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April 1978 40p

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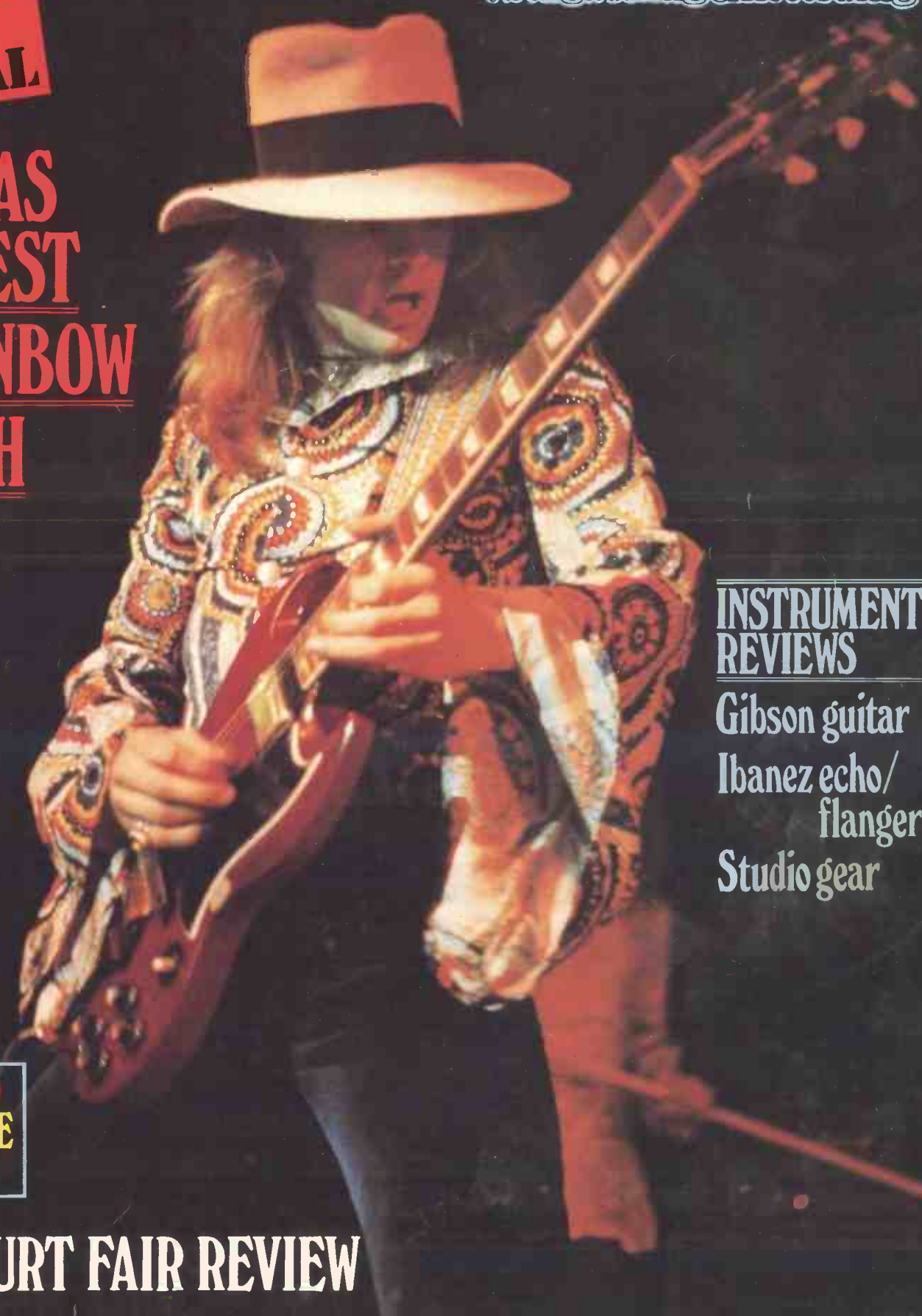
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BEAT INSTRUMENTAL

Songwriting & Recording

No 138

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Editorial

Ever read those editorials which trumpet about 'action-packed issues'? Never mind if you haven't because you're just about to read an example! That's because this month's edition boasts a particularly action-packed line up of bands and musicians — plus our usual comprehensive instrument reviews and surveys.

The bands first of all. Beat has been championing Judas Priest since their early days on the local club circuit, and now that they've finally broken big we've asked them to pass on any tips about moving gingerly in the direction of the Big Time. Cozy Powell, the second of our heavy metal trio, gives a rare interview on behalf of Rainbow and talks at length about drumming while Rush complete the triumvirate with an up-to-date resumé of their ever changing list of equipment.

It's not all heavy metal, though. We begin a series on the trials, tribulations, and recommended hardware to be examined by anyone thinking about starting his own eight track recording studio. Steeleye Span, the recently demised leaders of the British folk rock movement, take their place under our retrospective career microscope, while any bands hoping to take their place should find our article on buying acoustic guitars a helpful starting point.

This month's technical features, like the heavy metal bands, also line up as a fearsome threesome. Our team had scarcely returned from this year's Frankfurt Fair before the ringleader pushed his Review into the out tray to take its place alongside the microphone and PA surveys.

How, you may be thinking, can they fit all this between two shiny but straining staples? The answer is — with a lot of squeezing; enough, even, to include the Flamin' Groovies, victims last month of 'good ol' technical problems'. See you next month.

Contents

Front Cover — Judas Priest	
Judas Priest	4
Letters and Queries	8
Cozy Powell	14
Instrument Reviews	19, 20, 23, 27
Recording Studio Equipment	30
The Strawbs	36
Rush	38
Steeleye Span	42
How To Buy An Acoustic Guitar	47
Flamin' Groovies	51
Frankfurt Fair Review	56
Carl Perkins	61
Album Reviews	66
Microphone Survey	74
PA Survey	77
Instrumental News	81
I.T.A. Profile	82
Top Shop — Cookes of Norwich	86
Studio Spotlight — Audio International	88
Continental Studio Spotlight —	
Dutch Music Centre	92
Music Mart	94
Personal Ads	97
Price Listings — Guitars, Amps,	
Keyboards and Drums	98
Advertisement Index	106

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Contrary to the uniformed opinions of retired colonels from Esher, life as a Rock star in 1978 isn't easy. At least, not if you persistently refuse to conform to media archetypes of what constitutes an acceptable style. Put bluntly this means that, unless your band conforms to the 'new wave' image touted so persistently by much of the weekly press, you could be in for a hard time.

Judas Priest, however, have found a way out of the current media trap. They've made the big time both here and in the States without any help from the Press apart from ourselves and one or two lone voices on the weeklies, and are well placed to comment on the processes and attitudes that took them to the top

What's it like making it to the top in 1978 when you're a good old-fashioned heavy rock n' roll band? Gary Cooper asks



infamous Hammersmith Odeon. Now they're off to take a second crack at the States, a market which bent under the impact of their first short venture over the pond and now looks likely to crack at the second attempt. In anybody's book they're poised for tremendous success so the question is how did they make the break when, a couple of years back, they had problems selling-out the Roundhouse?

"The economic injection certainly helped a great deal" confesses singer Rob Halford. "CBS are a bigger organisation with that much more promotional muscle behind them. Any band gets to a point where they need a fair sized injection of capital to make the break and your record company is usually the major source of that finance, along with your management of course."

In Priest's case, the management company is Arnarkarta, the same people who look after Be-Bop DeLuxe and Pat Travers, Arnarkarta's experience with these two bands pushed Priest through to CBS (a traditionally aggressive company who were looking for British bands at the time), a better tour organisation, better gigs and, not without significance, the best publicist in London who has worked hard to make an unwilling media take notice of a band who, whatever one says, have a massive grass-roots following.

This sort of work takes money and knowledge. It also raises questions for smaller bands, questions like 'O.K. So I need a good manager to get anywhere, where do I find one?'. The answers aren't easy, but K.K. Downing thought it over.

"Although people generally say that you need a good manager to get anywhere I happen to know from personal experience that finding good

managers isn't easy. There really are no rules about this. Your chances of picking up someone who has never done it before but who'll turn out to be brilliant are pretty small, about the same chance as the band stands anyway. On the other hand no John Reid or Peter Grant is going to take on a tiny band more than once in a blue moon. What you have to do is work on your own for as long as possible and then maybe work yourselves up through several managers, being careful not to sign too tight contracts, knowing that, when the band has got enough to offer, the right managers will become interested in you."



Glen Tipton adds his thoughts. "At one time a Rock band like ourselves could start out on the club circuit but now most of those are turning into discos and quite a few have shut anyway — a few are punk clubs — it's certainly not easy for a Rock band."

"If you take Birmingham as an example" K.K. adds, "I can only think of one pub where a Rock band get the occasional gig and I suppose that's pretty typical of the country as a whole."

"If I were starting a band right now and wasn't prepared to sacrifice the type of music that I wanted to play I seriously think that I'd save every penny I could and make the best demo tapes I could produce. From there I'd have to send them round the record companies, not hoping, as in the old days, that they'd take you on for the sake of

despite seemingly overbearing pressures.

To start with let's just re-cap on the facts to date. Priest are a Birmingham born heavy band with a nice line in doom-laden lyrics, impressive stage show, and uncommon musical ability. Their latest album, *Stained Class*, is their second for CBS, with whom they signed a couple of years ago after a dismal career of playing packed clubs, earning no bread and releasing several good but non-selling albums on the small Gull Records label.

The latest album has charted well and their recent tour of 2,000 seaters was a sell-out — including the



L-R Downing, Binks, Halford, Tipton and Hill

your U.K. potential, but with the hope that they'd have an eye on the overseas markets, which is where all the money is anyway."

Talk of hitting the overseas market raises the question of the prestige of British musicians in the States, the most lucrative market of all. Glenn Tipton has found that we still have a reputation to live up to, but it's a reputation that the home market has damaged.

"I'm afraid that the Press will one day realise the damage they've done the British music industry. They really do not understand the regard with which English musicians are held in America. Apparently one of Boston turned up to one of our gigs while we were over there and made some comment like 'yeah, only British bands can really play heavy Rock.' I'm not telling that story to show how good I think we are, more how good the Americans think the British are. But, if you listened to the Press you'd think that our Rock musicians are crap. The unfortunate side of all this is that it's encouraging bands to give up playing the very sort of music which is really big all over the World. I've nothing against punk itself, in fact it made some superb contributions to the business by enabling *anyone* to get up on stage and play and say something of their own. It also gave a whole new generation an interest in music. That's fine and the Press *should* have given it credit. What they shouldn't have done, however, was to go overboard and start slagging off young bands as 'pomp rock', 'heavy metal overkill' or whatever.

"In the final analysis, what matters is the sort of music that people buy on record or at concerts. If you look at the British, German, American or Japanese charts it's Rock music that sells. "But new bands shouldn't give up. Right now the business is going full circle and there's a move afoot towards better musicianship even in the most extreme punk bands. If

bands can only hang on for a year they'll find that the market has really changed again and there'll be room for everyone."

K.K. makes the final comment on the supposed death of heavy Rock. "People talk about our sort of Rock as if it had one foot in the grave. That's utter crap! What happened was that the music carried on but the bands stopped. You can date the whole demise of the sort of Rock from the break up of Purple. Then you started having problems with Sabbath, Zeppelin stopped playing and the whole scene started to seriously stagnate. The kids are still there, though, as one reviewer said in a recent write-up after one of our gigs. Needless to say we got slagged-off and he made some stupid comment about 'how this sort of music can still exist in the 20th century' or something. The fact is it



does and we've just done a 30 date tour which shows that the kids are still there. On top of us you've got Lizzy, Rush, Budgie and now Sabbath back again, all selling tickets like hot cakes. "to add insult to injury all the American bands like Kansas are coming over now and that'll show the market for what it is."

Having nailed down the lid on the coffin of prejudice, it seemed a good time to move onto the whole subject of money and how much a band can get together these days.

"I'm afraid that the old business of saying that you can't make money in the U.K. is still true," Rob confirms. "The gigs we played on this tour just couldn't support the sort of show you need to put on to be at all credible. It's a different matter in the States though. Honestly, no reader of *Beat* who hasn't been over there can have any conception of what it's like. You have people like Ted Nugent doing six month tours all over the country, gig after gig, and that's money, that's success, if financial criteria are what you're after.

"Once you've had a top 50 album over there you've done it. You're ready to headline those 10,000 seater auditoriums and there's a seemingly infinite number of them. What a lot of bands do is tackle a six month tour with the dates grouped around weekends. That's not a bad idea because you can fly home to your base for the rest of the week and it doesn't take so much out of you, otherwise it's a solid six months of hotel inspired boredom — and that can drive you mad! As soon as we got out to the States people started telling us how bad the financial position of the music business was. Well, I have to admit that I wasn't over there several years ago but it looked alright to me!"

"The kids have considerably more money than they do in Britain," Glenn adds, "In the States you'll find an average kid buying four or five albums week in and week out and that adds up when you've got such a large young participation. If you can make it over there, then, and I hate saying this, you really don't have to worry about Britain which isn't, of course, to say that we're about to drop England altogether because that's not the case. You did ask about money though and that's where it is!"

"Actually, that's what K.K. was getting at about record companies assessing new bands on their foreign potential" Robin explains, "What a lot of people don't realise is that the

Judas Priest

contracts being offered to a lot of the new wave bands are *totally* different to those being offered to Rock bands. Some friends of ours from Birmingham who are in a good new wave outfit told us that their deal, which is with a major company, is just for a handful of singles and that's the sort of potential that the record companies see in new wave, not the long-term steady sales in the foreign market which mean *real* success and *real* money.

One aspect of touring in the States is the danger of it. I'm not talking about the constant flying either. *Beat* readers may well remember the dangers of the drug scene as expounded in these pages by Nils Lofgren a while back. Priest confirm just how bad the scene on the road is in the States can be. Rob Halford spills the beans.

"Yes, people think it's a great laugh and we're not puritans but the American tour circuits can be very dangerous. As soon as we got to America we were warned! Don't take drinks from people you don't know.' 'Don't pick up a drink that you've put down on a table somewhere.' I



know it sounds crazy but when your organisation warns you it's because they're trying to protect their investment and that means YOU!

"I don't want to sound paranoid but if somebody sees that a band are going to make it then they want to get them out of the way, I'm not joking!

"I won't say too much but you can draw your own conclusions from what I say, If there was enough reason, and who can say that millions of dollars aren't enough reason, then I reckon that it could go all the way. If there was that sort of money involved then maybe someone might want you out of the way..." Rob refused to be drawn further but, as

he says, you can draw your own conclusions from that and the sort of security that the superstar bands take on the road with them.

In a nutshell (albeit a rather large one) Priest's success stems from two factors. They built up a large and loyal heavy Rock following by playing the club circuit for a number

Judas Priest

of gruelling years and they hustled till they got the management and recording deal that would give them the push they needed. If there are lessons to be learned they are those of having a fanatical but honest belief in what you are doing and a refusal to go under even when you're reduced (as Priest have been in the past) to 'doing runners' from petrol stations to get enough petrol to drive back home after a gig!

To make it in these days of media hype you either conform and have the short lifespan predicted by the record companies (who know about these things after all) or you slog hard and fight like tigers for what you want. The first course is easier, but if you ever want to headline those 10,000 seaters...

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YOUR LETTERS AND QUERIES

Wenderford a burton

Dear Sir,

While searching through my back-copies of Beat Instrumental for reference purposes I discovered, in October '76, an instrument review of a Pro-Axe 62 combo amplifier apparently manufactured by a firm called Wenderford Electronics. On re-reading the review I was impressed by the unit, but I do not recall ever having seen or heard of this particular amplifier through normal retail outlets. I should be obliged if you could inform me whether the manufacturers are still in business, and if not, give me any details on similar products which may be available.

David Jeffs,
Banbury.

We have received several letters about Wenderford and their fate. Our enquiries led us to one inescapable conclusion. Wenderford Electronics, like the fabled Monty Python parrot, are sleeping the sleep that knows no waking. They are an ex-company. On the more serious matter of alternatives, the combo market offers as many choices as ever. The review referred in passing to Fender, and other companies offering very eligible beasts in the 50 watt area include Marshall (a little more costly but of irreproachable quality), Maine, Music Man and Yamaha (yes, their amps are just as impressive as those guitars). Our price listings will give you a more detailed picture of the models available and their price (although they are of course always subject to change) and then it's down to getting on the road to hear your favourite candidates for yourself.

Son of Jedson

Dear Sir,

Please could you supply in-



Blast from the past: good amps, but where are they now?

formation on the Jedson Les Paul copy with the natural maple top. I would like to know what year they were last produced and how much they retailed for. If possible could you please tell me what wood was used for the back and sides. Keep up the great reviews — they're a big help in choosing gear.

Alasdair Blake,
Wigginton.

Jedson guitars were originally brought into this country from Japan by the Dallas/Arbiter company which went out of business about two and a half years ago. In fact, the name Jedson derives from the abbreviation of J. E. Dallas and Son. Nowadays the same guitars still come in but carry instead the Arbiter name plate. The November '75 price of the Jedson Les Paul copy was £101.65 plus VAT at 25%. The woods used in the construction of these models were the Japanese equivalents of mahogany for the sides, maple for the top and mahogany for a neck which included an ebony fingerboard.

Circuit short

Dear Sir,

I own a Sound City 50 Plus amp which recently decided to go up in smoke. Could you tell me where to get a circuit diagram? I wrote to Dallas Arbiter and got my letter back, and then to CBS/Arbiter and got no reply. I would also like to say thanks for an interesting magazine. My main interest is home recording and I particularly enjoyed your features on the Teac A3340S and the ITAM 805 mixer. More of the same or similar please.

Mr. Blake will be able to tell you why you got your letter back from Dallas Arbiter! We mentioned it to CBS/Arbiter and they promised to post it to you as soon as we let them off the phone.

Knobs down under

Dear Sir,

I recently bought through our

local newspaper a Hofner Violin Bass as reviewed by Ray Stiles in the October '77 issue of Beat, but now wish to replace the volume/tone knobs on the switch panel. My problem is finding a shop or supplier which could come to my assistance. The music shops in New Zealand are not particularly hot on carrying spares, and nobody seems to have even heard of the guitar! I only hope you can help me out.

Gavin Keen,
Dunedin,
New Zealand.

Where would you be without Beat, Gavin? The British importers of these German-made guitars are Barratts of Manchester, 652 Chester Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0RX. If they aren't able to help you, try writing direct to the manufacturers: Karl Hofner O.H.G., D-8521 Bubenreuth, Uber Erlangen, W. Germany.

Drummers' main course

Dear Sir,

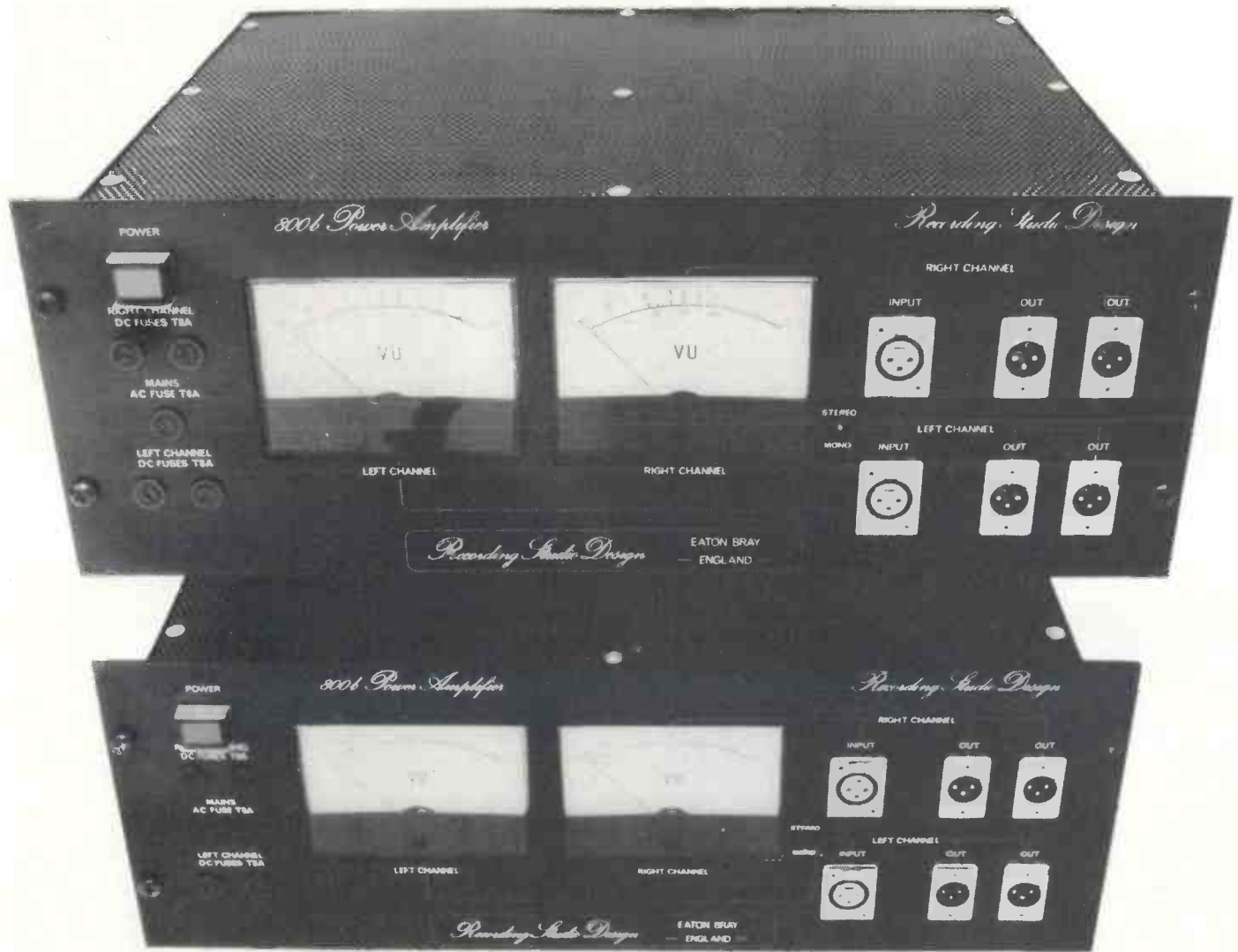
I am a British subject and have been residing in South Africa for the past ten years. I am interested in obtaining information on practical drumming courses (preferably jazz). I have written to the British Musician's Union and have spoken to the British Consul here and neither can help. I have read about several colleges like Berkeley in America which offer courses like this but have never heard of any in England. If such a course is not available, what 'higher courses' can a drummer take?

S. Oates,
Johannesburg.

A tricky one, this, as you don't make it clear whether you wish to study in Johannesburg or take a course in England. If you have progressed beyond the normal range of tutors etc. available in South Africa, your best bet would be to try the Universities there who might be

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YOUR LETTERS AND QUERIES

able to offer suitable courses. Johannesburg's Witwatersrand University is likely either to have a music department or know of something that the Consul doesn't. In England, several drummers give private and public tuition — Mike Skinner and Lloyd Ryan are obvious examples — and you could try writing to Lloyd at 5 Langley Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 for fuller information. Goldsmith's College in London's New Cross offers a wide range of music courses but you would have to graduate in the traditional academic fashion. Write to them at Lewisham Way, London SE14 if you think they could help or return fuller details and enrolment forms.

Heavy necking

Dear Beat,

I have been thinking about buying an electric guitar priced between about £250 and £450 and would like your advice. The main problem is that I play classical guitar, and so I am used to a wide neck. My favourite players include Hen-

drix, Blackmore, Page and Moore. I would also be grateful if you could advise me about a fairly cheap, "heavy" sounding 30-50 watt amp, for group rehearsals etc. It can't cost too much as I am suffering from a lack of income. Thanks for a great mag.

Ned,

West Midlands.

PS. What about an interview with Rainbow?

You want a "heavy" sound and you admire the statutory cross-section of "heavy" guitarists — yet you're after a guitar with a wide fretboard. Gretsch guitars immediately spring to mind — the Country Gent and Tennessean, for example, and others include older Gibson models like the 335 and SGs, either Standard or Special. The two things which will affect your choice are 1) whether you want a solid or not and 2) whether you are prepared to buy second hand. Wide fretboards are generally a feature of older guitars (although fave raves likes the Les Paul and Strat have very narrow fingerboards) and you may therefore have to enter the secondhand market to stay within your budget. In that case,

be on your guard that you don't get sold a pup — check the neck, fretting etc. etc — and maybe you'll be one of the lucky buyers who comes up with a real find which will keep and maybe increase its value.

The question of amps has been touched upon elsewhere in the letters pages. An AC30 is still a good bet, but check the backup service. They should cost around £220. Maine, as we already mentioned, also make good combo amps in the same price and power range. Marshall, Fender and Hiwatt are also possible — the secondhand market could throw up something there — and the Peavey Classic, a 50 watt beast around the 300 quid mark, is sure to fit the bill if you are still in a position to slide three big ones across the counter once you've found that guitar. Another from Peavey, the Backstage 30, could fit the bill.

PS. The members of Rainbow live in all corners of the globe and interviews are fairly thin on the ground these days. All we can suggest is that you lick your middle finger, dig it into the page and flick it over. OK?

Stingray of hope

Dear Sirs,

Firstly, I'd like to thank you for an amazing mag and for including reviews and articles for the bassist. Secondly, I have a problem with my current set-up which I hope you can solve. I have a Fender Jazz Bass which I run through a Carlsbro Stingray bass amp into an 8 ohm HH 4 x 12 200 watt cabinet. The problem is that I can only get a low volume output (nowhere near as loud as a Marshall 50w) and have to run it with full bass boost and treble cut to get a decent bass sound. I have returned the amp and received a new one but the trouble is still there. D.N.A., the band I play in, is quite loud and I tend to get a bit lost in the background, so any suggestions would be appreciated.

D. Irvine,
Long Marston.

The crux of the matter seems to be what you term 'a decent bass sound'. Carlsbro specifically designed the Stingray, a solid state amp, in response to bass players' request for a clean but tonally variable amp, and it would not respond favourably to efforts to boost, distort it etc.

beyond its normal duties. It differs from other models as it is a single channel amp without the master volume control which helps the others to distort. There are several alternatives to getting more power and volume without battering the Stingray so much (after all, as you say, the problem remained after Carlsbro had given you a new model). One is running it into a 4 ohm cab — this should give you 50 per cent more power. Carlsbro make 4 ohm cabs, so do Peavey (although as far as we know HH don't). Another idea to create the same effect is to add one more 8 ohm cab. You could ditch the 4 x 12 idea altogether and go for a pair of Carlsbro 2 x 12 flare cabs; these were designed at the same time as the Stingray and intended for use with it. Again, that will give you the preferable 4 ohms and extra loudness.

If you wish to approach the matter from a different direction, you could try installing more powerful pickups on the Fender. Of course, the Fender pumps it out quite nicely as it is, so this one might not yield massive dividends, although it would be a comparatively inexpensive stopgap. You could also throw your bass to the ground in the middle of a rehearsal and insist that the band kitty rises to a slave amp — or a Crown power amp — if you can afford to solve the problem that way. We won't suggest that you ask them to play more quietly — most of us are here because they wouldn't! Best of luck.

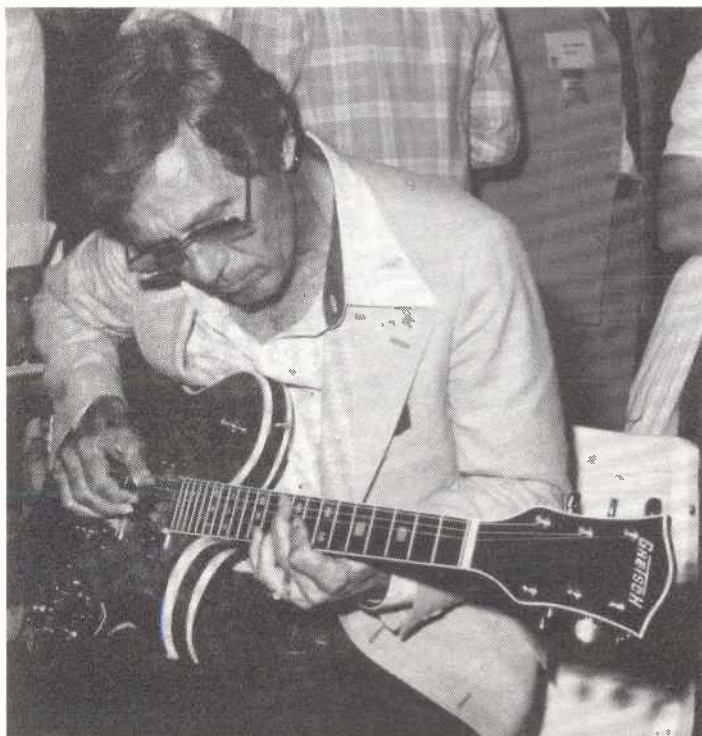
Yama-hammers

Dear Sir,

I am interested in the hardware that the Japanese Yamaha are producing with their drum outfits. They look as strong as Premier's new Tri-lok stands, but personally I think the tripods on the Jap stands look more streamlined (ready to take off!!) and the boom arm looks neat. Could you please advise me on a dealer, preferably in my region.

G. Turner,
Bilston,
West Midlands.

Funny you should mention that — Rainbow's Cozy Powell has a few words on the same subject in a page or two. The nearest Yamaha Pro-Centers seem to be Funkshun in Northampton, Sound Pad in Leicester and Woodroffes in Birmingham.



Chet Atkins demonstrates a Gretsch — and its wide neck

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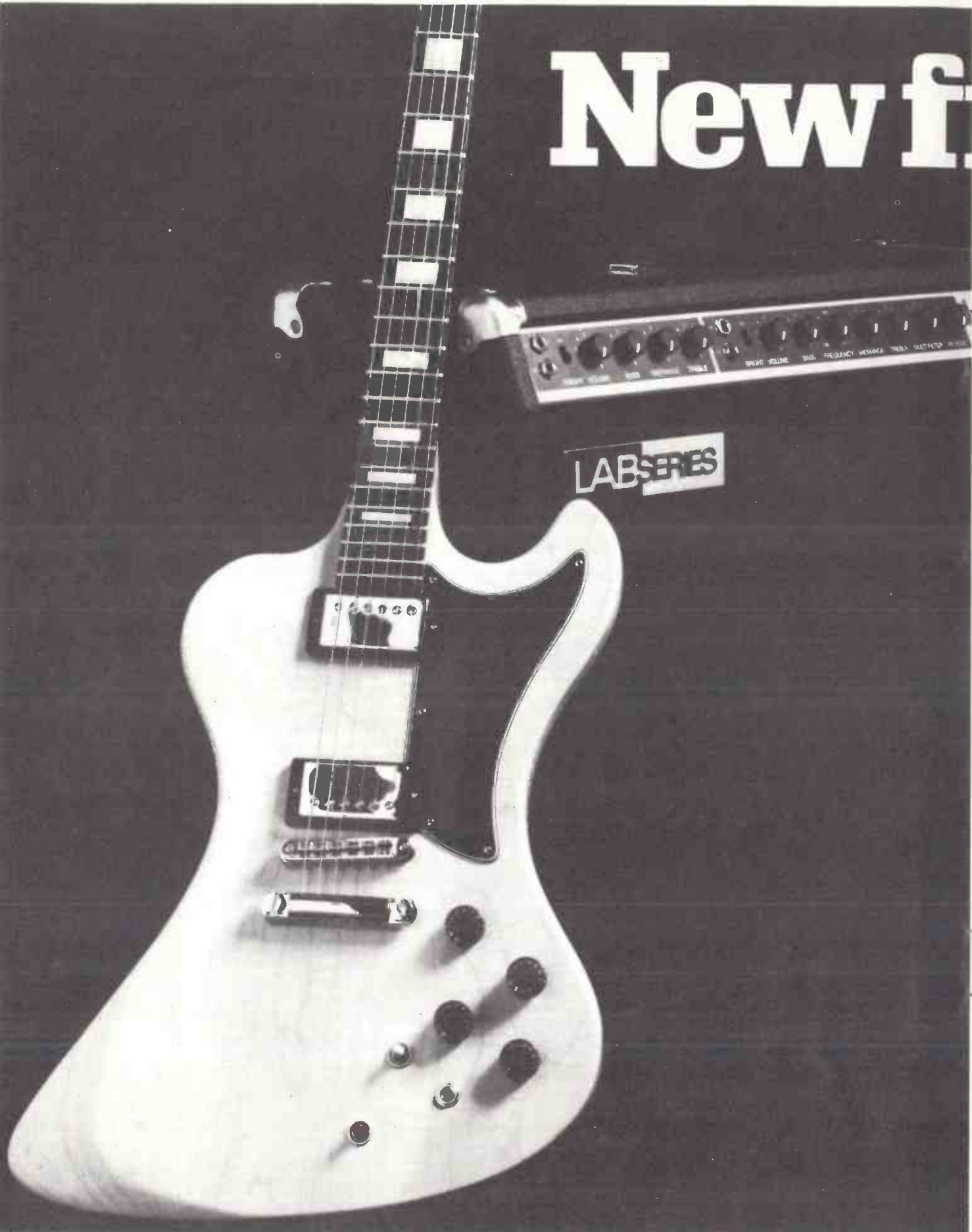
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The result of all this wizardry is a range of sounds and colours never before possible from a solid guitar and – perhaps most important – dynamic response. Far from drowning you in effects, the remarkable RD lets you express yourself in ways you never imagined.

Swings and roundabouts

Unhappily, all this power can be the death of a lot of amplifiers. Unused as they are to all this active circuitry, their input sides tend to fall to pieces with alarming ease.

Don't panic, though. Lab Series to the rescue. Thanks again to some very original thoughts from the good Dr. Moog, and a lot of talking to the best guitarists in the world, we've come up with a series of amp systems that are the equal of even the most advanced studio setups. On top of what must be the finest solid state circuits around, we added features to let you mix and colour your sound to your heart's content. The Lab Series features individual bass, mid range and treble controls, multifilters to let you add top end harmonics, reverb, a compressor to let you play heavy without going deaf, and a frequency control. Whether you need an amp for your shiny new RD or not, Lab Series is *the* guitar amp for the serious player.

Luxury Length

Another glance at the RD will reveal that it has a 25½" scale length – another first for us – and a rather unique body shape, developed to give it a balanced feel and the sort of brightness and sustain you'd expect from the world's most advanced solid guitar.

Taking it all in

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L-R Blackmore, Daisley, Dio, Stone and Powell

LONG LIVE ROCK & ROLL!

Rainbow has risen as it was ordained. 1975 saw one of the Deep Purple fragments settling into a band sold to the world as Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, fronted by the Man in Black and powered along by one of the few heavy rock drummers who could take the pace — Cozy Powell. Blackmore, true to his reputation for total professionalism (wicked practical jokes a sideline outside office hours) made it clear from the start that the band were not to rest on their laurels, and that once they had achieved a solid footing the Ritchie Blackmore tag would go.

The groundwork of bonecrushing tour schedules across the globe began. Japan, predictably, took the band to its heart — they go for heavy metal in a big way — and Europe, Australia and New Zealand immediately accorded them superstar status. The mighty U.S. of A. was a rather harder nut to crack — as Bad Company discovered you've got to deliver whoever you are in order to win the richest prize, and Rainbow haven't yet been able to string together a full coast to coast tour to bring it home.

Epic

On the album front (now look fellers, if the history's getting you down you can always skip a couple of paras) the same divide dictated the band's success. The first album, Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, was a

disappointment in view of Blackmore's avowal that he wished to avoid recycling the latterday Purple riffs. "Second rate Purple, if you don't mind my saying", decreed his old companion Jon Lord, "but the next one could be a killer." The follow up, Rainbow Rising, was more epic all round, a warlord fist clenching the rainbow on the cover while the album contained a couple of marathons that were to become high points of the stage act. The third album, On Stage, was a live double which went the way of many live doubles — great for the fans but not otherwise a revelation. Long Live Rock & Roll is the new album; twenty minutes spent huddling over a rusty cassette player convinced me that it's the best to date. To coincide with the album, the band are planning the big American tour assault that should put their status beyond doubt.

Cozy Powell drove his racer into town to give an interview about the band's progress, the new album, and — of course — drumming. A silver jacket with Ferrari emblazoned on the front indicated that his second love — racing and fast wheels in general — is still very much in evidence.

That new album, first of all, and welcome back to the readers who sat out the preamble. "It's a lot more commercial than anything we've ever done," he began. "The first album I wasn't on, of course — that was Ritchie's solo album and all the rest of it. Rainbow Rising was the first



Cozy Powell talks to Chris Simmonds

band effort, which was possibly a little self indulgent. That was exactly what we were into at the time, and while it sold well over here it suffered in the States because the tracks were too long and the short tracks that *were* on the album were neither one thing or the other. No-one in the band really wanted the live album to come out at all; that was a political move by Polydor as they needed something to come out then.

"I don't think live albums are a good idea for a new band, which Rainbow still is. It was also overpriced — six pounds or something — and we were a little shocked when we discovered that. Anyway, that's past now. The new one, as I said, is more

commercial, a lot stronger and the songs are more to the point. It's a hard, driving album, probably one of the few straight rock & roll albums out this year."

Cozy naturally appreciates that the album's chances for America improve with shorter tracks but agreed that basically it was down to touring, something Rainbow take very seriously indeed. "We've done two 20 date tours of the States, nowhere near enough," he admitted, "so obviously it'll still take some time to crack it over there. We plan about four months of this year solely on America. We had to concentrate all our efforts first of all on the countries that were buying the records — England, Australia, Japan

— which is why we didn't hit the States first as most bands do."

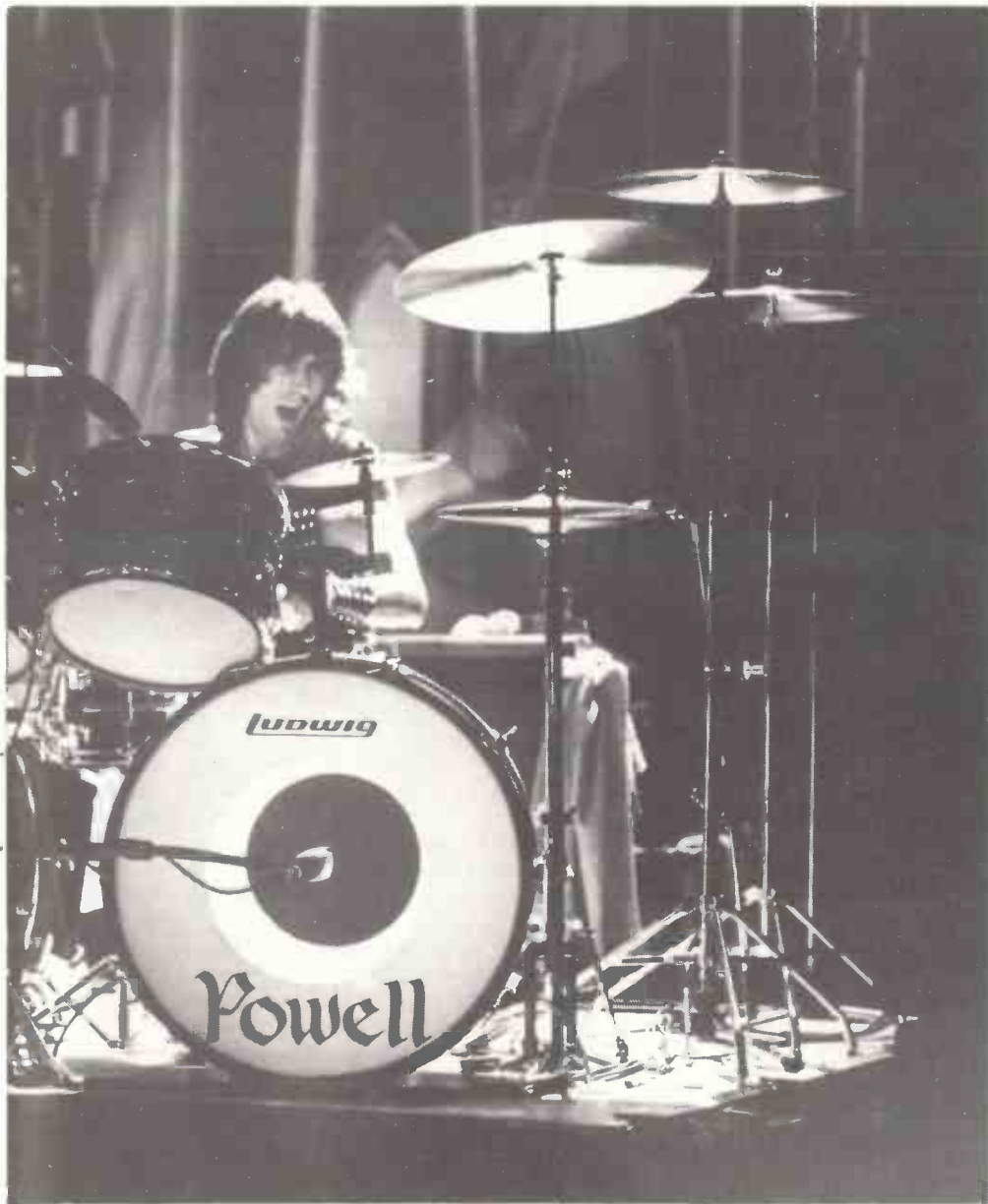
The band descended on the Chateau to record the album, a departure from their previous choice of Musicland: "a funky sort of a place", as Cozy described it. "Not the best studio in the world, but its's fun. We were there a long time; changing personnel halfway through didn't help matters. It ended up with Ritchie and myself doing most of the backing tracks with Ritchie playing bass. Musicland is totally different, much more clinical", he continued, comparing the studios. "The Chateau's maybe not so good technically, but it's got a better feel. As we had Martin Birch with us, engineering and producing, he was able to correct most of the problems . . . I'd like to go back there again."

Foundation

The new arrivals, of course, were Canadian David Stone on keyboards and ex-Widowmaker Bob Daisley, representing the other side of the globe — Australia. Cozy had a few words to say about the role of a keyboard player in a heavy rock & roll band. "It's difficult for a keyboard player in this band — I wouldn't want to be Rainbow's keyboard player. The band is based around what Ritchie writes which is very riff and guitar orientated, so a keyboard player has to provide chords under that and also be able to take a solo when needed. It's down to laying a good foundation for Ritchie to solo on. They're hard to come by these days — they either want to be like Keith Emerson or Chick Corea." The alternative of installing a rhythm guitarist didn't crop up; apart from the possibility of detracting from Ritchie's performance there was always the consideration that a guitar simply can't match the colour and sound range of the well chosen bank of keyboards. "You need those colours," Cozy went on, "even in a rock & roll band." And Rainbow, if nothing else, is a rock & roll band, as Cozy likes to remind anyone within earshot.

"Ritchie must have two or three hundred riffs on tape which we haven't even used yet," he remarked. "Of course a riff isn't enough, it has to be arranged, so he usually comes to me with an idea and we play it through, working out a middle eight, whatever, to polish it into a proper song."

Cozy Powell as spokesman for Rainbow had more or less said his piece. Cozy Powell, as one of Britain's foremost heavy metal drummers, hadn't yet. At the last count, Cozy was battling it out with a massive Ludwig kit incorporating those two massive



COZY POWELL

26" bass drums. Ludwig being pretty well the state of the art as far as heavy drumming goes, it came as quite a surprise to discover that Cozy has axed the Ludwig in favour of a Yamaha outfit. "I told them to build me a kit which was bigger and louder than anything they'd ever heard before", he grinned.

"They came to our last Japanese gig in Tokyo with this monster kit which they'd managed to build for me — fantastic, so loud it wasn't true. The bass drums (two, naturally) are the same size, 26", tom toms are 14" and 15" for the top, 16" and 18" for the floor. They have all chrome shells, a lot harder and more heavy duty than the Ludwigs (what is this man saying??). The snare drum is literally twice as loud — made from a combination of wood and metal. It's deafening. Ritchie's roadie stands next to me behind his amps and he has to wear earplugs now. That's just from the acoustic volume! Yamaha have also strengthened all the fittings up; the hardware is the strongest I've ever come across. When they watched me playing in Japan, they took notes about what had to be done, improved and so on, and then went off to the factory, re-tooled some of the machines, and came back with this monster." In other words, for any heavy drummers already booking their long distance calls, Cozy's kit is by no means an off the peg job. The one item he has stuck with are his beloved Remo heads — "always have and always will". Cymbals, too, remain an armoury of Paiste. (Three cases of 30 cymbals each accompany the band on tour.)

Miking up

There's still the small matter of miking up the drums. "I've got my



own PA system behind me," Cozy went on, "comprising a Mavis 16 channel desk with Sennheiser microphones for each drum, two overheads — Shure for the snare and Shure again for the hi hat. This is driven by a Mackintosh 600 amp and a Crown 300. Besides that there's a Urei graphic, Urei crossover, linked to the Mavis and it all goes through four bass bins and four horns. That's just for the drums — what most bands use for their full P.A."

Cozy likes people to hear that the band's got a drummer, then. The Mavis, to get things quite clear, is entirely given over to the drums. "We have to use another for the monitor mix on stage," he added. "The way I play sticks could be a problem, but what I use there are Ludwig 3S military sticks, literally twice as big as normal sticks. They must be 3/4" thick. People ask me 'how the hell do you play with *them*?' but I've been used to them for so many years. If I use a smaller stick now I just hit the drums once and it breaks... actually, I saw

an inventory the other day. I went through 176 pairs of sticks last year, 14 bass drum pedals, 63 skins, 36 cymbals — ridiculous when you think about it."

Calculating the rest of the band's equipment on the strength of Cozy's massive array of drums and amplification (to say nothing of his rising drum platform — yet) indicates a veritable convoy of artics carting the gear from one town to the next. Remember that Rainbow not only play super-loud but carry special effects as well.

"The P.A. we hire from Tasco, where he have a regular contract, and in the States they run out of both New York and Los Angeles. The lighting is done by C Factor, based in New York again," he continued, explaining the breakdown of their gear inventory.

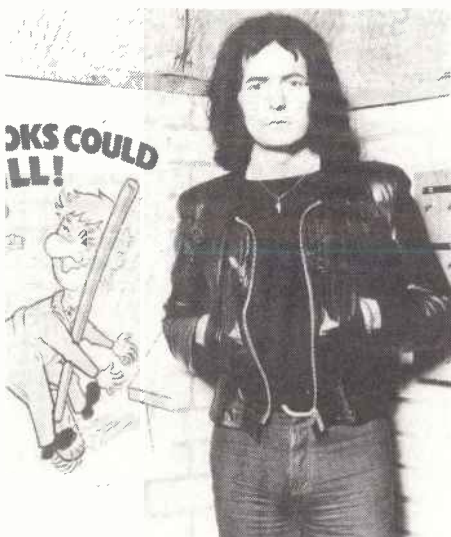
"The Rainbow backdrop of course we take ourselves. No-one else would have much use for a flaming great rainbow, after all! Taking so much out on the road starts to get expensive; it's impossible to show any profit in Britain, for instance, although we might show a little in a country like Japan. But that's not what the band's about. We believe in going out and putting on the best show we can, because it's those audiences who put us where we are. They buy the records, and we feel we owe them 100 per cent effort. That's why we've spent so much money on these effects." These effects, besides the usual blazing light show, include explosions, the Rainbow backdrops and that rising platform during Cozy's thunderous solo spot towards the end of their set.

Hydraulic

"I thought of that a few years ago," he admitted, "but because it cost so much I never managed to get it done until this year. It works on two hydraulic winches, one driving forward and the other up, and we had it made by a specialist firm in Hollywood working for the film sets. It compresses into a ten foot cube, and the two platforms fold up easily." When the kit goes up, Rainbow furnish explosions and flashes, attached to the front of the platform, and when they've died down Cozy's back in place on terra firma. The microphones in the meantime go up at the same speed above the kit but the monitors stay below — not an important loss as Cozy knows his way around his solo section and can hear it well enough anyway. "I'm only up there for a very short space of time, so I don't really need it," he concluded, winding up the guided tour of his hardware.

The next topic, obviously, was Cozy's actual technique and style. For

"Ritchie's brought his cello round to rehearsals... and I've put me boot through it a few times"





Well, you've got to have a pic of Cozy's rod, havent you!

a drummer like Cozy, stamina is just about as important as any special playing style. That suits him fine because he lays off the usual pep-you-ups that accompany most bands on a wearing tour — booze and the rest of it. He keeps himself further refreshed by transporting himself from gig to gig either by car or motorbike — the speed depending on his evaluation of the previous gig. But technique is always important. How much more was there

to heavy heavy drumming than using crowbars for sticks and a few tons of amplification? I wondered (although I didn't exactly phrase it that way).

"I don't need as much technique or speed as I used to," he admitted. "It's more from the heart than from my head in this band. In my book drumming's not about going round the kit and up your own bum as fast as you can, it's about driving the band along in the appropriate way. Some drummers seem to forget that the drum is a rhythm instrument after all. Now maybe that sounds like a cop-out from a guy who can't play as fast as the other people, but that's just the way I feel. Flashy stuff in Rainbow would never fit. English drummers who are coming up now seem to be copying the Americans beat for beat, and if that's true it's a shame."

Inbuilt

Cozy went on to mention how playing two bass drums worked out, and the effect it had on his style. "If you use two bass drums you've got to have a very good inbuilt sense of rhythm, because you're not getting any help from the hi hat. Your feet have got to work completely independently — if you have to think about what they're doing, forget it. The one thing you should never do is merely double

your capacity by thumping away alternately.

"You should provide an interesting line, or two interesting lines that go together, for the bass guitar to play along with." And to keep your ideas fresh, you've got to be prepared to try new things, attempt something just that little bit beyond you." As far as passing on any tips goes, Cozy reiterated a point of view he's expressed before: "Don't listen to too many different people unless you want to end up a poor copy. Just nick a little bit here and there and then form it into your own style."

As Rainbow mount another heavy tour campaign, they find the old system of keeping separate private lives offstage keeps the band in better spirits. "I like it that way," he grinned, "because I'm a miserable bastard at the best of times. We're all into different things. 'I've got my racing, Ritchie's into playing his cello at four in the morning. Ronnie likes watching the telly, whatever. Yeah, Ritchie's even brought his cello round to rehearsals a few times and I've put me boot through it a few times. He's quite a good cello player actually, I think he's having lessons from the fellow in ELO". One final grin, and that was that.



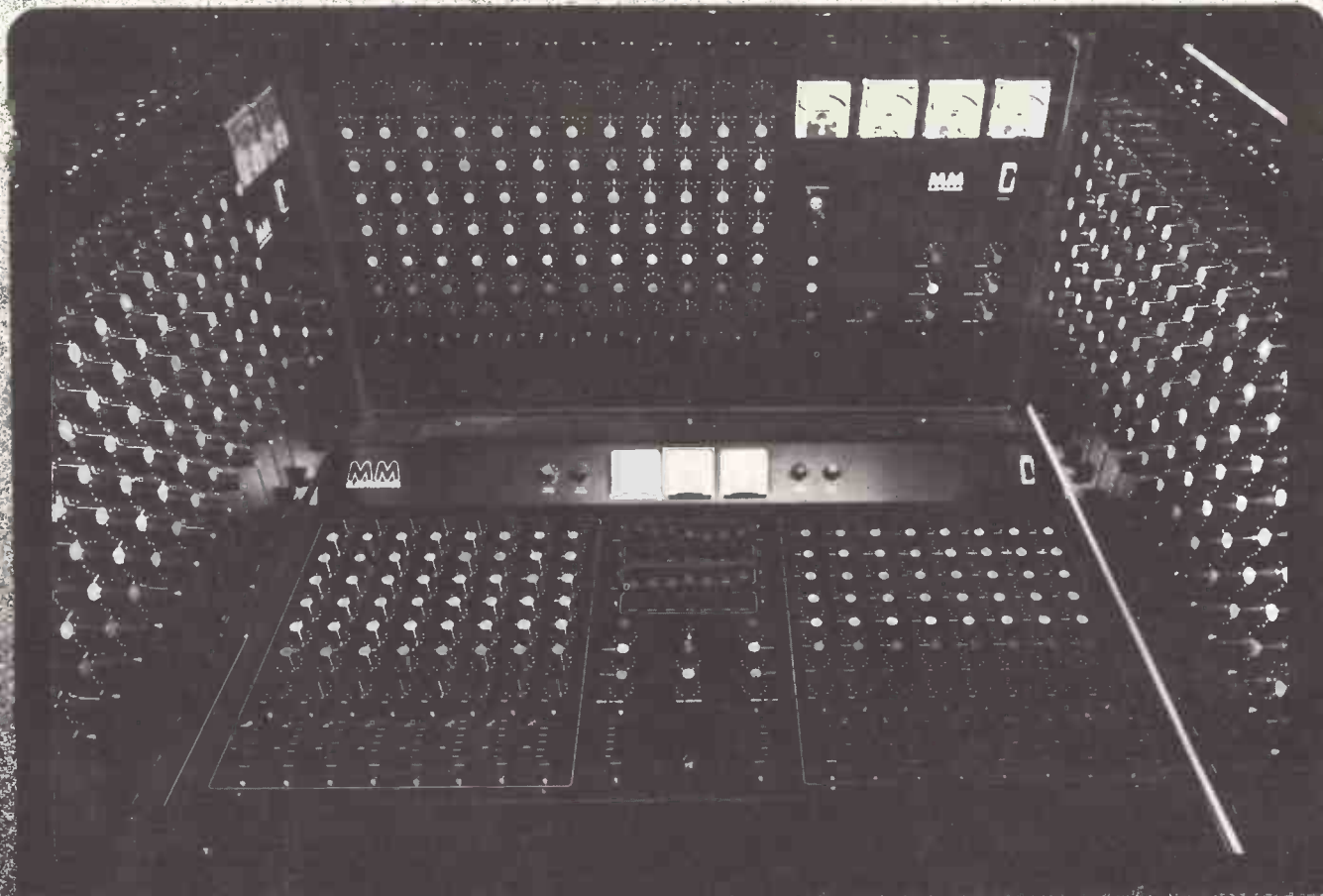
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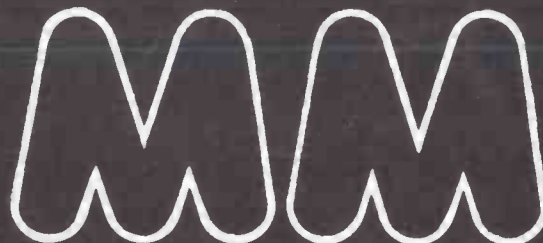
MP 175	8	into 2	incl. 4 band e.q., foldback, echo send & return, hi-lo imp. switch.
MP 175	12	2	_____ *
MP 175	16	2	_____ *
MP 185	16	2	(Super 16) inc. two way 'x' over, stereo graphic, pfl, ppi.
MP 285	16	2	(Super 16) as 185 plus flightcase & cannons.
MP 275	12	2	(Export) incl. flightcase & cannons.
MP 175	8	4	PFL, talkback, 4 limiters.
MP 175	12	4	— * — * —
MP 175	16	4	— * — * —
MP 175	20	4	— * — * —
MP 295	16	4	Foldback mixer.
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INSTRUMENT REVIEW 1

AMPEG VT40 60W COMBO

There was much nodding of heads and judicious stroking of stubble as the delivery man lay panting on Beat's office floor following his exertions with this amplifier. Yes, we thought, it's a beast all right. One of those creatures you don't really touch straight away — you sort of *approach* it, gingerly, with a sharp stick in one hand in case it decides to lash out.

Like nearly all American amps, the Ampeg looks alright. It doesn't look like a cornflakes packet sprayed black or a transistor radio with a big speaker. It looks like a brute whose job is to repel all boarders with a single snarl.

Metal

Anyway I'm sure you've got the idea by now. Down to business.

It puts out 60 watts r.m.s. and has four 10" speakers. It is housed in an immensely tough cabinet — $\frac{3}{4}$ " all the way round and covered with some hard-wearing plastic (vynide, I think they call it), and all eight corners have protective metal thinges. The amplifier section is shock-mounted, and although the chassis hangs there with no *visible* means of support, those springs ensure that you can toss the combo out of vans and down fire-escapes without the least fear of damage.

Bite

For the price, we expect a lot from Ampeg. There are certainly plenty of extras for your money. The equalization section has the three standard bass, middle and treble controls, plus a three way rocker switch for use in conjunction with the middle control. The idea of this is to "give tone balance flexibility comparable to a recording studio" — the rocker's purpose, in other words, is to give three basic midrange areas which you then "fine tune" with the rotary control. The gradations are at 300Hz, 1000Hz and 3000Hz. Next to that is another rocker, marked "Ultra Hi". This means that it reaches out for the frequencies normally operated via a presence control, the effect being to add bite and



crunch at the top end.

There are two channels, channel one offering a slightly more positive lead sound than channel two. Channel one also has a distortion facility — in the form of the rotary control. Reverb is operable on either channel; another rotary control is provided for adjusting its depth. A two-button footswitch, presumably coming at no extra cost, is provided for switching reverb and effects in or out. Finally, there's a standby switch next to the power switch. Being a valve powered amp, the Ampeg needs a few seconds to warm up, and if left on standby will sit there cooking away until you actually want to start playing.

Blown

Surprisingly, there are some nice touches on the back panel of the amplifier. Simple but, I suppose, obvious is the fact that you can wind the power cable out of harm's way around a couple of brackets on the back panel. Since the cable is (at a guess) 13 feet or so long, this is

a useful addition. It's no use simply letting the cable drop into the open back of combo's like this — they tend to fall out and get in the way when you're carrying the thing upstairs. Then there's a reverb spring lock which you just press in or out to put a stop to that irritating rattle when you're not using it. The third feature of the back panel which I liked was the way Ampeg have indicated the model numbers of all the valves, output and input, from left to right, or if you prefer from right to left, depending on which one has blown in the middle of a gig. This means that the roadies, or most probably you, don't have to grope around in the dark with a flashlight in order to read the numbers on a hot, smoking, blackened glass tube.

Workings

The output valves fitted, incidentally, are not the standard EL34 type but 7027A's, and it would be as well to buy in a few of those at the same time as you part with the cash for the combo if you're fastidious about

these things. On the other hand, EL34's will do as a replacement.

The performance of the combo was good, but not quite up to expectation. Certainly it has volume, and the 60 watts is not an underestimate. The tone — surprisingly for a valve amp — is rather harsh and middley; this is probably a result of those 10" speakers, and I think 12" ones would sound better, richer and more authoritative. Admittedly the sound improves the more you familiarize yourself with the workings of the middle section. I found that the best lead guitar sound was achieved by keeping the rocker switch on 3000Hz and using the Ultra Hi to give the axe something to sharpen itself on. The bass end is there all right, but the speakers inevitably make it clunky, and with distortion a bassy chord dies away rather like a Honda 50 pattering into the distance.

Boat

Ah, distortion! Now there's plenty of it hers, and seekers of the "clean sound" are advised to shop elsewhere. The distortion control itself doesn't come into it, and in fact is something of an embarrassment to the rest of the amp, since it sounds like the remains of a 1½ volt Ever Ready battery powering a toy boat. Yuk. Leave it alone. You just don't need it, since the onset of clipping, through varying depending on the power output of your pick-ups and where you set the volume on your guitar, is at around one-third on the volume scale.

Noise

Yes, this is the old fashioned heavy-metaller's delight — power chord after power chord crunches into your cranium, and the amp doesn't (thanks to the valves) have that annoying habit of cutting out briefly during the initial surge of noise. If there are any pansies out there who wanna play clean, they'll just have to leave their guitar volume on about two.

Well that's about it. Judge for yourselves whether the price is over the top for what you get. In my opinion it is.

RRP £426 + VAT. Tested P.D.

INSTRUMENT REVIEW 2

IBANEZ ANALOG DELAY/FLANGER AD-230

Just think. All over Japan there are these sleek little gentlemen in white lab coats who spend their days and nights working on methods of bringing about the downfall of the West's economy.

They do it by making things cheaper than anyone else can. This applies equally to cars, hi-fi and musical instruments, and to other items of related technology. They started with guitars, proceeded through drums, keyboards, amplifiers, mixers, P.A. equipment, effects units and automatic tooth-brushes, and are now beginning to replace everything they can find in the recording studio that bears the legend "Made in U.S.A." or "Made in England".

Rigours

They've begun this assault with two analog delay/flanging units, and we decided to take a look at the more expensive one, the AD-230. Like its smaller counterpart, the AD-220, it is designed to be rack mounted, and would thus be at home amongst a rack of power amps at a live gig, as well as in a studio. The unit that found its way to Beat was by no means new, and had furthermore recently been subjected to the rigours of a week or two with those mindless hooligans-cum-

boot-boys — Genesis. I couldn't in all conscience look at it in the same light as I would a brand new one.

The two sections of the unit are completely separate. The analog delay section consists of six rotary controls with various functions including regeneration (i.e. number of repeats), delay time, delay range, delay level, plus oscillator speed and width. The speed is indicated by means of a pair of flashing LED's; the delay range has shelves at intervals of 75, 150, 300 and 600 milliseconds, with delay time controlling the precise degree of echo required. The delay level is indicated by an attractive and easy-to-read LED strip down the left hand side of the analog section, and next to that is another strip denoting sensitivity. To the left of that is another pair of rotary controls marked for sensitivity and output level respectively.

The Multi-Flanger has the same facilities as the Analog Delay, minus the delay range. At the other end of the unit are four push-buttons for function-select: from top to bottom these are delay, normal, flanger and power, with an LED for each.

On the back of the AD-230 are sockets, both jack and DIN, for normal output, echo output and instrument input. It is necessary to run both outputs in

order for the echo section of the unit to work, though the flanger seems to work O.K. on either one.

Distort

So now you have a rough idea of the complexity of the thing. It doesn't take long to figure out how it works, but there are dangers to avoid. The regeneration control on the flanger, for example, should not be turned too high because the swooping, soaring and diving sounds tend to take on a life of their own. Similarly, the width can't be allowed to go too high, since it tends to distort the notes unpleasantly. A few minutes of random juggling, however, will soon get the user accustomed to the flanger's tricks, and it will begin to yield up some delightful effects. Those who know all about the many floor units currently available will be familiar with what is obtainable from a flanger *per se*, so there's no need to go into all that, save to say that the AD-230 has a particularly nice line in tremolo when the speed is at maximum. Combined with reverb, this effect was once popular on recordings about ten years ago, but hasn't surfaced recently.

As for the echo half, well, it wasn't exactly in tip-top form at the time of this review, so the

possibilities for experimentation were limited. It doesn't do a great deal more than any other unit of its type, but has a big advantage in that the echoed signal does not deteriorate into a fuzzy, stick morass of distortion.

Two minor additions to the AD-230 would be extremely helpful, bearing in mind that it is somewhere between sophisticated floor effect and budget studio gear: the rotary controls ought to be calibrated from 1 to 10 to enable you to mark precisely the settings you wish to use. This is especially necessary when you stumble on a particular sound after a lot of twiddling, since it is very easy — and very frustrating — to lose it, and then spend about half an hour trying to get it back. Secondly, it is not possible to combine the two functions. Possibly the same electronics are used for both functions, in which case combining them would indeed be a problem. On the other hand, I can think of nothing on the market that does this.

Performance

Obviously the AD-230, and the AD-220, was designed to compete with the expensive American-made Eventide studio machines, and in those terms serve their purpose well. They are expensive, though, and any potential buyer will have to listen long and hard to the performance of each if he is thinking of installing one in a recording studio. Naturally it is absolutely vital to take into account such factors as I.C. hiss, in addition to the elementary considerations of how many knobs the thing has. For comparison, an Eventide flanger costs just under £400, a Harmonizer anything between £940 and £1158, and a Digital Delay Line a cool £2760. When VAT is added to that lot, the cost begins to serve as a fairly effective deterrent!

Thus the Ibanez units are by no means to be sniffed at, and I could particularly see them coming in useful to professional bands on the road who are looking for something light, compact, versatile, easy to operate and (last but not least) entirely mains-powered.

RRP AD-220 £450; AD-230 £600. Tested P.D.



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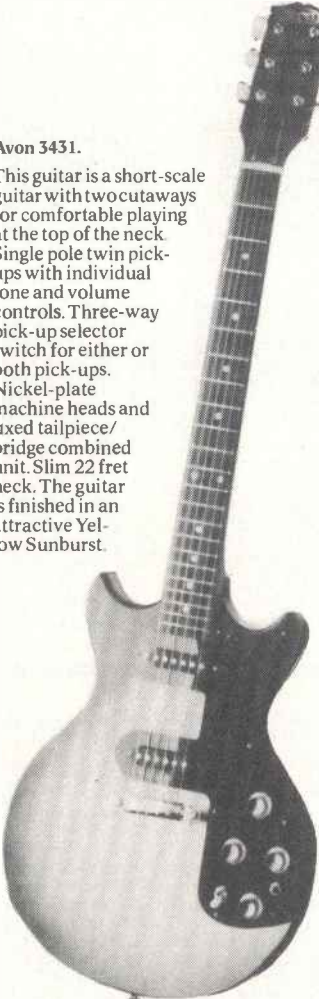
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Shaftesbury 3399.

This is a double cutaway bass guitar with an ash body and maple type neck. It has two pickups and a damper on the tailpiece. The action is fully adjustable and the controls are: volume control, two-tone controls (one mid-range one treble) and a four position switch for channel changes between the pickups. It is supplied with a fitted case.

Avon 3430.

This guitar has a double cutaway allowing easy access to top frets. Two pick-ups of single pole type with individual tone and volume controls. Three-way pick-up selector switch for either or both pick-ups. Tulip style machine heads and fixed tailpiece/bridge combined unit. Slim neck with 22 wide frets. Finished in Cherry Red.



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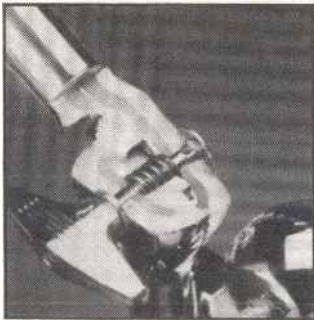
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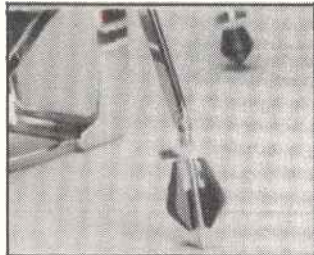
Wedge-shaped locking device with steel plate ensures reliable positioning of shell mounted tom tom.



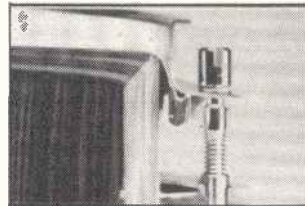
Prism clamping device ensures reliable positioning of tom-tom legs.



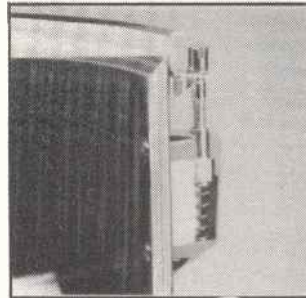
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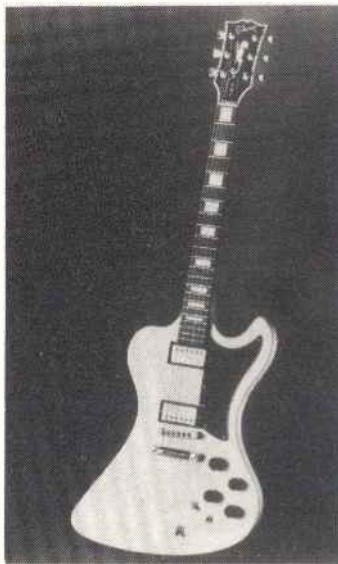
INSTRUMENT REVIEW 3

GIBSON RD 77 ARTIST

Yes, it's a new one! the Gibson RD77 Artist is a complete departure from normal Gibson productions incorporating, as it does, active, as opposed to passive, electronics as well as coming in a different shape, size, and, inevitably, price. We borrowed one, tried it out ourselves, and then decided to pass it on to a confirmed Gibson addict, Scott Gorham of Thin Lizzy.

But firstly, the guitar. The RD77 appears to have emanated from the same design team that came up with the Firebird/Explorer families. The Artist is more rounded, and carries a Les Paul head which somehow looks a little out of place on top of the angular body. The model we had for review had a natural finish — in this case a blonde maple with a matching neck. The fingerboard is ebony with a 25½ inch scale. The overall construction is faultless — impeccable even, but, at this price, one would hardly expect otherwise. Comments concerning traces of glue left at the body/neck join should only be relevant to cheaper guitars; this far up the ladder to perfection it shouldn't even be necessary to look to see if there are any.

Body shape, of course, is a matter of opinion. Scott reckoned it looked "terrible, like a Firebird copy, but with angular lines" whereas the general consensus of opinion in the office was basic approval for the shape. Pick-ups are Series VI Humbucking, and controls are all — bar one — normal: volume controls for each P/U, and full range bass and treble controls for each p/u. The selector switch is of the standard 3 position type. The big difference (of which more later) is the addition of a second three-position switch entitled 'Mode Selector'. The rear position activates both compression and expansion; selecting then either forward or rearward position on the p/u selector switch activates compression (forward -/u) or expansion (back p/u). The expansion mode is touch sensitive adjustable at the rear by means of a small slot-head screw.



Mid-position on the mode selector places the guitar in a neutral mode, and forward position activates a bright mode emphasising the upper harmonic registers with approximately 8db of boost at 4kHz effecting both pick ups.

It is the inclusion of this switch, and its accompanying 'active' electronics which makes the RD such a substantially different guitar. Compression reduces attack and produces an amazing amount of sustain; expansion gives a hard, explosive response with rapid decay, and the bright mode accentuates treble frequencies. These 'active' electronics don't, however, work on their own. There's a pre-amp sited inside the body which is powered by an ordinary 9 volt battery which Gibson estimate will last for some 150-200 hours intermittent playing. And now, down to plugging the beast in (*at last* . . . Ed.) and finding out whether the inclusion of these electronics has done anything for or against the performance of the guitar as standard, and basically, if the machine is worth the money!

Over to you Scott.

"Well, first-off, I must emphasise that all the thoughts I have on the guitar are personal opinions," Scott began as we chatted over a coffee in Lizzy's office. "I'm not qualified to comment on the electronics and stuff like that, but as a

professional musician who earns most of his bread from working on the road I reckon I'm as qualified as the next man to comment on the playability of the thing. I've been playing Gibsons for years and rate them as the best guitars in the world, so if you like I was a little prejudiced in favour of it before I played it; unfortunately I'm not as impressed as I hoped I would be.

"The neck is too wide for me — especially after playing a Les Paul — and I doubt if I could ever feel really at home on it; on the other hand the fretboard is superb; the frets are wide, and for someone like me who plays a lot of bent notes it's ideal — just a pity they couldn't have put it on a narrower neck!

"Construction-wise I have to criticise the ergonomics — the tone controls are perfectly sited, but to place the jack plug socket, tone selector switch and mode selector switch all in the same area of the body strikes me as a little short sighted — there's just too much going on down there. I would have preferred the jack-socket at the base of the guitar and the p/u selector à la Les Paul — but, as I said, it's all personal opinion!"

As it happens, although we at Beat do prefer to see jack-sockets on the face of the body, in this case the inclusion of another switch in the same area does modify that opinion. The controls are just that little bit too close together.

"The sound of the guitar is rather different to the normal Gibson tone," Scott went on. "There's definitely more treble bite (an opinion we endorse at the office) and overall it's a genuine improvement — there's more tone to it. The electronics side, however, is a different matter. I found there was a whole range of variations — masses of them, but in all honesty I don't feel I had the time to get used to them; and that's important. If I'm playing, live, changing from one guitar setting to the next, leaping around as we do on stage, the addition of this sort of facility can be as much a draw-back as

it could be an advantage.

"The compression mode gives fantastic sustain; the 'bright mode' with its extra boost is quite marked and very tasty indeed — but I've a feeling these extra facilities are of more use to the guy in the studio rather than on the road. I reckon if I'd had the chance to sit down in the studio and really get into the variations available I could have gotten used to the guitar a lot better — but then, if you've got a sound on the album you're gonna need it on the road too, and you might well be back at square one.

"Another point which just struck me is that while the guitar is perfectly balanced, the body is too long: I have to wear it further across my own body than a Les Paul which makes the reach to the bottom frets rather too long for me. The craftsmanship is great — Gibson can't go wrong for me on that side — and there's a lot more power than on my own Les Paul; I got a lot more shit out of it".

Scott's conclusions:

"Well, I really think Gibson should reconsider the positioning of the controls; it's a bit cluttered down there and it wouldn't take much to sort it out. I rate it as a really good guitar otherwise — there's plenty of power and tons of tone variations — but, how much did you say it was? £732 — it's overpriced — in my opinion. That's a hell of a lot of bread for an axe."

Strangely enough, we at Beat are forced to the same conclusion. The RD77 Artist is a good guitar, but it's not quite a great one. The active electronics section is interesting, performs very well, but we wondered whether it might not be cheaper to use sound modifying units on a souped-up Les Paul if you like for similar results . . . and at £732 (admittedly including a superb case, strap and the dreaded VAT) Gibson have entered the realm of diminishing returns.

Our thanks to Scott Gorham and Norlin Music. Tested Beat Instrumental (we all had a go) and Scott Gorham. Maine, Amppeg and Mesa Boogie amps.

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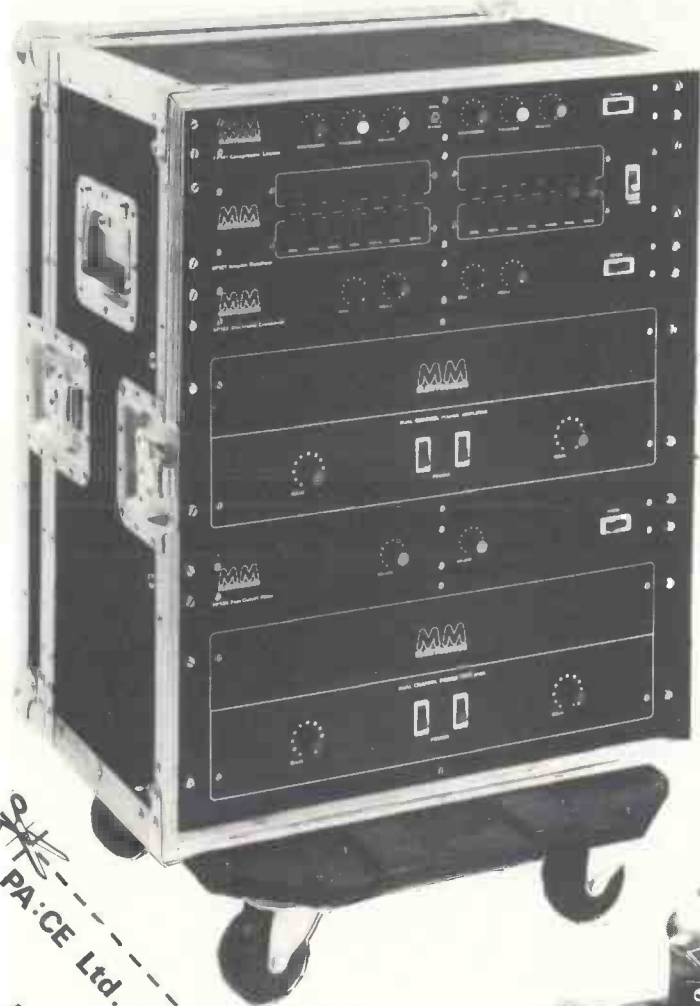
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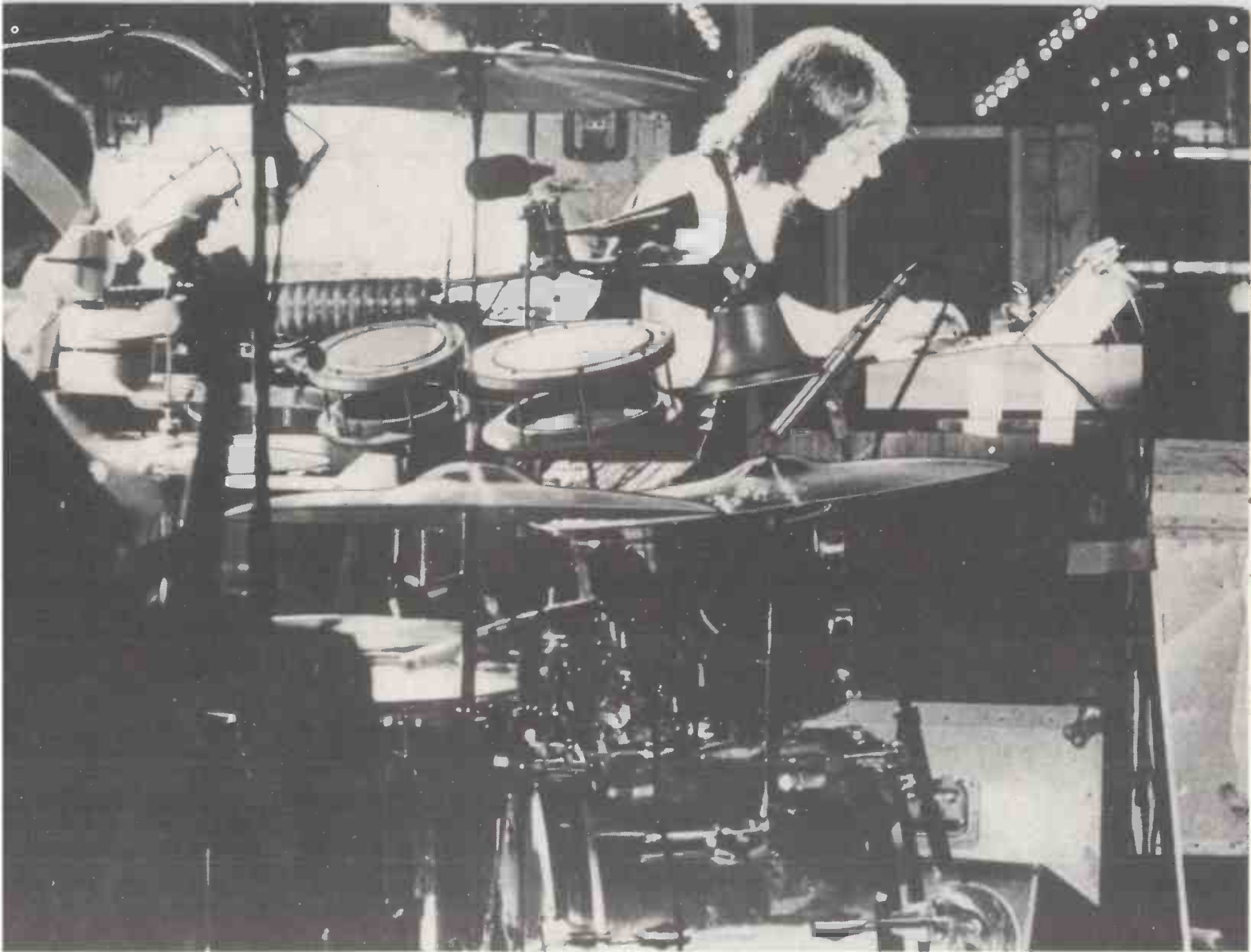
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INSTRUMENT REVIEW 4

ELVIN PIANO

'Elvin Piano? — never heard of it' you might rightly say — but the chances are that if you're a keyboard player you will be hearing quite a bit of it — despite the hassles I went through getting hold of one! Elvin first came to my notice a couple of weeks before this year's Frankfurt Fair, and during my visit there I made a point of searching this newcomer out.

I eventually tracked it down to the Soundout stand because, it turns out, Soundout are going to be handling the distribution for Elvin as soon as full-scale production begins, which hopefully will be around the time you read this review. Although I was unable to play the piano in Frankfurt, my interest was aroused when the salespersons started using phrases like "closer to an acoustic piano than anything else on the market" and try "a proper touch sensitive keyboard".

Come now, Mr. Carroll, thinks I, for under five hundred pounds? Well, on my return to the office I requested one for review and that's when the aforementioned hassles started! Soundout's truck decided the autobahn was no place to prove its reliability and promptly blew up on the spot. Delay One. The truck — as you will by now have guessed complete with the only available Elvin piano in the world stacked neatly under fifty tons of speaker cabs on board — staggered under tow-ropes to Dover where the customs people weren't too happy and decided to just think things over. Delay 2.

The Elvin is basically a compact electronic piano complete inside its own travelling case covered in a black vinyl and protected at the corners by solid metal corner-plates. The lid lifts off towards you — think about why you lot keep scratching the keyboard and top looking for the hinges on your own keyboards — revealing a five octave keyboard with a control panel consisting of varying sized rocker switches and several rotary controls — all very sweet, neat and tidy and well thought out. Running from left to right there's a mains indicator light accompanied by the power rocker switch; a large rocker switch is headed 'pedal' and footed 'sustain'; three rotary controls under a bracketed



heading 'Transpose' bear the legends 'decay', 'transpose' and 'tune'; a larger rocker switch is next, rocking from 'Transpose' to 'piano'; two small rocker switches control Phase 1 and 2, and three small rockers further along handle 'Piano', 'Honky Tonk' and 'Harpsichord'; the last pair of rotary controls look after 'volume' and 'tone'. A twin pedal group comes complete with the Elvin — a la real piano sustain and soft — and there's an extra-long rubber coated mains cable which should stretch across the Empire Pool stage if necessary! The back panel has sockets for power supply, pedal, output and headphones.

OK, that's the description, what about the piano? Well, I must admit to being amazingly disappointed at first — in fact almost furious. The keyboard was so light they could have used it in the Nimble television commercial — about as similar to an acoustic piano as a snowball — despite the assurances that it would feel like the real thing. Secondly I could hardly get any volume from the top octave without hitting the notes over-hard. Thirdly, in the transpose mode I couldn't bring the piano back down to concert pitch, no matter how much I

fiddled around with the tune and transpose controls.

Fourthly, the panel lettering is all red — I for one, wouldn't like to search the fascia for the right control in most stage lighting.

But, you cry, what about the good points? Well, there certainly were some of those as well! Despite the ultra-light (for my tastes) keyboard it was possible to make it react like a piano if I tried concentrating hard enough, but if only the touch had been harder. In normal piano mode, the three preset voices were very good — the harpsichord the least convincing of the three available, but the honky tonk (with the tone up to top treble) was bouncy, and the piano voice very realistic indeed. Judicious use of the foot pedals led to the discovery of a further realistic touch — the soft pedal actually dampens slowly like a real piano rather than activating a touch switch which cuts the volume instantly. The so-called loud pedal is controlled by however much decay is pre-set on the fascia panel — from very short to tubular bell length sustain!

The, in my opinion wrongly-termed, 'phase' rockers also did their stuff. This is not a tape phase effect, and much less

does it resemble electronic phasing — it is, in fact, a sort of tremolo. The difference between tremolo and the Elvin phase system is that the former wavers the entire length of the keyboard at a constant speed. Not so the Elvin. Peter Elvin has made a brave attempt at simulating the different 'tremolo' — speeds of a piano string — so the bass notes appear to vibrate slower than the treble end, again similar to the differences between the lengthy fat bass strings and the short, thin treble strings on an acoustic piano. I call it a 'brave' attempt because the result isn't 100% convincing, but it's a marked improvement on the totally artificial sounds of a conventional tremolo.

Switching now from 'piano mode' to 'Transpose' the first thing that became immediately obvious was that I appeared to have put the thing out of tune. I was reviewing the piano on top of my own two-manual Welson, and all of a sudden it started playing B flat minor instead of the A minor chord I was holding on the organ. Easy, thinks I, tune it down and we'll be all right — but none of it. No matter what I tried it remained exactly one semi-tone higher.

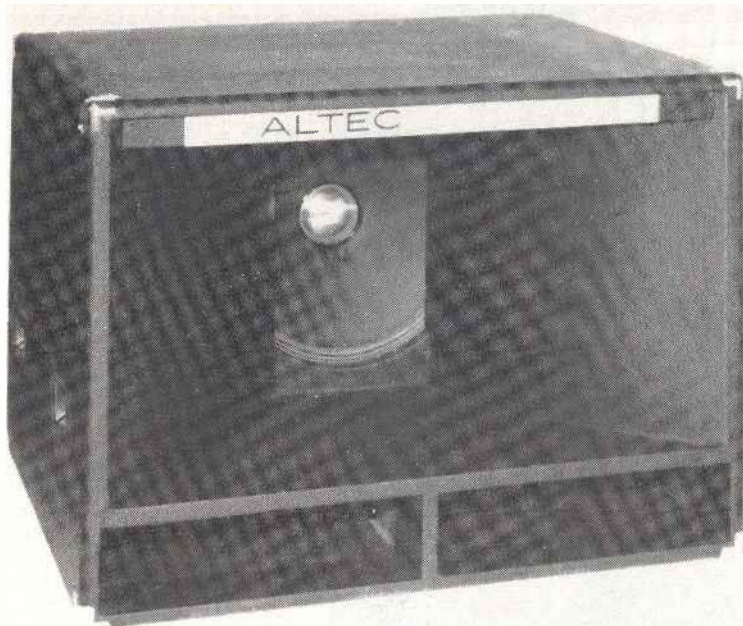
Anyway, in the Transpose mode there's a rotary control which slides the notes up four full notes — very interesting and who else allows you to bend a piano note? Add lots of decay, tune the phase so it's a little discordant, and use the transpose control and the piano becomes a neo-electric Peruvian cow-caller, or anything else you can imagine. Very versatile. But the problems remained, and I phoned Soundout Productions.

Peter Elvin spent an afternoon with me in my home going through the criticisms I had for it, listening patiently, explaining the philosophy behind the design, and eventually agreeing without persuasion to make a couple of alterations to the piano before it goes into full-scale production.

Firstly, the touch sensitivity. It transpires that this is pre-settable. When you order your Elvin you inform the dealer that you want a light/medium/heavy keyboard response and this is set at the factory. It happened that I had one pre-set to light

continued on page 56

ALTEC

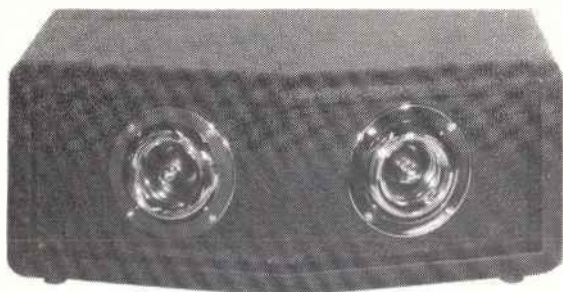


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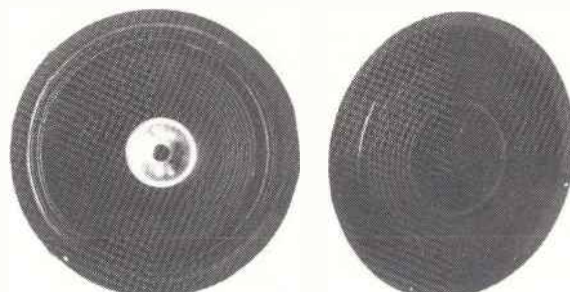


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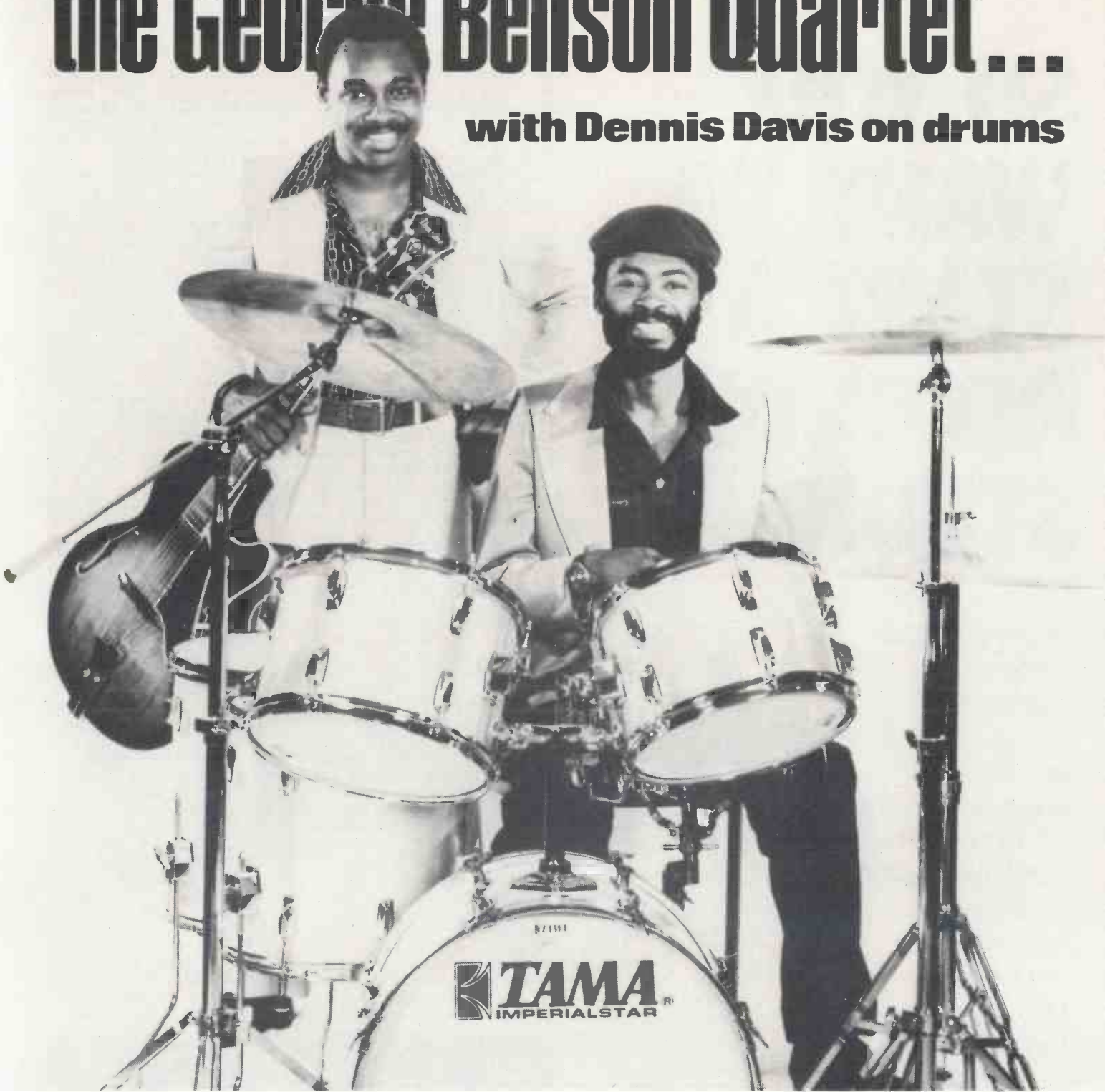
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SO YOU WANT TO START A RECORDING STUDIO...

Nigel Jopson surveys the expanse of equipment available to anyone setting up his own eight track recording studio, and reviews the best bets. He also tots up the cost and outlines the perils of taking short cuts

The enthusiastic response to our recent "Recording Techniques" series makes it clear that many Beat readers are interested not only in 'home recording', but also in the possibility of starting their own professional recording studio. Much has been written about home recording, in Beat and in most of the Hi-Fi mags as well: there is a wealth of this sort of equipment available nowadays, most of it is readily understandable in terms of domestic Hi-Fi equipment, and the choice between the innumerable different brands really depends on what happens to suit the personality of the individual operator, rather than what is actually good or bad from a technical point of view. After all, this sort of equipment is usually only going to be used to help the musician concerned to formulate ideas and to produce demos of his or her own brand of music.

The first thing to realize about gear, if you are considering starting a studio that will pay its way commercially, is that the equipment you buy is going to have to be capable of working day in, day out for as much recording time as you can book into the studio. If it does break down (and even the best gear will at some time) it must be capable of being repaired with the absolute minimum of fuss and bother, or you are going to lose money — lots of it.

Your choice of equipment must also be able to effectively

record any type of music that the studio is likely to be booked for: if you are a solo musician recording at home you may be able to make do with a four output console, because you'll never be recording more than two instruments at a time, or if you are a rock band with your own studio you may be able to make do with old and noisy equipment because you're stuffing so much signal level on tape that the equipment noise is masked by your noise. Making these kind of compromises if you want to get a real studio together will result in less sessions and more unhappy customers.

If you are contemplating opening your own commercial studio, then you will also have a pretty good idea of where and how you are going to get your trade, and thus the sort of premises and business organisation that you need. If you don't have any concrete ideas in these departments, then think again, or think about getting a partner to take care of such things. I could write a whole article about this side of setting up a studio, but this piece is about the less-commonly discussed topic of the equipment that will have to provide your daily bread and butter. Suffice to say — think very carefully and plan in advance your bookings and premises, and be sure that you know (not just think you know) how you are going to manage these departments before you start getting equipment.

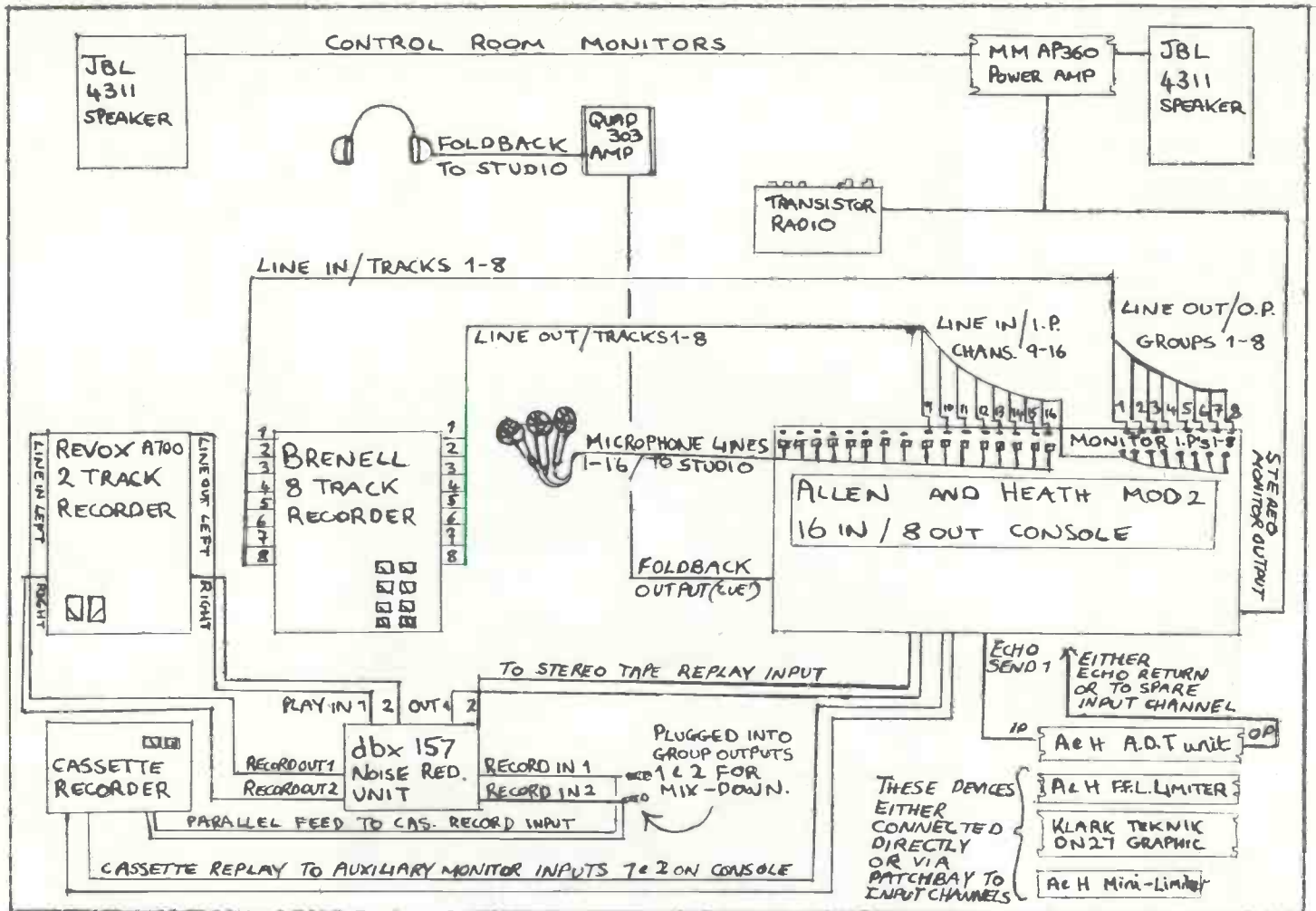
The minimum amount of money you are going to have to spend in order to equip a basic 8 track studio is £10,000 (Gasp? Now read the previous paragraph again!) Yes, it has been done for much less, by fools like me who know (thought they knew) about gear, by buying rancid old beaten-up

electrical equipment and repairing it and wiring it up to home made monitors, patch-bays and so forth. But ask anyone who have done this — and some, perhaps a third, have done so successfully — and they will agree with the figure I have just quoted. After all, ten grand is but a fraction of the cost of a really top notch new 24 track recorder; I appreciate that it may sound to some of you like some know-it-all journalist who gets to play with funky hardware saying 'well for a start, you *must* have a Noddy Crumpleflanger, because they're the best' . . . but the gear that I am about to recommend is the very minimum requirement if you are serious enough to consider producing master quality tapes from an 8 track studio, with the minimum amount of 'down time' (jargon for the time spent, lying under your console fiddling with the wiring, whilst the client mumbles 'F***ing cheapo-cheapo studio, never come here again.')

For a start, all the gear that I reviewed was brand new, and I absolutely recommend that the multitrack recorder, stereo master recorder and mixer that you buy are new as well; all studio gear will have been used, and used hard, second-hand gear may be obsolete, spares and a repair man will be very hard to find inside several days for a major fault — the cheaper and older it is, the longer and harder it will be — that's why it's for sale. Monitor speakers you may think you can build yourself, but bear this in mind: I have built several monitors, painstakingly, using old Tannoy drivers and so forth — none of them have sounded as clear, 'transparent' (and all those other words of praise for the indefinable quality of sound that is excellent) as the pair of JBL 4311's that I tested — which



Author's friend looks on as modules await repair.



Block diagram of the 8 track studio. The equipment under review comprises: Allen and Heath Mod 2 16/8 console; Brenell 8 track recorder; Allen and Heath Automatic Double Tracking unit, Feed Forward Delay Limiter and Mini Limiter; Klark Teknik DN27 graphic equaliser; dbx 157 noise reduction unit; Revox A 700 stereo master recorder; JBL 4311 control room monitors; AP360 power amp; 6 Beyer microphones and stands; all the rest of the equipment illustrated is my own.

were used in a completely untreated, unprepared control room with plain, painted brick walls and plaster ceiling.

In fact, all your gear is best bought new: you will probably be funding the equipment from a loan anyway; it will make a great impression on the clients, it will work from the word go and the manufacturers are bound by their guarantee to repair faults. The desk, multitrack machine and three effects units that I tested were all from the same manufacturer, Allen and Heath.

Apart from the quality of their equipment, Allen and Heath were chosen because they are the only British manufacturer to produce both mixing consoles and multitrack (Brenell) machines. In fact, A&H/Brenell are the only British manufacturer who traditionally have made truly professional multitrack machines of any repute. They do have competitors from abroad, the most notable being TEAC/Tascam

and Otari: heaven forbid that I should run down the excellent design etc. etc. of these particular machines, but the Brenell has the overwhelming advantage in that it uses 1" tape, which remains the accepted and universal format for 8 track recording professionally, and means that the machine can be successfully used without full noise reduction (running at 15 ips, or course) for every type of music. It also means that multitrack masters can be taken to larger studios (has been known to happen with good takes) for remixing and sweetening.

Also, however good a distributor or agent is for foreign machinery, there is absolutely no substitute for having a factory in London where any machined part, major component or whatever can be made, repaired or replaced on the spot. I was actually in a very good position to review the Brenell Mini 8, as I had previously run a studio which

used one of the early model Mini 8's, and I think it would be a pretty good endorsement of the company's r & d policy if I rapidly mention the changes and improvements that have been made.

The new machine features a totally superior and completely professional transport system: the infuriatingly silly, recessed push-buttons with 'clunk-click-bang' relays have been replaced with proper square push-buttons, and a superior logic system that allows you to go straight into play or record from wind in any direction, without the horrendous tape snatch / stretch / spill that such procedure would elicit from certain obsolete or out of date machines with grander sounding names. This ease of control is very important is you're going to do all the tape jockeying (as I was) as well as engineering. The new machine also has nice, chunky, self-centering hubs, which are much easier to take on and off than

the old ones and stop the reels vibrating when fast winding; a word of warning, though: don't be too zealous about tightening them as, being alloy, they expand after about ten hours use and you may not be able to get them off until the machine cools down (red faces all round if the client wants to take the tape with him!)

The new Mini 8 also has record lights which flash in the 'ready' mode; there are two ways of going into record on this machine — either by operating the record switches on the required tracks, whose lights will then flash until you press the record and play buttons together — or by starting the machine by pressing record and play buttons (there is a master red-record light) and then operating the individual channel switches when you wish. The first method is obviously the most common in practice — you can 'drop in' to

SO YOU WANT TO START A RECORDING STUDIO...

record by having the lights flashing in the play mode, and then pressing record plus play buttons at the right point — but the second method is useful for "tidying up" tracks, where there's a cough or burp from the vocalist just before he starts singing, for instance. It's good practice to eliminate such things before mixing, as in the heat of the mix a track can be left fader up for some forgotten fart or squeak ("oh shit — what the hell was *that*"), and the switch-record mode means that you can run the tape to clean without stopping every time you drop out of record.

Brenell have now done away with the mechanical counter altogether (it used to slip all the time anyway), and provided a digital minutes/seconds one instead. This has a very clear and bright display, and is in a little plastic box which can be mounted on top of the console or where-ever, connected to the machine via a remote cable and driven from the rotating guide next to the take-up spool. Actually, Eric Clapton nicked my digital counter (yes, folks, ol' Slowhand himself uses a Mini 8) and took it off to the States with him, but A & H/Brenell are now making a complete remote control unit which includes transport and record controls and counter. This is a really excellent accessory, as it, means that you can park the recorder somewhere out of the way of the console and passing people, and surprise visiting producers by the speed with which you organise and accomplish tricky 'drop ins'.

The new Brenell also has different heads with hardwired connections to each track (I once started a session convinced that one track had developed an electronic fault — in fact I'd knocked off one of the removable-pin head connections on the old machine, whilst replacing the head cover after cleaning the heads.) My review machine also sported a simple, manually operated replay head hum-shield, something else that was lacking from early models. All in all, Brenell have done a remarkable job in developing what was a basically good machine into a



Brenell-recommended in the tape department

truly excellent one, and one which is a joy to operate — even single handed and for hours at a time.

The mixer in your studio is going to be the central 'control area' for every stage of the recording process, so you had better choose one that can accomplish any function in this respect that you will need, with the minimum of repatching and replugging. I mention this (rather obvious) point because the Allen and Heath Mod 2 console that I selected does have quite a few competitors within the same price bracket, many of them British built and with slightly more sophisticated equalisation of auxiliary send facilities on the input channels. None of them, however, can compete with the Mod 2's switching, routing and monitoring capabilities, which are actually more important: you can always elaborate and extend the facilities in your studio after it has been opened, by acquiring more outboard equipment like the graphic equaliser and limiters that I had and linking them with selected channels via the patch bay — in fact, this is a

more flexible way of doing things, as this way you can get a better sound by spending your money on really sophisticated gear that would cost thousands of pounds if it were duplicated on every single channel.

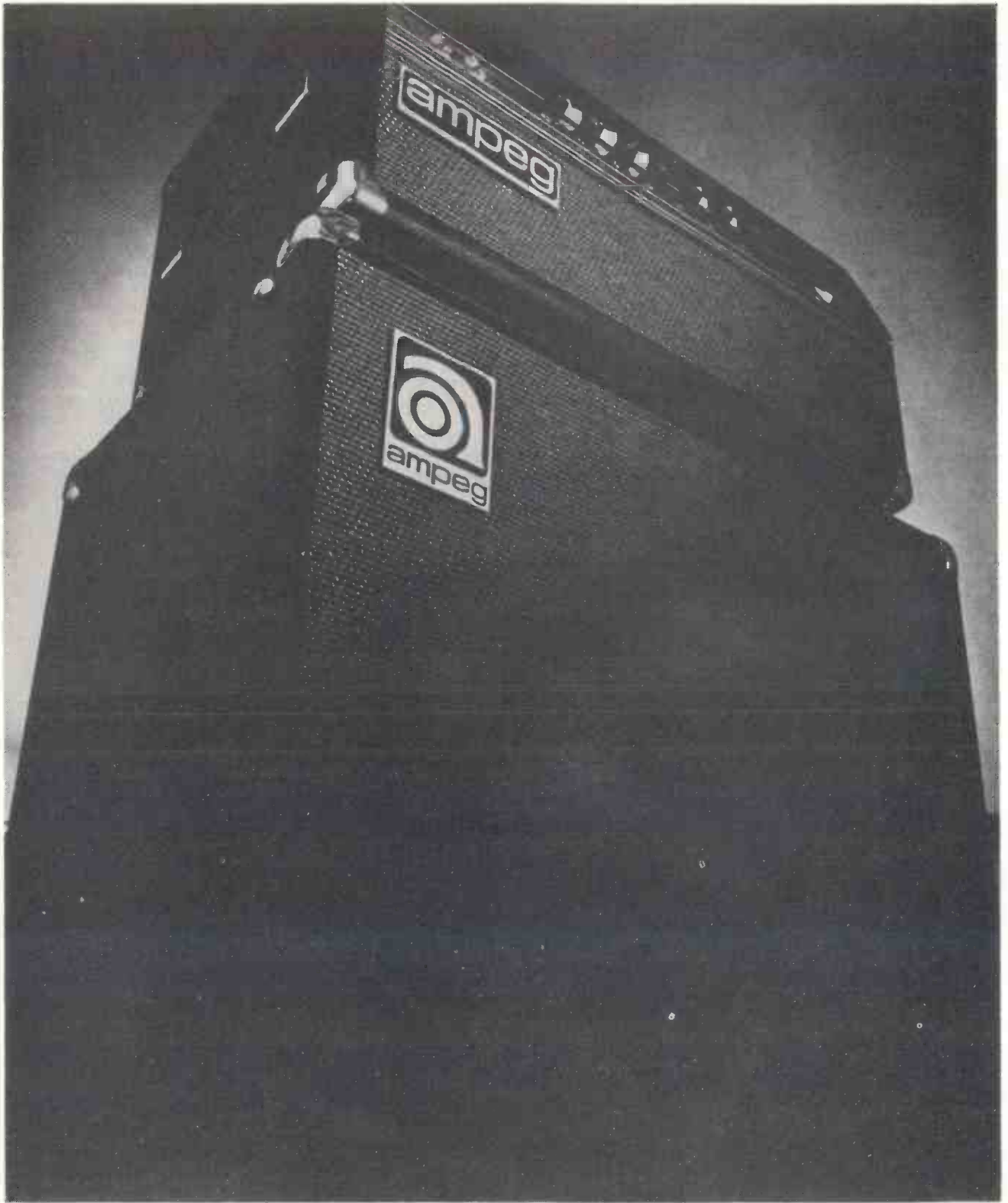
There'd be nothing worse, though, than buying a console that doesn't have something as basic (to a professional studio) as automatic relay switching for changing the monitoring between line output from console groups and tape return — and into the desk's monitoring system. A band of push switches immediately to the left of the monitors selects the following functions for your ears to sample on the control room speakers: Cut (nothing at all, but keep the monitors muted if you're re-plugging anything), Mono (simply adds left and right outputs so you can check for compatibility), Tape (stereo replay from your mastering machine, in this case the Revox A700), Stereo (monitors line outputs 1 and 2 for mixing), Cue (monitors the foldback mix so you can set up a balance for the musicians), Solo (monitors individual channels when their

solo buttons are pressed), and the Monitor Mix and associated line in/out buttons, which have already been explained.

All the input and output sockets for each module on the Mod 2 are actually mounted of the upper part of that module, but the sockets and cables etc. are hidden from view during operation by the meter hood, which hinges down to keep all the wiring out of the way. This really is an excellent system, which I'm surprised other manufacturers haven't copied, as it makes initial wiring up and subsequent plug swapping so much easier than having the plugs stuck out of reach on the back. It also makes maintenance simpler, and the only 'hard wiring' off the modules is to the channel and group insert points on the patchbay — which also means less hum problems, as there is no low level signal wiring off the input channels.

It only took me three days to install and wire the whole studio: one day to collect, unpack and arrange everything in position, one day to wire up and align the gear for mixing down, and one day to wire up for recording and align the multitrack machine... pretty rapid, when I think how long such things have taken to do in the past. I spent just over £30 on all the extra cable and plugs, spare fuses etc that I needed to get everything operational and wire the devices together, although I did already have about 25 long XLR to XLR mic cables, which would probably cost at least a fiver each, even if you made them up yourself. Despite the speed with which I did this, the end result was far simpler to use and more reliable than any 8 track studio I've worked in before (gulp!), and I didn't have a single wiring fault during three weeks of hard use. This is another point in favour of buying new equipment — the time you spend getting it set up is so short that the recording (and earning of money) can start almost immediately, before the bank loan has had time to clock up even a few % of interest.

Next month I'll describe and comment on the Revox A700 mastering machine, the JBL speakers, dbx noise reduction unit and the effects units and microphones, as well as giving a full price breakdown on the total cost of the gear and explaining how the whole studio shaped up to the varied demands placed on it whilst recording:



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WELSON

'IMPERATIVE' two module portable

The Imperative is a two manual portable with special effects and graphic volume controls. The upper manual has 49 keys from C to C. Seven six-position drawbars are provided for Flute, three for percussion, one for percussion decay; an on/off switch is provided for flute sustain on four drawbars, and seven push-buttons with lights modulate the flutes separately or together. Two drawbars control modulation amount and speed. The lower manual has 41 keys from C to C, with four six-position drawbars for flute sound. The String Synthesizer action is provided with a sustain control and three tabs as follows: Cellos, Violins, Upper to Lower Strings Coupler. Another three tabs control Piano, Harpsichord and Upper to Lower Special Effects coupler, a slide control being provided for Piano and Harpsichord Decay. Six slide volume controls allow graphic level setting of the various organ sections. A Stereo effect is achieved via twelve coupled push buttons, which allow placement of any or all of the sections to the left or right channels. In addition to all these features, the following facilities are also provided: Two photo-cell expression pedals, a pitch control and a pedal board output.

Recommended Retail Price: £1,146.96 inc. VAT



Keyboard: 37 keys, c to c.

3 Oscillators:

Oscillator 1-4 footages with individual volume controls, 32', 16', 8', and 4', pitch control + or - one semi-tone.

Vibrato amount control.

Modulation monitoring with flashing red light.

Oscillator 2-4 footages with individual volume control, 16', 8', 4' and 2'.

Tune control over one full octave.

Vibrato amount control.

Modulation monitoring with flashing red light.

Oscillator 3 (modulator) - Waveform switch, triangular and square.

Frequency control 1-50 Hz.

Modulation switch (push button), oscillator 1, 2, V.C.F. and V.C.A.

Envelope Generator: Four slide controls - attack, decay, sustain and release.

Voltage Controlled Filter-Resonator (VCF):

Two slide controls: Cut-off frequency and resonance factor,

Oscillator 3 amount control.

ADSR amount control.

Modulation monitoring with flashing red light.

Voltage Controlled Amplifier (VCA)

Oscillator 3 amount control.

ADSR amount control.

General volume control.

Initial volume push button switch with pilot light.

Modulation monitoring light.

Portamento (glide): Glide on/off switch with pilot light.

Glide speed control.

Music Random Switch: Push button switch with pilot light.

Presets: Preset on/off push button with pilot light.

15 preset voices, flute, trombone, horn, oboe, bass clarinet, jaw harp, wha wha,

accordion, strings, xylophone, bass guitar, spinet, space, fuzz, musical saw.

Noise Generator: Noise colour switch, white and pink. Volume control.

Optional: Metal stand and vinyl bag.

Dimensions: (approx.)

	Inches	Cms.
Length	40 1/2	102
Width	12	29
Depth	6	15
Weight	14Kg.	

Recommended Retail Price: £690.18 inc. VAT.

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Channel 2: Volume, Tone (Treble, Middle, Bass)

Reverb, Tremolo (Intensity, Speed)

Fittings: Master volume

Voltage selector switch

Extra speaker jack, Foot switch and Caster

Size: 20 1/2" H, 26 1/4" W, 11" D

Weight: 26kg

Recommended Retail Price £279.45 inc. VAT.



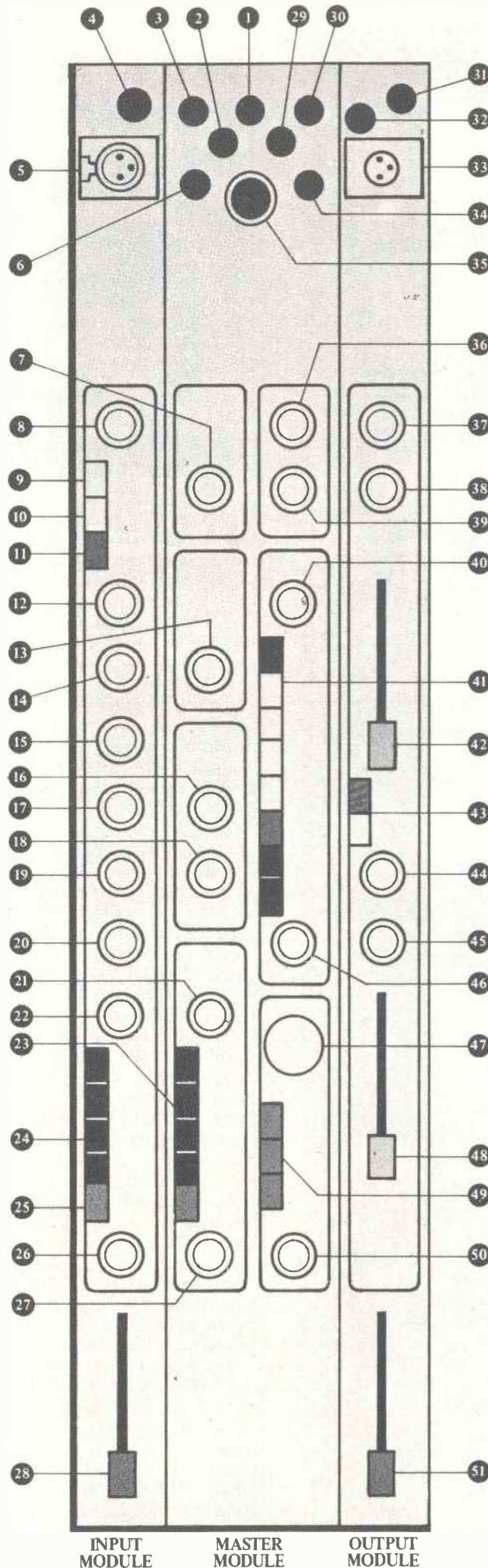
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- 2 Each send No. 2 output
- 3 Cue output
- 4 Line input
- 5 Lo-Z Mic input
- 6 Echo send No. 1 output
- 7 Echo send master level No. 1
- 8 Input gain control, 50dB gain control
- 9 20dB Mic pad
- 10 120 Hz lo cut filter
- 11 Mic line switch
- 12 10 kHz equalizer \pm 16dB
- 13 Echo send master level No. 2
- 14 Mid equalizer frequency control 1.8 kHz to 7.5 kHz
- 15 Mid equalizer boost/cut control \pm 14dB
- 16 Cue derivation control, pan between inputs or outputs
- 17 100 Hz equalizer \pm 16dB
- 18 Cue send master level control
- 19 Cue send level from input channel
- 20 Echo send level from input channel
- 21 Echo return to cue system, mono fix of echo return 1 & 2
- 22 Echo send level from input channel
- 23 Echo return assign and solo
- 24 Input channel assign
- 25 Input channel solo
- 26 Input channel pan control
- 27 Echo return master
- 28 Input channel fader
- 29 Stereo control room monitor output
- 30 Echo return 1 & 2
- 31 Auxiliary monitor mix input, tape playback
- 32 Main monitor mix input, tape play back
- 33 Line output
- 34 Stereo tape play back input
- 35 Power input connector
- 36 Oscillator frequency control, 1 kHz to 10 kHz
- 37 Auxiliary monitor mix cue send
- 38 Auxiliary monitor mix pan control
- 39 Oscillator level control
- 40 Echo return to monitor system
- 41 Monitor select wswitches
- 42 Auxiliary monitor mix fader
- 43 Over dub (sync) and monitor channel fader reverse
- 44 Main monitor mix cue send
- 45 Main monitor mix pan control
- 46 Monitor master output level control
- 47 Talkback mic
- 48 Main monitor mix fader
- 49 Talkback switching to studio, cue, or slate
- 50 Talkback level
- 51 Output channel fader



which other mixer has this facility for £2,500, which is what the Allen & Heath costs?

Again, you may think that you can build such things yourself, but (1) it's the kind of job which never gets done properly 'cause you never have the time (2) it looks unprofessional and gives your clients the impression that the mixer is 'home-made' (3) the monitoring section is the bit which gets switched about and used most, and the manufacturer will repair it for you if it goes wrong (4) it looks much slicker and is easier to use if all switching functions and patchbay are built into the console, and anything extra is taken care of by an impressive-looking rack of 'toys'.

The Mod 2 console is actually provided with 16 monitor inputs, so if you decide to go 16 track it's not actually necessary to replace the console — this facility must make the Mod 2 the most ridiculously priced full 16 track mixer in the world! The eight monitors directly above the output group faders normally follow the respective desk outputs 1 — 8, or the tape return inputs if the master line in/out button is depressed. Each of these is provided with a red 'sync' button, which returns that individual monitoring channel to follow desk output if the rest of the monitors are following tape return: this is very useful when doing overdubs, as it means you can listen to all your tracks back, and when you reach the rightpoint, just press the console Sync button and put the correct track on the machine into record — I even managed to do this and drop in on the middle of a riff — whilst playing a keyboard as well, so it's quite a rapid process!

The upper bank of eight monitors is provided with the same facilities of slide fader, stereo pan and foldback send (cue), but they only monitor line return from the extra eight tracks of a (16 track) tape machine via the 'Auxiliary Monitor' input sockets. If you do happen to use a 16 track recorder, then eight switches located above the sync buttons on each module will invert the input/output connections to upper and lower (Aux and main) monitoring sections, meaning that the Sync button can now be used to switch between tape return tracks 9 to 16 and the eight console outputs — neat, isn't it? If you're only recording 8 track, then the Auxiliary monitors are surplus, but you can make use of them, as I did, for hooking up extra devices like Cassette recorders

DAVE COUSINS



How the Strawbs lost and kept their Deadlines

Ever lost an album before? No, no — I mean one you've nearly finished recording yourself. The Strawbs managed to do just that with Deadlines — permit Dave Cousins to explain: "We had been in Air Studios finishing off the backing tracks and we decided to take three days off before completing the overdubbing. When we returned we discovered that the first eight tracks of the master tape had been erased and we had to re-record four of the songs.

"We had to re-do vocals and guitars on other tracks — in all it took us an extra two months. A couple of the tracks were actually an improvement but Joey and Me, for example, wasn't so good. The original recording had great sparkle and I think it sounds a bit stiff now. But there you go. . ."

The album re-establishes the band's old keyboard textured sound after a period in which they tried 'a new direction'. This flopped to such an extent that the band decided to go off the road to concentrate on albums again to regain their position. Dave: "People have always associated us more with keyboards, and we really tried to push John Mealing forward on the new album. He was a little unwilling because his session commitments wouldn't allow him to come on the road with us, but Andy Richards has inherited John's work and he'll be well up front on the tour. Andy's a qualified concert pianist — more qualified than Rick (Wakeman) was when he-joined the band.

"Dumping the mellotrons for Nomadness turned out to be a mistake; that came more from the producer than the band, and the tour to support it flopped badly. We decided not to tour for a year apart from 3 weeks to promote Deep Cuts. But you see, that highlights a problem. Do you get in a rut if you keep making similar sounding records that your audiences can identify with, or do you try a little change and risk what you've built up? The Strawbs are a cult band in the States, and as soon as you try and broaden the appeal you lose that. The band is more comfortable with the longer pieces, and the next album will probably be a suite thing — with an extractable three minutes for a single! In Britain, we were a University band before Part Of The Union — Grave New World reached the top ten without a single. Then we started getting 12-15 year olds after Part Of The Union, and the university audiences were horrified to see these teenyboppers. When the next single wasn't a hit, we lost the teenies as well.

"That's why what we're doing now is back to the roots. This tour is based around the Universities, and the album is back to what the Strawbs do best. I'm more curious about America now. We have decided not to headline when we go there — we'll be supporting Steve Stills, Kansas or Dave Mason I think. I'd hate to follow the band on stage the way we're playing, though." Anybody been missing the Strawbs of late?

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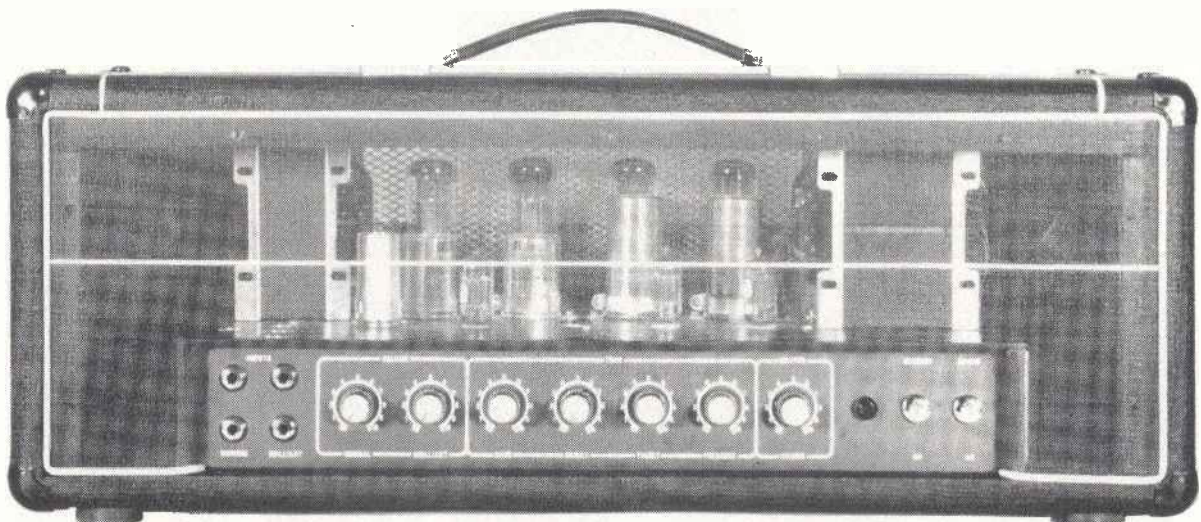
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By now everyone knows about Rush, so we can probably skip the preliminaries, except to say that their second British tour sold out as completely as the first did last summer. The release of "A Farewell To Kings" increased and strengthened their already fanatical following. It brought from them a gentler and more lyrical side than their previous albums had displayed, and although their live performance is as decisively heavy as ever, it does at least indicate the direction which the music is now taking.

As Geddy Lee and Neil Peart entered Alex Lifeson's hotel room, still visibly suffering from the after-effects of a late-night visit from Lizzy's Brian Robertson, the best method was obviously to pounce straight away before they all assumed a horizontal posture and started snoring. Geddy, however, was quite happy to talk, though whether he was actually asleep behind his large dark-tint glasses is a matter for conjecture.

For the information of those who still don't know, Geddy plays bass and sings in a high, eerie voice, quite belied by his normal speaking voice. In addition he has a set of Moog Taurus bass pedals and a Mini-Moog. Rush as a band seem to load themselves with work: on stage they all play several instruments, and when they're not on stage they are travelling to the next gig or recovering

from the last. Wouldn't it at least be easier musically if they recruited a fourth member to handle keyboards?

"Well yeah," said Geddy, "but we have fun with just the three of us and we really like the way we work together. We don't want anybody else. It's a question of music too. What's going to happen? Is our music going to continue growing as a three-piece or shall we get

another member? We say No, let's try to pull it off ourselves, put the work-load on ourselves, try to bring these extra textures in somehow, as well as bettering ourselves as musicians. We're just hoping to create a more original trio sound."

And so to the Taurus pedals. How do they fit in? "Those bass pedals are great — they've got four pre-set bass sounds and one variable high-end syn-

thesizer sound, which is great for a bass-player. You can play a bass run and you can co-ordinate a high-end run to go along with it. It's like having another person." Although he doesn't class himself as a proper keyboard player — yet — he has recently acquired an Oberheim 8-voice polyphonic synthesizer. It isn't being used on stage so far, but Geddy sets it up in a side-room at every gig and finds time to practice on it for a couple of hours every day.

"I was going to pick up a Polymoog, but there were certain things about it I didn't like. First of all it feels very percussive. I think it's made more for a real keyboard player — the keys are pressure-sensitive, which is not really necessary for me because I'm not piano-trained. And although you have an unlimited amount of notes that you can play on, eight notes is fine for me. And there's the fact that on the Oberheim each voice, each note, goes to its own module, its own oscillators. It has a really rich sound, and I didn't think the Polymoog could compare in the richness of tone. I've had nightmares with my Mini-Moog, keeping it in tune, stabilizing it on the road, and I thought wow! if I get this Polymoog and it starts doing the same thing I'll go crazy! So far I've had this Oberheim in three different countries and I barely ever have to tune it. . . .

"But the number one feature of the Oberheim is the computer memory. You can pre-set sixteen sounds in the programme, and at the touch of a button you can recall that sound. I'm busy working on some really bizarre noises. There are all kinds of things you can add to it. There's a cassette you can interface with it, or you can programme the complete sixteen-oscillator sound into the cassette and play it back through the machine." He has also been busy on the bass guitar front — in particular a new weapon to swell his armoury of Rickenbackers.

"It's a new model of the Ricky bass they've just put out this year called the 4002. I don't know if it's available in England, but it's like their competition with the new wave of basses (*I told you not to mention the new wave in this issue . . . Ed.*). It's got an ebony fretboard, a natural wood finish, low impedance pick-ups differently positioned, and an added input: it's got one normal socket, one for the Rick-O-Sound, plus one for putting the bridge pick-up straight through. It's their expensive model. It does sound

RUSH'N AROUND

Peter Douglas brings the equipment roll up to date . . . and all without waking up the boys



quite different from the 4001. . . ."

It was time for Geddy to retire gracefully and to slap Alex into wakefulness in preparation for more axe-related questions. A strong cup of black coffee later he began to explain why he has changed from Marshall to Hiwatt, though as before with a stack of four 100 watt heads.

"It's more controllable. That's mainly what I like about it. I tried using the Hiwatt heads with the Marshall cabinets but it wasn't a very good match, I didn't think, so I went over to the Hiwatt cabinets, and it's a much richer, fatter, thicker sound than the Marshalls. Anyway I find that the tonal response on the Hiwatt is a little more accurate than it is on the Marshall. On the Marshall some of the things didn't work: from volume 1 to 9 nothing happened, then when you hit 10 it all kicked out. And the bass wasn't there. It may have been the heads that I had — and I did have them for a long time. But the difference between the two is radical."

Alex has also ditched most of his effects units since we last spoke with him. . . . "I've only got a Roland Chorus and a Roland Space Echo now. I got rid of the Electric Mistress. It was too noisy, too unreliable, and I got rid of the MXR analogue delay that I had . . . I just got rid of all that little stuff. I find that you can be fairly versatile with the Chorus. You can get a nice combination of sounds. With the two Echoplexes and the Maestro unit and all the other stuff on the floor there was so much hiss and so much noise that I got really bugged by it. I thought that if I was getting new amplification I may as well get rid of those things. The Roland Echo is much cleaner than the Echoplex and there's no power loss. It does have one thing that I don't like: the motor goes in and out when you turn it on and off. And you get a *wooooaaaeeee* noise when you turn it on. You could avoid it by putting in a relay between the echo and normal settings. There's a little toggle switch on it, and I imagine you could put in a relay there and just leave the echo on all the time. But so far it hasn't really been a problem for me."

Alex too has been out shopping for guitars. His original Gibson double-neck was smashed in transit to New York, and he now sports a bright new white version of the guitar. His beloved 335, which he has owned since the beginning of the band in 1968, was damaged in the same accident, which is

why Alex was playing his 355 instead for most of the tour. For one song — "Closer To The Heart" — he uses a brand new Strat.

"I'm just getting used to it. It has DiMarzio pick-ups on it and it sounds pretty good. It doesn't sound like a Strat! . . . The new Gibson double-neck is much lighter. I don't know why — I don't think they've used different wood, or less of it, but it's a lot lighter and that makes a big difference. There's much better balancing on this one."

So far the large, amiable frame of drummer Neil Peart had been slumped peacefully in a corner. I prodded him with the Beat microphone, and he began: "Right now I'm getting a set of tympani . . .". But where are you gonna put them, Neil? Is there room? You already seem to have more percussion than the entire London Symphony Orchestra.

"I figured it out somehow — I hope it'll work! I'll get the tape measure out. I figure I've got room for them. I'm also using a Roto-tom and a timbale. You see, I don't go in too much for those because I've got all the things that Roto-toms are meant to replace. I have the Concert toms. Friends of mine that have the normal kit with a few Roto-toms find that they take the place of the Concert toms very well, but I *have* those things already, so when I hit the Roto-toms they disappoint me, because I'm expecting the same kind of sound that the real thing gives."

Does that mean that he now has everything that a percussionist could want — apart from tympani, of course? "Well it'll never be perfect, because I'd be bored then, I think. Things like bell-trees are pretty simple because they don't take any time to learn how to play — they're just a sound that I can stick in when the right place arrives. But the glockenspiel and the tubular bells are very much an on-going thing, and the longer we work with them the more we know about them."

Neil is in no way the typical let-them-damn-skins-have-it rock and roll drummer. As one third of a hard working outfit he could never get away with just playing the drums. "It changes the aspect for me when I go and play the bells because I'm dealing with melody instead of just rhythm."

Well, rock on, Quasimodo! But how about the lyrics? Neil writes most of them, and his voracious reading habits undoubtedly aid him in this. His tastes are extremely broad, and

RUSH EQUIPMENT LIST — EUROPEAN TOUR 1978



GEDDY LEE

1969 Fender Precision bass, 1974 Rickenbacker bass, 1978 Rickenbacker bass, Rickenbacker custom double-neck 4/12 string, Moog Taurus bass pedals, Mini-Moog, Oberheim synthesizer, 2 Sunn 2 x 15" cabinets, 2 Ampeg V4B bass cabinets, 2 Ampeg 250 watt SVT amplifier heads.



ALEX LIFESON

Gibson Les Paul, Gibson Custom double-neck 6/12-string, Gibson 355, Fender Stratocaster, Gibson Dove acoustic, Epiphone C060 classic, Gibson B45 acoustic, 3 Barcus Berry studio pre-amps, 4 Hiwatt 100 watt amplifiers and cabinets, 2 Fender Twin Reverbs, Roland Boss Chorus, Roland Space Echo, Maestro Phase Shifter, 3 Cry-Baby wah-wah pedals, 2 Morley volume pedals, 2 Maestro parametric filters, Electro-Harmonix power boost, Moog Taurus bass pedals, Tapco graphic equalizer, Tapco reverb unit.



NEIL PEART

Slingerland drum kit comprising 8" x 12", 9" x 13", 12" x 15", 16" x 18" tom-toms, 6", 8", 10", 12" Concert toms, 12" Roto-tom, 13" and 14" timbales, 3 14" snare drums, 2 24" x 14" bass drums, 12 cymbals, 1 set of temple blocks, 6 sets of wind chimes, 2 triangles, 1 set of tubular bells, 1 bell tree, 1 Slingerland glockenspiel, 2 drummer's thrones.

Operated from mixer

Mutron Phase III, MXR Phase 100, Roland RE-101 Space Echo, Eventide Harmonizer, Eventide phaser, Eventide digital delay.

a little coaxing persuaded him to tell me what they include. "I read a lot of non-fiction, and a lot of fiction, right from the bottom up — I like Agatha Christie novels, right up to Voltaire or Rousseau or Plato (*I said no new wave!* . . . Ed.). There's something to be gotten from all of those. Why people think the way they do — that's basically my big question."

Deep waters indeed. But then, Rush do take their work very seriously. They take it seriously enough for them to devote almost their whole time either touring or recording.

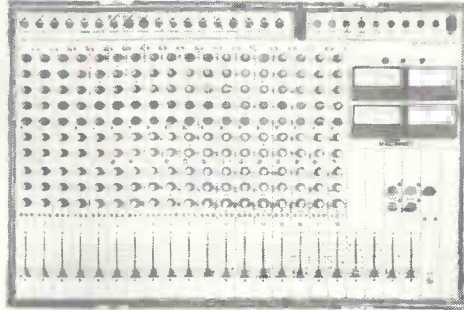
They've been on the road for virtually the last two years, and there's no sign of any rest on the immediate horizon.

"We figured things would get a little easier," sighed Alex, "and that we could afford to go at an easier pace — and it's been just the opposite. There's so much more to do, so many more people to worry about. It grows to the point where there's a lot to take care of, and travelling in the States you don't get that much sleep. . . ."

I tiptoed out of the door, switching off the light on my way.

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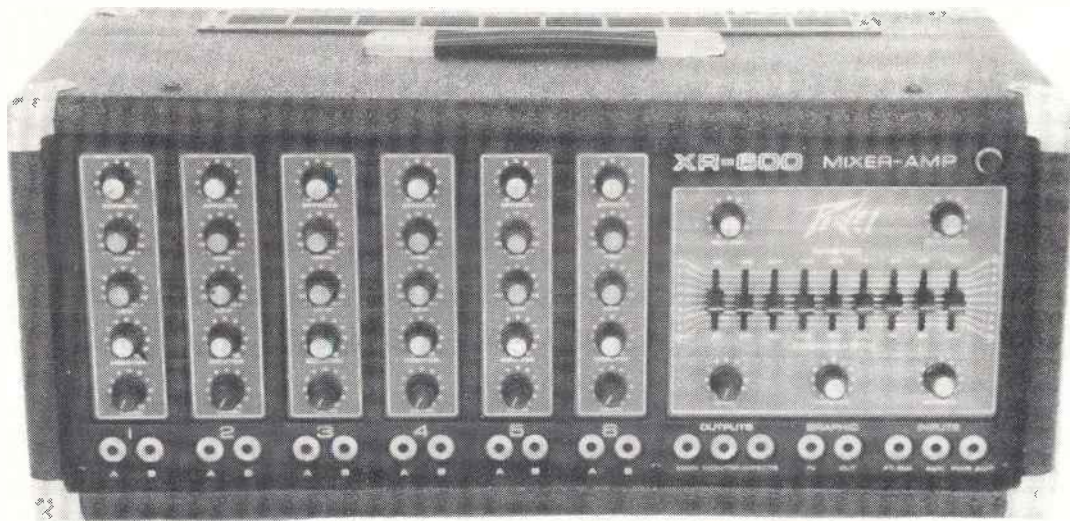
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STEELEYE'S SPANNER IN THE WORKS!

This was to have been an interview but Beat's Tom Stock went down with a little Hart trouble and the band broke up. In its place, he surveys the career of Britain's premier folk/rock band.

It's ironic, and annoying, that this article was intended to herald the resurgence of Britain's most successful folk-rock band, but now can only look back (partially in anger) on its birth, development, traumas and rapid death. Steeleye Span came together back in the spring of 1970 and fell apart literally the day after I had talked with Tim Hart about the new line-up and their plans for the future.

That, at the time of the interview, Tim Hart already knew that Steeleye had decided to call it a day and yet gave no hint of it because the time was not absolutely right and propitious, is my bone of contention. That on Monday, January 16th Tim Hart can say that Steeleye with its new line-up including Martin Carthy once more along with John Kirkpatrick, is 'a much better band' and on Tuesday announce that this 'much better band' has decided to call it a day after only six months together and one album to show for it, shows some disrespect to the press (and to me personally).

Obviously I'm not so naive as to suggest that the timing of the announcement was

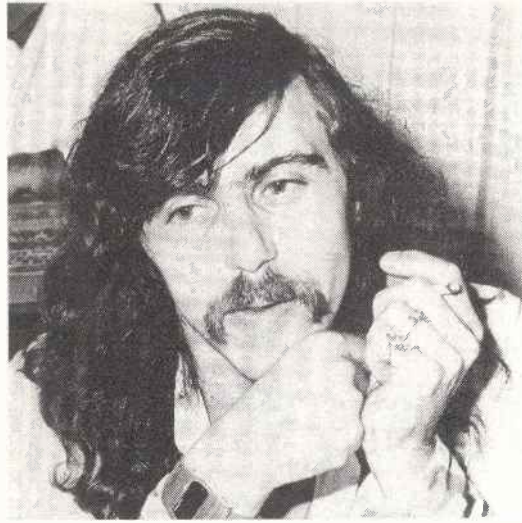
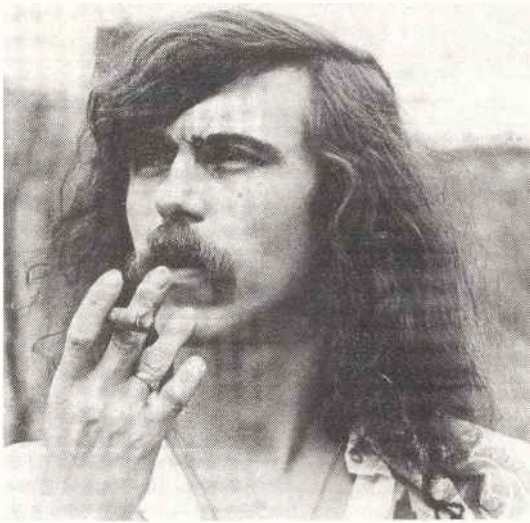
anything but critical to the band: contracts and similar such binding pieces of paper can not usually be broken at a snap of the fingers, or a wave of the arms. Tuesday, therefore, must have been the right day to let the cat out of the bag. I merely humbly suggest that Wednesday could have been a better day for the interview to have been arranged. However, enough of this grousing for now.

Steeleye Span originally came about immediately after the release of Fairport Convention's crowning glory album *Leige and Lief* — probably the best electric folk album of all time, and maybe one of the great albums of any style of music. At last, it seemed, there was a market for electrified traditional songs after years of all sorts of other developments and influences — many of them American.

Leige and Lief not only brought this style of music to the general public: it also created ripples and tidal waves throughout the extensive folk circuits of the country. Opinion, in fact was divided. The purists dug burrows, sang unaccompanied, and generally rued the coming of the Electric God into their supposedly Utopian existence. Others, however, welcomed the advent of some kind of progress into a musical vacuum relying totally on the products of other ages. Electricity, in the same way it had revolutionised industry and domestic life, had come to irrevocably change the face of folk music.

Eventually, news filtered through the folk club circuit that an electric band devoted entirely to traditional music was being formed and in April of the same year Steeleye Span — named by Martin Carthy after a character in the traditional song 'Horkstow Grange' — made its debut. The first band comprised Tim Hart and Maddy Prior (up until that time a relatively well-known duo performing on the folk club circuit), Tyger Hutchings, recently of Fairport themselves, and an Irish duo Gay and Terry Woods. This line-up produced one album, 'Hark! The Village Wait' before Gay and Terry Woods decided it wasn't for





"Shall I tell him, then? . . . naah, he'll read about it soon enough"

them and left. At this point Peter Knight, a completely unknown violin player, joined along with the legendary Martin Carthy, still recognised as one of the really great acoustic guitarists in the world.

Steeleye's birth pains continued, however. The album didn't do very well and the individual members of the band continued performing on the folk circuit — Hart and Prior as a duo and Carthy as an individual performer. In the spring of the following year one of 'those' albums came out. At the time of its release 'Please to See The King' received interest from the critics but little from the public.

Gatefold

Following a tour in the summer and with their reputation beginning to grow, Steeleye released their third album in the autumn of '71 with the ridiculous title 'Ten Man Mop or Mr. Reservoir Butler Rides Again'. The album was well-packaged — gatefold cover and booklet — but the contents didn't match the promise of 'Please to See The King', and right at the end of the year the band went through another major lineup turnaround. Founder member Hutchings left wanting to form a more 'English' sounding band (which eventually became the Albion Country Band) and Carthy

then wanted someone like John Kirkpatrick (a multi-instrumentalist) to join in his place. Steeleye fragmented into factions and Carthy left. The two places were filled by Bob Johnson and Michael Chapman's bass player Rick Kemp.

1972 and early '73 saw little happening. The band still had no permanent drummer and filled out the year with the release of 'Below the Salt' (following a change in record label to Chrysalis) and the recording of their fifth album 'Parcel of Rogues' which was eventually released in March 1973. Parcel marked the end of another Steeleye era because at this point the band realised that to continue their line of progression a permanent drummer had to be drafted in to make the group more rhythmic. Parcel was also a good album, and can still be regarded as one of the high-spots in the band's history.

Three months after its release Nigel Pegrum was pulled in to fill the drumming seat and a new era opened. The addition of a drummer changed Tim Hart's role, pulling him more towards rhythm guitar work, and giving Kemp an ally in the overall sound. This new, rhythmic outfit began at last to make inroads into the popular consciousness. They toured the States, successfully, and returned to headline the '73 Cambridge Folk Festival — probably the

most important and influential event in the folk calendar. This event catalysed their following. Steeleye had begun, in no uncertain terms, to be a rock band, and they alienated much of their original audience by their uncompromising approach to the arrangement of purely traditional songs. Equally, they began to pull in audiences from sections of the music buying public which, to that point, had had no, or little interest, in so-called folk. This development undoubtedly pleased them — and Tim Hart in particular, who was particularly intent on keeping traditional music alive for future generations to enjoy.

Unaccompanied

In December '73 an almost unheard of event put them right in the public's eye. A track from 'Below The Salt' was released as a single for the second Christmas in a row, and the song, an unaccompanied carol in Latin from the middle ages 'Gaudete', hit the Top Ten. Steeleye had, in material success terms, finally made the grade. Appearances on Top of the Pops inevitably brought them to a wider audience, and from that point on it was the larger concert venues around the country that opened their doors to them.

Early in '74 the next album,

produced this time by Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull (who else?) arrived. Titled 'Now We Are Six' (the first album since Pegrum had joined the five Steeleyes) it was an unbalanced record with some brilliance but some mediocrity. Later in the year they recorded their own series for television which had them playing in the halls of major stately homes around the country. January '75 saw the release of 'Commoners Crown' (delightfully featuring Peter Sellers playing ukelele on one track), another excellent record which was among their best. Shortly after its release they embarked on another major concert tour which revealed a certain boredom and staleness creeping into their stage performances.

Management

Later in the year manager Jo Lustig parted company and Tony Secunda took over the management reins. Much of the commercial success the band had achieved in this most important period of their existence can be credited to Lustig. In November '75 Mike Batt, riding high on the absurd success of the Wombles, produced the eighth album, All Around My Hat (groans from large sections of the Beat office). All Around My Hat immediately spawned one of the most outrageous hit singles of the last fifteen years and the album celebrated (as presumably did the group's bank managers) by positioning itself in the top three while its single counterpart rode high on BBC 1 on Thursday evenings.

For most of the following year, '76, Steeleye disbanded to pursue outside interests (the financial freedom provided by the success of All Around My Hat was making itself felt). Maddy Prior, the voice of Steeleye, recorded an album with June Tabor, and then toured with her and a backing band which included Danny Thompson. Nigel Pegrum

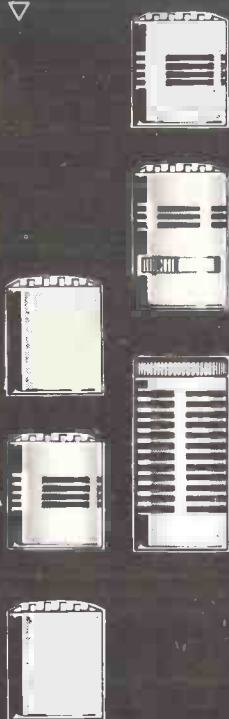
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STEELEYE SPAN

became involved with Plant Life Records (see Beat's August edition) his own label aimed at promoting folk artists, while Rick Kemp produced an album for Richard Digance. Steeleye got back together to record and release 'Rocket Cottage' in October — again with Mike Batt producing — and although it was well-received the single failed to repeat the amazing success of All Around My Hat.

At Christmas Steeleye stage-managed one of the most successful publicity stunts the music business has ever witnessed (the Monkees and Sex Pistols excluded) by giving away the door receipts at Hammersmith Odeon. The audience was showered with £8000 and the public was showered with reports of the event on national television news and on the front pages of London evening newspapers and even the following morning nationals.

'77 saw Bob Johnson and Peter Knight collaborating on an album released in June called 'The King of Elfland's Daughter' and suddenly the whole band fell apart. Johnson and Knight quit and the remainders at first considered disbanding altogether but then decided to ask Martin Carthy back again. Carthy, seven years on, found himself in an identical position, but this time the others agreed and as he joined so too came John Kirkpatrick from the Albion Country Dance Band.

Of course, the folk world is up in arms again at seeing its favourite son re-entering Steeleye, but the band set off on a low-profile tour which worked, and then produced an album 'Storm Force Ten' — incidentally, a very good record which showed the band moving away from purely traditional roots. A spring tour was announced, and the band split up over Christmas. Martin went to the continent on a solo tour, and everybody expected them to re-form in the middle of January to start rehearsals

for this year's tour. But, none of it. The band indeed are reforming and are currently on their last — as they put it — tour before finally hanging up the Hat of Steeleye.

Fruitless

Since the split Tim Hart has been quoted as saying they've no regrets and that they've achieved what they set out to do — putting traditional music back into current musical language. He's also said that none of them were able to do the things they wished to do as individuals while being in the band which 'is like being surrounded by a wall and not having a chance to look over it'.

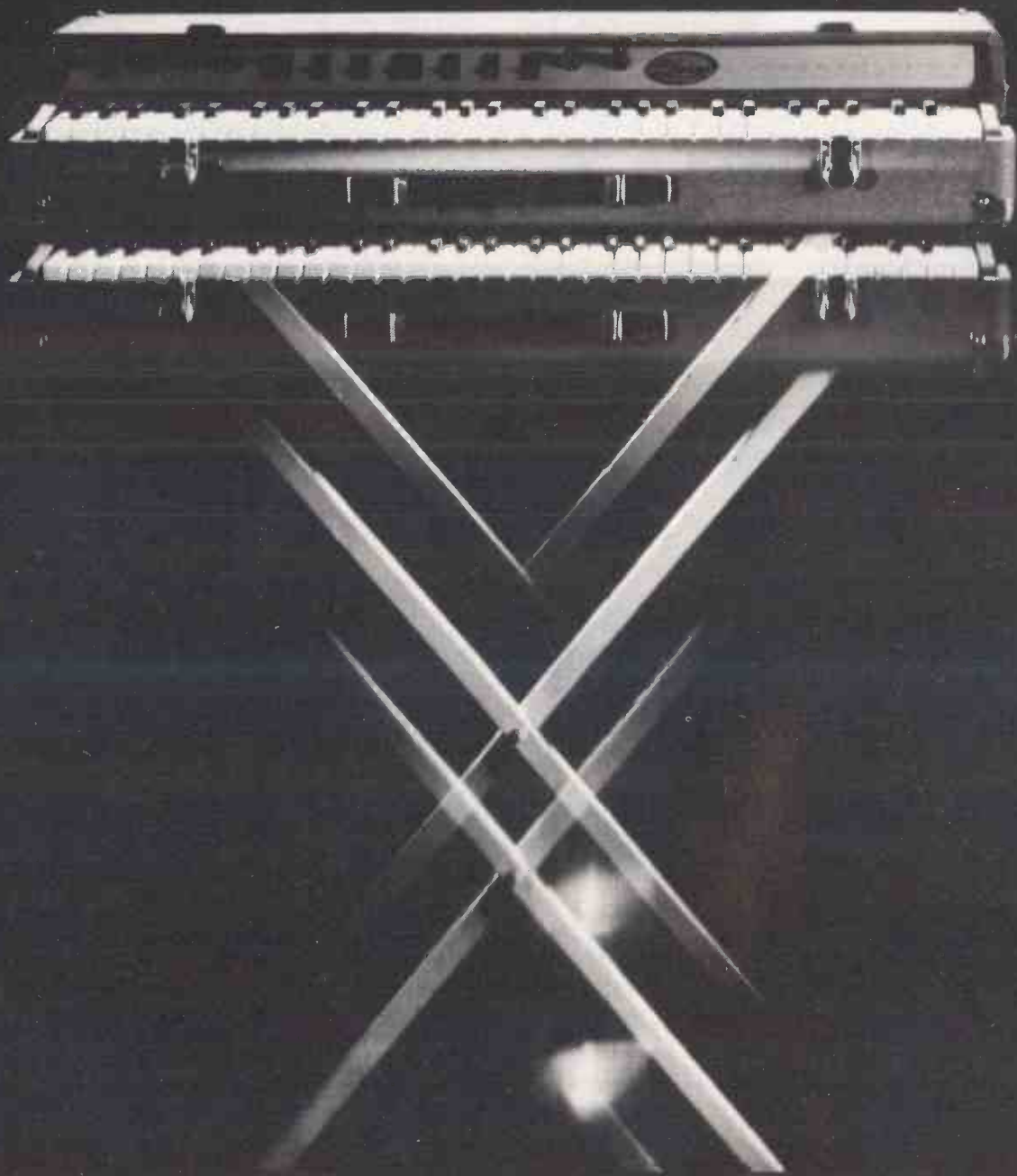
However, compare those ideas with a couple of statements Hart made to me during our fruitless interview, and the picture is more murky. Most of what was said, concerning the music and its roots, obviously holds true. Even statements like 'this is the best line-up we've had' remain true even after the split. What I found, however, throughout the chat, was that Tim was talking about, and looking forward to, the future of Steeleye while knowing it was not to be. If this sounds like pique, as if I'm being petty about Hart's remarks, then you're dead right. I have better things to do on a Monday morning than, in effect, listen to a pack of lies.

Hopefully the sour taste will not prevent me from continuing to enjoy listening to the wealth of music that Steeleye have left us. Maddy Prior established herself with Steeleye as one of the purist female singers of rock/folk music, her voice soaring through the band's history without an error. Steeleye took Fairport's lead and carried on through. For that we can be thankful, and there's no doubt Steeleye Span will be sorely missed.

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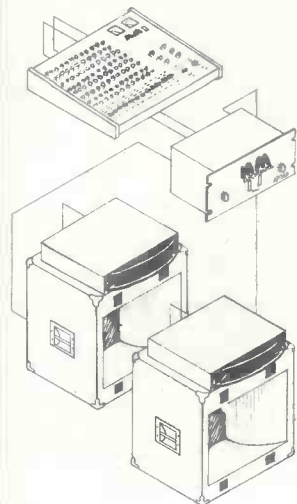
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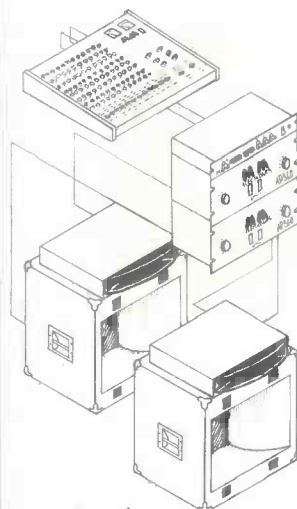
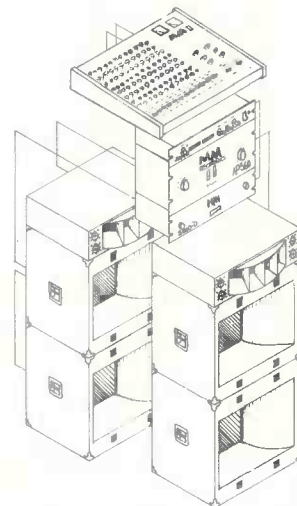
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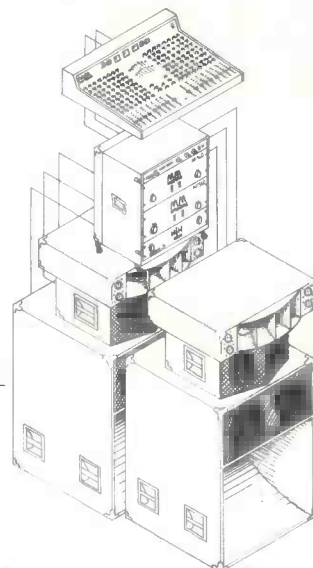
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HOW TO BUY AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR

For almost every guitar player an acoustic guitar is an important possession. Although there's a tendency to start with an electric instrument these days, most guitar teachers realise that, to *really* get to grips with the electric instrument, you need to fully understand its acoustic properties. The only way to do this is buy yourself an acoustic and learn about what happens before the pickups transmute the natural tones of steel strings and wood into an electronic cacophany.

For players who've never owned an acoustic (and with the increasing availability of good basic electrics these days that's a surprisingly large number of beginners) the addition of an

acoustic can make a world of difference to your playing.

To start with an acoustic makes you play better — and that's a fact. Modern electric guitars, linked with amplifiers and comprehensive effects units, do a lot to disguise scruffy playing. A fuzz box will hide bum notes and badly held bar chords but an acoustic guitar makes you pay great attention to technique, a factor which will reap massive benefits when you translate your newly improved skill onto your electric.

Leaving aside considerations of technical benefits, however, an acoustic offers a wide variety of sounds which, no matter what you do, you simply cannot duplicate on an electric. Most good guitarists use them from

time to time on stage and on record, valuing the subtlety of tone and harmonic mood an acoustic can give you. In case you happen to play in a heavy band and think that there's something weak about the sound of the instrument, try listening to see how many Stones and Zeppelin tracks have several acoustics mixed way back in the final overall sound. Used as an almost hidden rhythm instrument, the acoustic gives an aural thickness and body to a song that no amount of overdubbed electrics can duplicate.

So, hopefully having sold you on the need for an acoustic, how do you go about buying one? Well, obviously, if you've enough of the wonder wallet filler you high-tail it for the local music shop, slap about six hundred smackers down on their counter and walk out with a Martin or a Guild but, and this is back to the harsh realities of life, few of us have that sort of bread.

That, in itself, needn't be a problem. There are, these days, some excellent cheap acoustic guitars going around. In fact quite a number of top line players use them. Would you believe me if I told you that Charley Whitney used an Eko 12 string (retailing at around £65) for the Family classic 'My Friend the Sun?'. You might doubt it but I had the facts from the horse's mouth. Coming a little more up to date, how would you react if I told you that Brian May of Queen frequently uses (actually *prefers*) a cheap £15 acoustic Japanese guitar to any number of up-market models for Queen's albums? So, you see,

you don't have to spend a fortune to get a good sounding instrument, especially if it's prime use is for recording. In fact, unless you're planning to do solo spots with an acoustic and plan to stick to backing track recording or occasional live use, you really don't *need* to spend all that much money for anything other than creating a good impression.

To a far greater extent than electric guitars, acoustics depend on the wood used in their construction. Changes in climatic conditions, supplies of well seasoned wood, construction methods, glues, varnishes; all have their part to play in the overall sound of a guitar. Accordingly it is quite pointless to say that *all* acoustics improve with age. Some may actually get worse. Equally well, some years may be better than others and only your ear can be the guide as to which ancient instrument you should buy.

With the cheaper instruments you don't really have to worry. Quite often quality control and indifferent materials will ensure that one instrument made yesterday and another made two years will be much the same. In fact, and many purchasers of acoustics *still* don't realise this, few inexpensive guitars are actually made out of wood these days!

Due to the scarcity of good wood and the high prices demanded for even the old rubbish used in packing cases, many Japanese and Taiwanese guitar factories now use a compressed paper/pulp material which is then laminated to look

■ ■ ■



Vega...



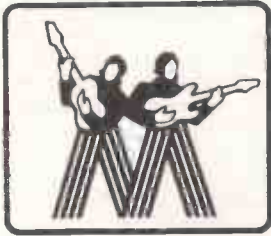
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HOW TO BUY AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR

(often horribly convincingly) like the real thing. 'Right', you might well say, 'None of that laminated crap for me!' Well, hold your horses because it may not be as bad a prospect as you think. When I first saw the early laminated guitars coming into Britain I laughed but, in point of fact, some of them are now getting quite acceptable.

I was recently asked to guide a young player through the maze of instruments on offer in a major London shop and help him pick a good buy. In the end we agreed on an Epiphone FT 140 (at about £70). Although this was a laminated pulp guitar it had a good bright sound and an excellent neck (one of the easiest shapes for a beginner that I've ever seen). Sound quality hasn't exactly improved over the weeks and the chances are that it will always sound more or less the same but *don't* look down your nose at laminates unless you really can afford something better.

So, let's assume that you've decided that you want an acoustic and that you know, roughly, what your budget is. By and large you look for the same points in acoustics as you do in electrics. For the sake of those of you who've never bothered to examine a new guitar carefully, here are the golden rules. Firstly, check that the neck is straight. This isn't quite as easy to do as it sounds because some manufacturers set their necks at a slightly disturbing angle (Ovation for example) which can be quite demoralising if you don't know that it's deliberate and part of their design principles. Nevertheless, treat with extreme caution any guitar with a neck that looks at all out of true. Secondly, play a single chord up and down the neck, making sure that the frets are even and that the chord stays in tune when played up high. Check that the twelfth fret and the open string produce notes which are a true octave apart.

Thirdly, check that the string spacings are even. I've come across quite a few of the worse quality Japanese instruments where the strings are set at different intervals and this can be a terrible hassle to cope with as your style improves.

Fourthly, check that the machine heads function smoothly and that they don't suffer from the 'three complete turns, no tuning difference and then a jump of an octave' syndrome. If they do either forget the instrument or insists on a replacement set of machines.

Fifthly, Check that the binding of the instrument is in a good condition. With second-hand instruments, one sometimes notices a tendency for this to come apart, indicating that the back may be separating itself from the sides due to either shrinkage of the wood or bad glueing.

Sixthly, look inside the guitar (a mirror can help here) and see if the internal bracing struts are properly fixed in place. It's rare for them not to be but, on old instruments, they can get loosened and that means big problems for someone, hopefully not you.

The final test that you should make is one of projection. Quite often the worst person to assess the sound of an acoustic guitar is the player. I know that sounds crazy but consider that the sound is meant to project to the back of a club or room and not hover around your lugholes before fading away forever. Get someone whose opinion you respect to make a comparison between instruments from several feet away and then, while he or she plays the instruments in question, you repeat the process.

In principle, having completed these checks, any instrument that has passed them should be good enough. What is still remaining, though, is the matter of sound and this has to depend on personal taste. One suggestion, to you, however, is to look for an instrument that is not too bassy. There is a regrettable custom among manufacturers of the cheaper instruments to equate bass response with quality. For the sake of getting a good projection try and get a guitar with a good strong top/middle response so that, at the very least, you will be heard against the background noises of other instruments, beer glass smashing, jeers and cat-calls!

As with all instruments, the more you pay the more you get. If you can afford it, buy a solid wood instrument in preference to a laminate every time. If you have to buy a laminate then buy a good one. Spend every last penny you've got in the certain knowledge that a good instrument will reward you time after time.

About now you might be

asking yourself whether a 12 string is a good bet. For most purposes a 12 string should be regarded as an extra luxury. In groups where you are going to be a rhythm guitar player only then, maybe, a 12 string will be enough but for general work a six is a better bet and you can always buy yourself a 12 string later on.

For most people, though, a simple six string is a more versatile buy. For those who do wish to buy a 12 string instrument the rules about selection are much the same with the proviso that these guitars need extremely strong necks to stand the extra tension imposed by double the number of strings. With 12 string guitars, I really wouldn't recommend you to buy a cheapo model. As always, buy the best you can afford — but more so!

In the under £100 pound range I would suggest that you look at several models from the Antoria range, Kasugas, Yamaha's, Eko's (superb value for money — Philip Catherine plays one too!), Epiphones, and the few Ibanez models that are still under the ton.

If you're going up-market then the field narrows considerably. You won't get an American instrument under £350 minimum and the Japanese tend to run out of steam at about £150. Of the instruments I saw the best by far was the Ibanez Artist acoustic but the new Yamaha's are also excellent and both Tama and Vega seem to be getting a good name between them.

If you're above such mean considerations as money then there's little I can say to help you as you, presumably, already know what you're doing (if you're not a Rock star how come you got the bread to spend that much money on a guitar????). Just for the sake of expressing an opinion though may I point in the general direction of a certain company by the name of Guild and leave it at that?

For 12 strings look at the latest Epiphone models plus Yamaha's, Ibanez, Antoria's, Eko, etc, etc.

Providing you are careful an acoustic guitar will add a new dimension to your playing. You can take it anywhere and play it anytime. It will help your songwriting and your recording, it'll tighten up your style and above all give you a fresh insight into how a guitar works — a new appreciation of an instrument that, if you just play electric, you probably only know half the story of!

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FLAMIN' GROOVIES



Likes: roots

Dislikes: gimmicks/rock gods

Gear: various stereo guitars

Aim: perfection

Favourite food: tape recorders

PETER DOUGLAS ATTENDED THE LECTURE

"If you wanna know how to build a rocket to go to the Moon, you'd better know what the hell you're doing. I mean, man's brain *actually figured out a way* to blast something like twenty-five tons of weight off the planet, which means you have to reach a speed of about 25,000 miles per hour, and you have to maintain that speed for about an hour and a half. And then you're finally in orbit. And it's the same way with heavy rock and roll records. . . ."

Whaaaaat? If that sounds like the most far-fetched analogy you've ever heard, hang on, because there's more. The Flamin' Groovies are fanatics. To them, rock music is not just the insubstantial pap that clogs up the world's airwaves. It's the product of years of development — a sophisticated art-form of more than equal importance to the paintings of Rembrandt or Van Gogh.

Weighty

"The Beatles were a heavy group because they'd been around for years before they even made it, studying rock and roll, copying from this guy and copying from that guy. That's what we've been doing, taking from that group and that group, and eventually, after ten years, if you do something original, all these influences fold into something that's your own.

"It's like Salvador Dali said — 'those who do not imitate do not create'. Because everyone

who's great in art has copied from someone else and ended up with their own style and technique."

But before we delve any more into these weighty matters, let us find out exactly who the Groovies are. Perhaps their first offering to attract the attention of the Great British Record Buying Public was the album "Shake Some Action" in 1976. This caused a critical sensation, but it didn't sell a million. Now this is a shame, because such a fine album deserved every ounce of praise it received and more. It was a *heavy* album, as they would say, the culmination of some twelve years of hard work; for years they regarded themselves as apprentices, and only now feel confident enough to say that they finally have something of their own to offer.

Currently this takes the form of the album which they finished recording the day before our interview. The format has been the same as for "Shake Some Action" — same studio (Rockfield), same producer (Dave Edmunds), and same results — a full, melodic sound, bursting with lush vocal harmonies, and driven along by some of the most perfect jangling Rickenbacker guitar you ever heard, like a cross between the Beatles and the Hollies *circa* 1965. But the Groovies' sound beggars description because it *has* become their own.

At the same time, they don't want to get too arrogant about it. The new album — Flamin' Groovies Now — is about 50/50

self-penned/old favourites. So we get Cliff's "Move It" this time just as we got "Misery" by the Beatles last time. They hold the music of the mid-sixties in such reverence that they feel it would be pretentious to release an album consisting entirely of their own material. Plus they *enjoy* playing the old songs. This isn't just nostalgia either. You may say that nostalgia isn't what it used to be, but in their case it's the firm belief that the music of the Beatles, the Animals and the Kinks, and the opening riff of "Johnny B. Goode", is the best there is, and the best there will ever be. Period.

Label

By the way, the man doing all the pontificating about Salvador Dali just now is Cyril Jordan (guitar and vocals) who writes most of the Groovies' material in conjunction with Chris Wilson (also guitar and vocals); Cyril and bassist George Alexander were in the outfit that evolved into the present band — a high school group called The Chosen Few, which was active in San Francisco from 1965 until the following year, when the Groovies were formed. The work went on for four years before they released their own album — on their own label. Since then there have been four more, not counting the new one, as yet untitled.

Six albums in twelve years? Not the most prolific output, admittedly, the bad luck and trouble they've been through

with various record companies over the last decade has become almost a cliché. However, it does at last seem that they have a label (Sire) who are prepared to support them, if only because 1978 has been billed as the year when pop music makes its long-overdue comeback!

We got on to the inevitable subject of punk, and how a lot of new young bands claim to be unaffected by anything that has gone before, saying that what they play has come straight from themselves. "The thing that gets me about it is this," Chris began, "Anyone who denies their roots, says they don't have any, it either lying or they're stupid." "Or both," chipped in Mike Wilhelm (guitar and vocals again).

"Like Dali says — he who does not imitate, er, does not create. You have to draw on what's gone before, because not everything you do is gonna be great, unless you're a fucking genius!" "Yeah — if you're gonna be totally original," said Mike, "don't use a guitar, don't use an amplifier. Invent a new instrument!"

A telling point indeed. If you're going to utilize the conventions of rock music, you must be prepared to accept its limitations as well. A particular remark made by David Bowie irritates the Groovies no end.

"Bowie says rock and roll is a titleless old woman," Chris snarled, "and to me that is the



worst traitorism you could imagine, cuz the guy made it in this business, even though he wasn't a musician — he was a folkie when he started out." So what did Bowie mean when he said that? "He meant Bowie's a titleless old woman!" said Mike, "He sure was getting to look like one."

Boundaries

"I've been in groups for years, as have all of us," Chris continued, "and we've met some of the heaviest people in rock, like in the old days when it was really happening—the Yardbirds, Animals — people that were making it at the time. And they didn't put on any airs, they were just people that were doing what they could best. And to meet someone like Bowie, when we met him in '72 . . . boy did he think he was the greatest. He thought he was a fuckin' god, y',know? If the guy was even a good musician I'd give him that, but he sings like fuckin' Anthony Newley!" Chris then proceeded to do an impression of Bowie/Newley which unfortunately doesn't come across on the printed page. Maybe it's just as well. Hope you're enjoying the article, David.

Surely what Bowie is trying to do is to push the boundaries of what can be called rock music further and further out, I countered? Not to be deterred from their opinion, however, the

FLAMIN' GROOVIES

Groovies remained convinced that Bowie is more interested in gimmicks than in music. No, they don't like his last two albums. They don't accept that the Thin White One is even making rock "heavier" by his efforts. Is it therefore possible for rock to "progress" in any way?

Mike thinks so: "The music just naturally gets more refined and improved — production techniques get better, and people write new songs that reflect the times. That's not taking it logically, I know, but all these people are just putting some kind of . . . it's superficial, y',know? You set off smoke bombs on stage, or suspend a piano on wires and have it rotate over the stage. What's that got to do with music? What's heavy about that?"

This, to me, smacked of dodging the issue. Some artists may be prone to the odd bit of gimmickry now and then, but when it comes to making records, all you've got is sound.

"If music's gonna progress," Chris said, attempting to redefine their position, "it's gotta be heavier than what's already been." At this point everyone began to argue at once, but in the ensuing racket I managed to track down this comment by Cyril, which led on to what the Groovies themselves are really about.

Market

"Why hasn't David Bowie started a new phenomenon? Because only so many people, and it's a minority, are gonna relate to that. The market is not

the same market that Elvis Presley had, which was gigantic. And what the Beatles had was so big — people in Africa dug it, people in China dug it, people in India dug it, and people in Australia dug it. Now you put all those people in the same room together and they'll look at each other and go. Do we have something in common? You doooo, man! But David Bowie didn't do that."

This brought us round to the idea that without painstaking practice and a large degree of imitation, what you're doing is almost worthless. Cyril cited the example of Yoko Ono putting a ladder up against the wall, climbing up it, and writing on a little piece of paper 'you're weird' — or something of that nature. "Now if somebody thinks that's heavy, there's something wrong with that person. It's a question of technique. Take modern art. People maybe take a cup, throw some paint here — but the guy don't know how to paint metal, he don't know how to paint glass on two dimensions. He doesn't have the technique to express that. We've had people like Van Gogh and Rembrandt — why should we relate to these assholes who don't take any time in studying?"

This then is the message from the Flamin' Groovies: if you want to be heavy, you'd better wise up to your roots. This requires not only learning how to sing and play, but in the long run buying the right instruments for the sound you want. Which is why the Groovies use a large variety of rare and beautiful hardware — specially wired

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"It spreads out the sound — it doesn't stay on the same level. Like the Sex Pistols' album. The whole of the first side is in the key of G, every cut ends in the same way. They've taken a trip that's very limited. Anybody that limits themselves like that doesn't know what they're doing, man. That's what you get for coming out all of a sudden. You should go back in your garage and rehearse for a couple of years to get it together like we did.

Study

We came here in '72, played a whole year, got messed over by United Artists, went home and did not do any gigs, man, until 1975. We worked on our new drummer. Told him to get the Beatles' first album, get the Kinks' first album, study every drum part on that album, and after a year of that we got back in the garage and started rehearsing, and we rehearsed for two years, and played for nobody. . . . At this point a slight trace of bitterness entered Cyril's voice. "I mean, we don't care whether we get patted on the back. We're doin' it for ourselves."

Well that's true, but at the moment they're doing it for us too. Any band whose aim is nothing short of total perfection are worth listening to. It may not be your idea of perfection, but they don't care about that. Nobody's going to take away from them the obsessive single-mindedness which has kept them going all this time. Oh, and they play good music. . . .

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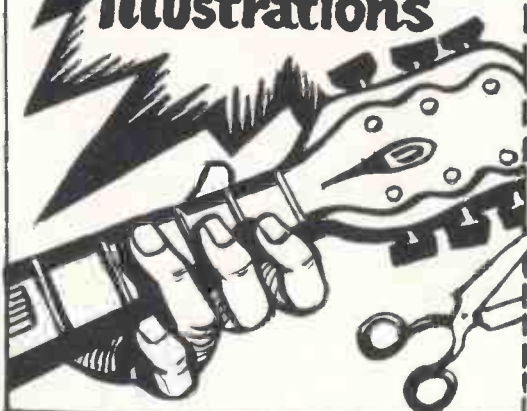
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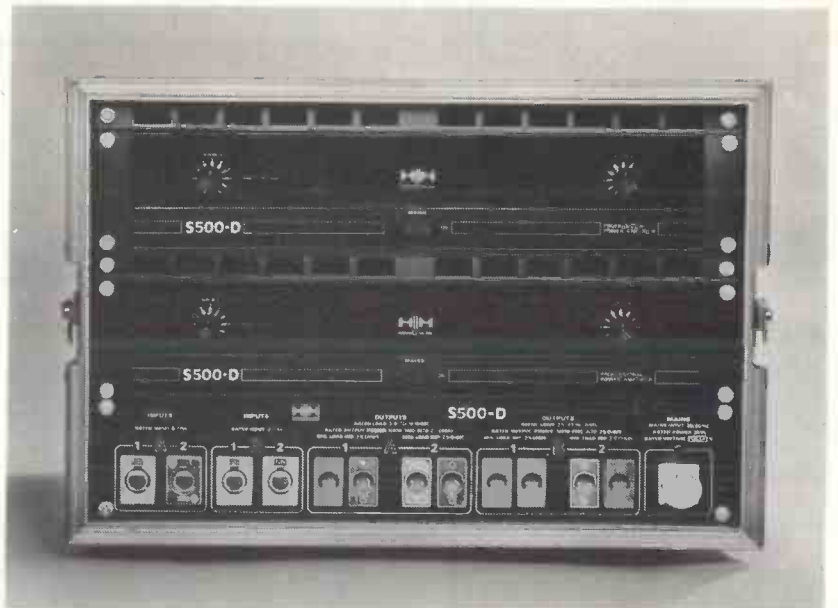
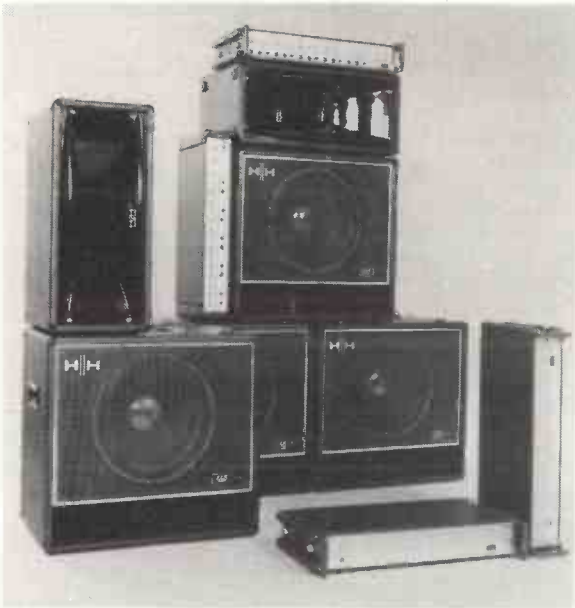
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INSTRUMENT REVIEW 4: ELVIN'S PIANO

Contd. from p.27

touch when in fact Elvins can set them up to 3 ozs! This, naturally, changed my opinion.

Secondly, the poor response from the top octave. It seems that Peter Elvin deliberately included that as a feature because an acoustic piano requires greater pressure at the top end for similar response. Each of the five octaves is a separate electronic unit, presettable for volume etc., and this unit had been set deliberately like this in a further attempt to get closer to the natural sound and response. And, undoubtedly, had the keyboard response been as heavy as I would have liked it to have been, I would have appreciated the subtleties of the design!

Thirdly, the matter of the pitch of the transpose mode. This, it turns out, was also a deliberate design and it apparently took much research and investigation to create the right electronics to bring the pitch up exactly one semi-tone. I pointed out the drawbacks of such a design — for a multi-keyboard player especially the restriction of not being able to use the transpose mode without playing in two keys one semi-tone apart with this left and right hands — and Peter agreed that when the Elvin piano comes onto the market the transpose mode will now switch in to concert pitch.

Fourthly, the matter of the red lettering — again Peter took my point and production models will appear resplendent in a more practical colour — most probably white, which reflects any colour light.

So, with those modifications and explanations in mind, and taking account of the excellence of the service, I allowed the Elvin out of my home with a great deal more regret than had seemed feasible at one stage. I feel certain that the Elvin will become a best-selling piano because it provides the advantage of a pretty realistic acoustic piano sound with those of electronics — size and weight and tone variability. With a little more thought, and possible the addition of a couple of extra voices sometime in the future when the model has become established, it will not only be a best-seller but a damn good one at that. And even now, at £485 including VAT it's a blooming bargain.

Tested TVS with Maine combo.

FRANKFURT FAIR REVIEW

— A consumer's view —

Frankfurt's come and gone again leaving in its wake the usual mass of post-mortems in offices all over the world. This year's Fair differed little from any other year bar the important difference that at last the organisers succumbed to the pressure brought to bear by the varying trade associations throughout the world — our own AMII well to the front — and provided a second area for the exhibitors to spill over into. It's something of a shame, from the British punters' point of view, that such an event has to be held in Germany, (probably every national music magazine from every other country thinks the same, however,) and that,

with the exception of the opening Sunday, it's by definition a Trade Fair. A third drawback is the fact that seven or so other exhibitors relating to industries as adverse as pharmaceutical and leather-work are held simultaneously in neighbouring exhibition halls. This concentration of displays may help to make Frankfurt's reputation, but it sure puts the pressure on the airport and road systems, as well as making accommodation about as rare as a penny black stamp.

Secondly, unlike every consumer exhibitions in this coun-

continued on page 59



One of Norlin's newer exhibits — the Gibson RD Standard bass, sister model to the six-string version reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

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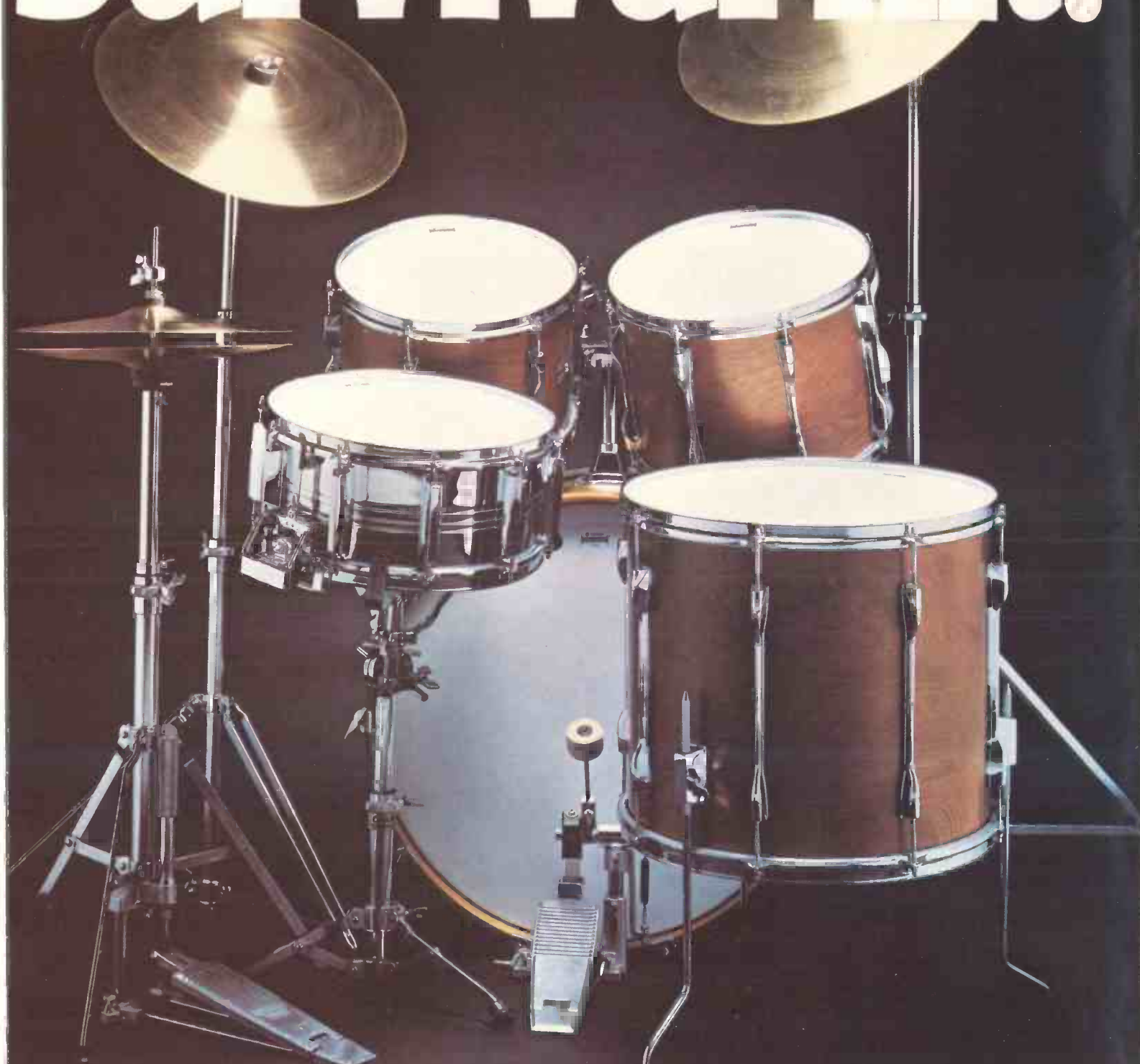
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FRANKFURT FAIR REVIEW

try, there is opportunity to try everything (well, nearly everything) that is on display. Consequently around the piano stands one is deafened by side-by-side pianos being subjected to their player's party pieces — snatches of Fur Elise vying for air-space with the opening chords of Tchaikovsky's Number One concerto; amplifiers have headphones coiling from them while soundless guitarists contort their faces; electronic keyboards, too, click quietly while their sound fills the potential purchaser's headphoned ears; drummers find it more difficult, but for example, the Summerfield stand came complete with drum-booth and a full Tama kit ready for action.

This availability of the instruments really does make the difference — where else in the world can you play a Bechstein, Steinway and Baldwin grand pianos within ten paces of one another without having the slightest intention of parting with any money? Where else can you play the entire Yamaha electronic keyboard range side by side, or fulfil a life-time's am-

bition of striking out on a full size electronic vibaphone? This is the magic of Frankfurt which is sadly (in a sense) reserved for those inside the trade who may well be too jaded to enjoy it.

Of course, one cannot forget the Fair's importance as a show-piece for the trade: but, with communications the way they are, and with the continual growth of new importers for foreign equipment, the basic need for a central showcase has surely lessened. Business is done — in a big way and one would be foolish to suppose otherwise. New equipment is launched but, like the motor show at Earls Court, manufacturers don't wait specifically for the exhibition. New models are, as we all know, introduced at any point throughout the year; those that are introduced for the first time at Frankfurt become fewer and fewer each year.

I'm not suggesting that the industry could do without the Frankfurt exhibition — the chances are it couldn't survive. It is essential to meet the people you deal with on the phone for eleven months in the flesh once

every-so-often. Deals are concluded, and British equipment without a European distributor finds one; foreign manufacturers get a chance to talk with prospective retailers and importers in Britain — but the whole visual appeal of the Fair is consumer-orientated, while the purpose for it remains purely trade.

So was there anything really new at Frankfurt this year — I mean really new? The answer — though I could stand to be corrected — is probably no. There were new models, certainly, but the vast majority were adaptations, modifications or variations of existing equipment — new facilities, different voices, changed materials. This isn't to run down the innovative processes of the instruments industry — but the question of what is new, i.e. a brand new instrument, and what is different, i.e. modifications to an existing instrument is an all-important one.

Is, for example, the Biotron (we actually managed to play one at last) a brand new instrument, or merely an

alteration of — albeit a substantial one — the Mellotron? The Gibson RD series is another example — is the RD really a brand new guitar or should we accept that it is now impossible to produce a brand new guitar? The RD is certainly a significant breakthrough on Gibson's behalf — and indeed on many guitar players' behalf. Touch sensitivity is an unheard of facility in guitars, and the active electronics it incorporates — i.e. an expander is an important innovation. But is it new? The answer is up to you.

What did I remember most about my visit — the awesome size, especially now the music section has been allowed to expand into Hall 5a — it's possible to get very weary in just a couple of hours walking from one stand to the next one you want to visit. The professionalism of the German organisers, too, is memorable, as is the excellence of the British section of the Fair — well-grouped and very helpful. My favourite item of equipment must be the 'Charlie' amp/combo, as yet unavailable in this country — solid pine box, looking like an up-market Dynatron cabinet, which amplifies an acoustic guitar and leaves it sounding the same. □



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OL' BLUE SUEDE BOPS BACK!



Carl rocking it up at the Nashville with Dave Edmunds and Alan Price sitting in on the fun.

Ol' Blue Sueder Carl Perkins was looking every bit the part of the hospitable, courteous Country Boy Made Good, elegantly folded into a plush chair and just the right combination of living legend and helpful subject. The hair is greying, to be sure, but combed back as neat as you please, the silver CP pendant about his neck dead centre and those shoes nicely shined and ready to twinkle when they start tapping out the beat.

The new album, Ol' Blue Suede's Back, has come out under the banner of a tribute to rock 'n' roll by one of its founding fathers and its broad but personalised reference to an entire era should help to ease Perkins back into the British Consciousness after an absence of five years. The man's had his fair share of ups and downs and then some; a car crash that laid him low while Elvis scaled the heights of stardom with the help of Carl's new single — Blue Suede Shoes, months in the middle of the Sun Records out tray, subsequent labels and disappointments coupled with bouts of heavy drinking, a shooting accident which nearly did for one foot and a hand caught in a fan to deaden a couple of fingers. . . .

So when he sits back and calmly surveys a career that has been both turbulent and influential, you listen to that deep, slow Southern drawl and defer to the voice of an old school dues payer. But let's start at the end first of all: "The day Elvis Presley was buried his producer for twelve years, Felton Jarvis, flew from the funeral in Memphis to Nashville and gave me a phone call. He was all tore up;

he said 'I don't know who I'll produce now, Carl — nobody I guess.' He said 'there won't ever be another Elvis but if you'd want me to, I'd sure like to produce you.' I really appreciated that because it's turned out that Felton can — and will — produce me the way I want to sound better than anyone else I could think of. Now when the boy died everyone immediately wanted me to do a tribute album to him but I didn't want to be accused of cashing in that way, so I refused. Mebbe in time I will do an album and talk about the things that happened in them early days — a story album about some of the experiences we had, the schools we played, the flat tyres we fixed on the side of the road, the kinda money we made back then"

What Carl came up with instead is an album of rock 'n' roll classics chosen by Carl and including his own Blue Suede Shoes plus one newly written track to sum it all up. "It was real hard choosing the numbers. When you start trying to pick out *one song* by Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Jerry Lewis — all these people — it's quite a problem. Instead of trying to pick out the favourite, or the one that sold the most, I just did the one I liked the best. For Fats Domino Felton said 'c'mon, we gotta do Blueberry Hill, man' but it just wasn't my favourite. We got a couple fo cuts of it, but I don't do it like it was ever done before. I do it with a beat."

Carl started tapping one twinkling shoe and sang it out his way — with a beat. "I rock on with it, see. If this thing catches on mebbe I'll do another one like it, because they all did

too many great songs to hit at it and quit just one time. But mah next album will be all new things that I have written, nostalgia songs goin' back to when it happened." Carl's rich voice and style give them a distinct country feel, but they've still got that beat as well.

Country

"I'll never be anything but a country boy," he explained. "After Blue Suede Shoes came out they dressed me up, put me in a Cadillac and set me in Rockefeller Centre in New York, but down under them clothes I was a country boy. Country music I grew up on, my dad wouldn't let us listen to anything on the radio but Nashville. My music is country but it's influenced very heavily by the black man's rhythm & blues. That's what early rockabilly, later called rock & roll, was. That's what Elvis was. You see, I'm just as glad when the band leaves the stage back home so I'm there alone with a catgut guitar, talking to those people, singing stuff like What A Friend We Have In Jesus. So long as I can tap my foot and sing a song I can rock on with, that's where it's at."

The mellow country boy of today with a few old rockers in the bag is a far cry from the years when Carl was at his recognised peak. 1956 saw him sharing the Sun Records explosion and turning out Blue Suede Shoes — the first rockabilly number to simultaneously top all three American charts; pop, R&B and country. He remembers the golden days with affection, when legends in the making rub-

bed shoulders round the studio and played their shots with style and abandon.

"It warn't like it is today with professional musicians reading their parts and all strictly business. We just got in there and cut till it was done, I stayed all night most times. When one guy had a session, we would all drop by to see what was happening. Nobody there in his wildest dreams ever had any idea what was going to happen; I've seen kids singin' all the words to songs I wrote before they was even born. But it all happened very quickly in those days, we all moved on sooner or later, mainly on account of money. Nobody was getting what they should, and as soon as our contracts were up, we took off.

"Now I ain't accusin' nobody of *keepin'* any, mebbe they just lost it. It could have been the U.S. Mail. I just know something's wrong when you lose all your artists. I figure Sam Phillips got rich too quick and lost interest in what he had set out to do. Money was piling in on him from all directions, and after three years he just wanted to move to other things. There's a barber's shop in the original Sun Studios now, but there's another modern one a block or two down the road. His boys record a few things there once in a while, but they ain't hustling."

Carl readily confesses that the 'too rick too quick' syndrome affected him likewise: "Every one of them, I reckon. You take an old farm boy like Cash, Lewis, like I was, and things happen too fast and you just go wild.

CARL PERKINS

The world knows it. It's on record. Orbison held his pretty well, but no-one else I can think of. I was an alcoholic, Cash was a dope addict, Jerry Lee was a mixture of all of it; that stems from never having anything to suddenly being able to afford things.



"My music is country but influenced very heavily by the black man's rhythm & blues."

Makeshift

"Success is hard to handle for any people, especially them as had nothin' before. All of a sudden there you are, going down the street in the sharpest automobile, everybody's spinning round to catch a look at you. You got all you ever dreamed of, and it still goes wrong. It will always happen. If it can happen to an older man it might be different; once you got kids of your own it slows you down. If I get a hit now it scares me right to death because I've seen and been through that wild thing. I've got it out of my system."

Gee-tars — well, Carl seems to be pretty happy with anything he can "rock on with". He started out in true do-it-yourself fashion with a makeshift instrument made from a cigar box (cigars come big down South), a broom handle and a few strands of wire — assembled by his music conscious pa. Les Pauls subsequently became his favourite for recording, but these days he totes a sea blue Strat. "The Les Paul is so damn heavy, I'm getting too old to hold them up for a start", he chuckled. "But they're great gee-tars, no question, and Fenders are pretty tough too. Mind you, they ain't the gee-tars they

were back in the old days — but what is?"

An easy-to-play guitar became a priority for Carl when he suffered one of his several accidents. That was the day he played a couple of numbers for a friend, stepped back to take a bow and caught the fingers of his left hand in an unguarded fan. At one stage amputation seemed likely. "I don't have any feeling in the two small fingers in that hand any more," he explained. "I had to learn over again. The doctor wanted to take them off; he said 'Carl, they're going to be in your way, that little finger is just hanging there' but I said 'you leave it

right there and we'll see'. I had to learn over again like a kid, and now I just make do with three fingers." As far as amps go, a Fender Reverb has given Carl loyal service. "I'm not one for effects," he said, "I'm from the old school. As long as that amp comes on and it's got treble and bass, well, I'll find me a little sound somewhere."

He leant forward in his chair like the sage of yore on the porch of his cabin. "I'm just so glad to be here", he said, "rocking it on to the people. That's jes' fine."



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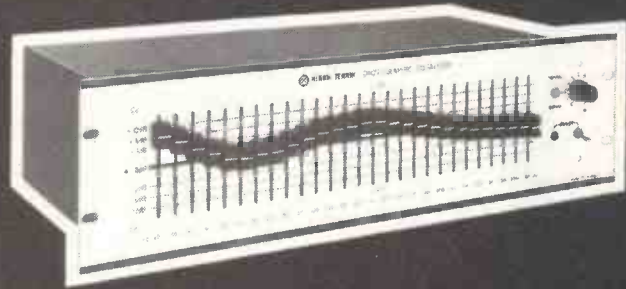
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album reviews



LITTLE FEAT WAITING FOR COLUMBUS WARNER BROS. K66075

The same way that the British seem to be the prime exponents of genuine heavy metal, so refined funk and boogie, by all accounts, is the exclusive domain of the Americans — or more precisely a select clique mostly on WEA. Little Feat as the main movers in the art of bringing invention and musicianship into previously *unrefined* funk and boogie workouts have more right than most to turn out four sides of music and gift wrap it as a live double album. They even have the right to appear masterminds beaming at each other in sheer amazement and pleasure at the funkiness and cleverness of it all.

And they do — you can sense it without even looking at the shot on the back of the sleeve. Four sides of persistent, sizzling, smoking, non-stop boogie is one thing, but what of the ancient Chinese proverb 'live albums too boring, much waste of time and money'?

That's it, really, a play off between length and repetition on the one side and class on the other. For me, it took a good few listens before the balance tilted towards the class. Little Feat's music comes on a slowing fuse, and one which won't explode the first few times, but just give it the chance and it'll ease its way into mind and bones. Some of what they do isn't overt steaming American boogie; they lean up against the Tower of Power horn section and almost manage to conceal the root of a song by throwing in heavy rhythm changes, long vocal harmonies or piano passages — on *Fat men In A Bathtub* Bill Payne plays some fat synth lines over the drums and congas — a welcome extension to his piano playing — and on *All That You Dream* they go for the harmonies *and* whip up the rhythm in the second section. The next track, *Oh Atlanta*, runs a bit nearer to rock n' roll, while *Old Folks' Boogie* gives Payne his first chance to roll out some idiosyncratic piano.

These are the tracks, in order, of the first side, and each has the same centre with a different wrapper. Most of the time Ritchie Hayward's drums will be pumping away at the same old beat underneath, just as idiosyncratic and emphatic as Payne's piano, before the others throw in something clever to keep you off the scent. (Solos, for example, crop up for only moments at a time instead of being the drawn out heroic variety, and therefore hog the limelight in quick bursts).

The singing revisits on *Day or Night*, the piano revisits on *Dixie Chicken* (Old Folks' Boogie-style again) to elongate it and help contribute to the one distended side (three) on the album. That piano — it shows up as more of an asset on the studio recordings but is still a big feature of the band when most people would automatically turn towards the guitar playing of Lowell George and Paul Barrere.

Elsewhere, the band seem to be least comfortable when they make a token gesture to deliver faster and simpler boogie; *Tripe Face Boogie* would be better for another (less clever) band, and they emphasise the idea by following it with a lazy, luxuriant version of *Rocket In My Pocket* — much more the Little Feat stamp of elegance. Even *Don't Bogart That Joint* is sung in full harmony, and you sense the band straining to turn that, too, into a slow burning funk track. They do a mandatory blues — *Apolitical Blues* — but like *Tripe Face Boogie* it's not Feat in their element.

Little Feat's element, if it's not been made quite plain already, is persistent, nagging and classy boogie funk. Which brings us back to the beginning. Give it a chance and it'll take you over, otherwise you'll just

find it another long, boring album. Either way, it's oh-so American.

C.S.

JOURNEY BY JOURNEY

ADVANCE ISSUE

Sometime around April you are in for a shock. That's when CBS plan to release the next Journey album in Britain, an album which they kindly let me have and advanced issue of so that Beat could spread the good news well in advance. In fact when their Press Officer handed the record over with a slightly more sincere than is usual for PR men 'You're gonna like this one' and a vulpine grin, I should have known that I was in for a goodie . . . and a goodie is what this album is.

For the uninitiated, Journey are an American outfit with the legendary British drummer Aynsley Dunbar on board. Their first few albums were good but rather lukewarm standard issue American heavy metal, performed with much gusto but that legendary lack of conviction which marks the true difference between British and American metal. Their latest album, though, represents a massive change, a leap forward into maturity.

Clue one lies in the production. I've long believed Roy Thomas Baker to be the World's most gifted producer. His work on Queen's albums was breathtaking, likewise his Lone Star session which gave birth to their first album. True, he's been accused of a Mike Mansfield-like overkill with effects but I get a record for the end result and Roy's production is an object lesson in how to use Hi-Fi and stereo — an object lesson which I though had died with Jimi Hendrix. So, here we are with a newly matured Journey. The songs are, almost unbelievably, gentle, romantic and melodic. Occasionally Aynsley shows Bonham what heavy drumming will do next, and Greg Rolie and Neal Schon give the keyboard and guitar virtuosos a few lessons but this is an album of good songs and quite staggering production.

The album opens quietly with

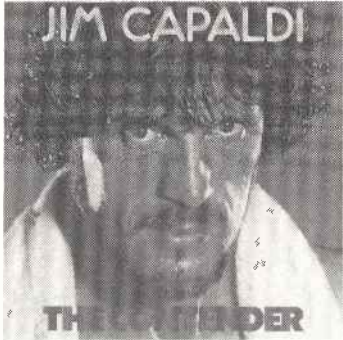


Little Feat — four sides of slow burning American boogie

album reviews

It's like . . . oh hell, find out for yourselves!

P.D.



**JIM CAPALDI
THE CONTENDER
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The string of solo albums between the break-up of Traffic and the formation of a permanent band have clearly illustrated Jim Capaldi's favourite hunting grounds. Well written and well arranged croon material and a nice line in tougher funk were the salient features which could and did gell from time to time into tracks of striking quality. Of course being a 'songwriter' — especially one with a past — is no picnic these days, and anything less than perfection runs the risk of being ridiculed far and wide.

The idea behind the Contenders, then, must have been to assemble a band of musicians on the same wavelength as the leader and to get them playing as a unit, Capaldi-style, as quickly as possible. It seems that this natural process was arrested halfway by the need to actually get the album out. Two tracks, Daughter of the Nite and Game of Love, were produced by Peter Sullivan instead of Capaldi and made by a band of on-location sessionmen. Capaldi was originally sent to Sullivan by Island in an attempt to bring a more commercial streak to his work, and the tracks come across as poppy and nondescript.

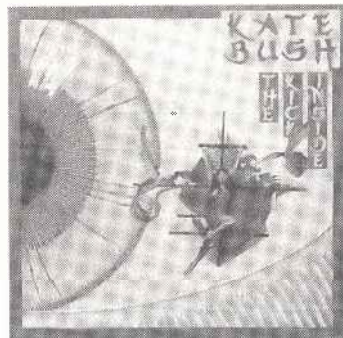
Elsewhere the Contenders settle down and get to work on a uniform sound. Dirty Business sets the album off with a simple but snappy song and Hunger and Greed, the last track, comes from the same mould. That hard-edged funkiness I men-

tioned earlier shows up in Elixir of Life — one of his live tracks — and it turns out one of the best tracks. Appropriately, though, the best track on the album is the title track. One of Capaldi's recurring melodies finds the best possible home, with sensitive, unobtrusive playing by the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section and the late Paul Kossoff on lead guitar. For the kind of Capaldi song no guitarist could fit in better (see Koss' contribution to Boy With A Problem on Short Cut Draw Blood) and he soars above the gentle chording. Unfortunately a few highs don't make a great album — some of it's almost middle of the road — but it should make the man a less obscure figure and leave him in a position to produce what could be a hot and funky follow up.

C.S.

**KATE BUSH
THE KICK INSIDE
EMI EMC 3223**

Kate Bush has become the most speculated-about new talent to emerge for some considerable time, and it ain't just her looks either. She has arrived at a surprising moment: when singer-songwriters are the most despised race on earth — rightly so in most cases. And it might be worthwhile examining why this has happened before going any further.



Singer-songwriters as such started to appear in the early sixties with the "protest movement". If you wanted to be noticed in 1963 you had to wear a denim cap and sing about The Bomb, man's inhumanity to man, the wickedness of politicians, etc. And quite rightly so, we would

agree, brushing the pipe-tobacco ash from our duffle coats. The next big peak was The Psychedelic Protest against Vietnam during the last sixties. And when that petered out, the lonesome songwriting introvert emerged pallidly from his attic and began his allotted task of deluging the world with "sincere" dirges about his inner state, usually one of boredom verging on paralysis of the brain.

Ms Bush has turned all that on its head. For a start, her instrument is the piano rather than the strummed acoustic guitar. Secondly, she comes across as an extrovert. Thirdly, her songs are built around complicated melodies which require several listenings before their subtle internal structures become clear. Her love songs tend to be, er, physical rather than romantic. Feel It, for example, can't help but bring a lump to the throat of any red-blooded man among you. L'Amour Looks Something Like You is a continuation of the same theme, with some excellent lyrics — a feature of just about everything on the album.

Wuthering Heights has proved that she can write a truly original, musically complex, and yet still outrageously commercial tune. The album contains what ought to be the follow-up single — Them Heavy People.

She seems to have so many qualities she might almost have been designed by a committee. So let's not allow our enthusiasm to blind us to the album's fine musical arrangement and production by Andrew Powell, and some wonderfully sympathetic backing from David Paton, Ian Bairnson, Duncan Mackay, Stuart Elliot and Morris Pert. A cigar for each of them; and for Kate, a hope that even better albums lie ahead.

P.D.

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**TOOFA SERIES
FLY/CUBE RECORDS**

Just a reminder that this bunch of platters is back in the record shops once again, courtesy of Pye who have taken over distribution from Decca, and a welcome sight they are too. Included are the first couple of Joe Cocker albums back-to-back, and the first four Procul Harum albums: A Whiter Shade Of Pale/A Salty Dog and Shine On Brightly/Home. In the same series we find Prophets Seers and Sages/My People Were

Fair by Tyrannosaurus Rex, and the first two by the Move.

Procul Harum just nudge into first place with Shine On Brightly/Home — thrill to the guitar of early Robin Trower, gasp at the still-underrated Gary Brooker — and this one (TOOFA 10) can be yours for £4.05, as can all the others above-mentioned. The TOOFA series contains some essential rock history, most of it as timeless and ageless as it was on the day it was recorded.

**BRYN HAWORTH
GRAND ARRIVAL
A&M AMLH 68462**

Respected amongst musicians for many years, Haworth must be no more than a name to most punters. An album like this can only reinforce his obscurity: so laid back is it that it's approaching the horizontal. "Relaxed and mellow" say the record company, and why not? There are plenty of J. J. Cale fans out there, after all. During the recording of this album J. J. apparently lent Bryn his guitar. Maybe he's recognized an insomnia cure more effective than himself.

**BLONDIE
PLASTIC LETTERS
CHRYSALIS CHR1166**

The single "Denis" gave a slightly distorted view of Blondie as a band. This album has distinct sixties overtones, but remains in the mainstream of commercial rock. Inevitably they've been saddled with the exploitation angle, and for some reason have also found it necessary to identify themselves visually with the boring old punks. This is all likely to put off their true audience — those who just like good straight rock. Debbie Harry can sing, and the band can play: Polymoog, Farifsa organ, Roland synthesizer . . . and the E-Bow all make guest appearances. A challenging and distinctive L.P. — hear it if you can.

**RENAISSANCE
A SONG FOR ALL SEASONS
WARNER BROS. K56460**

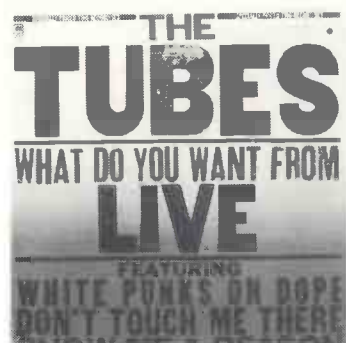
Not a great deal of change from the usual diet of heavy romanticism linked by rockier passages. Actually this is very pleasant stuff to listen to whilst reading a book or sitting in the bath, but not the kind of thing which holds the attention too well at gigs. Annie Haslam sings with beautiful precision, pure and devoid of emotion. Will sell well abroad, unless foreign buyers detect the theft from Procul Harum's tune Whaling Stories in the opening track.

a ballad (yes, I know what you're thinking, 'a Journey album with a ballad????) and, as it progresses, Baker winds on the production skills with staggering amounts of phasing, cross-fades, multi, multi tracks and the whole effects range of His Master's Wheels and Cherokee Studios till you're receiving virtual orgasms of sound. For owners of good stereo equipment, lovers of quality production, anyone who admires ability in the music and who is tired of three chord distortion and meaningless nihilism, Journey represents the future.

In fact, this album highlights the growing superiority of American bands to their English counterparts. Forced by a mindless Press playing a game of the emperor's new clothes with succeeding new wave bands, British musicians are giving up and playing the basic three chord monotony demanded by the climate of the times. Needless to say American audiences (and ditto for German, Japanese and concert going album buying Britishers) are voting with their Barclaycards and buying bands like Rush, Kansas and Boston in preference.

Unless we get some new British bands coming through with the next year who can show any of Journey's virtuosity then the British Music Business might as well give up and go to sleep . . . bands like Journey are going to wipe the floor with any number of Pleasers and Blondies. Buy this album and mark my words!

G.R.C



**THE TUBES
WHAT DO YOU WANT
FROM LIVE
A&M AMLM 68460**

I suppose we're all composed of tubes, by and large: blood vessels, digestive tracts, naughty bits. But it's a depressing way to look at people; surely there's more to us than a collection of conduits?

Apparently not. The Tubes, being "satirists", are determined to ferret out every hidden

unpleasantness. Naturally this means sex 'n' drugs 'n' rock 'n' roll, and these three traditional themes are given the full treatment over the four sides that make up this live album, recorded at London's Hammersmith Odeon last November. The track from which the record takes its name sums up their attitude, as Fee Waybill goes into the audience to pick out some idiot and ask them what they want from life. An unlimited supply of alcohol or a simulated beaver coat? Such wit! But somehow I can't see Nicholas Parsons blushing.

Anyway, on to the music. The big question has to be, does it stand up outside the context of a live show? The sound quality is excellent, the musicianship faultless, and there are even pictures of the dancers all over the sleeve to make up for the lack of spectacle as you sit in your living room, attempting to re-capture the live atmosphere. Stylistically the music is close to Frank Zappa as he was two or three years ago during his flirtation with funk: abrupt time changes, linking dialogue and so on. The general concept of The Tubes goes back to Zappa's Live At The Fillmore album. As is the case with all those whose chief aim is to be "outrageous", nothing sacred — except of course the egos of the musicians.

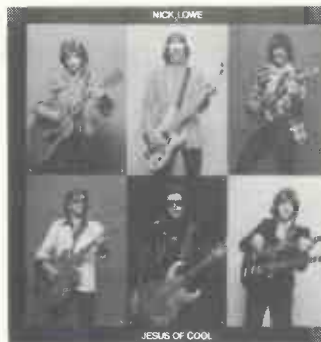
Inevitably therefore, the music is secondary, well played though it is. A punk version of I Saw Her Standing There pounds along with characteristic precision and cold ferocity, but little feeling. That's the trouble with the whole thing, really. Good entertainment, no doubt, but low on good tunes and lower on good taste. Do we *really* need more jokes about the excesses of rock stars? Is bondage actually funny? Does anybody really care?

P.D.

**NICK LOWE
JESUS OF COOL
RADAR RAD 1**

Nick Lowe is infuriating. Not only is he the golden boy of the hip media, not only has he been the producer behind some of the best albums of the last five years, not only has he brought out a first solo album (this one) that is a killer, but he just doesn't seem to *care*. No wonder he's the Jesus of Cool! Golly, I mean he's so cool he makes the *Fonze* look like a nerd.

A lot of Lowe's endearingly flippant attitude toward the pop music industry is a result of his early experiences as a member



of Brinsley Schwarz, initially one of the most hyped bands of all time, who later made up for it by doing numerous free gigs and hippy-style open air concerts (*Those were the days* . . . Ed.) He ain't desperate for success; it comes as naturally to him as failure does to others.

There are things wrong with Jesus Of Cool. For a start it's low on mileage, groove-wise. By this I mean that there are eleven pretty short tracks on it, adding up to around fifteen minutes per side. Brevity was also a factor in Elvis Costello's album of last year. Let's hope that the second Elvis album — also on Radar Records — isn't equally lacking. The other thing wrong with this album, though this isn't so serious, is the fact that three of the tracks — So It Goes, Heart Of The City and Marie Provost — are not actually new. Thirdly, although bass, guitars, keyboards and drums are prominently featured on the album, we are not told who plays them. As it happens, we *know* it's Terry Williams on drums, at least for Heart Of The City, because of that old gradually-speeded-up-drumming trick he used to do with Man. But the rest we can only guess at.

So what else can you say about pure pop? Everything from pseudo-metal on Music For Money, pseudo-reggae on No Reason, pseudo-60's on Little Hitler and pseudo-rock 'n' roll on Shake And Pop . . . it's all here. As long as you don't *mind* it being pseudo, Jesus Of Cool is a gas.

If on the other hand you find the contrast between the "heaviness" of the lyrics and the lightness of the tunes a little disquieting, you may find it a somewhat tasteless exercise. Y'see, Nick wouldn't be so cool if he took rock music seriously.

P.D.

**NATIONAL HEALTH
NATIONAL HEALTH
AFFINITY AFF6**

This was actually recorded over a year ago. The Point, the studio

at which most of it was put on tape, told them they need not pay their bill for recording time until they found a recording company with sufficient — let's say — *suss* to snap up the "product" and commit it to vinyl.

Charly Records were that company (Affinity being one of their subsidiary labels) and good on them for having faith in a band like National Health, whose commercial possibilities are limited, let's face it. No, wait a sec, I think I spot a hit single in track one, side one! Admittedly it's nearly a quarter of an hour long, but a sympathetic, ruthless, hit-minded producer with a good sharp pair of scissors could probably leave that incredibly catchy hook line with enough decoration to satisfy Bob Harris. Or maybe even Noel Edmunds.



National Health consist of Dave Stewart on organ and piano, Phil Miller on guitar and Pip Pyle on drums. When this album was being recorded, Moog/piano player Alan Gowen, bassist Neil Murray and singer Amanda Parsons were still in the group. Who has been brought in since to replace them, I know not, since Dave was in France when the answers were required. Jimmy Hastings and John Mitchell guest on flute and percussion respectively.

And so to the "product" itself. 25 minutes per side and just four tracks? A formula that instantly spells "self-indulgence" to those who don't know any better. But to those who liked Egg, and after them, Hatfield And The North, it spells a feast of wierd, compelling and utterly unbaggage music. No use calling it classic-jazz-rock, or Tibetan-influenced nose-flute-transposed peasant folk-dance music. It just isn't like that. Nor indeed is it like anything else.

It is like National Health — softer, more abstract and more lyrical for the most part than the Hatfields, and without the, ahem, zany humour that Robert Wyatt and Richard Sinclair imparted to that lamented group.



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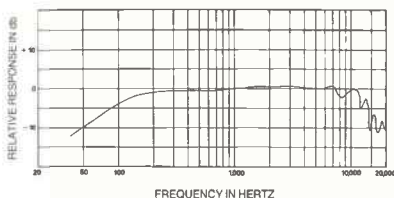


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silent...**

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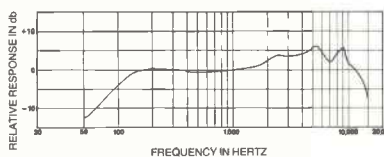


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Probably the most widely used on-stage, hand-held cardioid dynamic microphone. The SM58 dynamic microphone is preferred for its punch in live vocal applications... especially where close-up miking is important. It is THE world-standard professional stage microphone with the distinctive Shure upper mid-range presence peak for an intelligible, lively sound. World-renowned for its ability to withstand the kind of abuse that would destroy many other microphones. Designed to minimize the boominess you'd expect from close miking. Rugged, efficient spherical windscreens eliminates pops.

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channel has two inputs with different sensitivities. We've seen 1959's giving over 170 Watts RMS when driven

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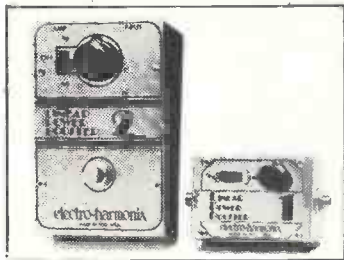
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The SCREAMING BIRD and SCREAMING TREE are treble boosters that will give your instrument that razor sharp edge that can cut through when you're playing live. The high end of your sound spectrum will sparkle, as you can taste and feel each note.

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The MOLE and HOG'S FOOT Bass Boosters cut the highs and amplify the subharmonics, giving your instrument the depth, authority and heavy penetration of the foot pedals of a church pipe organ. The MOLE or HOG'S FOOT will give your axe or amplifier that thick, swamp-bottom blues sound of the Fender jazz bass used in conjunction with the old Ampeg B-15. MOLE—3" x 2" x 1 1/2" HOG'S FOOT—5 1/4" x 3 3/8" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"



WELL DONE, DOCTOR Q

DOCTOR Q is the most economical yet high-quality Envelope Follower available on the market today. Effects ranging from involuted mellow funk lines to slashing thin chops can be instantaneously and sensitively controlled through the player's use of attack and decay dynamics. The range of the filter can be preset. And as an added feature, the bass switch can be used to add a rich bass equalization without losing the thin, whipping Envelope

Follower sound on top. This makes the unit excellent for getting potent new sounds from electric bass, as well as guitar and clavinet. 5 1/4" x 3 3/8" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"



NEW ELECTRONIC DEVICE FOR SELF-MULTIPLICATION

Let THE CLONE THEORY Chorus Effect double your live vocals or instruments, with the fullness of studio overdubbing and the natural intermodulation of large orchestral groups. Makes voice, guitar and horn sections in fact any instrument sound bigger and richer. This new device utilizes a highly sophisticated voltage-controlled analog delay line which generates both echo and flanging at the same time. The result is a moving chorus otherwise obtainable only with an expensive combination of delay and flanging equipment. Multiple controls can produce a delightful true vibrato and other variations. AC. 8" x 6 3/4" x 6" x 1 1/2"



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Jimmi Hendrix relied on the BIG MUFF PI for his smooth, mellow, supple electric-lady sound. Now Santana uses this finest distortion device, high on sustain and low on distortion. Whole chords can be played with minimum distortion. It is designed for the guitarist who wants his axe to sing like a hummingbird with a sweet violin-like sustaining sound. The sustain control allows the player to optimize long sustain with a hint of harmonic distortion. The tone control allows you to control the

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THE LITTLE BIG MUFF PI is a compact version of the famous Big Muff PI favored by Jimmi Hendrix and Carlos Santana. Preset maximum sustain. AC/DC. 5 1/4" x 3 3/8" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"

MUFF FUZZ This funkier distortion device will give the player that dirty sound which cannot be gotten from today's popular solid state amps. It gives the player that natural distortion of tube-amps used by the Rhythm 'n Blues bands of yesteryear. And now it comes with a double male plug that lets you plug into amp or instrument. 3" x 2" x 1 1/2"



ELECTRO-HARMONIX PRESIDENT KEEPS TWO MISTRESSES!

Our internationally popular ELECTRIC MISTRESS Flanger/Filter Matrix was much too good to discontinue just because the brand new DELUXE model has been designed with improved noise and distortion specifications, greater reliability, and convenient AC power. Rick Derringer, for example, has honored the standard MISTRESS as "the best sounding of the flanging devices." Both units have a sweet, shimmering flange. Both

gently sweep the sound spectrum to create a prismatic array of absolutely fascinating and ethereal sounds. Both are made on earth for rising stars! DELUXE (AC), 8" x 6 3/4" x 6" x 1 1/2" STANDARD (DC or Adaptor), 6 3/4" x 5 1/2" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"



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The 5X JUNCTION MIXER is designed as an input-output mixer and accessory blender. As input mixer 4 mikes or instruments can be attached as inputs to obtain one output. As output mixer amps connected to external speaker combinations can go directly to the 5X with up to four external speaker cabinets being connected to one 5X. This eliminates sloppy wire hookups and decreases set-up time. As accessory blender instrument signal can go directly to the 5X. Up to four different accessories can be joined with another 5X with one line then going to the amp. This facility allows the blending of any combination of distortion devices, wah wah pedals, echo effects, etc. An infinite number of connecting problems can be solved with this very functional accessory. 3" x 2" x 1 1/2"

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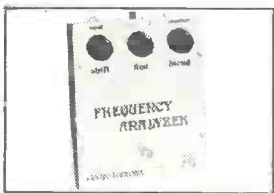
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13" x 6" x 3 3/4"

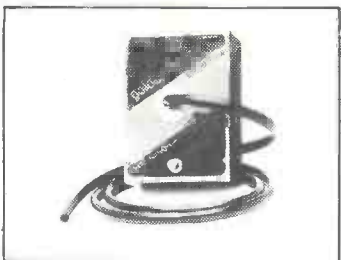


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Try the effect that musicians in Europe like Kraftwerk are using. The FREQUENCY ANALYZER can compress the neck of a guitar down to two feet or stretch it up to nineteen feet. This highest-quality Ring Modulator available is a brilliant accessory for all brass and woodwind instruments. Blow horn through the FREQUENCY ANALYZER and out come three different horns in moving harmonies.

Shift the frequencies of drums, cymbals, and hi-hats. Play any note on any piano, for example a C, and out comes a D, E, B, or any note or fractional in-between note, according to the setting on the dials. Blend your regular signal with the new shifted notes. Filter control allows you to sort out high frequency components. Set any harmonic multiple desired for an avant-garde sound.

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This top-of-the-line mouth tube and filter enables a musician to make the unique sound recently popularized by Peter Frampton and also used by Stevie Wonder, Jeff Beck, Steely Dan, and Joe Walsh. Your mouth becomes an extension of your guitar, as the guitar music feeds up into and is controlled by the movements of your jaw, tongue, and lips. Wah, fuzz, tremolo, phasing, and many other effects are possible.

GOLDEN THROAT is more powerful than the competition, with a 100 Watt driver and a red light overload indicator. Its sharp but meaty sound can be produced with any strength amplifier.

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Now, using only one GOLDEN THROAT DELUXE, you can boost the range of your group *threefold*.

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And each of these sound dimensions is instantaneously controlled by simply tapping one of two heavy-duty footswitches! AC.

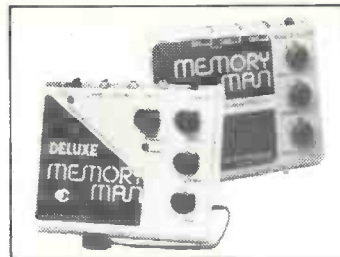
8 1/2" x 8" x 3" x 1 1/2"



E-H DEMO RECORD GETS DOWN TO IT

This new LP, produced by Elliott Randall using top New York City studio musicians is a contemporary, highly listenable set of music ranging from funky blues to space jam. It demonstrates ingenious uses of our most popular effects devices—uninterrupted by live hype. You'll hear 6-string guitar multiplied to 12 by the ELECTRIC MISTRESS Flanger voice doubled with sax-like sound

through the OCTAVE MULTIPLEXER, plucked strings silkened into bowed strings by the BIG MUFF PI, and many more startling transmutations using our "STONE" series of Phase Shifters, GOLDEN THROAT, DELUXE MEMORY MAN, DOCTOR Q, FREQUENCY ANALYZER and HOT FOOT. Hip liner notes by Village Voice music critic Carman Moore described how the effects are created. A must for every electric guitarist. Albums are available at your musical instrument dealer.



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Presenting MEMORY MAN DELUXE. Discriminating musicians welcome the superb totally-electronic echo unit you've been waiting for. Number one in features and performance. Slapback stage echo...repeating arpeggios...delayed split stereo... "bathtub" reverb... controlled feedback... vocal doubling—a range of effects effortlessly achieved that is truly astounding!

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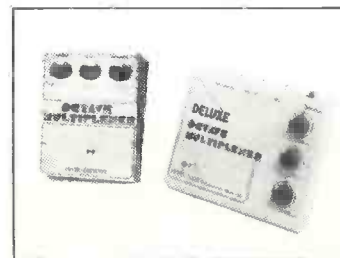
Unlike competitive solid state echo units, MEMORY MAN DELUXE does not decrease its bandwidth as Delay is increased. The result? Crisp razor sharp highs at any echo setting for the professional performing musician.

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Combines with other effects for a smashing echoing flange echo-wah or echo-fuzz. Attractively packaged in a nickel-plated steel chassis with heavy duty line cord.

Also available in an economy design less indicators, level control, and noise reduction circuitry, but including special Boost switch

8" x 6 3/4" x 6" x 1 1/2"



DELUXE OCTAVE MULTIPLEXER WITH ERROR-FREE TRACKING

Now you can sound like Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce playing together in lightning fast runs as the DELUXE OCTAVE MULTIPLEXER synthesizes a note one octave below the one you're playing. You'll get clean octave division on every guitar note with no false triggering. Five filters allow the musician to shape the harmonic content of the new note from fuzz bass to a pure deep organ bass. This device can explode the tonal capabilities of horns

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AC only DELUXE 8" x 6 3/4" x 6" x 1 1/2"
AC-DC STANDARD 6 3/4" x 5 1/2" x 2 1/4" x 1 3/16"
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Studio and live, Cardioid and Condenser

ADASTRA

Adastra claim to distribute nearly one thousand items used in the audio and electronics field. The microphones come near the lower end of the price market but have established a reputation for reliability and performance within that price bracket. The M12 Condenser Cardioid mic is a professional type with a wide frequency response — 50-15,000Hz — and is a stick mic in die-cast aluminium finished satin and black complete with an internal 1½ volt battery and an adjustable 'U' bracket slip-on windshield. Adastra produce a comprehensive catalogue of a wide range of equipment and can be contacted direct via their automatic answering service on 01-452-6289.

AKG

The last twelve months or so has seen some diversification in this Austrian company's products including the addition of mic mixers and hi-fi cartridges to their established lines. AKG remain, however, one of the world's most popular and successful manufacturers of high quality domestic and professional microphones. The AKG D190 is known as a relatively inexpensive but superb quality mic aimed at vocalists, instrumental music, and for a multitude of home recording purposes.

The AKG range is comprehensive, and the company's catalogue gives, in addition to technical info, a rough idea of the possible applications of each of their microphones. The D170, for example, is a dynamic microphone with a cardioid polar pattern and recommended for use by vocalists and instrumentalists because of its built-in wind pop screen. Many of the AKG range are to be found in professional recording studios and interested parties are advised to contact the company for further details of the enormous selection available.

ASTATIC

The Astatic Corporation was



Neumann's U47



A recent addition to the Reslo mics — the RGP 71

founded back in 1930, so they've had a good few years to get to know the microphone business. Astatic mics are reasonably priced items, and it could well be worth examination if your budget's tight but your desire for faithful reproduction is sincere.

The 850s Ultra-Cardioid dynamic has a ball head filter eliminating pop, blast and wind noise making this model ideal for indoor and outdoor use and for close work. The 857 is basically a slightly less expensive model of the aforementioned 850.

BEYER DYNAMIC

It may be surprising for most of you to learn that two of Beyer's most successful microphones have been in continuous production for 18 years — in an industry normally associated with rapid change and development. The two mics in question are ribbon microphones — the M160 and M260. The 260 is a favourite with bands for live work because of its high feedback threshold, while the 160 can be found in many of the top studios situated close to the acoustic piano. A development of the 260 is the M500, designed to successfully suppress undesirable side effects like popping, breath noise and hissing. The M500 has a very flat frequency response, high sensitivity and an excellent front to back ratio.

Beyer's wide range of dynamic moving coil mics has recently been enlarged with the addition of the M201, M550 and M640, all of which are more at home in the broadcast/-reporting worlds. Beyer also manufacture a selection of microphone stands, goosenecks, clamps, adaptors, windshields and transformers.

ELECTRO-VOICE

Electro-Voice produce a whole range of musicians equipment

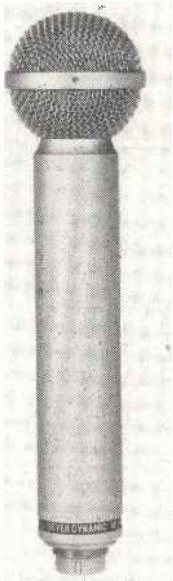
— speakers, speaker systems, horns and drivers as well as their better known range of microphones. Electro-Voice, handled in this country by Gulton, manufacture mics for the top end of the market, with prices and performances to match. The 671A Beatific mic — accompanied by their delightful ad copy line 'it won't funk' — is a sturdy vocal mic with excellent performance and well worth enquiring about. Elsewhere in the range we find the RE50 Shockproof Dynamic mic created specifically for the most exacting professional applications.

It was designed for hand-held applications, and all handling noises, clothing noises, and even cord shock and vibration are isolated from the microphone element so effectively that virtually no vibration is amplified at all. By using a high-mass steel internal acoustic chamber, shock-mounted within the impact-extruded outer casing, the RE50 offers virtually the highest degree of isolation from shock in the mic industry.

NEUMANN

Distributed in the UK by F.W.O. Bauch (49 Theobald Street, Boreham Wood, Herts) along with a wide range of studio equipment, Neumann really are at the top end of the microphone market — in both price and performance. The U87 remains one of the most popular studio microphones amongst engineers aiming for excellent close miking at high sound pressure levels. The dual membrane capsule uses evaporated gold on polyester film which has proven to be the most heat and aging resistant material.

Those more accustomed to stage hand held mics may be surprised at its apparently old fashioned appearance, but its performance is now legendary and it looks unimportant! Other



Beyers M160N

Neumann mics of interest include the U47 — a development of the original 47 still used by some studios which was originally developed as far back as 1947 — and the KM series.

PEAVEY

"Peavey and microphones?" one might ignorantly exclaim — but it's true and, indeed, established. Peavey don't just make guitars, amps, mixers, cabs, etc., etc., but they also have fingers in the proverbial microphone pie. The four Peavey mics can be used as high or low impedance models by simply interchanging the microphone cable.

Peavey mics feature an extremely wide and smooth frequency response with a very tight cardioid pattern for clean and realistic vocal reproduction. Each mic comes complete with carrying case, holder, and a twenty foot cable with matching transformer. All of them have on/off switches on the mic body and are well insulated against shock.

RESLO

New to the Reslo range and unveiled for the first time at the Frankfurt Fair, is the RGP71 dynamic microphone with a broad frequency response quoted as 100Hz to 15kHz. Being super cardioid its polar response is good, and to all intents and purposes it can be regarded as uni-directional. Average rear response is quoted at better than 20dB below the front from 100Hz to 5kHz.

Also available from Reslosound — at Eagle Road, Rye, Sussex — is the Cabaret radio mic system which is a complete transmit and receive

system which packs neatly into a compact carrying case when not in use. Reslo believe the system will succeed in the disco arena, but it's quite possible that the specialist advantages available from such a system may have broader applications within the music scene.

SENNHEISER

The German company Sennheiser's interests in the UK are looked after by Hayden Laboratories in Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire. Sennheiser come as close to producing state of the art microphones as anyone else, and manufacture mics for applications in virtually every audio field — cassette and reel to reel recorders, professional audio, P.A., measuring equipment, lecturers, natural science and film and photography.

In the sound systems for musicians category come models MD441, MD 421, MD416, MD413 and the MD408 — surely enough to be going on with for the time being. For studio work the MD211N is probably worth a look — regarded by many engineers as one of the finest moving coil microphones in the world with a frequency response that is as smooth and wide in range as a good condenser mic.

SHURE

Shure mics have probably been used to one time or another by every major rock musician on the world, and many recording studios as well. We've had a number on loan to us here at Beat for a while and found them all, without exception, more than capable of doing their specified jobs. The PE5EQ — the original equaliser microphone — has four small switches on the body to give easy control over feedback. The control switches activate attenuation filters at crucial feedback-generating regions in the audio spectrum. By selectively attenuating these frequency ranges, the PE5EQ can minimise disruption feedback simply and quickly from the stage on the house system as well as the monitors.

All the Shure mics are worth looking at, but a couple of interest to those of you who expect a mic not only to reproduce faithfully but also to manage that while being flung around the floor, stage or anywhere else are the 565D Unisphere and the 548 Unidyne IV — both used by the Who. Full details can be obtained from Shure Electronics at Eccleston Road, Maidstone. □

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T. H. D.	0.1% at 450w RMS

The unit is designed for standard 19" Rack Mounting, and features an LED Signal Ladder and slide volume control on the front panel.

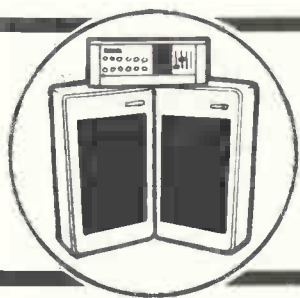
Output Power RMS continuous sinewave:
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 Speaker impedance 4 ohms — 350w RMS
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} — for 0dB input

Unit is Fan Cooled.

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P.A. SURVEY

A few years ago P.A. surveys were compiled as easily as guitar or keyboard surveys. Nowadays, however, the term P.A. encompasses an awesome array of mixing consoles, slave amps, horns, bins and cabinets of all descriptions. This month we isolate a selection of firms making and distributing mixers and P.A. amps

ALLEN AND HEATH

Although Allen and Heath have distinguished themselves in recording studios around the country, they would probably agree that their policy of manufacturing smaller mixers with price tags to match has endeared them more to musicians needing a mixer for the road. Their SD 12 portable stereo console is the latest addition to their range. It features twelve input channels on a semi modular chassis which allows rapid 'in-field' servicing, without the additional cost of a fully modular system. The electronically balanced inputs have fully variable gain, allowing optimum signal to noise ratios and minimum distortion to be achieved for all

programme levels.

A fully combining four band equaliser section allows positive control of sound quality and troublesome feedback frequencies, and a pre-fade foldback mix is also incorporated complete with independent equalisation. While the console was primarily designed with recording in mind (it features direct outputs and line insertion points on all channels) the unit would be equally at home operating as an on-the-road unit.

CANARY

Long favourites with gigging musicians, Canary offer reliability coupled with economy. At the moment they

have desks of 10/2, 10/4, 16/2 and 20/2. The 20-channel version, just as an example, uses Penny and Giles faders, four-band variable e.q., four stereo sub-groups, foldback sends, two treatment sends with pre-post switches, headphone monitoring with AFL per channel, foldback and three-way stereo crossover. Modifications to this spec can of course be made at the wishes of the customer.

HILL

Hill offer four series of standard modular consoles, supplemented by a large variety of optional facilities. The basic channel module features gain, treble, presence, middle, bass,

foldback, auxiliary foldback, echo send, pan, channel mute/p.f.l. switch and master fader.

The 'A' series desks, then, is the basic set-up, with a pair of VU meters for assessing the overall output level. The system can be upgraded to the 'B' series class by the simple addition of channel meter modules and XLR connectors — assuming these are required. The 'C' series is aimed more at the recording angle, having mic/line level switches on each input channel, and Penny & Giles faders. Up to 8-track routing is also available.

The 'D' series is specifically designed for the most sophisticated PA applications. In addition to all the features of the previous three series, it has high and low pass filters, band selection on the presence control, post fade sends, and four output channels.

MACINNES

Crown and Amcron — as unavoidable in the field of power amplification as Gibson in guitars and Marshall in instrument amps. The two most widely used models are the D150A and the DC300A, which have now got LED meters on each channel as a standard fixture. The LED lights when distorted signals exceed 0.05% — a small but welcome improvement. They have also recently improved the signal-to-noise ratio of the D150A and DC300A — which were previously regarded as about the best! Power output on these amps is rated at 80 watts per stereo channel into 8 ohms, and 200 into 8 respectively.

Macinnes also manufacture a 16 into 4 mixer which has been designed for use in high quality PA systems, being built into a sturdy fibreglass flight case.

MARSHALL

Marshall — distributed of course by Rose-Morris — produce several PA units of interest. The 2125 8 channel 100 watt mixer amplifier is a fully portable mixing desk with built-in 100 watt RMS slave. Each of its eight



MM Electronics 12 into 4 mixer — including limiters

P.A. SURVEY

channels will accept low or high impedance inputs, and features full equalisation with bass, middle and treble controls with an overall presence control for added 'punch'. An interesting feature in is the use of rotary volume controls rather than sliders, chosen on Marshall's reckoning that rotary controls are quieter and more reliable. Foldback or monitoring is provided by a jack output and a volume pot.

The Marshall 2071 6-channel mini-mixer is a useful scaled down item for those whose needs are rudimentary. You get volume, treble and bass on each

channel, master volume, foldback monitoring, two outputs and a VU meter . . . and to go with it, what better than the 2205 100W slave? On the other hand, if the budget won't stretch to two units, try combining the two in the Master P.A.

MM ELECTRONICS

The mainstay of the MM range is of course their MP series of consoles, and in particular the MP 175, which comes in 8, 12, 16 and 12/4 configurations. Standard spec includes high and low impedance (high for d.i., low for mics) switches, channel gain, four-way e.q., foldback,

echo send and panning. Optional features are Cannon/Switchcraft connectors, mute switching, PFL buttons on all inputs, distortion indicators, VU metering . . . or indeed any other bright ideas that you may care to discuss with the MM technicians. The MP 185/285 mixers go one up on the 175 spec by having 7-band graphic equalization and two-way electronic crossovers on each output, in addition to several of the 175's optional features as standard. The 175 and 185 consoles will come to you in flight cases if required.

The AP360 200 watt per channel slave amp is an admirable complement to the desks, and is designed to fit into the MM 19" rack, along with such units as

the 2- and 3-way stereo electronic crossovers, 7-band graphic equalizer, etc. all at extremely competitive prices.

NORLIN

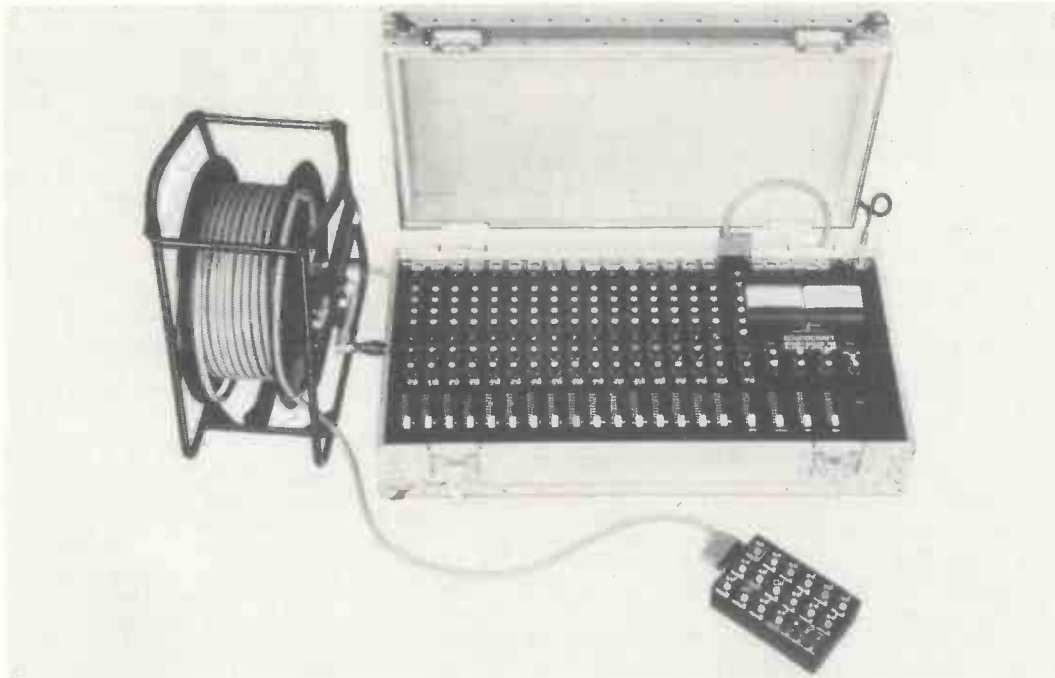
The current flurry of activity by Norlin in the guitar and keyboard fields has detracted a little from their much longer standing range of ex-Selmer PA units. The PA100 power amp is still available in both valve and solid state versions, featuring five channels, each with volume, treble and bass controls, overall volume, presence and reverb controls.

ORANGE

The roll-call of PA amps and mixers from Orange includes several slave amps and a mixing console. Among the slave amps is the 120 watt graphic based on the reliable valve power amp employed in their graphic range of amplifiers, which can be used as a single unit in small PAs or linked together for larger systems. The slave can also be used to drive stage monitor systems or add to the power of stage equipment. An alternative is the 200 watt transistor slave.

The 15 channel stereo mixer boasts studio quality and an attractive finish, while its toughness is emphasised by a sturdy transit trunk coming complete with each unit. By selecting pre-fade on the headphone monitor, each channel can be monitored alone by pressing that channel PFL button. The channel faders control the stereo output to master, whilst not affecting monitor level or meter reading.

◀ *The Soundcraft 16 into 2 mixer plus aluminium case*



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PEAVEY

You can always rely on Peavey to have any number of variations in whatever field of amplification you're interested in, and PA is no exception. Starting with their PA200 mixer/amp, this has 4 channels capable of handling up to eight microphones, each channel having volume, bass, treble and effects controls, and there is a built-in reverb. The amp puts out 100 watts into 4 ohms at 5% t.h.d. Next comes the Standard PA amp, which give 130 watts and has a more comprehensive master section. Up the scale again is the XR-600 — 200 watts, six channels and a nine-band graphic equalizer.

Still in the field of mixer/amps, but this time of the console variety, we stumble across the PA700S and the PA1000S, which put out 120 watts and 200 watts r.m.s. per channel respectively, and offer 7 and 10 channels. Each mixer has two (count 'em) graphic equalizers — one for each output channel.

The mono mixers — and most bands in all honesty only need a mono PA — come firmly flight-cased in six, nine and twelve channel configurations. These are splendid value-for-money no-nonsense sixers, though if you do want stereo there are six, eight and twelve channel versions with slightly grander facilities. The new Mk. 2 series consists of eight, twelve, sixteen and twenty-four input models with all stereo output and very full equalization.

Lastly, a crop of power amps loom over the horizon — going under the name of Boosters, and offering 130 watts mono, 130 stereo, 200 and 400 respectively, whilst the CS series has units giving 200, 200 stereo and a horrendous 800 (using a bridge mode) watts. And that's very definitely yer lot!

ROOST

Since Roost have a finger in just about every pie, it would be a mistake to ignore them in the field of PA. They manufacture a couple of slave amps — the SR40 and the 300S. The SR 40, a valve slave, is designed to couple with most mixers, PA and instrument amps and cabs, and delivers 150 watts r.m.s. There's an input and link socket on the front, which allows you to connect extra slaves, a volume control, and standby and on/off switches. Impedance and mains voltage selection is of course standard. The 300S is a stereo amp, which means that it's really two-in-one, and is transistorized. Fuller

spec is available from the company on request.

Finally, the SSR8 mixer has eight channels, each featuring high and low impedance inputs, a volume fader, treble, middle and bass, and an echo level control. If required the mixer can be supplied with a power amp and headphone monitoring.

R.S.D.

... which stands for Recording Studio Design. They are based in Cheshunt, Herts, and offer a complete range of P.A. both for sale and for hire. Their largest desk is a 30-channel quad console with 10-band e.q. per channel, 8 sub-groups, LED's PPM's, and so on. There are also 24-channel versions and an eight channel monitor mixer.

On the amp front, R.S.D.'s big one is the 800b stereo power amp, which has been in production for quite a while now, and continues to be popular. Into 4 ohms, both channels running, it delivers 325 watts r.m.s. per side, with distortion less than 0.05% at all power levels. Open/short circuit protection, thermal cut-out and forced air cooling are all features of this monster, which is equally at home in the recording studio as out on the road.

SHURE

That's right — not just microphones but a whole host of other equipment (including one of the best ranges of hi-fi cartridges) come from Shure. In the P.A. field Shure concentrate on the smaller mixers and power amps. The SR group of mixers are rack-mountable eight channel mixer/preamplifiers which can be custom mounted in a desk or console, or even in Shure's own accessory case. The SR101 accepts up to eight impedance mics each with individual controls for volume, reverb operation, high and low equalisation and input attenuation, while switchable inputs on channels seven and eight also accept auxiliary high level signals or high impedance microphones.

SOUNDCRAFT

Soundcraft's 16/2 mixer has always enjoyed a reputation for quality and robustness since its introduction in 1974. Its four band equaliser offers two types of equalisation with precise control over the complete audio spectrum. The foldback controls adjust the level of individual input channel signal sent to the foldback output, while echo performs a similar function to its own echo output.

The circuit boards are all linked by a 'motherboard' system, making servicing particularly easy. In an emergency, the appropriate board can be replaced. The front panel of the chassis is finished in scratch-resistant semi-gloss enamel and is silk-screen printed, while its built in power supply comprises a torodial transformer with a rectifier and two capacitors.

TURNER

Five basic stereo power amps come rumbling out of the Turner factory and all are well respected in the PA industry for providing high quality and reliability. Beginning with the B302, a model giving 100 watts per channel into eight ohms, we move up to the A300, which has a dual power supply, 100 watts into 8 again, and the A300VU. This one provides 180 per channel into eight ohms, and as its name implies, comes complete with a pair of VU meters.

The A500 and the A500VU have comparable output levels, but represent the top end of the range, costing £550 and £650 respectively. Expensive, without a doubt, but worth every penny if you're after the best there is. Bear in mind too that they do a rather nifty line in modular mixing desks.

YAMAHA

A truly awesome line-up of PA gear is available from Yamaha, who make mixers from six channels up to thirty. Starting at the low end, there's the EM-150 powered mixer, which has a built-in Accutronics reverb, 7-band graphic equalizer on the master section, VU metering and a 150 watt r.m.s. amplifier. In other words, this is a deceptively well-equipped machine, and well worth a look, as are the PM400, PM300 and PM200B.

Staying with the PM series, next up is the 430 — eight channels again, but this time with bass and treble e.q., monitor 1 and 2 volume controls (which can also be used as pre- and post-faders) and a pair of VU meters. The whole lot is encased in a solid road box with a carrying handle. There is also a 12-channel version — the 700, which has a gooseneck lamp as an added bonus. The real beasts of the PM range continue the praiseworthy trends which appear in the smaller consoles, and I'm talkin' 'bout the PM-1000 series of 16-, 24- and 32-channel desks — all packed in flight cases, with colour coded controls, padded elbow rest, full VU metering and 4-channel output.

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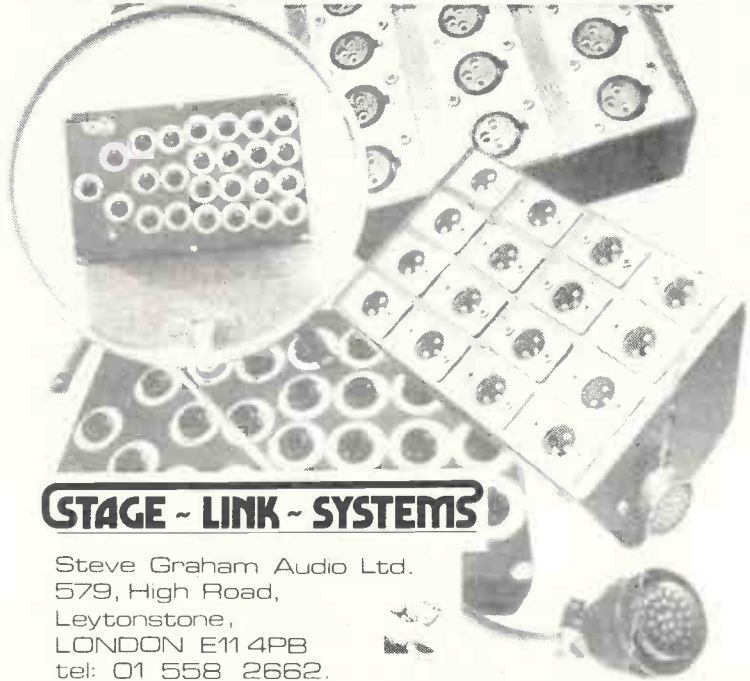
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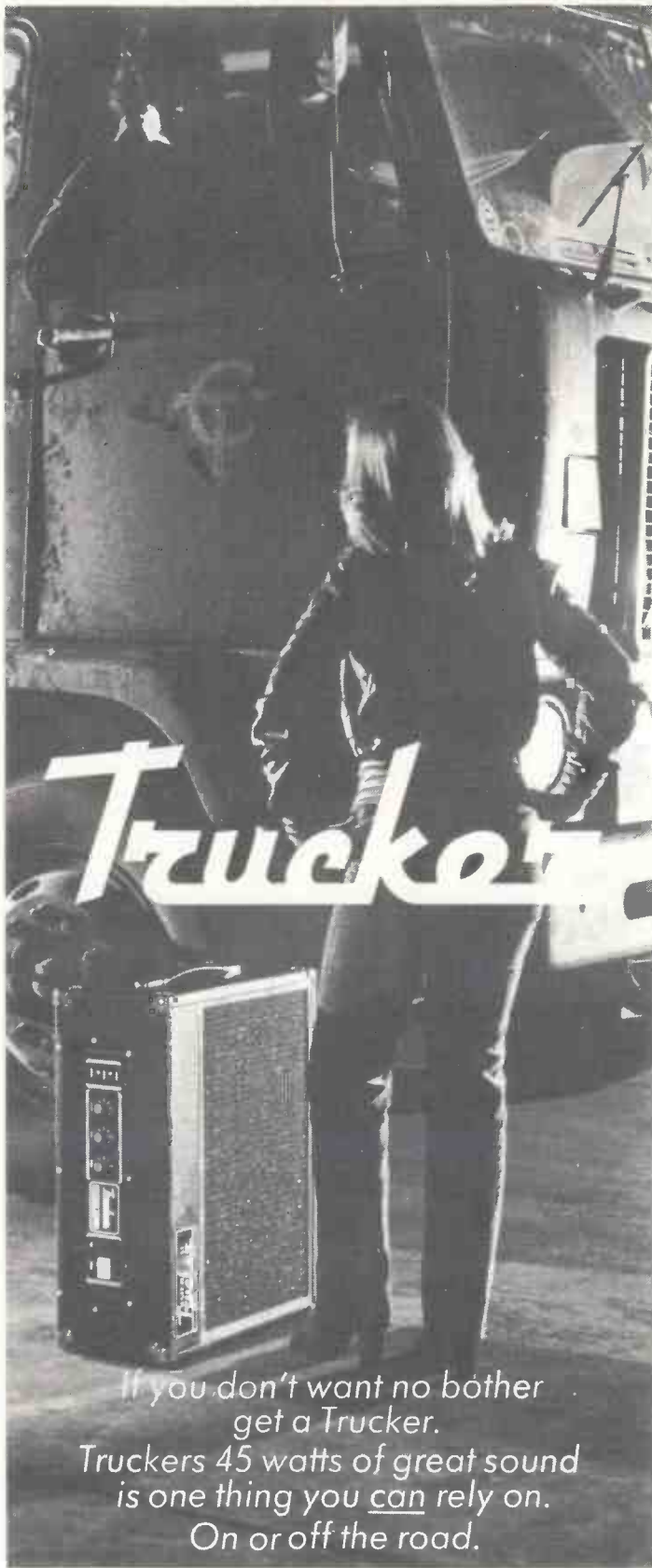
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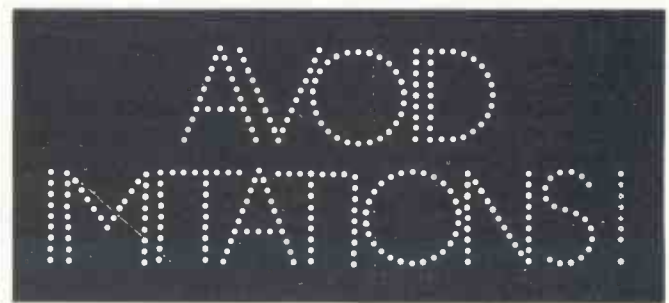


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INSTRUMENTAL NEWS

PEAVEY'S PEEP SHOW

The Langham Room at the Bloomsbury Centre was recently the scene of an informal seminar led by Pete Wood, the International Marketing Director of Peavey Electronics, during which he outlined Peavey's plans for the rest of 1978 for the benefit of the assembled dealers and journalists.

The first piece of news concerned speakers. Peavey have become somewhat disillusioned with their old manufacturers and have resolved henceforth to make their own. "We wanted a speaker system," said Pete, "that a guy could use for his hi-fi at home and then take out for a gig with his band." This is not as outrageous an idea as it may appear at first sight: affluent young Americans are now using 200, 300 and 400W hi-fi(!). One of the new speakers, the Black Widow, is rated at 150W and is designed to replace any existing Peavey speaker, 12", 15" or 18"; before leaving the factory each individual speaker is tested with 250 watts of pink noise for at least twenty minutes. A file is then kept on its performance, so that information on it can be retrieved if necessary at a later date simply by quoting the correct serial number.

On the amplifier front, the twin problems of appalling weather conditions and a long New York dock strike have led to a grave shortage of transformers, which come from Italy, and other components. Peavey will be doing their best to make up for this setback so that they can meet existing orders from all over the world. In future all Peavey amps will in-

corporate a tap on the transformer to allow adjustment for different mains voltages in Europe, Britain, the U.S. and elsewhere.

Two new bass amplifiers will be arriving in England in May or June, one of them a small 40 watt job with a single 12" speaker. This, it is hoped, will not cost a great deal more than the popular Backstage 30. Other new items are the KM4 keyboard mixer, the XR-600 mixer amp (to replace the PA400), the CS.X2 crossover, the IP-1 instrument pre-amp, which is best used with the bass guitar, and the MC-16 mixer.

The long (and we do mean long) awaited Peavey guitars are expected to appear in a late-April shipment. Problems with manufacturing machinery have until quite recently kept production of guitars down to just seven or eight a day, but Peavey hope soon to bump this right up to around 300. The guitars have die-cast zinc fittings and an ash body. The truss rods are inserted whilst the wood is still "green", and the assembly with the body does not take place until the wood has aged for about eight months. The price of the Peavey guitar will be in the same area as a Fender Telecaster, and this includes a damage-proof case, which Pete pogoed on by way of demonstrating that even the entire Judas Priest road crew couldn't dent it.

Beat had the chance to riff briefly on the pre-production model which Pete brought with him, and found it eminently tasty. Stand by for a full review as soon as we can smuggle one away.



The Peavey Mace — one of the existing products that will have to move over and make room for more from the States.

MORE FROM GIBSON

Last month's guitar survey was already growing warm under the presses when we received some interesting information from Norlin Music about Gibson guitars.

In addition to the re-issued Firebird, Thunderbird and Explorer, Les Paul '55, Melody Maker, the new Artisan and the Pro-De-Luxe, Gibson are currently producing the Howard Roberts Artist acoustic/electric jazz guitar, complete with ebony fingerboard, abalone inlay, gold-plated hardware and gorgeously figured maple top.

Four models of the new Mark series of acoustics have also emerged. Here Gibson have taken a leaf out of Ovation's book: they have designed these guitars with the aid of at least three prominent scientists, who did a good two years' research before coming up with the product. Needless to say, these

guitars are represented in the upper price bracket.

Finally, the Gibson RD series consists of five models: the Standard and Standard Bass have new pick-ups and passive electronic circuits. The other three models in the range, which for the first time incorporate active electronics, are the RD Artist, Artist Bass, and Custom. Dr. Moog — he of synthesizer fame — developed special compressor and expander circuitry for these instruments, and these, together with some sophisticated built-in pre-amps, form the basis of the "active" RD range. (See I.R.3)

This means that the guitars become more responsive, and provide more attack. They also apparently free the right hand, "reducing the amount of tension that is required to play hard and fast." Armchair rock is here to stay!

NEW MELLOTRON MANUFACTURERS

That old standby of bands like Barclay James Harvest and the Moody Blues — the Mellotron — is making a comeback. Sound Sales Inc. of Connecticut, U.S.A. have taken over the Mellotron trademark and have begun to manufacture the instrument.

The two models currently available are the 400SM and the Mk. V, with single and dual manual keyboards respectively. Mellotron accessories include conversion kits with technical updates, additional tapes from the famous "library of sounds" and hard shell cases.

Other products from the same stable are the Powerhouse Rhythm unit, which utilizes 8-track tapes of drum beats, and the Kelsey 20-channel quad/stereo mixing console, which is manufactured in England.

ROSE-MORRIS ACQUIRE DI MARZIO AGENCY

Rose Morris continue their relentless drive toward world domination by taking over the exclusive agency for DiMarzio products! The much sought-after high output pick-ups manufactured by DiMarzio in the U.S. will now become more readily available with the help of Rose Morris' extensive distribution network. These include every model from the Super Distortion Humbucker to the Acoustic contact p/u. Further information from R-M at 32-34 Gordon House Road, London NW5.

HORNBY SKEWES BRING IN HAMER GUITARS

Hornby Skewes announced after the Frankfurt Fair that they have taken on the sole UK distribution of the excellent handmade Hamer guitars. The Hamer range consists of only three models; the Hamer Stan-

dard, the Crown Sunburst and the Dot Sunburst.

All three will be available through a limited number of dealers, where prices will range from around £600 to over £1000.

I.T.A. PROFILE

Beat visits one of the leaders in the recording world, and examines the market they have created for themselves

In December last year we borrowed an ITAM 805 8 track recorder and a 10:4 mixer for review and were so impressed with the combination of performance and price that we made a note to visit their headquarters at Harewood Avenue, just off London's Marylebone Road, to have a closer look round. As with most good resolutions, it took seconds to get the idea in the first place and several months to get round to doing anything positive about it, but we even-

tually fixed a positive appointment and found ourselves ensconced in Martin Parmiter's office with cup of excellent coffee in hand.

Martin is one of I.T.A.'s two directors — Barry Lamden being his partner — who started the original company back in 1972. Both Barry and Martin were working for Revox at that time, but believed there was a large gap in the professional recording market between the top end of the 'hi-fi' and semi-pro equipment and the vastly more

expensive products on offer to studios with a lot more bread to lash out.

Martin told us: "At that time the smaller recording studio of less-than-rolling professional musician searching for equipment was almost forced to either over-spend on the budget or go for the vagaries of the second-hand market — not, you'll agree, a particularly satisfactory state of affairs."

I.T.A., therefore, set out to provide a service to a particular section of the market, and

began by handling TEAC and Revox products, modifying the standard models to bring them up to a higher, professional specification without making the price too lofty. The modifications were both electronic and mechanical, and ITA can now customise products from Revox and TEAC to very specific requests from potential clients.

"Until we started selling this type of equipment the only outlets were through the hi-fi shops — places where musicians and engineers alike didn't feel particularly happy. We added features like varispeed and special repeat patterns which pushed the product that little further into the serious recording field."

At this time I.T.A. operated from a small workshop out in Windsor, but outgrew both the premises and the non-centralisation, and therefore moved into London, first to Camden Town and finally to their present premises at 1-7 Harewood Avenue. Fortunately for Martin and Barry, it seemed that the gap they had seen in the



The ITAM 805 8 track recorder, one of the firm's "specials"

market actually existed — business boomed in the first year of the founding of the company, and before long they were appointed sole UK agents for Otari. They found they were able to supply complete studio packages for smaller studios, from the mixer to the master recorder, mixdown, with microphones and cables if necessary!

The next step in the development of I.T.A.'s operation was to Barry and Martin a logical one. "Barry's an engineer and it was obvious that while he was working miracles modifying other people's equipment, he wasn't working to his full satisfaction," Martin went on. "We decided to plug yet another gap in the market — a good, 8 track professional recorder which didn't carry an enormous price-tag."

The result was the ITAM 805 model, one of which we received in December and which is still one of the most successful recorders on the market today. I.T.A. wanted to make it even cheaper but decided that lines had to be drawn between quality and price, and the line had to fit somewhere higher up the price scale than they hoped for. Future plans include a Mark 2 version of the 805 with a new

cabinet and recording heads, with an overall improvement of the finish.

The second foray into producing equipment under their own name covered a range of mixers manufactured by Alice-Stancoil specifically for I.T.A. at an I.T.A. price — again, the result was successful, and I.T.A. now have to worry about meeting the incredible demand for both the recorders and the mixers.

However, things at Harewood Avenue don't allow time for resting on laurels — quite the contrary in fact. The major move to the introduction of a 16 track recorder is planned for this summer — hopefully in early June. The recorder, to be known as the 1610, will be a fully professional 16 track 1" machine, aimed at the smaller, budget studio, (or the larger, non-budget professional musician). From the verbal specification that Barry Lamden gave us the 1610 — with a price which should be around £5,000 — should take the market by storm — 3 speed, with every conceivable function remotable, and a whole list of other facilities.

Also on the cards for introduction this year is a modular ancillary system, similar to the

Scamp idea but by ITA's own admittance aimed down market from the famous Scamp, which at the moment incorporates the rack, power supply and a compressor, with LED displays. Despite this wealth of new products I.T.A. hope to concentrate their manufacturing capability on the tape recorder side of the business while looking to other mixer manufacturers — of which there are many, to supply that side of the studio's requirements. "One problem we may find is one of space," Martin explained, "because although we're going to manufacturing a lot more equipment for ourselves, we desperately want to continue operations along similar lines to the way things are run now. We like to see old customers coming back to upgrade equipment, and we're certain to continue handling equipment from Revox, Otari and TEAC, all of which we have excellent relationships with." I.T.A. are, in fact, the biggest Revox dealers in the country!

Another expansion during 1977 was the opening of a branch in Paris which handles equipment from Allen and Heath, Brennell, Lockwood, R.S.D., I.T.A. and a number of other manufacturers both British and

French.

I.T.A. also do a lot of work modifying recorders for such diverse companies as the BBC, British Rail, E.M.I., the police force and local radio stations — the connection? Ultra-slow speed tape requirements — or, in other words, logger recorders. I.T.A. have produced a new 8 channel logging recorder used as a means of recording information — such as aircraft movements at an airport. The slow speed admittedly does little for quality, but it allows machines to run (at 15/16 ips) and record staggering amounts of information on as little tape as possible.

The future, then, looks bright for I.T.A. with the new recorder due out soon, an up-dated version of the best-selling 805, diversification into non-music fields, while at all times being cost-conscious. "We're not in this business to manufacture ultra-sophisticated, luxury equipment at ludicrous prices," Martin continued. "There are enough people in the game who do that. We're more interested in providing good, reliable, flexible equipment at a price which is, as near as we can make, un-restricting. If we can continue doing that, we'll be well-satisfied."

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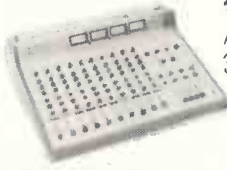
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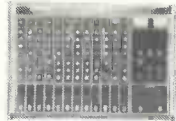
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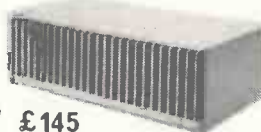
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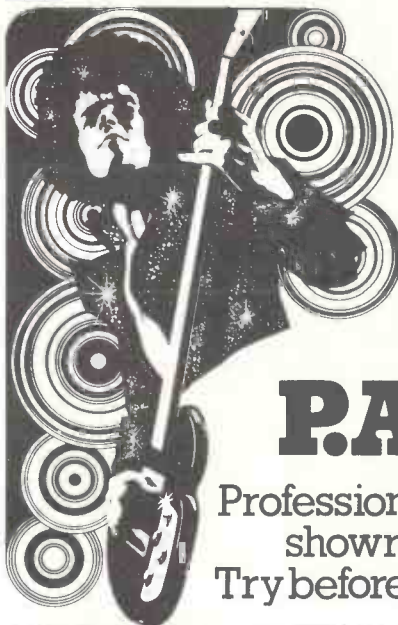
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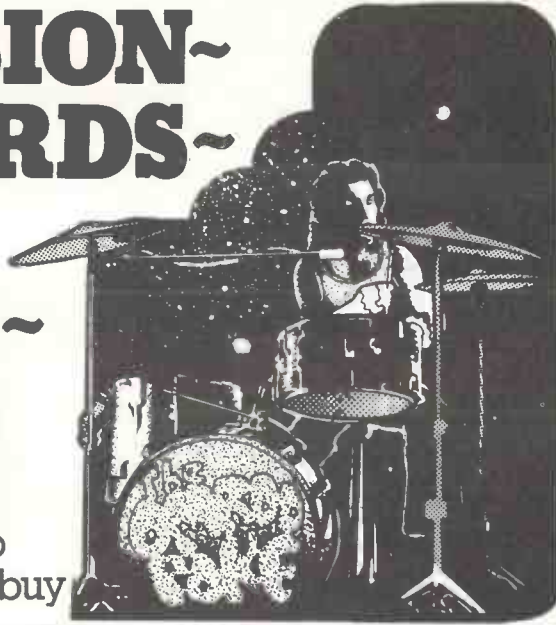
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COOKES NORWICH

Norwich is one of those very rare cities which has managed a successful marriage between old and new. Dominated by its soaring cathedral, and half-walled by the river, it sits slap-bang in the middle of Norfolk with hardly a major town within thirty miles, thus making it the commercial and industrial cen-

tre of a wide, agriculturally-based catchment area.

Communications are better now than they once were — especially with London although the cross-country routes are still a little rural — but there is now a feeling that Norwich is the capital of a partly forgotten area of the country, and a uniquely beautiful town at that.

Enough, though, of the geography lesson. The purpose of our visit to Norfolk was to pick up on rumours that there lurks in the city a particularly fine music instrument shop — Cookes, in St. Benedict's Street. Road travellers will find St. Benedict's Street easily — being one of the main links off the excellent ring road into the city centre, but even travellers by rail will have little difficulty as Norwich is such a compact city.

Parking's OK, although a double line of yellow deterred us from slapping the Beatmobile right outside the building, but we discovered a conveniently placed alleyway in which to temporarily house the beast. Cookes inhabit three different buildings in the same street — each one run as a separate entity. One shop specialises in the orchestral side of things — woodwind and brass and such-like; another concentrates its efforts in the home organ and acoustic piano fields, while the one that concerns us — Cookes Band Instruments — occupies number 34 and is stashed to the brim with band equipment.

From the outside (see pic) you'll agree that number 34 looks substantially different from the majority of establishments we get round to visit — partially because the building's are nearly as old as the editor (*gasp...*) and partly because at

one time it was a public house. Present council philosophy has been to list the building as being of architectural interest so there's little chance of its appearance altering for a good few centuries yet.

Inside we were met more by the incredible wall of equipment than by Cookes' manager, Brian Morrison: our initial impressions were therefore somewhat mixed. Cookes certainly believe in using every inch of space available — even when that inch is just a few from the ceiling. It certainly took us a bit of time to realise that there was some method in this apparent madness, and that the stacks of amps had been arranged as opposed to just thrown in for convenience! There are more ways than one, however, of interpreting this: indeed, as time went on we became used to it and realised that with the limitations regarding altering the building, the best compromise is to fill it full!

Brian Morrison — whose uncle is the boss — seemed a little surprised at our comments regarding space. "It could be that I've just got so used to it" he commented, "but most people like it this way: there's so much equipment around at the moment that I'd prefer to stock as much as I can and pay the price in terms of space, rather than arrange it all out in the open but hardly carry any stock." As it happens we soon became used to the amount of equipment around, and it is probably only our experience in different establishments that made us comment on the stuff in the first place!

Music

Cookes have been in the music business for one hell of a long time — in fact there's a case for saying they were selling instruments before the term 'music business' had been invented. The first Cooke shop arrived in the city in 1887, managed then by one of Brian's great-great-grandfathers. The second shop opened some thirty years or more later, and then Brian recommended that the family should pick up on the vast boom that hit the industry in the aftermath of the early Beatles and Rolling Stones' successes. Sure enough, the family agreed, and in 1964 Brian opened Cookes Band Instruments — and he's been there ever since following apprenticeships with a couple of the larger music instruments wholesalers and distributors.



Three Cookes in the town, but unspoiled technical broth.



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"I felt that it was essential to get a good grounding in that side of the trade: obviously I knew a fair amount about the business carried on by our other shops, but at the time there were so many new ideas and products coming on to the market almost every day that I knew it would be better to work for someone else for a time just to get used to it." Brian told us. "It was an exciting time in the business simply because of the immense impetus that the early rock groups were giving it."

Keen

So, on with the tour then. Brian has managed to fit an office in at the back of the ground floor of the shop — although at the time of our visit the office looked as much part of the shop as anything else. There were several guitars lining the wall awaiting either repair or return to their owners, as well as a couple of interesting second hand guitars — including a smart 335. What's the line on second-hand gear, then?

"We're always moving second-hand equipment," came the reply, "although it's mainly guitars we do take anything (within reason) as a part exchange. We keep a keen eye on the second-hand market and try desperately to be as fair as possible to both ourselves, the seller, and the potential purchaser. We moved a lot of Gibsons a couple of weeks ago — but then again we might have a couple of weeks without used equipment at all: it's an impossible area to predict as we have no control over it whatsoever."

The downstairs area of the shop is given over to guitars, acoustics, amps and P.A. equip-



Repairing a gadget before repairing to the pub.

ment. The normal range of guitars were there, from Gibsons onwards (or some would say backwards) although Yamaha electrics were conspicuous only by their absence. It seems that East Anglia has not caught on to the Yamaha boom that appears to have taken the rest of the country by storm. On the electric side, we did see a couple of Strats with an, how shall we put it, "interesting" metal flake polyurethane finish — not unlike the coachwork of some of the entries at the Custom Car show!

Amps from most of the major manufacturers were on show, and it was while looking at the amps that we came to appreciate the manner in which the equipment is laid out — you don't have to wander great distances to compare facilities on competitive amps etc., and you can hang in close to compare performances without chasing around and forgetting what the first choice sounded like!

Acoustic guitars hang from one end of the main area, and repose of shelves around the shop, while the accessories — straps and effects — stay just out of reach behind the counter. At the end of the ground floor and out the back, so to speak, is the service department where the majority of repairs are carried out. "We can, in fact, handle everything" Brian told us. "We can call on the services of 11 engineers of one sort or another from guitar technicians, through electronics experts and even on to piano tuners and repairers. Because we've got the organ/piano shop just up the road we can use their engineers on keyboards as well; one way or another, whatever's wrong with it we'll try our damndest to fix it."

Stashed

"So what about drummers?" we hear you plead. Well, upstairs is the drum showroom —

and pretty spectacular it is, occupying a similar area to the main sales-floor below, it is stashed full of kits — as opposed to drums. There were, at the time of our visit, probably a dozen or more kits set up and ready to go — the individual drums being stacked neatly away against the walls. "We do sell individual drums, obviously," our guide continued, "but whether a customer is just interested in a snare or a cymbal doesn't concern us out of context — with our set-up he can play the drum or part of a whole kit with an absolute minimum of fussing around changing the kit set-ups. "This use of space must be appealing to all drummers — especially as the kits were all the good stuff from Premier, Ludwig, Rogers etc, etc, as well as some of the cheaper offerings from other manufacturers. Full marks here, we thought, beginning to think that first impressions of space were somewhat misguided.

Disco

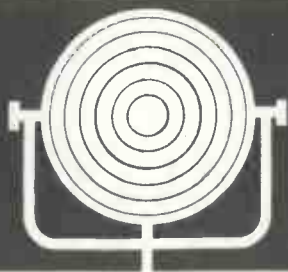
Across the landing from the drum showroom is another large area devoted almost entirely to disco equipment — speakers, decks etc. as well as the obligatory lighting effects. We didn't dwell here too long as obviously it's only of passing interest, but we did note that all the gear was attractively laid out, and thus created a pleasing visual impression typical of Cookes.

From other areas in the building — a further floor, and used as storage — it seems that the gear on display is only some 50% of the total stock carried, so if you don't see what you want don't leave before asking because it may either be upstairs, or equally, Cookes could probably get it to you before you could find the time to try elsewhere. Norfolk isn't exactly flush with music instrument shops!

Our conclusions, therefore, are extremely favourable. Brian and his two assistants undoubtedly know the products they're selling and therefore give it to the customers straight.

We retired from Cookes, into the snow, and into the first pub which sold the good stuff (incidentally, beerophiles take note — Cookes must be the only music instrument shop within two minutes walk of four pubs serving real ale!) to finish our visit in the manner to which we are accustomed. Well worth the visit, Cookes, and we hope you will think the same.

STUDIO



SPOTLIGHT

AUDIO INTERNATIONAL

Audio International is one of the better known, but least publicised, of the major London recording studios. It also has one of the longer pedigrees in the business — the reels of tape have been turning at Rodmarton Street, a convenient and quiet location just off Baker Street, since around 1947. Sound Star studios, as it was called in those days, was built from a converted meeting hall by the original owner Derek Faraday, and was used for film soundtrack and radio recording with live audiences; "Take Your Pick" and "Double Your Money" were regularly recorded there for Radio Luxemburg, and it was Lux who eventually bought the studio and turned it into Audio International in 1970.

Richard Millard was put in charge of the operation as studio manager: he had previously been chief engineer at Lux, and in this capacity had worked with groups such as the Stones, Billy Fury, Cliff Richard and the Hollies.

One of the first things that Richard did was to get his friend (the late) Sandy Brown, of Sandy Brown Associates, to undertake the reconstruction and acoustic treatment of the new studio. David Binns did most of the design work, and it is a testimony both to the quality of the original work and subsequent maintenance of the premises that, eight years later, the place still looks and 'feels' like new, and is still capable of producing consistently good recorded sound. As you can see

from the photographs, the studio area itself is unusually large, and the nominal capacity of 35 still leaves plenty of elbow room to spare. Originally the studio floor was going to be even larger, but Richard quite wisely decided to give the control room a bit of extra space "otherwise it's a bit difficult to get away from your monitors."

The control room is actually positioned where the stage used to be in the old hall: the slightly raised position gives one the feeling of being on the bridge of a ship when seated behind the desk, and the all round visibility is a great asset when working on large sessions. In the left hand corner opposite the control room there's a compact isolation booth, the end wall directly opposite the glass serves as a backdrop for a 'portable' cage of screens where the drum kit is normally placed, round to the right of the control room a door leads to another isolation booth, and on the other side of the control room's 'bulge' into the studio there's a small kitchen area. The false ceiling is high enough that you forget it's there, and the space

above it provides a useful storage area for tapes, echo plates and the usual collection of spare parts and last year's Christmas trees.

Although the size of the studio has obvious advantages for sessions involving string sections and so on, it is invaluable for groups who want to get away from the 'sit in a cage and play' syndrome. When Sweet record at Audio International, they bring most of their stage gear in and use the resulting high sound level to inject a bit of the old 'performer's adrenalin' into their playing. Mick Tucker usually sets his drum kit up in the middle of the studio floor, with the carpet rolled back to expose vinyl flooring, which gives a bright and open feel to the recorded sound. Would you believe brass bands use similar techniques to good effect? Richard himself does quite a lot of work with military bands "knocking out an album in a day and an afternoon — it usually gets cut the following day as well! I generally use about 34 or 36 microphones, and I like to have the first title down within 40 minutes." And 'down' means recording directly to two track stereo which, as engineer Peter Silver commented with a grim grin, is "one hell of a shake-down for a multi-track engineer!"

On the subject of work: "The majority of our clients are record companies: I think that the day of the producer financing his own project is really in the past, although obviously it's the producer who books the studio". Those who've done so include Mike Chapman and Nicky Chinn (before they became tax exiles, and made off into the sunset with former Audio Int. engineer Peter Coleman), who brought in Sweet (Wigwam Bam, Ballroom Blitz, Teenage Rampage, Blockbuster), and Mud, Suzi Quatro and Smokie for most of their well known hits as well. Barry Blue, as well as recording his own numbers such as "Do You Want To Dance" and "Dancing on a Saturday Night", brought in Heatwave to record

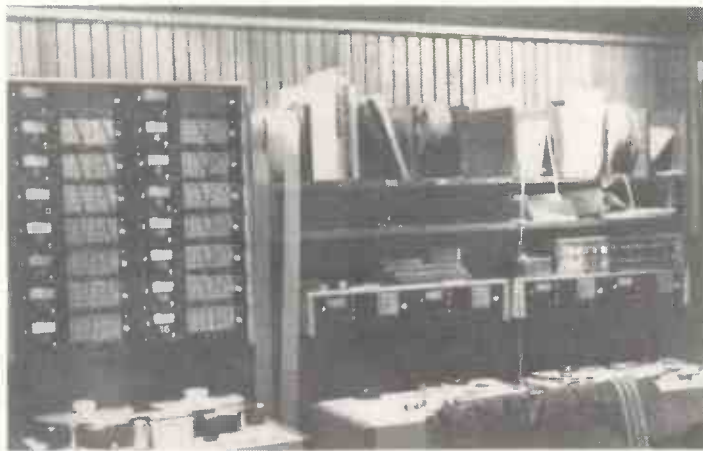


Engineer Nick Ryan and tape op Simon Hurrell at the Neve console.

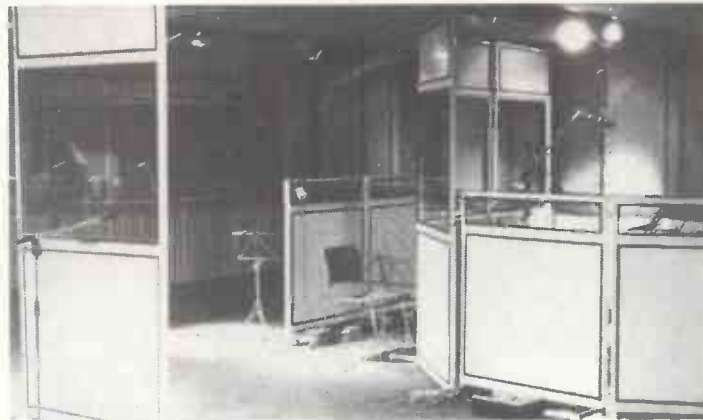
"Boogie Nights", which stormed up to number 2 in the Stateside charts ... one gets the impression that if Audio International were to release a few 'Greatest Hits' albums they wouldn't need to advertise on Telly in order to put K-Tel out of business! As MAM also own a 50% share of the studio, some of their artists like Gilbert O'Sullivan record there, although apparently the 'in-house' work only takes up a small fraction of recording time.

The control room, as mentioned before, was designed with spaciousness in mind; the portion of the room containing mixer, tape recorders plus engineer and producer's chairs is slightly raised, the forward section of the room is the listeners/hangers-on area, with a row of comfy chairs along the leading edge of the console at a slightly lower level so that bouncing heads and scraps of conversation reflected off the glass do not disturb the producer's concentration. The console is a Neve 32 input, 16 group, 24 track monitor job: "We've had this desk about seven years and it's been very reliable — we have outside engineers coming in and they find that the format is very easy to come to grips with. The mixer has been modified over this period — some of the channels are only a year or so old — and it's been fitted with new equalisers, which now have 6 turnover points for HF lift and cut, plus a couple of extra positions on the mid range. I suppose I'm a bit conservative in some respects", says Richard modestly, "but I'd rather buy something that I know rather than something that is an unknown quantity. If anything does go wrong, and it's seldom that it does, everything on the desk is in modular form, three modules per channel, with separate cards in each module. This makes it easy for the engineers to fault-find themselves, and if a switching unit or something malfunctions, then that whole sub-assembly can be replaced."

Tape machines are Studer A80's, a 24 track and two 2 tracks (there's also a 4 track Scully for tape echo and a Revox for odd-job work.) The Studers were also chosen for their reliability, and because "the importers, Bauch, have a very efficient and comprehensive back up service." One of the things that Richard is very hot on is effective upkeep of the studio equipment: "Because I'm technical myself, I'm very fussy



Studer A80 24 track and 2 track recorders.



Isolation booth and moveable drum cage (right of pic.).

about alignment of tape machines. To date, I've always lined up tape recorders myself, and no one else is allowed to touch them, except in dire emergencies. Every tape that leaves here has a complete set of line-up tones, and that's got us a lot of work and a good reputation. We've got numerous test tapes, BASF, MRL and so on — disc cutting rooms are all impressed with the quality of tapes that we submit for cutting."

Although this may seem like a slightly boring subject to read about, any musician who's had the misfortune to record at a studio where everything in this department was *not* in order (and there are a few) will tell you what a vitally important point this is. With the current plethora of different operating levels in use, the ability to adapt quickly to a client's needs is an important asset, and one that has got Audio International a lot of work, especially from abroad, "We work at standard Ampex level because the tape can end up in Munich or Stuttgart and it has to be alright in every respect. One of the advantages of the Studer is that we have a complete set of 16 track cards, with which we can do a very rapid conversion from 24 track.

The Studer is also very stable once adjusted, and it doesn't drift at all from alignment."

Audio International also boasts a stack of outboard equipment more comprehensive than most. Apart from the Neve compressor/limiters built into the desk, there's an equipment rack to the right of the console containing 4 Universal Audio 1176 limiters, 1 dbx compressor/limiter, Eventide Flanger, two Eventide Harmonizers and a Marshall time modulator. Engineer Peter Silver: "The Harmonizer delay line section gets most use, for split delay stereo effects, although the pitch changing facility is very useful for out of tune piano or 6 string/12 string guitar effects. The Time Modulator can get some great sounds but it's very critical to set up — if you're not careful it tends to blow your head off!" Below the patchbay there's another rack of equipment, containing two Multitrack parametric equalisers and an Audio & Design Scamp rack. This latter contains 2 parametric equalisers (which feature adjustable 'Q' — the bandwidth around centre frequency), 4 compressor/limiters and 9 noise gates. The noise gates are mainly used for gating out buz-

zes and clicks on mixdown — they have been tried on drum microphones to cut down on spill during recording, but both Peter and Nick find that the adjustment is rather too critical to use with complete confidence. The general attitude towards the 'toys' seems to be the very sensible one of 'In moderation — OK.'

Echo and reverberation facilities are provided by three EMT steel plates and an AKG BX20 reverberation unit. There are 32 channels of noise reduction (Dolby A361), and monitors are four Tannoy HPD's in Lockwood cabinets ("everyone's going back to them now, aren't they!"), driven by 2 Amcron DC300A's. "I'm always telling the engineers that they mustn't all end up by getting the same sound", says Richard, "and if anyone tries something new then I'll encourage it."

Perhaps the most vital asset in achieving the right sound is the right microphone — Audio International have over 50. The list reads something like this: AKG A's, 224's, 202's, D12's, D19's, D20's and C451's; Neumann SM69, plus KM84's, 83's, 88's, 86's, 87's, and 85's; STC 4038 (used for Brass and French Horn); Sennheiser MD 421 and 441's and Calrec CM1050's. Neumann U47 is the overall favourite in the studio because of its good performance on almost any instrument, probably a tribute to its extended low frequency response.

Upstairs at Audio International is the small 2 track studio and control room, which was originally going to be a reduction suite. The latter proposition was decided against in order to avoid shifting clients around too much, and because of the problems of shared equipment and parallel obsolescence with two multitrack studios in the same building. Equipment upstairs is based around Neve/Studer/Tannoys again, with a BCM 10 into 2, three B62 recorders and a Revox A700. Two Gates turntables, Spotmaster Cartridge, Neil Cassette recorders, Eventide Phaser, Compex Limiter and a strange Reverb unit made by a man called Willy Foss (?) round off the picture. Work here ranges from language courses to radio jingles and film soundtracks, and solo instrument albums for rarities like the Harp and Zither.

Rates at Audio International are £42 p/hour for 2, 4 and 16 track, £36 for 2 track, with an £8 p/hour surcharge for overtime. What more can we say — it speaks for itself doesn't it?



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CONTINENTAL STUDIO SPOTLIGHT

DUTCH MUSIC CENTRE

It's all very well enumerating the advantages of city locations for recording, but there comes a point where the disadvantages begin to outweigh the advantages, and all the musician wants is to retreat from the hassles of traffic, noise, smog and hordes of shoppers, taxi drivers and commuters. Not that Amsterdam is by any means the worst city in Europe for pollution from chemicals and people...

Baarn is a small town less than half an hour's drive from Amsterdam, but set in pleasantly rural surroundings. Three years ago Bert Van Rheenen, better known in his alter ego as Chiel Montagne — d.j. and telly personality — bought the studio, which he says "looked rather clinical at that time". He began rebuilding it and in a short period converted it into a place with atmosphere — with all the old tricks of subtle lighting,



plush carpets and the sort of interior decor that makes a studio a pleasant place to work in.

Certainly the artists who have so far used the D.M.C. think so. Most of them are Dutch: groups such as Champagne, Livin' Blues, Sweet D'Buster, Pandemonium, Luv, Breeze, Limousine and Spin — not household names anywhere but Holland, admittedly, but nonetheless providing the studio with a regular stream of bookings; Cleo Laine and John Dankworth have been in and apparently enjoyed recording there, so perhaps the D.M.C. is on the verge of a breakthrough with British artists.

Champagne's producer, Martin Duiser, says of the studio: "Apart from the high technical standard it's the casual, friendly atmosphere that makes recor-

ding easy. The engineers don't show off their technical know-how and don't try to force their own ideas on a producer, but they know exactly what you want, even when it's something hard to explain. They know their job."

Those included in this generous hand-out of praise include chief engineer John Sonneveld and his assistant Okkie Huysdens. Sonneveld followed up his training in classical music with a long stint as a bass player, but has for the last ten years been a full-time recording engineer; this studio has been his home for the last two. "According to experts," comments Bert, "John is Holland's best engineer". Okkie was a singer and bassist with Limousine for a long time, and still plays with a group called Rainbow-Train in addition to session work, songwriting, arranging, producing and working on his own solo projects. The third member of the technical team is Jan Rorive, the maintenance engineer. He also builds new gear when needed, and is currently looking into the possibilities of installing a computer-assisted board.

At the moment the D.M.C. desk is a 24 in/16 out Cadac with six echo sends and eight returns. Outboard gear is by Audio and Design, Cadac, Fairchild, Kepex and Gainbrain. A host of delay units, flangers, equalizers, harmonizers and echo units — too numerous for Bert to mention in detail — complement the desk and tape machines, which are a 16/24 track Ampex MM1000, a 2-track Ampex AG440B and a 2-track Studer A80. All are connected with Dolby A systems. Monitoring is by J.B.L. with Harman Kardon amps. There are four speaker systems for use in quadraphonic mixing.



Top, and left: two views of the console

Right: the studio from different angles and in different stages of readiness

For those more interested in knowing exactly how much elbow-room the D.M.C. has available, Studio one measures $15 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ metres, and Studio two $8 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. Out with the slide rules to convert to feet 'n' inches! Studio two has a hard wooden floor to capture the elusive "live" sound, and is particularly suited to the recording of strings. The main control room measures $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ metres. A third studio is under construction at the moment, and this will be used for mixing, overdubbing and vocals. Another control room is also on the way. The layout of the main studio allows band members either to face the glass partition or to do their bit in privacy, around the corner, and out of sight.

Lubrication

There are four headphone units on hand and a large number of mikes from Schoeps, Electro-Voice (RE 20's), AKG (condenser mikes), and Neumann. Less technical gear is at the ready in the recreation room; table football, pinball, billiards, table-tennis and a telly. And of course should the whistle require lubrication there's always the bar.

Bert was anxious that we mention the non-technical staff too: there's an accountant called André who keeps tropical fish, and a secretary called Tilly. Her job includes managing the bookings ledger, keeping the boys well supplied with food and drink... "and she sees to it that there's a clean pair of socks for Okkie" chuckles Bert. Finally there's Han, who makes coffee every morning and clears up the mess of the preceding day. Bert himself is very modest about his job as The Boss: he describes himself as the only manager in Holland who is employed by his employees.

The Dutch Music Centre keeps going day and night, according to the whims, and the financial inducements, of the artists. The clock does not rule going home times or meal times. Flexibility, in short, is the watchword. One might also mention coziness, comfort and coffee, courtesy of Han. The name is Dutch Music Centre; the address is Goeman Borgesiuslaan 19, Baarn; the phone number is 021154-13374. The rest is up to you.



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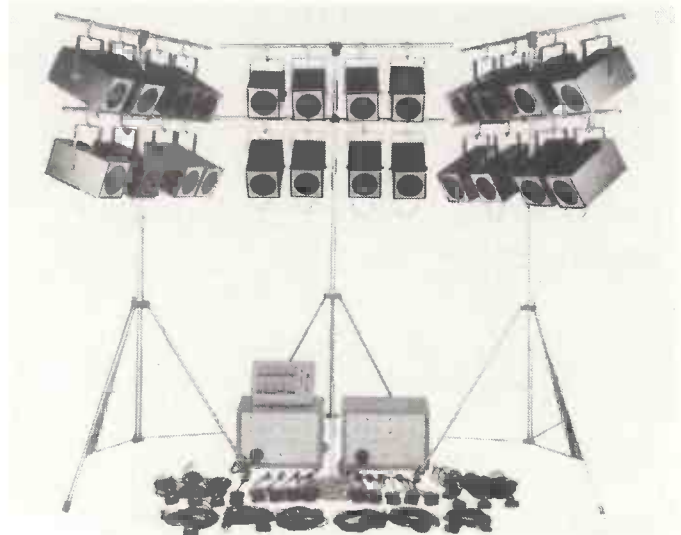
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GUITARIST, 16, competent but inexperienced wishes to join/form group in N.W. London area. Please phone Ruislip 39689.

WRITER/LYRICIST would like to contact musicians, composers, singers, groups, with view to creating new material and to do something with it. Any style. Mark Harrison 01-584 1130.

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8585 Snare Drm w/ tone cont.....	98-74	8565 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	46-88	6872 'Stage Master' Cym std.....	19-54			7512 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	40-05	7569 Concert Tom Tom set.....	241-02
8685 Snare Drm w/ tone cont.....	111-16	8566 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	52-89	6875 'Stage Master' Hi-Hat std.....	32-87			7513 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	42-00	7570 Concert Tom Tom 8-pc set.....	411-00
8555 Sna e Drm w/ tone cont.....	85-62	8569 Concert Tom Tom set.....	244-23	6790 'Stage King' Drummer's throne pedal.....	43-05			SA7512 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	40-05	7588 Snare Drm w/ tone cont.....	57-22
8512 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	51-85	8570 'Augustar' Tom Tom Concert set.....	418-95	6740 'Hi-Beat' Drm pedal.....	29-93			SA7513 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	42-00	7576 Snare Drm w/ tone cont.....	44-80
8513 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	54-99	6898 Concert Tom Tom std.....	32-10	6681 Single Tom Tom hldr.....	16-82			TD7812 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	47-73	SA7516 Snare Drm w/ tone cont.....	44-80
8514 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	63-64	6910 Stage Star Snare std.....	34-05	6682 Double Tom Tom hldr.....	22-68			TD7813 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	54-08	7556 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	51-70
8515 Tom Tom w/ tone cont.....	68-10	6912 Stage Star Cym std.....	31-40	6675 Double Concert Tom Tom hldr.....	16-12			7558 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	23-10	7577 'Hi-Ace' Snare Drum std.....	27-77
6899 Double Tom Tom stand.....	33-56	6914 Stage Star Cym std.....	39-77	6580 Bass Drum spurs.....	8-02			7560 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	28-80	6882 'Hi-Ace' Cymbal std.....	20-79
8556 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	23-79	6915 Stage Star Hi-Hat std.....	42-70	6552 Tone Control.....	2-20			7562 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....	31-05	6885 'Hi-Ace' Hi-Hat std w/die cast pedal.....	31-05
8558 Concert Tom Tom w/hldr.....				6080 Drum Sticks—							

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Elkarhapsody 490.....	368-80
Preludio 22L.....	1063-29
Elkarhapsody 610.....	607-73
Elkasoloist 505.....	369-31
Elka 'String Bass' Pedalboard.....	73-18
Crescendo 303.....	1725-64
Artist 606.....	2061-69
Artist 707.....	2905-86
Rm. 100 amp.....	303-82
Elkatone 610PR.....	592-17
Elkatone 615PRS.....	734-83
Elkavox 77P.....	1741-72

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VIP 600.....	873-96
Pro Elec Piano.....	476-85
Transivox TX1.....	1013-53
Transivox TX2.....	1096-61
Transivox TX10M.....	1134-82
Scandalli 137.....	342-27
Scandalli XIV.....	428-67
Scandalli Super IV.....	440-30
Scandalli Super VI.....	586-51
Polyfonico XIV.....	438-64
A251 Cordovox.....	3346-30
Model Super IV.....	440-31
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307 Korg Polyphonic II.....	945-85
308 Korg 770.....	474-55

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Acoustic Sound Systems	96	Guild	78	Premier	50
AKG	26	Hill	70	Roost	37
Allen and Heath	17	Hohner	49	Rose-Morris	21, 71
Ampeg	33	Holiday Music	79	RSD	9
Andertons	36	Hornby Skewes	75		
Archbishop of Canterbury	52				
Audio International	90	ITA	84	Scenic Sounds	44
				Scotland the Brave	82
Beyer	6	James How	106	Shure	69
Biggles Music	76			Simon King Music	64
		Kemble	58, IBC	Sonor	22
Canary	11	Kingfisher	80	Soundout Productions	45
Cerebrum	96	Klark Teknik	63	Soundwave	46
Cetec	IFC			Strings & Things	37, 48, 62
Cookes	85	Laney	48	Summerfield	29
Cripple Creek	52				
Custom Sound	80	Macinnes	40	Tannoy	24
		MM Electronics	18, 25	Telecomms	40
Dave Simms	76	Music Labs	60	Theatre Projects	28
Dutch Music Centre	91				
		Norlin	12	Woodroffe's	54
Eastwood	72			Woods of Bolton	34
Electrosonics	OBC	Peavey	41		
Electrovoice	7	Phoenix	57	Zephyr House	53
GMS	59, 97				



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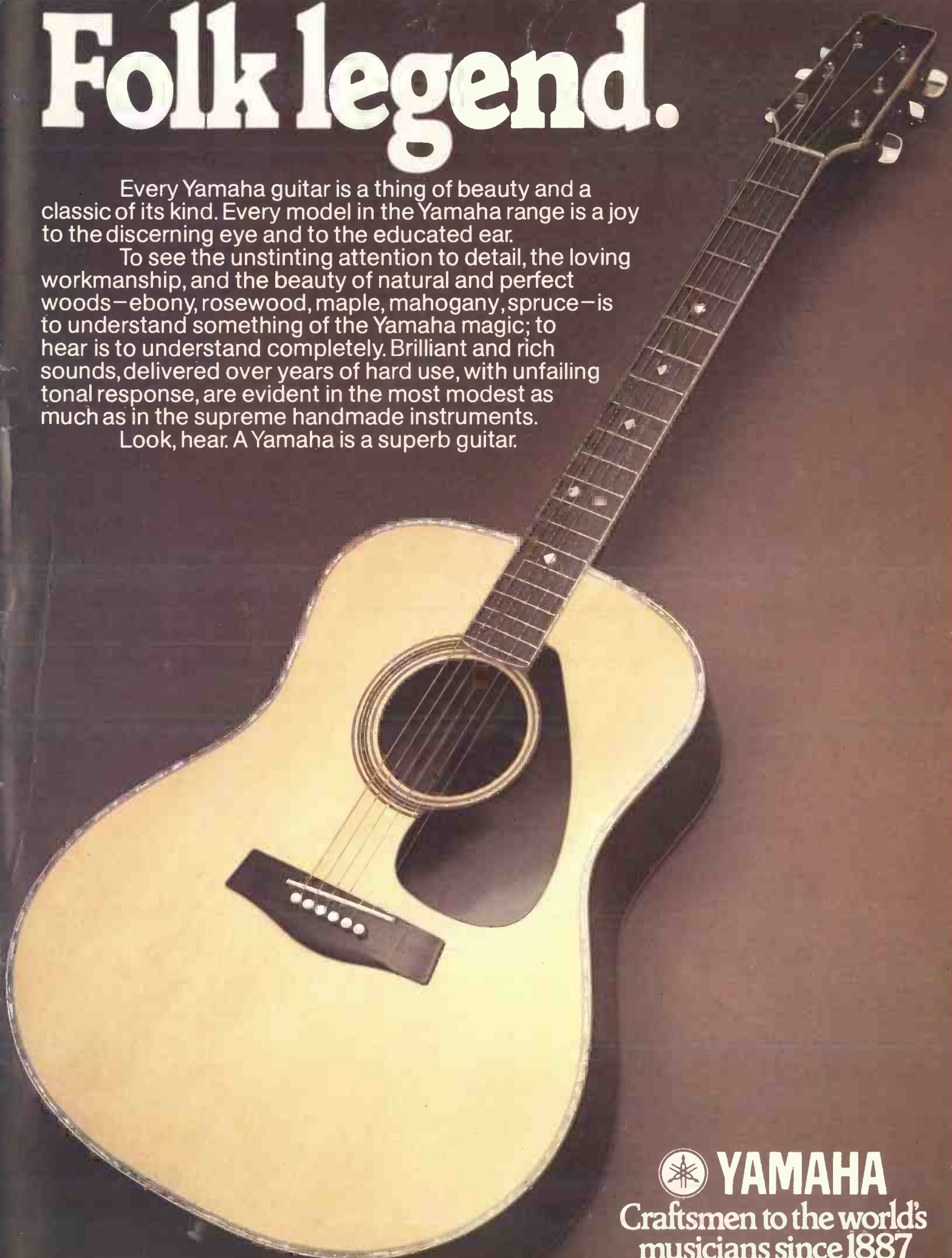
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