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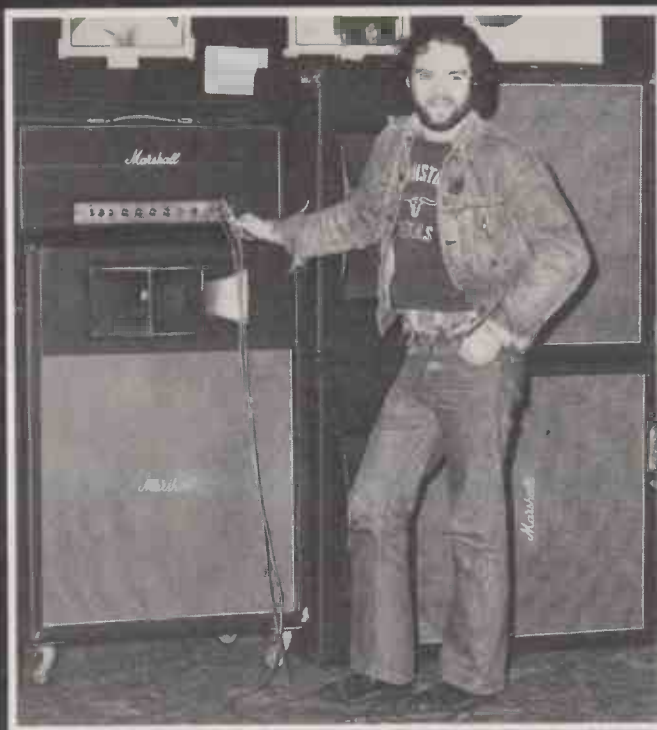
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QUEEN

IT says fairly and squarely on the sleeve of Queen's album, *Sheer Heart Attack*, "composed, produced and performed exclusively by Queen".

Queen might say it sorts out the boys from the girls. It has become their hallmark as a group, this total concern, commitment and involvement in every aspect of recording.

Such a process has been there from the beginning, even if some of us remained rather unmoved by it or found early work lacking at times.

With their latest album Queen have added former cynical voices to their cause. *Sheer Heart Attack* fairly leapt into the album chart compiled by the British Market Research Bureau. Praise has been showered on them from every quarter.

The story behind the disc and this trait of Queen's to 'do their own thing', was told to me by John Deacon.

Deacon says the group used various studios on this album and gave the reasons. *Sheer Heart Attack* started its life at Rockfield but no Dave Edmunds was involved. The studio is 24 track but Deacon says they met a few technical problems.

At the same time Brian had ulcer trouble and required surgical attention. It left the other three and to some extent it became a question of what could be laid down without Brian...

Around 80 per cent of the backing was laid at Rockfield but a week was spent at Wessex laying down some vocals. Further time was spent at the studio putting some overdubs in the percussion field.

A week was spent in Air studio 4, a small over-dub room. More backing vocals followed at Wessex — and mixing was at Trident. At some points work at various studios overlapped.

Queen did have some outside assistance from Roy Baker, listed as co-producer and Mike Stone, the engineer. Deacon said this about Stone, "He worked a great deal on Queen 2, he's so good, so he came everywhere with us. Trident loaned him out to us."

Deacon describes Trident mixes as "lovely" and even



“Recording isn’t easy”

by TONY JASPER



▲ Brian May
 ◀ Freddie Mercury
 ▼ The band



says some are “quite hairy”. The latter remark comes from the fact of Trident “not being full 24 track when we mixed. We did in fact use several different machines. At one point we were using a 16 track with another Triad in front for rhythm section mixes.

Queen find 24 tracks sufficient and at this point have no thoughts of any recording on a 32 track, “24 is enough, it takes a lot of pushing up and down and can get complicated. I think you have to keep things within reason!”

Sheer Heart Attack took three months in making, “a lot of sweat, even when funkiest!” and three cuts at Trident. Deacon adds, “We then got hold of the US cut and we preferred that and so used the American cut for the English release. This is why the album was one week late. We were very pleased with it.”

On the group’s general approach, Deacon says “There was no cutting of corners, we get so involved and it really seems as though one album a year is for us.”

It might be argued that one is insufficient for a group in the present position of Queen. Since they intend extensive touring in the States and other parts of the world, including hopefully Japan, this makes their presence less in Britain than it might otherwise have been.

“There is admittedly a problem in constantly reminding people we are still here but again no short-cuts. We don’t intend to release, *Queen Live*. I think such a thing is somewhat of a short-cut when our sole material is already found on the studio albums and such is performed on stage.”

Deacon did add, “there must be at least two more studio albums. We’ve no thought by the way of getting our studios. We’re only just beginning to be rid of all the costs involved so far and an album like *Sheer Heart Attack* cost £25,000.”

There is a feeling of Queen now really getting everything together from recording to the live show. Deacon says the organization round them is get-

ting better and the tour which ended last November was their best yet.

“We were very pleased, things went right, though we had problems at London’s Rainbow when the mains blew. We don’t pander to anyone. We play good music and do it for ourselves and hope people will appreciate what we are doing and gladly this seems to be happening, more and more.

“At present we have hardly any time in which to rest. One thing seems to follow another with rapid speed. As soon as the British tour was over, we were packing our bags for playing on the continent.”

Deacon smiles when hearing mention of Queen’s academic record, “It’s about time newspapers gave that one a rest. We’ve no thought of returning to that world. I reckon I’ll always be involved in music and recording from now on. Anyway, I like the world I’m in these days.

“The other day we met Paul McCartney and that was great. He even said hello to Roger and said he was doing fine. McCartney has been Brian’s hero since teen days. I must say though *Juniors Farm* was rather a disappointing single.

“McCartney has done so much good work. *Band On The Run* was very good. Getting back to my earlier remark, I suppose I could be in some laboratory or something now. I don’t know really but what I’m doing at present is so rewarding.”

Deacon retired from this interview with some final thoughts on the energy taken from Queen in their varied activities. He said recording was a sixteen hour process and particularly so during the mixing stage of *Sheer Heart Attack*. Live gigging didn’t allow much relaxation, though they tried to ensure things, such as journey distance, were as smooth and simple as possible. During the winter ’74 UK tour, Queen did add a personal manager to their pay-roll.

And his final remark was one of modesty, “I’m happy in my mind with our success. It’s always exciting on the way up!”

YOUR LETTERS

WORKSHOPS

Dear Sir,

I've heard that rock music workshops are being held from time to time. I have just missed one that was held in my home town and I would like to find out who organises them and what they are all about and also, when the next one is likely to be held.

Yours sincerely,
Mike Kelly,
Coventry.

I think the Workshops you are referring to are the ones held by the Musicians' Union. They have been going on for some time, up and down the country, mostly in the larger cities. What happens is that various well-known exponents of particular instruments come along and discuss aspects of their instrument, with demonstrations—it's a kind of free-for-all, quite a casual atmosphere, and anyone interested in music is invited to come along, whatever their age and regardless of whether or not they can play.

Chris Spedding, the famous session guitarist who played for Sharks until their recent split, was at the Coventry one, and a couple of members of

Soft Machine have also been frequent participants.

If you'd like to know more about it and where and when the next Workshops are likely to be held, we suggest you contact Brian Blain, Secretary, Music Promotion Committee, Musicians' Union, 29 Catherine Place, Buckingham Gate, London, SW1.

MAHAVISHNU

Dear B.I.,

Two of my favourite groups are the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Back Door. A friend told me recently that they were going to do some work together. Can you tell me exactly what is happening, please?

Brian Southwell,
Burnt Oak,
London, NW9.

The connection is that Mike Gibbs, who does a lot of the arrangements for the Mahavishnu Orchestra, arranged one of the tracks on Back Door's forthcoming album. Ron Aspery Back Door's sax/flute/keyboard player, explained, "When we heard Mike Gibbs' arrangement of John McLaughlin's 'Apocalypse' we were knocked out and phoned him up and asked him to arrange

one of our numbers, never dreaming he'd agree.

"We presented him with the tune, just a duo for soprano sax and bass and he said 'what do you want me to do with it?' He has only done jobs before where people told him what they wanted. We replied, alter the whole melody if you like, turn it upside-down, we want your head."

"He thought he couldn't use strings on it, so he wrote five sax parts and I went into the studio and played them one after the other. Then he suddenly decided it would take strings as well, and in a couple of days he'd booked the musicians and done the whole thing. It's ended up with 18 strings, six saxes and phased bass.

Back Door are at present discussing with John McLaughlin the chances of him involving himself with their next album on which they have already begun work.

PIANO TUITION

I have just bought a second-hand piano and wish to learn how to play. The trouble is, I don't only want to play in a rock style but would like to be able to play classical music as

well. Will learning one style harm the other? Is there any real point in learning all the "kids' stuff," i.e. scales and arpeggios, and thirdly, how should I go about finding someone to teach me?

Yours,
Bernard James,
Marlow,
Bucks.

It's a pity you don't live in London because it's easy to find teachers there. Many final year and post-graduate students at the music colleges teach, and there are always advertisements about teachers in the weekly music papers. In your case, I think the best way to find a teacher is by reading local advertisement boards in shop windows—I've noticed that many such boards carry ads from music teachers—or looking in your local newspaper, and just asking around.

You can, of course teach yourself. The larger record shops carry albums containing courses in most instruments and you can buy books to go with them. Some are advertised in the weekly music press.

However, the best way to learn to play rock is by listening to recordings of keyboard players you admire and trying to work out what they are doing and emulate them. Buying sheet



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AND QUERIES

music and learning how to read music is a pretty laborious process if you are teaching yourself, and not strictly necessary as many of the best rock keyboard players started off by playing by ear.

Naturally, if you want to play classical music, learning to read music is a necessity and you can only be taught by a music teacher. As you are starting to learn now, rather than when you were a small child, a grounding in classical techniques cannot really harm you and may in fact improve your rock playing by adding an extra dimension to it.

As for those scales and arpeggios—kids' stuff or not, they certainly strengthen the muscles in your wrists and hands that you need to develop, and also give you a lead into many "flash" runs as well as helping you to play with more swiftness and agility.

'MICRO-FRETS'

Scanning through old BI's, I came across an item in a Nov. '73 issue in one of your instrument reviews, about the micro-frets swingers. As I am now looking for a better guitar, I would be very interested if any-

body owning such a guitar both amateur and professional could let me have their views on the instrument. I would also be grateful if you could let me have addresses where I might obtain information and prices.

Yours sincerely,
W. V. Richards,
Exmouth, Devon.

Perhaps some Micro-frets Swinger owners will write in with their views. In the meantime, the UK distributors are B. Page Ltd, 10 Wood Street, Doncaster, Yorks.

DOUBLE-TRACKING

Dear BI,

Could you please tell me if there is a special effects unit available on the market with which vocal double tracking can be obtained (or simulated). I am thinking in terms of a portable unit, used in conjunction with a 100 watt PA system, and which would be within the scope of a semi-pro-band—not studio equipment.

Many thanks,
J. Cordell,
Cobham, Surrey

At £270, Selmer retail the Echoplex, which can delay the vocal pulse for up to four sec-

onds before echoing it. WEM's Hailecat has four input channels and costs £250. Much cheaper is Selmer's Octave Divider which simulates the voice one octave down. The price of this is £65.

TELECASTER BASS

Dear Sir,

I recently purchased a second-hand Fender Telecaster Bass. It has the old type of printing on the head and the serial number is 235,893. It is in excellent condition. I wonder if you could tell me when this instrument was made or put me in touch with somebody who will be able to supply this information.

Yours faithfully,
T. Davidson,
Seaham,
County Durham.

We spoke to CBS/Arbiter who handle distribution of Fenders in this country, and they have actually had several inquiries of this nature. They have no records of these old models; but if you're that keen to find out, the date is printed on the body of the guitar under the neck, which you would have to remove!

URUBAMBA

Dear B.I.,

Please can you tell me something about the band Urubamba, whose album was produced by Paul Simon? Have they ever played with Paul Simon in the past, because their sound is a bit like the backing on Simon & Garfunkel's record, *El Condor Pasa*. Also, what sort of instruments do they play?

Yours sincerely,
David Harwood,
Chelmsford,
Essex.

Paul Simon discovered this group, then called Los Incas, in Paris in 1965 when he happened to play on the same bill as them. *El Condor Pasa* was actually Paul Simon's lyrics added to one of their tunes and he used their backing track on the recording.

Since then they have played on Simon's songs, *The Boxer* and *Duncan* and also on the Garfunkel number, *El Eco*. Their assortment of weird and wonderful instruments include the charango, which is made out of an armadillo shell, bamboo flutes and drums made from hollowed out tree trunks.

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REACHING FOR THE STARS

A light-hearted look at the perils (and pleasures) of interviewing

"Garbo greeted me in her negligée," and similar lines, were inserted into every feature writer's copy during the heyday of Hollywood just to prove that the writer was on the most intimate terms possible with the star in question. "And how are the children coming along?" enquired Errol, across our bottle of breakfast champagne," was enough not only to establish the writer as a close friend and confidant of the swash-

buckling Flynn, but also to hint at shared exploits, or hushed-up orgies, all carefully calculated, of course, to arouse the envy and avid attention of thousands of readers.

Now the attention has switched to the giants of rock, and any writer who does not regularly have Clapton dropping in for tea and does not receive invitations to join Elton aboard his private jet is a mere nobody who would probably be better off making the tea for

the staff of Pig Farming Weekly.

But is the life of a "glamour" writer really like they say? Is it the way people imagine-all lavish parties and booze-ups with groups in mid-air over the Caribbean? Occasionally, very occasionally, maybe once a year, yes. A sought-after invitation to tour Disneyland with Led Zeppelin will drop into your lap, you'll rejoice for a minute, check the date and discover it clashes with the weekend

you've arranged to spend with your elderly auntie in Doncaster. As you've already cancelled Auntie three times and received tearful missives in her trembling handwriting, conscience wins!

In reality, music stars are people who get spots, hangovers and indigestion just like anybody else. They can turn up late and bad tempered for an interview, but woe betide anyone who writes the "complete" truth. The myth of rock was built by keeping up the image of glamour and untouchability. "I met (substitute your current favourite) by the side of the swimming pool in his luxury hotel" is much more likely to be as follows . . .

Apologies

Your appointment to meet Sebastian Scintillator, lead singer of the Cosmic Twits, is for 10.30 a.m. at his hotel. It is raining. Your wellies have begun to leak and there is not a taxi to be seen. You set out by tube, wait half an hour for one, are misdirected several times and arrive, breathless and full of apologies at 11.

"I'll see if Mr. Scintillator is in," grins the dolly-bird receptionist, while you try to squeeze some of the water out of your dripping clothes into the nearest potted palm.



"Bl weary-eyed, stubbly-chinned and suffering from jet-lag"

Third time
lucky for

SUPERTRAMP

'The BBC were
very good to us'



Back Row L/R Dougie Thomson, Roger Hodgson, Richard Davies. Front Row L/R Bob C. Benbery, John Helliwell.

LOOKING through the album charts a few weeks ago, there was just one unfamiliar name amongst such scintillating regulars as The Wombles, The Osmonds and Mike Oldfield. It was Supertramp, with an album called *Crime Of The Century*.

Seeing that they had only done one gig with their current line-up before releasing the album, after months off the road and a total reorganisation of the band, and seeing that they were not exactly a household name on the tip of everyone's tongue, how on earth did enough people get to hear about them to put their album in the charts?

"It was sold mostly by word of mouth," explained guitarist Roger Hodgson. "The BBC were very good to us, too. I think if they get off on your music they'll do their best to help you. We found people like Alan Freeman, Bob Harris and Alan Black incredibly enthusiastic and helpful."

"Big business is really stifling music at present," added bass player Dougie Thomson. "Britain is saturated with bands. We were discussing this on the train coming up today, as a matter of fact. In my home town, Glasgow, there are more concerts going on than you can possibly imagine. Everyone who goes on tour hits the major cities so local bands hardly get a look in. So it's really good that something like our album can come up through the normal channels."

LINE-UP

Crime Of The Century is Supertramp's third album and first for A & M Records. The first two for Chrysalis were with a different line-up who were much more a regular kind of rock band than the five musicians who created the new album.

The band was started by keyboard player/composer Richard Davies. He came to London to assemble some musicians and first to join was Roger Hodgson, who added his writing talents to Richard's to form the basis of the band.

"The original idea behind the band," said Dougie, "was to work with Richard and Roger's songs. By the time I joined the band, just after the second album, things were in a confused sort of state. The group were at a low ebb, the direction was floundering and

Continued on page 12

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SUPERTRAMP

Continued from page 10

the business end of things had fallen apart.

"I really got off on their songs, which is why I joined. Then we set out to try to get back to the beginning again, to build the group up on that basis, around their songs."

In a way their third album exorcises the past. Not only does it contain songs which were all, bar one, written three years ago, but it has shaken off all shades of past line-ups by putting these songs in the charts. The record company describe it as a "concept album" but the band don't altogether agree with this label.

"The only 'concept' was our idea of putting the songs in an order where they followed on and told a story. In fact they are eight completely different songs which are complementary to each other," said Roger Hodgson.

GROWING UP

The subject matter of the album is — growing up. Perhaps that's why it has appealed to so many people. The lyrics are full of close to home observations which manage to recall many moments of childhood and teenage anguish, such as the resentment of a brainier child, hatred of being confined in school, the aimlessness of an unambitious person just about to go out into the world.

"The whole album is pretty personal," explained Dougie. "That one about *Jimmy Cream* is really Rick, though he'd never admit it."

Instrumentally, the whole thing is very keyboard orientated, something which was entirely unintentional and as such is rather misleading. If you hadn't heard the band before you might be forgiven for thinking that this was their usual sound, but it was just chance that all these numbers were written from the piano.

"We have a large backlog of material. If we hadn't put these songs on the album they would have been scrapped but they seemed too good to be scrapped. They're not even the best of the lot, they're

not even our favourite songs but we had to get this album out of our systems because we'd been planning it for so long," said Roger.

"When we started the group again there was nothing, just us, an idea, the title, *Crime Of The Century* and those songs. It was a target that we set ourselves."

MONEY

The other two members of the band are John Helliwell on sax and clarinets, and drummer Bob Benberg. There are certainly no ego trippers amongst them. They are the sort of people who would go on playing whether they were earning a lot of money or not, just for the joy of it. They certainly didn't compromise in any way by making an album deliberately aimed at a gap in the market, neither did they consciously develop a 'different' sound.

"We were aware of the fact that there was a uniqueness in our sound and I think that's why we have all been able to generate such enthusiasm towards it," said Dougie.

They harmonise extraordinarily well and their songs are full of sudden interesting changes which are sometimes reminiscent of 10cc, a voice suddenly coming in an octave below the others, or a few bars in a different key and rhythm. They don't go in for solos on their instruments but make the song the focal point.

EFFECTS

They also use tapes a lot for background effects and instead of resorting to a sound library like many people they went out with a Nagra portable recorder and taped their own. "Ken Scott, our producer, recorded the schoolchildren. He went down to his kid's school and hid behind the fence with the mike over a wall.

"The station announcement was done in Paddington. We waited for the right announcement, Didcot and Swindon,

which is where Rick and I come from," explained Roger.

The numbers were never tried out on the road before recording and now that the album is doing so well they find that reproducing it on stage is far from easy. "This band never went on the road at all until halfway through making the album," said Dougie. "The vocals are the hardest thing because often on the album we'd use one person's voice multi-tracked. Then there are technical things like the gong we use on the title track.

"We're getting into multi-instrumental things. The drum-



Bass player Doug Thomson



Guitarist Roger Hodgson

mer and I are the only ones who stick to our instruments. Roger spends his time flying around the stage from his guitar to various keyboards. But we want to work up a total act with things, maybe touches of humour, which come from the personalities of the people in the band.

CHAOTIC

"The first gig we did was King's Road Theatre and we hadn't had time to work out all the lighting cues and between numbers there was total darkness and cries of 'help, where's me guitar?! But things are less chaotic now."

Chart success doesn't seem to have affected them much. "You get a thrill seeing your name in the charts, which lasts for about ten minutes and then you get back to essentials again, like what to put on the next album," said Roger.

"It means nothing really. We've had a few people ring up and that's it."

Whatever fluke, phenomenon or piece of good fortune has smoothed their path into the charts, you can't say success has gone to their heads. They've been through the break-ups, hassles and slogging that most bands have and *Crime Of The Century* is the result of five months of really hard work, during which they were off the road and not earning a penny.

STATES

Now they are preparing for a European tour and, hopefully, their first visit to the States touring with the music from the album. In their opinion one reason why the album has had such a wide appeal is that, due to the order in which the numbers were arranged, if you wanted to read something into it, you could. "Even the five of us in the band all get entirely different things from it," commented Roger. A lot of people seem to find the 'message' rather pessimistic but I think it leaves room for hope."

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BRUCE JOHNSTON

Ex-Beach Boy turns producer

TWO YEARS ago Bruce Johnston decided his days with the Beach Boys were numbered. Not that life was so bad, merely his own musical creativity was being frustrated.

As Johnston said, "When you've someone like Brian Wilson around, it doesn't exactly give too many openings for other writers."

So Johnston had decided on making his own future and spent a year or so sorting things out. Financial worries were at least missing, since Beach Boy royalties continue at high level.

A year back he finally decided his future. In partnership with ex-Byrds producer Terry Melcher he formed his own label, Equinox Records. The label is distributed in the UK by RCA records.

TALENT

Johnston intends furthering his writing talent, at the same time producing various artists and even being part of a group, California Music.

The group's first single was issued in the UK just before Christmas, a surprising choice of an old Beach Boys number, *Don't Worry Baby* (RCA 2488). Other personnel with Johnston are Gloria Gaione, a back-up singer to David Cassidy on his World Tour finale during '74,

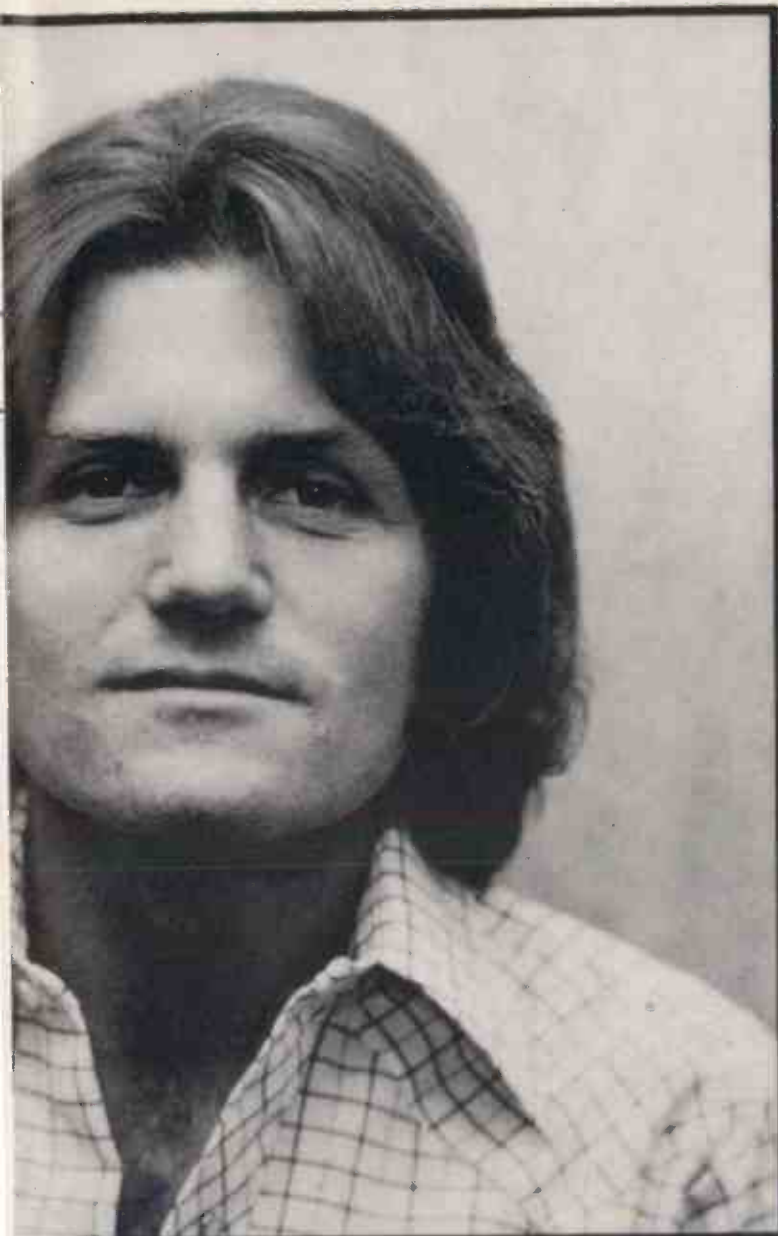
The Beach Boys including Bruce Johnston, back in the 'Surfing Sixties I'

and Kenny Hinkle. Hinkle has made his own album, produced by Johnston.

In conversation with the ex-

Beach Boy, *Beat* found Johnston concerned to make one point clear, "I haven't had any kind of quarrel with the Beach





Boys. I was talking to Brian only the other evening and asked him whether there was anything he would like me to say. As it happens they are doing incredibly well these days and attract a tremendous number of teen people. I still have a love for the music of Beach Boy time."

When Johnston made his decision to leave, the comment was "go ahead and every success."

He says he still intends, all things permitting, to do a few concerts with the Beach Boys but for now his main attention lies with Equinox.

ACCIDENT

The label at present boasts five acts and though Johnston is keen on acts other than the one he is part of, obviously an immediate hit from California Music will give an early lift.

Since Johnston has removed himself from the Beach Boys, why immediate recourse to an old Beach Boys number? Was he intending to present another group with the BBs sound?

"It was an accident choosing, *Don't Worry Baby*. It really was. I was playing round with it and Gloria and Kenny said, 'let's do it.' When you hear it, you'll find quite a different arrangement from the oldie.

"California Music have a West Coast feel, hence our name but we utilise other musical styles, including Mexican touches."

Should the group meet chart success then Johnston does expect time on the road, though as to how this would fit in with other commitments, he is re-

ticent to enlarge upon at this time.

On Johnston the record executive or producer, rather than Johnston the singer, he says, "There will be no difference. I don't aim to change and become all different. In any case I have a beautiful working partnership with Terry and also Ken Glancy of RCA. Terry and myself worked with him in the past. I don't see why though I shouldn't say, I'm an executive at one moment, at another, I'm a producer."

On himself as a producer Johnston says, "I've been doing odd bits for some time, as with Elton on his *Don't Let The Sun Go Down*. That guy is fantastic. I learned my trade with Brian and you know what he did on *Pet Sounds*. I rather like what Ringo is up to. *Only You* is cute but safe. *Photograph* was two notes, a cool song! *Only Sixteen* was a nice one. I mean he makes cute, charming and harmless music and why not?"

TAPES

However back to Johnston, "I see myself straddling a lot of fences and find the thought exciting. I'd like some British people to send me some tapes. I have a big signing on the way, it's off the point but take note!

"I think I have a good feel for an artist. I'm not going to implant Johnston or Beach Boys all over his music. People listen to me because of my experience and they know I respect them as artists.

"I'm not a self-sufficient producer. I'm not greedy. I can walk away. I want people showing their own musical talent."

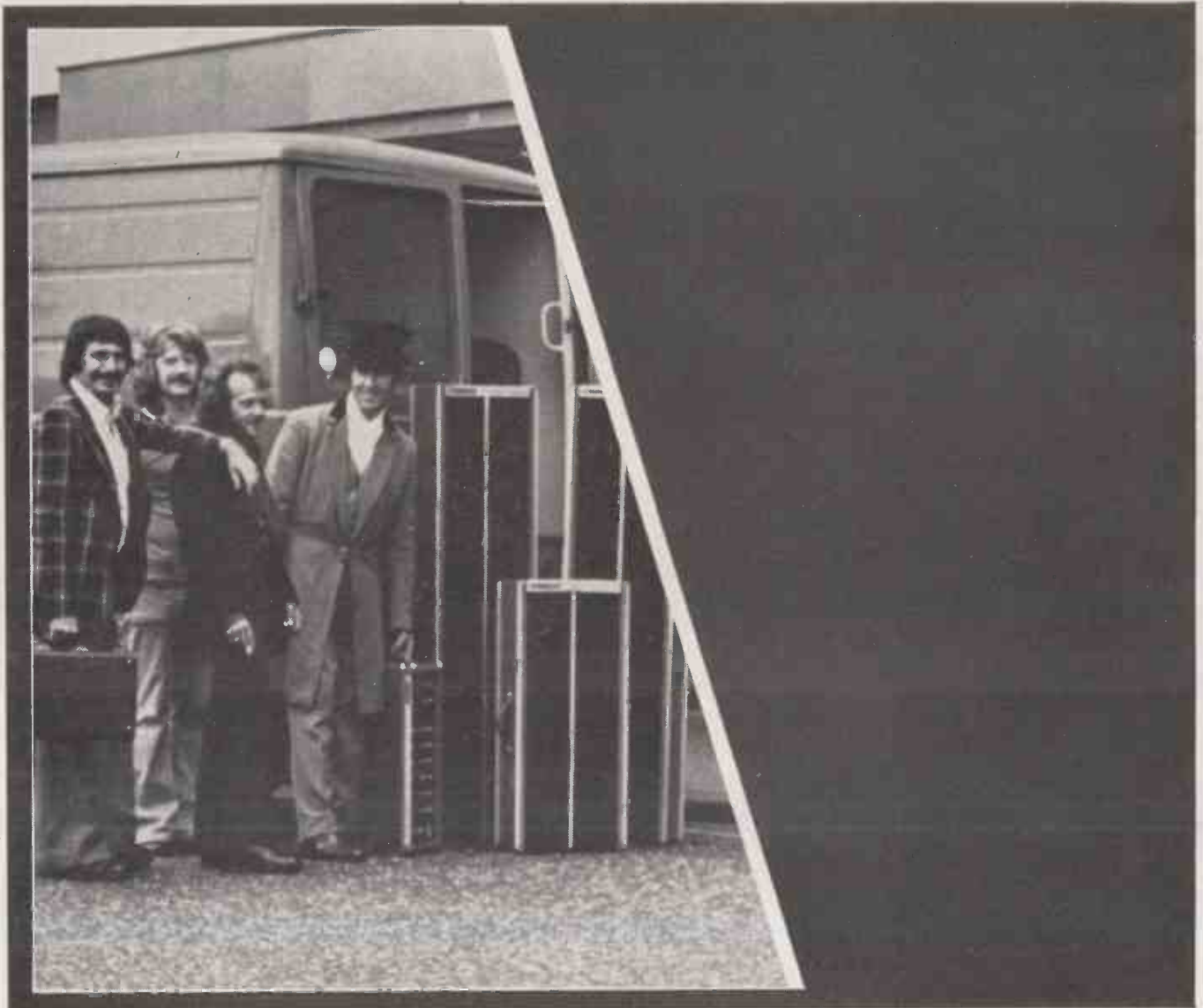
As you might expect from someone of Johnston's past track record and general artist contracts, he has no doubts as to his future success.

He says, "Record business has always fascinated me. I've always had this dual role. I mean even with the Beach Boys I was intrigued by the business angle. Now I can put my enthusiasm into concrete form. At the same time I have general enthusiasm. I've been waiting for the Keith Moon album. We live in close distance to each other. From what I've heard his disc is funny and humorous."

Onward then Bruce Johnston and we're watching with interest. Meanwhile I'm back listening to *Holland* and *Endless Summer*.

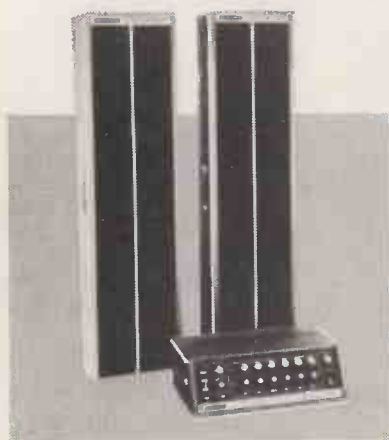
◀ The Beach Boys producing good vibrations on stage.





Kenny Ball with arm on shoulder of soundman Pickstock outside London Hilton.

The 151,000 mile sound system.



Working with a band that's constantly on the road can give any soundman headaches, so imagine the difficulties facing Ian Pickstock, sound technician for Kenny Ball and His Jazz Men. As the United Kingdom's most widely travelled jazz band, the group wore out its first sophisticated equipment van after 86,000 tortuous miles. But despite the rigors of countless one night stands, Ian's Vocal Master Sound System is still producing true-to-life sound after 151,000 miles on the road! When asked about the Vocal Master's instant adaptability, Ian says, "This system makes an expert out of me—whatever the size and shape of the hall."

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AFTER Detroit, Memphis, Muscle Shoals and Philadelphia it's now the turn of Miami to set the new trends in soul music.

The source of all the activity is the TK Studios run by former white pop star Steve Alaimo and record-business veteran Henry Stone.

Stone was the man who first discovered Ray Charles and Sam and Dave and lots of others. Basing his business on what is one of the South's largest independent distributor set-ups, he has since added the TK Studios and a whole string of record labels: Glades, Cat, TK, and Alston included.

The Miami Sound has already burst forth over here, thanks to George McRae's chart-

topping *Rock Your Baby* and KC and the Sunshine Band's *Queen of Clubs*.

The McRae and KC stories are very much inter-twined. McRae was the high voice heard on *Queen of Clubs* while it was KC and the Sunshine Band who furnished the backing tracks for *Rock Your Baby* (see page 48).

SUCCESS

For McRae it has been a long, hard road to overnight success, success not only for himself but for his wife Gwen McRae who has been scoring mini-hits of her own for several years and recently joined George for his debut UK tour.

They make records on their

own and they also have a joint album in the pipeline. More than that, George and Gwen have provided back-up voices not only on virtually all the TK recordings of the past half-decade but also on much of the product emanating from Atlantic's Criteria Studios just down the road—and that includes Bill Wyman's *Monkey Grip* album among other projects.

The story of how George and Gwen first came together reads as though it was thought up by a Hollywood script-writer, but it's the truth.

It started when a drunken sailor met a pretty girl at the Sugarbowl Restaurant in Pensacola, Florida. She told him she didn't talk to strangers.

A year later, and again a bit worse for drink, the same sailor met the same girl in the same restaurant and got the same brush-off.

A few days afterwards, they met on the street and he got to walk her home. A week later and George and Gwen McRae got married!

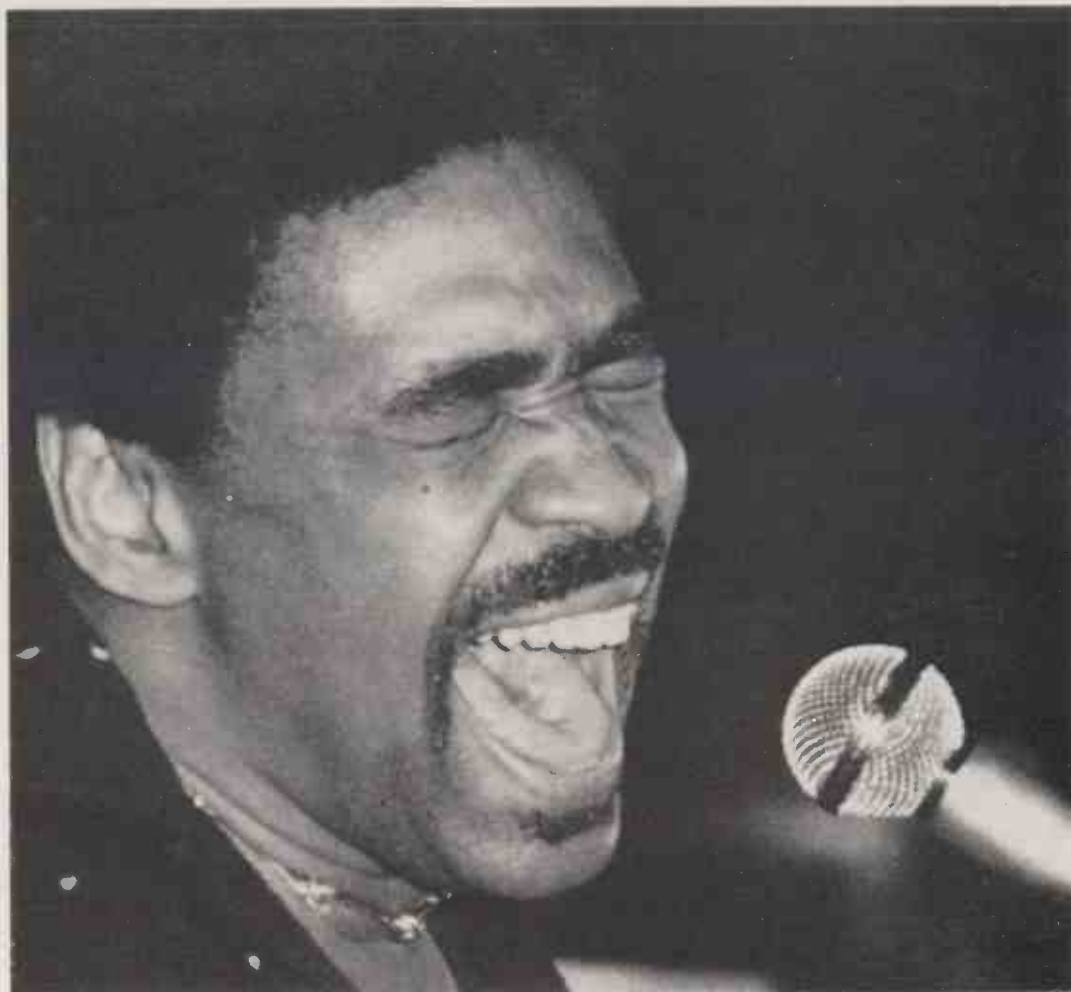
GOSPEL

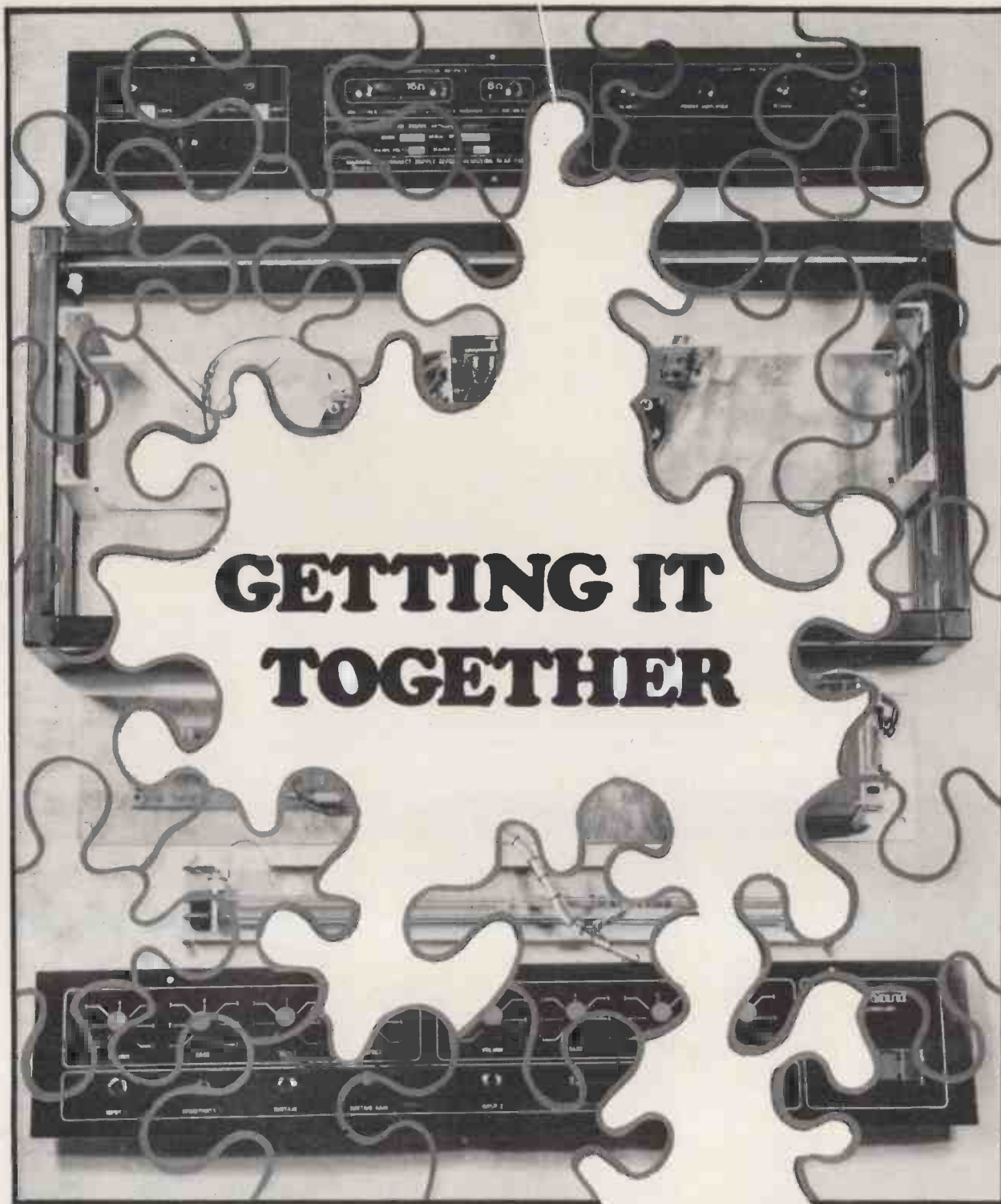
Music was their immediate common interest. George, born in West Palm Beach, Florida, on 19th October 1944, started singing in a church gospel choir at six years of age then at high school formed a rock group known as the Jivin' Jets

Continued on page 19

THE MIAMI McRAE SOUND

The
sound
which was
born when a
drunken sailor
met a
pretty girl in
Pensacola



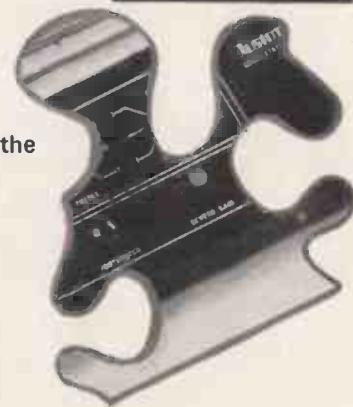


GETTING IT TOGETHER

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THE MIAMI McRAE SOUND continued

but they broke up after graduation and George enlisted in the US Navy.

Gwen, born in Pensacola on 21st December 1943, had been raised in a very religious and musical family and worked with local gospel groups like the Lafayettes and the Independents, now and then getting onto the supporting bill when a big-name gospel group hit town.

The pair set up home for a few months then came 18 months of separation when George was posted to Japan where he set up a group with fellow servicemen.

TOUGH GOING

Returning to Florida, George re-formed the Jivin' Jets and brought Gwen into the show as featured vocalist: "But it was tough going, we just couldn't make enough money with all those people to feed so we broke the group up and started working as a double-act, using house-bands," recalls the soft-spoken George.

"In '67 we got a residency at the Kandy Bar Club in West Palm Beach. We really enjoyed that but it was tough work.

"We'd sing there six nights a week and six days a week

we'd do the cleaning and the maintenance on the club to make up our money."

After eight months of this double-duty, the young couple split and started playing the Florida club circuit while George would take temporary day jobs, as a mechanic, window cleaner or machinist, to bump up their slim earnings.

At one of their club dates they were introduced to soul star Betty Wright and her producer Willie Clarke who had been impressed by their act and gave them a number to call to see about a recording contract.

"I just put it in my pocket and forgot it," says George, "I didn't think we were ready yet, I guess we were scared really."

Two years passed before they were approached again, this time by top producer Brad Shapiro, who works with Wilson Pickett, and Henry Stone, the man who's number Betty Wright and Willie Clarke had given them.

Stone put out their first record *Two Hearts in a Tangle* on his Alston label but it failed to make any noise outside of the local charts.

Several records followed,

with minimal success but they were building valuable experience and stuck with it.

"Once we got into the recording studio we gained confidence and knew we could cut it.

"At that time, the TK operation was really more of a production thing. Stone would cut the masters, issue them locally on one of his own labels then, if they went well, lease them to a major company for national distribution."

MANAGING

That way, George McCrae ended up on United Artists and his wife on Columbia.

George's records did little, Gwen's did better so he dropped into the background, concentrating on managing her career, restricting his own singing to working on other people's back-up vocals.

And that's the way things stood in the Spring of 1974 when George happened to be by the studio at just the right moment.

H. W. Casey and Rick Rinch, the two young white writer/musicians who are the nucleus of KC and the Sunshine Band, had recorded a really catchy backing track but it was in the

wrong key for Casey's voice.

They needed lyrics and somebody to sing them, which is where McCrae came in: "They asked me to hum the tune and they flipped over the way I did it, so we all sat down there and then and came up with a title and a set of lyrics."

It worked perfectly. *Rock Your Baby* was the outcome and it shot to the top of the charts in America, England and around the world — its stay at number one on the Continent setting some kind of longevity record.

McCrae has since followed through with the equally catchy *I Can't Leave You Alone*, Gwen's *Move Me Baby* is snatching a lot of disco play, KC's *Queen of Clubs* has made the charts and the Miami Sound has really arrived.

"It's all a kind of family thing down at TK, I suppose a bit like Motown and Stax were in the beginning. We all help out on each other's recording sessions and that's why it suits Gwen and I so well.

"We can pursue our own individual careers, making our own records, while at the same time working together and making joint records and live appearances."



BEAT INSTRUMENTAL'S LEGENDARY GIANTS OF POP...

Buddy Holly, rehearsing for his British tour in March, 1958, and (far right) in January, 1959, New York at the last picture session before his death the following month.

In just three years of recording he had a tremendous impact on the future of pop music!



BUDDY



HOLLY

BUDDY HOLLY'S actual recording career was all over so tragically fast. His first-ever studio sessions were in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 26, 1956. Just three years later, February 3, 1959, he was dead . . . killed in an air crash that also claimed fellow chart artistes Big Bopper and Richie Valens.

He was a star of the 1950's, a posthumous hit-maker of the 1960's — and remains very much a legend of the 1970's.

A short, sharp, and quite magnificent career. Take his *That'll Be The Day* smash-hit single. A million groups round the world mentally digested that song, arrangement and style, built on it in various ways—and used it as the basis of the beat boom that was to come in the 1960's.

Lucky

It's said that he was lucky because he came along at the right time. There was skiffle, or do-it-yourself music in Britain; there was Elvis, Haley and a precious few rocking the States. But Holly was a new kind of figurehead, arriving at a time when pop outside the top bracket didn't quite know where it was going.

He was bespectacled, and it didn't matter. He had a weird way of sounding his vowels, and nobody gave a damn. He didn't even look or talk like a pop giant. And maybe that was the secret.

One critic explained thus: "He hinted that anybody anywhere could pick up a guitar, sing songs, get rich, pull chicks . . . all you needed was a bit of luck and a reasonable talent and a lot of nerve."

That oversimplifies the magic of Buddy Holly.

Charles Hardin Holley was born in Lubbock, Texas, on September 7, 1936. He could have joined the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra but instead

took the only other musical alternative . . . he sang country and western music.

With his then partner Bob Montgomery, Buddy got a show-opening gig on a bill starring Elvis Presley and Marty Robbins. At least that got him noticed, and a Decca talent scout signed him to record in Nashville . . . Montgomery was chopped out of the deal because the Decca people were looking for potential rockers, not standard country voices.

It started from there. The first single sank without trace, but there was enough promise for the record company to persevere. Holly built a group, The Three Tunes, which was to include drummer Jerry Allison, guitarist Sonny Curtis and bassist Don Guess. The basis of the Crickets . . . which was the label credit name on *That'll Be The Day*.

Like most of the pop stars of the day, and today come to that, Holly was masterminded in the studios. His mentor, his Svengali, was Norman Petty, who looked more like a bank-clerk than a super-rocker, but who knew his stuff.

By 1958, Holly and the Crickets toured the world. In London, they were predictably photographed with a couple of professional cricketers, a stunt which fell deservedly on its face. The hits continued . . . *Early in the Morning*, which Bobby Darin (now also dead) wrote; *Maybe Baby*; *Rave On*.

Family Roots

Holly married Puerto Rican girl Maria Elena Santiago—the fans didn't mind, because it was only natural that a boy-next-door type pop hero should get some family roots. He joined a show called *The Biggest Show Of Stars For 1959*. And while some of the party were flying from Clear Lake, Iowa, to Fargo, North Dakota, the four-seat single-engine plane crashed into snow-capped slopes.

Buddy Holly, pop giant, was dead. Age 21.

The mind boggles at all the possible permutations of Holly's career had he lived. He'd already tinkered with Gospel-flavoured songs, like *Early In The Morning*. He planned an album of Ray Charles soul-searers. He'd introduced the pizzicato string sound to rock, as on *It Doesn't Matter Anymore*, that startingly-titled posthumous hit.

Continued on page 22

BUDDY HOLLY

Continued from P.21.

Play a 1958 Holly single now and it doesn't sound at all dated.

He was really getting into writing his own songs, but he had a sharp ear for good-quality songs, no matter where they came from. He was particularly impressed with the lyric-melodic efforts of a new writer who had been short-time pianist in Bobby Vee's backing group. A new guy name of — Bob Dylan. Holly had said he'd like to record Dylan—give the new boy a break.

Vocally, Holly was a lot better than some critics gave him credit for. He had a flexible, light voice, but when he wanted to he could rock with as much power as Presley. Ready Teddy is an example. But it was that much higher-pitched than most of his contemporaries.

And if it felt sometimes the voice was a shade thin to suit the body of the song . . . well, he was almost certainly the first rock and roll singer to double-track his voice and harmonise with himself. A couple of examples: *Words Of Love* and *Listen To Me*.

The flow of Holly discs is virtually over. Norman Petty

added backing tracks to a whole mountain of tapes which Buddy had recorded mostly unaccompanied. It's been a matter of surprise that he managed to get so much on tape in such a short time—literally dozens of his own songs, of varying impact and importance.

Uninspired

But inevitably much of the flood of posthumous platters has been somewhat uninspired. Mostly it's of Holly just singing for his own interest on all-night sessions. But the really lasting tributes to Holly's talents are in those superb productions and arrangements of his hit singles.

Play a 1958 Holly single now, nearly twenty years on, and it doesn't sound at all dated. That's the magic. Had he lived, there would have been people trying to edge him away from rock and roll and into the Andy Williams-Johnny Mathis cabaret fields. Petty himself was guilty of this shameful thinking!

But for all the nice-guy softness and sensitivity, Holly was

▼ Buddy (minus glasses) in 1957 pictured with the original Crickets Jerry Allison and Joe B. Mauldin in their home town of Lubbock.



a man able to look after himself. And he knew those roots, be it by use of strings, Afrodrums, balalaikas, tubas or sitars.

In just three years of recording, Holly influenced so many different areas of pop music. Plus a string of bandwagon-jumping singles, like *A Tribute To Buddy Holly* — or Bobby Vee's album *I Remember Buddy Holly*.

And the big names that followed the Holly era paid less effusive tributes. The Beatles' version of *Words Of Love* on the *With The Beatles* album was as near as dammit to the original. The Rolling Stones, of course, did *Not Fade Away*, their second and consolidating hit single.

Admirers

As for Adam Faith . . . well, he says his real idol was the actor James Dean, but he sure managed to sound a lot like Holly when it came to singing. And Faith's arranger-musical director John Barry was clearly an admirer of Holly scores.

Buddy Holly was an international star for his music

alone—for his style and his songs—not for his personality and appearance. Presley was hard; Holly was soft. Both were thoroughly professional.

Listen to a Holly record today, and bear in mind how recording techniques have improved in the past couple of decades. Ponder the fact that for Holly it had to be essentially a simple process. There was no hiding of imperfections, simply because the guy with no voice had nowhere to hide.

Tribute

His posthumous hits were *It Doesn't Matter Any More*, *Peggy Sue Got Married*, *Baby I Don't Care*, *Reminiscing*, *Brown Eyed Handsome Man*, *Bo Diddley* and *Wishing* — all on Coral. The flow and flurry of hits ended by 1963, just as the Beatles were appearing.

But the only thing, surely, that stopped Buddy Holly from holding on to his top spot, and continuing his tradition-breaking influence, was death.

For his contributions to today's pop standards, the name Buddy Holly really DOES matter, and will go on mattering.



▼ Buddy, Jerry and Joe at the New York Paramount Theater, probably early 1958. Above, a typical publicity still from the 'fifties.



**BEAT INSTRUMENTAL'S
LEGENDARY GIANTS OF POP**

album reviews

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

FLEETWOOD MAC

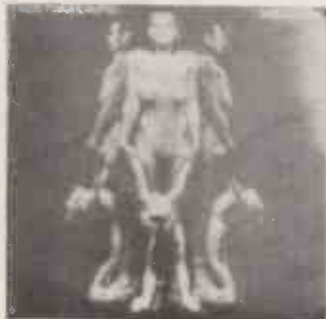
Some bands age and others grow more mature. Fleetwood Mac belong to the latter group, and *Heroes Are Hard To Find* puts them firmly in the category.

Heroes Are Hard To Find, recorded at Angel City Sound in Los Angeles, reflects an increasingly strong West Coast influence on the band, and particularly on the writing of Bob Welch. It could detract from the band's strengths if carried too far, but on this album it's absolutely beautiful. The title track is arguably the best with Christine McVie's vocals supplemented by an outstanding horn arrangement, and the still fresh rhythms of Mick Fleetwood and John McVie underpinning the whole thing nicely.

UNDERRATED

Other particularly good tracks are *Come A Little Bit Closer* and *Prove Your Love*, which tend to demonstrate that Christine is one of the most underrated female vocalists this country has produced.

The only drawback is Bob Welch's vocals, but given his weakness, the production skills of Bob Hughes and the band themselves have made the best of it.



THE SWEET
DESOLATION BOULEVARD
LPL1 5080

Over a year ago, *Beat Instrumental* broke the story that the Sweet hadn't even played on their first three hit singles. That was the beginning of their *We want to be treated seriously* campaign, of which *Desolation Boulevard* is the latest battle.

In *Desolation Boulevard*, they have certainly proved they can play. No doubt about it, those instruments are certainly turning out the right notes. Unfortunately, they still have to prove that they can write decent songs.

The Chinn-Chapman touch is still there in the production of the songs, but they have only contributed two of the nine songs. The boys themselves are responsible for all the other tracks, with the exception of *My Generation*.

On the whole, the Chinn-Chapman compositions seem to be the best. They've written all the Sweet hit singles, and they obviously have an understanding of the band's strengths and weaknesses, perhaps more than the band themselves. The band's own compositions are variously weak, contrived, and over produced to the heights of the ridiculous.

Their rendition of *My Generation*, complete with Brian Connolly's imitation of Daltrey's Purple Heart Stutter, is really very bad. I just can't think of a more damning thing to say about it.

One ends up wondering why they want to be taken seriously. They were pretty successful in glitter when they were playing *Blockbuster* and *Wig Wam Bam*, and on the whole they were pretty reasonable musically.

Perhaps, in an attempt to say something meaningful, they are acknowledging the fact that they are growing older. If this album is the best they can do in their mid-twenties, I would guess that aging can hold nothing but terror for them.

QUEEN *SHEER HEART ATTACK* EMI EMC3061

Without doubt Brian May's heading up for guitar-superstar recognition that's so often bandied about but so rarely deserved. His playing style could be said by some to be rather old fashioned in that he still plays identifiable runs — but they're good, so good. It's especially impressive to listen to his achievements on this album (listen to *Brighton Rock*) when you know that he had to go in and record many of his parts on previously laid tracks because he was hospitalised during the making of the album.

Most people have pointed at Freddie Mercury as being the focal point of Queen. I would argue and say that Brian is — especially from the standpoint of this magazine. He contributes far and away the most in terms



of actual playing and his on-stage mastery is quiet but sure.

The album was recorded at several different studios and I think it is possible to hear a slight difference. Compare *Flick Of The Wrist* with *Killer Queen*.

Already highly successful the band's set to be big.

R.H.

NICO *THE END* ISLAND ILPS 9311

This is not for those of a nervous disposition. However, if your favourite form of entertainment is all night horror films, you'll love this. Nico made her name with Velvet Underground, but since it split, she's never reached the heights of success achieved by that other ex-member of the Underground, Lou Reed. One difficulty she must have faced is the unsuitability of her voice to conventional material. It's the coldest voice you're ever likely to hear, almost inhuman in its chilling clarity and dead-pan, zombie-like delivery. Her German accent only serves to make her songs more sinister in a B movie fashion.

With this record, however, she has found the perfect vehicle for self-expression — horror songs. And the musicians she has used, Eno on synthesizer, Phil Manzanera on guitar and John Cale on just about everything else combine to produce some pretty disturbing sound effects.

The synthesizer is used to great effect, particularly on the track, *Innocent And Vain*, where the sound effects conjure up a murder in a graveyard, munchings, rattling chains and demoniacal laughter thrown in. You'll never have heard a more spine-tingling version of The Doors' number, *The End*, particularly where Nico's lunatic whispering of "I want to kill you — Mother?" blends into the howling of the wind.

As a horror concept album it could be taken several ways. It could be the end of the world, with the powers of darkness come to claim their kingdom, it could be the mental collapse of an individual or even the collapse of the Third Reich, if the final track, a version of *Deutschland Ueber Alles* is anything to go by. It's perfect for background music to a seance or a recital of ghost stories, but if you prefer something more in the easy listening vein, bury this with a stake through the centre and buy Hudson Ford. L.R.



THE SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY BAND

**THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM
VERTIGO 6360 112**

This third album from The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, is separated from their previous LP *Next* by about a year, and although there are two or three outstanding tracks which should make it a must for Harvey fans it does lack the impact of *Next* and *Framed*. *Framed* came in for its share of criticism as far as production was concerned, but unpolished though it was in places, in many respects, I still think it shows The Sensational Alex Harvey Band at their best both for material and sheer balls — *Midnight Moses* remains by far the most suitable single material the band have recorded and still deserves to be released as such.

The best material on *The Impossible Dream* is all on the second side, which opens with one of those vaudevillian piss-taking pieces complete with demoniacal laughter, that The Sensational Alex Harvey Band seem to do so well. Incidentally I insist on repeating the full name of the you-know-who's because I figure that any band that has the audacity to call itself sensational and live up to that claim deserves to be referred to by its proper moniker instead of the mere abbreviation "Sensationals" or even worse, the unintelligibly truncated SAHB.

It's been remarked many times that The Sensational Alex Harvey Band are preferably seen as well as heard, and I wouldn't argue with that. *Weights Made Of Lead* with its mercilessly pounding beat captures well the intensity of a Sensational Alex Harvey Band live performance. (Where does old Alex find all that energy?)

A short, high-powered version of the old rock and roll standard *Money Honey* gives way to the even shorter title track which has Alex torturing his larynx to reach what seems to be the impossible note but sounds like a heartfelt statement nevertheless.

This is followed by *Tomahawk Kid*, a gem of a track written by Alex and keyboard man Hugh McKenna with Hugh and guitarist Zal Cleminson demonstrating their instrumental ability to complement lyrics and Alex's manic, threatening vocal interpretations with such pertinence that it would be difficult to imagine Alex working with any other musicians.

The most remarkable track on the album is *Anthem*, which with its drums and bagpipes courtesy of the "London-Scottish TAVR" sounds as though it should be a piece of emotive Scottish patriotism but lyrically isn't.

Side one contains *The Hot City Symphony* Parts One and Two, the former a re-worked version of *Vambo Marble Eye*, and the latter, *Man In The Jar*, in the *Framed* tradition with Alex doing his Edward G. Robinson impersonation; *River Of Love* — suggestive but unmemorable; and another head-kicker, *Long Hair Music* which ends in the frenzied jock ravings of "I Can't Get Enough" (gasp).

Even in his quieter moments, old gang-leading rough diamond Uncle Alex never lets up though—this side of the disc fades out to the following lines sung in mock crooner-style: "I knew it was time to say goodbye; when I felt that warmth against my thigh,— Hey! Is that you pissin' on my leg?!" No sell-out here to a middle-of-the-road middle class sugar and spice market!

A mixed album by previous standards then, but one that still reinforces my opinion that in many ways Alex Harvey is the most original and outstanding talent around the current rock scene. D.R.

**HUDSON FORD
FREE SPIRIT
A&M AMLS 68274**

Since leaving the *Strawbs*, it hasn't taken Richard Hudson and John Ford long to develop a sound and style which is all theirs. They have a happy knack of writing good commercial melodies and lyrics and, as if this wasn't enough, they are also extremely clever at arranging their numbers so that there is always a dominant and memorable riff which repeats itself and becomes an important factor in each song.

They have got together a number of musicians who not only complement Hudson and Ford's tight harmonies and melodic writing style but who each make an important individual contribution, particularly

guitarist Mickey Keen who is outstanding on *Take A Little Word* and keyboard player Chris Parren who plays tastefully and sensitively rather than going in for flash runs.

Their most ambitious number on this album is *Silent Star*, which follows up the science fiction precedent set by the track *Revelations* on their last album, *Nickelodeon*. Apart from the opening few bars which are from *2001* and, as such, pretty cliched, it develops into a rich build-up of keyboard sounds with a 'save the world' message that is curiously poignant.

It's not an album which hits you over the head with its brilliance or originality, but it is one which grows more and more pleasant with each listening, as you keep discovering subtle little instrumental touches that you missed the first time round. L.R.

**SPARKS
PROPAGANDA
ISLAND ILPS9321**

It's quite something when you can really call a band different, and that's what I would call Sparks. There is really nobody making music like it. There's no meter in the lyrics, the rhythmic structures are extremely advanced and pose the question whether complication for its own sake is a good thing.

By combining a marked image with a marked sound Sparks have cut through, but personally I'm still waiting to hear a good song from them. I don't mean to knock a good band, or interesting writers, it's just that originality eventually has to be productive, not just exhibitionist.

Frankly I found listening to the album from start to finish quite difficult. Although the band changed tempo and mood, their sound is so distinctive that it's a lot to take at one sitting. Rightly successful, I'm forced to suspend final judgment until I see behind the scenes. R.H.



**RINGO STARR
GOODNIGHT VIENNA
PCS 7168**

Because he is who he is, this contains some amazing stuff. Whether he'd be that good denied numbers from Lennon, Elton John, Nilsson et al is arguable.

Ringo sings better here than ever, but it's a strange realisation that a man who has built the home studio of his dreams (*Imagine* was done there) should still nip off and hire Sunset Sound studios, L.A. I would suppose that's where the mean players hang out, but you know what I mean.

Richard Perry (I've heard that name before somewhere) produced with tasteful precision and there's some really excellent horns (Bobby Keys in there somewhere).

There's a good number from Elton John and Bernie Taupin, *Snookeroo*, and Ringo's efforts with Vini Poncia stand up very well. It's a remarkably good album, with a line-up to make any producer self-conscious. R.H.

**ART ROSENBAUM
FIVE-STRING BANJO
KICKING MULE SNKF 101**

Art Rosenbaum is a contemporary American banjo picker who's studied the old-time traditional styles of banjo playing which are presented on this essentially ethnic folk music album. Rosenbaum's dedication is event, not only from his playing but also from the knowledge he displays in the comprehensive sleeve notes which deal with each tune in turn.

Being principally instrumental, with some very clean picking, this record is ideal for the musician studying such material. It is in any case, only likely to appeal to enthusiasts of this style of music.

It is however a good thing that such labels like Kicking Mule exist, who are prepared to cater for minority audience markets. D.R.

INSTRUMENTAL NEWS

POCKET-SIZE ELECTRONIC TUNING FORK FROM BAUCH

SURELY one of the most ingenious examples of the updating of a traditional concept by means of electronics is provided by the new EMT 117 TS electronic tuning fork, marketed in the UK by FWO Bauch Ltd and offering several advantages over the traditional instrument. It is a pocket sized unit, described by Bauch as a "highly stable, precision

tuning aid of pocket-size dimensions and weighing less than a pound."

The design employs the latest CMOS technology and the generated frequency is independent of temperature changes over the range ten degrees centigrade to forty degrees centigrade. A clearly marked knob allows the frequency to be adjusted in 1 Hz steps between 435Hz and 445Hz.

Special harmonics added to the fundamental frequency gives the tone the sound of an oboe, the instrument normally used by orchestras for tuning. A switchable vibrato, claim Bauch, "makes the sound even more true to life."

Tuning of baroque instruments, conforming to the tuning standard agreed at the Vienna Conference of 1885, as well as modern orchestras is possible.

The unit contains its own 9v speaker and a battery. Connections for an external power supply are also fitted, and audio output terminals to drive an external load when required. Further details are available from FWO Bauch Ltd, 49 Theobald Street, Boreham Wood, Herts.



Portability Breakthrough for ARP Players

HOT on the heels of the advent of ARP's new synthesiser, the Explorer, comes another development to aid the synthesiser player, the instrument case to end all cases. ARP have teamed up with another company, Anvil, to produce a case which is described as a 'sturdy, riveted, angle iron edged, piano-hinged carrying case' and there is one to fit every ARP model from String Ensemble to Odyssey. Handles are placed over the centre of gravity in each case to facili-

tate easier carrying and reinforced corners add an extra protective measure.

Talking of ARP synthesisers, two exponents of the same are Hugo Montenegro and Stevie Wonder and these two musical masterminds have combined to produce an album of Stevie's greatest hits, entitled *Hugo In Wonderland*, recorded on the RCA label.

Original

With Hugo's son, John, at the ARP's controls and a very tight band of backing musicians, Montenegro has come up with his own highly original versions of numbers such as *Superstition* and *Living For The City*, which impressed Stevie so much that he wrote to Montenegro on the album sleeve, 'You have taken what I write, play and sing about to an even higher level of expression.' And that's praise indeed!

BIG TOP LIGHTING & SOUND

YEARs of experience in the field of sound and lighting have prepared Lighting and Sound Equipment Ltd. of Barking, Essex for jobs ranging in size from ordinary discos to the largest cabaret nightspots.

An example is the unit installed at the Big Top Restaurant at the Circus Tavern in Purfleet.

This installation called for a total of 44 L.S.E. electronic demos controlled by two pre-set faders or automatic effects, 42-special rotating lamps with narrow beam spotlights controlled by dimmers and various spot and follow-spot lamps, a sound-mixing desk with an 18-channel unit complete with a radio microphone.

Each channel has full moni-

toring and also has an overload-lamp indicator (brackets are a standard feature of most L.S.E. mixers).

Although reverb and echo are contained in external units, a sound distribution switching system is included. One particular point is that the desk was built with low, middle and high frequency crossover networks at 0 DBM, giving separate drive to 1,100W of power amplifiers.

The artist has three separate foldback systems giving good coverage over the stage, and, as a special feature, the hydraulic dance floor is used to extend the stage.

A complete two-way talk-back system designed by Lighting and Sound Equipment is also included. Their equipment also includes power amplifiers, mixing desks, pre-amplifiers, talk-back systems, as well as lighting control desks and power demo racks, all of which are manufactured in the L.S.E. factory in Barking.

AMCRON resumes production

Amcron 700 series and 800 series tape recorders are again available in the UK, from Macinnes Laboratories Ltd., following the fire at Amcron's Elkhart plant which wiped out tape machine production and also all of their engineering drawings.

Say Macinnes: "with the maximum effort in the factory being devoted to amplifier production, coupled with the need to sit down and start again on the engineering side, it has inevitably meant a big break in the supply of these fine

machines."

A range of new accessory units is also being offered with the recorders, and a brochure is available from Macinnes which describes in detail the various types of electronics which may be mated with the two different transports. As before, the recorders are available as mono, stereo or four track in-line machines in player-only versions. Macinnes Laboratories Ltd. are at Macinnes House, Carlton Park Industrial Estate, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2NL.



ORANGE PA AGAIN AT MIDEM

FOR the fifth consecutive year, Orange Musical Industries will be supplying PA and other stage amplification equipment at MIDEM. Announcing this, Orange's Cliff Cooper remarked that the order represented some twenty amps and stacks, and that the PA would probably be in excess of 4,000 watts.

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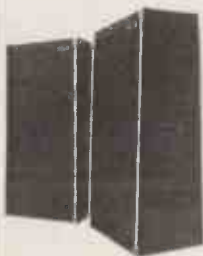
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drumming with henrit

Bob Henrit continues his series for drummers

THE drummer's role within the band has changed a little since the days when bands used to consist of several musicians and a drummer.

Nowadays it's essential for the drummer to understand musical concepts. It's not good enough to know yourself what voicing or harmony you'd like to hear if you can't converse musically with the rest of the band. I regret not having been forced to go to piano lessons when I was a kid; the piano is the very best grounding for any musician, especially from the composition and arrangement standpoints. I suppose that, like all my friends, I would have hated going to piano lessons but the experience would prove absolutely invaluable to me now. It seems to become more difficult to learn anything as one gets older because normally it's impossible to be single minded about one's interests.

These days it's not just the drummer who is the time-keeper in the band; it's up to all the musicians to keep time. Unfortunately it's always the drummer who is scowled at if the music speeds up or slows down—it's almost as if the poor drummer has a magic anchor he can throw out if the music speeds. Oh well we all have our cross to bear.

UNDERSTANDING

It's necessary for the bass player and the drummer to have musical sympathy and understanding for each other since they normally play more or less the same basic pattern, at least in modern musical formats. In Argent Jim Rodford and I mostly play exactly the same lines, whereas when I do sessions with Dave Wintour we tend to play two completely different parts. This cuts down my learning time substantially. All I have to do is learn the song instead of first the song and then the bass line. Of course the two rhythmic patterns could fight against each other but Dave plays so lyrically and economically that it leaves me lots of space to play time alongside him.



● The piano is the best grounding for any musician ●

I find it very stimulating to play on sessions with other musicians since I never know exactly what they might play in a given set of circumstances and vice versa. I have to concentrate harder than I would in my familiar Argent set up. Though with the acquisition of our new guitarist/catalyse, nobody knows what the other will play. It's very refreshing. It's really very good to jam with people sometimes too, although I'm not exactly knocked out by endless twelve-bar repetitions.

Those of you who are into more esoteric Rock 'n' Roll must be aware of time signatures like 5/4, 7/8, 9/8, 11/8 and so on. Of course the easy way to play these is to hit 5 or 7 or 9 beats in the bar and then figure out the accents later; this would definitely work but certainly wouldn't get you through a Don Ellis or Mahavishnu session! I suggest you listen to the music first, find out where the other musicians are putting their accents and split your part into a familiar format. Obviously 7/4 could be divided into one bar 4/4 and one bar 3/4, but on the other hand it might be two bars 3/4 and an odd crotchet, or even 5/4 and 2/4 and so on. I play the melodic accents with everyone until I can sort out my offbeats, etc. The acid

test is whether or not you can fill in comfortably in these meters. In short determine accurately the way the bar is broken up and fill in confidently at a place where you know you can. Failing all this, as Rod advocates, you could always think in terms of a musical pattern instead. There really is no substitute for practice within the band. This and a little diligent attention to your record collection.

CHOOSE A STYLE

While we're on the subject of fill-ins, there would appear to be three distinct ways to fill. We can halve the tempo like Ringo, we can play in the same meter like Keith Moon, or we can double it like Billy Cobham. Technically this means playing crotchet for Ringo, Quavers for Moon and semi-quavers for Billy Cobham. Interesting isn't it? I think these three, along with Pete Baker, have really made a particular style of drumming their own and contributed greatly to the development of Rock 'n' Roll. Of course there are lots of others but this mob have really spearheaded styles of music with their playing, not just styles of drumming.

I suppose it could be time to

touch briefly on Drum Solos. I know that even drummers in the audience can be bored very quickly by them, so you can imagine how bored a non-drummer can get. It must be kept interesting. Basically there are two ways to play a conventional solo. Either play something difficult and make it look easy like Buddy Rich or play something easy and make it look difficult, like almost everybody else. These seem to be the only rules except perhaps it should have a logical format. It must have rhythmical highs and lows and end on a crescendo. It's much better to leave the people wanting more rather than wanting less. By the way I would appreciate you not coming up to me quoting this article after you've heard my solo!

With so many drum-monsters around at the moment it's good to get one's own style and technique into perspective. Don't ever be put off by anyone. Several tours ago, in America, we worked with the Mahavishnu Orchestra and all the time I was doing my solo Billy Cobham was down in the audience taking photographs of me.

At first I freaked but, as I got into the solo, I calmed down and even began to show off a bit. I rationalised that I can't be that bad a drummer if he's out there watching me, unless, of course, it's because he thinks I look good in photographs. I got drunk with Ian Paice recently and we discussed the relative merits of Buddy Rich, Billy Cobham, Alphonse Muzon et al. and we both had the same attitude towards these fellows. Yes, they really had their shit together, but in a different way so had we—and, probably, so have you.

It's very negative to go and see a drummer and become so pissed-off (demoralised) that you think in terms of going home and burning your Y-fronts (drum sticks, cymbals). When you see someone better than you it ought to give you incentive to work out something better for yourself. It's all in the mind. There's something to be learnt from everyone. Buddy Rich might even learn something from you!

Roadies Page—

MIKE BRISCOE & CHRIS COCKRAN OF THE STRAWBS

ROADIES HAVE to be calm people. It's a life of dealing with problems and getting over obstacles that threaten to get between a band and the audience. Mike Briscoe and Chris Cockran take care of things for the Strawbs.

They've been with the band since the early part of last year and they're now in the position of understanding the band's needs precisely. Along with Vic who looks after the keyboard section of the band, Mike and Chris are responsible for all aspects of life on the road.

APPRENTICES

Mike is tour manager: "I joined the band after I finished with a band called the Master Apprentices. I came to this country from Australia a couple of years ago with that band although I'm English. I originally went out to Australia eight years ago and I got involved with the group scene. I didn't play anything but I really enjoyed the music business."

After arriving back in England Mike spent a period working for MEH (Marshall Equipment Hire).

"That was an extremely valuable period for me. I worked with MEH for 18 months as a general roadie for their equipment and I also spent some time in the workshops so I picked up a considerable knowledge of electronics and amp design."

Originally Mike was trained as a motor mechanic so he's obviously got all the right qualifications for the job.

Chris is a proper Australian. He drifted in the group scene around Sydney and Adelaide and had a hand in running a promotional agency.

"I didn't really have any musical knowledge or any training in electronics but it's surprising how quickly you pick it up. I met up with Mike who

was looking after the Master Apprentices and I came to Britain with him and the band. When he got the job with the Strawbs he asked me along."

Mike recalls with a grin the short notice that he had to get ready for the band.

"I was up at five the next evening and I got a call from Chas Cronk, the bass player. He asked me if I was working and when I said 'no' he asked if I'd like to look after the Strawbs. Of course I agreed and Chas said, 'Right we start an English tour tomorrow'.

"I was up at five the next morning and I had to think about getting a crew together. Naturally I thought about Chris for the job.

"Chris looks after most of the driving. He says he doesn't mind but it's a hard and unrewarding task. The big thing for the band is the next States tour.

BULKY

"When we play America we fly all the gear over and hire a PA system when we get there. That saves a lot of problems. It costs £1.60 a kilo to freight the gear so you can work out for yourself how expensive it is. Few people realise just how big the Strawbs are in the States, however. They're so big there that it makes it all worth while now."

The basic back line for the band is pretty bulky. Included are three Fender Dual Showmans, one Fender Twin Reverb, one Ampeg 350 bass, Fender Rhodes piano, two Mellotrons, two Moogs and the drum kit.

In the UK the band hire an IES PA system which has a total output of 4,000 watts through a JBL speaker system and they have a 16 channel fold back system which delivers an amazing 2,000 watts.

"The boys like a lot of fold back", said Mike in something of an understatement, "What they really want is clarity and

quality and you need a lot of power to get that."

Looking after the band and that much equipment is quite a heavy responsibility, how much should roadies earn for that?

"Roadies working for a pro-band should earn at least £50 a week plus expenses, you couldn't really expect an experienced guy to work for less.

"We're fortunate to be with a band who really appreciate what roadies do. So many bands expect their equipment to arrive as if by magic, to get it set up by a miracle and then for the gig to go perfectly, all without any effort. There's an enormous amount of work to do before a band can step onto the stage.

"We're not exactly popular with other bands on the road. We've got a rule that we won't move any of the gear that's onstage after it's been set up. We do very careful sound checks when we set up and moving even a single item of equipment can destroy all the work balancing up. So bands who are on with us have to move around us I'm afraid.

Mike and Chris fulfil a dream later this year.

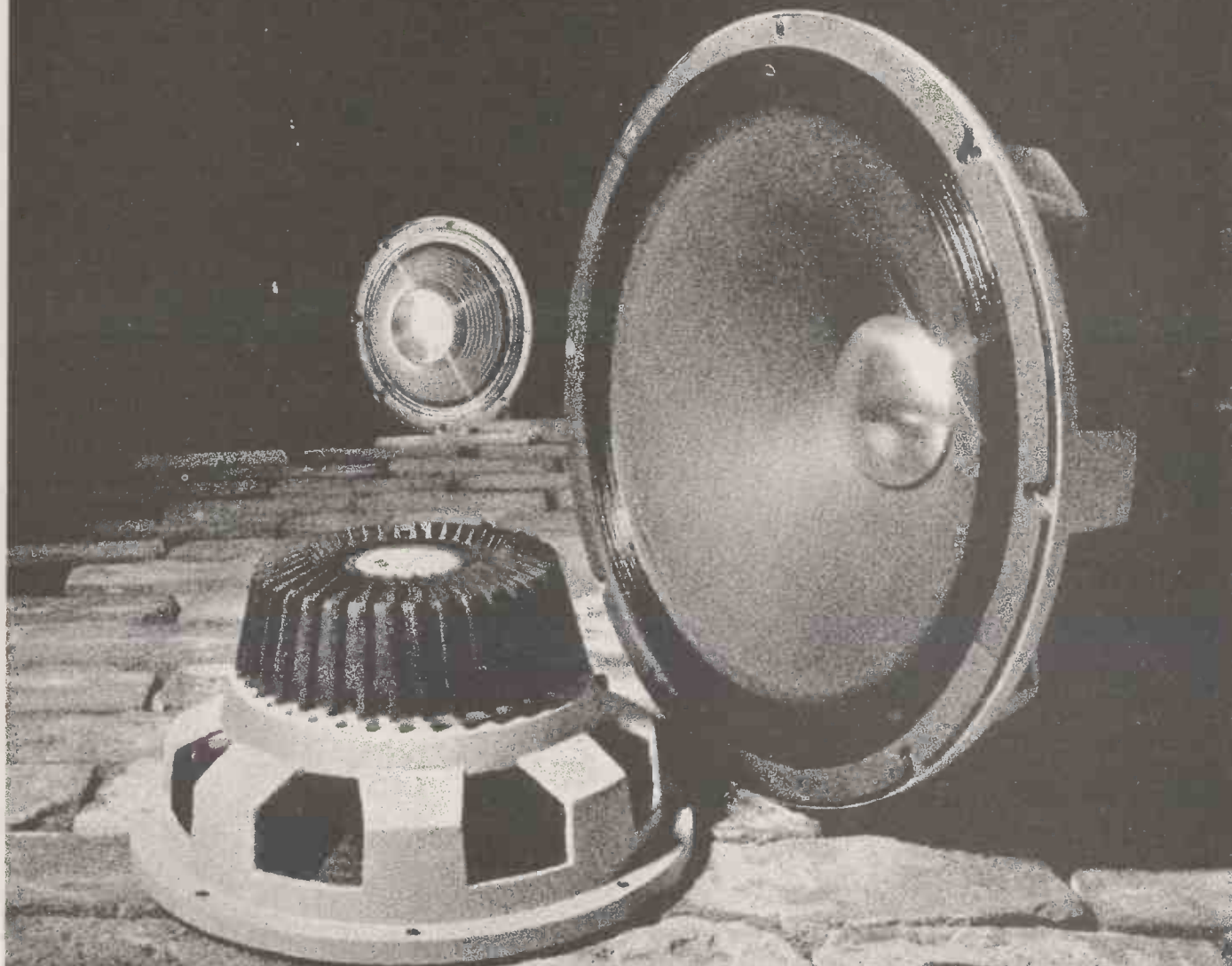
"We're playing the far east and Australasia," said Mike, and included in the itinerary is the Sydney Opera House. It's been a dream of mine to play there since I left and I'm really looking forward to going back in style."



Chris Cockran and Mike Briscoe.

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HELLO SAILOR

THE red-light district has a fascination of its own for many people, and none more than Sailor. Sailor—the name has a comic sound about it suggesting the latest thing in pouffter-rock, the latest addition to the ranks of the trendy-Wendies. Sailor have wisely avoided sinking into such an obvious image however. Instead of being one of those “new” groups that try to jump on somebody else’s bandwagon too late, Sailor are an original outfit in several aspects.

BIZARRE

The background of the band is bizarre enough for a start—they met as members of an ever-changing resident band at a Paris artists’ cafe called Le Matelot — hence the name Sailor. When the cafe burned down in 1971 the members went their separate ways until Steve Morris, the son of Hollywood music publisher Edwin H. Morris, met up with Phil Pickett jamming with a group of studio session men. This led to the band reforming with Phil and three others who were among the last of the musicians to play at Le Matelot—Grant Serpell, Henry Marsh and Georg Kajanus.

Kajanus—lead vocalist and 12-string guitarist—is the main creative source behind the outfit. Like all the members of the band, and any Sailor worth his salt, Norwegian-born Georg has done a fair amount of globe-trotting—France, Canada and Mexico. His background reads like a novel: son of a Russian prince and Johana Kajanus, the famous sculptress; grand-nephew of Benjamin Emile Tjegodiv, the French-Russian critic and writer; great-grandson of Robert Kajanus, composer and confidant of Sibelius. Georg has been a photographer, stained glass window designer, painter, writer and composer.

Fascinated by the idea of the red light district, something fostered by his time in Paris, Georg went to work on his own collection of songs, *The Red Light Quarter Review*. This has formed the basis of Sailor’s act

—a theatre rock concept in the tradition of Brecht and Weil, and provided most of the material for the band’s first album, called Sailor, a predictable and uninspired title in view of its individuality. One track, *Traffic Jam*, does in fact have nothing to do with *The Red Light Quarter Review*, but says Georg, “this is just the icing on the cake. It shows we can do something else if we want to”.

“The red light quarter of any city has a special glamour that attracts people, and we’ve tried to capture this both visually and in song. We know the realities of these places of course, but on the outside that’s not how they usually appear.”

The band have a uniform—they all wear sailors’ outfits, an apparently obvious choice, but one that goes back way before the present line-up came together.

“The proprietor of Le Matelot always had the resident band at the cafe dressed up as sailors. I think he was helped in the war by an English or American sailor and wanted to commemorate him.”

Sailor’s stage act is set with a backdrop of a seaport (what else?) in silhouette. The scene is dominated by the band’s secret weapon—a fiendish looking contraption called the Nickelodeon, logically enough “because it looks like one”.

The instrument, designed by Georg, incorporates two opposing piano keyboards (one side used for bass, the other for treble), an upright piano, an organ, a glockenspiel and a synthesiser, and it is also used by the band in place of the conventional electric bass guitar. “I designed the Nickelodeon to give different combinations of these built-in instruments,” explained Georg, “and pressing one note of the piano will give either one sound or all available sounds at the same time, depending on whatever is connected”.

The connections are made through both electric and mechanical link-ups—“an all mechanical link-up would make it too heavy,” and foot pedals are used to control the volume.



‘The red light quarter of any city has a special glamour. . . and we’ve tried to capture this both visually and in song’

LOR



▲ Sailor with their "secret weapon" — the Nickleodeon.

Beyond that, the band are reluctant to say any more about the invention, which looks almost as weird and wonderful in operation as a fairground showman's organ. "It's something that's unique to the band and an important part of our sound—we don't want anyone to be able to copy it," said Georg.

Did this mean that he wasn't interested in the possibility of the nickelodeon being produced commercially?

"I don't think I would have the time to handle this anyway, it would interfere too much with the work I'm doing in the band.

"The nickelodeon will never be finished," Phil added, "we're always getting new ideas for different sounds and we try to build these into it."

Phil also plays the guitarron—a Mexican acoustic bass guitar fitted with nylon strings and a Barcus-Berry transducer mike.

When I spoke to the band they were rehearsing prior to a tour with Mott the Hoople.

TOUR

"We'd obviously prefer to be doing a tour on our own," said Georg, "but of course we have to go on tour with a well-known band before we can build up our own following. The fact that we're completely different from the usual type of support band is in our favour, and we've found on the gigs we've already played that the audiences are very interested in what we're doing, especially in colleges. You'll always get a hard core of people who'll shout for the top of the bill band and don't want to listen to anything else, though."

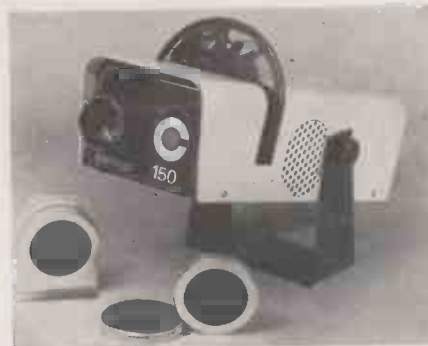
All dressed up in their natty sailor-suits and with their short hair (it's coincidental and not intentional) Sailor certainly stand out as a clean-cut bunch of lads, and, dare we say it, even "respectable!" "Don't you believe it mate!" says Henry Marsh, second son of an "obscure" lord and ex-Oxford man. Well, how could they be when they hang out in the red light quarter?

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Steve Harley

THERE'S a lot of stars running around on my back and it's getting me down,' sighed Steve Harley, the man whom the music press love to hate. 'I've had a lot of lousy reviews lately which I think were totally uncalled for, the one of the Rainbow concert for example. If they have to give somebody a slag they'll come and see me. A lot of reporters on the weeklies are making stars of themselves by writing a page piece on Steve Harley, his value or lack of it.'

Judging by the lyrics he's been writing for the last few months, it's really beginning to get him down. I suppose if you set yourself up in a band with the name Cockney Rebel, you have to expect that people will attach the 'rebel' tag to you. But the sudden transition from reporter to rock star has caused Harley a few personality problems.

'I do have a problem with my ego. I've become very anti-social. I don't like people very much any more. I used to love them, that's why I was a journalist, but now, the fewer people I meet the better. I've got a bit of street paranoia, the fear of kids running after me. They don't mean any harm but it can be a bit awful when you just want to go out shopping.'

ANXIETY

Add that to the anxiety which his limp, the legacy of polio, still sometimes causes him on stage and you end up with a pretty strange, confused young man. It's the combination of imagination, journalistic training and the chips on Harley's frail shoulder that makes his lyrics so interesting. His images flash by at an almost subliminal speed, his melodies jerk and shuffle. 'I guess my songs are written like shorthand. What journalism does teach you is to fine things down to the essence, to be succinct.'

Lyrics like this are clever, well-worked, well informed, and prove the point that you don't have to write moronic words to get into the charts. Too many people seem to be under an illusion that the average record

buyer can't understand words more than one syllable long and only reads the strip cartoons. Harley, for all his compression of imagery and meaning, gets his points home to the kids in no uncertain way. He's got quite a cult following. On his recent massive British tour of over forty dates, he noticed the same faces at as many as a dozen of the gigs which covered the length and breadth of the country. It bothers him.

'Guys come up to me and say, "I'm Mr. Soft, man, you must have written that song

about me," or say they know all about *Sling It*. It's all very silly and I'm not impressed by it, but they need somebody to identify with. Most of us used to do it to Dylan. I'm sure Bowie must get it to a terrifying extent in America where there are so many real nut-cases who think they're the star.

'But in a way it also flatters me. They need *someone* to fantasise about, so why not me?'

It's easy to see why journalists find this articulate ex-journalist a stimulating proposition for an interview.

'They've been told that my interviews give a lot of good quotes. All they know before they come to see me is that they've been told I talk a lot. They never expect me to have moods when I'm not chatty.' With or without Cockney Rebel, he has a certain charisma which makes him impossible to ignore.

Now that he has a band of new musicians together, for all his apparent self confidence he doesn't seem quite sure of his standing. 'I'm worried about my solo single, *Big Big Deal*. Will people buy it when they find out



the man the music press love to hate has trouble with his ego!

it's just me without Cockney Rebel?' He seems genuinely surprised when it is suggested that two reasons for the huge impact made by Cockney Rebel on the pop scene were his on-stage personality and his songs. 'Nobody's ever come up to me and said they thought I was a good songwriter.'

As you may expect, when it comes to writing he ends up with many more lyrics than melodies. Like the book he's written, a lot of them tend to be autobiographical. His book is the story of the last two years of his life, written as a 'controlled stream of consciousness.' When he was writing it, he used to knock out 15 pages a day and his notebooks are overflowing with lyrics searching for a melody.

VAGUE

'The reason why I'm a vague and confused person most of the time is because I'm carrying round about ten songs in my head, trying to remember them. I prefer doing that because if it's good it sticks.'

His songs are always written from the mood of the moment. 'I'm in a permanent mood with life which can be pretty consistent for a few months. I'm writing songs now which are more compact than my old ones. I'm not writing death trips any more, eight minutes of *Sebastian* or *Tumbling Down*. The new album's going to be practically all four-minute stuff.'

His current mood? 'Confusion mostly, because of the band, the press, the media. But whether that will show to the average person who hears the album, I don't know.'

His current favourite amongst his compositions is *Cavaliers* from the *Psychomondo* album. 'Horrified to step outside, trying very hard to keep up my guard.' Sounds like the 'street paranoia'. In fact, if this is his favourite song, I can't believe the death trips are over.

'It probably isn't my best song in the sense of being well structured but it says so much in a short space. It moves me

when I hear it. It brings things home to me, great things that I must have been seeing when I wrote it and I love singing it, performing it, acting it out.'

It must be very hard to live inside Harley's head, populated as it appears to be with a host of phantoms and fantasies. Hard reality, such as money, seems to belong to another world. 'I don't know what I do with it. It's just sitting around, I guess.' His face creases in one of his silent, stricture laughs.

He has a couple of ambitions, to fill Madison Square Gardens and to have a number one album in Britain but apart from those, what seems to matter to him most of all is keeping his band together and keeping up the flow of songs.

'It's a good band. I've got George Ford on bass, Jim Cregan, who used to be with Family, on guitar, I've still got Stuart Elliott on drums and Duncan Mackae on keyboards. It's a much bigger band than the old Rebel, more mature and experienced. The sound is a lot bigger, too. We're using seven keyboards on stage and a lot of guitar effects.'

COLD

'Playing the old stuff with them is like playing totally new songs, but the reception was a little cold at first, when people heard the old things done a different way. However, because it's a new sound it's giving me new ideas.'

The messy split-up of the old Rebel caused Harley a lot of heartache and probably added to his gloomy repertoire. 'I really want this one to last,' he said, with a resigned air as if afraid to tempt fate. He says a lot of his songs are like a diary statement, written at the time and only fully understood some time later.

The guy knows how hard it is when one 'lowers one's guard to the vultures,' (*Tumbling Down*) so perhaps those vultures will stop picking the bones of the old Cockney Rebel now and allow Harley to write a few happier entries in his diary.



FANNY O

The original all-female electric band's ne

WANTED keyboard player, organ/piano, able to sing back-up vocals, age 19-24. Apply — Fanny."

"A little rhythm guitar would be good as well," added Jean Millington, Fanny's long-legged, glossy haired bass player. Yes, Fanny really are, as the title of their latest album suggests, *Rock and Roll Survivors*, having

Fanny (from left) Patti Quatro, Cam Davis and Jean Millington

survived several years of anti-Women's Libbers and line-up changes. "Now we're being mentioned in the Press just as "Fanny", not as "The girl group Fanny," said Patti Quatro triumphantly.

Their latest problem, as the "ad" at the top of this column suggests, is the departure of Nicky Barclay and the search for a replacement before they begin touring again later this month. She actually left last July but agreed to play on their

tour of Britain with Jethro Tull, rather than force the band to miss such a great opportunity.

"She feels she can't work within the confines of a group," chuckled Jean, laughing over what was obviously an in-joke with the band.

New members

If you read the credits on their new album, you'll see that Brie Howard played drums on it. That's yet another thing

that has changed in the few months since the album was recorded, their new drummer former assistant press officer Cam Davies. Of course lead guitarist Patti Quatro is pretty new, too, having replaced June Millington last March. But in no time at all she has emerged as the dominant figure in the band, her shaggy-maned energy, powerful vocals and sense of humour marking her as a "character", the perfect foil for the cool, sultry Jean Millington.



HANGES

...w sexy line-up is as outstanding as ever!

Nicky Barclay's contribution will be sadly missed. She was the only member of the group who possessed a dark, bluesy voice as opposed to the less gutsy sopranos of Jean and Patti. She was basically a piano player rather than an organist, her rather classical approach adding an extra dimension to the band. It will be interesting to see if her replacement is more into organ and, if so, what difference there will be to their over-all sound.

On stage, Fanny have great presence, playing on the fact that they are women by showing as much thigh as possible, and being outrageously sexy with their guitars as Bowie and Ronson used to be.

Humping

As they pioneered all-female electric bands, they had to take a lot of knocks in the beginning from men who were convinced that girls could not play rock, and play to fit. A lot was made

of the fact that they were out to demonstrate Women's Lib by humping round all their own gear.

"That wasn't the case at all," explained Jean. "I mean, you're not earning £1,000 per week right at the beginning and you can't afford roadies when you're saving up for a new guitar or a better PA. So it was a case of necessity. I remember the dirty, grimy hands and lifting up the Hammond . . ." she reminisced, with a grimace.

"We could put up with all the comments and criticisms because you know who you are and what you can do so it doesn't really bother you. If we couldn't play we wouldn't be here today, would we? They don't come back to see you time and time again just because you're girls."

Fast licks

So Fanny wish to be judged in the arena, along with all the other bands. Okay. Close your eyes and forget the girls on stage, the photos on the album sleeve and separate the image from the music. What are you left with? A good, tight, but not startlingly original rock band, who play short harmonised rock and roll numbers. The sort of band you'd go and hear if you wanted a really good night out with plenty of pounding beat to dance to. A neat drummer, a forceful bass player and a lead guitarist who thoroughly understands her instrument within the confines of her present capabilities. Plenty of fast licks and fuzz but nothing too creative, nothing to make the instrumentalists in the audience start to take notes but enough to give you the feeling of satisfaction that here's a guitarist who is in command of what she knows and uses it at all the right moments.

Patti is a showy player, too, ripping a difficult passage out of her machine with a variety of facial contortions, twisting her body round it, attacking it

like a lioness devouring her prey.

She and sister Suzi started playing electric guitar when they took jobs as hat-check girls in a club years ago. They were shocked at the poor efforts some of the groups put up and Suzi suggested that she and Patti could do just as well. Suzi was given a bass by her father and Patti took up guitar and since then they've proved they can play with a vengeance.

As Fanny are the best known girl group, it's understandable that they should have acquired quite a following of female admirers and emulators. "We often find at our gigs in the States that a whole bunch of 17 or 18 year old girls will come round back stage afterwards, who also play guitar or bass, and say, "If I could ever play like you . . ." said Patti.

In Britain this tends not to happen nearly so often. "I think there is a world shortage of good women musicians whose style is rough and rocky enough," Patti added. They were expecting that it might take quite a while to find the right keyboard player.

Hard work

Before they left the States to tour Britain, Fanny had been working on Keith Moon's album, together with such luminaries as Lennon, Nilsson and Ringo. The album covers a variety of numbers from oldies like The Beachboys' *Don't Worry Baby*, to material penned by Moon himself. At the time of going to press, two suggested titles for the album were *Keith Moon's Greatest Hits* and *Like A Rat Up A Pipel*.

They can't start working on their own next album, however until the new keyboard player has been chosen. "Whoever it is will have to face touring nine months of the year and not really having any time off," announced Patti. "It's a full time job, it's hard work but enjoyment at the same time."



Speaking to the professionals



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BEAT COMPETITION WINNER

IT was a great day for Mike McQuillen of Lewisham, London when he opened his copy of *Beat* and read to his surprise that he'd won first prize in our September competition — a brand new Carlsbro 100W solid state combo amp! And Mike came to the Fender Soundhouse in Tottenham Court Road recently to collect his prize, which was presented by Soundhouse Manager Rod Alexander and *Beat* directors and staff.

"I hit the ceiling when I saw that I'd won," said Mike, "I thought I wouldn't stand a chance. I sent my entry in and forgot about it, until I saw my name in the November issue."

Winning the amp was a

dream come true for 16-year-old Mike, who up until now has had to play his "Strat" copy plugged into a record player. Now he'll be able to form the school rock group he's been thinking about, with his friend Neville Stanley who came to help Mike take his amp home. Both attend the Sir Thomas Moore school at Eltham and like listening to bands like the Horslips, Focus and Status Quo.

"I've been playing for nearly a year now," said Mike, "and I'm learning to read music, but I find it's difficult trying to get hold of sheet music for a lot of the material I like. I read *Beat* every month, especially the equipment surveys."

◀ Mike McQuillen receives his prize from Rod Alexander.

▼ Bryn Hamer-Jones presents the Peter & Nicholas Mike Stands.



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MANY-SIDED

'Singles are not easy to make, whatever some reviewers say about the finished product'

BARRY BLUE, alias Barry Green, is a man of many talents. He is a recording artist, song writer, producer, sheet music publisher and is ever looking for good new recording talent.

In terms of record artist and song writer, Barry has, in the past few years, had a steady stream of single hits. One of his most recent was *Hot Shot* and this single epitomises to Barry the problems involved

in making good singles.

"Singles are not easy to make, whatever some reviewers say about the finished product. My discs are quite complicated affairs, partly because I insist on so many things happening."

Barry's *Hot Shot* for instance was mixed three times. And though *Miss Hit and Run*, *School Love* and *Dancin' on a Saturday Night* seem pretty complicated, Barry says they were nothing like *Hot Shot*.



BARRY BLUE

This single utilised "the largest line-up of instruments I've ever used: 16 to 18 strings, four French horns, an accordion, a bouzouki, clarinet, the basic three guitars, bass, drums, piano and percussion."

With the cost of basic session time rapidly rising and studio costs now between £25 and £40 an hour, Barry reckons the single cost him £1,500. He says three months ago the figure would have been £1,000.

When he began making this single, Barry's basic aim was finding a 'Russian' sound. He says with a smile, "You know the kind of thing heard in *Fiddler On The Roof!* After all", he continued, "I've already had the Greek sound."

Whatever the national side to music produced, Barry threw everything "but the kitchen sink" into that first mix. The second mix was a simplifying process for he reminded him-

self what all producers should know, that a mass of competing instruments does not make for a clean sounding disc.

By the third mix he had rectified most of the faults. During this process he changed studios in order to get exactly the right place and right engineer for the kind of sound he wanted.

"I tried the Marquee, a very good studio. Then there was Sarm, which is in the East End. There was also a little studio in Denmark Street called Central Sound and in the end I commuted between the three.

"Central for instance is good for strings and the Marquee for rhythm. Basically it works out cheaper this way than using one studio, partly because the studios themselves have different rates."

These days he employs session musicians, since of course the Rubettes are now involved in their own career and no longer his backing group. On *Hot Shot*, he used Andy Stede, Terry Britton and Graham Prescott.

'BASH BASH'

Barry says he aims to cut down on the overall number of sounds in the future. He doesn't want 'bash bash' and requires basically simple rather than complicated chords to get everything on the disc.

In reference to a previous single, *Saturday Night*, Barry says, "It was basically a pop song and to it I added that bit extra, the Greek feel with the bouzouki instrument. You can change things with just a simple touch."

"I don't think in terms of money. I'm more interested in what satisfies, though at the same time I do admit slight irritation over the recent singles.

"Each has done over 100,000 and then stopped. The fan pull makes the difference and you partly achieve that by being seen, either live or pretty frequently on the box."

Barry spent this Christmas taking a honeymoon and at the same time attempting to in-

terest certain US artists like Andy Williams and The Carpenters in his material.

Barry had been in the studios laying down an album of his songs, not for any UK release, purely as demo material. "US demo tapes have to be quality masters. A much higher standard is required than here, in a way. I don't know why but it's just the way they work. The songs themselves are geared to the US market.

FAMILY

"In America you make for the artist. In terms of US recording I find it interesting seeing that there is much more of a family relationship at the studios. Session men are paid retainers to stay with a particular studio. They can't move anywhere else.

"Here in Britain a guy dashes from one studio to another and it's extremely hard for anyone to get on the session lists. Nothing is advertised and things go by word of mouth. It often takes years to build up a good reputation."

In terms of Britain and song-writing, Barry says he is not a Cooke-Greenaway, "I just write songs and then I think so and so might suit it. I don't physically write for someone in mind, though I did do an early one for *Sweet Sensation*."

In terms of his own success as a song-writer Barry, in general terms, sees much of today's scene more-or-less sewn up.

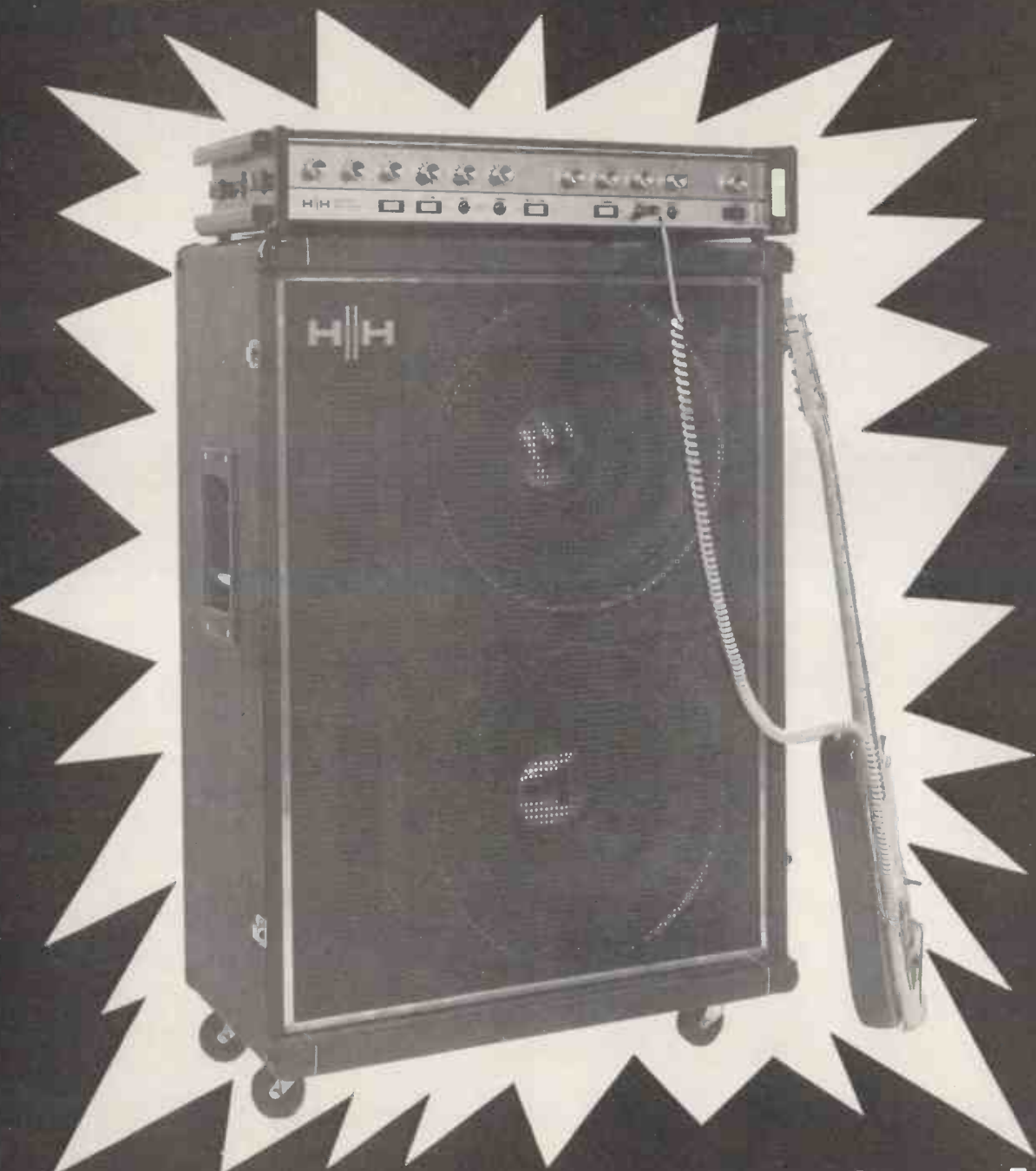
PARTNERSHIP

He sees the Chinn-Chapman partnership having 25 per cent of the market and then he says no-one writes for Gary Glitter, Slade or the Rubettes outside of those already engaged and in any case the artists themselves also write.

"Not many big artists want songs and those that do are more the middle of the road artists like Tony Christie or Cliff Richard. I don't think I could write for heavy bands but then could anyone?"

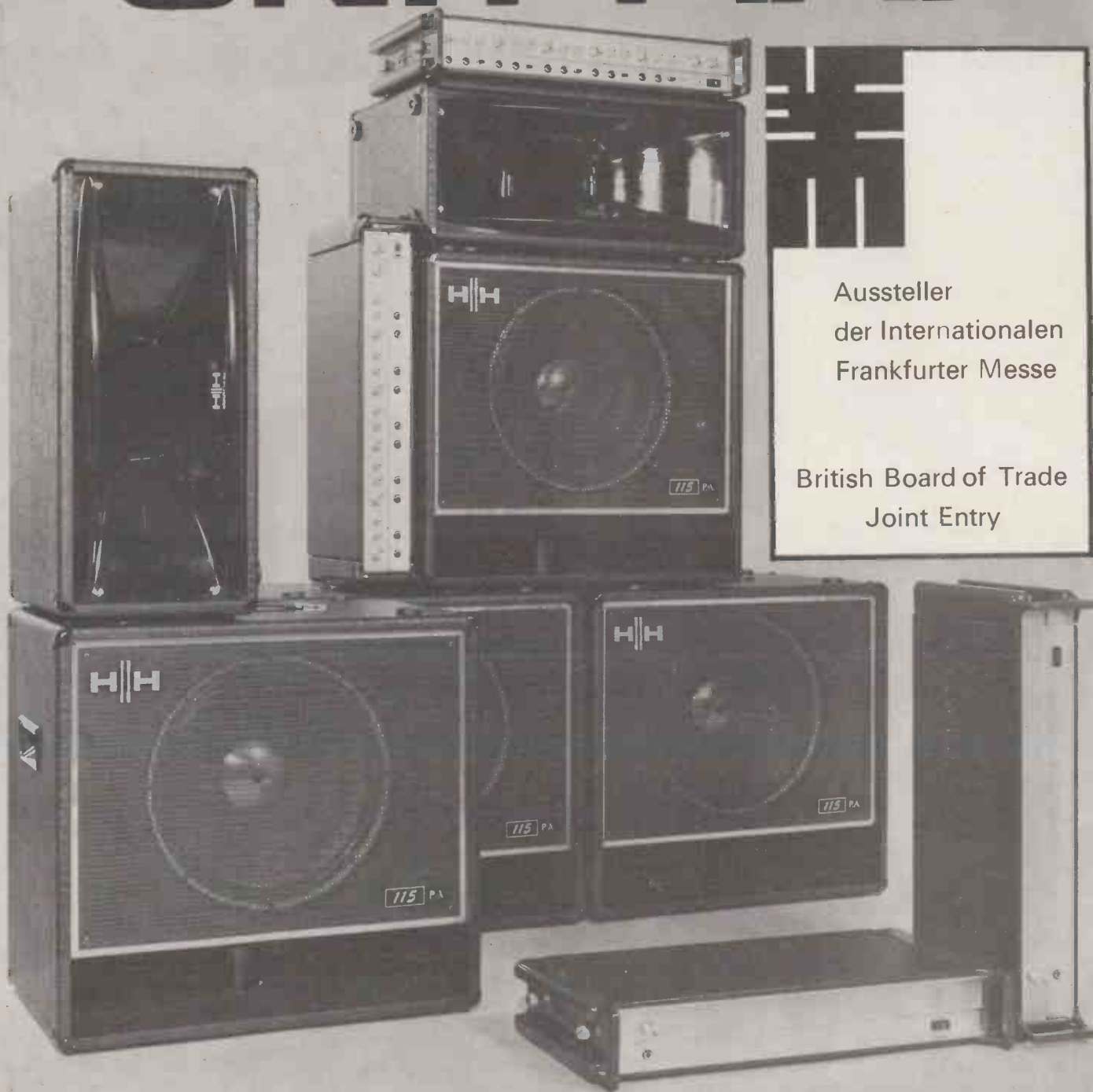


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B.I. INSTRUMENT REVIEW

KASUGA RB 400 Banjo

THE banjo seems to be undergoing an increase in popularity at the moment, particularly the five string "G" variety, traditionally played by the three-finger picking method (thumb, forefinger and middle finger) or alternatively by other non-plectrum methods such as frailing, drop thumb or claw-hammer.

Scruggs-style

The modern three-finger style of bluegrass banjo picking is the one most used by musicians in the C&W or country rock fields, and is generally acknowledged as the "Scruggs style" after Earl Scruggs who has also written a tutor which I've heard good things about. Although Earl did not actually "invent" this style of playing he did develop it to a far more advanced level than had been heard before and consequently became the greatest single influence on banjo playing in recent years.

The "guv'nor" American banjos are expensive and not easily found in Britain, either new or secondhand, and the Japanese and one or two importers have not been slow to spot a gap in the market. We decided to review the Kasuga RB.400 a 5-string banjo from the Kasuga range, handled here by John Hornby Skewes & Co. Ltd,

This banjo is similar in appearance to the Gibson Master-tone model. The rim, flange, tailpiece and arm-rest are chrome plated, the latter two parts nicely engraved with butterfly and flower designs respectively.

The 11 inch plastic head is resistant to changes in climate which affect vellum — little used today — and is tensioned by 24 brackets, over an inner cast-zinc flange tone ring. This banjo has the "bite" one would expect from one of this style, bearing in mind that it costs considerably less than its American counterpart, but it is of course possible to fit alternative tone rings to alter the sound as desired. Variation in tone is provided for, however, by the tail piece which is adjustable for tension by means of a milled edge knurled screw.

Attractive

The removable resonator is attached by three similar screws and is made of rosewood. It has a particularly attractive back with a high gloss finish and genuine mother of pearl inlay at the centre, although the matt finish on the exposed inside edge of the rim was patchy in places on the instrument we tested.

Apart from that small point the overall finish of this banjo is very good indeed. This is especially noticeable on the traditionally-shaped head which is veneered rosewood and also has genuine mother of pearl inlay. The "Bats-wing" design inlays on the rosewood fingerboard are in pearloid and the edges of the fingerboard are bound in ivory plastic.

The neck itself is reinforced with an adjustable steel rod and is detachable from the body.

Bridge-piece

The wooden bridge-piece has a hardwood strip which takes the strings, resulting in a similar appearance to the ebony-inlaid bridge-pieces sometimes used.

The efficient machines used for the top four strings are geared and based on the American-type, but the fifth string is not geared, resulting in a critical degree of adjustment when tuning.

The price of this banjo, which includes a hard plush-lined case, is £16, and although similar instruments were available here one to two years ago at about half this price, an American banjo of the same style would still cost over three times this amount. D.R.



Kasuga RB.400

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KC & the SUNSHINE BAND

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

KC. & The Sunshine Band roared into the British charts with *Queen Of Clubs* as a virtually unknown band but in fact they'd already been sitting at number-one just a few weeks previously with *Rock Your Baby*.

You thought that one was by George McRae? Well, certainly he sang the vocal but the track had been laid down by the Sunshine Band and the group's two white members, Richard Finch and H. W. Casey had written the song.

H.W.—it stands for Howard Wayne—explained: 'We'd originally intended the song for ourselves but I didn't think my vocal was strong enough.

'George wasn't performing at the time, he was concentrating on managing his wife Gwen, but when he came into the studio I asked him to try the song and it worked perfectly so we put it out by him.

'As it happens, George's is the high screaming voice you hear on *Queen Of Clubs*.

'Indeed, all-for-one-and-one-for-all is the essence of what's happening right now at TK Productions, the company to which K.C. & The Sunshine Band, George and Gwen McRae and everyone else who's hot down in Miami right now are affiliated.

'Clarence Reid, Betty Wright, Timmy Thomas, Little Beaver, Latimore, they are all signed to TK and we all help out on each other's records.'

Miami's really hot right now with a string of American hits and promising emergence on the UK scene.

CAREERS

TK is actually owned by Henry Stone, the man behind the early careers of Ray Charles, Sam and Dave and many others, and Steve Alaimo, once one of America's top white pop singers.

Though white-owned, the

company is 100-per-cent black orientated, incidentally owning what was once the largest independent distribution set-up in the USA plus Miami's most active studio and a string of labels like Alston, Blue Candle, Cat, Drive and Glades, most of them now distributed through Atlantic Records.

Though obviously rooted in soul music, did H. W. Casey, as a young (23-years-old) white guy find it hard breaking through: 'Why sure. There's certainly a resistance to white artists in this field. Very few have ever made it big: the Righteous Brothers did it, and Rare Earth too but I can't think of many others.'

Now TK's hottest writer/producer, along with partner Richard Finch, H. W. Casey had to serve a long, hard apprenticeship, plenty of dues' paying, before reaching his current status.

'I'd always been into R&B, I was brought up in a hot-Baptist Church, a white church but the people there sang and danced and wailed just like in the black churches down South, and my mother was a soul addict,' he explained.

SOUL

'But it took a long, long while to break into recording. I started out with an all-white soul group called Five Doors Down—we were all neighbours—when I was 16 or 17.

'We played local clubs and I studied music at school before taking a job in a record shop.'

There he met a sales rep. for Tone Distributors, the TK subsidiary: 'He heard me singing around the store and suggested that I go down to TK's studio and see if Clarence Reid could do anything to help me.

'I started hanging round the studio hoping to see Clarence and Henry Stone eventually said

that instead of just sitting round doing nothing I could help out in the warehouse.

'I swept the floor, shifted boxes of records, did all the odd jobs and I'd stay on after work and haunt the studio, picking up on how to work the board and so on.

BOOKINGS

'Then I was put in charge of handling bookings for Betty Wright and Timmy Thomas.

'I was still playing with a band in the evenings but I realised I wouldn't get anywhere until I got onto record.

'Then one night I went to a party at Betty Wright's house and they had this group from

the Bahamas there. They called themselves a Junkanoo Band and played things like cow-bells, whistle, skin drums and so on, a real rhythm thing and I've always been hooked on rhythms.

'Soon after I went to a concert in Washington with Timmy Thomas—he was hot with *Why Can't We Live Together* right then.

'There were 30-40,000 people there and they all had whistles, so the two ideas came together and I wrote a song called *Blow Your Whistle*.

'I'd been writing for years but nobody had shown much interest. I managed to get some studio time though and brought in those guys from the Bahamas



Smiles all round for K.C. and The Sunshine Band ►
L. R. Jerome Smith, H. W. Casey, Robert Johnson, Rick Finch.



▲
H. W. Casey.



and then later added the studio rhythm section.

'All we kept of those Bahamas cats in the final mix was their chat and the whistles—they had a great sound but they just couldn't keep time properly!'

HIT

The result was a minor American hit—number 16 in the soul charts—and a measure of confidence which led to a follow-up, *Sound Your Funky Horn* and the formation of a regular Sunshine Band (it was originally K.C. & The Sunshine Junkanoo Band) bringing in Richard Finch, who till then had been the studio engineer, on bass and two black studio regulars Jerome Smith (guitar) and Robert Johnson (drums) to support Casey's (K.C.—get it?) keyboard work.

Horn players Ronald Smith (trumpet) and Denvil Liptrot (sax) and conga-man Oliver Brown supplemented the sound

and Casey is now talking of adding regular back-up voices and more horns too.

Blow Your Whistle had been cut in January 1973 (and became a UK club standard soon after), *Sound Your Funky Horn* and an album followed in October, 1973 but though their records were familiar club fare over here on import, there were no British releases till this summer when President Records' boss Eddie Kassner tied-up a deal for UK distribution of TK product.

'Eddie was over in Miami to sign the deal and Steve Alaimo played him through some product. It was Eddie who picked *Queen Of Clubs* off the album as a single ideal for Britain and in fact it has only just been released in America following its UK chart success.'

'As it happens, we're really bigger in Britain than we are back home so now we are hoping our success here will be picked up on when we get back.'

WHO'S WHO IN SOUND

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STUDIO PLAYBACK



The Shadows, reformed for the Eurovision Song Contest

EMI Improvements

EMI Studios have been handicapped recently with one of the studios closed till the middle of January for the installation of a new 24-track console.

The first visitors to try it out will be Pink Floyd, who have booked time right into February. In the other studio and working steadily are the Shadows. They are preparing six tracks, so that the public can choose which is most suitable for the Eurovision Song Contest. Once they're out Alan Parson will be

in to produce and engineer for Al Stewart on CBS, and Pilot on EMI. As yet they can't specify what they're hoping to come up with, but once the tracks have been laid down... could be two new albums on the way.

Further visitors could not make definite plans until the departure of the Shadows and the Pink Floyd, but possibilities include Julie Felix, Olivia Newton John, the Hollies and Roy Harper.

Argent at CBS

Argent were in recording their new album before Christmas. After a break to enjoy the festive season, they've been hard at it since. Chris White is producing and Mike Ross engineering. It'll be called *Circus*, and they'll decide later which track to make the single. They plan to release it first in the States in February, so stand by for one here around the beginning of March.

Ex-Argent guitarist Russ Ballard has also been in. He finished his own album four months ago, and he's now in

producing the Australian group New World for EMI. Dexter Productions' Peter Sarstedt is finishing off the mixing for his album: *Starry-Eyed and Laughing* are doing the same for theirs.

Between them, all these people have booked up plenty of time, but there's one more visitor from down-under. Frankie Stevens, more or less the Tom Jones of New Zealand, is working hard to break into the solo market here. At the moment he'll probably keep it to a single, produced by Paul Phillips.

Kingsway and The Butterfly Ball

KINGSWAY Recorders have been hard at work finishing off the projects that they started before Christmas. They've made good progress considering that they can only handle one session a night. Above the studio in the same building are the offices of the Civil Aviation Authority, and they don't like listening to all that music while they're working! Roger Glover, ex-Deep Purple bassist, finished his *Butterfly Ball* album there, and it's sure to come to most peoples' notice in one form or another. It will be shown first as a series of animated cartoons on ITV; following that it will be made into a stage musical, and then in 1976 it will be seen as a full-length film.

Roger's old colleague, Ian Gillan, is still in the studio finishing off his album, which

will be released on Purple Records. Helping him are busy session-men Mike Moran (keyboards and arrangements), Bernie Holland (guitar), Dave Wintour (bass) and Andy Steele on drums. Since he stopped singing with Purple, Ian has been concentrating more on production: like so many soloists who have broken away from a successful band, he'll probably be out to experiment in new musical directions.

Kingsway have undergone some staff shuffles lately. Martin Birch, the last managing director, has left, and now spends most of his time with the re-shuffled Deep Purple in America. He was with the studio for two years, and the man now in the hot seat is the former technical director Terry Eden.



Bad Company at Air

AIR Studios have some interesting dates from about March. The Drifters, Renaissance, Sparks, Curved Air and Caravan are all expected to be in laying down tracks. Meanwhile the Faces are in putting the finishing touches to some material. Bad Company, who did all the mixing for their last album at Air, are also in giving their tapes a last listen.

From mid-January, about six weeks' time has been booked by Mott the Hoople. This could well be 'Ian Hunter and friends' rather than the rest of the group. At this stage these friends are keeping a low profile—but if Ian's got some

surprises up his sleeve, he will wait to see how the music-making goes before spilling the beans.

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More than thirty different artists have recorded Ralph McTell's song, *The Streets of London*. There's no counting the thousands of times this song, now a folk classic, has been sung in folk clubs up and down the country. Yet it wasn't until Christmas 1974, more than seven years since he wrote it, that McTell himself was able to release it as a single.

Naturally, the popularity of his version, which has become the most requested song at any of his gigs, enabled it to rocket up into the top ten. And the question that has been voiced by many people over the last few years is, of course, why hasn't he ever released it as a single before?

Ralph McTell is a very pleasant, smiling, down to earth bloke, casually dressed, with no superstar air about him, although he is in the unique position of being Britain's top artist in the folk singer/guitarist category and our answer to Canada's Gordon Lightfoot.

"Why didn't I release the song before? Simply because of contractual problems with my record company. I've changed company since then and only recently became free to record it as a single."

I saw him four years ago and on his last tour and both times he was still singing that song with just as much feeling. He must have done it hundreds of times. Isn't he heartily sick of it by now?

"No, I never get tired of singing it because it always brings people together at my gigs. They all know the words and everyone can sing it together. I think one of the reasons why it is so popular is because it's sympathetic rather than trying to punch home a point. I always prefer to illustrate things, to suggest, in my songs, rather than say, you must think this. Too many people's songs are

spoilt by making too heavy statements instead of merely suggesting ideas."

McTell is no stranger to the streets of London, having been born and bred in its suburbs, but he has certainly made a lot of money out of that one song. "I can't tell you exactly how much. I'm not evading the question but I honestly don't know. I would call myself well off now. I've got three different mortgages at the moment!"

He came up the way every aspiring singer/guitarist in the folk vein hopes to, starting off in folk clubs, hoping that someday, someone with a bit of influence might hear him.

"When I first started playing I never dreamt of writing my own songs. When I did get round to writing my first one, I certainly didn't find it easy. When I introduced it into my folk club act, I didn't announce the fact that I had written it but I soon found that people were requesting it, so I started introducing it as one of mine."

PUBLISHER

As instant stardom didn't strike, he did what so many people do and sent up some tapes to a music publisher. He didn't think much of those particular songs but could see that they showed some promise and he asked Ralph if he had anything else. A few months later, Ralph made a live tape in a folk club, including some of the high spots of his act, complete with audience participation. He sent it up to the same publisher and instantly got the phone call that sets every aspiring musician's knees trembling, "come into the office for a chat."

That chat led to a contract with Transatlantic Records and a first album which sold 3,000 copies, "which wasn't bad for an unknown in those days," he chuckled.

From his earliest days in the

home-grown McTELL

"The reason so many British writers fail is because they're writing from a borrowed culture."

music business, Ralph has been friends with Bert Jansch and John Renbourne, although he says that, playing-wise, he has never learnt anything from them. "I'm just not in their class!"

He still uses his old Gibson J45, which he has had for many years, although a recent meeting with Brighton guitar maker Keith Johns has led to his guitar collection being increased by a beautiful Martin copy which he now uses for some numbers on stage.

Even now, after many albums, he doesn't find that songwriting comes easy. "I'm not a prolific writer. I only produce about 12 songs a year. You know my song *The Ferryman*? Although that was inspired by reading Herman Hesse's book *Siddartha*, it still took me six months to write the song."

He often finds that a song is inspired by something he's read, and has songs drawn from a book about the Soledad Brothers (centred on George Jackson) and the works of Sylvia Plath.

In fact, he is one of the few songwriters who almost never writes about personal happenings but tries deliberately to keep his songs objective, in order that they may apply to a wider number of people.

"With my next album, though, people may notice a change. It will include some love songs, which is unusual for me. I get so fed up with other people's songs dedicated to Sylvia or Cindy or whoever is the current flame. It's only lately that I have begun to write love songs, because teenage love is so painful that you

can't write about it at the time. I don't believe in chronicling one's affairs."

McTell claims that he has never compromised in his writing. "I have never written a song purely for commercial gain. I suppose I've been lucky in that the things which have come naturally to me have sold."

There aren't many writers whom he regards particularly highly, with the exception of Randy Newman. "He is right up there at the top. Any others whom I like are about there," he said, pointing to somewhere halfway up an imaginary ladder. "I think the reason why so many British writers fail is because they are writing from a borrowed culture, that of America. Randy Newman speaks strongly and honestly. He's not comfortable to listen to but you can spend the rest of your life just thinking about his songs."

LONER

McTell has, up to now, been a loner on stage, occasionally joined by friends but never with a set band. Now, for the first time, he is getting together a band for his next tour, just as an experiment, feeling the need for a bit of extra dimension with which to express himself.

Does he think things are harder than ever for the aspiring songwriter in 1975? "I think there's no such thing as an undiscovered genius," he smiled. "I don't even think that a writer needs to hustle. If your songs show integrity and get through to people, they'll eventually sell themselves."



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Hovering somewhere down the list of select/solo contemporary singers who've graduated from the club floor-spot to the concert hall is the name Pete Atkin. In 1970 I saw Pete playing to a dozen or so people in the candlelit dingy upstairs room of a London pub soon after the release of his first album, *The Beautiful Stranger*. Five years on and with the same number of albums under his belt, times have improved somewhat for Pete, although despite this, he still remains a lesser-known figure than the Ralph McTells, and Al Stewarts of this world.

The reason for this may be inappropriate modesty — "I wouldn't want to blame anyone in particular for influencing my guitar playing"—or possibly Atkin's music is something of an acquired taste, a quality product better appreciated by a minority rather than a mass. It may also be due in some measure to the fact that large numbers of potential Atkin fans are as yet unaware of this somewhat introverted talent.

UK TOUR

Last December Pete completed a UK tour which coincided with the release of his latest LP, *Secret Drinker* taking him to audiences from Gravesend to Glasgow. Supporting Pete on the tour were contemporary singer Juliet Lawson and Isoptope, a band that Pete describes as "something between rock and jazz". Pete also put together his own band for the tour, backing his own keyboard and guitar work with electric and bass guitars and drums.

"It's useful to work with a band because one of the purposes of the tour was to bring in as many new people as possible. It's easier to persuade people to come when it's a band rather than a solo performer they don't know."

Solo performer Pete Atkin may be most of the time, but he also has a partner who plays a very important part in his music. That man is Pete's lyricist, writer and film and television critic familiar to many viewers as the "movie man", Clive James. James' words have a musical ring of their own, poetry of the seventies which having initially captured the listener's ear rivets his attention to the last line. Often cunningly laced with a tinge of irony and successfully complemented by the music that Pete writes himself, they hit the audience with an impact

PETE ATKIN

Learned to read music & started picking out melodies with the right hand while vamping chords with the left

that strikes firmly into the grey matter or simply seduce the ear with pointed wit.

James however is not a performer, neither does he write music, and this is where Pete Atkin's role as a composer and singer-musician completes the other half of the partnership. Atkin on stage is very much the same as Atkin the person. An unassuming but quietly confident manner ensures him of establishing an immediate rapport with his audience—he has a large following in colleges as well as folk clubs.

The Atkin-James partnership has existed since 1967, when they met in the Cambridge University Footlights Revue, a theatre workshop that has pointed the way to the stage as a career for more than a few scholar-wallahs. It would be easy to draw the conclusion that James' lyrics suit Atkins the composer and performer so well, and vice-versa, because of their long-standing association, but this is negated by the fact that all the songs on Pete's first album, *Beware of the Beautiful Stranger* were written during their two years in "Footlights". It was apparent that each had found the right man for the job and succeeded in forming a partnership that although not as commercially potent as a Lennon-McCartney type association, could produce in its own way, goods of distinct individuality and of a very high standard.

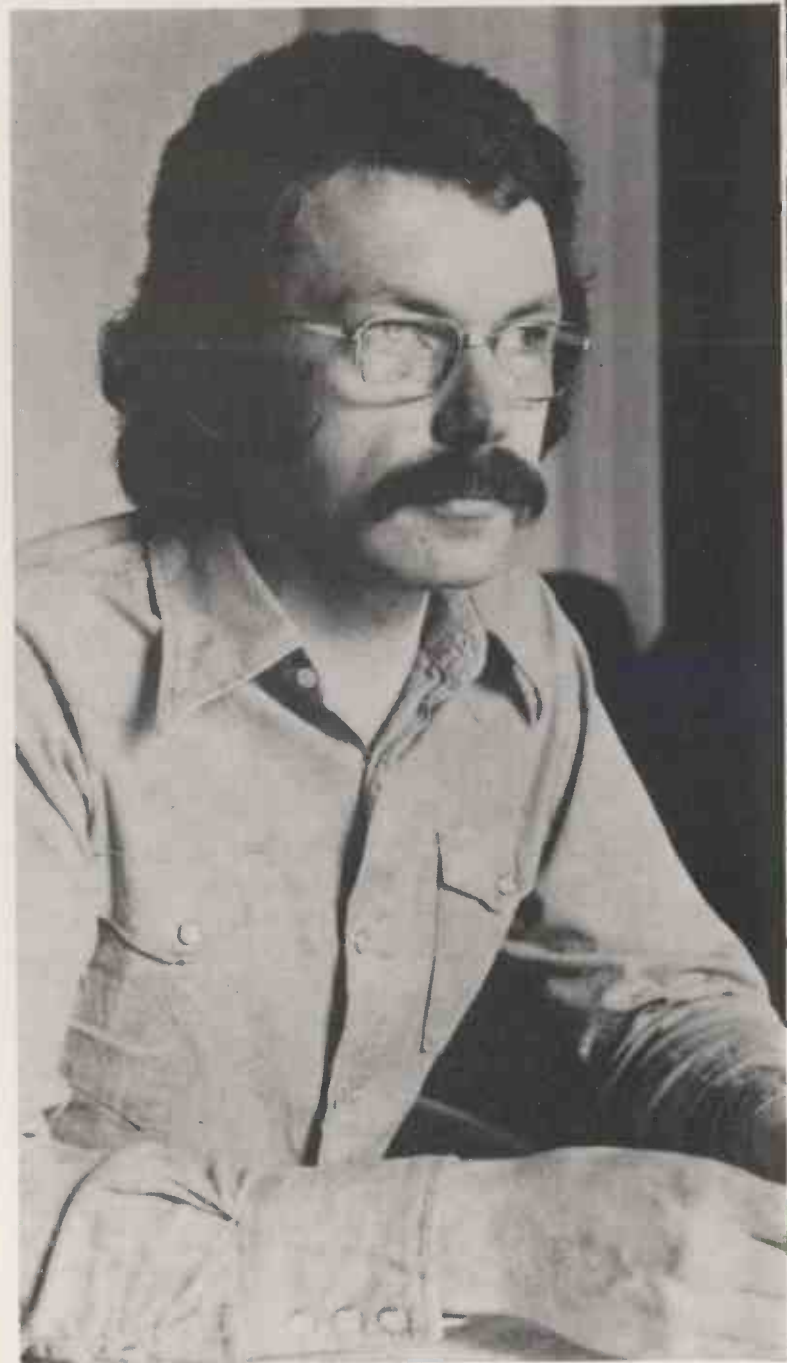
COLLABORATED

"When I met Clive in the Footlights Review he directed the 1967 show and I was musical director for the club so inevitably we collaborated on various things, writing for the shows and writing lots more songs besides. It just built up from there and we've seen no reason to stop since. I'd already written a few silly songs and it came together through mutual admiration basically, aided and abetted by the work-

shop atmosphere. Up to that point Clive hadn't written songs though he'd always wanted to. Perhaps he was concerned with finding a musician whose at-

titude to words was the same as his."

When Pete finished his classics course and left Cambridge in '68 he came out with



a £50 scholarship for writing and determined to make a career out of music. As is so often the case, it was tough going at first.

"The only money I was making was from some songs that were being used on odd TV shows—I was living at home going through various traumas trying to do something with the songs by remote control. I was generally existing on almost nothing and trying to persuade a bum manager to do something. We both eventually discovered that he didn't know anything at all and I got rid of him. I came to London at the end of '69 for a Christmas show that a bunch of us old Footlights mates got together and I suddenly realised that I wasn't going to get anything done unless I could actually be in London to go round and hustle."

Pete's modern-day Dick Whittington move led to some TV work on a programme called *What Are You Doing After The Show?* and then took him into folk clubs.

"I never set out to be a folkie," said Pete, "it was just that I was able to go out and play at many of the folk clubs in London and try to build up some sort of a following."

AMATEUR

Pete's adventures in the basically amateur world of folk led him out of London as well, sometimes travelling halfway across the country to play gigs for a few quid a night. He sings of these tribulations in a song called *Star Of Tomorrow*, which cynical though it may be, has an all-too-familiar ring of truth about it for any musician who's "done the rounds" trying to pick up some recognition and a few quid on the folk club scene. To be honest it sounds like a mixture of all the conceivable "nightmare" gigs rolled into one, with the hapless singer having his guitar smashed when a drunk falls on him "still it wasn't new was it", competing with noise from the boozers, playing to an empty room and getting his fee cut because someone forgot the advertising, and getting up at some unearthly hour of the morning to catch a train home after spending a sleepless night on somebody's kitchen floor.

"I think it's a bit self-indulgent really," comments modest Atkin, albeit with a wry grin.

"A good folk club night has its compensations of much more involvement with the audience although I often have to throw

in a few funny songs to maintain the audience's attention. The disadvantage with a lot of clubs is that they don't have a playable piano so I'm limited to songs that I can do with just the guitar. I feel much freer to do exactly the songs I'd like to do at a concert, I like to do both really."

Self-taught on piano Pete learned to read music and started picking out melodies with the right hand while vamping chords with the left. "It used to take me three days to work out a written-down piano part. The old Adam Faith hit, *Poor Me* was the first piece of sheet music I bought and worked on."

INFLUENCED

When it comes to being influenced by other artists imitation is out as far as Mr. Atkin is concerned: "when I acknowledge an inspiration it's not in a way I can personally put anything down to, it's more a matter of feeling than anything specific. "I'm influenced by people I don't like—as well though I find it hard to make a link between people I do like and what I'm actually doing. I'm sure I've learnt more from Duke Ellington than any other individual musician but not in an imitative way."

Pete's other favourite artists range throughout the music spectrum: Ry Cooder, Maria Muldaur, the Beach Boys "for their melodic and harmonic resourcefulness", Gene Vincent "I think he was much more original than he was given credit for" and classical composers such as Brahms, Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn.

"I've been listening to quite a lot of country music lately although until recently I had a somewhat snobbish attitude to it, mainly because of the pop-country music that gets played by the media and gives it a bad name. I've recently acquired the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band triple album with all the old-timers on it, and a Merle Haggard album—it's a real eye-opener."

Pete has an ambition to gain recognition in America and hopes to make an impression there in 1975, although if he does succeed in becoming the Star Of Tomorrow Atkin fans need have no fear of losing him to Uncle Sam. "Money is obviously important to me in so much as I need somewhere to live and a place to eat. I wouldn't want to have to leave the country because I was earning too much or have to buy 'E' types as a tax loss though." DEL ROBINSON.



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STUDIO SPOTLIGHT

THRESHOLD STUDIOS —the Moodies' own.



A fish-eye view of the control room at Threshold.



The Moodies (left to right): Ray Thomas, John Lodge, Justin Hayward, Mike Pinder, Graeme Edge.

THE MOODY BLUES have returned home. Years ago in the Decca Number One studio at 165 Broadhurst Gardens, West Hampstead they recorded *Days of Future Past*. It was made from a four track master and parts were only two track.

Now they have their own studio, possibly the world's best equipped and the site is indeed Decca No. 1. According to Threshold spokesman, Nick Massey, "Costs were more or less irrelevant. When you have seven million selling albums, then some liberty is possible."

The Moody Blues had been searching for their own studio site for some time and then suddenly came the offer of space from Decca.

The studio is basically for the group, unlike some other studios financed by artists and groups but available for anyone who pays and makes the necessary booking. In recent times each of the Moody Blues involved in a solo effort has been laying down tracks.

Massey says it's perfect setting for the temperament of artists like John Lodge and Justin Hayward, "they can arrive at 6 p.m. and stay until the following morning with no problems."

Part contributory for this ideal scene is the person of Dave Bell, who, Nick Massey says, "will stay 365 days and work 24 hours in each day."

Eventually the studio might be made available for recordings outside the Moody Blues family but for the present the answer is no go for the enquirer. Massey reckons its cost by the hour will be expensive when studio time is available but then he points out, "you do have the finest of everything there and should expect to pay the necessary."

Still things can change but what of the studio itself, the brainchild of the group's producer, Tony Clarke.

Basically it offers in terms of mixing, 32 input channels, 16 output Groups plus Quad, 24 track monitoring metering, 4 echo systems and 4 cue (foldback) systems. There is auxiliary equipment installed in the extra wing of the console.

In terms of tape, the studio has recorders in 3M Mincom Series 79. The loudspeakers are Westlake Audio Studio Monitors, each using JBL units comprising two 15 inch bass units, one Mid-range multicellular horn, and one pressure type tweeter.

There is closed circuit television consisting of four National Panasonic low light level cameras. Two of these are in fixed positions, one has a wide angle lens for a general view of the studio and the other is equipped with Zoom lens and full remote control from a panel in the mixing console. The other two cameras are tripod mounted, with a selection of lenses available.

There are also four Shibaden 17 inch Monitors mounted just above the control room window between the front monitor loudspeakers.

DESIGN

Clarke spent considerable time in the US looking for the best equipment and hired Tom Hidley to design the studio. He says Hidley is the best person in the world for such work.

In America Hidley has designed studios for MGM, Elektra and Warners plus Neil Young's studio, the Record Plant and one for the Osmonds. In terms of Decca No. 1, Hidley had 100 feet by 70 feet and 40 feet height to play with.

Clarke like the Moody Blues is thrilled with the complete set-up and Nick Massey says for the group, "as good in working terms as their wildest dreams. It's custom built for them, every latest gadget is there. Most of the stuff is American."

And the cost? No answer is given. Nick Massey says with a smile, "Well, it was very expensive."

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JANIS IS A

SOME make it when they're young, before the world has done its dirty job, sings Janis Ian in her composition, *Stars*. She ought to know. She was a star at 14 and by the time she was 16 the dirty job had been done and Janis had gone into self-imposed retirement.

She hit stardom in an entirely different way than most young kids, not with pretty clothes and ingenuous songs about love penned for them by cynical ageing men, but with a song of her own, *Society's Child*, a poignant, penetrating observation of the colour problem which instantly put her on a par with writers twice her age. She had started out wanting to be a star and a singer but her record company tried to turn her into a non-performing writer so, "I sang for a couple of years, fell in love and quit. Just like that."

During the years of silence between then and now she concentrated on what she terms, "learning my craft", and now she is back on the road very together, very confident in the merits of her material and that much wiser about the music business.

Alone

Surely the height of vulnerability is one person alone on a huge stage, standing in the spotlight with an acoustic guitar. There's terror on both sides, the magnitude of the space around you if you're the performer, the wave of fear as you face that sea of unknown people and, on the side of the audience, terror that somehow they will fracture that person's confidence, cause them to commit some awful fumble with the guitar, trip up, forget their words.

This creates a fine tension that, if he can brave it, will wring the very best out of the performer. It was just this position that Janis Ian found herself in as she stood on the stage at London's Rainbow Theatre, facing an audience most of

whom didn't know her or her material and many of whom were just passing the time until the headlining band came on. It must have taken her all of her courage on her first trip to Europe, to preface *Stars*, her best and favourite number, with the words, "If any of you want to go out for a drink or to meet your friends you'd better do it now, because this is a long song".

Those who stayed — and happily most did — were treated to songs whose fragile beauty and sensitive interpretation had those people right along with her on every word.

Grand

On stage she plays a grand piano and a Martin 0018 and she is more than competent on both. It's not likely that the opposition which frightens off so many ladies will inhibit her from aiming at the top. It is a fact that, even with all the publicity given to Women's Lib, particularly in the country which originated it, is it still much harder for a woman to make it.

All the more aggressive members of that movement have done is scratched the surface of what is, especially in America, a very deep-rooted prejudice. In music it means that a man can be taken seriously. He's allowed to make a career for himself, but a woman's music is frivolous and she's just filling in time between her more important functions of looking after a man and having babies. The whole scene makes Janis sick.

"We have a female road manager, Patti, who lugs round all the heavy amps and things and can set up a stage just as good as any guy. But we have a lot of trouble, particularly in colleges in the Mid-West, with people laughing and not taking her seriously. In one college the chap doing the lights wouldn't listen to a thing she said.

"Record companies still hold



STAR AGAIN

the belief that it's mainly women who buy records so they need far more men than women to record. That really is a load of shit, if you'll pardon the expression. Women do listen to women artists. There are some really good women writers coming up in America but the attitude of the business is all wrong for them.

"The attitude of the guys is a problem as well and the attitude of other women artists doesn't help much. I can only speak of the States because I haven't really played anywhere else. Another woman can take your man or your job from you so, a lot of women singers feel that any other woman singer is stepping on their feet. You get women writers who won't sing a song by another woman writer, or won't choose a female pianist.

"It's harder for a woman to be taken seriously. People think that a woman is only capable of writing love songs. It's a very screwed up scene. You can write about a man leaving you but people don't think you can write about you leaving a man. That's not right."

It's unusual to find a person who combines an extremely sensitive and introspective writing talent with such a forthright, sensible approach to things, yet it is this which will pull her through in the end. It's taken her several long years of sitting at home studying life and music to arrive at this philosophy.

Lucky

"I was lucky in that I had saved up enough from my early singing days to have two years off then I borrowed enough for another two. For two years I studied the craft of songwriting without actually writing a thing, just learning how to squeeze a lot into a little, rhyme patterns, melody patterns. A lot of writers don't think about all that, and when they come to write a song they get so



tangled up in the technicalities that they lose what they're trying to say."

As soon as she felt confident that she'd mastered the art, Janis started work on a series of songs from which were chosen the ones on her *Stars* album. "This album is really my guts. It's my album. In part it's the arranger's (Ron Frangipane) and the producer's (Brooks Arthur), but the essence is mine. And if it's no good, that's on me also."

It contains a selection of songs on various subjects, one of which, *You've Got Me On A String*, she tried to interest Barbra Streisand in. "I thought it was perfect for her but she'd just decided she wanted to do rock and roll." She thought that a lot of people would wish to cover the title track but thinks they are put off by the length, seven minutes of sustained metaphor and meaning.

That song is completely

autobiographical. "I started out wanting to be a star." Then came the hassles, her drop-out from the scene. During the intervening years between then and her come-back many people offered her gigs which she turned down because "people wanted an angry spokesman and I didn't want to be that any more. So I stopped working and stopped being a star."

Song

In her song she says, "Stars, they come and go . . . they vanish like the last light of the sun all in a blaze." She talks about the guys stopping her on the street and asking for autographs and her doubting if they really loved her as opposed to the 'star'.

She refers to the person who is a star when young and then cannot fit into any other way of life later but turns to drink and drugs as a substitute for

fame. She wonders if the person to whom stardom comes later in life has more strength and wisdom to cope with it.

It is this song that has enabled her to come back to face it all again. It has effected a kind of mental catharsis, clearing out her mind, clarifying and putting into perspective what must have been a very traumatic experience for a girl of 14. Apart from the realities expressed in it, it is a beautifully constructed song with a hypnotic, subtly unwinding melody. And it applies to everybody, not just stars and has-beens.

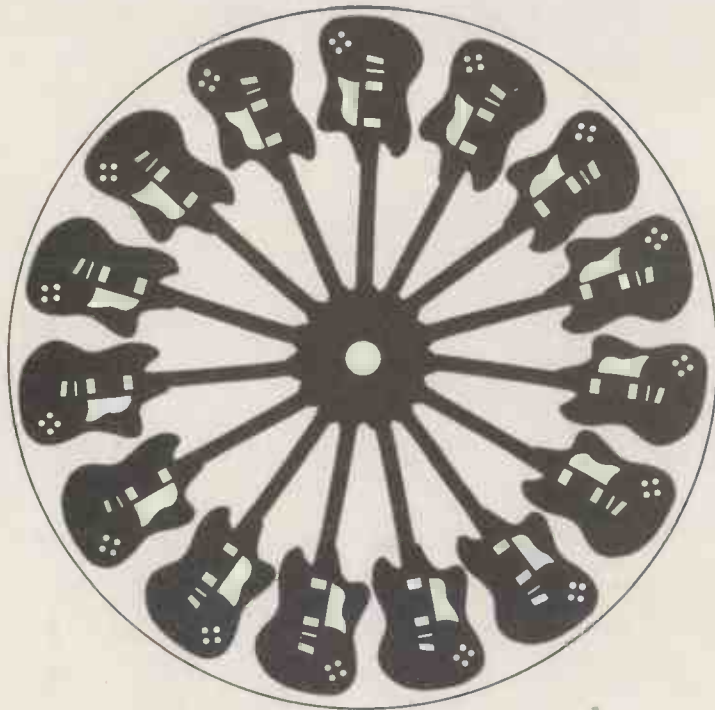
Dreams

"Everybody has their dreams and everybody gets knocked around one way or another." As for her own dreams — "Sure I still have dreams but they're a little bit more real now. I don't dream of being surrounded with champagne, which I don't drink, and an entourage which I don't really want.

"I've fulfilled one of my dreams recently by buying a Steinway grand piano and I should like a house and some more dogs!"

Janis will be over here again in the Spring, with a new album entitled *Water Colours*. Don't let the rather pallid sounding title put you off. Janis's warm voice has, as well as its soft, dreamy side, a rich power and raunchiness which enables her to write and perform a wide variety of song styles. And she has something else in her voice and performance too — sincerity and authority, which can put her songs over far better than any amount of vocal tricks. She's been through the "many years forgetting what you know too well" (*Stars*) and if she becomes a star again, as I believe she will, no-one will ever have been better prepared for the riches and rigours of that disorientating way of life.

GUITAR SPECIAL



THE guitar is obviously the most popular rock instrument today, and has enjoyed this position since the first rock and rollers burst on the scene in the early fifties. As much analysis about the potential of guitars in all its forms has taken place, perhaps another review at this stage could be considered unnecessary. However, since the guitar became an instrument in its own right so early on it has been accompanied by the massive development of a market that is increasingly competitive.

At the end of the forties, the Telecaster was designed by Leo Fender, while in 1952 the Les Paul was commercially pro-

duced. With men like Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters producing the sounds of the new rock and roll revolution, it was obvious that there would be quick developments in the field of the guitars.

Distinct

More and more varied sounds were needed: groups like the Shadows had to have a distinct and heavy lead. Behind this the rhythm section could no longer be a pleasant appendage to a melody; it had to drive the song along, be the engine on which the lead relied for its full effect.

With several instruments in a

band complementing each other there had to be further developments in the sound that they could produce. The first development of this nature was the vibrato arm which allowed much greater and more varied freedom of expression to the leader. The most outstanding exponent of this device was surely Jimi Hendrix, who created his own special sound from it.

Evaluation

By this time, copies had been made of the originals, and they were surprisingly good. The trade has done well from such stern competition, and it's obviously a good thing for the individual to be faced with different products, to be able to choose the points that appeal to him personally, and to make his own evaluation and weigh them against other important aspects such as the price. From a comprehensive guide a discerning buyer can get ideas as to where he is most likely to find the guitar which will give him just the sound that he's after.

It is with this in mind that

Beat Instrumental continues to publish and update a regular review of developments in the field of guitar production, and we hope that all enthusiasts, whether would-be Hendrixes or aspiring Segovias, will find much of value in the following feature.

Fast-playing necks are a feature of most of the guitars in the Swedish-made Hagstrom range, handled in the UK by Arc Musical Instruments. Hagstrom's patented "H" expander-stretcher is built into the neck of every Hagstrom electric and steel string acoustic guitar and is designed to provide perfect alignment, guaranteed for ten years.

Controls

The Hagstrom Swede guitar has the popular Les Paul-style body, finished in cherry red and an ebony fretboard. The two "antihum" pickups are activated by separate volume and tone controls and by two three position switches. The upper switch is for the tone and provides sharp, mellow and deep pre-fixed levels independent of

Below: Top Gear's director Ken Achard, showing our photographer the Rickenbacker stereo bass



the pick-ups in use, and the lower switch is for pickup selection, lead pickup, rhythm (both in use), and bass pickup. Each string of this guitar can be individually adjusted at the bridge, both horizontally and vertically.

Swede bass

A bass version of the Swede is also made with separately controlled twin pickups.

Available with or without microphone, the H-45 acoustic is designed for the C & W or folk singer. It has a spruce top and has black and white celluloid inlays around the top sides and soundhole. Finished in sunburst, the H-45 also features an adjustable bridge. An electric version is made, the H-45E, and a twelve string acoustic, the H-33.

Boosey & Hawkes (Sales) Ltd distribute a wide selection of acoustic guitars, mostly costing from about £15 to £100.

Classical guitars, folk, jumbo and twelve string models are available in the Angelica, Landola, La Manchu, Di Giorgio Vittorio, Kyoto, Takeharu and Perez ranges, and two solid

electric Angelica guitars are made, finished in red and oak.

The Angelica 2851 model is an inexpensive full size classic with laminated spruce top, laminated red wood (schefflera) back and sides and rosewood fingerboard. The head is inlaid with marquetry, which is also around the sound hole, on the bridge, and on the bottom of guitar.

Ornamentation

Di Giorgio guitars are made in Brazil, where the factory has been established for sixty years and is solely devoted to guitar production. "Each guitar", say B & H "is made under a rigorous system of quality control using only raw materials that have been checked and treated." Di Giorgio's 36 Bel Som model has a selected pine top, dark rosewood grained back and sides, rosewood fingerboard with nickel silver frets and carved head. The sound hole and back and sides are inlaid.

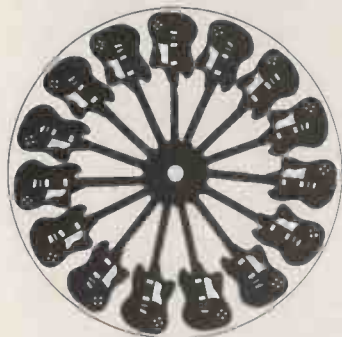
Boosey and Hawkes also

Continued on page 62

(Left): Proving that all tastes are catered for is this left-hand Fender Stratocaster. ►



GUITAR SPECIAL



Continued from page 61

handle the famous American-made Harmony guitars. One of Harmony's most popular models over the years has been their Sovereign jumbo model. This large-bodied instrument has mahogany back and sides and spruce top with white edge bindings and inlays and Torque-Lok reinforced mahogany 'Slimline' neck, with ovalled rosewood fingerboard.

CBS/Arbiter Ltd handle the famous Fender guitars, including the seemingly ever-popular Stratocaster and Telecaster models and Precision bass guitar.

Telecasters

One of the more recent additions to the Fender range is the Telecaster Custom, a twin pickup solid incorporating the standard "Tele" lead pickup and a humbucking-type rhythm pickup. Three individually adjustable bridge sections are fitted to allow perfect intonation and string alignment. Individual volume and tone controls are provided for each pickup. This guitar can be bought in a variety of finishes and an optional one-piece maple neck is also available.

The Telecaster Thinline is a semi-solid version of the Telecaster, with a single "f" hole and body finished in natural ash, sunburst, or a custom colour. The single-piece fast action hard rock maple neck has tilt neck "micro" adjustment, and six individually adjustable

bridge sections are provided. Two switchable wide-range humbucking type pickups are fitted.

A less expensive Fender model is the Musicmaster which has one pickup with separate volume and tone controls, three individually adjustable bridge sections, and is available with a three-quarter or full length fast-action neck.

A range of Fender acoustic guitars is also available.

The well-known Antoria guitars—one of the largest ranges on the market—are handled by J. T. Coppock (Leeds) Ltd., as well as Yamaki and Tama acoustics, and Dobro and National Dobro guitars.

Antoria guitars cost from £35 for their Bronco folk model, to about £134 for their Memphis Custom de-luxe. The latter is an L.P. type guitar which features a one-piece neck and body, and gold plated fittings. This instrument is available in a left-handed version as well. Coppocks also offer a Strat. type guitar, the Rocketman which is available in a variety of finishes such as white, sunburst, natural and ash, and there is also a choice of rosewood or maple fingerboard models, and again, a version for the left-handed guitarist.

Finishes

Besides the aforementioned Memphis Custom de-luxe, the L.P. type guitar is also available in several finishes which include red, natural and black, the latter right or left-handed.

Among the many other Antoria guitars are basses, SG types, semi-acoustics and various jumbos, with several more left-handed models in the range.

At the time of going to press, Coppocks were awaiting delivery of another twelve new electrics and some new Tama guitars as well.

A vast range of guitars, strings and accessories is distributed by Fletcher, Coppock and Newman Ltd, including the Kimbara series of classical, folk, jumbo and electric models. Kimbara electrics are priced from about £85 to £109, and are similar in appearance to such guitars as Les Paul, SG and Stratocaster.

Kimbara's N119 model has a large double cutaway body finished in sunburst, with mahogany neck, rosewood fin-



One of Fletcher, Coppock & Newman's range of Spanish-style guitars

gerboard, nickel silver frets, individual chrome-plated fully enclosed machines and three high response hum resistant pickups with selector switch volume and tone controls.

Resonance

The independently adjustable microset bridge is combined with a tremolo arm. The N.120 is similar but has a body fin-

ished in white polyester, and so is the N.121, but this model has a body made of two-ply Sen wood which, say FCN, "contributes greatly to the natural resonance of the guitar." The N.121's neck and fingerboard are made of maple.

In their jumbo guitar range, Kimbara's N.95 custom guitar has an extra large tone chamber

Continued on page 64



The recently-introduced Framus Nashville guitar

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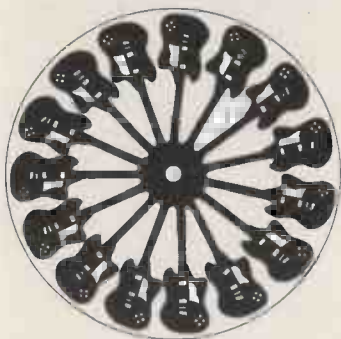
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GUITAR SPECIAL



Continued from page 63

for full resonance, laminated spruce top. The back and sides are veneered in maple, the back being arched and having marquetry inlay.

Binding

The guitar is bound in black and white ivorine and has a fancy pickguard with pearl inlay and butterfly design rosewood bridge. The fingerboard is also rosewood, with ivorine bound edges and large pearl inlays and the instrument comes complete with a shaped hard shell plush lined case.

Framus have recently been making an impression on rock guitarists with their Nashville lead and bass guitars and the Jan Akkerman guitar — the latter was reviewed in Beat last September, and the Nashville bass in January's issue. Mungo Jerry are among the bands currently using the new Framus instruments.

The Jan Akkerman features an ebony fingerboard with attractive inlays, the neck joining the body at the 15th fret, individual machine heads, golden plated metal parts, and two Nashville sound pick-ups activated by a six position toggle switch to produce different sounds (rotary tone and volume controls are also provided). The body, neck and bridge have been designed to produce long sustain, and the neck actually runs the whole length of the instrument, the bridge being mounted on it. The strings are fitted right on to the bridge, making a shorter



Terada Western FW-941 by Hornby Skewes

scale, and giving a high degree of flexibility, even when heavy gauge strings are used.

All Framus International guitars are equipped with a tension rod, adjustable at the head.

Framus have also just introduced a new acoustic.

Trade distributors, **John Hornby Skewes & Company Limited** near Leeds are sole British distributors for an extensive range of classic, folk, western, and electric guitars.

Inexpensive acoustic guitars come under the Palmer label,

this range including smaller-sized classic and steel-strung instruments for the younger player, and retailing from as little as £7. Other Palmer guitars include the popular 1612 series plectrum and classic models, each of which is priced around £15 retail, making them 'attractive buys' for the student.

The well-known Terada range of 11 classic, folk and western guitars also provides a choice of models and prices to suit the student and more advanced player. Examples of these are the G306 Terada Classic, retailing at approximately £37, and the JW835 Western model at approximately £104.

Kasuga guitars need little introduction to the keen guitarist, although it may not generally be known that this range covers some 24 guitars and ten banjos. In the guitar category there are four classics retailing from approximately £45 to £68, a Flamenco model at just under £100, and 12 folk and western guitars ranging in price from around £49 to £106. Four 12-string instruments are available in this fine selection.

Solids

Kasuga electric guitars offer a comprehensive selection of solid body styles, all of which are complete in deluxe carrying cases. Prices range from approximately £117 for the KSG2 model through to the KLG2S at approximately £138.

Zenta electric guitars are yet another brand distributed by Hornby Skewes. This range includes ten solid models priced from £30 for the FT1 single pickup model to around £100 for the LE200 guitar and LE200B Bass instrument.

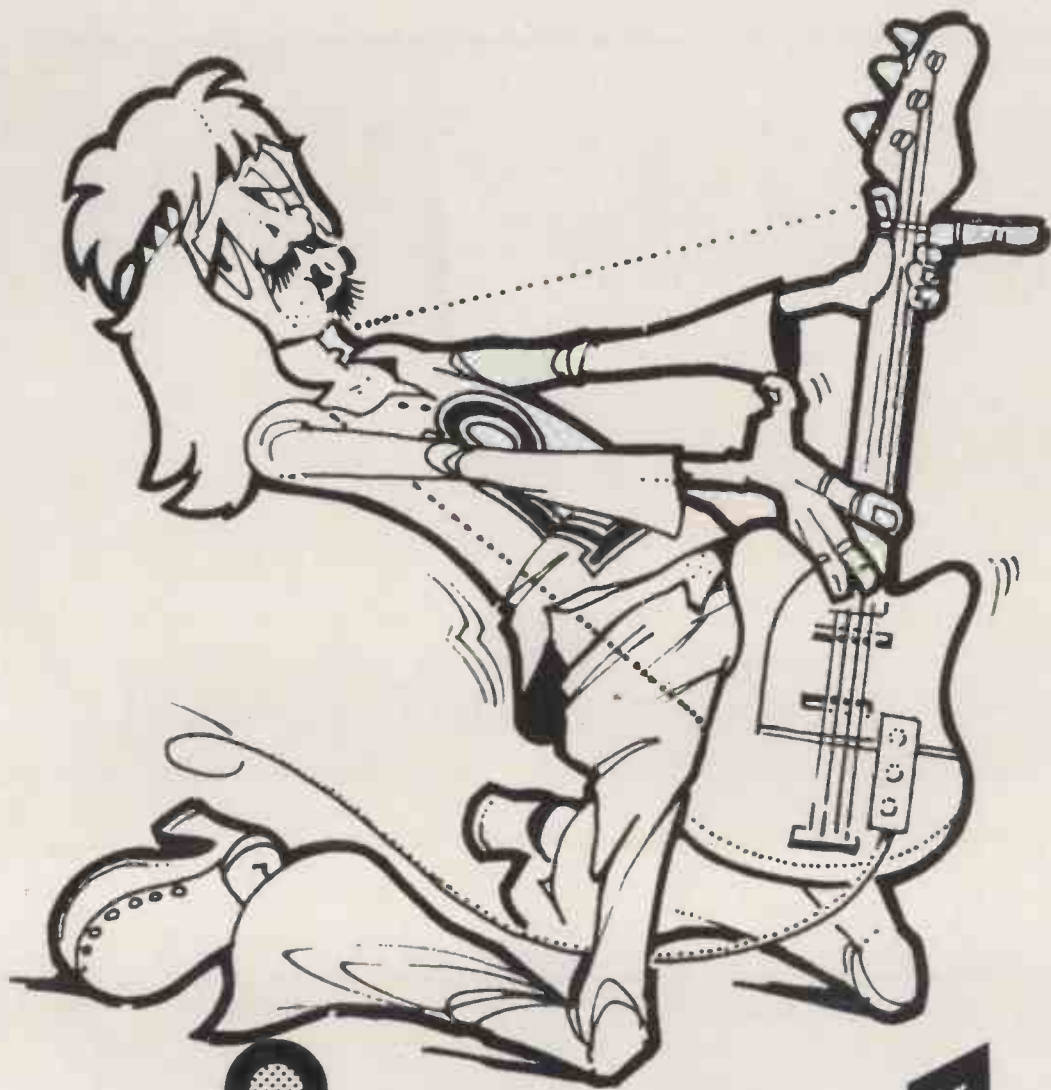
One of the leading dealers in secondhand guitars in London is **Macaris Ltd** in the Charing Cross Road, so if you're looking for a secondhand instrument or have one to sell, why not pay them a visit? They offer part exchange deals as well.

Besides secondhand instruments, Macaris also stock a good selection of new guitars and have a very comprehensive range of strings and accessories. They are a main retail stockist of Yamaha guitars and other makes stocked include Fender, Gibson, Guild, Epiphone, CSL and Antoria. For someone thinking of buying one of the many "copies" of electric guitars on the market, shop manager Carl Neilsen

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Continued on page 67



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that world renowned quality of construction and workmanship that made their electric cousins world leaders. We're calling these acoustics the 'F' Series. 5 Classics and 9 Steel strung comprise the range with prices from £27.25! Feel that mahogany neck. Run your finger over the Fender strings. You know it's a Fender by the feel. The feel that comes from years of experience at making the world's top guitars. That's something we at Fender know a little about!



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GUITAR SPECIAL



Continued from page 64

particularly recommends the latter two makes.

Acoustics available from Macaris include Terada, Eko, Epiphone, Landola, Antoria, Eros, Tatra classics, Fender, Yamaha, B & M and Kasuga. A popular 12-string guitar is the B & M Maverick model which costs £42.

Strings

There should be a set of strings to suit any guitarist's needs at Macaris, with a choice available from such brands as Martin, D'Arco, D'Angelico, Raves, Gibson, New Yorker, Augustine, Black Diamond, La Bella and Funky. In Custom gauge Macaris stock strings by Picato, Ernie Ball, and Rotosound.

The Orange guitar, which, believe it or not, is finished in black, features a double cut-away body made of Honduras mahogany, ebony fingerboard with large fret board, Tuneomatic bridge. Schaller machines and humbucking pickups. The pickups have separate rotary tone and volume controls and are activated by a toggle switch. Say Orange: "the guitar incorporates an original Les Paul-type tone circuit, with a sound that's a cross between a Stratocaster and an SG." "Orange will also custom build their guitar to individual requirements.

Orange shop

In the Orange shop in London's West End, a wide range of Gibson and Fender guitars are stocked, and Rickenbacker stereo basses.

Orange strings are available too: their Super Light Gauge silk on steel strings "were tested by no less than 500 guitarists to find the best possible combination to make up the set."

Shaftesbury, Ovation, Top Twenty, Avon, Guyatone, Sigma, Eko, Aria, Suzuki, Alhambra and Student guitars are all distributed in Britain by **Rose, Morris & Co. Ltd.**

The Shaftesbury range also includes the British-made and designed Ned Callan Cody and Hombre guitars. The six-string Hombre is a solid body guitar finished in golden-brown sunburst with the dark brown neck and head enhanced by a high

Continued on page 68

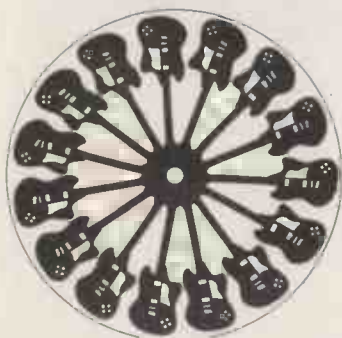


A selection of guitars on display at Orange's West End store



Avon solid electric from Rose Morris

GUITAR SPECIAL



Continued from page 67

gloss polyester finish and offers, say Rose-Morris, "Ned Callan quality at a moderate price." The guitar features two Ned Callan pickups with one volume and one tone control and a 3-way selector switch, detachable neck with fully adjustable truss rod, seasoned hardwood fingerboard with nickel silver frets, bound edges and mother-of-pearl position markers, fully adjustable bridge/tailpiece assembly with removable chromed cover and individual covered machine heads. A Hombre bass guitar is also available.

Acoustics

The Eko range offers a wide choice of acoustic guitars in the middle price bracket. Their Rio Bravo model is a jumbo guitar with a spruce top and is finished in natural polyester, edged in white. It has an imita-



Two Ovation guitars distributed in this country by Rose Morris — an acoustic and a startlingly styled solid electric

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tion tortoiseshell fingerplate, adjustable rosewood bridge, and rosewood fingerboard with pearlex position markers and white edges. The Ranger is a lower-priced instrument than the Rio Bravo, but is also jumbo-sized. The former features a spruce face with mahogany sides. Bridge and fingerboard are again rosewood. Twelve-string versions are made of both these guitars.

Epiphone guitars are designed, quality controlled and ap-

proved by the makers of Gibson, and also fitted with Gibson strings—Rosetti & Co. Ltd. are the sole U.K. distributors.

Rosetti have recently introduced five new Epiphone acoustics all fitted with a fixed heel neck, which they say, "is a return to the traditional and more difficult method of dovetailing the neck into the body instead of just bolting it on."

The Epiphone FT335 "Super de-luxe" folk guitar has a laminated spruce top, rosewood

vener back and sides, slim fast adjustable neck, and rosewood fingerboard with block inlays. A jumbo model, the FT350, has a similar modification.

Twelves

Two 12-string models are available, the FT565, which has a three-piece back in veneered jacaranda and natural curly maple finish, and the FT365 which features a three-piece adjustable neck and an adjustable neck. Completing this new

range, the FT350 is a six-string model with a three-piece back similar to the FT565 12-string and has a fixed rosewood bridge.

A wide selection of other acoustics, electrics and bass guitars is also available from Rosetti.

Gibson guitars are distributed in Britain by Henri Selmer & Co Ltd, and this famous American range includes liter-

Continued on page 70



Epiphone EA-250 semi-acoustic electric available from Rosetti

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GUITAR SPECIAL



continued from page 69

ally dozens of models, both electric and steel-strung acoustic.

The most recent models from Gibson, the Les Paul Signature, Les Paul Signature bass and Ripper bass models were described in detail in last October's *Beat*.

Briefly, the Signature models represent a departure from the "standard" Les Paul shape with thin line hollow bodies and low impedance pickups, and the Ripper bass features pickups designed to provide powerful and broad range adjustment combined with a four-position sound switch and mid-range control. Say Gibson: "It may sound complicated but it isn't."

The Les Paul guitar is of course extremely popular with today's rock guitarists and

besides the Signature, Gibson are producing the Custom, Deluxe and Recording Les Paul models, and the Triumph bass.

The control panel of the Recording model incorporates a high/low impedance selector switch, a pickup selector toggle switch, master volume switch, 11-position Decade control switch, treble, bass and tone controls and phase switch.

Pedal steels

Selmer also handle MSA pedal steel guitars, Hofner, Yamaha and Saxon guitars, two inexpensive Viva guitars, and their own six and 12 string acoustics.

A vast selection of guitars is handled by Summerfield Brothers of Gateshead, including classics by Paramount, Maya Cimar, Tamura, Ryoji

Matsuoka, Mitsuru Tamura and Masaru Kohno, the new range of Levin acoustics, and both electric and acoustic guitars by Ibanez, CSL and Sumbro. The left-handed guitarist is well catered for with no less than 30 different models, both electric and acoustic, available from Summerfields.

The CSL and Ibanez ranges offer between them a wide choice of "copies" based on famous American prototypes. Four of the latest additions are the CSL 2408 Swinger and 2409 Grabber bass, based on the L6S and Ripper bass respectively, and the 2350W and 2341 Les Paul-style guitars.

Detachable

The 2350W guitar features a solid body finished with contoured white top, back and sides, detachable neck incor-

▼ *Gibson's recently introduced Custom L5S, from Selmer at £645 (recommended price)*



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porating an adjustable truss rod, rosewood fingerboard with pearloid position markers and white bound edges, two gold plated pickup units with separate polepieces, and comes complete with lead and plush-lined carrying case.

Hand-polished

The 2341 has a similar specification, but the body is finished in black with white purfled edges, and there are three pickups. The individual tuning machines are gold plated and have pearloid buttons. The entire instrument is polished by hand, and is also supplied with lead and case. A de-luxe version of this guitar, the 2341DX has a fitted neck and special machines.

Top Gear Musical Wholesale Co. distribute Guild, Ricken-

Continued on page 72



▲ *Top Gear's Denmark Street showrooms*

▼ *Graham Osborne, manager of Selmer, pictured with the Gibson L6S which retails at £309*



GUITAR SPECIAL



Continued from page 71

backer and Harmony guitars in the U.K.

Several new Guild models have been introduced over the past year including two electrics; the Starfire Six semi-acoustic which has a double cutaway and gold plated Bigsby vibrato and humbucking pickups; and a de-luxe version of the S100, a twin cutaway solid body guitar, also with humbuckers and Bigsby, which incorporates a phase switch.

New 'twelves'

The F50 Navarre acoustic has an extra large jumbo size body with curly maple sides and back and spruce top and the F512 is a 12-string guitar with spruce top and rosewood sides and back. Guild have also introduced two more 12-strings in a Dreadnought body shape, the G212 and G312 models. These are similar in appearance to the Guild D40 and D50 Dreadnought six-string models respectively. Finally the G41 Dreadnought has an extra large 17 inch body in mahogany and the G75 is a $\frac{3}{4}$ -size Dreadnought.

Upper price

Two new acoustic models from Harmony have been designed to appeal to the upper-price section of the market, the Opus 5 and Opus 10 models. Both feature spruce tops, mahogany backs and sides, rosewood pin bridges, and

Grover chrome-plated machines. The Opus 5 is a Dreadnought shape and the Opus 10 has the same style of body as the popular Harmony jumbo Sovereign.

Top Gear are presently awaiting supplies of the new Rickenbacker 481 guitar which is a six string model with a similar body shape to the 4001 stereo bass, and features twin humbuckers.

Over the last couple of years more and more rock outfits have found a place for the pedal-steel guitar, previously considered suitable only for country and western music. Leading stockists in this country are ZB (pronounced Zee-bee) Guitars (UK), Kent. This trend has encouraged the firm to supplement their range of custom-built ZB guitars with a variety of new Emmons guitars. Despite various price increases by the manufacturers, ZB are trying to keep their prices competitive; however, a pedal-steel guitar is no cheap item and the Student S10 for instance costs £350.99.

The S10 incorporates the standard 3-pedal arrangement with one knee lever on an E ninth tuning. The frame of the guitar is in cast and brushed aluminium, and the body is solid wood covered in a fibreglass finish currently available either in clear blue or black.

The single-wound high performance pick-up compares favourably with a professional pick-up. The height of the legs is adjustable, and a special feature is the double-changer head which allows the user to raise and lower the same string. The price includes the case and VAT. If you apply to the firm they can fix you up with any tuning or knee lever arrangement that you want. You can add more pedals and knee levers as and when you feel you can use them to advantage (and you can afford them).

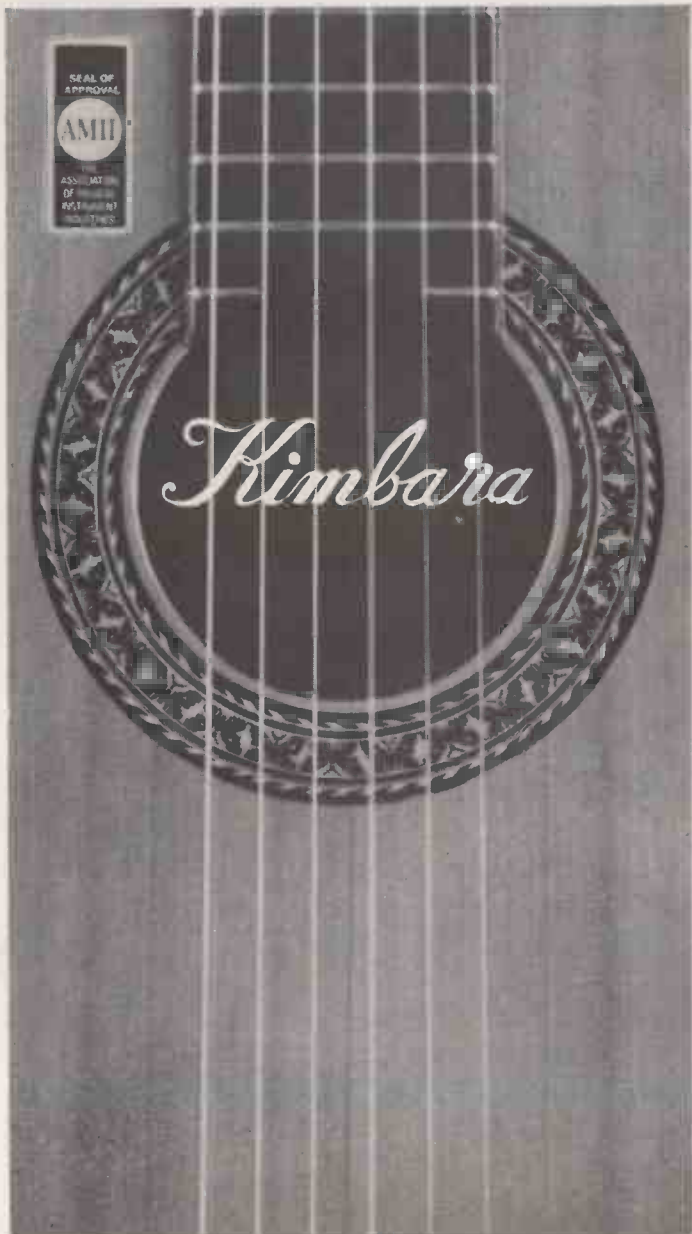
ZB have recently made available special custom colours on their professional range. Orange, brown and gold sunburst, solid purple with metal flake, and solid purple with mother of pearl inlays are among the more expressive. These custom colours add about £12 to the cost.

The price range for the quality professional models is from £662.03 for an S10 Professional with three pedals, three knee levers, case and VAT to £888.83 for a D10 Professional



Gibson Howard Roberts electric acoustic which sells at £585

Continued on page 74



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GUITAR SPECIAL



continued from page 72

with 8 pedals, 2 knee levers, case and VAT. Continuing up the scale to the four-figure mark is the Emmons D10 featuring eight pedals, four knee levers, double-wound pick-up, wooden neck inserts and volume pedal (plus case). It's finished in red bird's-eye maple.

One neck is tuned to E ninth and the other to C sixth. ZB didn't specify an exact price, but it is well over £1,000 — "but the price could well go down depending on other variables." Rob Maskell will handle any inquiries.

Where to write for further information:

Arc Musical Instruments — 23A High Street, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 3RB.

Boosey and Hawkes Ltd. — St. Giles Music Centre, 16-18 St. Giles High Street, London WC2.

CBS/Arbiter Ltd. — Fender Soundhouse, 213-215 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9AF.

J. T. Coppock (Leeds) Ltd. — Royds Lane, Leeds 12.

Fletcher, Coppock and Newman Ltd. — Shelton House, 39-41 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HL.

Framus—W. Streit Esq., Framus Ltd., Highview Road, Lightwater, Surrey.

John Hornby Skewes & Co, Ltd. Salem House, Main Street, Garforth, Leeds.

Macari's Ltd. — 122 Charing Cross Road, London WC2.

Orange — Orange Musical Industries, 3/4 New Compton Street, London WC2.



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Rose, Morris & Co. Ltd., — 32-34 Gordon House Road, London NW5.

Rosetti & Co. Ltd. — 138-140 Old Street, London EC1V 9BL.

Henri Selmer & Co. Ltd., — Woolpack Lane, Braintree, Essex CM7 6BB.

Summerfield Brothers — Saltmeadows, Gateshead, NE8 3AJ.

Top Gear Musical Wholesale Co., — 5 Denmark Street, London WC2H 8LP.

ZB Guitars (UK), 2 Upper Fant Road, Maidstone, Kent.

NEXT MONTH IN BEAT

The March issue of Beat will include a comprehensive preview of exhibits at the 1975 Frankfurt International Fair.

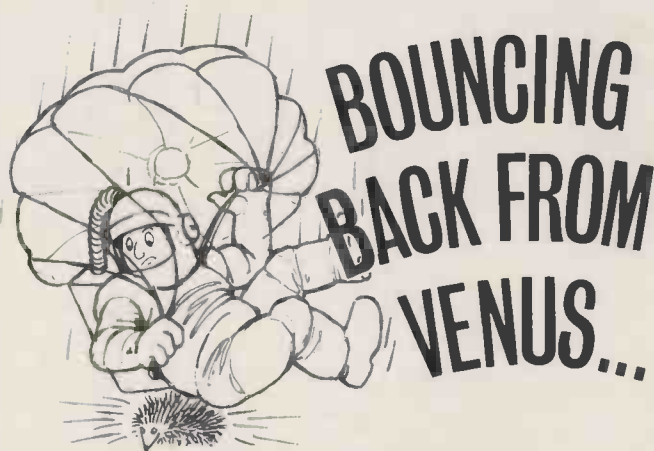
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SYREETA

'I do what I believe, I do my own thinking and it's too bad if anyone prefers me to go another way'

SYREETA Wright, ex-wife of Stevie Wonder, is suspicious of the term 'soul'. She thinks it refers to music made by black musicians but other than that she says, 'why call anything, anything'.

She prefers quality of music than finding music via a term which categorises a style of music. She says, 'I like good music, so long as it's good, whatever its so-called type. My music is personal, giving my

flavour, evolving into something felt; the thing is communicating those things, relating them to people who listen.'

Writing

Much of her music is written by Stevie Wonder, though the lady is increasing her self-penned output. She has, of course, written many of Stevie's lyrics, particularly on the two albums, *Where I'm Coming*

From and *Music Of My Mind*.

In 1974 she took to the road for the first time playing gigs in American clubs.

She says, 'I do what I believe. I go my way of thinking and it's too bad if anyone prefers me to go another way. Lord, I take care of myself and one thing helping me is what is termed Transcendental Meditation, a scientific technique.'

Independent in spirit she might be, yet that Stevie Won-

der influence is marked, if only because she will happily talk about the great Motown super-star.

'Do you know,' she says, 'he has five years of music stacked away and that guy is miles away ahead of anyone else.'

'People are only understanding what he did three years back.'

'I don't think "super-star" labels worry him one iota. I hope it will not ever affect me. What



SYREETA

'I don't want it to become a job'

does it mean to have a number one soul record, or a number one? You waste your time standing in adulation. I want to remain innocent and reflect an honesty in my music. I don't want it to become a job.'

Lyrics are not throw-away items for Syreeta. She says her writing for Stevie took time. 'He would come around and dump some tapes and go off and I listen to the melody a million times.'

'When you hear, you day-dream. I usually sit back and relax and listen and then ideas come and words and melody blend.'

Self-confidence

'When I make my own music, I usually hum a tune on to tape and then someone puts chords to it. I enjoy this process. I find myself able to master things I formerly was only learning and at the same time I gain self-confidence.'

This self-confidence, Syreeta says, will become more evident on her third album and her increased musical freedom does owe something to the '74 touring.

It was, she believes, the beginning of making her into a future star.

She was bringing her music to the people, which is something she wants to do more than anything else. With most people such a statement sounds a boring cliché. This lady makes it sound fresh, and wholesome as her music.

First attempts

Her present feeling about things going her way is given impetus by comparing current interest in her music with her first attempts on disc.

'I was Rita Wright. I sang something called *I Can't Give Back The Love I Feel*. It was a disaster. It was a flop. At least they still allowed me into the world of providing backing vocals at Motown and gave me a secretary's job when I wasn't in the studio.'

She did get another chance and found herself working closely with Stevie Wonder. 'I've been involved, very involved,

on a musical level with Stevie. The guy's a genius and you don't let a genius go. He's someone who knows and can bring out the best in me. Suddenly I've discovered the depths in my singing and ability not only to write lyrics but also music.'

'Stevie is into every kind of music people give a term to and much more; with him the possibilities are endless. He can write five hit tunes in one afternoon. He doesn't have day or night in a time sense, he just goes on and you wonder whether you can possibly keep up with him and when you lose him, how you can get back on track with him.'

Syreeta is concerned that no one should think her part of some Stevie Wonder music machine. Indeed meeting her is to realise she does possess an independent streak which no man will quell.

Very free

'I had a five-piece backing band and it was done without Stevie, the arrangements I mean. The whole thing was very free with no set pattern. I relied very much on the evening's mood.'

'It was spontaneous and not choreographed and I ad-libbed and joked and I had a great deal of fun. The audience seemed to take things very well!'

Some of this spontaneity doubtless comes from one of the main influences in Syreeta's background, jazz music. 'I was late into my teens before I heard pop music, maybe that's why I understand Stevie's music with its endless variety. I don't think about proving myself. I sing with emotion and regardless of what anyone else thinks.'

Syreeta says, 'I've been in the background at Motown for six years or so. I've seen mistakes made by other people and I've learnt from them. In any case, what I don't understand I can ask Gordy or Stevie about.'

Motown has virtually moved from Detroit to Los Angeles and now has plans for branching into plays and films. Syreeta sees her future there too, but for the moment is out to make herself a singing star.



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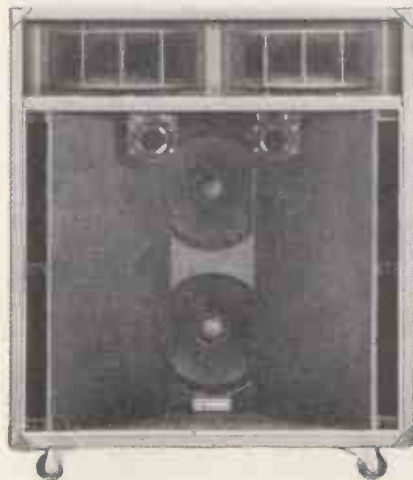
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