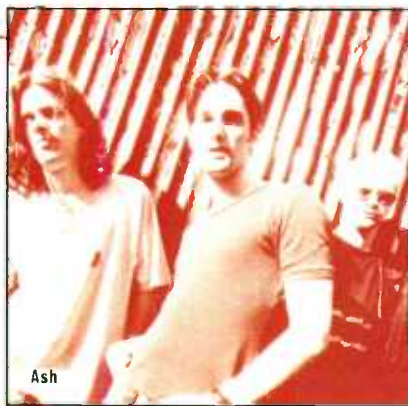
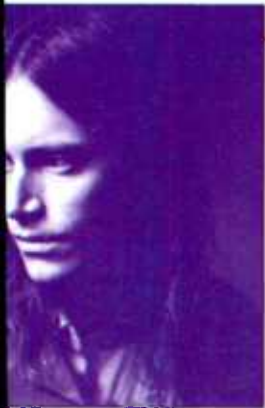
But you keep adding to a song until you feel like it's done, and there is a point where you don't want to go any further. Maybe you'll try an idea and you'll say "Ahh, that's too much—we've pretty much got it where we want it." It's kind of a feel thing between the band and the producer. When you tapped all your ideas and everyone feels like it's done, then you stop. But you have to try and experiment for a good bit at least, just to see what you come up with.

At press time, Cracked Rear View had spent 4 weeks at Number One on the Billboard album charts.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN DANIELIAN



HIMMIX

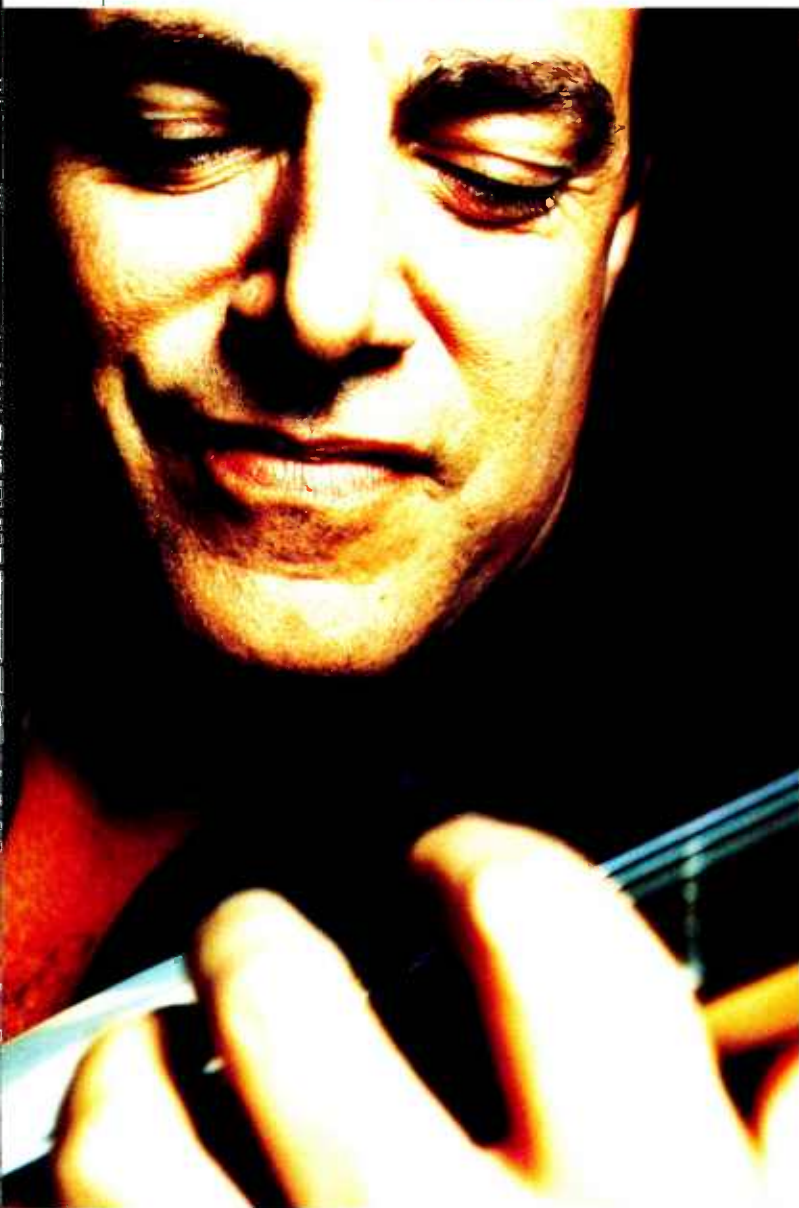


GENERATION ENDLESS

Now that members of the '60s generation are inching inexorably toward their sixties, you'd think their influence as pop music consumers would start to wane. Guess again. RIAA stats for 1994 show that record buyers over age 45 purchased 16.1 percent of all records last year, up from 11.8 percent five years ago. In the next few years that percentage will almost certainly rise. Martha Quinn, call your agent.

Other stats of note: CDs now account for 58 percent of all sales, up from 31 percent in 1990. For cassettes, the figures are nearly the reverse: 54 percent in 1990, 32 percent last year. Record store sales have declined from 69 percent of the market to 53 percent, while "other stores" have picked up the slack. Musical genres have held steady, with "rock" leading the way at 35 percent, but overall record industry revenue has nearly doubled since 1990, from \$7.5 billion sales to more than \$12 billion.

ROUGH MIX



NEAL SCHON

Neal Schon's playing musical chairs these days. He's touring with Abraxas (early Santana minus Carlos), working on a Journey reunion, and launching his instrumental career with *Beyond the Thunder* (Higher Octave), on which he cools his heels to the pleasant tune of mid-tempo, quasi-jazz grooves.

So it's no surprise that Schon's guitar playing has been a mixed bag. He blends piercing long notes—articulated with the stinging bluesy bends of Albert King—with irregularly-patterned scalar flurries that are reminiscent of another early hero of his, John McLaughlin.

Although noted for his high speed fretboard chase scenes, melody is never far away. "I think it's from listening to singers," he says. "I was strictly a blues player early on, and I used to listen to Aretha Franklin's records to cop her phrasing. It wasn't necessarily the notes. It was: *where* did she hit this note?"

"As for technique and dexterity, the most I ever worked on it was when I was watching TV in my folks' bedroom as a teenager. I'd sit down on the floor with a Les Paul and let my fingers fly while I was watching TV, not paying any attention to it. It was a cool thing to do, because now I hardly ever look at the guitar. When I'm playing the best, I'm not looking at the guitar and wondering 'am I hitting a wrong note or a right note?' I've got my eyes closed or not paying attention at all, and it's just coming out.

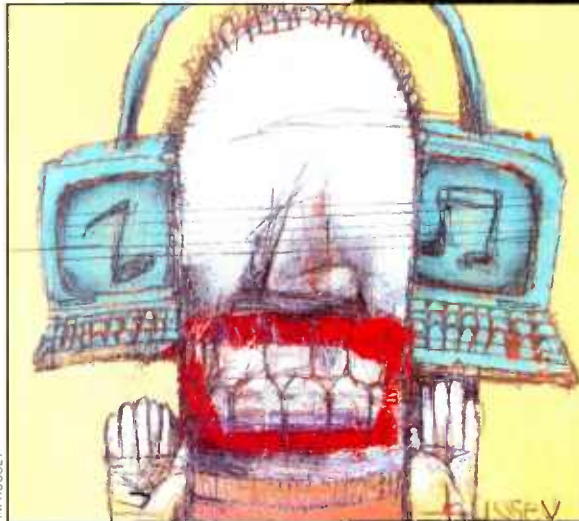
"My warm-up exercise before I play is not to play," he laughs. "I play a lot. I don't practice. I've never practiced scales. I find it boring. I don't know all my scales, and I don't want to know them."—J.W.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MITCH TOBIAS

STAR SEARCH

Celebrated producer Daniel Lanois has accepted an A&R consultancy at Capitol Records and is accepting submissions. Contact c/o Capitol Records, 1750 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA 90028.

This month's Rough Mix contributors include Nathan Brackett, Cheo H. Coker, Ted Greenwald, Ken Micallef, Mark Rowland, Mark Weingarten and Josef Woodard.



TIM HUSSEY

WILL IT FIT UNDER YOUR PILLOW?

Radio HK, hyping itself as the first 24 hour Internet-only radio station, began operations in

February, offering fidelity its owners claim is "just below AM broadcast quality" to any PC user with a 14.4 bps modem, a phone line and a connection to World Wide Web (<http://www.hkweb.com/radio>). The catch: only about 100 people can listen at one time. Currently, several radio stations re-broadcast their live signals into the Internet, and other Internet-only stations are in the works.

In the meantime, Radio HK has finessed the ques-

tion of paying for international performance licenses by hammering out deals directly from the holders of those rights.

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In fact, the MS1202 is so successful that it's spawned a host of eager competitors. But only the original has received accolades not just from pro audio magazines, but from video, broadcast and even consumer audio reviewers. Only the MicroSeries 1202 is currently used in facilities as diverse as NASA, CBS Broadcasting, AT&T, Yanni's percussionist and Phillips Interactive Video².

CALL us toll-free for more information on the ultra-compact, 12-channel mic/line mixer that pros really use day in and day out.

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"Overall winner in grading categories" *Keyboard Magazine Under-\$600 Mixer Shoot-Out*



"In spite of the unit's diminutive size, it's easy to work all the controls. There's space around each knob for your fingers . . . all inputs and outputs are on the top, making it simple to interface with your system. From its military-issue steel construction to top quality electronics, the little board is over-engineered. It offers stunning audio quality, tons of flexibility, sturdy construction and a palatable price tag." *Videomaker Magazine*

"I can't say enough good things about the workhorse Mackie MicroSeries 1202. It is an absolutely essential audio tool in my daily work. I would be at a loss without it. The more I think about it, the MS1202 may just be one of the best audio bargains of all time." *Radio World Magazine*

"This little mixer has the same electronics as Mackie's incredibly popular CR-1604. The 1202 is billed as a 'low noise, high headroom mixer' and it certainly lives up to its word. The board has a very clear, clean, quiet sound. For home and studio recording applications, I can see the board becoming equally popular as a 'starter unit' and as an auxilliary mixer." *Recording Magazine*

"GRADE: A. One of the product wonders of the pro audio world, the MicroSeries 1202 mic/line mixer is priced so ridiculously low that audiophiles can make good use of it for home recording projects. I tried it with a CD player via the tape inputs and found its sound as clean as that of some audiophile stereo preamps costing twice the price." *Audio Magazine*

¹ Suggested retail price. Your mileage may vary. Price is slightly higher in Canada and outer reaches of the Spiral Nebulae.

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DANNY CLINCH

JENNIFER TRYNIN

JENNIFER TRYNIN

"I really don't think *all* relationships are doomed to failure," says Jennifer Trynin. Not that you would know it from listening to this Boston native's debut album, *Cockamamie*. The bleak emotional landscape that Trynin unflinchingly explores on songs like "Too Bad You're Such A Loser" and "Knock Me Down" makes Bergman's *Scenes From A Marriage* look like a madcap romp. But *Cockamamie* is hardly an exercise in Reznor-ian misanthropy;

Trynin's shimmering, ebullient melodies and jagged-edge hooks make this a world-class pop album. Just don't expect Trynin to trot out the usual pop avatars (Big Star, The Beatles) as seminal influences—she really has none.

"I'm not a big music fan," says the 31-year-old. "Music definitely influences me, but I don't like to listen to it too much. The only record I've ever owned is *Cockamamie*."

Trynin recorded *Cockamamie* on her own Squint label while running a desktop publishing business, then almost immediately found herself in the middle of a major-label feeding frenzy. "I'm not exactly sure how that happened," says a still-bemused Trynin. She eventually settled on Warner Brothers, who agreed to release the album exactly as it appeared on Trynin's homemade imprint. Despite all this attention, Trynin maintains a healthy perspective about her entry into the big leagues: "It's great to have a bidding war over your record, but let's fact it—it's not *that* good!"—M.W.

CHAVEZ

Unlike most New York neo-noise bands who depend on hardcore or punk for sustenance, Chavez finds a new wrinkle in that brooding blueprint, creating caustic artsy-rock with squealing, stretched guitars, loose-limbed drumming and edgy rhythmic counterpoint. The distinctive Chavez clamor began as two bored guitarists searching for a sound. "For months Clay [Tarver] and I would clang on one riff for two



CHAVEZ

A classic band. A classic guitar.



Pictured above (left to right): Larry Hoppen with his VS-35CEQ guitar; John Hall with his VS-35CEQ guitar; Lance Hoppen with the VB-40CF bass guitar

Orleans is kicking off a summer tour that'll cover more than 50 cities in over 30 states. Touring is hard, and equipment has to last. Vantage made a lasting impression on *Orleans*, and it will do the same for you.

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hours, trying to find something to play," says guitarist/vocalist Matty Sweeney. "And since absolutely no one was interested in playing with us, we knew we could do whatever we felt like."

Ex-members of Bullet LaVolta, Skunk and Wider, Chavez made *Gone Glimmering* surprisingly short (33:03), but full of passionate songs that never suffer for all their staggered, syncopated complexity. "Both of us changed our playing to fit the other's way of not playing guitar," says Sweeney. "Our music may sound tough, but it's simple, actually. It just depends on what the bass and drums are doing, where everything fits."

"The rests are the hard thing in this band," says drummer James Lo. "When the guitars stop, it gets difficult. I have to fight my natural tendencies."

"I always thought that if a band was around more than four years it became a museum piece." Lo goes on. "It would have all the aspects of music without the freedom to surprise. I'm not sure if even I believe that anymore."

Tempered by years on the noise scene and working experience in the industry, Chavez stands fit to withstand the ensuing hype, at least for the next four years. "Having seen the downside of it all, we didn't want to work with anyone we knew



COUNT BASS D

from the past, we wanted to earn it," Sweeney observes. "Our satisfaction comes from playing to people who really like our music, not because they're friends of the manager." —K.M.

COUNT BASS D

Nashville based Count Bass D is rapper/instrumentalist who understands that spontaneity takes place in the present tense. His self-produced debut *Pre-Life Cri-*

sis contains everything from gospel to bluesy '70s funk influences backing up his often hilarious tongue-in-cheek rhymes about life in "Cashville," television and a chance meeting with the object of his desire, TLC lead rapper T-Boz. Having played all of the instruments himself, "live" to the Count means playing all the way through a song, not, as some rap-producers believe, sampling a musician playing like and chopping it up later.

[con't on page 66]



STEREO **charlie hunter trio**
bing, bing, bing!



CHARLIE HUNTER TRIO
Bing Bing Bing (31809)

Charlie Hunter, 8-string guitar / Dave Ellis, tenor saxophone / Jay Lane, drums

Introducing an incredibly creative triad of musicians. San Francisco guitarist CHARLIE HUNTER { ex- Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy} and his band blur the borders between jazz and rock. He plays a mean eight-string guitar (covering both bass and guitar) while DAVE ELLIS handles saxophone and JAY LANE lays down a rock-solid beat on drums

ROCK

GUIDE

DON'T DIE—

I HEAR YOU ROCKIN'

THEY

DIE

NIC

MARKETING



ARISTS

ROBBY

SCOVER KRIEGER ORGANIZATION

HE

BY ROY TRAKIN

ALVIN LEE HAD REACHED the pinnacle of rock guitar-dom. Of course, by the time Woodstock was over, his "I'm Going Home" (by helicopter) histrionics would

have been overshadowed by Jimi Hendrix's climactic "Star Spangled Banner," but for that moment, all flying sweat and flashing fingers, the 24-year-old Nottingham lad emblazoned himself on the national consciousness. Overnight, Ten Years After burst onto the American rock scene, turning its fiery local point into a full-fledged rock star. And making him absolutely miserable in the process.

"I'm a musician who started out playing in clubs," says Lee. "That's where I'm happiest. Some of the best gigs I've ever done have come in small, sweaty bars. I've been playing for some 37 years now and the motivation to keep going has to come from the enjoyment of what you're doing. The last thing I ever wanted to be was some cardboard cutout of a rock star."

Since 1974, Lee has floated a low-key solo career, (albeit one that included collaborations with George Harrison, Steve Winwood and Ron Wood). Like many musicians of his generation, he has been largely abandoned by the mainstream record industry and has become familiar with the independent and self-run labels. Lee puts out records on his own HHH imprint in Europe, which recently released his *I Hear You Rockin'* album. His LPs are distributed in the States by one-stop confederation Alliance Entertainment through Viceroy Music, a specialty classic blues-rock imprint whose roster includes such rock veterans as Blodwyn Pig guitarist Mick Abrahams and Savoy Brown's Kim Simmonds.

They're not alone. Shrapnel, previously known for releasing young metal bands through the Relativity (RED) distribution network (partially owned by Sany), has launched a roots-rock division called Blues Bureau, boasting Ledlie West and Mountain as well as Rick Derringer, Pat Travers and Greg Howe. Former Procol Harum guitarist Robin Trower and Scorpions/UFO veteran Michael Schenker have both launched their own labels, along with the likes of Martin Barre and Ronnie Montrose, while Santana/Journey axeslinger Neal Schon just recorded a solo album for new-age label Higher Octave Music.

Alvin Lee photograph by Starfile/Dagmar

Lee, whose albums with Ten Years After lodged in the Top 40 of the U.S. album charts at the group's peak, is content to sell what an average Viceroy Record aims for in the U.S.—anywhere between 20,000 and 30,000 copies.

"I'm much happier these days," says Lee. "The major labels are fine if you can get all the departments agreeing what to do. The trouble is, they know very little about music and most of 'em need second opinions and accountants to justify their every move. And you have to play the media game."

Being in the public eye also bothers Savoy Brown guitarist Simmonds, who has kept the band together on a variety of labels since forming the group in London almost 30 years ago.

"I'd just as soon no one called, to tell the truth," he chuckles from his home in Syracuse, N.Y., where he married a local gal and has a year-old child. Savoy Brown, which was probably better known for sending its alumni to such acts as Yes (Bill Bruford) and Foghat,

built up a loyal state-side following for its "workmanlike" take on the blues. Though Simmonds is the only original member in the current line-up, he insists his guitar-playing "provides the continuity." "All my better records feature the interplay between the singer and the guitarist," he says. "In blues-rock, if you get the right blend, like I

think I have now, it's a spark that's irresistible to the ear. The right guitar sound with the right vocal has been the essence of Savoy Brown's music from the beginning."

Triple-A formats and bands like Hootie & the Blowfish, Dave Matthews Band and Blues Traveler—as well as neoclassicists such as Lenny Kravitz and Poppa Chubby—may signal a return to the classic blues-rock of the '60s and '70s. But the cold facts suggest that today's major labels are more interested young, fresh talent than old warhorses, no matter how large a drink tab their A&R execs run up at the House of Blues.

"In their inverted commas 'infinite wisdom,' the major labels think

we're all fried out," says Blodwyn Pig founder Mick Abrahams, who has been battling the music biz wars since he split Jethro Tull rather than fight Ian Anderson's expanding ego way back in 1969. "But that's not the impression I get from the audiences I play to or the people I talk to. Blodwyn Pig was playing in front of 25,000 at the Fair-



port Convention festival in England last year and we tore the arse out of 'em. They loved it. So where were the major labels?" His latest Pig record, *Lies*, which includes ex-Tull-mate, drummer Clive Bunker, came out last year on Viceroy.

"The thing is, the indie labels are more interested in listening to what you're actually doing musically," says Abrahams. "They offer constructive criticism, but at least they're on your side."

Many veteran musicians choose independent labels precisely so they don't have to deal with outside influences in the way of pressure to be more commercial—or at least what a record company may surmise would be commercial.

Doors guitarist Robby Krieger, who has recorded for indie labels his entire solo career, including his latest, *RKO Live!*, for the Albany, N.Y.-based One Way Records, hears all about the pitfalls of today's multinational conglomerate record companies from his son, a member of the band Bloodline, signed to EMI.

"It's unbelievable the way the record company tells them what to do," says Robby. "Who to write with, which songs to do, who the producer should be—it's ridiculous. We never would have stood for

"I'M LUCKY TO BE ALIVE TODAY," ALVIN LEE SAYS.

"I DIDN'T LIKE THE LIMELIGHT. THE MARIJUANA, HASHISH AND LSD DIDN'T HELP. I WAS A LITTLE CONFUSED."

that in the '60s. It's totally a business now; everything's for the money and the artist suffers."

Guitarist Robin Trower, who has formed his own V-12 Records label with former Chrysalis President Derek Sutton to release his latest album, *20th Century Blues*, insists there was more artistic integrity in the '70s. "Back then, you could get exposure with practically any kind of music. The channels have closed down so much over the last 10-15 years. It's very hard to get heard by the public unless you stick to one of the mainstream categories."

Which is why guitar heroes like Trower, Lee and Simmonds have found themselves drawn to independent labels run by people who are fans of the music—not lawyers, accountants, promotion men or even A&R weasels.

"If you're making a record without pandering to the marketplace, then you've got to be prepared to basically start on the bottom rung," says Trower, who turned down a chance to tour with a reformed Procol Harum on the BMG-distributed Zoo label because "there wasn't enough of myself in it." "That's what you give up to be able to make the music you want without any commercial considerations whatsoever."

"We're the kind of musicians who play what we want to play," insists Lee. "All these pop stars and fashion kings sit down and ask themselves what the public wants, and do that. I try to make the records I'd like to hear, and if other people happen to like them, that's even more rewarding. One of the worst things you can do is make a commercial record and not sell any. That must be the pits!"

"I've never been able to become a pop star, even when I tried to," Simmonds admits. "And I'm glad my limitations got in the way or I probably would've lost my credibility with the fan base I have now."

It is the indies' goal to find and maximize that base. Trower's manager Derek Sutton says: "In order to maintain a classic artist, you have to find their audience. It's my job to keep Robin alive while radio is not playing his music—so that when radio finally does discover this music, we have the distribution apparatus already in place."



EBET ROBERTS



For German guitarist Michael Schenker, even an established indie label is irrelevant. Schenker was already selling 300–500,000 albums worldwide each time he put out a record with either UFO or his most recent band, McAuley-Schenker Group, when he let his life go to seed. He woke up one morning to find himself without either a manager or a record label. After cleaning up at drug rehab, he experienced a spiritual awakening which led to an inner peace.

"I had a real desire to show my gratitude, a 'thank you' to all my fans and friends who have supported me over the years," says Schenker. A promotional tour with his partner Robin McAuley for his last

major label album, *MSG*, on Impact, playing acoustic sets for members of the media and retail, gave him the idea to record an entirely acoustic guitar album and release it on his homegrown label he later dubbed Positive Energy Records.

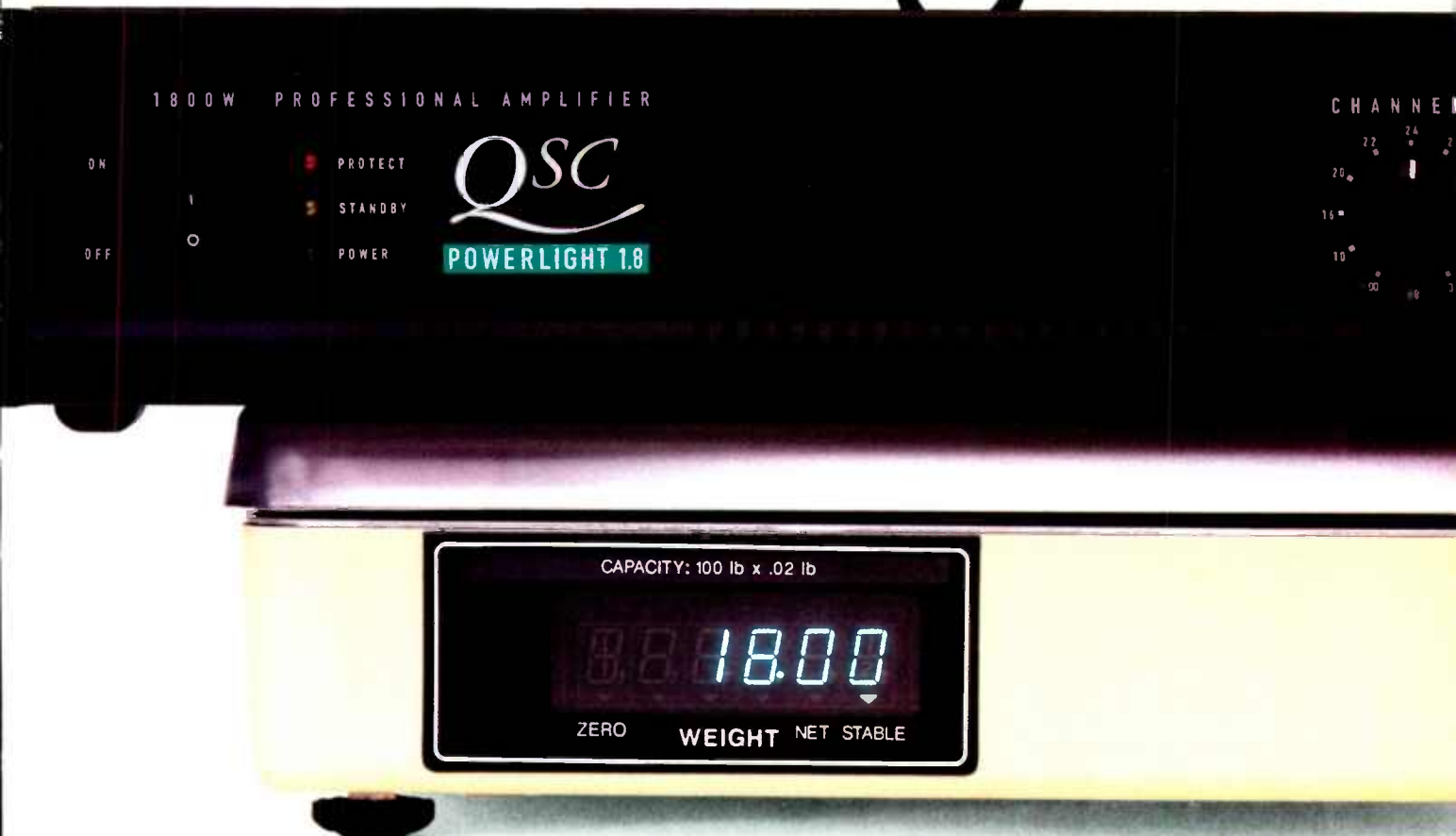
"You have to be mentally and spiritually ready to be able to take this particular trip," says Schenker, who moved to Scottsdale, Arizona with his manager Bella Piper to launch the company. "As normal human beings, we have a desire to be recognized, to be on the charts, to sell as many records as we can. To do what I did, you can't worry about making the Top Ten. And that's where the power comes in. You remove yourself from the rat race and take what's given. If you have too much pride or too many expectations, you won't be able to get yourself to do it, because it won't be any fun.

"I was just tired of giving all my money away to someone who just says, 'Hi, Michael, let me sign you,' collects and goes away. It was just

MICHAEL SCHENKER (ABOVE): "I WAS TIRED OF GIVING MY MONEY TO SOMEONE WHO SAYS, 'LET ME SIGN YOU,' THEN COLLECTS AND GOES AWAY."

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so obvious what was going on. Plus, I never really made any money.”

Schenker recorded the acoustic instrumental *Thank You* and filled the CD sleeve with the names of fans, fellow musicians, record company personnel, radio stations and friends who supported him along the way. On the final track, “Escape From the Box,” Schenker utters the only spoken words on the album, basically describing his decision to abandon the mainstream record industry, and everyday world for that matter. “I have made up my mind/I am leaving/I can

see disbelief in their faces, but I am going/Bye, it’s all made up.”

“I had a lot of people telling me I was a stupid idiot for doing what I was doing,” Schenker admits. “They said I couldn’t see the big picture. Well, having fun is the big picture for me right now. Two years later, I have record company people coming up to me and saying the way I’m doing things is how it’s going to be in the future! Adds Robbie Kriger, “I’m just waiting for the Internet to get happening so I can sell my music over the computer. That’s the future.”

For Journey guitarist Neal Schon and Mountain axe wielder Leslie West, combining major label affiliations and independent outlets turned out to be a way to get the best of both worlds.

Schon took a break from working with his fellow members of Santana (sans Carlos) in the band Abraxas and trying to convince Steve Perry to resurrect Journey to do an all-instrumental album, *Beyond the Thunder*, with bandmate Jonathan Cain, for the new age Higher Octave label. Leslie West has put out both a live and a studio record, *Dodgin’ The Dirt*, on Shrapnel’s Blues Bureau imprint at the same time as his Mountain reissues go through Columbia/Sony’s catalog label, Legacy.

“Let’s face it, everybody wants their tours underwritten,” laughs West. “But you can get lost at a major label. And with these big corporations owning everything, groups are going to have to play in *their* arenas, use *their* ticketing systems, contribute soundtracks to *their* movies—it’s gonna be horrible. You’re going to really have to sell yourself out if you want to be with a major.

“The point is, if you really want to go out there to play and you need a little help, you’ve got to give a little to get a little.”

Schon is delighted he’s able to play his instrumental music for one label and do his Journey thing on a larger scale. He feels it will help him as an all-around musician and that what he’s learned while doing his jazz/new age/instrumental/world beat Higher Octave album will help him when he returns to the band.

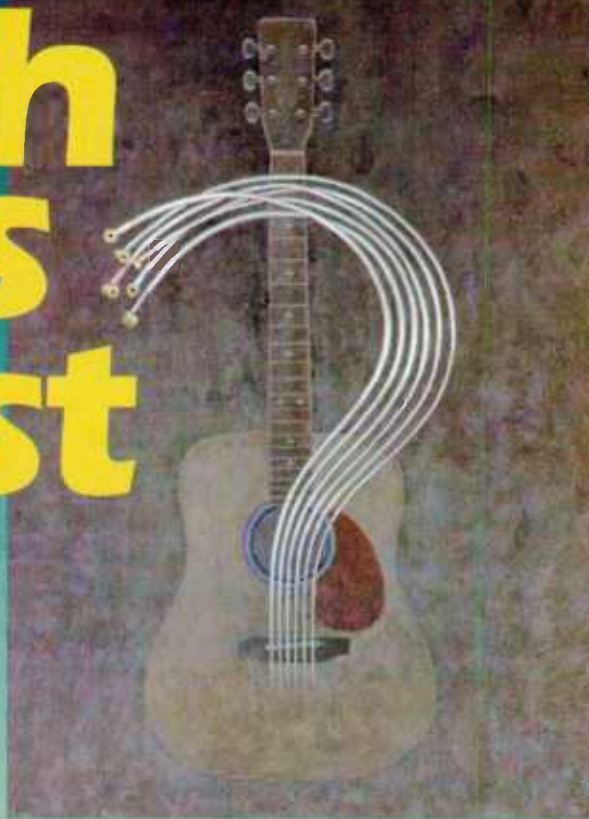
“I’ve never been more satisfied musically than I am now because I haven’t had to give up one aspect of my playing to attain another,” says Neal. “I’m opening up more. I’m able to create more of what’s in my imagination.”

Strategies for career survival didn’t exist until recently, many rock veterans admit, because *they* didn’t figure to survive. “None of us ever expected to be in our 40s and still be doing this,” admits ex-MC5 guitarslinger Wayne Kramer, who has resurrected his own career on the punk Epitaph label. On his 1994 album *The Hard Stuff*, he’s joined by members of bands he’s influenced such as Claw Hammer, Rancid, the Melvins, Bad Religion, Pennywise and the Vandals. “When I was 20, we didn’t think the planet was going to last another 20 years. “And rock ‘n’ roll as a lifestyle has a pretty brutal attrition rate. It may look like fun on MTV, but it doesn’t show you driving in the van freezing or what happens when your record company lays



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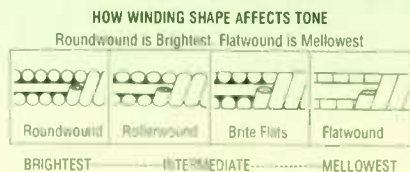
Q How does string material affect tone?

The cover wire material affects tone by changing the brightness of the string. Different materials can be ranked by the brightness of the tone they produce. Common cover wire materials used in string construction include stainless steel, nickel plated steel, pure nickel, brass and bronze. The core wires for all strings and all plain steel strings (both acoustic and electric) are made from tin plated Swedish steel.



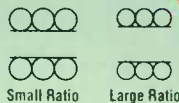
Q How does cover wire shape affect tone?

Cover wire shape affects the brightness of the string tone. The four common cover wire shapes are shown in the diagram.



Q How does string "geometry" affect tone, tone life, volume and flexibility?

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down on you. And the band falls apart. And you discover Jack Daniels and heroin."

"Basically, I'm lucky to be alive today," says Alvin Lee. "I didn't like the limelight. And the marijuana, hashish and LSD didn't help, either. I got a little caught up and a little confused. There's a lot of stress in fame and fortune. You may think when you're on the verge of it, it's what you want. I was lucky enough to realize it wasn't what I wanted. I saw the downside. Basically I've been trying to live my life as a working musician. The guys I admire are the blues and jazz players.

The guys who are still playing at 80 years old, like John Lee Hooker."

Trower, Abrahams and Lee are torn between hewing to their initial influences and trying to create something modern.

"I've tried to maintain a hold on my original inspirations," says Trower. "Even though at a certain point, you try to move forward. On my last major label release [1990's *In The Line of Fire* for Atlantic], I tried pretty hard to give them the album they wanted and at the end of the day, it was pretty unsatisfactory. All you really end up

with then is a piece of product."

"I don't give a fuck what other people think," snorts Abrahams. "I've never seen myself as a commercial kind of guy. People tell me some of my stuff is commercial. But if it is, why can't I get arrested with it?"

"Rock 'n' roll still gets me off," insists Lee. "I still play Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry when I feel like listening to some good music. It's what you were brought up with when you're that impressionable age between 12 and 16. It gets in your blood and becomes a part of you. It's music for musos."

Working with fresh talent is another way to invigorate your music, according to Kramer and Lee. "These young musicians I worked with were willing to go beyond the beat and the key," Kramer observes. "And let's face it, I have more in common with these kids than with people my own age. The success of this music has been a vindication for me."

"I find it invigorating to work with younger players," adds Lee. "If I work on my own too long, I get bored. I believe you can learn something about the guitar from anybody; even someone who's only been playing six months can come up with something I might find interesting and be able to take a bit further."

As rock 'n' roll continues to splinter into factions, classic first-generation guitarists are being pigeonholed into smaller sub-categories that threaten to turn their music into a rapidly diminishing cult. Toss in a tightening world economy and you've got an idea why it's getting harder and harder to maintain your niche. Most of the artists we spoke to are lucky in that their catalog sales sustain them through tough times. But all working musicians have to keep up with the times.

"You have to be responsible for yourself, which is the case with life in general as well," says Schenker. "If you allow yourself to get ripped off, you are the one to blame."

Compared to the innocent, naive 24-year-old who took Woodstock by storm, Alvin Lee says, "I'm less confused, I know what I'm doing now and I'm doing it at my own pace. I'm playing what I want to play when I want with whom I want. Now, if I find myself in a shitty hotel room somewhere asking what am I doing here, I can answer myself. I'm the guy that put me there. In the old days, it was always a manager, an agent or the record company talking you into doing stuff. Now, I'm in control."

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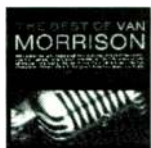
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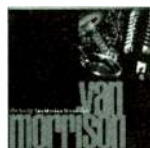


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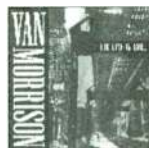
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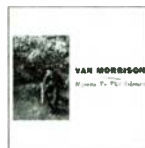
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[*con't from page 10*] students. The Ramones made my teenage years livable. Thanks Joey, Johnny, Tommy, Dee Dee, Marky and CJ!

*Kimberly Ferguson
San Francisco, CA*

Thanks for the great punk issue. As for Offspring, I quote Paul Westerberg's "A Few Minutes of Silence": One more note and I'm out that door.

*Nicky Spencer
Albuquerque, NM*

Re: 20 Years Of Punk Rock. "The underbelly of the '60s generation who remembered the glory of their youth?" What an utter load of shit.

I tuned into punk in the late '70s when it was a way out from sanctimonious '60s bores who still, to this day, can't put the Beatles and Woodstock behind them and move on. Also, I challenge the belief that punk is somehow averse to the spirit of revolutionary capitalism. Punk is the purest form of libertarian capitalism in the music industry. Ayn Rand would be proud. If anything, punk really did the most damage to the static socialist establishment of 1970s Britain.

In the Contract With America era, what hell difference does a 1984 Dead Kennedys' prank on the GOP convention really make? What difference does punk music make to the United Rubber Workers after just getting their butts kicked by the Bridgestone/Firestone corporation in a recent failed strike?

Maybe punk nostalgians are copycatting their Boomer elders in bragging about social pseudo-accomplishments that do not matter in the real world. Fuck 'em all, the lying bastards.

*Ron Yarnell
Dubuque, IA*

Thank you on your article on the punk scene. But isn't the "scene," the "clubs," the "fashion," all icing on the cake compared to what is really important—the music. It would really be fitting to read about Steve Jones' thunderous guitar sound, or hearing about Joe Strummer's train-like rhythm guitar and Paul Simonon's adventurous bass. Or Tom Verlaine's futuristic guitar lines.

What I really get disgusted with—these self-righteous people who spend all their time disparaging bands that have started out on "indie" labels then signed to majors, saying

that in the process the band has "sold out." Do they think when a band signs on the major label that the band's creativity stops?

That attitude is so tired. It's become a cliché! The bottom line is the music. If the music is good, it doesn't matter what label they're on. Signing to a major only means that they want to reach a wider audience. If a band didn't want to share their music with other people, they never would have left the garage!

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the article. It just seems the music takes a back seat in favor of the politics of rock which goes old fast.

So to all you self-appointed judges out there, take some advice that Jello Biafra gave to Nancy Reagan—"Fuck Off And Die!"

*Jason McClellan
York, PA*

P.S. Live sucks!

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TO PAT

By Josef Woodard 🍷

METHENY

PAT METHENY, FRESH off the figurative farm of his hometown of Lee's Summit, Missouri, strode into a world of hype and transition with deceptive ease and a new strain of killer chops. It was the mid-'70s, and the jazz industry found itself seized in the electro-shock embrace of fusion, with a jazz mainstream tradition that had been reduced to a trickle. Guitarists were running rampant and turning their amps to 11.

Metheny was something else. His clean, bell-like tone on a fat-bodied Gibson, rendered extra dreamy with digital delay, created a necessary bridge between the worlds of Jim Hall, John McLaughlin and triadic, American folk traditions, with Brazilian pulses underscoring it all. Metheny was a rare bird from the beginning, combining melodic flair with virtuosity, harmonic sophistication with chromatic dervish dancing. And he served it up with a smile. For all the buzz he created from the start, working in Gary Burton's group and releasing the modest-selling but now classic ECM debut, *Bright Size Life* (with drummer Bob Moses and his pal, bassist Jaco Pastorius), Metheny turned into a phenom with his first Pat Metheny Group album in 1977, and he hasn't slowed down since.

This year's model from the official Pat Metheny Group is *We Live Here*, the first Group album in six years, and the first to embrace a more R&B-hued groove. Visibility is high. It is in "Group mode," as he puts it, that Metheny has earned a place as a best-selling jazz artist.

Many followers of *Musician's* history have undoubtedly noticed Metheny's conspicuous absence over the last 15 years or so. It wasn't for lack of trying on our part, but rather it had to do with Metheny's long-standing refusal to be profiled until a living jazz musician graced a *Musician* cover (ergo, the John Coltrane cover didn't count). Metheny's appearance in this issue comes courtesy of Branford Marsalis's appearance on our cover in July 1994. As he put it, "Until *Musician* had a living jazz musician on the cover, I wouldn't do it. They finally had Branford on the cover, probably for the wrong reasons, but at least there was one of us represented as a member of the community."

So it was that he sat down in his West Hollywood hotel suite for an interview at long last. Over the course of our three-and-a-half-hour talk, he

— Photography by Chris Cuffaro —



often rose to his own defense, either implicitly or openly. Perched and alert on the couch, drinking Diet Pepsi, tanned and ever-ready for action, Metheny was the picture of health, a musician going along swimmingly midstream in his career. But he's not too reflexively polite to air his grievances or his feelings of being misunderstood. The fact remains that Metheny is sometimes unfairly written off or incompletely appreciated, even by his ardent admirers and mass base of fans—*especially* by his mass base of fans.

For every huge-selling accessible Metheny album there have been other dark horses that confound and enthrall, depending on who you're talking to. The fertile last few years have seen the release of *Secret Story*, perhaps his most unabashedly romantic album yet, followed by his sideman shot on Gary Thomas's great set of revisionist standards, *Till We Have Faces*. Next came Metheny's solid salvos on Joshua Redman's *Wish* in 1993. And with his plectrisist colleague John Scofield, the resoundingly good *I Can See Your House from Here*. Most notoriously, the avant guitar lab experiment *Zero Tolerance for Silence* was released in a wee edition, by Geffen standards, before the next *real*, marketable Metheny Group album, being *We Live Here*.

Part of Metheny's image problem has to do with the company he keeps on radio. His patented lyricism and flair for infectious melody have earned him a golden spot on the lucrative, oft-reviled WAVE and Adult Contemporary formats. But clearly, Metheny's conscientious artistry has little or no kinship with the lame, pentatonic banalities of Kenny G and his ilk, though you may hear them back to back on the radio.

Basically, Metheny is unique in the jazz sweepstakes. Dismissed and beloved for a lot of the wrong reasons, he may well be the only jazz player of lasting significance for whom the term "visionary" isn't too much of a stretch, and who enjoys an epic box office as well. Lee's Summit, MO has every reason to be proud.

MUSICIAN: Basically, there was a five-year hiatus with your Group. Was that a plan, or an unintentionally long break?

METHENY: It just worked out that way. The Group has an 18-year history now, and we've had periods when, to keep it fresh and to just keep things moving, the best course has just been to cool it for a while. Also, more so than anybody in the Group, I've had other things that I've wanted to do.

This particular period is a little bit deceptive, because it looks longer than it actually was. We did *Letter from Home* in '89 and basically spent a year and a half following that. That ate up a bunch of time. It was during that time that we recorded the live record, *The Road to You*.

But then I started on that *Secret Story* project album, which was a very ambitious undertaking, a culmination of 15 years of musical and personal everything all in this one place. In the middle of all that, too, I did run into Joshua Redman, which wound up being a pretty sizable commitment of time and energy, just working with him—which was something

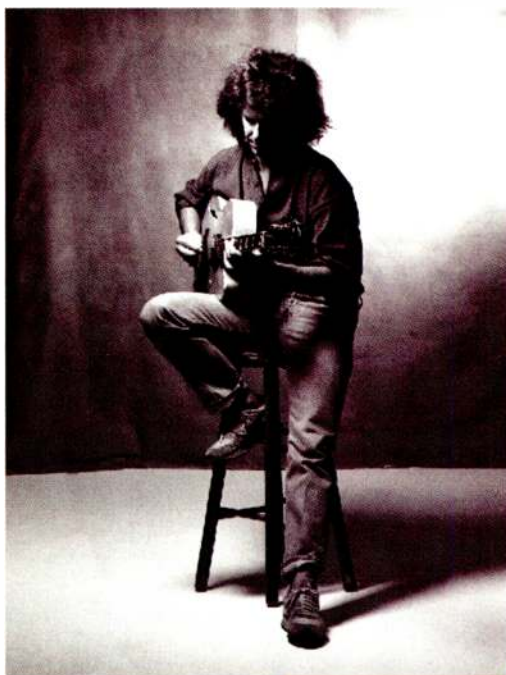
I really enjoyed. Then I also did the project with John Scofield.

I think we've come back with a new appreciation of what the Group is. The possibilities are wider and more open for us to explore music together than they've ever been. Plus, we have this appreciation of what we've done together and how long we've been together.

MUSICIAN: Your first solo album, *per se*, was *Bright Size Life*, right?

METHENY: That's right. During that whole time, Jaco and I were playing together all the time. We had that trio with Bob Moses and continued to play with Paul Bley. He and I were best friends. From 1973 until the year after he joined Weather Report, we were like brothers. We had in common that neither one of us ever drank alcohol and had never taken any drugs. That was kind of our link. I'm still that way. I've continued that groove for my whole life, really. Jaco kind of went into another zone, as we know now.

We were always really tight, even near the end. We were always close, but never again the way we were in those early years. We spent a lot of time together talking about our careers and about the respective roles of our instruments in jazz and what we wanted to do. Thinking about Jaco's impact on his instrument, there was never any question in my mind that that was what it would be. When I first heard Jaco in 1972, it was there. In a lot of ways, he was better at that time than he ever was.



"When our first Group album came out it sold not 2000, which we expected, but 100,000. I had no preparation for that."

He got signed to Epic and joined Weather Report right around the time we did *Bright Size Life*. The writing was on the wall with Jaco. In addition to everything else, he was completely ambitious. He would

call up Keith Jarrett and say, "Man, I'm the baddest bass player you've ever heard. You've never heard the bass before." He did that with everybody, so it was clear that that would happen. And he was right.

When our first Group record came out and it sold not 2000, which is what *Bright Size Life* sold, but 100,000, I had no preparation for that. That was the last thing in the world I ever expected to happen. And, in fact, it was a little bit disorienting for me. I was 22 years old. I almost felt like I had done something wrong. This was reinforced by ECM's reaction to it, which was not exactly favorable. Manfred's attitude towards me was very odd, because it was doing well. I almost felt like I messed up the hierarchy or something. On the other hand, I felt real good about the music we were playing. I felt like the combination of me and Lyle was a very viable one, musically, and very stimulating.

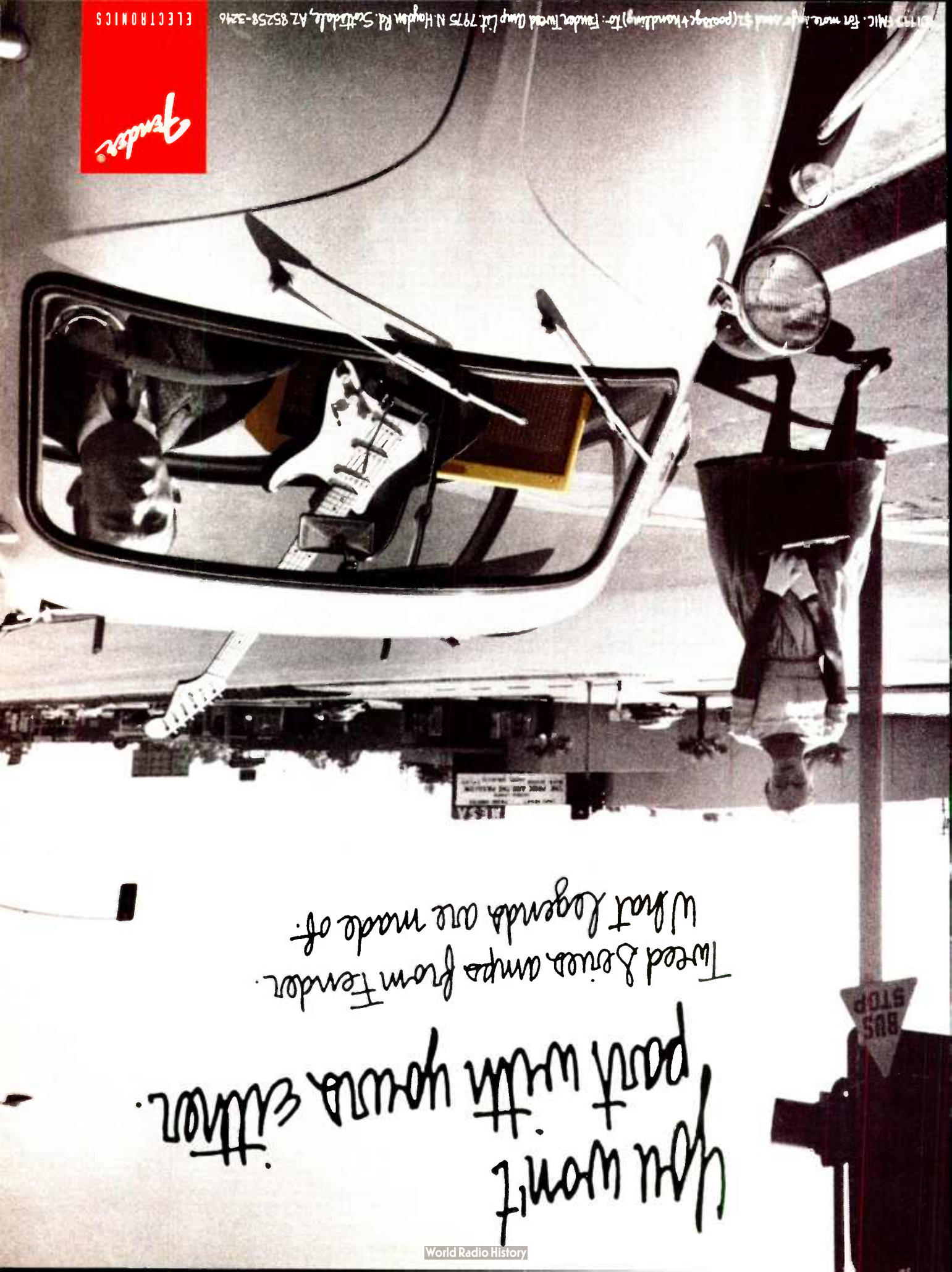
MUSICIAN: How does it differ for you playing—in Los Angeles, for instance—at a sprawling venue like the Universal Amphitheater versus the Catalina Bar and Grill, where you played with Joshua Redman last year?

METHENY: It's not really that different for me. I'm aware of the audience only as a matter of consideration. When it comes time to play—

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and I don't want to say this in a snotty way—I don't really care at that point. Once the music begins, it's kind of between me and it. I've never been that affected by either the audience or record companies or critics or whatever. Having now 20-some years of experience in dealing with all these variables really helps. I'm much more competent at getting to the real deal nightly than I was when I was 18 years old and playing with Gary Burton. I understand a lot more about the process, particularly as an improvising musician, of what I have to do to be ready to face the music.

MUSICIAN: *Several years ago, you mentioned that you were in a heavy practice regimen of playing mostly major scales, as a way of traversing the fretboard almost without thinking. Do you still do that?*

METHENY: I avoided playing any kind of scales at all during the first 15 years that I played. I avoided any kind of pattern-related activity on the instrument, because, to me, that was the thing that killed most guitar players as improvisers. It's such a pattern-based instrument. I would see guys who wouldn't ever even move their hands. The worst culprits of this are blues guys. They even call these areas "boxes," and they just kind of hang there. Whatever notes happened to fall under their fingers, that's what they play.

As time went on, I found myself discovering that playing arpeggios and scales is a very efficient way to get a deep relationship with proximities on the instrument. It makes a whole lot of sense. Arpeggios, especially, are incredibly effective at training your mechanism to know where things are at all times in a sort of 3-D kind of way. It works, so I had to give up the ghost with that attitude.

When I get out there, the instrument almost disappears for me. It's this *thing*, this tool that enables me to manifest sound into the air. I try, as much as I can be, to be prepared for the moment, through understanding and being warmed up, knowing all about chords and scales, so I don't even have to think about that and I can get right to what it is that I want to say.

MUSICIAN: *But you must have times when you don't feel that direct connection between what you want to say and where your fingers go.*

METHENY: If you're going to go out and play a couple hundred gigs a year, yes, some nights are better than others. For me, the good news is that, after 25 years of playing almost every night, I feel like I can get to that zone much more regularly now, almost all the time. But when you can't, there are several approaches. One is to stop; you just don't play anything. The other is to rely on what you know is grammatically correct.

MUSICIAN: *Aha, the GC approach.*

METHENY: Anybody who goes out and plays improvised music night after night after night is going to have certain grammatical zones that they'll function in and rely on. From the Art Ensemble of Chicago to whoever you want to name, everybody has their world that they live in as musicians, and the language that they speak is what it is.

MUSICIAN: *On this new project, you're delving into some new groove territories. How did that come about?*

METHENY: I wanted to use the Group's history and collective aesthetic values as a lens to take a picture of what we saw in the contemporary pop music world. I don't know if I would have felt as comfortable as I

do now addressing pop music in such a blatant way as using drum loops, for instance. I just felt like, at this point in time, like everybody else on earth, when I hear those grooves, I say, "Yeah, that sounds hip." I always wondered, though, why did it have to be one chord?

For the first time in about eight years, I stopped touring and rented a house to write. Also, knowing that this was the plan I had, I felt like I just wanted to get back in touch with what day-to-day life in America felt like and sounded like—what the pulse was now. I walked around a lot and listened to what people were listening to in their cars. I went to a lot of bars and clubs, places where people had music on, and I realized that those grooves are everywhere. They're in every kind of music you can imagine.

MUSICIAN: *Where was this house?*

METHENY: In Miami. I've had a long association with Miami over the years, and it seemed like as good a place as any to settle in and write.

MUSICIAN: *I get the sense that you don't call any particular, fixed place home.*

METHENY: I haven't lived in a place for five years now. I haven't had a residence anywhere. I just live in my suitcase. Wherever I have to go, I just go to this warehouse where I keep all my clothes, pick out the appropriate thing and go. I stay in hotels the rest of the time, or wherever I have to be. It's been that way since 1990.



PHOTOGRAPH BY RANDI ANGLIN

"I'm aware of the audience only as a matter of consideration. Once the music begins, it's kind of between me and it."

MUSICIAN: *Do you like that lifestyle?*

METHENY: It's cool. It's different. It's not something I'll be doing for the rest of my life, but for these years, it's worked. It's been the appropriate way to live.

But for writing, I really do have to go someplace. The process of writing music for me is the most difficult part of the three stages—writing,

recording and performing is how my time gets divided. And the writing part of it is, for sure, the hardest. So I need to just go someplace with all my stuff to just work, and that's what this process was.

I made these demos and I wanted to get Lyle involved real early. He was really chomping at the bit to get back into the Group. He came down to Miami, along with Steve Rodby, who was sort of our adult supervision in the writing process. As much as Lyle and I have written together, which is a lot over the years, we both have our weird quirks. Lyle's thing is that he'll obsess over some minute compositional detail that probably no one in a million years would ever hear, that will completely paralyze him for two or three days at a time and won't get anything done.

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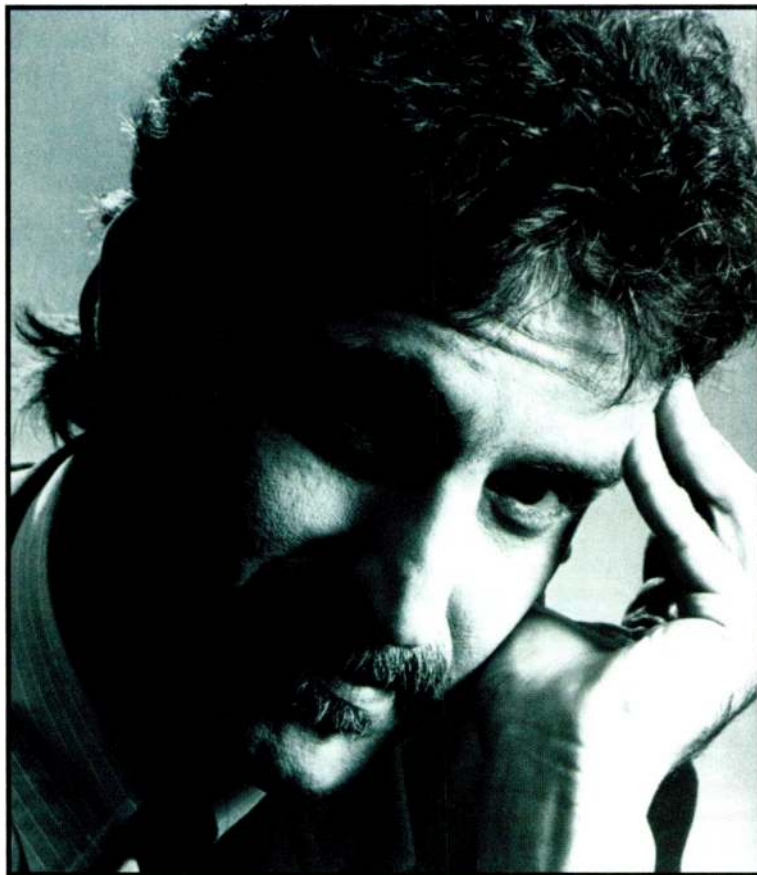
My thing is that we could write the greatest piece of music, and after listening to it for an hour, I'll say it sucks and that we should start over again. So Steve stopped Lyle from obsessing over details, saying, "No, it's okay, we should just go on," and then he would say, "No, Pat, it doesn't suck. You should keep going here." He kind of produced the writing zone, which was very efficient.

MUSICIAN: *When you are in Group mode, you must have to suppress certain aspects of your musical personality.*

METHENY: It's more the other way around. The Group is the one place where I really feel

I can play all the music that I like. Oftentimes I hear this about me—that I have the Group, which is the mainstream thing, and then I've got this other experimental side. Honestly, the Group is as experimental or more than anything else that I do. I have to say that it bugs me a little bit to hear that analysis of the two sides of what I do.

For me, that's kind of an easy way out for whoever is commenting on me or writing an article. There's not that much of a difference for me between playing with Josh or playing with the band or playing with Steve Reich or whoever. I get a little tired of people trying to



"Everybody in this room is wearing a uniform and don't kid yourselves."

—Frank Zappa

Frank Zappa on Rykodisc

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METHENY'S MACHINERY

METHENY still plays his beloved Gibson ES 175, "the first real guitar I bought, for a hundred bucks from this guy in Ray Town, Missouri." Of late, though, he has been using an Ibanez Pat Metheny signature model, which will be available commercially later this year. "It's more or less a traditional jazz guitar, but it's got its own characteristic sound." One of his newest axes is a baritone guitar made by Canadian luthier Linda Manzer. He strings the Gibson with D'Addario CG24 Chromes, the Manzer with D'Addario J16s.

While composing, Metheny says, "I still sit there with the [New England Digital] Synclavier in front of me, a [Steinway Hamburg Model B] piano on one side and a guitar on the other. I move freely between the computer, piano and guitar. A lot of people consider the Synclavier a dinosaur, which it is. They used to advertise it as the 'last synthesizer you'll ever need,' back in '77. It still does a bunch of things that I can't find anywhere else."

After using the same Acoustic 134 amp since 1972, Metheny switched to a Digitech GSP 2101 processor "with a whole bunch of digital effects in it and a tube. You're able to get almost any kind of a sound. It's the first device I've used where I can simulate my sound while using more modern gear. It solved a bunch of problems for me." He runs the Digitech through Crest 6001 and Ashley MOSFET 200 power amps with two Tiel cabinets, an Oakes 2x18, and the Acoustic 134's 4x10 enclosure.

Metheny uses his Apple Powerbook 540 as a virtual studio-in-a-box that enables him to compose on the move. Using Opcode's StudioVision sequencer-cum-audio-editor with Apple's Sound Manager operating system extension, the computer can play up to five eight-bit mono audio tracks in tandem with sequenced tracks. The sequenced tracks trigger sounds in the computer provided by QuickTime (the original video system extension that now handles soundtracks as well). "You can plug your guitar right into the 540 and play along," Metheny says. "It's limited bandwidth and limited time," he says, "but you can do some pretty serious damage on it."

"I did all of the edit points for the new record on an airplane at 30,000 feet, which was really a mind blower," he says. Scaled down to mono eight-bit, the entire album fit onto the Powerbook's internal hard drive. The visual waveform display made it simple to try out various edits as he listened on headphones in the comfort of his airplane seat.

Ottmar Liebert

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MARK EGAN

Victor Wooten

FRANK GAMBALE

Acoustic Alchemy

VINNIE VALENTINO

Roscoe Beck

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find easy solutions to complex problems. The whole issue of style in jazz bothers me. To me, jazz has always evolved through the efforts of individuals. It has rarely been through movements. There's a real danger in jazz to have it become something that's more like classical music. To me, that doesn't work. When Milt Jackson dies—and I hope it's a long time from now—there will never be another Milt Jackson. I suggest that everybody go hear Milt Jackson as much as you can now, because he's one of the best musicians ever. It's a rare and beautiful thing when

somebody comes along with a particular way of hearing music that they're able to manifest into life for everybody else to hear. That's what, to me, what jazz is all about.

MUSICIAN: *But young players are encouraged in that direction by the marketplace, and the industry hunger for new young conservatives.*

METHENY: I encourage people to ignore the marketplace. I don't care if you're a new bebop guy or an alternative rock band, no truer words were ever spoken than when Public Enemy said, "I Don't believe the hype."

If you're going to be a musician that is serious, the first thing you have to realize is that music is really hard. It's really hard to address music that in a complete, detailed and intimate way over the course of a lifetime. If you can't find a reward in music itself, you're better off not even bothering, because that's all there is.

To tell you the truth, I wish I got some satisfaction out of having a little bit of extra coin and getting some awards. It means nothing to me. My mom gets off on it. For me, if I get some fancy award and I go out and play that night and it's not happening, I go back to the hotel room and want to kill myself. It makes no difference whatsoever.

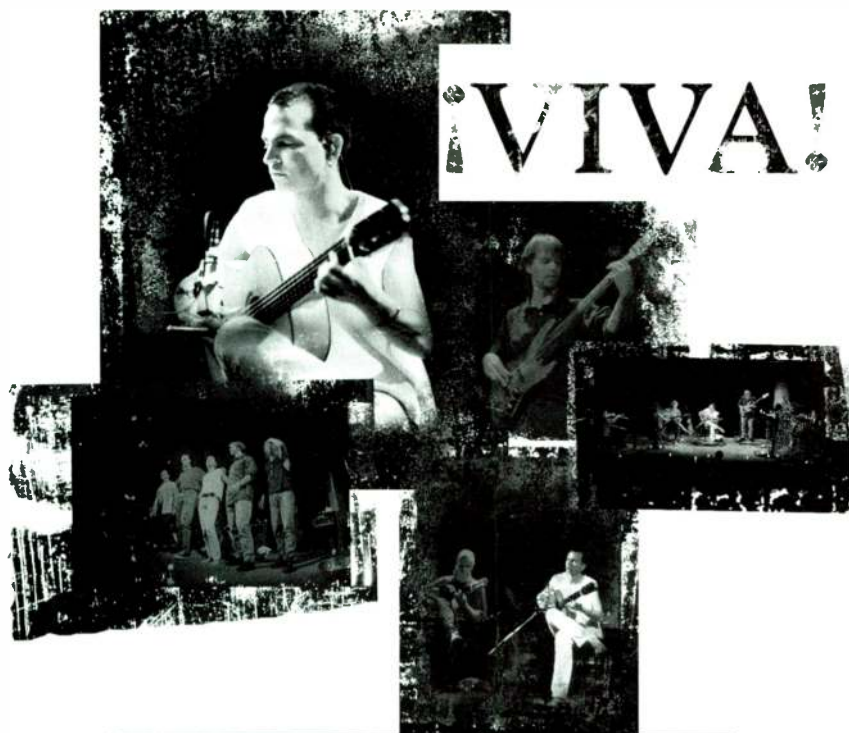
The only thing I get something back from is playing with certain musicians. The fact that Charlie [Haden] is one of my best friends and that when we play together, it's happening, that's something that means a lot to me.

MUSICIAN: *When I last talked to you, after Secret Story came out, you were restless about your guitar tone. You mentioned how you heard so many players with your sound, as if you had created a monster. How do you feel about that now?*

METHENY: One of the things that I've grown to love about the guitar is that it can be so many things. But there is this fundamental sound which I guess we're talking about—the Pat Metheny guitar sound—that, for whatever analysis I could give of it or whatever opinion I have of it, finally, it just is what it is. Whenever I pick up anybody's guitar, it sounds like that. I can go sit in on some weird jam session in Poland on some Russian-made guitar, and it sounds like me. Yes, there are aspects of what I do that I suppose are copied by people, with the digital delay and flat-sound strings and this and that, but those are the superficial aspects of it. The core of it is just the way I hear things.

MUSICIAN: *You laid down some exciting and unexpected stuff on the Gary Thomas album Till We Have Faces a couple of years ago. How did that come about?*

METHENY: Gary's great. I went to that date thinking that we were going to do one of his funk, *Kold Kage* type of things. I had a sense in my mind of what kind of a zone that would be fun to play with him in, harmonically. I got there, and he wanted to play all standards. I thought, "Oh my God, now what am I going to do?" Then I thought, "Well, I'll just play the way I was planning to play."



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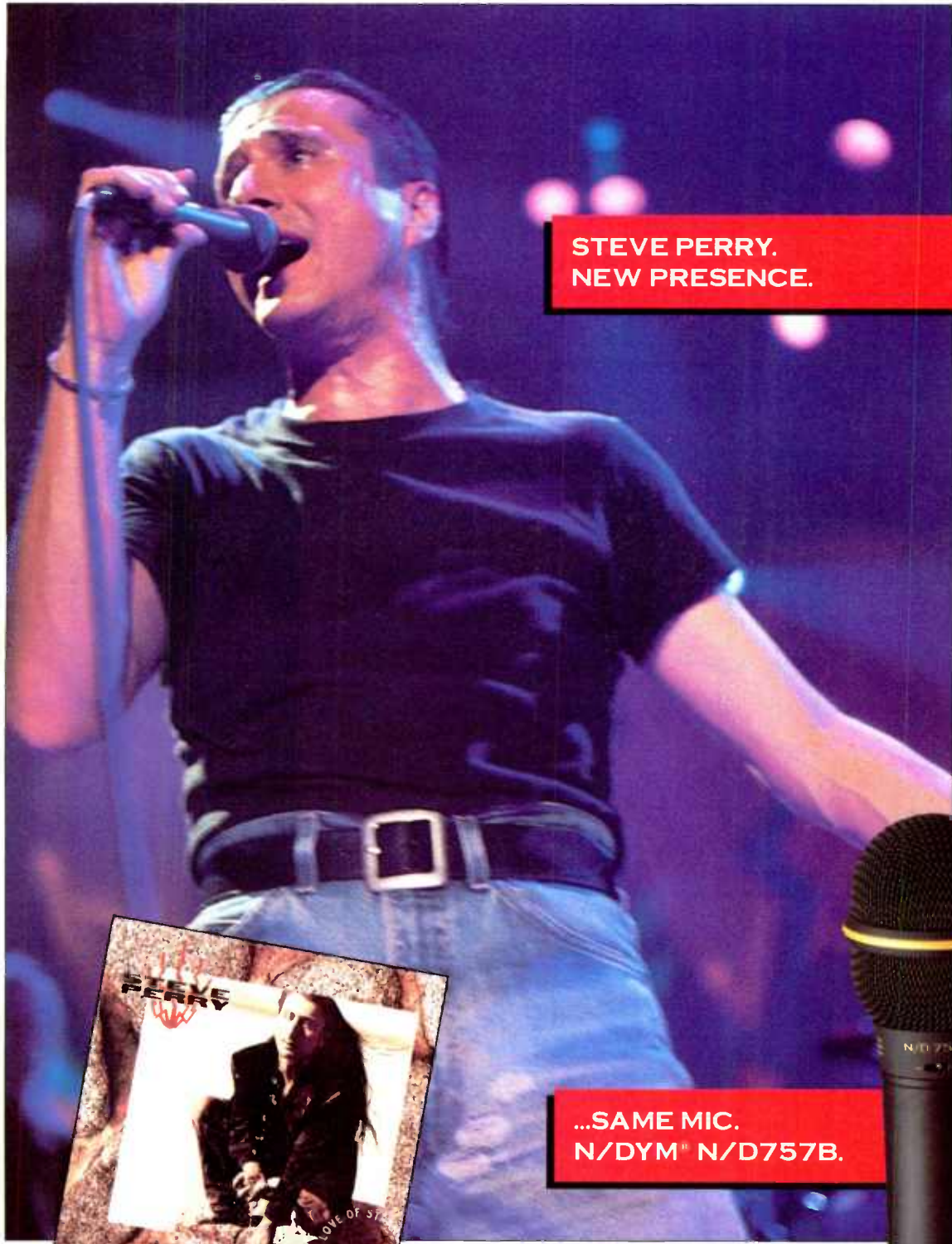
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Also on Gary's date Terri Lyne Carrington was real inspiring. For me, that drums are always the most important thing, in whatever setting. I try to physically be near the drums and I try to get as inside the drums as I can. And she was dealing.

MUSICIAN: And on "Lush Life," are you using a baritone guitar?

METHENY: It should have been a baritone guitar, because I tuned it really, really low. I've always been interested in exploring what the guitar can do, sonically, besides just being itself. When I first started the band, the best way of getting to that was by taking guitars and restringing them, tuning them in different ways, and coming up with these sonic events that you could never get with a traditional guitar. When synthesizers showed, I stopped doing that. I started to find that my interests were quenched by being able to go up an octave or down an octave or retune everything at the touch of a button. But there is something about the strings actually vibrating together that you'll never replace.

MUSICIAN: Do you feel like an alien when you are played on the radio formats such as the WAVE and Adult Contemporary?

METHENY: I have real mixed feelings about that. Of course, like anyone, for whatever anybody wants to say about the word "alternative," the real alternative world is any of us who are trying to exist in this culture playing any kind of instrumental music. Those stations are a source for us. I don't cater to them. There are usually just one or two tunes that would fit anyway, just time-wise. I have to admit, I feel a little uncomfortable with that. But it's reality.

MUSICIAN: It goes back to what you were saying about these shuffly grooves being used in a simplistic way, harmonically, whereas all of your songs are much trickier than they might seem on the surface. Deceptive simplicity is your thing, isn't it?

METHENY: I think so. Finally, our music speaks better for itself than I can. Whether it's used for background music for a Roto Root-er commercial or an NBA special—all the weird places that I've heard tunes of mine—are fine. But the context that I intend for somebody is to put on headphones, crank it up all the way, and listen as hard as they can, because that's the way I hear it.

People tell me all the time that the song "Are You Going with Me?" is used for certain activities. There's a kid in Colorado named Metheny, because of that song. I feel terrible for him. People use that song to fuck

by. For me, it's my tune that I've played a billion times. It's not about fucking. It's about that song. However people use the music is something that's beyond my control. All of those things wash away in time and what's left is the music itself.

MUSICIAN: At least a subtle bossa nova pulse is evident in almost all of your music.

METHENY: Well, Antonio Carlos Jobim was very important to me. That whole way of moving around harmonically had a big effect on me. I know Jobim is Brazilian, but it almost goes beyond that.

MUSICIAN: Is there an analogy to be made between Brazilian music, with its merging of rural and urban musical values, and your own musical signature, from the heartland by way of New York City?

METHENY: If there is, it is probably the guitar. Both of those musics you described are both largely guitar-driven. The Americana folkie thing has to do with that sound of open strings, which I've always loved. Brazilian music is a more closed version of the same thing, that involves at least one other note apart from the triad in the voicings.

Like a lot of guitar players, my first contact with a major seventh chord was on "Girl from Ipanema." [laughs] That was about the third chord I learned, because I couldn't barre those first two strings, so I thought, "Hey, how about if I just leave the top one open?" That was about the second day of playing for me, after learning the "Peter Gunn" theme and the theme from "Batman." **MUSICIAN:** Thinking about your long and twisting career, is this at all what you expected when you started on this saga?

METHENY: I never really had much expectation. Any expectation I had, this has knocked it out of the ballpark, into the next county, into the next continent. The only goal I ever had was that I thought it would be great to play in Gary Burton's band. That was the equivalent of joining the Beatles for me. I got that gig when I was 19, and I realized during the time I was with Gary that there was a way I wanted to play that I wouldn't be able to play unless I started my own band. But that point, my goal would have been to play the Jazz Workshop in Boston and have it be half full on weeknights and maybe full on Friday and Saturday. Anything other than that would be gravy. And then if I could continue to do records for ECM, that would be fantastic. To tell you the truth, from then until now, it's been one big blur. It's 18 years later, and it's really been one long tour for me.

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LAW giveth, the Contract taketh away

How record
companies
subvert Federal
copyright
law at the expense of
artists

By **Peter Jaegerman**
illustration by
Eric White



MOST SONGWRITERS AND COMPOSERS are aware that record companies pay fees, specifically known as mechanical royalties, to copyright owners for the right to manufacture copies of their songs in the form of CDs, tapes and the like. But many music professionals are unaware that record contracts routinely include provisions that can effectively relieve the labels of this responsibility—and, if artists aren't careful about the agreements they make, can even force them to become further indebted to their record company with each record sold.

Before going further, it should be noted that copyright law differentiates between a recording and the song recorded (which is known as the "underlying work"). In the following discussion, the phrase "copyright owner"—which may be a work's author or publisher or, indeed, anyone who has purchased the right to reproduce it—refers to the owner of the copyright for the underlying work, not for any particular recording of it.

It is also helpful to bear in mind the distinction between three types of royalties: mechanical royalties, or licensing fees paid for the right to manufacture a reproduction of a copyrighted work; performance royalties, fees paid for the right to reproduce the work in public performance or broadcast; and artist royalties, a percentage of the market price of a recorded performance that is credited to the performer. This article deals with mechanical royalties only.

Piano Rolls

THE STORY STARTS WITH THE PLAYER PIANO and the earliest music playback machines. In enacting the original United States Copyright Act of 1909, Congress established that music publishers—owners of the copyright to a composi-

Test Case: The Singer/Songwriter

IN 1992, A RECORDING ARTIST DELIVERS A FINISHED master to a record company. The recording is accepted and released later that year in cassette and CD formats. The artist wrote three songs on the album, the remainder having been written by prominent songwriters.

The artist's contract with the record company includes a typical "controlled compositions" clause. Under this agreement, the total mechanical royalties that the record company will pay for the entire album total to just under \$0.47 per copy, or ten times 75 percent of the minimum per-song statutory mechanical royalty rate as of the date the album was delivered. The other songwriters whose works appear on the album are not bound by the artist's agreement with the record company. Their authorship interests will be paid at the full statutory rates.

Consider the album as released on cassette. Each cassette contains ten selections. Setting aside the three songs written by the artist, the statutory mechanical royalties payable on the other seven songs amount to almost \$0.44. Remember, the record company will pay \$0.47 on the entire album. For his three songs, the artist gets the leftovers—about \$0.01 per song.

What about copies released on CD? Each CD contains a bonus track not composed by the artist. The additional mechani-

cal payment (at the full rate of 6.25 cents) pushes the artist's obligation beyond \$0.47, making the composer responsible for excess mechanicals on every CD sold. Not only will he receive nothing for his three songs; just over three cents will be deducted from his artist royalties with each CD sold.

To complete the picture, according to the contracts among the various parties involved, mechanical royalties will accrue to outside songwriters at the full statutory rate for all CDs and cassettes sold and not returned. Excess mechanicals are charged to the artist based on this sales figure. But the mechanical royalties on the artist's own songs aren't paid at all for sales of cut-outs, record club selections, and other so-called "free goods" amounting to roughly 10 percent of total sales. That is, the artist owes excess mechanicals to the outside songwriters based on total sales, but receives mechanicals for his own songs based on an arbitrarily smaller figure.

As the album continues to sell in future years, the statutory mechanical royalty rate paid to the outside songwriters will increase. But the artist's mechanical royalty cap will remain at \$0.47 per album. As the outside songwriters receive a greater and greater share, the artists will owe more and more to the record company in excess mechanicals.

Lost Mechanicals: How Much?

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE TOTAL DOLLAR amount of mechanicals that go unpaid due to royalty-reduction strategies tallies in the millions of dollars each year in the U.S. Consider the ceiling on the number of royalty-bearing cuts. The ten-song cap, which has become the standard limitation, evolved during the age of vinyl LP albums. Because of the technological limitations of that format, vinyl albums tended not to contain more than ten selections.

But with the advent of the CD, the potential capacity of an album increased dramatically. The inclusion of "bonus tracks" (originally an incentive to buy CDs rather than LPs) has become the norm today, and it has become rare to see a different number of cuts on a CD than on the corresponding cassette release.

How many selections are contained on a typical pop release today? As you might suspect, the number is more than ten. Consider the most popular albums. Nearly 120 albums achieved U.S. sales of over one million units during 1993 and 1994 combined, according to *Billboard*. The overwhelming majority contain more than ten cuts, the average being between twelve and thirteen. Based on statutory mechanical royalty rates in effect in 1993, a 12-track album made at that time (in which all tracks are under five minutes long) would have yielded 75 cents. With 1994's rate increase, the figure approaches 80 cents.

As we have seen, a typical record contract pays $\frac{1}{4}$ of the statutory rate, with a cap of ten royalty-bearing songs per album. This imposed a ceiling of nearly 47 cents during 1993 and 50 cents during 1994. For CD containing twelve cuts, eliminating royalties for the two extra tracks, the loss of royalties averages about 29 cents per unit. That is, the CD's copyright owners at large forfeited $\frac{1}{3}$ of mechanical royalties due them, as specified by Congress.

Remember, this calculation is based on 1993 and 1994 rates. Because the rates paid by the record company, once established, never increase over the commercial life of the albums involved, the per-unit loss will only increase year by year. Mechanical royalty income diminishes further if the usual exemptions for free goods and cut-outs apply.

The unofficial estimate of the national Music Publisher's Association is that at least half of all cuts on contemporary albums are subject to some form reduced-royalty arrangement, and that the dollar figure for mechanical royalties forfeited or charged back to artists amounts to between \$75 million and \$125 million annually.

Guarantee or Benchmark?

RECORD COMPANIES HAVE COME TO VIEW THE COPYRIGHT Act's statutory mechanical royalty rate as a "benchmark" from which to negotiate downward. Given the amounts of money at stake, it's not difficult to understand why.

It's easy to blame the record companies. But the labels argue that any recording artist is free to go elsewhere for a better deal. The obvious problem is that, particularly for a beginning artist, once a relationship with a particular A&R executive or record company has been established and a decision to sign has been made, it's difficult to pick up and go elsewhere over a contract point that arises late in the game.

Some suggest that the problem lies partly in the fact that the largest U.S. music publishers are affiliated with the major record labels. In practice, the greater portion of income from mechanicals frequently ends up in the hands of songwriters, not publishers; so reducing mechanical royalty payments saves a record company more than its affiliate publisher loses. That is, the recording/publishing conglomerate as a whole saves money at the expense of songwriters.

Ironically, much of the responsibility for the lost royalties

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belongs with the very people who lose the most: the artists and composers. Even if they understand the effect of royalty-reduction policies, many artists, managers and attorneys consider them a minor element of the recording contract as a whole—certainly nothing worth jeopardizing a negotiation over.

What's At Stake?

IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT POLICIES that reduce mechanical royalty payments to songwriters have changed the popular music

industry in fundamental ways. From the music publisher's perspective, they have transformed a relatively simple licensing and compensation system into a tremendous administrative burden. Under the structure created by Congress 85 years ago, calculation of compulsory mechanical royalties was easy. Under typical controlled-compositions clauses today, it is usually impossible to calculate royalties for a given album until its contents have been determined.

The expense involved in monitoring compliance with these complex agreements is dif-

ficult to justify. And, for many publishers, the risk of doing business has become unacceptable. With no assurance that mechanical royalties will be forthcoming, publishers are hesitant to offer advances to composers whose works may be affected.

Instead of continuing to build their catalogues, these publishers have withdrawn from the market for new talent. With fewer active publishers in the game, aspiring songwriters have fewer places to shop their material. As the financial incentives disappear, this promising source of fresh musical blood dwindles.

Is There a Solution?

IF THE STATUTORY MECHANICAL royalty rate, originally intended to guarantee a minimum payment to the owner of a song, has become merely a benchmark to be reduced through negotiation, then the original system has ceased to function, at least within the domain of contemporary popular music. Some observers recommend that compulsory licensing be replaced by the European system of industry-negotiated royalties pegged to higher rates for full-price product, giving the record labels lower costs for budget product or extra-length albums. Certainly this is an improvement over the inflexible American system.

But many music publishers are opposed to ending compulsory licensing and statutory royalty rates. They fear that the overwhelming power of U.S. record companies would enable them to reduce mechanical royalty rates even further. Instead, they suggest that the statutory rates be enforced, ensuring both that copyrighted compositions are available to be recorded and that copyright owners are compensated fairly. Incredibly, the legality of the record companies' strategies to contain mechanical royalty payments has never been tested in court.

Some in the music publishing community speculate that under the Clinton administration, with its awareness of intellectual property issues, the Justice Department may be more interested in examining the effect of these policies on publishers, composers and recording artists. The bottom line is that the royalty-reduction measures routinely exercised by record companies are destroying the economic value of music copyrights. Ultimately, this limits the freedom of artists to determine the direction of their careers.

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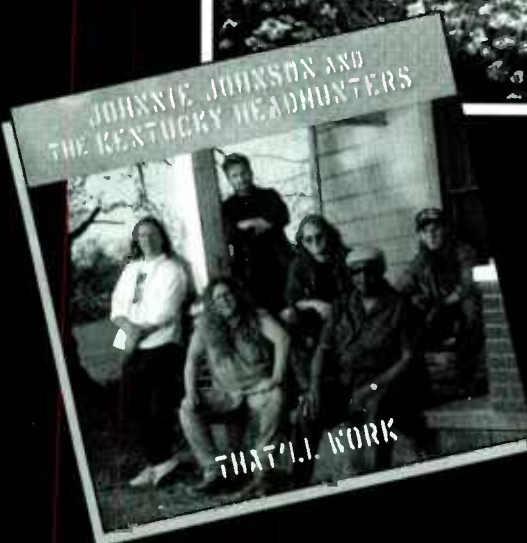
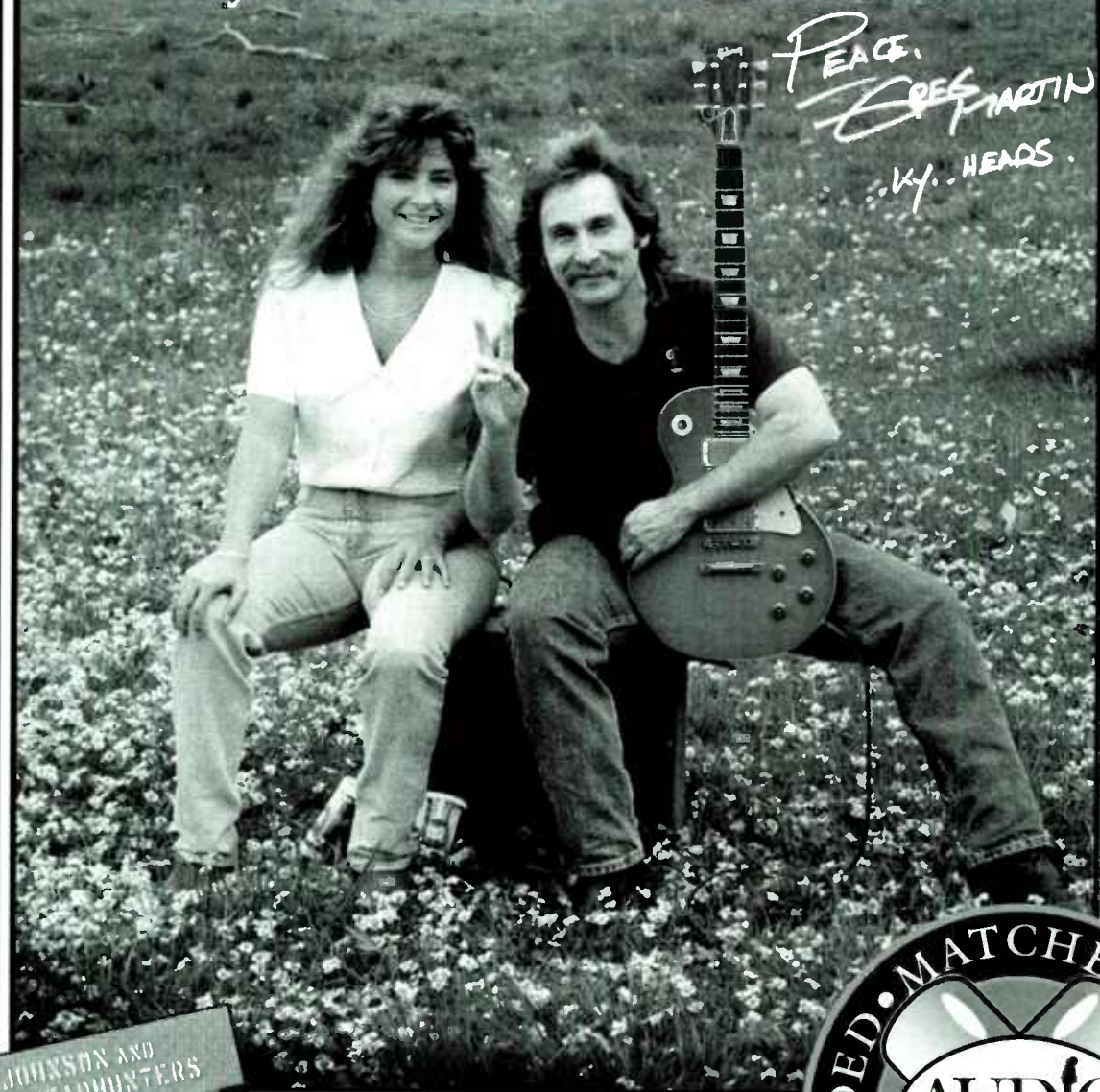
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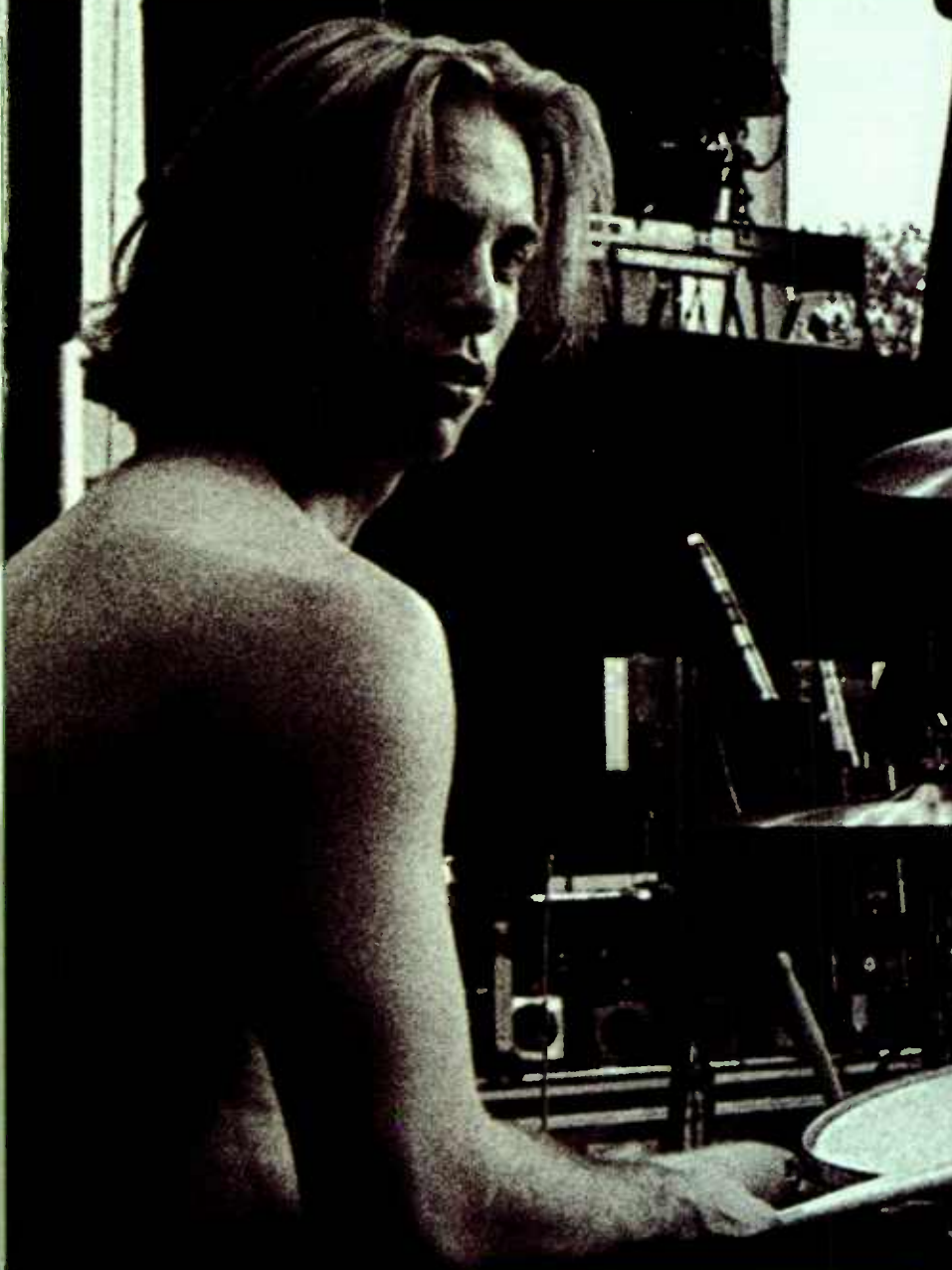
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OASIS

IN ENGLAND, THEY HAVE THIS TERM "LAD."

"It doesn't mean anything," says Liam Gallagher, singer of Oasis, a Manchester-based punk/pop fivesome that at this writing has registered a few tremors on the Rock Richter Scale, just enough to tantalize Anglophiles here and music tabloidists there. "It just means being a lad."

"Being a lad," agrees Paul "Bonehead" Arthurs, rhythm guitarist of Oasis.

"Here we are," says Liam, gesturing to Bonehead and drummer Tony McCarroll in his Vancouver hotel room. "A bunch of lads."

Well, the word doesn't exist as a slang term in the United States. It has subcultural connotations known only to those in the subculture.

"No, don't get deep," warns Bonehead. "Just five lads in a band. It's about being a lad."

"Not faking it," says Liam.

Were the Beatles lads?

"Oh yeah," says Liam.

"The Stones, they were lads," says Bonehead, who in about a year will be known as Asymmetrically Bald Head.

"Blur are not lads," says Liam, referring to the English neo-art rockers, who sound equally descended from the Kinks and A Flock of Seagulls. "Pearl Jam are not lads. Stone Temple Pilots are not fucking lads. The Who were lads. The Sex Pistols were lads. Suede are not lads. Are you starting to get the drift now? Frankie Goes to Hollywood were not lads."

So it's a matter of authenticity?

"Yeah," says Bonehead. "We're authentic."

How about Nirvana?

"Kurt Cobain was," says Liam. "I don't know about the bass player or the drummer. Actually Cobain was a bit of a silly lad."

The Oasis sound is even more basic than Nirvana.

"That's what it's all about, isn't it?" says Tony McCarroll. "It's real. That's what every band is, every real band. Techno is bullshit. Synthesized bollocks."

Synthesizers are for non-lads.

"Now you've got it," says Tony. *[As of press time, McCarroll had left the band and been replaced by drummer Alan White.]*

"You can't get deep about this," says Liam. "We're lads. Aretha Franklin is a woman, and Morrissey is not a lad. When you're writing this, you listen back to what I just said, and you write it down. I go through all them people, and that's how people will read it. If they understand it, they understand it. And if they don't, they don't. Now, next question."

The Oasis sound is most immediately identified by Liam's vocals. He sneers. And he doesn't do anything else. Doesn't move onstage, doesn't write songs, doesn't interpret songs, doesn't sing. He sneers *everything*. A one-note piano he is, but it's a good note. Nobody has sneered better since Johnny Rotten, and before him, nobody sneered better since John Lennon. Liam is often compared to both. A more complete analogy might be: If John Lennon was the Babe Ruth of sneers, and Johnny Rotten was the Roger Maris of sneers, then Liam Gallagher is a rookie who hit 41 home runs with a .207 batting average and 36 errors at third base. Try sitting in a diner and hearing the Oasis semi-hit "Live Forever" come on the radio at background volume. Liam's sneer amazingly cuts through all the clink and clatter and conversation. It's just a miracle, like a home run over the roof at Tiger Stadium. Anyone with the slightest love for what the English did with rock 'n' roll from the Beatles

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG ○ PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY BLAKESBERG

IN A FOUR



Clockwise from front left: Noel Gallagher, Liam Gallagher, Paul McGuigan, Bonehead, Tony McCarroll

IGN LAND

through the Police, and haven't remotely done since, just has to root for Liam Gallagher to develop some additional moves and avoid that trip back to the minor leagues.

"Well, I don't want to sing, if you know what I mean," says Liam. "I don't want 'AHH HeeeeAHH HeeeeAHH.' I don't want none of that shite. I just want to growl."

When John Lennon used to sneer...

"He could sneer melodically."

Is it by design that Liam also sneers melodically, or is it that Lennon and Liam come from Liverpool and Manchester, respectively, and have similarly thick accents?

"Well, it goes back to being a lad, doesn't it? I'm a lad, John Lennon was a lad, and Suede isn't."

Almost every article about Oasis notes that no new English band has broken big in the United States for over a decade. Is that due to a lack of lads in current English bands?

"Phil Collins is probably big here," says Liam.

Phil Collins isn't a lad, is he?

"No, he's not," says Bonehead. "Now you understand."

"That's what I'm trying to say," says Liam. "He's not a lad, but he's big. So it will be nice if we can come here and by being lads, be fucking big."

"Lads," Bonehead nods. "It's what America needs."

R.E.M. aren't lads, right?

"Not even close," Liam sneers.

Lads. Young men of English working-class origin. Unlike most Americans of working-class origin, who believe themselves middle class, they know they are working class. But that's as far as class consciousness goes in these days of a Labor Party trying to sell out as thoroughly as Democrats in the U.S. Sentenced to an education sys-

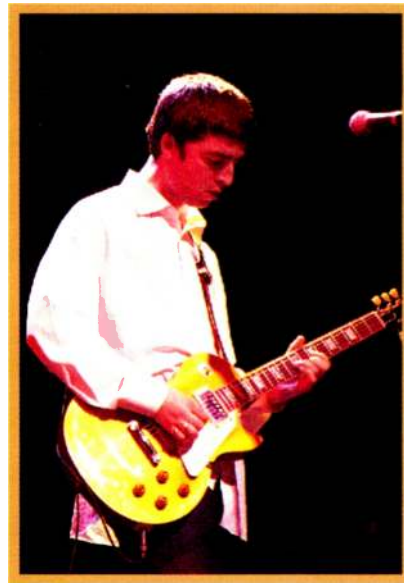
tem designed to teach obedience or to humiliate, lads escape as quickly as possible (age 16) with a distrust of abstract thought, which, after all, has been used to screw them and their ancestors for several centuries. Faced with the prospect of digging holes or the dole, the more creative and ambitious lads can escape by becoming soccer hooligans, alcoholics or rock stars. And that's what lads dream about: not so much money as escape.

In Vancouver, the five lads of Oasis are booked to play their songs of escape at the Commodore Ballroom, a huge club built in 1929 with glittering chandeliers, great sight lines, plenty of tables and chairs if you want to sit, and a wooden dance floor constructed on old tires

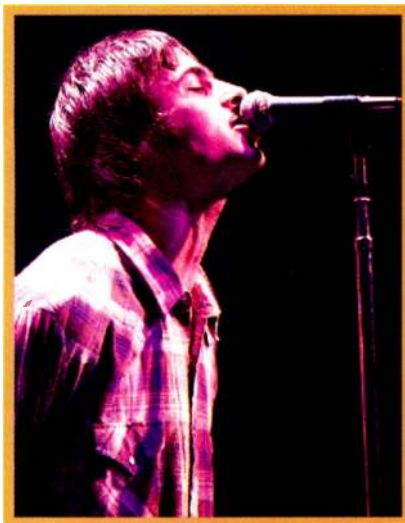
which give it an incredible bounce if you want to dance. It has to be the best big club in North America, the sort of place that would have been torn down years ago in New York for an office building. And it's full of Canadians, a people that has survived by not offending the colossus next door, so they tend to be friendly and polite.

"Let's show them how much noise we can make in Vancouver!" a local radio DJ exhorts over the PA. "Let's welcome Epic recording artists Oasis!"

Oasis takes the stage. Liam grabs the microphone. "I don't know what that was about," he sneers at the DJ. A promising start. Nothing like a punky lad throwing a tantrum to compel your attention. But those are the only words Liam speaks all night, stage patter apparently falling outside the canon of lad-approved behavior. Moving one's feet in any way also fails to make the canon. To be fair, it must be said that Liam occasionally walks back to the drum risers to drink a beer, and the guitarists sometimes walk back to their amps to tune up. Prancing about, however, is clearly for



"I'M MORE INTERESTED IN DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL THAN IN NAKED WOMEN."



tem designed to teach obedience or to humiliate, lads escape as quickly as possible (age 16) with a distrust of abstract thought, which, after all, has been used to screw them and their ancestors for several centuries. Faced with the prospect of digging holes or the dole, the more creative and ambitious lads can escape by becoming soccer hooligans, alcoholics or rock stars. And that's what lads dream about: not so much money as escape.

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non-lads like Michael Stipe. On the incredible bouncing dance floor, the crowd seems to want to pogo and mosh, and in every third song they sort of pogo and mosh. Then they stop, perhaps inhibited by the staid visuals.

Oasis plays ten of the eleven songs on their album *Definitely Maybe*, omitting the acoustic "Married with Children," and closing with a not-on-the-album cover of "I Am the Walrus." It is good basic rock 'n' roll, and there is never enough good basic rock 'n' roll in the world. Liam sneers as the Marshalls roar over a solid backbeat, and that's the whole of it.

Comparisons with the Sex Pistols and Beatles perhaps overreach. The Ramones crossed with Steve Miller seems more apt—the Ramones for their fundamentalism, and Miller for the Poppy plagiarism. You can tell Noel Gallagher is the lead guitarist because he gets two amp stacks while Bonehead and bassist Paul McGuigan get just one apiece. Noel teases the crowd several times by playing the riff to "Cigarettes and Alcohol" between songs, and then starting some other song. Although he's just noodling unconsciously, it feels like a cruel trick, because the riff is so blatantly taken from T. Rex's "Get It On (Bang a Gong)," one of the greatest rock 'n' roll dance numbers of all time. The crowd wants that riff, and then they get something else. It's almost anticlimactic when Oasis finally does play: "Cigarettes and Alcohol."

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World Radio History

Standing up the local radio contest winners and record store people, Oasis doesn't show at the meet 'n' greet backstage afterwards. Among these standupees is Steve McDonald, a trainman for the CP Rail. He rides trains back and forth from Calgary to Field, British Columbia, and listens to the radio all day long. His buddy won a contest on Mix 1060, and they got a free trip to Vancouver for the show.

"You be sure to print that Mix 1060 kicks ass," says McDonald, his face red and the rest of his large self swaying slightly from copious consumption of suds. "They treated us like gold."

You think Oasis is going to make it?

McDonald furrows his brow. "It's great. It's tight. But..."

But?

"I've heard a lot of bands like them. I could be wrong, and they could be a hit with a big push. But they just aren't that original. It's been a long time since anyone from England changed anything. I don't know. It's good music. Good enough to fit in with the Seattle

sound, but it isn't Seattle."

This is so. Oasis is not Seattle, home of many non-lad bands. And it's hard to imagine Oasis connecting with the Pearl Jam non-lad demographic. A college student seeking confirmation of his identity crisis through the mysticism and indirection of Eddie Vedder just isn't going to find a lot to engage his middle-class imagination in the concrete, linear craving for escape in Oasis, unless maybe the economy collapses. Of course, Steve Miller didn't sell millions of records to that crowd, either.

THE MEMBERS of Oasis grew up within a few miles of each other. They went to schools that played each other in soccer, and marinated their friendship in the pubs as they got older. Bonehead made the first move toward recruiting a band.

"I told him I can't do anything," recalls Paul "Guigsy" McGuigan. "And he said, 'Why don't you sing?' And I said, 'No, I can't sing,'

BREAKING AMERICA



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK AN English band in the States these days? And just what exactly is Oasis willing to do that so many of England's previous Next Big Things—the Wonder Stuff, Happy Mondays, Blur, Suede, to name a few—weren't?

"Work," says Epic president Richard Griffiths, a British expatriate.

"Tour," shrugs David Massey, another English transplant and Epic VP of A&R whose signings include U.K. acts Oasis, Des'ree and Echobelly.

Explains Griffiths, "Most British bands arrive here prepared to do very little, and what work they've done hasn't been in the best frame of mind. The success of the Cranberries is no coincidence—they were willing to do a lot of work, and it's paid off."

"Oasis's commitment to tour early on—as a *real* rock 'n' roll band—enabled us, as a company, to let it grow naturally and not hype them," explains Massey. "We were able to grow them the way you build a band in America, over the course of four to five months. And this includes playing the *heartland*—not just five East Coast dates and two West Coast dates."

"U.K. bands think they can just come and do a dozen shows—they don't take the American audience seriously," agrees Boy Troy, music director at Boston alternative station WFNX. "I will say that Oasis has done their homework. They came, they stuck around, they made themselves familiar—that's important."

For Oasis's manager Marcus Russell, who previously visited the U.S. with The The and Electronic, patience in that area has been key: "Our goal is just to get *established*. In order to achieve that, you've got to devote a certain slice of each year to being in the American market. Oasis is working to achieve that in the old-fashioned sense, like a '60s or '70s rock 'n' roll band."

"If you look at Soundscan, sales jumped in every city they've

played—*every city*," observes Massey. "MTV only came in recently, we've gone to pop radio *now*, but we didn't initially—just college, alternative and some rock stations. We owe all this to the tour. There's just nothing as effective as the proof. This way people see that they're a real rock 'n' roll band. And it's helped for the press to be able to come and see that, too. Oasis realizes they have to earn America's acceptance."

"America is a big country and the traveling is *much* more arduous than anyone from Britain could ever imagine at first. So we've tried not to overwhelm them with huge amounts of in-stores *and* radio *and* soundcheck *and* enormous journeys."

"Why rush?" asks Russell. "We know we've got a great second album coming, Noel Gallagher's a prolific songwriter—there's no need to panic."

The manager admits that those virtues wouldn't mean much without Epic's active support: "If a label has no commitment, especially with a foreign band—if they don't give tour support, set up co-op advertising or do station interviews—there's *nothing* that can help that band. If a U.S. band doesn't get tour support, at least they're still *here*—they know what to do, they know what key markets to hit. U.K. bands are at the mercy of their labels."

Bob Waugh, assistant PD at WHFS in Washington, D.C./Baltimore, is rotating Oasis heavily. "I don't know that Epic or any other label's determination to break a band will do it," he says. "A lot of great songs come along, and sometimes the tiebreaker for us will be the label's commitment, but, ultimately, our audience decides. A year ago Epic tried to tell us that October Projekt were going to happen with or without our help."

Still, Oasis is determined. "So many of the bands they admire deeply happened here," says Massey. "The Beatles, the Stones—America was incredibly important for them. It's the ultimate challenge, and Oasis wants it badly. I am so happy about that—it makes my job easier." DEV SHERLOCK

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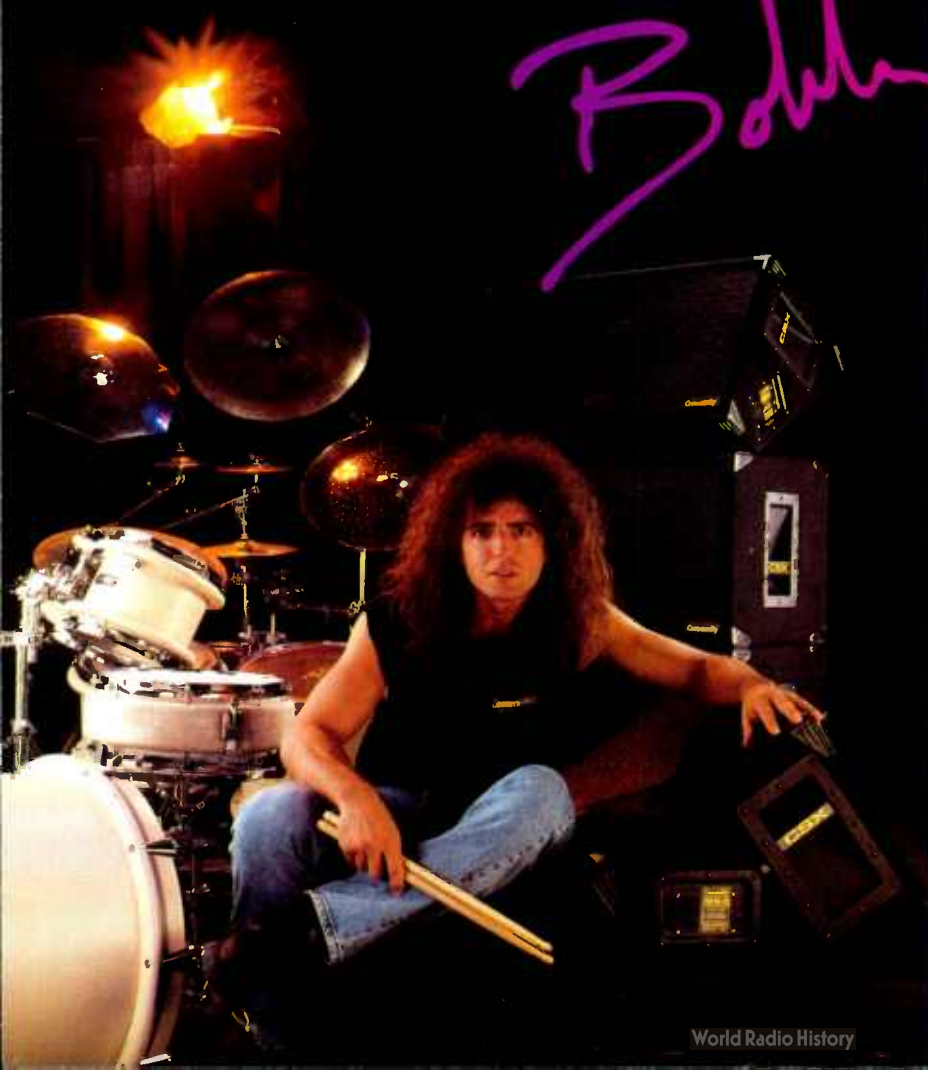
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And he said, 'Then play bass, 'cause you only have to play the top string if you want.' So I said okay."

The bass is the easiest instrument to play adequately.

"Definitely. So that was the start. So for a couple weeks, me and Bonehead sat in me mum's house and worked out a few things. Mostly we tried to think of people who played the drums, and Tony was the only one we knew, so he was the drummer. Then Liam said, 'I wanna be the singer.'"

After six months of rehearsal, the four of them had three songs and felt themselves ready for their first gig. They played a local pub and Liam invited his older brother. Noel had been a guitar tech for Inspiral Carpets for four years, had been writing songs on his own since childhood with no outlet. He announced that if they wanted to be the best band in the world, he would join and write songs for them. The rehearsal schedule immediately escalated to four nights a week, eventually hitting every night of the week.

"All our friends would say, 'Let's get drunk, let's chase some women, let's take some drugs.' We'd say, 'No, no, we have to practice.' They all thought we were mott for quite a while."

Mott? Like Mott the Hoople?

"No, mott. M-a-d. They thought we were crazy."

Their dedication paid off in late 1992 when they played their first gig outside Manchester. They just showed up one night at a pub in Glasgow, unscheduled, and demanded to play. On the basis of that show, they were offered a record contract a few days later, and by April they were big on the British charts.

"It was a pretty fast rise, and I'm sure it'll be a pretty fast fall, too. But that's life: gravity."

You must be in shock.

"We've been so busy the last 14 months that I haven't had time to think about it. We did 315 gigs, toured Europe four times, done nine tours of England, been to Japan, been to the United States three times. Although we enjoy having a drink, obviously, and we enjoy things that most men enjoy, we're not real nightclubby. It's not something that's taken us over."

A high percentage of the coolest bands consist of people who grew up together.

"It's a lot easier to trust someone when you grow up together," says Guigsy. "Being in a band on the road in a bus, I think the hardest thing is staying friends. It's just diffi-

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- 128 6/89 Peter Gabriel, Charles Mingus, Husker Du
- 129 7/89 The Who, The Cure, Ziggy Marley
- 131 9/89 Jeff Beck, Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
- 133 11/89 The 80s, Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
- 135 1/90 Aerosmith, NRBO, Richard Thompson
- 137 3/90 George Harrison, The Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
- 138 4/90 Tom Petty, Lenny Kravitz, Rush, the Silos
- 139 5/90 Paul McCartney, Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
- 140 6/90 Robert Plant, Suzanne Vega, Soul II Soul, Drums
- 143 9/90 Steve Vai, Michael Stipe, Malmsteen/McLaughlin
- 144 10/90 INXS, Neville Bros., Lou Reed/Vaclev Havel
- 146 12/90 Slash, Replacements, Waterboys, Pixies
- 147 1/91 Robert Johnson, Bruce Hornsby, Soul Asylum
- 148 2/91 Pink Floyd, Neil Young, Art Blakey, Black Crowes
- 149 3/91 Jerry Garcia/Elvis Costello, NWA, Pink Floyd
- 150 4/91 R.E.M., Top Managers Roundtable, AC/DC
- 151 5/91 Eddie Van Halen, Fishbone, Byrds, Chris Isaak
- 152 6/91 Stevie Ray Vaughan, Morrissey, Drum Special
- 153 7/91 Bonnie Raitt, Tim Buckley, Sonny Rollins
- 154 8/91 15th Anniversary issue, Sting, Stevie Wonder
- 155 9/91 Paul McCartney, Axl Rose, David Bowie
- 156 10/91 Dire Straits, Jesus Jones, McCartney part 2
- 157 11/91 Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Primus, Fogerty/Duane Eddy
- 158 12/91 Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
- 159 1/92 Megadeths!, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
- 160 2/92 Fear of Rap, Eric Clapton
- 162 4/92 Def Leppard, k.d. lang, Live
- 163 5/92 Drugs, Booze & Creativity, Lyle Lovett, Microphones
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- 165 7/92 Led Zeppelin, Faith No More, A.M.C., T-Bone Burnett/Sam Phillips
- 166 8/92 David Gilmour, Robert Wyatt/Bill Nelson
- 167 9/92 U2, Guitar Special, George Harrison
- 168 10/92 Playing With Elvis Presley, Producer Special
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- 171 1/93 Best of '92: Extreme, Chili Peppers, Tom Waits
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- 173 3/93 Mick Jagger, Hothouse Flowers, Annie Lennox
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- 175 5/93 World Party, Stevie Ray Vaughan, PJ Harvey
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- 183 1/94 Flea, Bill Graham, Max Roach
- 184 2/94 Zappa, Jeff Buckley, Slash, DAT
- 185 3/94 Nine Inch Nails, Elvis Costello, Kate Bush
- 186 4/94 Lyle Lovett, Soundgarden, AAA Radio, Afghan Whigs
- 187 5/94 Counting Crows, Ricki Lee Jones/Leo Kottke, Bjork
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cult, like in a family. 'Cause that's what it is, it's a family. You have to understand the person, and you have to make allowances sometimes, and sometimes they have to make allowances for you."

In Portland the following night, they play the Roseland Theater, a dark hole of a club that manages to exude punk romance without actually smelling bad. The show itself, however, stinks. Not moving, the crowd stares at Oasis, who stare back, not moving. After about six songs, Liam backs off the microphone and starts yelling at his brother. For a brief moment, hope arises that some Kinks-style brotherly fisticuffs will erupt, but it turns out Liam has just lost his voice and can sneer no more. Noel then sings "Cigarettes and Alcohol" in his decidedly non-sneering voice, then explains the show is over and walks off.

"Bullshit! Bullshit!" screams this middle-aged, record-biz-looking guy.

But what do you really think of Oasis?

"They did a shitty short set, that's what I think of them," says the guy. "It reminded me of a Small Faces concert when they were so drunk they didn't care if they fell off the stage."

They weren't that drunk.

"Okay, how's this?" the guy sneers. "They were a very loud version of the Bay City Rollers."

"I KNEW how to change strings, how to tune a guitar, and change a fuse or a plug, and that's about it, really," says Noel Gallagher, reminiscing about his four years as a guitar tech for Inspiral Carpets. Where younger brother Liam fidgets grandly, always appearing on the verge of running away or jumping on you, Noel fidgets small, constantly touching things around the back room of the tour bus with his fingers and shifting in his seat. "When I speak to real guitar technicians, they go on and on about stuff, and I haven't got a clue, mate. Not a clue. I just lied when I got the job."

You didn't like Inspiral Carpets much?

"No, they didn't treat us well at all, and I didn't like the music. They had a couple of good tunes, but they didn't have any spirit. They were just going through the motions for the money. And then, well, I'd be looking at them and thinking, 'Fucking hell, if they can get away with it, I can.' So I started me own band."

In four years with them, you didn't get found out once for not knowing anything

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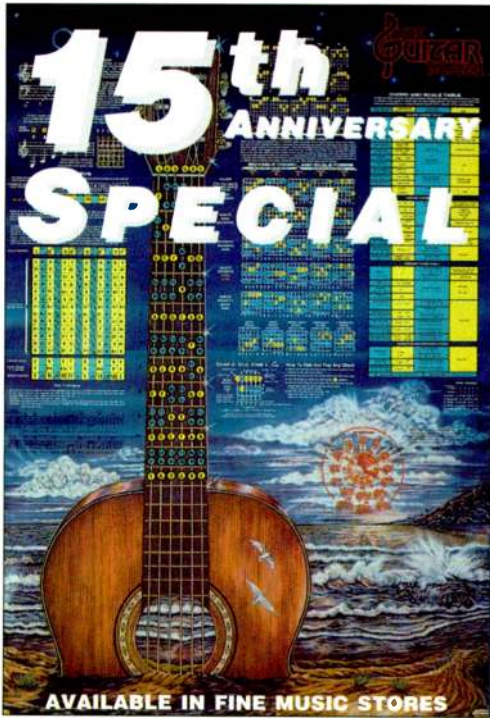
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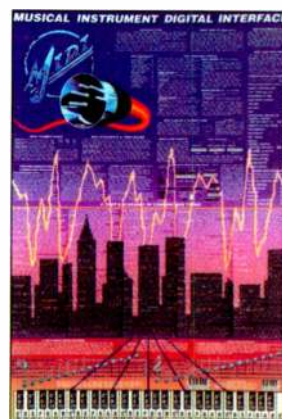
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about guitars?

"Not at all. No."

If someone asked you to set up a guitar, you couldn't do it?

"If they'd have asked me, I'd have fucked about with it and given it back, and said, 'That's right now, that.' The guitarist knew less than I did, so it was the blind leading the blind. I remember once his amp went down onstage. He had this effects rack, some ART digital thing, all MIDI-ed up and that shite, and it started making these bizarre noises. I stood behind it for about a minute, pulling jack plugs in and out. Then I just belted it on side—whomp!—and it came back on. That was the only crash we had during a show."

So you were on the road, thinking these guys don't have it, and you're writing songs on the side.

"Yeah, I'd jam with the sound engineer, who's now with us. I wrote 'Live Forever' and 'Columbia' during their soundchecks. The rest of them were written during that period."

So many of your songs concern escape from routine that *Definitely Maybe* feels almost like a concept album—is that a fair statement?

"That's fair, but it wasn't intentional. I didn't know it until I had to approve the lyrics for the vinyl version of the album in England, where you got the lyrics printed out. I was reading them and I thought, 'This is a concept album about the sky, the rain and escaping.' So fuck yeah. But it was just the way I was feeling at the time. There was a period between leaving the Inspiralists and getting a record deal meself when I was on the dole. I knew I was a good musician but I wasn't getting anywhere."

That is the rock 'n' roll dream—escaping a regular job. It's difficult to imagine your brother doing a regular job.

"No, I can't either. He's never had a regular job. And it's just frustration for me. The fact that I knew how good I was, that I could write a song like 'Live Forever' or 'Slide Away' and then have to go to work pissed me off. You're thinking, 'What the hell am I doing here, digging a hole in this road, when I should be on a tour bus somewhere with loads of naked women.'"

Have you been finding loads of naked women?

"No."

Really? They don't fall for your accent?

"No. I'm not interested in naked women, really."

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But you thought you were when you were digging holes in the road?

"Yeah. But now I'd rather they sit there with their clothes on and give me drugs, to be quite honest. I'm more interested in drugs and rock 'n' roll than in naked women. And you can quote me on that."

Which drugs have captured your interest?

"It's been the same since I was 14. I love drinking, ecstasy, cocaine and that's it. I don't do pot, or acid. Just stuff to keep us going."

What do you read?

"A lot of music magazines, and I read books about bands. I don't read fiction. I'm reading a book about Neil Young right now. Or John Lennon, or John Lydon, or Steve Marriott, or Pete Townshend. They're the only things that could keep me interested."

Do you ever get inspired by other art forms?

"I'm inspired by television. I love adverts. I love America because you can lie back on your bed and flip through 50 channels of utter bullshit, but some of the one-liners in the adverts are the best ever. 'Shakermaker' was inspired by an advert in England. It was a toy in the '70s. But I don't like these ads that cost a million quid, and they got skinny birds like Kate Moss that are supposed to look good. *Calvin Klein Obsession for Men*—fucking bullshit! They should just say, 'This is it. It makes you smell nice.'"

Calvin Klein is not a lad.

"Not at all."

Dyslexic, shy and introverted, Noel didn't do well in school. Most of the time he skipped class. His father worked at night as a country & western DJ at parties, and by day as a laborer who poured concrete floors. Did he hate his job too?

"I don't know. He probably did. But you've got to work when you come from our background. If you don't go to work, you don't pay the bills, and if you don't pay the bills, you don't have a house, and if you don't have a house, you live on the street. You just got to do it."

When did your father leave home?

"He didn't. My mother left him about eight years ago. She asked me if I wanted to stay with her or with him. I said, 'Well, Dad can't cook, so it'll be you, Mum.' And off we went."

Have you seen him lately?

"Not since the day we left."

Does that bother you?

"No."

Does he know about the band?

"I imagine it would be difficult for him not to know about the band, since we've been on TV every single night in England, and on the radio, and in all the magazines."

He hasn't called to say congratulations?

"No. Knowing me dad, he don't give a fuck. Strange guy, me dad. He don't give a fuck about nobody or nothing. Not a toss. He was one of the lads."

After discovering Johnny Cash and Tammy Wynette at his father's feet during jobs, Noel found the great English bands like Led Zeppelin and the Sex Pistols long after they had flowered. It's the curse of every rock generation since the '50s—the legends being gone—but seems to be felt especially acutely in the age range of Noel (27) and Liam (21).

"It's always pissed me off that I never saw them, never experienced them directly."

The Sex Pistols had a certain Oedipal fury, a desire to knock off their parental bands like the Stones, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. Oasis has always expressed respect for their elders.

"The punks were idealists, and I'm not into idealists. They always fail. The Sex Pistols aren't around anymore, and Led Zeppelin is. That's my argument for that."

Given your love for great old English rock 'n' roll, it's odd that Oasis doesn't do more covers.

"No, never done that. 'I Am the Walrus,' that's the only one." We did our own songs from the start. None of us can read music."

Not even guitar tab?

"Them things with a diagram and dots on? It makes no sense to me. When we learned 'I Am the Walrus,' we just put the cassette on, and when the first note came up, we were like, 'What's that one?' And we rewound it until we got it. Then we did the second note the same way. The tape wore out after three weeks, but we finally got it. We don't even know the names of the chords."

How do you know where to go on the neck when you solo?

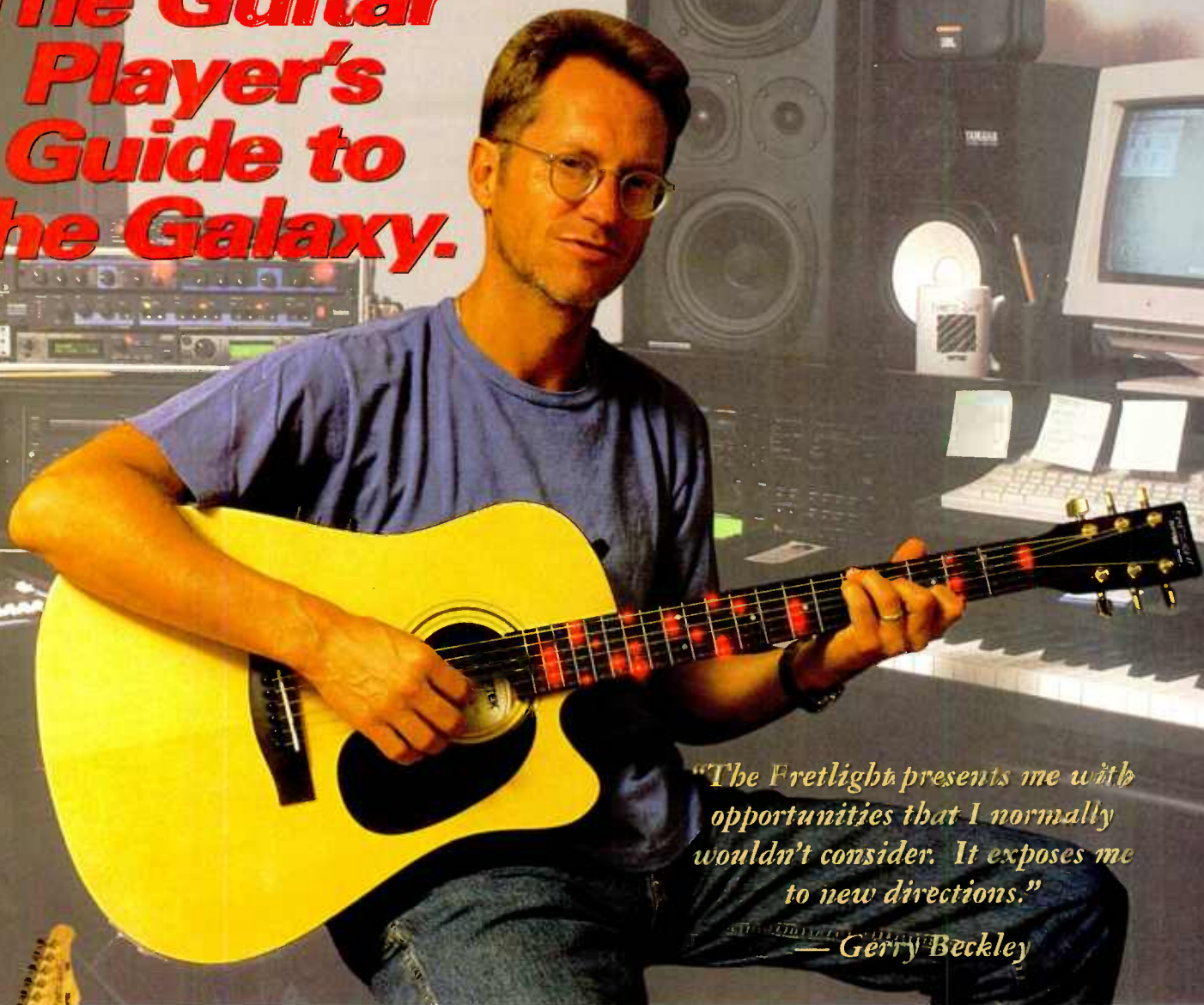
"Purely by trial and error. It takes about five minutes to write the song, and about six weeks to get the guitar solo. Bonehead just plays the riff until I figure it out."

You never played a scale? Not even the blues scale?

"I can play a 12-bar blues in E. Bum-buh-bum-buhbum-buhbum. Then you go to...uh...A. Then the other one that's above A. I don't know what it's called."

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PAUL "BONEHEAD" ARTHUR plays an Epiphone Riviera through a 1971 Marshall head. No effects whatsoever. **PAUL "GUISY" MCGUIGAN** favors a 1969 white Fender Telecaster bass, with a Jazz as a backup. His strings are medium-gauge Rotosounds. In the United States he amplifies with an Ampeg SVT, but in England he prefers a HiWatt guitar amp with the treble all the way down and the bass all the way up.

"Yeah. B. And then back down again. I know that."

You don't know the names of the chords you're playing?

"Not the faintest idea. I know E, A, G and D, but I get mixed up between C and F. After that, I'm completely lost."

Well, some of the greatest musicians in blues and rock have been instinctive. Noel has a nice feel for bending strings.

"I've come across so many things by accident. I'd hate to master the guitar. If I knew where to go for every note, I'd get bored, and I'd have to play the piano."

Is it true you're getting sued by Coca Cola for "Shakemaker"?

"We were. We changed the lyrics. Now we're getting sued by the New Seekers. I can't keep up with the number of people suing us. A chain of women's clothing stores called Oasis is suing us for the name. It's just a word out of the dictionary. I don't know what they think they're doing."

The great bands all knew how to plagiarize.

"That's what it's all about."

Led Zeppelin was particularly shameless.

"You can see it in Jimmy Page's face. He's always got that has-anyone-noticed-yet expression. When I write a song, I'm only interested in making music. If it's good I don't care where it came from. Nobody owns them chords. It's a pretty bold statement to say, 'I own that piece of music.' It comes from nowhere, and it's owned by no one. If anything I write sounds like someone

else, I didn't intend it. But if it does sound like somebody else, fine. Ninety-nine percent of the time, it's only the publishers who care. The artists don't give a flying toss. We're all musicians. The publishers just want their money. In about five years, I'm sure I'll hear an exact copy of 'Live Forever' with different lyrics, and I will not care in the slightest. I'll phone them up and say, 'Good luck to ya, mate.' But my publisher will be trying to put him out of business."

So you really don't care about money?

"No. You need it, but I don't want it. I just want a back catalog, something for the kids to plagiarize. I'll have done my service to rock 'n' roll. So long as I have my music and I feel enthusiastic, that's all I want. I want to realize my own potential."

COUNT BASS D

[con't from page 17] "If I had put together a record with E-mu SP1200, it would have been a snap," says D about the recording process. "I didn't play horns, but I played all of the other instruments live. We had a real problem, because the engineer would stop after the first verse and I would be like, 'What are you doing, I'm just starting to get in the groove! I don't know anything about 'punching in!'"

The son of a West Indian evangelist, Count Bass D (the name is a take-off on Count Basie) started playing drums in his father's Canton, OH church at age 4. Soon after he mastered piano and organ, and later learned how to play the bass. He went to Middle Tennessee State University expressly to finish his demo tape at the expense of the Mass Communications department, and later moved on to host his own rap-video show on the college's TV station. After that, it was only a matter of time before he signed a record deal.

"Man, if kids were afforded the chance to play music like I was instead of sampling, we would have Earth, Wind, and Fire's today, we would have more Fatbacked and Gap Bands. We'd have more Tony Toni Tone's, not the garbage we have today," he laments. "I think black people deserve an apology from the black music industry because they've totally, totally let me down for the last couple of years. We need to say that we've been wronged that we've been trying to get over without putting proper time in, trying to get girls and ride around in Mercedes Benzs without making good music. We apologize for that."

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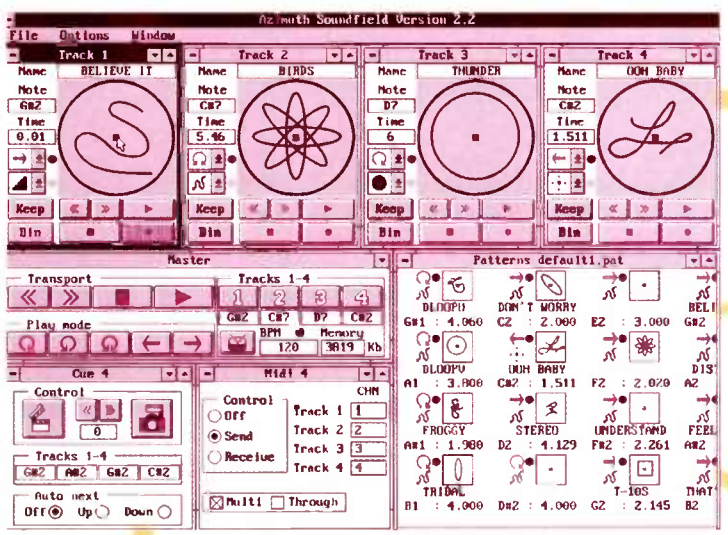
RSP CIRCLE SURROUND

As 3D sound makes its way from theaters into living rooms, surround processors designed specifically for music are beginning to appear. RSP's system starts with the Circle Surround 4-2-4 matrix encoder (\$999) and any surround decoder, or RSP's own HP decoder (\$1299). The HP creates mixes compatible with all media and surround formats. Continuous motion beyond 180 degrees is possible using a joystick controller (\$999), which responds to MIDI program changes. 3D moves can be edited graphically using the Azimuth Soundfield software/hardware package for Windows (\$1199). ♦ RSP, 2870 Technology Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 49309; voice (810) 853-3055, fax (810) 853-5937.



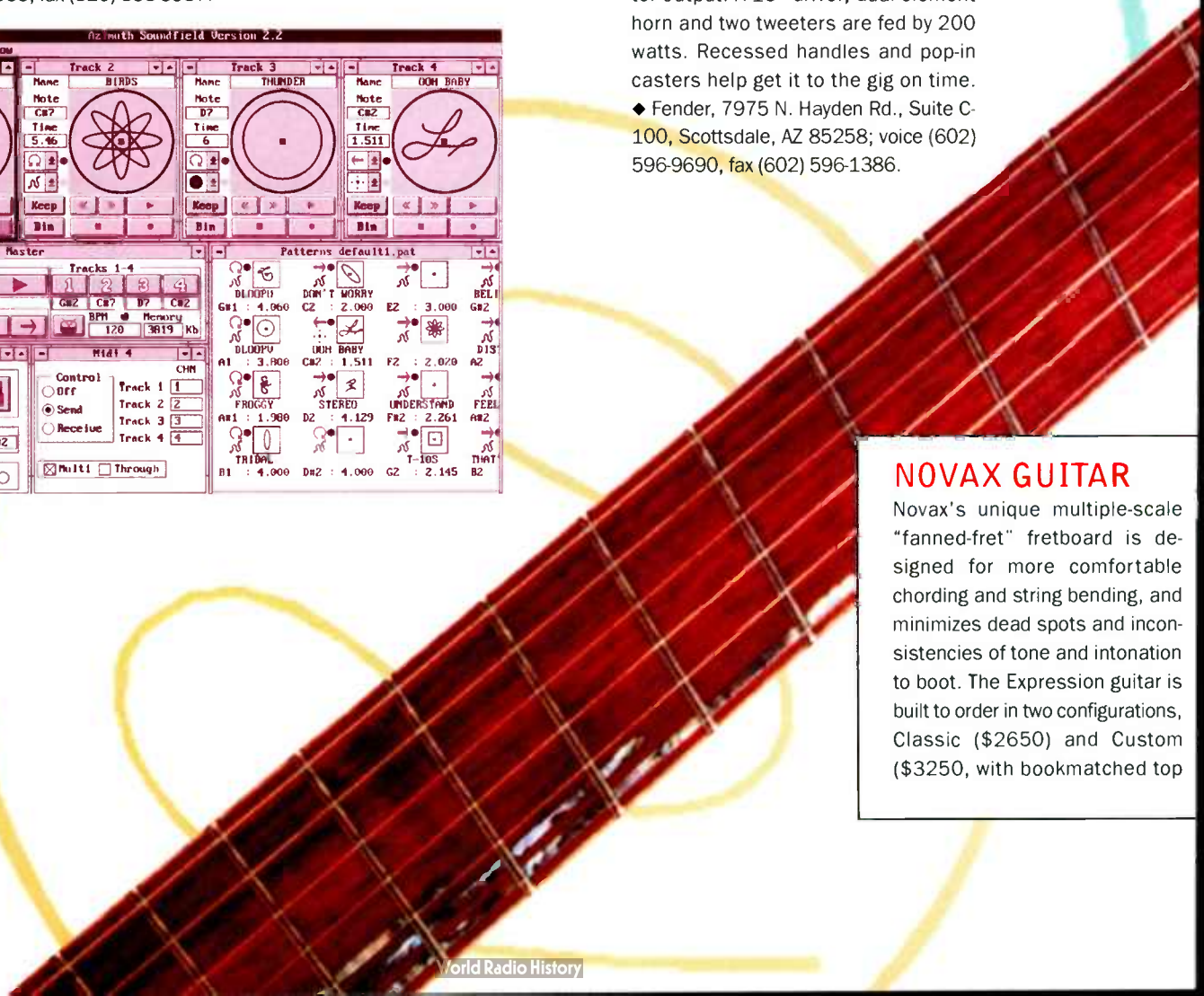
FENDER KXR 200

Virtually a self-contained PA system, Fender's KXR 200 (\$799) is designed for multikeyboard rigs but suited to electronic drums, acoustic instruments and vocals. Each of four channels (including one low-impedance input) offers independent EQ, reverb and effect send; a compressor/limiter conditions the master output. A 15" driver, dual-element horn and two tweeters are fed by 200 watts. Recessed handles and pop-in casters help get it to the gig on time. ♦ Fender, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Suite C-100, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690, fax (602) 596-1386.

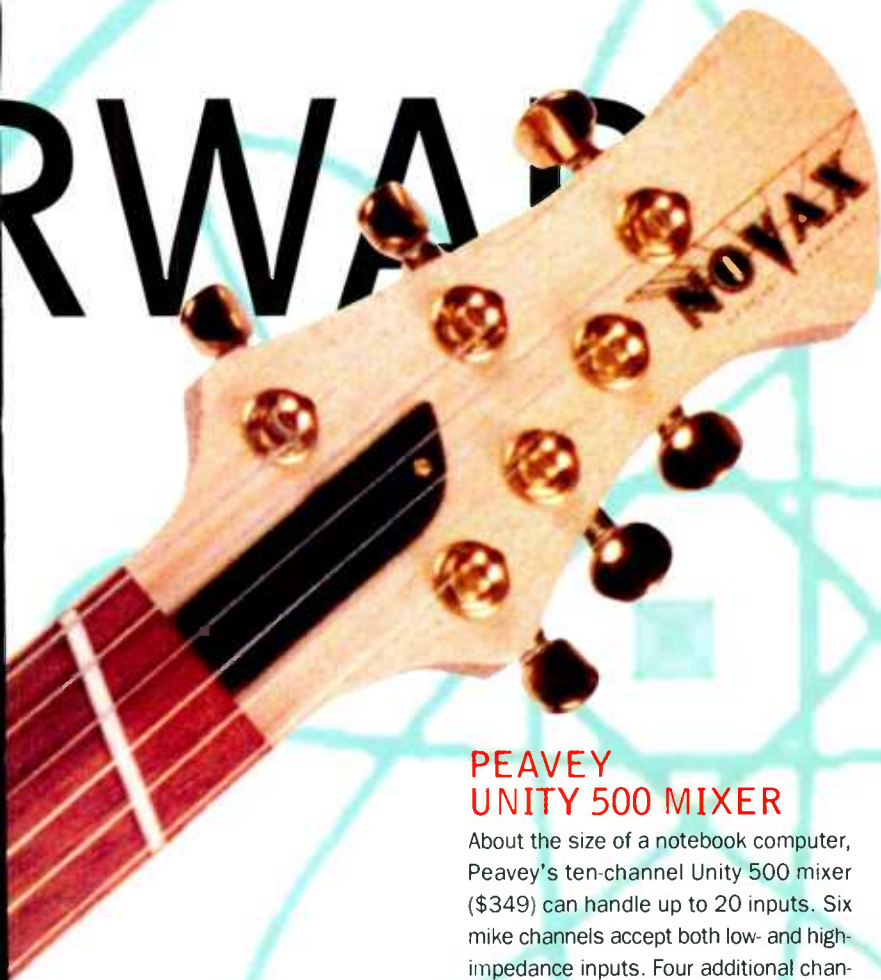


NOVAX GUITAR

Novax's unique multiple-scale "fanned-fret" fretboard is designed for more comfortable chording and string bending, and minimizes dead spots and inconsistencies of tone and intonation to boot. The Expression guitar is built to order in two configurations, Classic (\$2650) and Custom (\$3250, with bookmatched top



RWA



CITRON BASS

Built of mahogany with a bookmatched curly maple top, Citron's hollowbody Acoustic Bass (\$4150) comes equipped with a Seymour Duncan under-bridge contact mike, a Bartolini humbucker near the soundhole and Bartolini active blend and tone controls. The headless laminated neck (34" scale length)—lightweight enough to eliminate "neck-diving"—is bolted on and paired with a 22-fret ebony fingerboard. Options include four or five strings, right- or left-handed, and various finishes. ♦ Harvey Citron, 452 Chestnut Hill Rd., Woodstock, NY 12498; voice (914) 679-7138, fax (914) 679-3221.



PEAVEY UNITY 500 MIXER

About the size of a notebook computer, Peavey's ten-channel Unity 500 mixer (\$349) can handle up to 20 inputs. Six mike channels accept both low- and high-impedance inputs. Four additional channels accept stereo line-level inputs. All channels include two effect sends (the returns can double as input channels) plus preamp gain, EQ, pan and level controls. RCA tape-in and -out connections are provided; LED meters display the master output. ♦ Peavey, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1172.



and bound fretboard). Both feature set-neck construction that eliminates the heel for easy access to the upper frets. A wide selection of woods and electronics is available, including Bartolini active pickups and preamps. ♦ Novax, 940A Estabrook, San Leandro, CA 94577; voice (510) 483-3599.

NEW TOYS & NEW TOOLS

GUITARS & BASSES

◆ Washburn's Cherokee D55SW features a rosewood body with Sitka spruce soundboard and ebony fingerboard and bridge. White abalone feather inlays adorn the fingerboard, and herringbone binding surrounds the soundhole and top. **Washburn**, 255 Corporate Woods Pkwy, Vernon Hills, IL 60061; voice (708) 913-5511, fax (708) 913-7772. ◆ The pole-piece housing of the Muy Grande single-coil replacement pickup by Rio Grande is available in three vintage-style finishes: red and brown tortoiseshell and white pearloid. **Rio Grande**, 3526 East T.C. Jester, Houston, TX 77018; voice (713) 957-0470, fax (713) 957-3316. ◆ Guitar straps from Planet Waves feature a sliding neoprene pad that hugs the player's shoulder as the strap moves. A special buckle determines length with minimal fuss. **Planet Waves** c/o I/MC, 100A Tee St., Hicksville, New York, 11801; voice (800) 752-0164, fax (516) 933-7881.

AMPS & SPEAKERS

◆ The Workingman's line of bass amps from SWR now includes the Workingman's 15 combo, 160 amp, and 2x12 speaker cabinet. The 160 provides 160 watts @ 4 ohms, while the Fifteen delivers 120 watts @ 8 ohms into a 15" PAS woofer and Le Son ferro-electric tweeter. Both models pair solid-state electronics with a compressor/limiter, aural enhancer, EQ, and extensive interfacing options. The 2x12 comprises two Celestion 12s and a Le Son tweeter, handling up to 250 watts. Also, SWR introduces the Bigfoot, a relatively small bass cabinet containing two Bag End 12s and a Le Son tweeter. The Big Foot handles up to 500 watts. **SWR**, 12823 Footbill Blvd., Unit B, Sylmar, CA 91342; voice (818) 898-3355, fax (818) 898-3365. ◆ Trace Elliot unveils the Commando, a 100-watt, 1x12 bass combo with effect loop, passive tone controls and bright, "mid-shift," and "deep" switches. The all-FET preamp, designed to emulate the tube response of the V-Type series, is protected from thermal overload and output short circuit. **Trace Elliot** c/o Kaman, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; voice (203) 243-7941, fax (203) 243-7102. ◆ The TriTube 75M is a 1x12 version of ADA's programmable, MIDI-savvy QuadTube 150M stereo 2x12 combo. Ten tube voicing modes provide a range of basic tones, while speaker emulation, compression/gate, chorus, tremolo, and EQ condition the signal further for routing to balanced or unbalanced outputs. All parameters can be controlled via MIDI; a

4x4 MIDI footswitch is included. **ADA**, 420 Lesser St., Oakland, CA 94601; voice (510) 532-1152, fax (510) 532-1641. ◆ Engineered for cost effectiveness, energy efficiency and expandability, Crest's CKS power amps (for low-impedance applications) and CKV models (for constant-voltage distributed power) are the heart of the new Power Processing System. Both lines accept modular cards that provide signal processing functions such as crossover, delay, equalization, compression, load and current monitoring, networking and remote operation. **Crest**, 100 Eisenhower Dr., Paramus, NJ 07652; voice (201) 909-8700, fax (201) 909-8744. ◆ The Array series of sound reinforcement speakers from JBL now includes the 4891 vertically- and 4890 horizontally-oriented cabinets. Both include a 4" compression driver, midrange horn and 14" Neodymium woofer with "vened-gap cooling" for low-frequency accuracy. **JBL**, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA 91329; voice (818) 894-8850, fax (818) 830-1220. ◆ Ampeg is reissuing the V-4B bass enclosure. Boasting 15" drivers, the cabinet handles 400 watts to generate up to 135dB SPL maximum. **Ampeg**, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133; voice (800) 727-4512, fax (314) 727-8929.

MIKES & MIXERS

◆ Nady's latest wireless system is the 201XL. This compact true-diversity VHF transmitter can be paired with any of three headset mikes: the Audio-Technica ATM-75, Crown 312E or AKG C4510. Dynamic range is 120dB, and battery life ranges from 16 to 20 hours. **Nady**, 6701 Bay St., Emeryville, CA 94608; voice (510) 652-2411, fax (510) 652-5075. ◆ The Groove Tubes MD3 is a large diaphragm, all-tube condenser mike providing both cardioid and omnidirectional pickup patterns. Metalized cloth shields against RF interference, and sensitivity can be reduced progressively by 20dB without altering the mike's tonal characteristics. **Groove Tubes**, 12866 Footbill Blvd., Sylmar, CA 91342; voice (818) 361-4500, fax (818) 365-9884. ◆ The Midas XL200 console is available in 24-, 32- and 40-channel configurations, expandable by 16 or 24 channels. Features include eight aux sends, eight VCA subgroups, six mono and two stereo subgroups, eight mute groups and four-band EQ. MIDI automation is optional. **Midas** c/o Mark IV, 448 Post Rd., Buchanan, MI 49107; voice (800) 695-1010, fax (616) 695-0470, e-mail 72662.263@compuserve.com.

SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

◆ Twelve Tone's Cakewalk MIDI Music Pack is an inexpensive way for PC sound card owners to learn about MIDI sequencing. The Pack includes a sound-card-to-MIDI adapter cable, a demo version of the Cakewalk Pro sequencer for Windows, and MIDI files of songs and rhythm tracks. Also, Cakewalk Pro 3.0 has been updated to version 3.01, adding features such as support for Lyrrus G-vox Bridge guitar-to-MIDI software. Registered owners can get the update free of charge from authorized dealers. **Twelve Tone**, 44 Pleasant St., P.O. Box 760, Watertown, MA 02272; voice (617) 926-2480, fax (617) 924-6657. ◆ Digital Performer, the sequencer/audio editor from Mark of the Unicorn, has been upgraded to version 1.6 for integration with Digidesign's Pro Tools III. The new version enables users to access software plug-ins to process audio tracks. Other enhancements include automated mixing and editing interfaces, score printing, groove quantization, real-time MIDI processing and support for QuickTime 2.0 and MMC. **Mark of the Unicorn**, 1280 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; voice (617) 576-2760, fax (617) 576-3609, e-mail 71333.3666@compuserve.com. ◆ From the Obsessive Collector comes Compact Discollector, a Windows database for CDs. The program accepts an unlimited number of discs, which can be searched and sorted according to 17 report formats. **The Obsessive Collector**, 41 Watchung Plaza, Suite 151, Montclair, NJ 07042; voice (800) 419-9061, fax (201) 744-3098, e-mail stuartr5@aol.com.

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

◆ Drum Workshop's 9000 series of variable-position mounting hardware attaches toms and cymbals to a bass drum shell without inhibiting shell resonance. There are also new entries in DW's line of cymbal stands, including Angle-Adjustable Cymbal Stackers and Closed Auxiliary Hi-Hat Holders. The 50H Delta Tri-Bearing System Upgrade improves DW bass drum pedals. **Drum Workshop**, 101 Bernoulli Cir., Oxnard, CA 93030; voice (805) 485-6999, fax (805) 485-1334. ◆ Pro Hand Hats from Sabian wed a pair of 6" Pro-series bronze cymbals with thumb-trigger action, creating a miniature hand-held hi-hat. Also, new ride cymbals include the HH Duo in 18" and 22" sizes, a medium-thin, small-bell ride with crash potential; the heavy weight 20" AAX Dry with a mid-sized bell and clean, crash-free response; and 22" signa-

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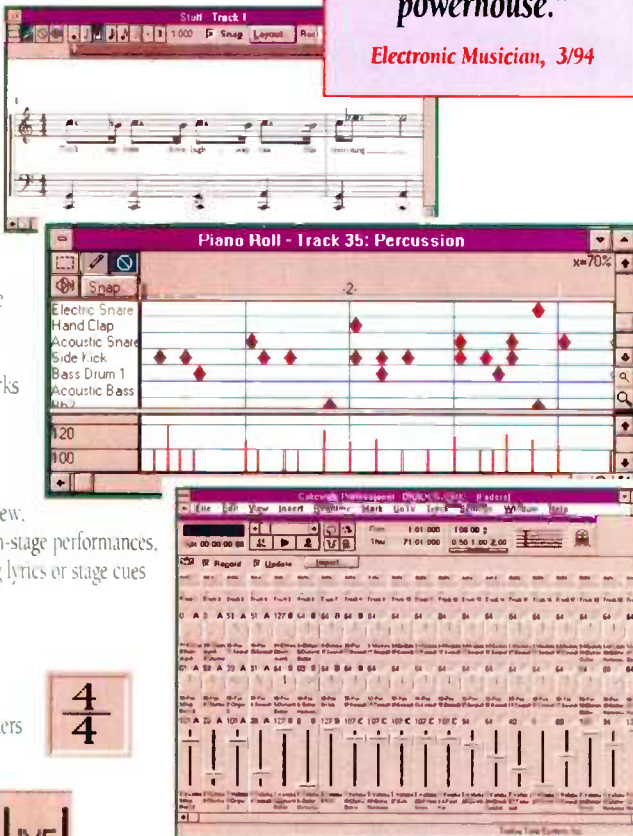
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GENERAL
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ture rides by Chester Thompson and Ed Thigpen. **Sabian**, Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada E0H 1L0; voice (506) 272-2019, fax (506) 272-2081. ♦ UFIP offers the Natural series of cymbals, the result of a hammering process that imparts a vintage sound by reducing the surface tension of the metal in a way that simulates natural aging. The result is a dark, warm tone. The Natural series includes 20" and 22" rides and heavy rides, 18" and 20" flat rides, 14"-18" crashes, and 12"-14" regular and heavy hi-hats. **UFIP** c/o Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Cir., Oxnard, CA 93030; voice (805) 485-6999, fax (805) 485-1334. ♦ Hardcase is a line

of seamless polyethylene drum cases from MBT. Lids overlap for water-tight protection and snap locks hold drums in place. **MBT** c/o Musicorp, P.O. Box 30819, Charleston, SC 29417; voice (803) 763-9083, fax (803) 763-9096.

PROCESSORS & MIDI

♦ Peavey's Tube Fex MIDI-controlled tube preamp combines two 12AX7 tubes and 24-bit stereo digital effects. Programmable preamp modes include clean, crunch, lead and ultra, while 37 effects types can be combined up to seven at a time. Input signals are routed directly to the tubes with-

out undergoing A/D conversion to preserve tone. **Peavey**, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1172. ♦ Rocksonics offers a range of affordable dynamics processors. The PL-2 stereo peak limiter is designed to provide brick-wall limiting for recording and live sound applications. For more comprehensive control over dynamics there's the DRP-2a, a stereo compressor, expander and gate. An input gain control accommodates instruments and high-impedance devices. The MVCA-4 comprises four MIDI-controlled VCAs for automating mixdown levels or onstage volume. The unit responds to both MIDI note-on commands and continuous controllers. **Rocksonics**, P.O. Box 442, Los Alamitos, CA 90720; voice/fax (714) 229-0840. ♦ Any four units in the Compact series of effects from Nobels can be connected and packed into a single rack space, complete with switching, splitting and effect loops. New additions to the series include a direct box, active preamp with three-band EQ, and four-channel mixer. All units respond to MIDI volume commands. **Nobels** c/o Musicorp, P.O. Box 30819, Charleston, SC 29417; voice (803) 763-9083, fax (803) 763-9096. ♦ Klark Teknik introduces software options for the DN728 digital delay. Operating system version 1.6 recognizes Leitch DFS-3000/DFS-3002 protocol for changing delay time, while a new RS-232 interface card provides synchronization for Leitch video processing devices. System version 1.7 adds MIDI capabilities, which can be enhanced with a new MIDI interface card. Another system version, 1.8, recognizes the custom BTS-type BNC remote interface. **Klark Teknik** c/o Mark IV, 448 Post Rd., Buchanan, MI 49107; voice (800) 695-1010, fax (616) 695-0470. ♦ MIDI man introduces Video Syncman, a MIDI-to-SMPTE converter and screen burner. The unit generates, reads and translates among VITC, LTC and MTC. Mac and IBM/Windows control panels are included. **MIDIman**, 236 W. Mountain St., Suite 198, Pasadena, CA 91103; voice (818) 449-8838, fax (818) 449-9480.

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ACCESSORIES

♦ WhisperRoom offers self-contained, portable practice rooms in two sizes. Rooms include cable passage and fan-powered ventilation. **WhisperRoom**, 116 S. Sugar Hollow Rd., Morristown, TN 37813; voice (615) 585-5827, fax (615) 585-5831. ♦ Sabine's Concert Tuner includes a "tutoring" function that provides ear training in proper intonation, and a "note finder" that identifies any pitch. Responding to sounds picked up by the built-in microphone, the LED display flashes yellow for flat, red for sharp, and green for in-tune. **Sabine**, 4637 N. W. 6th St., Gainesville, FL 32609; voice (904) 371-3829, fax (904) 371-7441.

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DRUMS ON TAPE

MY STUDIO'S drum booth has never seen a trap set. I've recorded scores, maybe hundreds, of kits, but I absolutely refuse to put them in *there*. Squeezing loud instruments with long wavelengths (that is, bass frequencies) into a cramped space makes about as much sense as using gasoline as a flame retardant. The drummer should be in the biggest room available.

Likewise, much of what goes into recording solid drum tracks can be deduced from a basic understanding of audio recording. For instance, the surest way to rob recorded drums of their punch is to set the kit up against a wall or, worse, in a corner. Why? Because the bass frequencies bouncing off the walls return to the mikes before one cycle of the waveform has developed, creating phase cancellation.

Perhaps the most important rule is to get the cymbals as high as possible above the traps. Many drummers perch their cymbals practically on top of the toms, where they can get to them quickly. The resulting bleed into the tom mikes severely limits your options when it's time to mix: Boost the highs to bring out the toms' attack and your ears are going to *bleed* when those cymbals are hit. And that big reverb on the toms doesn't sound so hot with a crash cymbal.

Speaking of toms, we've all experienced the bum-bee syndrome: Every time you hit a rack tom, the snare drum buzzes. When this happens, resist the temptation to choke the drums with tissue paper and duct tape. Try lowering the tuning of the toms. This keeps sympathetic resonance to a minimum; most rattles and buzzes can be tamed, if not eliminated, with proper tuning. Most of what remains will never be heard in the mix and those "wide-open" drums will sound great.

That is, if they're *played* properly. Some drummers have a habit of hammering the daylights out of the hi-hat. Perhaps they're keeping time by focusing on subdivisions of the beat. Unfortunately, it's likely that the amount of hi-hat in the snare track will be totally overbearing when it's time to mix. So drummers: Keep in mind that the balance between snare and hi-hat can't necessarily be adjusted in the mix. Although some tweaking of levels can be done, the burden is largely upon you to play them the way you want them to sound.

Unwanted bleed can also be controlled by judicious microphone choice and placement. Mikes with a cardioid pickup pattern are least sensitive at the rear of the mike; in techspeak, they offer maximum rejection at 180° off-axis (Fig. 1). Supercardioids offer maximum rejection at roughly 130° (Fig. 2), hypercardioids at about 120° (Fig. 3). Try to point these rejection areas toward what you *don't* want to pick up. For example, if you've got a cardioid Shure SM57 (\$143) on the snare drum, point the rear of the mike (180° from the capsule) toward the hi-hat for the least bleed.

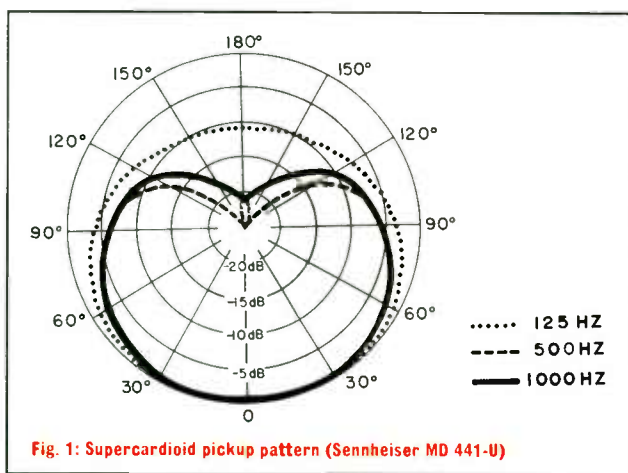


Fig. 1: Supercardioid pickup pattern (Sennheiser MD 441-U)

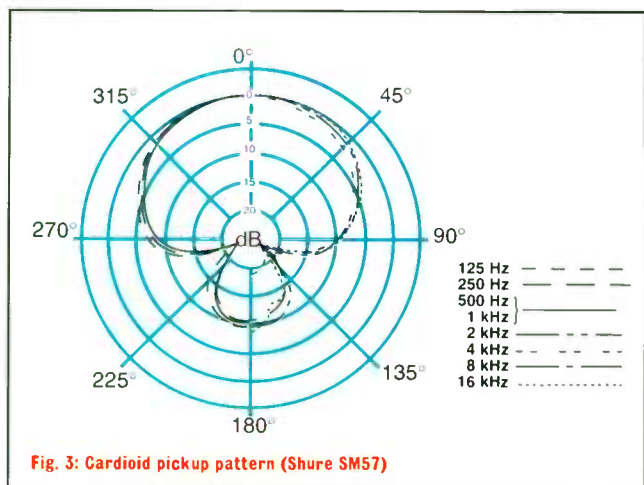


Fig. 3: Cardioid pickup pattern (Shure SM57)

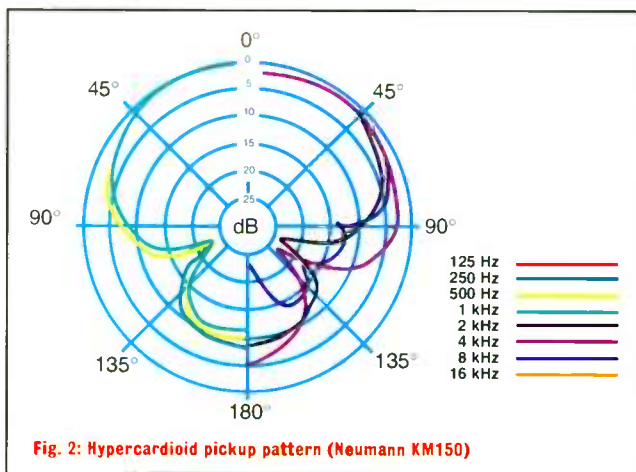


Fig. 2: Hypercardioid pickup pattern (Neumann KM150)

Bleed can also contaminate the kit's bottom-end punch. You may have heard this before, but it's worth repeating: For a killer kick drum sound, place a mike at least partially inside the drum. Miked exclusively from the outside, the beater will sound unfocused and bleed from the rest of the kit will be a problem. If you don't want to remove the rear drum head, cut a big enough hole to stick a [cont'd on page 79]

Capturing the sound of a drum set requires equal parts technical smarts and common sense.

BY MICHAEL COOPER

PERCUSS THE SINGING VOICE TO INCREDIBLE LEVELS WITHOUT ELECTRONICS!

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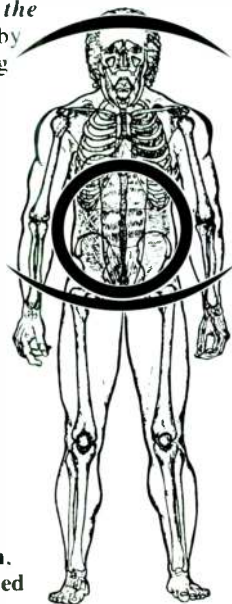
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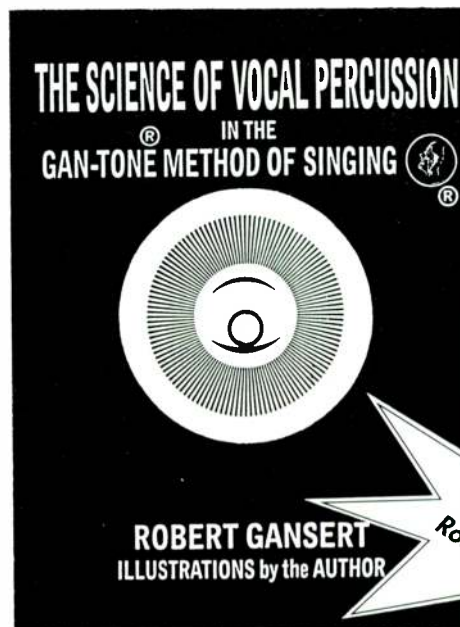
As Bartolommeo Cristofori transformed and augmented the harpsichord through percussive action on the string to create the piano, so Robert Gansert transforms and augments the acoustic singing voice through percussive action, by harnessing the Abdominal Muscles in Dual Fusion for imposing a Beat Frequency on the conventional voice, enabling the singer to sing on the "belly laugh" to create the Gan-Tone sound.

Since science operates within the structure of law and requires allegiance to law, the Gan-Tone Principles that create Vocal Percussion are explained in great detail in the textbook: *SINGING ENERGY in the Gan-Tone Method of Voice Production* by Robert Gansert, which has been selling **WORLDWIDE** for the past 14 years.

In order to give the reader another version as well as a quick idea of the Laws of Vocal Percussion for more rapidly spreading the news of this great discovery, *THE SCIENCE OF VOCAL PERCUSSION in the Gan-Tone Method of Singing* presents a concise summary of the Gan-Tone Laws through **64 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS** designed to concretize **THE GAN-TONE VOCAL INSTRUMENT** that makes the singer a **VOCAL PERCUSSIONIST** for producing **GAN-TONE: Transformed, Energized Singing Without Electronics** brought into existence by **Imposed Vibration** created by the **Abdominal Muscles on Body Fusion**, evolving the singing voice to an **Unprecedented Level of TIMBRE, POWER, RANGE, NUANCE, CONTROL, & BRILLIANCE** made possible by a higher level of vibrational consciousness!



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BEYOND KEYBOARDS

ONE OF the big disappointments of MIDI has been the limp response of musicians to non-keyboard controllers. During the honeymoon period of the mid-'80s, instrument companies were banging out guitar, wind, percussion and oddball controllers nineteen to the dozen—even Casio with that daft Christmas-cracker horn. But while keyboard players embraced the notion that the axe you play needn't necessarily make the sound you hear—and that the palette of musically valid sounds is as varied as the range of available MIDI-controlled tone modules—the rest of the world's plugged-in musicians stood at the sideline scratching their heads.

Where is it written that music fueled by electricity must be driven by a keyboard? In many situations, the keyboard limits your range of expression. The human body is capable of innumerable gestures that can't be applied to a keyboard. Why not put the full range to use?

The problem lies as much with price, perhaps, as anything else. Alternative MIDI controllers tend to be expensive, so few people buy them.

This, despite valiant efforts by a few stalwart manufacturers—none more stoic than Roland, whose president Ikutaru Kakehachi lacks keyboard skills but loves music. He has propelled the company through generations of instruments for people who don't play instruments: sequencers, drum machines and the world's longest-running saga of guitar synths and controllers.

Aside from the complete wimp-out of a drum machine, Roland offers three choices to drummers inclined toward MIDI. Their electronic trap set, the TD-5K Compact Drum System (\$1795), comprises several plain-Jane, single-trigger pads plus hi-hat and kick-drum trigger mechanisms and the TD-5 percussion module, which houses over

bit drum and percussion sounds. For those who don't want to go *that* electronic, there's the new flat-top Octapad, the SPD-11 Total Percussion Pad (\$895), to which you can add further pads and foot controllers to form the Total Percussion Kit if you're really brave. If you want to tap into MIDI without chucking your old rig, Roland supplies the AT-4 Trigger/Drum Adaptor (\$135). This provides a set of bugs that attach discretely to acoustic drums and send out triggers compatible with, say, the TD-7 module or SPD pad.

While Simmons remains in business as something of a cottage industry, Roland's main rivals are Kat—a company that plumbs unfathomable depths of cutesiness in naming its endless line of pretty-kitty controllers (the hip-hop KatScratch can't be far away)—and the Swedish ddrum. The high-end ddrum 3 (\$4850) is a box of sampled tricks rivaled only Korg's Wavedrum for relaying percussive expression.

In operational terms, the difference is that the ddrum 3 can be triggered by bugs attached to acoustic drums (or by ddrum pads) and responds to MIDI (which the Wavedrum, wonderful though it is, doesn't).

Kat's mainstay is the doughty drumKat (version 3.5, \$1149), whose rubber surface is subdivided into pads, two of them shaped like Mickey Mouse ears. Their big product, in all senses, is the trapKat (\$1199, stand \$229), which offers a roomier set of pads and comes with built-in grooves over which you can practice. Kat, too, makes kick-drum and hi-hat controllers if you want to build the drumKat or trapKat into a full electronic kit. But while pad technology is well evolved, nobody has really cracked the speed and responsiveness of hi-hat and kick-drum pedals. A degree of sluggishness is to be expected regardless of the make or model you choose.

Drummers are well taken care of compared to strummers. In fact, Roland is the only mainstream instrument manufacturer still making guitar-type controllers. The GK-

MIDI means more than keyboards. There are controllers for players of all instruments—and then some.

BY JULIAN COLBECK



Clockwise from top: Roland's SPD-11 percussion controller, Starr's Ztar controller, Yamaha's WX11 wind controller

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2A divided pickup (\$250) is reasonably easy to attach to most guitars (though not all), including acoustics. In fact, you can get one built right into a Fender American Standard Stratocaster for \$1279. Send its output to the GR-1 (\$1675) or GR-09 (\$1095) interface/tone units and you enter the world of guitar-driven MIDI control.

Guitar-controlled synthesis, even at this sophisticated level, is limited by tracking speed (how fast what you play gets converted into something you can hear or record). Although the Roland GK/GR combination described above is not without competitors—notably Shadow's SH-075 pickup (\$699) and GTM-6 (\$850) for acoustic players—this is pretty much as good as it gets for direct MIDI access. However it should be noted that, at present, Roland's new VG-8 (\$2695) appears to be the most rewarding way for guitarists to get into synthesis.

If you can satisfy your guitar jones without leaving your living room, the G-Vox system from Lyrrus (\$349) is worth looking into. G-Vox is a cunning combination of a pickup and a PC- or Mac-based software library designed to help you improve your playing skills. Recently Lyrrus teamed up with Fender to produce G-Vox-equipped guitars and with Twelve Tone Systems to make G-Vox more useful with Cakewalk, Twelve Tone's sequencer for IBM/Windows.

If the guitar-to-MIDI field is somewhat narrow, there seem to be more and more MIDI gadgets loosely based on the guitar. Take the Ztar from Starr Switch Co. in San Diego (\$1390 to \$2295), which replaces strings with switches built into the "neck" of guitar-shaped contraption. Or the Digtar from Italian upstarts Charlie Lab (\$449), which straps onto your waist like a giant belt buckle. This device has six metal "strings" about the thickness of the tines on a barbecue rack. Among its party tricks is turning chords from a keyboard or sequencer into idiomatic guitar voicings as you pick the strings. Obviously the Digtar is better for strumming and picking articulations than searing solos. I should also mention Oberheim's Strummer (\$249), a curious tabletop box released years ago but still extant, which also turns keyboard parts into guitar voicings.

Violin controllers are the sole domain of Zeta, whose MIDI violins are used by such luminaries as Jean-Luc Ponty. The MOC-

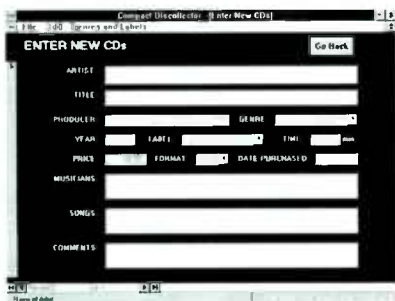
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2004 Mark O'Connor signature model will set you back \$3495, plus \$2295 for the VC225/MFS-40 MIDI interface/processor—violinists entering the realm of MIDI should do so with wallets at the ready. Tweaking the VC225's the trio of controls for sensitivity, dynamics, and dynamics mode, plus string sensitivity on the instrument itself, is about as plain sailing as microfiche to a mole—but with patience you can get some excellent violinistic results. Zeta also offers the ZC-234 MIDI cello (which requires its own MIDI interface/processor unit) for \$4995.

As for wind-driven controllers, Akai used to make a pair of them before the EVI trumpet fell by the wayside some years ago. The Concorde-shaped EWI (\$1399) is still alive, though, and Akai even produces the occasional dedicated sound module for it, such as

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the current FWI 3020M sampler (\$1399). Yamaha's WX11 (\$505) is perhaps the most popular wind controller, though many pros prefer the earlier WX7. It works nothing short of miracles with Yamaha's VL7 physical modeling synthesizer.

All of which barely scratches the surface. Beyond MIDI drums, guitars and winds lies the realm of controllers that don't mimic traditional instruments—alternatives that take full advantage of the possibilities offered by electronics. Consider Buchla's pressure-sensitive multisurface, Thunder (\$1990), and position-sensing MIDI baton, Lightning (\$1495). Or Zendrum's Z-1 (\$1350) a wedge-shaped strap-on multi-trigger surface. There's even a brainwave-to-MIDI system, the WaveRider from WaveAccess (\$750-\$1500).

Though a few of them could be called inexpensive, non-keyboard controllers are the only practical way to mold MIDI data into parts that don't sound like a keyboard. Musicians often speak in terms of blowing, true; but blowing a keyboard—even with one of those pressure-sensitive pacifiers in your mouth—is a rather oblique approach to making music. There's no way around it: Fingering, phrasing and dynamics are things that different control surfaces enable in very different ways. Better start saving those pfennigs. ♪

DRUMS ON TAPE

[cont'd from page 74] mike through.

You can also use the shape of each drum to your advantage. Position a tom mike so that the snare drum is out of the mike's "line of sight," blocked by the body of the tom. The acoustic shadow will block some of the potential bleed.

I usually use condenser mikes as overheads, dynamic mikes on the traps. Although condensers offer better transient response, their relative frailty makes them less likely to survive an errant whack from a drumstick, their high output can overwhelm a mixer's mike preamps, and very high sound pressure levels can degrade their high-frequency performance over time. That said, nothing beats the sound of a large-diaphragm condenser, such as the AKG C414B/TLII (\$1499) or Audio-Technica AT4050/CM5 (\$995), on a floor tom.

Small-diaphragm condensers are the often best choice for miking wide-spread overhead cymbals, as they impart the least coloration to sounds arriving off-axis (from the side).

The modular AKG C460B (\$479) with a CK61ULS cardioid capsule (\$649) is the most flattering mike for overhead use. It's also reasonably priced and offers a two-position bass roll-off switch and -10 dB pad. Wherever a cardioid pattern doesn't provide enough coverage, a pair of Neumann KM131 (\$1275) or B&K 4006 (\$1975) omnidirectional mikes or Crown PZM 30D (\$369) pressure zone mikes usually do the trick.

A bass roll-off switch is mighty handy when you're miking drums. Engineers who prefer spot-miking all of the traps and using a pair of overheads for the cymbals often roll off the lows on the overheads. Others prefer to use the overheads with no roll-off as the main mikes, filling out the sound with spot mikes only as needed. The first technique puts the drums in your face, while the latter yields a looser, more "live" sound.

Bass roll-off is also useful for countering the proximity effect, or unnatural bass boost, that results from close miking with directional mikes. The supercardioid Sennheiser MD 441-U (\$895), with a five-position bass roll-off, sounds great with toms and offers excellent rejection of adjacent toms and snare. Its only drawback is large size, which makes it difficult to place in tight setups. Where one mike can be placed between two toms to pick up both, a cardioid mike such as the Sennheiser MD421-U (\$485) or Shure SM57 provides the necessary broad coverage.

Once your drum tracks are recorded, they can be spiced up using reverbs, aural exciters, pitch shifters, compressors and gates. But as with other instruments, the key to recording great drum tracks is perfecting the basics. ♪

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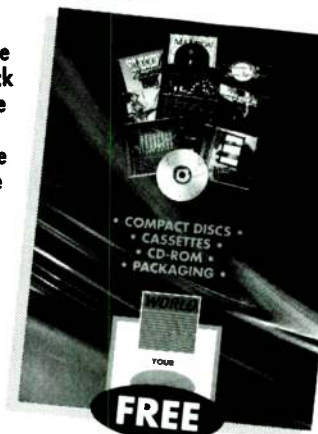
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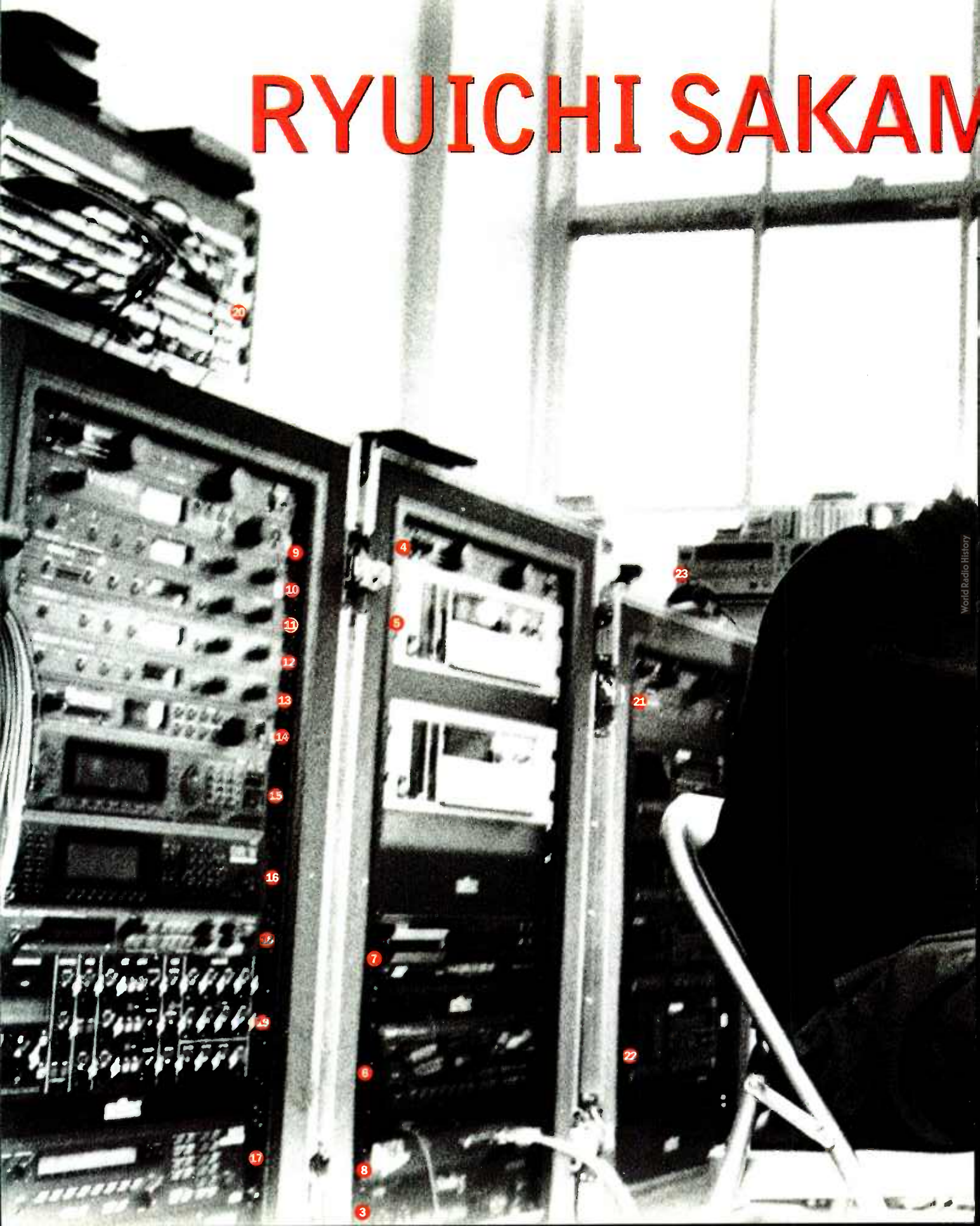


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SAKAMOTO'S HOME STUDIO



"You cannot control my life." "It is part of your life." "Do you want perfect silence?" "You live in a wrong place." "You should be delighted." "Get ear ~~whispers~~ plugs." Handwritten in pen, these words appear on a scrap of paper Scotch-taped above the desk in Ryuichi Sakamoto's spare Manhattan apartment/office/studio. Zen koans? New age affirmations? Or "oblique strategies," like Brian Eno's, designed to enhance creativity?

Sakamoto, composer of film scores for *The Last Emperor* and *Merry Christmas*, *Mr. Lawrence* and auteur of the recent solo release *Sweet Revenge* (Elektra), smiles wistfully. "The guy downstairs," he says, his accent mingling with wailing sirens and gunning engines from the Manhattan streets below. "Just a tiny noise, like when I drop a pen on the floor, he calls me. Not late at night. At nine in the evening! I have to be prepared with what to say."

Even surrounded by racks of equipment, it's hard to imagine that Sakamoto generates enough volume to compete with the street noise. His voice is nearly a whisper as he fingers the changes to "Giant Steps" on a **Korg T2 workstation** 1. His moody scores and occasionally hip-hop-inflected

songs usually begin as sketches entered into **MOTU Digital Performer** or **Opcode StudioVision** sequencers—the former if he needs notation, the latter if digital audio tracks from his **Digidesign Pro Tools** hard-disk recording system will be manipulated along with the sequence—running on an **Apple Quadra 800** computer with a **Radius Portrait/15 Pivot** monitor 2.

Most of his sound sources are packed into two road cases, each fed by its own **Opcode Studio 5 MIDI** interface 3 and protected by **Furman PL-Plus** power conditioners 4. There's a sampling rack with two **Akai S3200s** 5, **Roland S-770** 6, **Tascam CD-401** CD player 7 and **Data Director** 8 (which enables the samplers to share a single **Macway** magneto/optical drive); and a synth rack containing **E-mu Vintage Keys** 9, **ProcuSSION** 10, **Proteus 1XR** 11, **2XR** 12 and **3/World** 13, and **Morpheus** 14 as well as **Korg Wavestation A/D** 15, **01R/W** 16 and **M1R** 17, **Roland JV-880** 18 and **Studio Electronics SE-1** rackmount Minimoog clone 19.

BY TED GREENWALD

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELAINE ELLMAN

A **Yamaha DMP7** and three **Yamaha DMP9-16** digital mixers accept outputs from the modules, routed via a **März** patch bay. "The mixers are all cascaded digitally, internally," he explains, "so you can use all 16 channels for modules and keyboards. You don't need to sacrifice two channels." The mixers' internal effects are augmented by a **Tube-Tech MP 1A** mike preamp, **Focusrite Dual Equalizer**, **Summit Audio TLA-100A** tube compressor and a selection of **Sony** processors. Sakamoto uses **Yamaha FMC1** and **Alesis AI-1** format converters to pipe the mixer's outputs to four **Ale-**

sis ADATs, and to a **Panasonic SV-3700** DAT deck, so that signals remain in the digital domain as much as possible.

For such careful signal-routing, Sakamoto's monitor setup is surprisingly spartan: a pair of **Yamaha NS-10s** and tiny **Tannoy** speakers, amplified by a **Carver CM-1090**. "The NS-10s are a universal standard, so I have to use them," he says, "but I like the Tannoys better. I don't want to have big speakers like professional studios have. This is a residential building. Also, ordinary people don't have big speakers. To create music that people will listen to, I decided to

use consumer-level speakers."

While he's scoring to picture, he plays video tapes on a **Sony SVD-160** VHS deck and watches a **Sony Trinitron** monitor.

Scoring or making records, this facility enables Sakamoto to get as far as large-scale overdubs—strings, brass, group vocals—before it's necessary to move to a pro studio. "In some cases I can just move the ADAT rack; then I transfer my sounds to the pro studio's 48-track, overdub and mix. Otherwise I need to move everything. It's too much. On the other hand, there's not enough room for a big board here."

"I'm thinking which way I should go: Upgrade to Pro Tools III, which can record 16 tracks, add more ADATs, or give up on mixing here. I haven't decided yet." Another possibility is ISDN, a high-speed digital telephone line. "Then, if another studio has an ISDN connection," he explains, "I can transport all of the audio signals from here to there directly."

ISDN is the cutting edge of record production, but Sakamoto retains a fondness for older technology. The studio includes a rack of vintage synthesizers (retrofitted for MIDI, of course): a **Yamaha DX7II FD**, **ARP Odyssey** and **Quadra**, **Sequential Prophet-5**, **Roland JD-800** and **Roland Jupiter-8**—all axes that he owned years ago and sold to make way for newer models. But he has come to regret it, and over the past two years has rebuilt his collection. "The thing I like most is the ring modulator on the Odyssey. It's hard to find this function today."

"In general, I like more natural sounds, even from synthesizers," he continues. "One of the sounds I like most is a combination of sine waves with the pitch modulated by white noise. It sounds like a cloud or mist." Sampling, too, is a favorite creative stimulant. "Sometimes I'm watching a movie and some sound—one word, a noise, whatever—strikes me, and I sample it and loop it. Sometimes one sample can trigger me to write melodies or chords."

Even in the international arena of contemporary music, Sakamoto is a rare bird: a successful musician who straddles media, styles and cultures. "I'm not a typical Japanese composer or arranger," he suggests. "They use written music so much; the players too. The first time I came to New York 15 years ago I was surprised. Nobody here used written music. Then I changed my idea. Without it, the musicians need to use their ears. I think that's a better way."

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Mirror Ball, much anticipated as a collaboration with Pearl Jam, remains very much a Neil Young record, which is not to discount the band's impact. Their sound here invites comparison to Crazy Horse, obviously, but where the Horse's power grew out of their raggedness and slack understatement, Pearl Jam's power comes directly from *power*—they're a taut, lively band. You

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Mirror Ball
(REPRISE)

really sense the contrast on "I'm The Ocean," as Jeff Ament's bass lines counter the melody while Jack Irons shoves the beat forward instead of lagging behind. At the same time, Young alchemizes their sound by layering in an acoustically plinked guitar, and producer Brenden O'Brien's saloon piano. The result is a kind of impressionistic time-travel to match the song's imagery, which veers from the real violence of 19th century frontier life to vicarious chills filtered through contemporary TV screens.

Part of what makes *Mirror Ball* so moving is that sense of being unstuck in time, not so much musically—though the combination of Pearl Jam's uncompromised attack with Young's folk melodicism and plaintive tenor suggests the spanning of generations—but by Young's vision. Unlike many an aging rocker, his journeys through the past are less concerned with literal than emotional truths, and he tends to mingle the joyful with the sinister, whether setting the scene in the Middle Ages ("Song X," featuring a dark, dungeon-like chorus) or with hippies cavorting "Downtown," as a leering doorman surveys their collective bliss. By the time the band roils to a climax on "Throw Your



HOW PRIMUS FILLED THEIR PUNCHBOWL

"WHEN I LOOK at the records, even though I'm so close to them, they seem pretty consistent to Primus," says Les Claypool. "They don't change radically, but they do evolve." So what step up the evolutionary ladder did the band take with *Tales from the Punchbowl*? "Well, when we went to do this record, we didn't really have any material written," Claypool admits. We got together, rehearsed a couple times, and let a DAT tape play. I spit out a bunch of ideas and Herb (drummer Tim "Herb" Alexander) had a couple of ideas, and we just jammed. There'd be these tapes of 20-minute jams on a couple of different ideas, moods, or whatever."

Once the band had their raw material, they went into Claypool's new studio to shape them into songs. "Which basically meant me and Herb sitting there and jamming on them, me coming up with a sort of vocal structure, and then laying them down," he says, adding that guitarist Larry Lalonde generally added his parts after the drums and bass were recorded. "It was a situation where Herb and I basically had to sit there and listen to each other through headphones. There wasn't a bunch of big boomy amps or loud cymbals in a room, things were crystal clear. We were playing with each other through headphones, with a very nice mix. It was comfortable."

—J.D. Considine

Making things more comfortable was that the studio was in Claypool's house. "I moved to the country recently, and we picked away at it," he says. "Larry and I combined our equipment, Herb donated a couple mikes, and we borrowed a couple of old U-87s and strung them around the room. Just kind of tinkered with it until we found the sounds that we liked, then started laying things down."

That casual attitude, says Claypool, "helped us in the creative process as well as in the production process. Being able to get tones that we liked without worrying about getting home in time to see a movie, or paying some engineer X amount of dollars, worked well for us." Among the more interesting tones is the tuba-like sound Claypool gets out of his bass for "De Anza Jig." Hearing it, you'd swear it was the tone that inspired the bassline; "not so," says Claypool.

"The tone tends to come about in the mixing process. I mean, you get your tone as you're laying down your track, but you fine-tune it and find its frequency range and the space where it fits into a group of instruments while you're mixing. That's how we leaned toward that midrange-y sound that's giving us that tuba attack. But I wrote the part on my upright, playing it acoustically."

World Radio History

Hatred Down," you're at once elevated by its anthemic chorus and astonished at its weight. As the best Neil Young songs keep reminding us, in an age of disconnections the simplest truths matter most. —Mark Rowland

MICHAEL JACKSON

HIStory Past, Present and Future Book 1
(EPIC)

THE SCANDAL THAT BROUGHT MICHAEL JACKSON's career to a stand-still in 1993 has had a curiously liberating effect on his music. It's as if being the subject of such a public spectacle freed him—perhaps forced him—to take more chances. And so he has on most of the 15 new songs on this double-CD, giving new meaning to the adage, "what doesn't kill you will make you stronger." With the help of such collaborators as Dallas Austin and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Jackson incorporates tougher musical textures and deliberately "blacker" vocal inflections. This most guarded of pop stars is also more open about expressing negative emotions. This is a breakthrough for Jackson, who, in the past, generally expressed anger only in broad, cartoonish situations ("Beat It" and "Bad") or when he was portraying a character (the man wrongly accused of fathering a child in "Billie Jean").

Here, the anger is real. Jackson is out to even the score with the media and with police and prosecutors who investigated allegations of child molestation against him. (Jackson settled the civil case out of court in January 1994; the criminal case was subsequently dropped.) He



MICHAEL JACKSON

What Are You Listening to Lately?



ROY AYERS

1. Toni Braxton—Toni Braxton
2. Miles Davis—'Round About Midnight
3. Mary J. Blige—My Life
4. anything by John Coltraine
5. Omar—For Pleasure

MALCOLM MCLAREN

1. Serge Gainsbourg
2. Massive Attack—Protection
3. Portishead—Dummy
4. Henry Mancini
5. Duke Jordan—Les Liaisons Dangereuse soundtrack



JEFF HEALEY

1. Red Hot Chili Peppers—Bloodsugarsexxmagik
2. Naveed—Our Lady Peace
3. Amanda Marshall—Amanda Marshall
4. Lilith—Lilith
5. The New Animals



attacks the media in "Tabloid Junkie" and "the whole system" in "Scream" (the first single, a duet with sister Janet), but he reserves his greatest wrath for a district attorney who dogged him in the chilling "D.S."—which ends with a single gunshot. Jackson is also more pointed about political and racial issues, moving from the safe generalities of "Man In The Mirror" and "Black or White" (with its characteristic line, "I'm not going to spend my life being a color") to more controversial stances. "They Don't Care About Us," which Jackson wrote and produced, suggests that the white power structure doesn't really care about African-Americans. Unfortunately, he undermines his point about racism by lapsing into anti-Semitism with the phrases "Jew me" and "kike me." The album also demonstrates the conflicts that make Jackson such a complicated person and multi-dimensional musician. The angry adult is on view here, and so is the eternally vulnerable child (on the cloying and self-pitying "Childhood"). We hear the aggressive rocker (on a too-faithful cover of John Lennon's "Come Together") and the smooth crooner (a sugary version of the Charles Chaplin standard "Smile"). Jackson is at his most compelling when he brings the two personalities together. On "Money," which he wrote and produced, he spits out a bitter verse about greed and then breaks into a winsome and lilting chorus becoming McCartney to his own Lennon.

A few tracks offer a glimpse into Jackson's personal hell of 1993-94. In "Stranger In

Moscow," Jackson writes about his "swift and sudden fall from grace" and refers to that bleak period as an "Armageddon of the brain." It's a hypnotic look at abandonment. But the challenge remains to bring this new sense of openness and frankness to subjects other than Michael Jackson. As good as "Tabloid Junkie" is, it's also redundant—Jackson zinged the media on each of his last two albums—and more than a little hypocritical. If Jackson really wants to get off the 11 p.m. news, he ought to alert his army of publicists.

The other disk here features 15 of Jackson's greatest hits from 1979 to 1992, most of which were produced by the estimable Quincy Jones. The songs are generally well chosen, though "Off The Wall" and "Smooth Criminal" would have been better than the sappy "Heal The World" and the generic "I Just Can't Stop Loving You." Heard in one place, these recordings prove that, for all his eccentricities and egomania, Jackson is one of the most creative and assured record makers of the modern pop era. No scandal can take that away from him.

—Paul Grein

AIMEE MANN

I'm With Stupid

(REPRISE)

TOO OFTEN, GUITAR POP EMPHASIZES ONLY THE shallowest aspects of songwriting, substituting cleverness for intelligence, hooks for resonance, irony for depth. It has become a

genre so obsessed with form that it's almost a waste of time to look beneath the surface of the music, since there's so rarely anything there.

Maybe that's why *I'm With Stupid* seems so stunning. Sure, it's well crafted—from the bittersweet refrain of "Amateur" to the effervescent cadences of "That's Just What You Are," Mann manipulates melody and harmony as well as anyone in the business. But she doesn't stop there. Where other songwriters use wordplay to conceal their emotional wounds, her lyrics cut to the heart of the issue. She's not above metaphor (it may take several listenings before you get the central pun in "Superball"), but as "Amateur" and "Ray" make plain, she'd rather sift through her emotional wreckage than tuck it under a blanket of clever language.

Still, you probably wouldn't notice her depth if Mann's music weren't so polished. Though her best songs have the grace and ingenuity of the *Revolver*-era Beatles, they never sound like throwbacks. From the funky rhythms chugging beneath "Long Shot" to the production effects that animate "Frankenstein," the album has a thoroughly modern



AIMEE MANN

sound and feel. No, it doesn't hurt that Mann has first-rate help, with Chris Difford, Glenn Tilbrook, Juliana Hatfield and Bernard Butler joining producer Jon Brion in the studio. But apart from "Sugarcoated," where the guitar lines clearly bear Butler's signature, the guests are mostly walk-ons; Mann is this album's true star. Her performances here will leave listeners clamoring for an encore. —J.D. Considine

REVIEWS

FOO FIGHTERS

Foo Fighters

(ROSWELL/CAPITOL)

AMONG THE MORONICALLY SICK JOKES THAT made the rounds after Kurt Cobain's suicide were a few that snickered at how futureless the other members of Nirvana had suddenly become. In the case of drummer Dave Grohl, this assessment ignored that the grace and power of Grohl's playing was a tremendous part of what made Nirvana exciting. Now, with the release of the debut album from his new band Foo Fighters, it has become abundantly clear that Grohl's talents stretch far beyond the drumstool.

In fact, Grohl is off the drumstool—he's handling a guitar, vocals, and the songwriting for the band. Pat Smear, an ex-Germ who was part of the final Nirvana lineup, is co-guitarist, while bassist Nate Mendel and drummer William Goldsmith make up the rhythm section. Together, these Foo Fighters provide a remarkably energizing rush—an album full of smart, crafty, kick-ass music.

The estimable Cobain may have influenced Grohl's songwriting, but on *Foo Fighters* one can hear how much Grohl's musicianship guided Nirvana's sound—the album is packed with simple, forceful melodies, precise harmonies, and inventive arrangements. Grohl's lyrics are often mysteriously oblique, but those that are decipherable give his songs an edge and a sense of humor (“This Is a Call” is a rousing paean to ritalin and fingernails). “X-Static” fits soothing harmonies over a roiling rhythm track, while “Watershed” and “Weenie Beenie” pump along with Albini-sized outrage. “Big Me” has an easy, country-pop feel, and “For All the Cows” swings along like a closing-time croon from some strange dairy/lounge, before its choruses build to a frenzy.

Perhaps there's some post-Nirvana commentary from Grohl in powerful, personal songs like “I'll Stick Around” or “Alone & Easy Target,” but the most remarkable thing about his music is how convincingly it succeeds on its terms. Though the record can hit with the satisfying blast of *Nevermind* or *In Utero*, Foo Fighters aren't some sad and curious postscript to the Nirvana story—their sound and energy are fresh. Whether or not Grohl keeps them together for the long run, the drummer has proven himself a heavyweight. His music is intelligent, exuberant, and definitely capable of the knock-out punch.

—Chuck Crisafulli

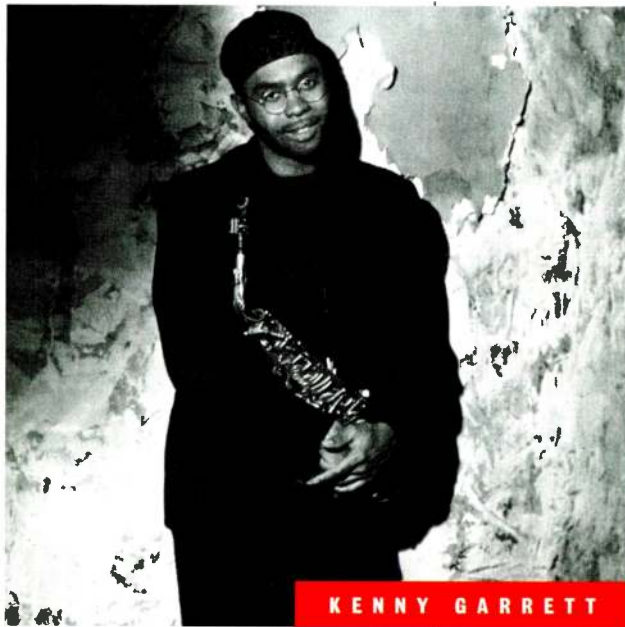
KENNY GARRETT

Trilogy

(WARNER BROS.)

KENNY GARRETT IS AMONG THE MOST FERVENT, committed young voices to emerge on the alto saxophone over the past 20 years. As a creative improviser and solo voice, he ranks right up there with those originals seeking to extend on the alto saxophone's proud history in the post-Coltrane era, and his playing also compares favorably with the classic work of older masters as well.

But then, Garrett is already a youthful veteran with a distinguished pedigree in the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and



Miles Davis' final working groups. Garrett's last Warner Bros. release, *Black Hope*, presented him in varied programmatic settings, from heady jazz-funk to hard-bopping blues, but *Trilogy* exposes him as never before in a revealing trio setting with the swinging young drummer Brian Blades and bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa.

From Sonny Rollins on “Freedom Suite” through John Coltrane on “Chasin' The Trane,” the trio format forces the enterprising saxophonist to create all the harmonic and melodic tension by himself. But with his tart throaty tone, cutting attack, bluesy melodic contours and harmonic fluidity, Garrett is more than able to sustain interest. On “Delfeayo's Dilemma,” “Pressing The Issue” and “What Is This Thing Called Love?” he rises to the challenge of thorny chord changes and breakneck tempos with tremendous rhythmic intensity and lyric wit.

But Garrett is also a convincing ballad player, as his tender reading of “A Time For Love” and

his little soft-shoe through “In Your Own Sweet Way” demonstrate. And although Garrett's tone at times suggests the brawny alto work of Julius Hemphill and Jackie McLean, his main influences seem to be testifying tenor men such as John Coltrane and Wayne Shorter, whom he honors with a driving “Giant Steps” and a sanctified “Wayne's Thang.” Still, he always maintains his sense of individuality, which makes him a standout in an era of technosnore copycats.

—Chip Stern

CATHERINE WHEEL

Happy Days

(MERCURY)

LIKE A JOURNEY THAT begins in a Volkswagen Beetle and winds up behind the sturdy wheel of an 18-wheeled rig, ornate Brit-rockers Catherine Wheel have, in the space of three albums, transformed an initially sputtery sound into a juggernaut of unstoppable noise. You don't just listen to the group's deceptively-dubbed *Happy Days* disc; you get mowed down by it, then caught on its axle and dragged screaming for several blocks. The whole approach, a regal

English equivalent to American grunge, is pretty much the concept of one man, Catherine Wheel's mad-eyed monk of a visionary/vocalist, Rob Dickinson. He penned this set, co-produced it with the texturally-inclined Gil Norton, and it's his tortured, vaguely anti-social thoughts you hear blasting out of an already speaker-blowing mix. How anti-social? One song is entitled “Eat My Dust You Insensitive Fuck”—and that's a ballad.

Basically, Dickinson builds pop with shiny steel girders. “Heal,” “Shocking,” “Receive”—while guitars clank and spark like medieval swords, dark, graceful melodies slither unsuspected within the action; they're the kind of hooks that only reveal themselves after several listenings, but when they do, they bite with both fangs. Even “Judy Staring At The Sun,” a gorgeous Dickinson duet with Belly's Tanya Donnelly, doesn't play all its cards right away, despite some obvious Top-40 trappings of tam-



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ET CETERA

ARTO LINDSAY TRIO

Aggregates 1-6

(KNITTING FACTORY WORKS)

THOSE WHO BELIEVE Ambitious Lovers brought out the best in Peter Scherer and Arto Lindsay might find each's latest outing deficient. Scherer's *Very Neon Pet* (Metro Blue) is all atmosphere and gauzy rhetoric, the exact opposite of the song shards that Arto links on this savage date. On *Aggregates*, Lindsay either jettisons or ruptures the pop appointments that made the Lovers palatable. With little investment in rhythmic sophistication, these fitful pieces, bolstered by the incisive abstractions of Mel Gibbs and Dougie Bowne, add up to a brutish jabberwocky that mauls the listener. The record's graphic of two pachyderms doing the wild thing is apt; the peaks here are made of mewling eruptions that titillate for a short time only. Bring back the pillow talk.—*Jim Macnie*

VINCENT HERRING

Don't Let It Go

(MUSICMASTERS)

HERRING'S LATEST OUTING as a leader is perhaps his best, especially in his choice of compositions. His title track, Cyrus Chestnut's "Into The Midnight" and "Big Bertha" by the late great Duke Pearson all bring to mind the sophisticated yet hummable melodicism of Benny Golson, who—just coincidentally—pens the liner notes here. Trumpeter Scott Wendholdt displays a cool, understated style, while Herring plays Trane to his Miles, blowing a storm without sacrificing intellectual rigor. And Herring's tone, round yet piercing, gets under your skin when it's not raising goosebumps. Check it out.—*Mark Rowland*

JOHN COLIANNI

At Maybeck

(CONCORD JAZZ)

THIS IS VOLUME 37 of what may be too much of a good thing—how many solo piano covers of "Tea for Two" and "Stardust" do we need anyway? But I've been listening to them all, and this volume is one of my faves. Could it be Colianni's relaxed melodic swing, bringing to mind the essence of K.C. jump blues and stride, even in the service of more "mod-

ern" standards? Or that those standards also include such judicious choices as "It Never Entered My Mind" and "Don't Stop The Carnival"? Or that Colianni's inspired take on Kurt Cobain's "Heart Shaped Box," of all things, conveys the spare beauty of Cobain's compositional gift in a way Tori Amos hadn't imagined? Yes to all of the above.—*Mark Rowland*

OTIS SPANN

Down To Earth

(MCA)

NO ONE IN Muddy Waters' legendary original band was more urbane than pianist Otis Spann. If Little Walter was the mercurial genius and Jimmy Rogers the rock solid craftsman, Spann gave Muddy's Delta blues the sound of the city. His solo career was ill-fated—there were no classic singles and he died young—but as this reissue of his Bluesway output shows, he was a dynamic artist in his own right. The live set is a real gem—a 1966 session/party with Spann and Muddy blazing away. Highly recommended.—*Tom Anderson*

LEE MORGAN

Leeway

(BLUE NOTE)

Tribute To Lee Morgan

(NYC)

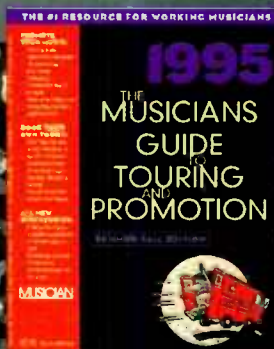
BLUE NOTE'S CONNOISSEUR series has unearthed another gem with this relatively obscure Lee Morgan date, aided by Jackie McLean, Bobby Timmons, Paul Chambers and Art Blakey. Two fine Calvin Massey compositions, including the aptly-titled "These Are Soulful Days," prove a fine frame for Morgan's expressive trumpet solos, and bookend two relaxed blowing blues, including Lee's own Blue Note tribute, "The Lion and the Wolff." That song is covered on *Tribute To Lee Morgan*, which collects his best songwriting from the funky "Sidewinder" to the gorgeous ballad "Ceora." Both feature the soprano sax of Grover Washington, Jr., sitting in with another stellar quintet—Eddie Henderson, Joe Lovano, Cedar Walton, Peter Washington and the peerless Billy Higgins. (NYC Records, 800-266-4692).—*Mark Rowland*

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REVIEWS

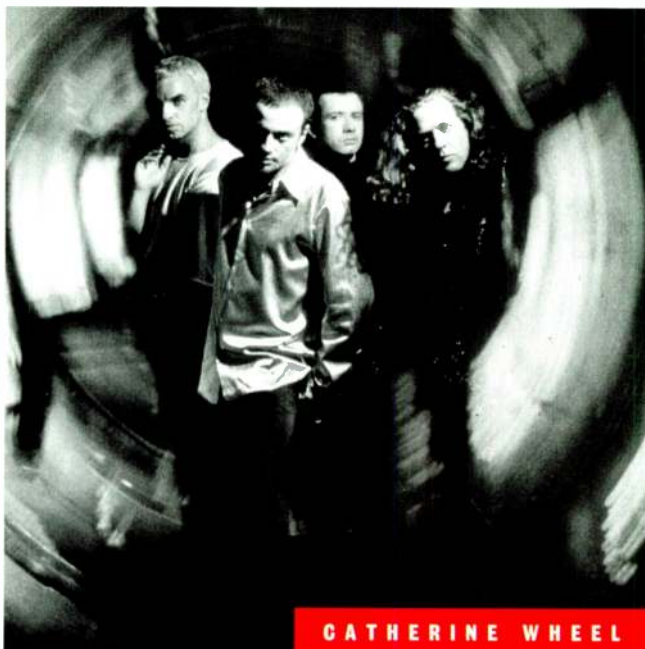
bourine, chimey axework and a smiling 'Wah-ooh' chorus. Every spin through, the line "Judy's suffering tonight—she's suffering" begins feeling creepier and creepier, until Dickinson seems to be turning into that classic Merrie Melody cartoon, "The Cat That Hated People." He sounds potentially dangerous, and that—in song after song—works to Catherine Wheel's advantage.

Dickinson doesn't just lash out at society; stares in the mirror from time to time, equally dissatisfied. "I destroy myself, I know, I know, I know..." he mutters in "Receive," an otherwise exotic melding of Far East electric filigrees and extra-meaty riffs. But another chunk of tractor-trailer grind, "Empty Head," best summarizes Dickinson and the addicting Catherine Wheel shtick. "Of all the things a popular song can bring," the vocals wheeze, "A permanent picture of hope is what I hate the most..."

—Tom Lanham

MORIS TEPPER

Big Enough to Disappear
(CANDLE BONE)



guitarist for such celebrated mavericks as Captain Beefheart and Tom Waits, but avoids gratuitous weirdness. From either angle, this deceptively slick gem crackles with more wit and vitality than most of the well-financed product cluttering the racks today, capturing the contagious joy of an inventive soul at play. Tepper just needs a record label smart

ATENTION ALL LAZY A&R PEOPLE: ANYBODY who wants to "discover" a swell artist with a minimum of effort should check out Moris Tepper's debut album now. It's familiar in an appealing way, echoing sensitive yet manly men like John Mellencamp and Bruce Springsteen without resorting to imitation. For artier types, it's got a seriously zany streak, reflecting his stints as

enough to put out *Big Enough to Disappear* as is.

The dude dazzles from the git-go. "Can't Stop Crying," the opening track, could pass for vintage Dylan, combining a flurry of tantalizing images, dramatic chords, and hoarse, overwrought vocals to depict emotions out of control. A champion of excess, Tepper routinely carries standard situations to tragicomic

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World Radio History

extremes. In the disarmingly straightforward ballad "Bankshot," a simple broken heart inspires high drama, while the woozy "Beside Me Once Again" enhances misty-eyed longing with the drunken Salvation Army strains of a tuba and cornet. Canny arrangements are Tupper's secret weapon. In addition to goofy horns, he spices the mix with marimbas, accordions, concertinas, banjos and the like, recalling the

chunky textures of the Band.

The romantic tunes are so genuinely poignant that his odder stuff seems truly warped by comparison. "The Stain," a demented hillbilly stomp, offers an unnerving brew of lust and anger; the frazzled "Then We'll Sail," one of two nautical tall tales, spotlights his knack for entertaining throw-away observations, as a luckless crewman

SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

BRUCE HORNSBY

Hot House

(RCA)

AS HORNSBY IS a stronger stylist than tunesmith, some of these songs might seem a tad familiar, like the way "Walk in the Sun" echoes the bluesy cadences of "Rainbow's Cadillac." But the playing is the real focus here, and on that front Hornsby is dazzling. It isn't just his pianistic prowess that dazzles (though the percussive power and rich, singing tone he gets in "Spider Fingers" is pretty damned impressive): what makes the music sizzle is the way he inspires the other players, leaving room in the jazzy "White Wheeled Limousine" for Bela Fleck and Pat Metheny to trade solos, and even giving Jerry Garcia a chance to stretch some on the surging, Doobie-ish "Cruise Control."

NATALIE MERCHANT

Tigerlily

(ELEKTRA)

BETWEEN THE LITERARY polish of her lyrics and the solemnity of her singing, Merchant's 10,000 Maniacs persona seemed dour, principled and a little cold around the edges. What a surprise, then, to hear this album open with the bluesy moan and funky groove of "San Andreas Fault." Her new playmates have a far greater stylistic range than the Maniacs, while Merchant conveys more passion and personality than in the past, adding anger and wit to confessionals like "Jealousy," and deep empathy to character studies like "Beloved Wife."

VAN MORRISON

Days Like This

(POLYDOR)

THERE ARE MOMENTS here when Morrison's interplay with the band verges on the tele-

pathic, mixing jazz, blues and soul better than anyone in contemporary music. There are great songs, too; tunes like "Melancholia" and "No Religion" that address complex topics with clarity and wit. But there are also examples of self-indulgence so stunning (like the duets with his pitch-deficient daughter, Shana) that the moments of genius seem almost accidental.

ROD STEWART

A Spanner in the Works

(WARNER BROS.)

STEWART'S WRITING MAY have lost some of its edge, but his singing seems surer than ever, and that's what makes this his best album since *Every Picture Tells a Story*. Start with the heart-in-mouth intensity of "Downtown Lights," then move to the winsome grace of "Leave Virginia Alone" and the soulful enthusiasm of "Muddy, Sam and Otis." By the time you get to the no-breaks run through "Hang on St. Christopher," it's clear that this *Spanner* definitely works.

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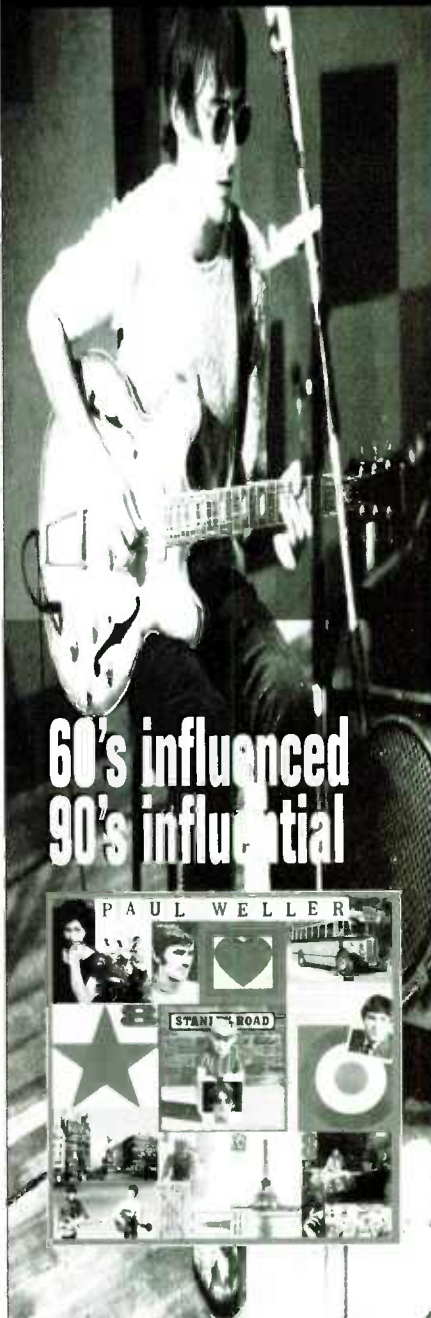
Batman Forever

(ATLANTIC)

LIKE THE MOVIES themselves, big-budget soundtracks are more about packaging than content, tossing tracks together with more attention to Top-40 potential than how it all will sit on an album. But though *Batman Forever* bounces from Mazzy Star to Method Man to Offspring to Seal, it remains a remarkably unified piece of work, worth owning if only to hear how U2's T.Rex-y "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me" dissolves into the dark, swampy blues of P.J. Harvey's "One Time Too Many," which in turn sets up the sweet, guitar-based funk of Brandy's "Where Are You Now?"

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REVIEWS

howls, "None of us is gentle/Because we live out on the sea." Even at his most melodramatic, Tepper never fails to rant with authority. Everything makes lovely sense in its own eccentric way.

Submit lucrative contracts to Moris Tepper at PO Box 371511, Reseda, CA 91337.

—Jon Young

DAVE THOMPSON

Little Dave and Big Love

(FAT POSSUM/CAPRICORN)

FAT POSSUM RECORDS, A SMALL LABEL IN OXFORD, Mississippi, is making the best blues records in America right now. The imprint has issued extraordinary albums by older talents like Junior Kimbrough, R.L. Burnside and the ineffable eccentric CeDell Davis. Now it has begun to put younger blues artists in the spotlight, such as Kimbrough's son David Malone. The lead guitarist on that set, Dave Thompson, boasts his own bow here, and like the company's previous albums, this one's a pip.

Thompson, a blues prodigy who first worked with jukester Booba Barnes while in his


early teens, is a guitarist whose style is literally slippery: He sprays WD-40 on his strings to keep them slick. His playing sports blazing high-end climaxes, and his messily affecting slide style betrays few stylistic precedents. His singing is blunt and natural, almost documentary in its directness. Overall, his work here is highly reminiscent of Son Seals' harshly compelling early recordings.

Little Dave and Big Love, like most of Fat Possum's other releases, was produced by former *New York Times* music critic and musician Robert Palmer. He cut the record in a one-day session that emphasized rawness and spontaneity. In the process, Palmer has managed to capture the essence of Thompson's gutsy, brooding music: Punchy funk numbers like "Standing Up On My Own" and somber slow-blues tracks like "I'm Having It So Hard" and "Ain't It a Shame" hit upside the head. Captured most adeptly is an undercurrent of barely suppressed violence in Thompson's sound, which is reflected lyrically in the blues *noir* of "After Hours Bar": "If you're looking for a good fight, go down there on a Saturday night."

If you're looking for one of the hottest guitar-slingers to come up the pike in a while, look no further than this doozie of a debut. Little Dave Thompson is looming large.

—Chris Morris

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Fat Man And The Hard Blues

The first time I laid eyes on Julius Arthur Hemphill, he suggested to me some rarified composite of the young James Earl Jones and Burt Lancaster. There was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, and his sonorous, distinguished voice was punctuated by long, discrete pauses and a low musical undertone. When he flashed that hundred watt grin, he became a charming rascal who was no stranger to wine, women or song.

With his wit, innate disrespect for authority, and hearty contempt for conformity, Hemphill was an American original. He was a singular composer and improviser; one of the great unsung heroes of the blues, modern jazz and 20th century harmony; a godfather of today's multi-media matrix, who first explored the artistic possibilities of combining dance, theater, video, painting and music—while forging connections with the local community—as a founder of the visionary Black Artist Group in St. Louis, way back in 1968.

In 1972 he produced an historic session which yielded a pair of influential albums—*Dogon A.D.* and *Coon Bid'nness*—that fostered a mini-movement in jazz, just as fusion was turning sour. Compositions such as “Dogon A.D.” and “The Hard Blues” combined the danger and freedom of post-Coltrane jazz with the earthy, folksy mystery of old-time R&B and the delta blues (as epitomized by the cello work of long-time collaborator Abdul Wadud). Hemphill's alto solos were notable for their intellectual rigor, hair-raising emotional content and absence of clichés. His blow-torched timbre, desperate upper-register cries and stunning rhythmic displacements were deeply imbued in Bird and the blues.

But then, Julius always viewed his work as autobiographical, and in the Hot End of Fort Worth, the blues came roaring out of every window. “When I grew up, the blues was all around me, so I tended to take it for granted, and looked toward other sources. That's how I came to find out about Lee Konitz and Lennie Tristano and people like that—they were different. Besides, white people tend to romanticize the blues. Where I grew up, respectable people considered the blues lowdown, vulgar and common.”

Hemphill was best known for his work with the World Saxophone Quartet, which he helped found in 1976; his writing and arranging set the tone for the group's finest works. But Hemphill had more ambitious music in mind. He achieved it with the Julius Hemphill Sextet on the remarkable *Fat Man And The Hard Blues* and *Five Chord Stud*. And despite the indifference of his producers, the *Julius Hemphill Big Band* remains among the visionary orchestral records of the last 25 years, a polyphonic melange of reeds, woodwinds, brass, electric strings and percussion.

Never a choir boy, he once remarked of his life that “You pay your dollar, and you ride your ride.” Julius enjoyed a creative and loving relationship with the remarkable modern pianist Ursula Oppens, and a fruitful professional relationship with manager and adviser Cynthia Herbst. He led an excellent electric ensemble, the JAH Band, on several tours, composed an ambitious saxophone opera, *Long Tongues*, provided music for the Bill T. Jones Dance Company's production of “Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin/The Promised Land,” and tour with his superb sextet, featuring the likes of Andrew White, Marty Ehrlich and James Carter.



Ursula Oppens and Julius Hemphill

But thanks to diabetes, his body finally gave out. First there was an amputation; then his kidneys failed and he went on dialysis; an operation for congestive heart condition was followed by anemia, a tumor on his liver and back spasms. My man Timex—take a lickin' but keep on tickin'. He accepted it all with courage, grace, and his customary sense of humor. I remember visiting him in the VA hospital in Manhattan, when he told me he'd lost his leg. My eyes began to well with tears, but Julius spoke calmly: “The doctors explained to me that they might be able to save my life when they amputated,” he said. “Not if...when. I'd run out of options—I didn't have a leg to stand on.” He made me laugh. Now that's a heart.

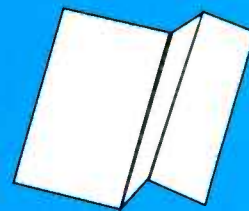
He was bedridden for two years, but in the last six months of his life he seemed to rally, because he started to think about music again, and that horny, sarcastic leer returned to his voice. In fact, a week and a half before he died, he played the Knitting Factory with his sextet, acting as a wry commentator in his wheelchair, and even chipped in with a few classic alto solos.

Walking west along 181st Street a few nights after he passed, I saw an amazing sight. There, below rooftop level, was this lofty crescent moon, like a matte painting across the Hudson, and I thought I saw Julius smiling down at me from behind a cloud with his distinctive cheshire grin. A wink and a nod from the beyond, chocolate and in technicolor.—Chip Stern

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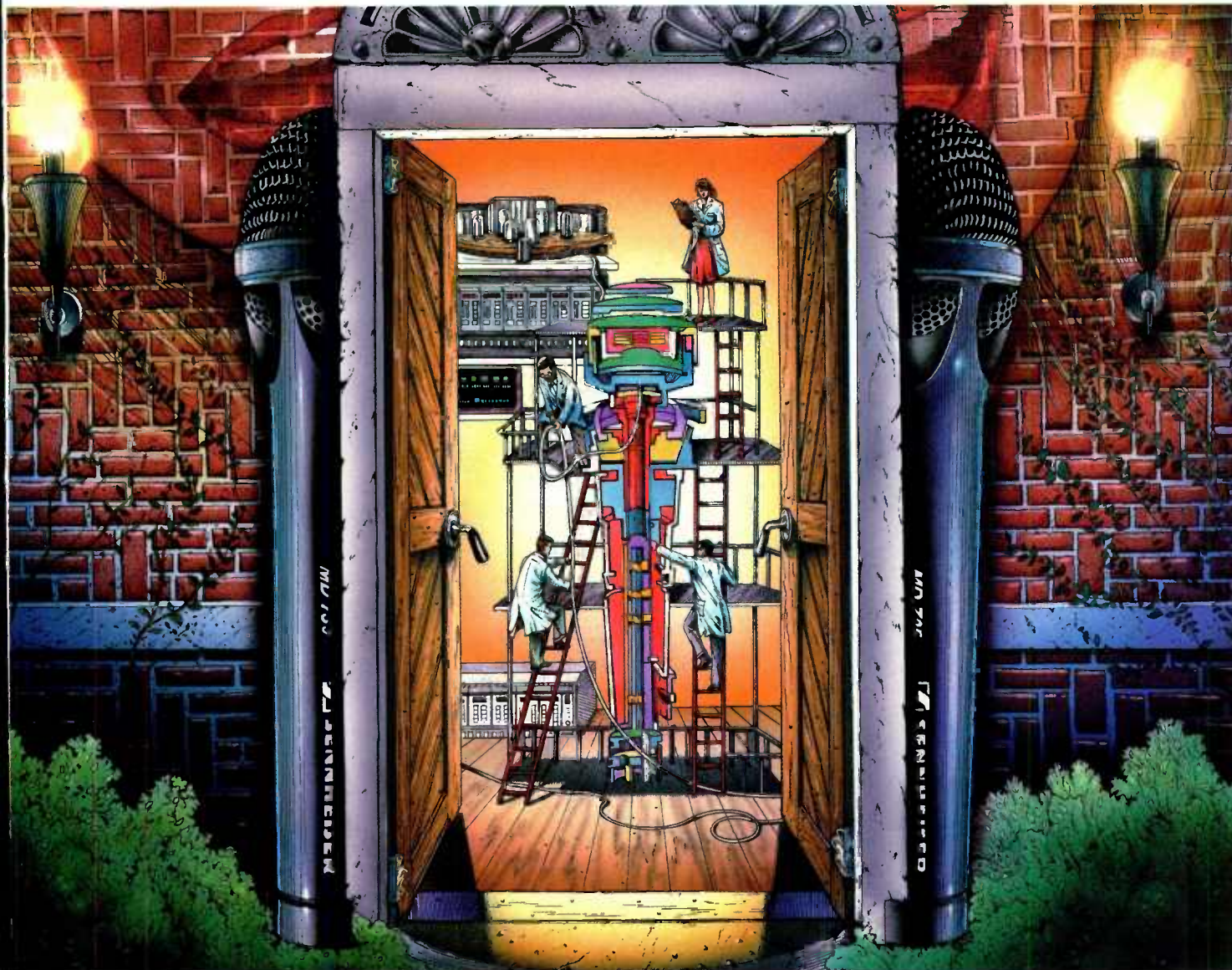
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The NS10MS has become a standout in the studio monitor field because of its uncanny ability to take a studio mix and seamlessly translate it to millions of living rooms and cars with the desired result.

NO OTHER STUDIO MONITOR COMES WITH SO MANY GREAT REFERENCES.

We call it reality-based monitoring. Your assurance that whatever you hear in the studio holds up in the real world. Which is precisely why so many engineers prefer Yamaha NS10MS monitors.

How many is so many? At last count there were more NS10MS monitors in studios than all our competitors combined.

Or to put it another way, any time you hear a great recording, our legendary NS10MS was probably involved.

Making sure you always have them in the studio is probably the smartest career move you'll ever make. And if you don't believe us, you can always check our references.

Ext.
1-800-937-7171

Call for more information.



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