SPECIAL ISSUE

MUSICIAN

PLAYER & LISTENER

No. 22 January, 1980 $1.50

SPECIAL 70'S ISSUE

Bangs and Palmer on 70s Rock and Jazz

Musician's Poll Winners

STEVIE WONDER

Fripp: The New Realism

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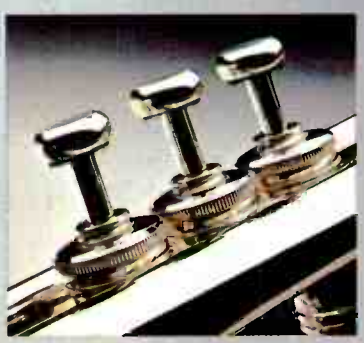

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MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

NO. 22, JANUARY, 1980

Rock in the Seventies. A look back at the highlights and lowlights of a time when rock music was making more good money and less good music than ever before. Lester Bangs slashes and burns.

Jazz in the Seventies. An exciting time wherein fusion comes and goes, the mainstream strengthens and grows and a whole new movement (the AACM) is born, promising much for the future. Robert Palmer reports.

Stevie Wonder is the hands down winner as musician of the decade. His new album's scope goes beyond anything he's ever done with incredible orchestration and a cosmological story line that may be missed without a closer look. V. Gaits arrives.

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Cover Photo by Waring Abbott

Silence. The Step Beyond.

Even more important than what an effect adds to your performance is what it doesn't add. Noise—pops, clicks, and hiss can make a good effect virtually unusable in a performance. That's where BOSS effects are different, and it's a difference you'll notice from the moment you turn them on.

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Publishers Letter

Dividing life into ten year segments is one of those journalistic afflictions that seems to spring more from the very un-journalistic belief that ten is a magic number than from real events and the true rhythms of history. We don't worry about that, though, because it's never a bad idea to review past sins, confess, and bolt headlong into the future with a clear conscience.

So here at *Musician* we're doing just that, in both this issue and the next. In addition to asking Lester Bangs what he thought of rock (ouch!) and Robert Palmer what he thought jazz had been up to, we asked the musicians themselves what they thought; this in the form of a survey questionnaire we sent out awhile back. The results of the poll were quite surprising — see pages 54 and 55 for more. Along with the poll questions, musicians encompassing a wide range of styles answered essay questions and were interviewed on the subject of the changes they feel are coming in the Eighties, both in their own music and in the overall scene. The answers are fascinating and diverse and will be published at length next issue.

Everyone's choice, including *Musician*'s staff, for Musician of the Decade was Stevie Wonder. No words can adequately describe the incredible love, power and beauty of his music, nor the consummate technical skills he seems to posses in seemingly unending abundance. His latest work is an astonishing step beyond the popular song form that's he's been using for so long. It's not as immediately accessible as his past work but there's even more within, as our cover story reveals. We hope people will give it the listening time it needs to be truly comprehended and appreciated.

We're honored to have Robert Fripp writing a regular column for us, beginning in this issue. There's no longer any doubt that 1979 has brought major and lasting changes to the record business and Fripp's "New Realism" deals directly with the abuses of the past and proposes changes in budgets and business attitudes for the future.

On second thought, with all the changes going on in the music business right now, maybe it really is the right time to look backwards in preparation for the future. A great majority of the musicians we interviewed on the subject thought so, predicting big changes ahead. See us next issue for their answers.

Letters

STORMY WEATHER

Clint Roswell's Montreux '79 wrap-up in your Eno issue was a masterpiece of slanted journalism. Roswell was obviously prejudiced against Weather Report from the start the way he stacks complaint after complaint against America's premier jazz group. Could any band really act the way Roswell portrays them or was he adding his personal opinion to flavor the facts? That is the lowest form of reporting. He makes Wayne Shorter sound like little Orphan Annie and Jaco and Zawinul sound like Nixon and Agnew. Did Roswell have an axe to grind? Is this his way of getting even because he wasn't granted an interview?
Ross Turner
Sausalito, Cal.

ENDLESS EGOS

Right on to Clint Roswell's story on Montreux 1979! It's about time someone gave an elbow in the ribs to Weather Report for the out-and-out crap they've been pulling on stage lately. Endless jamming and endless egos is what the band has turned into and someone should tell them. WR used to be my alltime favorite band, but after seeing them live recently, I've changed my mind. Somebody should remind Jaco P. that a little humility can go a long way. There's more exciting things than him going on in music, and he should get hip to the idea.
Joe Simpson
San Francisco, Cal.

DYLAN DEFENSE

As a born-again Christian, amateur singer/songwriter/guitarist and music store owner, I read Vic Garbarini's review of Bob Dylan's latest release with some disappointment. I was not surprised at the negative approach of this piece but must take exception to these points:

There are no "limitations of the religious form", musically speaking, as evidenced by such as Phil Keaggy, "Love Song", Chuck Girard and recently Bob Dylan. Rather the opposite is true, since the finite mind cannot comprehend the inspirational sources and avenues of expression available through the Holy Spirit.
James L. Mathison
Rochester, N.H.

LEGALIZE REGGAE

Let's face it. Rock 'n' Roll has seen better times. The "new wave" bands are just keeping it alive, but nothing new is happening. Music needs a lift. Disco is nice for dancing, but people still need music to listen to. I really honestly believe that with the right exposure Reggae can take over the charts like Disco did a few short years ago. Please give this new sound a chance. It's the best. Music needs a breath of fresh air. Rock has played itself to the max; Disco is wearing on everyone and the fans need something new. Give them Reggae and they'll love it. Reggae is another bag; it's something else. The sound is love and you can't beat that.
Rajah Monsour
Chicago, Ill.

MORE DAN

Your magazine is excellent! The recent interview with Steely Dan was extremely well done — the writer displayed a skill becoming rare in other music journals, that is, appropriately mixing technical content, anecdotal bits, and quotes.

Musician simply gets better with every issue!
Paul Kaza
Colchester, Vt.

WHERE'S THE BEAR?

What's with the Bear?! He walks off into the night laughing and that's the end of the story? That's the last we hear of him? I demand to know what happened. Did he go on to cut records, did he achieve stardom, did he disco, did he eventually run for Senator?
Barry Lamur
Newark, N.J.
Ed. — Oops, sorry, folks. One of those printers devils made off with the "Continued Next Month" at the end. See Part II in this issue.

MORE SOLO SONNY

Regarding Chip Stern's review of Sonny Rollins' new album *Don't Ask*, I am one of those "greatest fans' of Sonny Rollins that he spoke of in the review. He is right, Sonny is *transcendent* in a live performance. I have heard him live do unaccompanied tenor and it was out of this world. I have also been waiting and hoping that he would make a completely unaccompanied record. I will buy his new album too, but please, Sonny, make an album completely unaccompanied.
Mary Kramer
Redondo Beach, Cal.

DEMON DISCO

Why so quiet all of a sudden on the demon disco? Disco has been taking a national nosedive lately on radio, in record stores and on the dance floors. Rock dance clubs are on their way back in and disco on its way out. Isn't it the serious music presses' responsibility to publicize this fact and hopefully hasten its demise. Live music and musicians have been suffering long enough with this silly, sticky goo all over us and thank goodness it's receding.
Kim Ellis
NYC, NY

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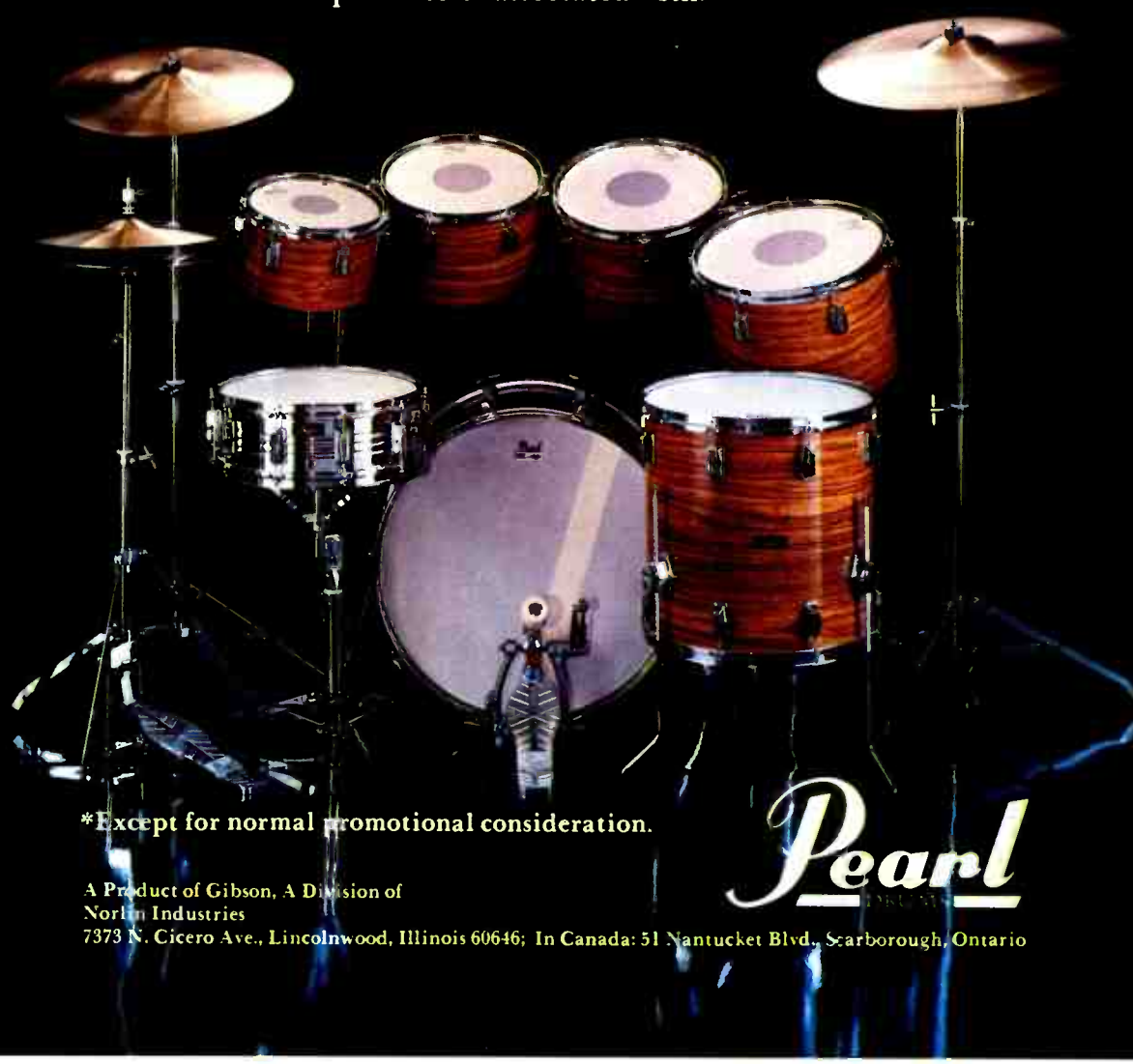

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RECORD NEWS

By Robert Ford

THE NEW RECORD BIZ

In the past decade the record business has changed from a risky volatile business filled with colorful entrepreneurs flying on the seat of their pants into a political, plodding industry dominated by a handful of multi-national conglomerates. While the passing of the old fashioned record men has brought an end to much of the double dealing and chicanery that once marked the music business (though many things are still not exactly kosher), the old guys had the type of creativity and street smarts that the record business today sorely lacks. The recent industry-wide slump may teach the corporations that you can't market records the way you market soap. Even at its most commercial, music is still basically an art, and it is almost impossible to figure out why some records sell and some don't.

Hopefully the industry will pay less attention to its accountants and computer programmers and more attention to its consumers in the 80s.

But don't expect too much. Look for more giant corporations to try to get into the record business in the next few years. Gulf & Western has already made one aborted attempt (EMI) to buy into the star maker machinery and they have made no secret of the fact that they are still looking. American Can now has a major interest in the nation's largest distribution network, Pickwick, and there has been some speculation that a record label may one day come out of this association. Look for the federal government to take an increasing interest in the record business in the near future. With so much money passing hands and so few people getting their hands on it, it won't be too long before Uncle Sam starts asking a few more questions about how this largely unregulated business operates.

CHANGING PARTNERS

The corporate musical chairs that has been going on in recent months continues with **MCA** reorganizing itself for the second time in less than a year. The much ballyhooed **Infinity** label is no more with Ron Alexenburg and his fat paycheck being the major casualties. The label has not done badly for a brand new operation, but apparently MCA moguls expected Alexenburg to set the world on fire in a year. It takes a long time for an operation the size of Infinity to establish an artist roster that can be competitive with the majors. Rumors are rampant that the **RCA** Record division is up for sale. The label has not done all that well in recent years, but the recent aquisition of the **A&M** line for distribution should have given the label a shot in the arm. Buyers currently rumored include the Chicago-based Ovation corporation and the aforementioned Gulf & Western. But don't put too much credence in this one until the papers are signed. Now that Gulf & Western's Paramount Pictures has backed out of the **EMI** deal the English conglomerate has fallen on very hard times. Reports are the company is now living hand to mouth with an infusion of cash needed desperately.

Another English record company that had hit hard times is British **Decca**. But the once dominant force in the English music scene has been swallowed up by those flying dutchmen from **Polygram**. Included in the deal is New York based **London** Records which once boasted an impressive catalog ranging from the Rolling Stones to Mantovani. But like so many other companies, the record business passed London and British Decca by and the woefully mismanaged company has been struggling for the last few years.

MORE IS TOO MUCH

And speaking of Polygram's flying dutchmen, the conglomerate has reportedly flown in three accountants from Holland to look at the books at **Casablanca** Records. While Casablanca has had great success with the Village People and Donna Summer, the label is losing money thanks to the spectacularly unsuccessful solo albums by the members of Kiss and the large sums of money thrown away promoting artists like Patti Brooks, Lenny & Squiggy, Paul Jabara and Angel. Polygram distributes the Neal Bogart-headed label, but they must be wondering how could a label with three of the hottest acts in show business be losing money. And don't expect Casablanca's hot acts to remain hot too much longer as Bogart has put out much too much product on all of them and the public is fast approaching the saturation point. Donna Summer is becoming particularly over-exposed with records coming out on her almost weekly. Doesn't anyone remember what over-exposure did to Elton John?

TAPING DISPUTE

The hottest controversy in the industry concerns the practice of radio stations playing complete albums uninterrupted. The labels claim that this gives consumers a chance to tape the albums and hurts sales. Radio says that while it is true that some people do tape complete albums off the radio, many other people are induced to buy the album by hearing the whole thing on radio. One point that should be made is that radio has been encouraged to play complete albums by record promotion men who have tried to create as much excitement as possible in their markets. Since this practice has gone on for years, it would seem that the labels are looking to use radio as a scapegoat for its slumping sales. Maybe people wouldn't tape albums off the radio if they weren't priced so high?

THE PHYSICS OF FAME

We know they're making a TV movie about Flora Purim because she was busted for cocaine, put in the slam and threatened with deportation, not just because she sings. But a little crime, a little music, how can you lose? Talia Shire is set to play Purim and Purim is working on the music. There will also be a book. Jazz is back.

THERE'S A RIOT GOIN' ON

Sharp observers have already noticed that the disco drug helps to cool out the ghettos, but in South Africa, fun spot for folks of all races, they're set to take it a notch further. A company is marketing an anti-riot truck with disco speakers on the outside. It drives into the middle of a riot, everybody hears dat beat, puts down their guns and proceeds to boogie. The idea is not only despicable, it's stupid. I can feel it all over.

1980

Looking Back:
Pop's well-oiled machinery machinery synthesized everything from Disco to Dylan into slick, polished product.

By Cris Cioe

Pop

As eruptive and energetic as the 60's were — Michael Gregory Jackson has a song on his new album, *Heart and Center*, that is dedicated to both Jimi Hendrix and Albert Ayler, which is an archetypal 60's couple worth pondering — so have the 70's been a time of slick polishing and synthesizing of pop music's immediate past into a well-oiled money-making machine. Surely, some great pop has emerged in the last ten years, but before we look at the major trends and beautiful bends over the past decade, it's interesting to note just how much the meaning of the word itself changed during the 70's. And ironically, in the very cyclical manner that American popular culture works, some of the deepest musical values from the 60's are coming around again, as popular taste reasserts its ultimate control over the airwaves.

Because of the way AM radio was set up in the 60's, pop music included everything from soul to rock to crooners like Tom Jones. By 1965, the music force that allowed this to happen was Motown.

The producers really made pop the musical money machine it has become. Thom Bell from Philadelphia started it all with the immaculately polished Philly sound while Barry White can be thanked for spawning disco. Elton John and Paul McCartney epitomized the singer/songwriter/producer selling millions to the soft-rock crowd.

Once the Supremes, the Four Tops, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, the Temptations, et al had crossed over from the R&B charts to top-40 stations, they permanently broadened the Motown audience base. All pop music changed irrevocably. The Beatles, on *Revolver*, experimented with Motown-like shuffle and horn arrangements. The Rolling Stones kept a more basic rock instrumentation, but adopted Motown figures and rhythms to their format (listen to the rhythmic and riffing relationships between "Satisfaction" and Martha and the Vandellas' "Nowhere To Run"). At the time, some rock musicians criticized Motown as being "too slick," but the fact is that several key Motown musicians were the models for most aspiring rockers. For example, Motown bassist James Jamerson and drummer Benny Benjamin literally created a driving, uptempo backbeat, laced with Jamerson's ultra-precise-yet-relaxed eighth-notes, that became the rhythmic basis for everything from the Memphis Sound to post — "Jumpin' Jack Flash" Rolling Stones. Meanwhile, Motown itself began to adopt rock guitar sounds and techniques, so that during the latter part of the decade, cross-influences and styles made for an incredibly diverse and rich playlist on the radio.

By 1970, though, things had changed. Looking at the Billboard Hot 100 from January of that year, it's clear that rock reigned supreme. The advent of album-oriented FM rock stations, massive album sales and rock criticism had catapulted bands like the two aforementioned English groups, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Led Zeppelin, and Iron Butterfly to mega-stardom. For a couple of years rock dominated the pop market tremendously, and in the process began to wipe away the diversity and range that had existed on the radio going into the 70's. Soul classics still made the top-40 (including anything by James Brown, the Jackson 5's early hits like "I Want You Back," Mel and Tim's wonderful "Backfield In Motion," or Tyrone Davis singing the heart-rending "If I Could Turn Back The Hands of Time"), but already rock's hegemony had helped to stratify pop music, and in this period soul-to-pop crossover declined. And yet, one production sound emerged in the early 70's that not only produced a long string of pop hits, but also spawned the greatest record producer this decade has seen so far.

Philadelphian Thom Bell was a member of the vocal group, the Romeos as a very young man, and got his start songwriting for the Cameo-Parkway label. He had his first hits with the Delfonics: "La La Means I Love You" and "Didn't I Blow Your Mind (This Time)," starting in the late 60's. But it was a couple of years later, first with the Stylistics and ultimately, the Spinners, that Bell hit his stride. As a writer-arranger-producer, he consistently came up with sophisticated charts, moving and emotional lyrics, and inspired performances from his musicians. The Stylistics, whose silky sound was an extension of the Moonglows/Five Keys 50's doo-wop style, were matched with eerily spacious arrangements on such first-rank masterpieces as "Betcha By Golly Wow," "You Are Everything" featuring the best use of the electric sitar sound on any pop single of the time), and "People Make The World Go Round." This last tune featured an impressive 5/4 instrumental break with marimba, percussion and flute).

Bell has worked with numerous singers and groups — from Elton John to Dionne Warwicke — but always employed an unvarying group of high-calibre Philly session players to maintain a dizzyingly consistent sound. This group includes Bob Babbitt on bass (who also worked at Motown in the 60's), Larry Washington on congas, and Andrew Smith on drums. The entire sound coalesced in its most perfect form when Bell first produced the

continued on page 28

Spinners (another former Motown group) in 1972. The first 45 — "I'll Be Around" b/w "How Could I Let You Get Away" — led to a long string of hits that combined repeated commercial success with a near-cinematic lushness and emotional depth. Seemingly stock musical devices, which have turned to shlock in the hands of lesser producers — are transcendent jewels of understated elegance in Bell's production scheme. Suspended fourths take on fresh resonance in a song like "Living A Little, Laughing A Little." In the same song, an introductory chorus of french horns simulate a call to the fox hunt, and it makes perfect sense, a king of tragic-comic grandeur that fits the lyric like a well-worn glove. Or note the classy, impressionistic harmonic influence in "Could It Be I'm Falling In Love," as the verses modulate up a minor third from the chorus. But most of all, it was Bell's use and direction of Phillippe Wynne's stately voice, always controlled as he stepped out at the ending of a song to testify with the lyrics, that jumped out of the radio. This is one of the eternal voices in pop, the kind of voice that makes you believe absolutely in a "Mighty Love," or in a "One Of A Kind (Love Affair)," or anything else he has sung about. Interestingly, Wynne is now singing with the Funkadelic (obviously one of the smartest expansion teams in pop today).

Of course, the Philadephia Soul sound wasn't the only idiom getting more complex in the early 70's. The general trend toward increased multi-track recording paralleled the music industry's growing awareness of demographics and marketing. By 1971, new stars and sounds emerged that were pitched to die-hard rock fans while enticing a new audience less interested in harshness. At the same time, rock and roll became a genre and not the dominant pop sound. The January, 1971 Billboard Hot 100 graphically depicts some of the trends that would develop over the next decade. The most obvious was the "soft rock" sound, which came in high and hard that year with America, James Taylor, Bread, Linda Ronstadt, Jim Croce, John Denver, Loggins and Messina, Gordon Lightfoot, etc. In the soft rock scheme of things, great emphasis is placed on a clean sound in the rhythm section. Producer Peter Asher and engineer Val Garay, working with Ronstadt and Taylor orignally, developed distinct and immaculate drum and bass sounds, which had as much to do with miking technique and engineering as with the players involved. Over such tracks, a traditionally raunchy guitar part sounds distanced and slightly separate, quite different from the kind of "live" production sound that a band like Creedence Clearwater Revival had purveyed so successfully a mere year and a half before.

In the soft rock vein several artists really found themselves though, and produced some moving work. For example, James Taylor and Carly Simon's "Mockingbird," a remake of the Inez and Charlie Foxx chestnut from the early 60's, stands on its own as an all-time great pop single. Mac Rebennack's flavorful organ playing and Michael Brecker's sweet and hot tenor sax solo, combined with the general state-of-the-art good-timey feeling of the song are the perfect backdrop for these singers and their approach. Another singer who quickly established a soulful presence within the soft rock framework was Phoebe Snow. "Poetry Man," which shimmered around Zoot Sims gorgeous tenor solo, can also take its place in the 70's pop pantheon. Ex-Beatles producer George Martin created a squeaky-clean, neo-folkish sound with the the group America, and one song especially, "The Tin Man," always struck me as a great minimalist top-40 fare. As a band, Fleetwood Mac found a very cozy niche in the soft rock mansion, and its semi-awesome rhythm section of bassist John McVie and Mick Fleetwood on tubs came up with the most chugging grooves in the genre as a whole.

Meanwhile, in the pop-soul arena, several important personalities and one behemoth trend developed in the 70's. Sly Stone toned down his funk-rock anthems to produce some movingly personal pop hits. First with the 45 "Family Affair" and then on the entire *Fresh* LP, Sly developed a tight-knit, punchy 16th-note funk that influenced everyone from jazz players like Herbie Hancock and Miles Davis to early disco-funk groups like Kool and the Gang, B.T. Express and the Ohio Players. *Fresh* is an undeniable classic, and drummer Andy Newmark introduced a new freedom to the bar line and rhythmic displacement in funk music. Sly's lyrics conjured up jagged interior landscapes that matched the song's herky-jerky fluidity (especially on the aptly-named opening track, "In Time"). Curtis Mayfield also cut a deep swatch through these years with such popping and socially relevant numbers as "If There's A Hell Below (We're All Gonna Go)." This tune features one of my favorite pop lyrics of that era: after cataloguing a depressing list of social ills and evils, Curtis ironically caps it off in his sweet falsetto: "and Nixon's talking about 'Don't worry' . . . " Of course, soon afterwards, "Superfly" established Mayfield as a major pop star, and this must be heard as one of the most exciting soundtracks ever.

Stevie Wonder's 70's apotheosis, starting with *Music Of My Mind* and *Talking Book*, not only changed pop music, but also established him as the only pop artist who could single-handedly start musical trends and even sounds happening. His singles have summed

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TERRY ALLEN

Moving into the '70's certain groups had a lock on the top slots of the record surveys. Stevie Wonder, the Temps, the Supremes and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles were among the stars that headed the list of successful Motown artists who consistently placed their records in the top 10. Sly and the Family Stone brought a comparatively hard edge to the sound, delivering the message while crossing into rock-oriented territory. Sly's success at Woodstock made him seem invincible, a balanced concoction of flash and funk-rock that looked to be around for awhile. And, of course, there was James Brown, the godfather, minister of the Super Heavy Funk. With a band that roared like lions in heat, Brown complimented that awesome barrage of rhythm and steaming horns with energetic physical performances that would leave his exhausted audiences in a cold sweat. To say that James Brown was a hit producing chart buster would greatly understate his impact: He acted as an inspiration to Afro-American culture and essentially cultivated musical concepts that would affect American music for the rest of the decade.

Some observers feared that R&B would lose its innocence to the commercial soul boom, that popular black music would fall prey to the large scale business of crossing over into mega-bucks. Similar concerns erupted in 1969, when gospel hit the airwaves via Edwin Hawkins "Oh Happy Day." The result was joy mixed with uneasy confusion on the part of some black DJ's and listeners as to how to handle the tender task of promoting the gospel. Though not to the same extent, and with different reasons, similar fears were being aired as R&B was being monitored by a wide span of businessmen throughout the industry. When executives began to realize that this music had the potential to rake in big money, the heavy machinery started to crank. Atlantic Records proclaimed "Soul Music" as "The sales leader of the pop field," and consequently added Roberta Flack, The Spinners, Donny Hathaway and Blue Magic to their catalogue. When Columbia Records sought to bolster their R&B roster, they simply shopped around and acquired Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff's Neptune Company which would become the now famous Philadelphia International label. The recording quality, promotion, and overall production of R&B discs would improve to insure more crossover product. At the same time, Motown was shocked when two of its leading stars decided that it was time to pursue solo careers. When Diana Ross left the Supremes and Eddie Kendricks waved goodbye to the Temps, two of R&B's most successful outfits found themselves in precarious situations.

During this period there were musical developments outside the R&B sphere that were to have a significant impact on popular black music. In 1970, Miles Davis' "Bitches Brew" would stupefy his traditional "Jazz" following, but would also point the way to new directions in improvised structures as the possibilities of jazz playing to larger audiences loomed in the future. In 1971, Jimi Hendrix' last legitimate recording, "The Cry of Love," would culminate a style that would spawn a new breed of electric guitarists, laying the basis for rhythmic technique, solid construction, and recording innovation that would influence a wide range of musicians including Ernie Isley, Robin Trower and David Sancious. The blues form also experienced a "revival" of sorts, as the influences (and sometimes blatant theft) of BB King, Muddy Waters, Slim Harpo and others found a welcome home in the styles and repertoires of many white musicians.

In 1972-74, Stevie Wonder's "Music of My Mind," "Talking Book" and "Innervisions" albums confirmed the beliefs of many that he had taken over as creative leader of the Motown brigade. The child prodigy had come of age in all avenues of his musical growth. His insights into the moral and spiritual developments of his generation and culture brought him the respect and adoration from all who were touched by his music. Stevie wasn't the only artist making waves though. Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway's smooth, soulful approach lifted them high on the charts with four albums on the surveys between them. Al Green and Marvin Gaye achieved their due stature through the classics "Let's Stay Together" and "What's Goin On" respectively. Philly International broke into the market heavily with hits by the O Jays, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, Billy Paul and the MFSB Orchestra. The sound of Philly had arrived, and R&B was in a healthy state. With more artists crossing over into the pop charts and artist rosters being enlarged, new groups were coming up rapidly and established musicians were receiving more airplay. Groups such as War, New Birth and the Ohio Players were being discovered by eager audiences in an expanding market, while hovering in the wings a man named George Clinton was busy priming his funk mob for the masses. Though Funkadelic's first LP's achieved only moderate success, a strong cult following was already in its embryonic stages. With "Maggot Brain" and "Cosmic Slop," Clinton's forces were gaining momentum and recognition as one of the more experimental guitar-oriented bands in rock or R&B. These cats could funk.

In 1973, Herbie Hancock's "Headhunters" LP would be the first jazz album to sell a million copies. Hancock, Donald Byrd and other jazz mainstays saw an opportunity to take the music to younger audiences by changing the pulse and the funktion of the rhythm section, all with the supposed intention of bringing improvised music to the masses. Funk had arrived as a method by which "Jazz" performers could boost their careers, but as time passed, it evolved into methodical approach which too many would blindly follow and few would succeed at. At approximately the same time, some R&B bands were slowly

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Souled Out:

By mid-decade soul music had been trampled underfoot by the dancing fools of the disco generation.

Soul

By Peter Giron

Stevie Wonder

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ALLEN TANNENBAUM

The Seventies were labelled the Me Generation and it stuck. John Lennon started it by not believing in Beatles; Neil Young survived it if nothing else; and Mick Jagger positively flourished in it. Herein lies seven others who epitomized the time.

David Bowie once said he made records in the Seventies so he would remember what they were like. Similarly, my list of the top records of the last decade is merely a study in what my particular passions were, rather than any definitive aesthetic judgment. For me, the Seventies were characterized by a hedonistic glorification of the ego. Gone were the communal themes of peace and love and, in their place, a radical narcissism took root that stressed the demands of the individual. While the Sixties offered us a glimpse of Utopia, the Seventies showed us our own private hells. From pagan democracy to world-weary isolationism, from bell-bottoms to leather, the Seventies hardened stances, and made explicit what was only suggested in the previous decade.

Nevertheless, the Seventies were an exciting period for rock 'n' roll, as it charted the decade's descent into decadence. If there was not a single album like *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club* to perfectly sum up the time, there were still LP's that did manage to capture the period like a Polaroid snap. The Stones, David Bowie, The Who, Bob Dylan and Lou Reed all survived the Sixties to turn in productive and important work in the Seventies, while this past decade was not quite as kind to the likes of the Beatles, the Beach Boys, the Grateful Dead, Traffic or the Byrds, all of whom suffered, if not commercially, then at least, artistically. Again, the theme of the Seventies was survival and the price it exacted on the survivors. The best works of the last decade shared that quality of toughness combined with fear; hardened cynicism masking an aching heart . . . Here is my list of snapshots of the decade.

1. *Exile On Main Street* — **Rolling Stones** (Rolling Stones Records). The Seventies were very profitable for the Stones, especially Mick Jagger, who perfectly mirrored the period's fascination with self. This double album came sandwiched in 1972 between two other impressive efforts, first, in 1971, *Sticky Fingers* and, following it, in 1973, *Goat's Head Soup*. This trilogy of drugs, sex and dulled disillusionment sums up the decade with shattering explicitness. *Exile* foreshadows the new wave rock renaissance with its dense, swirling production, replacing Phil Spector's classic wall-of-sound with a relentless wall-of-noise. Although the Stones released two disastrous albums later on, *Black and Blue* and the throw-away *Love You Live*, they came back strong with *Some Girls*, probably the best album of 1978. The Stones always managed to remain one step ahead of the competition. Like Muhammed Ali leaving the heavyweight division to retire, rock 'n' roll will be a mighty dull place when the Stones decide to call it quits, though it doesn't appear likely they'll do it too soon. The Stones have made a career of being "soul survivors." Of all their Sixties contemporaries, the Stones alone, perhaps in tandem with the Who, have lived out the decade in style.

2. *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* — **David Bowie** (RCA). Along with Mick Jagger, David Bowie brought rock 'n' roll into a phase of self-consciousness that literally mocked and parodied the genre's once-unreflective naivete. The consummate poseur. Bowie played the Great Impostor, stretching and distorting the rock musical form until it served his own self-centered purposes. From *Hunky Dory* through *Ziggy* to *Aladin Sane*, Bowie set out to dismantle and examine the essence of pop stardom. *Ziggy Stardust*, though, was Bowie's 1972 masterpiece — a chilling evocation of some indeterminate future where rock idols became gods, only to have their clay feet brutally exposed. *Ziggy* does indeed summarize most of Bowie's obsessions, but at the same time, records like *Young Americans*, *Station to Station*, *Low* and *Heroes* pushed rock 'n' roll into the realm of experimentation and innovation for a wider audience than ever before. Bowie's narcissism and dalliance with multiple personalities epitomized the lizard-like quality of the Seventies, where identities took on quicksilver shifts. The importance of David Bowie's work in the past ten years cannot be underestimated — he stripped his ego down to zero and created a body of work that mirrors man's fascination with his own reflection. Like poor Narcissus learned, this is dangerous turf to tread, and Mr. Bowie, the Thin White Duke, the Diamond Dog, David, Thomas Newton, The Man Who Fell To Earth, knows this only too well. His work reflects this razor-sharp double-edge and that is certainly its lasting relevance.

3. *Loaded* — **Velvet Underground** (Cotillion). The same label that brought you the Woodstock LP put out this final Velvets album, and, although true connoisseurs will tell you the Lou Reed-led outfit put out more important records, *Loaded* was remarkable in its prescience. Appearing in 1970, this is still Lou

cont. on next page

I, Me, Mine:
A disillusioned decades' decadent delights. The ten best.

By Roy Trakin

Rock

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Reed's most impressive work as a songwriter, though do not forget his solo output during this period, which included stand-outs like *Berlin*, *Transformer*, the grossly underrated *Rock 'N' Roll Animal* as well as *Street Hassle* and *Take No Prisoners*. Still, *Loaded* stands out as an amazing barometer for what eventually went down in the Seventies. "My life was saved by rock 'n' roll," sings Lou, and that just about sums up the decade as well as anything.

4. *Plastic Ono Band* — **John Lennon** (Apple). "I don't believe in Beatles/I just believe in me." From the comfort of community to the stark reality of aloneness in the world, Lennon's primal work of 1970 is still the best project any former Beatle has ever been involved with. Followed by *Imagine*, *Plastic Ono Band* divested itself of pretenses, musical and personal, to communicate directly and viscerally. Phil Spector turned in an innovative production job that even now has never been topped in its clear, frightening echoes. This LP launched the "me decade" with a directness and simplicity which was lucid and insane all at once. Though *Walls and Bridges* is also a sadly underrated album, John Lennon's self-imposed retirement since then has been the single most disappointing aspect of the past ten years.

5. *New York Dolls* — **New York Dolls** (Mercury). This one saved my life in 1973 when it quite miraculously appeared on the record shelves, bringing with it a renewal of commitment to rock 'n' roll which had been slowly eroding as the people's music became a marketable commodity. This garage-rock blasted out of your speakers with giddy abandon, simultaneously paying homage to the spirit while it trashed the body of good ole rock 'n' roll. The Dolls recorded another classic work just a year later, *Too Much, Too Soon*, but the go-for-broke hell-benders were never meant to grow old gracefully. All they were really meant to do was usher in a whole new era in rock 'n' roll, filled with good times, drugs and sex. Johnny Thunders is still the quintessential punk guitarist, even if David Johansen has seemingly lost his testicles roaming the land of FM accessibility. You may not hear it in the grooves, but this album's heart and soul was an inspiration to those who had lost faith as rock 'n' roll began to achieve a despicable respectability. The Dolls brought back controversy and love-hate to rock 'n' roll — they were the band that renewed the spirit of debate and excitement to a genre that was stultifying in its own pretensions.

6. *Tonight's The Night* — **Neil Young** (Reprise). Alone of his cohorts in Crosby, Stills and Nash, Neil Young put together a powerful body of work in the Seventies. You could cite *After The Gold Rush* in 1970 or *Rust Never Sleeps* in 1979 but this ragged, scarily real lament to his former roadie who died of a heroin overdose is the dark side of the Sixties drug paradise. Along with *Time Fades Away* and *On The Beach*, *Tonight's The Night* forms a Bergmanesque trilogy of lost innocence and disillusionment with stardom. Young's wailing lament is touching in its harsh sincerity, the effect akin to Michael Herr's laconic voice-over narration in *Apocalypse Now*. The end has already arrived and we are living in its aftermath. "It's only castles burning," assured Neil, but he forgot to add we live in those castles, they are our dreams. Once again, as with Lennon's *Plastic Ono Band*, we are told, in no uncertain terms, "the dream is over."

7. *The Ramones* — **The Ramones** (Sire). Four 25-year-old teenagers from Forest Hills, Queens, grab their piece of the rock dream before it's too late, in the most perfect album of the Seventies, if you mean by perfect that execution matches intent. A diamond-perfect, 14-song gem that ushered in the brave new world of three-minute bashes, *The Ramones* perfectly captures a time and place. A quirk, perhaps, but an ingenious oddity that added phrases like "pinhead," "gabba-gabba" and "Blitzkrieg Bop" to our collective vocabulary. This is still the quintessential mid-Seventies punk album. Released in 1976, it was the true bi-centennial LP, demonstrating conclusively just how far America has come in 200 years, and how far we have to go. The other Ramones albums that followed showed the band improving into a musically adept outfit, but this one is the

continued on page 28

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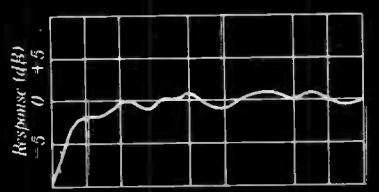

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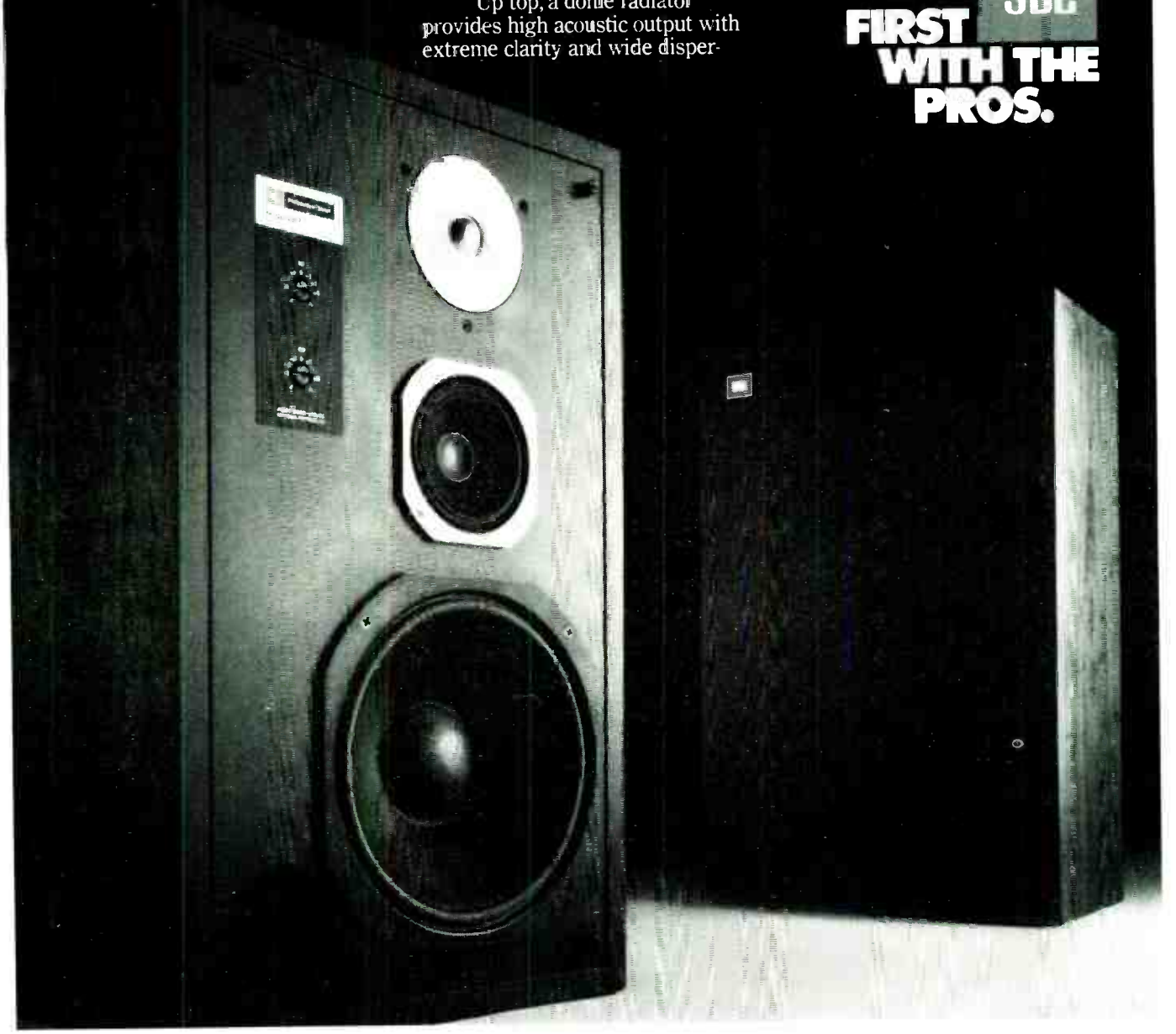

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Edges

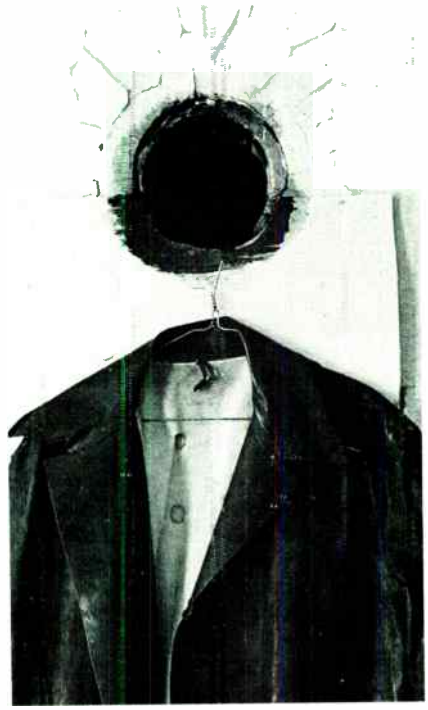
Foreigners:
From Joujouka to Japan, traditional musics evoke images of primal power and beauty.

By Brian Cullman

Not very long ago, records of foreign musics were generally released for the sole enjoyment of ethnomusicologists and the sorts of people who like to collect bits of string and twine. Though often well-intentioned, they were just as often collections of as many different sorts of musical styles and local customs as could be recorded (*Man Playing Three Stringed Instrument; Child Running From Large Iguana*). Individual tracks were sometimes magical (there is a wonderful moment on an old Folkways album of Zulu chants where a group of tribesmen who have been beating on various drums and tree stumps begin singing the melody to "Red River Valley"), but the records seemed intended for study rather than enjoyment, with covers that looked to be designed by the same people who illustrated *Junior Scholastic* and the large brown bags at supermarkets.

Several things happened to change all that. In the mid 60s, Nonesuch, a subsidiary of Elektra Records that released low-cost and often very unusual recordings of classical musics, instituted The Explorer Series and began releasing albums of Bahamian, Bulgarian, Japanese, African and Indian musics for under three dollars a record. And although some people regard much foreign music to be nothing more than half-naked people beating each other with sticks while making animal noises, still a bargain is a bargain, and three dollars struck a lot of people as a pretty reasonable price to pay to hear half-naked people beat each other and make animal sounds.

Actually, what they heard was very different from what they'd expected; not only was the music often startling and beautiful, recorded with a clarity and presence rarely heard in field recordings, but for once the albums seemed sequenced; songs fit together so that each side of the record felt whole, of a piece with itself, the way popular albums were sequenced, the way field recordings seldom were. There were any number of reasons for this: one was Nonesuch's association with Elektra, a popular label used to such commercial considerations as packaging and sequencing; and the other one was the fact that several of their earliest producers were also intimately involved with rock music and with the idea of



making *Records* as opposed to *Recordings* (Peter Siegel went on to produce Elliot Murphy and Paul Siebel; Joe Boyd produced Fairport Convention, Nick Drake, Toots & The Maytals, Ann & Kate McGarrigle, Maria Muldaur and a host of others).

Ultimately, some of the more interesting pop musicians of the time began to adapt textures and ideas from these records and use them in their own music: Paul Simon incorporated Bulgarian harmonies into "Patterns" (from *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme*), guitarist John Martyn adapted his blues style to encompass the oud playing he heard on Hamza El Din's Vanguard and Nonesuch recordings, the Incredible String Band began including the Pindar Family's "I Bid You Goodnight" (from *The Real Bahamas*, Nonesuch) in their sets and with waggish sincerity, Bob Dylan named Om Kalsoum one of his primary vocal influences.

Granted, a few imbeciles got carried away with the idea of ethnicity itself, and as 1967 fades further and further into the past, the memory of electric sitars and Chuck Berry runs played on the bazouki also fades. Mercifully.

The following is a small listing of some of the best and least known albums of foreign and foreign-based musics released over the last ten years.

Javanese Court Gamelan Vol. II (Nonesuch)

Javanese music is the slowest in the world, seeming to exist in a dream-time of falling and rising tempos and recurrent interior rhythms. The gamelan, a series of tuned gongs and/or bowls which sound like a cross between vibes and careless evening bells, is supplemented with bamboo flute, rebab (a raspy violin), and a vocal chorus. Of the fifteen or twenty gamelan records I've heard, this is the richest, the most beautifully recorded, and the closest to pure trance music.

The Master Musicians of Jajouka (Adelphi)

Also trance music, but of a darker, stranger variety. If the gamelan record seems like a dream of gardens, evening rains and faces in the stones, the music of Jajouka is like a dream that may turn on itself at any moment, a dream rich with blood, deaths, and mutual madness.

Jajouka is a small village in the Rif Mountains of northern Morocco. The Master Musicians are the sons of sons of musicians who, since the year 800, have played "to exorcise the illnesses of pilgrims, to reaffirm the identity of villagers and visitors at festivals and feast times, and to entertain and instruct their listeners and themselves, wafting their time-seasoned melodies and handed down rhythms out across the Jebel on clouds of Kif smoke . . . " (Brion Gysin). There is no safety in this music, in the drums, in the pipes, in the strings; it is darker and older than any gods we now know.

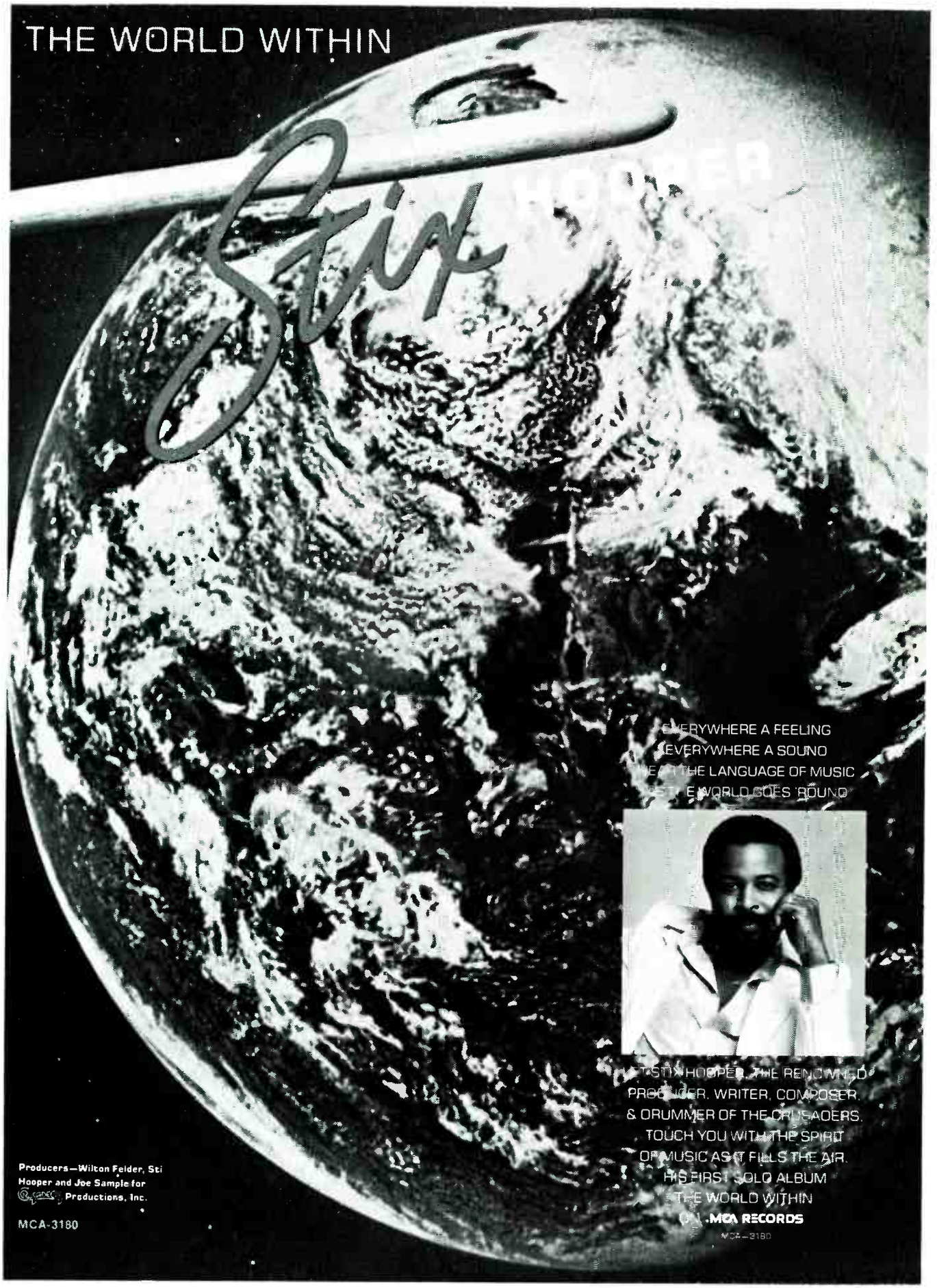
Eclipse, Hamza El Din (Pacific Arts)

Gentler (and far less pagan) North African music by one of Nubia's premier oud players and vocalists. The oud is an instrument similar to a lute or mandolin, whose five doubled strings are individually plucked rather than chorded. The performances (particularly "Your Love Is Ever Young", adapted from the singing of the great Om Kalsoum) are elegant, formal (in the best sense of the word) and joyful.

Music of the Minstrels — Studio Der Fruhen Musik (Das Alte Werke)

A brilliant attempt to restore Moorish overtones and improvisations to medieval musics. Thomas Binkley, who teaches at the conservatory in Vienna,

continued on page 28



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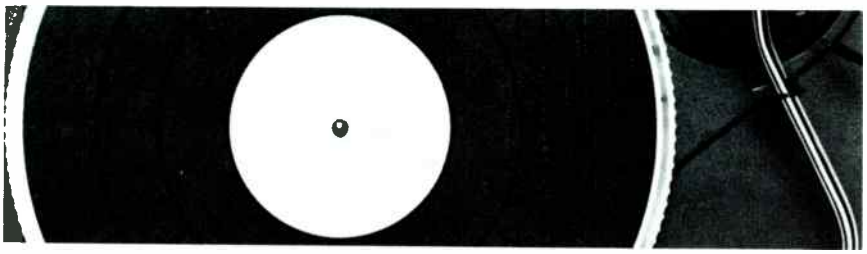

Direct drive versus belt drive, S-shaped tonearms or straight arm, manual versus semi-automatic versus fully automatic. With all these features battling for the consumer's attention, it would appear the turntable is a rather complicated device. Well, it's not. Its function is quite simple — to turn the record at a uniform speed. Not a particularly demanding task. The same goes for tape decks. Though a bit more complicated than turntables because of the electronics involved, of utmost importance is keeping the tape spinning at a steady speed. Three heads, switchable bias and equalization and the most sophisticated electronics this side of NASA will be of little use if the tape speed varies all over the lot. There is one specification unique, then, to these components for judging speed accuracy — wow and flutter.

Wow and flutter is probably the most self-explanatory hi fi spec you'll encounter. Variations in speed cause variations in musical pitch. If this variation occurs at a relatively low rate, it's called wow and sounds just like that. More rapid fluctuations will cause the music to "flutter". Listen for these sounds when one musical note is sustained for a relatively long period, such as the final note in a piano piece.

On the spec sheet, wow and flutter are expressed together as a percentage of deviation from true speed. There are no standard measurement methods for this area, so we have both unweighted and weighted measurements. The weighted figures claim to apply more to the real world, putting more emphasis on those frequencies most audible to the human ear. Often you'll see wow and flutter figures followed by the letters "wrms" which is simply a method of averaging wow and flutter readings. Most high quality turntables will have a wow and flutter reading of 0.1 per cent or better. The lower the figure, the better. In tape decks, wow and flutter depend on the tape speed. With open reel decks, you'll find figures for all three speeds — 7½ inches per second (ips), 3¾ ips and 1⅞ ips. You'll notice the figures improve as the speed rises. Figures for cassette decks will generally give only one figure since most cassette decks offer only one speed — 1⅞ ips. Some however, such as decks from B.I.C., Marantz and Fisher, offer the faster 3¾ ips and will give a second and generally better wow and flutter figure. Remember that anything over 0.2 per cent will be audible to most listeners.

Rumble is the next most important spec for turntables. Like wow and flutter, rumble is a wonderfully descriptive term. Any mechanical system with moving parts vibrates. In a turntable these vibrations can cause low frequency noise, called rumble. These vibrations can be transmitted to the cartridge which translates the vibration into an electrical signal that can find its way out through your speakers. There are many factors in a turntable's design that affect rumble, from the drive system used to the construction of the turntable base.

There are at least four diffferent ways for manufacturers to express rumble on a spec sheet, some weighted, some unweighted. So when comparing rumble figures for competing turntables note what method was used. You'll find NAB unweighted figures as well as DIN B or DIN weighted numbers and RRLL numbers, a weighted system developed by CBS laboratories. In all cases, the higher the negative dB figure, the better. Weighted DIN B figures of well above 60 dB are common among component turntables. The DIN B method results in generally higher figures than the other measurement methods.

There are few other specs you'll find for turntables that are very important. But just so you understand what manufacturers are trying to tell you, I'll run over a few more points. Tracking error, which is on most turntable spec sheets, is the angle that the cartridge axis deviates from being tangent to the groove on the record at any given point. When the master record is cut, it's done with a cutting head that travels laterally across the record so no change in tangency occurs. However, most turntables offer arms that pivot from one point, so the stylus will be tangent to the groove at only two points. Some tracking angle error will exist at every other point. The smaller it is, the better. This error is stated in degrees per inch or as the maximum number of degrees at the worst point.

You'll also find a figure for tonearm resonance. Tonearms will resonate when triggered by some very low frequency. This frequency should be well below the lower limit of audibility, and values of 10 Hz and lower are common.

For tape decks, two other important specs to note in addition to wow and flutter are frequency response and signal-to-noise. As with all other electronic audio components, you want the widest frequency response possible in your tape deck in order to reproduce the widest possible spectrum of sound. Dealing only with cassette decks since they are the most popular type of tape deck, the better units can reproduce frequencies as low as 20 Hz and as high as 18 kHz. Of course, this all depends on the type of tape used and other variables. These factors will be explored in more detail later.

In tape, the signal-to-noise figure refers to how far tape hiss or noise is below program level peaks. Expressed in dB, this figure, like frequency response, depends on the type of tape used as well as the use of such noise reduction circuits as Dolby, a feature available on nearly all high quality decks. With today's high performance premium tapes and Dolby noise reduction, signal-to-noise ratios of 65 dB and better are attainable, figures considered excellent for open reel decks of years ago. As with all tape specs, the s/n ratio improves with faster speeds.

Much of the information supplied by manufacturers dwells on the unit's design and convenience features. I have described the relatively few specs necessary when shopping for turntables and tape decks.

Turntables:

Wow, flutter, and rumble: three onomatopoetic standards to judge your turntable by.

By Terry Shea

Hi-Fi

This Panasonic stereo has one component your component system doesn't have.

A handle.

AM/FM STEREO CASSETTE RECORDER

The best stereo sound used to come only from components. Until Panasonic put a handle on it. Now great sound carries everywhere with the Panasonic RX-5500 AM/FM stereo cassette recorder, a super portable that packs the features found in many component systems.

Like linear-scale tuning that helps you pinpoint FM stations even on a crowded dial. For even more accuracy, there's a 14-stage LED tuning meter with separate right and left level channel indicators.

The 5500 also has component-like sophistication in the cassette section. Starting with the Dolby* Noise Reduction system. To a three-position tape selector that lets you handle the three most popular types of tape (CrO_2, FeCr and normal). There are two built-in, sensitive condenser microphones for great live recordings. And with mike-mixing you can record along with your radio favorites. While the digital tape counter, Cue and Review and locking pause control add up to effortless recording and playback.

The 5500's speakers are just as remarkable, with two powerful 6½" woofers and two 1¼" tweeters. And with separate controls for treble and bass, you can tailor the sound to your taste. There's even a variable sound monitor that lets you adjust the volume of the speakers without affecting your headphones. Or vice versa.

And all of this incredibly sophisticated sound travels just about anywhere because it operates on batteries (not included) and on any of the 4 international voltages. Even from your car with an optional adapter (RP-952).

The RX-5500. It's part of the line of Panasonic "Stereos with a Handle." Pick one up.

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Pop *cont. from page 14*

up the best in love songs ("You Are The Sunshine Of My Life"), funk ("Superstition"), and Latin-based fusion music (much of *Songs In The Key Of Life*), and as if these accomplishments weren't enough, he's also totally responsible for making the Hohner electric clavinet a standard instrument in popular music today, not to mention humanizing the synthesizer when it only squawked and rumbled in others' hands.

But the biggest pop-soul trend to happen in the 70's has been, unquestionably, disco. It first grew out of the street and Latin funk bands like Kool and the Gang (whose "Funky Stuff" was a seminal tune in that genre), but gradually, the same studio sophistication and multi-tracking ethos that was snaring larger audience segments for soft rock was used to create the disco "sound" — which was based more and more on purely artificial studio effects and lack of room ambience as a production value. Many singles and songs were important in disco's development over the early to mid 70's, but if any single person booted it into the modern age it was Barry White. His meticulous attention to production detail and using the right players (notably LA drummer Ed Green) on such songs as "Love's Theme" and the Three Degrees' "When Will I See You Again" really turned disco into an elaborate production sound. In the process, he also bestowed upon himself the dubious honor of being a latter-day, funky Percy Faith. The only other pop-disco artist to have as big an impact has been Donna Summer, who needs no introduction.

The final trend I'll point out that has emerged and developed in the 70's is the singer-songwriter. Elton John set the pace in 1970, starting with such neo-cabaret classics as "Your Song," but he went quickly on to show that whether writing a rock tune ("Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting") or an MOR ballad like "Daniel," it really is the singer *and* the song that matter. Carole King, Billy Joel, Carly Simon, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell — these are the obvious leaders who've dominated the movement. All rely on a select group of New York and L.A. studio musicians, so a certain sameness often creeps into their music. I'm sure we can all think of our favorite tunes from these writers, although at this point, Joni Mitchell has been the most adventurous, and has thus shaded her "pop star" status and image into a "cult figure" role. *Mingus* pushes her even further in that direction. But these are the writers who've composed the "standards" of the last decade, and doubtless their best music will live on.

As the decade closes, popular taste has been changing again, and right now, it's a little difficult to tell what's what. In the rock and roll idiom, there's a recent trend toward 60's and even 50's production values; i.e., recording a band live with fewer overdubs. The Knack cut "My Sharona" in a few takes, completely. Meanwhile, disco is winding down a bit, with a pronounced rock and roll (read sloppy) production influence creeping in. All the big 70's trends discussed here continue unabated, with New Wave intruders on the pop charts like Blondie and Nick Lowe now sitting comfortably beside MOR vets like Herb Alpert and Kenny Rogers. The Commodores, who a couple of years ago were the premier funk band on top-40 radio, now turn out ballads like "Sail On" — which has gotten MOR and even country and western airplay.

And what, you might ask, catches my ear today, as I drive to the shopping mall, to stock up on some fresh polyester and licorice pizza? Well, I hear the Funkadelic chanting "not just knee deep, she's total-lee deep." And then there's Dire Straits' pleasantly revisionist view of rock and roll history, so stunningly summed up in "Sultans of Swing" earlier this year. As far as I'm concerned, great pop music can be anything stylistically, as long as the common denominators are real emotion and musical sincerity.

Rock *cont. from page 20*

chef d'oeuvre. and that remains prime hamburger meat

8. *Born To Run* — **Bruce Springsteen** (CBS). In a decade characterized by savage critiques of the rock 'n' roll phenomenon, it was left to the son of a Jersey blue-collar worker to re-imbue the music with magic, hope and re-born innocence. Though *Born To Run* was probably not as strong an album as *The Wild, The Innocent and the E-Street Shuffle*, it crystallized the Springsteen approach — a stirring ode to personal freedom against long odds, a thoroughly American paean to rising above obstacles like class standing to achieve a personal transcendence. Live, Springsteen comes across with electricity, as if each performance was his last. Although the over-blown didacticism of *Darkness On The Edge of Town* doesn't exactly bode well for the future, Springsteen is a sterling songwriter and consummate bearer of rock's torch. Not innovative, nor a throwback, merely a beacon of light in a sea of dark.

9. *Horses* — **Patti Smith** (Arista). It's hard to imagine, considering the sad shell she has become, that Patti Smith was, in 1975, the great female hope of rock 'n' roll, but one listen to this epochal work truly communicates the shamanistic talent this frail poetess must still have, underneath the many layers of hubris that have accumulated since. An altogether remarkable debut, *Horses* was a watershed in demonstrating the androgyny and bi-sexuality at the root of all great rock. Patti herself set new standards of femininity and beauty while ushering in a slew of imitators who cannot hold a candle to her intense fury. In the light of the disappointments of *Radio Ethiopia* and *Wave*, despite her success with "Because The Night," it may seem like La Smith has shot her creative wad. Don't believe it.

10. *Marquee Moon* — **Television** (Elektra). Like all my choices, a personal one that evokes a period I look back on fondly. This is *the* guitar album of the Seventies, and you'll excuse my chauvinism if I include it ahead of *Layla* and/or *Allman Brothers Live At The Fillmore East*. *Marquee Moon*'s commercial demise was pretty disturbing considering this is precisely the type of music that FM radio seems to take to with open ears. Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd were the dueling mates whose friction finally forced their partnership apart. This was, technically, the highest point so-called punk-rock reached — a brilliant glimpse into the solipsistic schizophrenic mind-works of Master Verlaine and a stunning testament to a garage band that earned and learned its chops the hard way.

Edges *cont. from page 23*

reportedly rebelled at the stylization forced upon most music from the 11th and 12th centuries and fled to Morocco where, for several years, he learned to improvise by playing recorder, lute, and various stringed instruments with local street musicians. In the mid-sixties he brought his new-found skills and perspective back to Vienna where, with a few like-minded musicians, he began the Studio der Fruhen Musik (Early Music Quartet).

Baltazar Benitez — Latin American Music for the Classical Guitar (Nonesuch)

Though technically a classical album, the roots of many of these pieces are firmly entrenched in Mexican and Paraguayan folk musics and retain a deep and haunting simplicity. The playing is heartbreakingly beautiful (especially on Agustin Barrios' "El Ultimo Canto"), so unmannered and unerringly right that the music sometimes seems improvised in a moment of divine inspiration.

Veedon Fleece — Van Morrison

Van Morrison's strangest, most meditative record is an evocation of the Irish countryside and of the sense of grace that intermingles with a sense of home, a sense of place. The album is filled with half-remembered bits of childhood, William Blake, country fairs, first loves and hidden light.

A Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky — Goro Yamaguchi (Nonesuch)

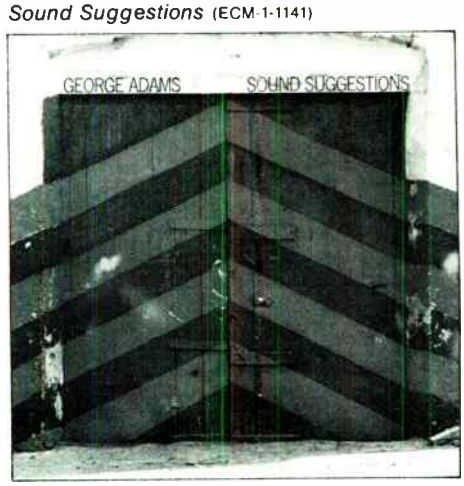
A record of unaccompanied shakuhachi music, a shakuhachi being a Japanese bamboo flute that produces unusual under and overtones in its playing. Spare, delicate as a tea ceremony, often quiet as breath.

ECM

George Adams

George Adams, tenor saxophone, vocal.
Heinz Sauer, tenor saxophone.
Kenny Wheeler, trumpet, flugelhorn.
Richard Beirach, piano.
Dave Holland, bass.
Jack de Johnette, drums.

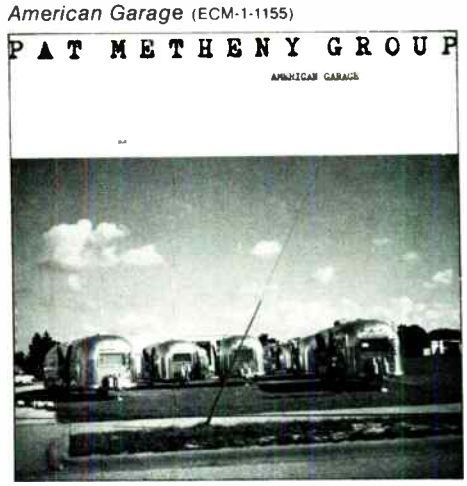
Sound Suggestions (ECM-1-1141)

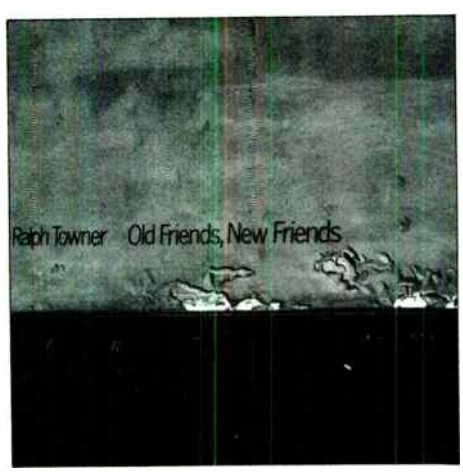


Pat Metheny Group

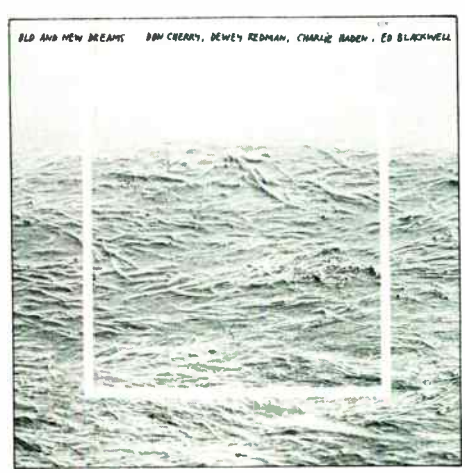
Pat Metheny, guitars.
Lyle Mays, piano, oberheim, autoharp, organ.
Mark Egan, bass.
Dan Gottlieb, drums.

American Garage (ECM-1-1155)





Old Friends, New Friends (ECM-1-1153)



Old And New Dreams (ECM-1-1154)

Ralph Towner

Ralph Towner, guitars, piano, french horn.
Eddie Gomez, bass.
Michael Di Pasqua, drums, percussion.
Kenny Wheeler, trumpet, flugelhorn.
David Darling, cello.

Don Cherry, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell

Don Cherry, trumpet, piano.
Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone, musette.
Charlie Haden, bass.
Ed Blackwell, drums.

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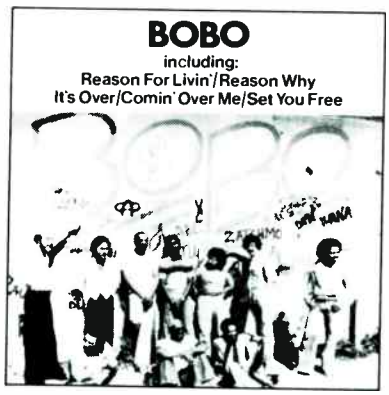
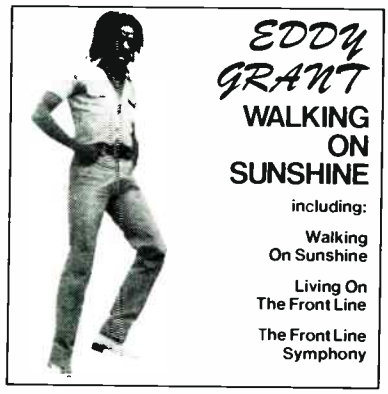


WILLIE BOBO

One of the most sophisticated percussionists around is Willie Bobo.

Over the years, he's brought his dynamic drums to a wide variety of jazz, Latin, rock and R&B bands. And he's led some outstanding bands of his own.

With the formation of the first band to bear the Bobo banner, he enters a new phase. Their debut album presents a supercharged, vocal—oriented music that can't be labeled with any name but "Bobo."

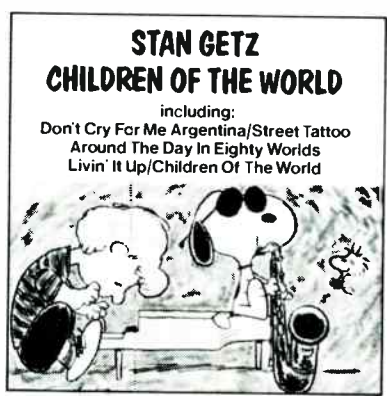


EDDY GRANT*

Eddy Grant has done a lot in his life. But he insists that he's got much more to do.

His accomplishments already include becoming the only black independent music producer in Europe, and the owner of a recording studio, a record label and a record pressing plant. All this while maintaining his own Top-10 career.

What Eddy would like to do now, is make his music known in the States. And his debut Epic album, "Walking on Sunshine," is going to do just that. It can't be categorized, he says. But he will say, "I didn't see any sense in playing... music I couldn't dance to."



STAN GETZ*

Lalo Schifrin, who arranged and wrote most of the songs on "Children of the World" for Stan, states in the liner notes...

"I am still in awe of Stan Getz's virtuosity...from the electronic explorations of "The Dreamer" to the beauty of his tone in "Summer Poem" to his playfulness in "You, Me and The Spring" to the virtuosity and bravura in "Livin' It Up."

"Children of the World." It's dedicated to the child in all of us from someone who never lost his sense of wonder. Stan Getz.

LALO SCHIFRIN*

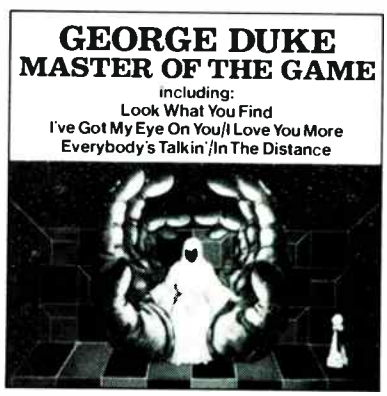
It's possible that Lalo Schifrin called his new album "No One Home" because he never is.

He has toured as a pianist with Dizzy Gillespie's band. He's conducted at the Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center and the Monterey Jazz Festival.

And his work as a composer for television and film has taken him to numerous exotic locations. Among the souvenirs he's brought back are Oscar, Emmy and Grammy Awards nominations.

But Schifrin's most recent efforts have revolved around making albums. He composed, arranged and conducted Stan Getz's new album, "Children of the World," which is also featured here. And he's working extensively on his own recordings.

Of "No One Home," he has said, "It adds a dimension that I'd like very much to explore further."



GEORGE DUKE

There's no one else in George Duke's league. That's why he's most definitely the "Master of the Game."

It's a game George learned in formative years, performing alongside Jean-Luc Ponty, Frank Zappa, Cannonball Adderley and Billy Cobham.

The way he plays it now, there's only one rule. You've got to move to the music. But with his persuasively pounding keyboards, the Duke makes that a very simple rule to follow.

Philadelphia International Records and Tabu Records are distributed by CBS Records.

Tappan Zee Records is distributed by Columbia Records.

*Not available on tape.

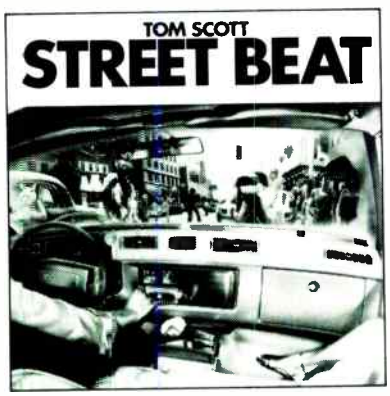
WEBSTER LEWIS*

What's music going to sound like in the next decade? Keyboardist Webster Lewis can make a very educated guess.

Webster, who has an M.A. from the New England Conservatory, explores his theories on his new album "8 for the 80's."

Joining him on this unpredictable venture are co-producer Herbie Hancock, the Tower of Power horn section and L.A.'s finest studio musicians.

"8 for the 80's." Have the foresight to get Webster Lewis' third Epic album.



TOM SCOTT

Tom Scott has taken his sax from L.A., where he formed the L.A. Express, to New York, where he created the New York Connection, to studios all over the country, where he's worked with everyone from Joni Mitchell to McCartney and Harrison.

And now he's taking it to the street with his new solo album "Street Beat."

On it he combines his street sense with everything he's picked up from working as a composer, musician and producer.

The results are some very savvy sounds.

JEAN CARN

When you find Jean Carn, you'll discover a woman whose voice *down beat* describes as "overpoweringly beautiful."

A woman who has recorded vocals with Duke Ellington, Norman Connors, and Earth, Wind & Fire.

You'll find one of the brightest stars on Philadelphia International Records.

But you'll learn all this for yourself, when you meet the sensitive but slightly sassy Miss Carn on her new solo album, "When I Find You Love."

BOB JAMES & EARL KLUGH

The one and only Mr. James scored very big not too long ago with his album "Touchdown." That record, which features the hit single "Theme from 'Taxi' Angela" is very close to the gold line. And Bob is following up his hot streak with the recently released "Lucky Seven."

The one and only Mr. Klugh, who has worked with George Benson, Return to Forever and George Shearing, also has a new solo album, "Heart String." And it's already striking a chord with jazz, R&B and pop programmers.

What will result from their collaboration, "One on One," which features three James and three Klugh compositions?

A very unique success story is going to come to light.

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FACES

Bob Dylan

On November 1, Bob Dylan began a two-week stint at San Francisco's Fox Warfield that is sure to go down in the annals of rock and roll as his most controversial performance since his historic electric appearance at the Newport Folk Festival. By now any interested party has probably followed the accounts of Dylan's conversion to Christianity and may have heard the initial reports coming out of San Francisco — Dylan standing almost motionless at center stage, plowing through his born-again repertoire; audiences pissed off because he wouldn't do "Like A Rolling Stone"; headlines lambasting "Dylan's God Awful Gospel."

To put the reviews in some sort of perspective, a few words on the subject of rock journalism are in order. Firstly, it seems a matter of fact that it is easier to find original ways to pan a performance than to find clever ways to praise one. And when an artist has already been universally proclaimed a genius, there's not much percentage in repeating old news.

Dylan's work has been dissected more than that of any other contemporary poet, and now he's laying all the cards on the table, as if to say, "This is what I am and this is what I'm singing about." If nothing else, you've got to admire his guts. If no one else can accept the idea of Dylan being born again, it seems obvious that at least he is convinced.

Booking two and a half solid weeks at a 2,200-seat theater proved a smart move, and by the second week any hostilities died down and audiences seemed willing to accept what they knew they were going to get. Dylan was more relaxed, and he spoke and moved around more freely. On a couple of occasions he seemed to be genuinely caught up by the spirit of the music, but each time his inhibitions kept him in tow.

After a half an hour of gospel tunes by Dylan's trio of black female singers — Regina Havis, Helena Springs and Mona Lisa Young — and pianist Terry Young, Dylan took the stage with "Gotta Serve Somebody." His first nine songs duplicated the entire "Slow Train Coming" album, with each song sounding livelier in person, thanks to Dylan's superior backup band — led by bassist Tim Drummond (the only keeper from the LP), with drummer Jim Keltner, guitarist Fred Tacket, and keyboardist Spooner Oldham. Man for man or taken as a unit, these guys top any band (upper or lower case on the B) Dylan's ever had.

The next seven songs previewed what might end up on the album Dylan is scheduled to record in Muscle Shoals this February. The highlight of the concert was "Hanging Onto A Solid Rock (Made Before the Foundation of the World)," which had much of the crowd on its feet midway through Dylan's two-hour set, which included two encores. The only song I can think of that comes close in terms of sheer power is Tina Turner's "River Deep — Mountain High."

Before the song, Dylan said, "We've been watch ing what's going on in Iran ... it doesn't surprise us, because you know Jesus is coming back." Introducing "When You Gonna Wake Up," he said, "We've been here twelve nights now, and the message is still the same, the message is always the same: God don't make promises that He don't keep."

It is interesting that instead of merely singing rock songs with lyrics about Jesus ("My Sweet Lord"), Dylan is actually playing and singing gospel music — the music is as Christian as the words. This brings up my one and only Dylan theory — that the music itself had a profound influence on Dylan's philosophical conversion.

When I proposed this hypothesis to Tim Drummond at the modest Tenderloin district hotel where the band was staying (driving to and from the auditorium not in limos, but in a shuttle bus), he thought for a moment and allowed, "That's very possible."

This was the first time I ever saw Dylan in person, and although the experience didn't convert me to a born again Christian, it did make a Dylan believer out of me. Three nights later I was back for more musical fulfillment. — Dan Forte

LYNN GOLDSMITH

Jerome Cooper

Candles bestride the small stage, the smell of incense fills the air, and the lone instruments are some battered old traps and cymbals, a Mexican double-reed instrument, and a pair of African Bailophones (mallet instruments). It might seem unlikely that one man could maintain tension and musicality for two hours with only this bare bones percussion set-up.

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

But the man is drummer-composer Jerome Cooper. As a member of the esteemed Revolutionary Ensemble (with violinist Leroy Jenkins and bassist Sirone) Cooper gained a reputation as a spare, sensitive group player, and wrote many of the Ensemble's best compositions (such as "Ponderous Planets" from "The People's Republic"). Since then he has pursued a career as a solo percussionist, emphasizing form and nuance rather than unbridled virtuosity.

In performances at the Tin Palace, N.Y.U.'s Loeb Center, Soundscapes and other venues Cooper has been developing a method of layering melodic variations over repetitious rhythmic patterns, an incantory,

ceremonial type of music that can be seen as an acoustic/percussive cousin to Robert Fripp's use of tape loop and electronic guitar. In one such performance Cooper played a sixteen beat pattern over and over again on bass drum and hi-hats until it became a memory loop in the mind of each listener. By sticking the beater of his bass drum into the skin with varying degrees of pressure, Cooper would vary the pitch up and down, getting a subtle hambone effect. Without dropping a beat, Cooper would then essay third world melodies on his reed instrument and suggest a wide variety of cross-rhythms and poly-rhythms on his two bailophones (one bright and glandular, the other thick like mud). The images of ceremonial dances were unmistakable, as Cooper extended the bailophone melodies to the drums and cymbals themselves, creating a dense matrix of rhythms before gradually returning to the original percussive figures (which had never really left), then silence. Perfection.

Two recorded works give evidence of Cooper's progress with his chosen discipline, both available through New Music Distribution: "Positions 3-6-9" with Kalaparushna and Frank Lowe (on Karma Records) and a solo performance recorded live at Soundscapes on About Time Records that's called "The Unpredictability of Predictability." — Chip Stern

Jean-Luc Ponty

To the college crowd that packed N.Y.'s Palladium from wall to wall, Jean-Luc Ponty promised cathartic release. As soon as the diminutive French violinist appeared, his avid fans swarmed to the stage, hoping to ascend to the spacey post Zappa/Mahavishnu realms they felt Ponty would propel them towards. Predictably, classic Ponty compositions like "Aurora,"and"Cosmic Messenger," plus material from his new album "A Taste For Passion," levitated devotees into the ethereal world of Zen-cool California artistry and California jazz-rock-classical fusion. Amidst all this cultivated artistry and showmanship most fans could easily identify each composition by album and sequence — an indication of the total correspondence between audience and player.

At this stage of his career, Ponty is beset with enigma. Assuredly his success with the college crowd provides a fair degree of commercial success, if not the certainty that his melding of so many divergent forms will cohere into a viable hybrid capable of winning over both the public and the press. As a veteran of both the Mothers of Invention and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, Ponty is anxious to expand the scope of his expression, to wrest his own distinctive jazz idiom from the somewhat inhibiting restrictions of his classical background. He's fascinated by jazz' spontaneity, but inhibited by his technical training. So, although he's credited as being the first artist to exploit the potential of the electric violin, his recent albums have not enjoyed the level of critical acceptance he had hoped for.

Meanwhile at the Palladium, Ponty's improvisational work showed him struggling to transcend both the free form/avant garde explorations he had experimented with earlier in his career, and the more traditional constraints of Stephane Grappelli's jazz/classical romanticism. Ralphe Armstrong on bass, Allen Zavod on keyboards, and Casey Scheuerell on drums all displayed excellent chops as both soloists and accompanists, especially on a new trilogy, "Stay With Me," "Sunset Drive," and "Dreamy Eyes," while Ponty himself made good use of electronic aides like the MXR Digital Delay and Echo-plex. Perplexing as it may be for him to be stranded for the moment at his current

plateau of commercial and critical acceptance, Ponty's dexterity and commitment convinces me that he'll eventually resolve the conflict of tradition vs. spontaneity. — Regina Weinreich

Horslips

Horslips are more than just an Irish rock and roll band.

Most of their songs are anachronistic — rocked up versions of traditional Irish melodies with lyrics that chronicle Celtic history from mythical times to the present.

From the moment the band took the stage at the Bottom Line in New York, they transported the audience to another time and another country, with Jim Lockhart's jiggish flute playing on "Trouble" (from the brilliant but unheralded "Book of Invasions" album) conjuring up visions of Gaellic heaths and faery people.

Their music hardened to rock as Barry Devlin sang "New York Wakes" from "Aliens", which tells of the anger and disappointment of a young immigrant

Lockhart switched to organ on "The Man Who Built America," title track of the last album in Horslips' Irish trilogy, showing the young immigrant finally making it in his new country.

The band has three lead singers: Devlin, whose emotive voice sometimes reaches for notes and misses — a trait more endearing than annoying; Johnny Fean, a fine guitarist with a beautiful tenor; and Charles O'Connor, whose crisp, clipped style is perfectly suited to the hurt, angry love songs he sings.

O'Connor switched from guitar to fiddle to mandolin, and Lockhart, seemingly unable to decide between flute and organ, played them simultaneously.

Horslips played seven songs from their new lp, "Short Stories Tall Tales," the first non-Irish, non-concept effort in their ten-album history. Noticeably absent from the new tunes are the fiddle, flute, and concertina — surprisingly the songs are all straight-ahead rock and roll.

New fans were impressed with the variety of rhythms offered, (particularly "Ricochet Man" whose beat and chorus are irresistible), and by the high quality of musicianship.

But those who were already familiar with the band reacted most strongly to the traditional rock material. The music is more obviously heartfelt, and it is through those songs that Horslips provide the key for time travelling through the land of green.

THE NEW REALISM:

A MUSICAL MANIFESTO FOR THE 80'S

By Robert Fripp

Record sales aren't all that's coming down. The mega-industrial dinosaurs of the music industry are toppling into the tar-pits of the new smaller economy. The new creatures, the smaller, more adaptive, warm-blooded mammals, like you and me and your favorite artists, have to find new ways to stay alive and still be creative. Them good old days are gone.

It is paradoxical that while music itself shows signs of ever increasing vitality, the music industry has never been in poorer health. I'm intrigued to find that as the industry publicly paddles in the tar pits, the performance and enjoyment of music, at least from a New York perspective, increases markedly, with a proliferation of new clubs, groups, and an expanded audience. Meanwhile, a friend of mine continues to make records with his manager attending mixing sessions in order to pass approval on the final mix — or veto them if they aren't "commercial" enough. This "commercial" act has in turn had massive record returns from the shops, (of mixes guaranteed "commercial" by He-Of-The-Green-And-$-Shaped-Ears), large unrecouped advances, and a large deficit resulting from touring with an extravagant stage show and expensive band of session musicians (on large retainers while not working in the studio . . .).

In Europe, the craft is the art, and success follows the craft. In America, success is the art, and the craft the means. The implication is that the means of achieving success are irrelevant; in a commercial culture success is accorded the highest social esteem. Consider this example from the music industry's conventional wisdom:

1. One does not make an album, one makes a *hit* album.
2. Hit albums result from hit singles.
3. It follows that unless an album has a single which will receive air play, it need not be made.
4. Commercial radio does not play records unless they are already hits.
5. So it follows that unless an album is already a hit, *it should not be recorded!*

Frequently, the shape of an album is decided by a Manager and Big Ears from the record company, who will forecast the reaction of Radio Ears, possibly consulting a friendly neighborhood program director in the process. These people will judge the record's chart potential as defined by established commercial practice. (A potential Peter Gabriel single, "I Don't Remember" was considered by Atlantic Ears to have No Hit Potential because it couldn't receive radio air play on account of Fripp's "irritant" guitar playing.)

As radio plays close attention to the charts, so too do record companies. Charts are compiled partly by monitoring radio play, (which is unlikely until the record is already charted by having been played), partly by advertising with the publications listing charts, and partly by the number of records shipped to stores. It has been standard practice to ship high numbers of records in order to "earn" a gold album and chart attention, and to generate radio play and then sales. Often colossal numbers of records are returned to the company, producing large scale market distortion, dislocation of retail accounts, and generating an atmosphere of pessimism. These elaborate contradictions are known synonomously as double binds, whirligigs, and knots.

The New Realism

New music will not have a market history. Without history, it will not appeal to Manager Ears, Record Ears, or Radio Ears. By my own observations, hip executives are between two and five years behind current taste. (This is particularly recognized in the Disco industry, where Street Ears are being appointed to positions of responsibility.) Even if one succeeds in making a contemporary and non-format album, it is unlikely to receive the kind of financial backing necessary to underwrite the kind of tour support and advertising needed to properly introduce a new work. On the other hand, if one does receive executive level support, one immediately knows that one's work is historical. For example: I attended a dinner given for a band of my personal and professional acquaintance by our mutual record company at a cost of $8,000. This was only a small part of a large promotional push during which some 150,000 albums were shipped. I, myself, received a total of $5,000 non-recoverable tour support for two months in America as part of the Frippertronics World Tour of offices, canteens, salesmen's conferences, record shops, small cinemas and restaurants. My album, *Exposure*, outsold the other group at a fraction of their budget, following high returns of their record. However, the group's new record is receiving radio interest because of the good (actually fabricated by initial overshipping) chart position of the previous album.

Some Helpful Hints on the Care and Feeding of Dinosaurs

1. Any system becomes fixed at its moment of inception.
2. Once established, a system's first aim will contradict the aim of its creation: i.e. . . . its first aim becomes self-perpetuation. — The President is elected to serve and govern the people; upon election his aim then becomes re-election. This may not be in the people's best interest, as we discovered with the Watergate fiasco.
3. Any fixed system perceives a creative element as an implicit threat, as a creative element increases hazard, and thus the likelihood of change within the status quo.

Raising Mammals for Fun and Profit

1. Intelligence is the capacity to perceive rightness. Some concepts of intelligence define it as a measure of adaptability. I conceive of intelligence partly as the capacity to choose appropriate courses of action in dynamic conditions where there is not sufficient information for rational decisions. In E.F. Schumacher's terminology, this is "divergent" as distinct from "conver-

continued on next page

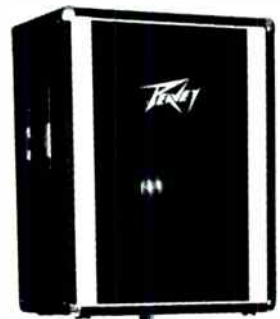
There are many ways to put together a sound system. You can spend a lot of money on mixers, equalizers, power amps, and accessories. Or, you can buy one of the new XR Series compacts from Peavey. The working musician who makes his money playing clubs, lounges, and small auditoriums will be hard pressed to find a more functional system.

The XR compacts have been designed for maximum versatility in a highly portable package offering features and specifications formerly available only with separate components. Take for example our built-in graphic equalizer that allows you to tailor the tonal response of the system to any playing environment while maintaining effective control of annoying feedback. Or, the independent monitor send controls on each channel that can be mixed and adjusted separately for each performer. Convenient patching facilities are provided for direct hookup with external power amps, effects devices, and monitor systems.

Two high impedance inputs are featured on each off the XR's channels. This means you can run as many as twelve microphones into the six channel XR-600. Using Peavey PBH microphones and cables that same setup is automatically converted to a low impedance balanced line, totally eliminating any hum or interference,...a feature usually found in much more expensive mixers.

The XR compacts are compatible with any four ohm speaker setup but, if you're after maximum performance in a portable package, our International Series enclosures are without equal. These extended range, high efficiency enclosures out perform many of the "professional" permanent installation systems that are much larger and more expensive.

Before you invest a lot of money in a sound system, stop by your Peavey Dealer and see what a great sound system a lot less money will buy.



The 115 International is an ideal enclosure choice when vocal clarity and definition are primary requirements. The system features a Peavey 22A Driver coupled to a CH Series high frequency horn along with a fifteen inch Black Widow precision transducer in a direct radiating enclosure. This combination insures extremely wide frequency response and dispersion characteristics.

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The Peavey S-1 heavy-duty speaker stand represents a vast improvement over previous speaker stands. The S-1's height adjustment utilizes a high-strength aircraft "locking pin" and does NOT depend on a "thumb screw" which can easily slip and cause the stand to collapse.

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XR-600
Six channels
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Complete patch panel
Seven-band graphic equalizer
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XR-400
Four channels
Auxiliary input channel
Complete patch panel
Five-band graphic equalizer
100 watts RMS power amp

 PEAVEY ELECTRONICS
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gent" problem solving, where formulaic solutions to mechanistic situations may apply.

2. One can act from intelligence or from necessity. Recognizing the drift gives one time to act before certain possibilities become closed.

3. Some relationships are governed by size. For a bride to bring along all her old boyfriends on the Wedding Night might make a lot more people happy, but would hardly be in the best interests of their marriage.

The New Realism, (a phrase coined by Ed Strait of E.G. Records), implies an acceptance by the music industry that in a contradicting market, conventional excesses are no longer acceptable. This is acting from necessity. Since, as we've already noted, one can act from either intelligence or necessity, the New Realism is an implicit acknowledgement by the music industry of its own stupidity. Five years ago Walter Yetnikoff committed Columbia Records to become the largest record company within five years. Following a series of decisions criticized within the industry, it is salutory to note that Columbia's toes have been the first to tickle the tar pit.

I find the monumental abuse within the music industry personally offensive. A CBS promotion man of my acquaintance was told to manufacture expenses so as not to undermine the larger expense accounts of higher personnel; the comfortable hotels and luxurious meals for record company people. I have sat conducting interviews by a hotel pool while the local promo man pumped down hefty shots of Chivas before proceeding to treat his personal friends to dinner and drinks as my interview continued outside. It is frustrating to have to argue over advertising budgets after watching one's promotional support being spent in this way.

The exclusive support of a highly placed executive and a gigantic publicity outlay for a new group, evidently comprising some very nice people with musically antiquated ideas, might give rise to questions regarding the nature of the executives' incentive. I have been touring recently, and have seen the energies and morale of local promotion men evaporating under threats of dismissal while pursuing this historic cause.

Small is Beautiful, Intelligent, and Necessary: Appropriate Budgets for the 80's

The U.S. music industry is controlled by a small number of people with access to large resources. The idea that publicity sells records is a fallacy, other than at the point where all profit is lost and yet confidence in the product persists. The function of publicity is to establish the market credibility of the artist to the music industry by creating history. The conventional wisdom demands that to receive industry support one has to make records for a small number of people whose taste is suspect. The support of the industry for the performer is vital. The New Realism contains the hope that in contracting markets, industry executives will recognize the financial viability of an intermediate level of performer who will generate a respectable amount of business without colossal investment.

Some Current and True Examples of Conventional Recording Budgets

1. Big Star and Platinum Expectations: $250,000 — $1,000,000

This will probably include a cocaine budget of from $10,000 to $25,000. Traditionally, one increases a New York budget by 50 to 100% if one is recording in Los Angeles. A further point of interest: star producers often inflate the budget by demanding limousine service and first class flights. A friend of mine's producer flies first class, while his artist, my friend, flies second class.

2. Intermediate: Sales expectations of $100,000 — $350,000. Budget: $100,000 — $250,000.

3. Art Level: Sales expectations of $5,000 -- $30,000. Budget: $3,000 — $75,000. At this level musicians are expected to provide their own transport, drugs, sandwiches, and beer.

New Realism Budgets

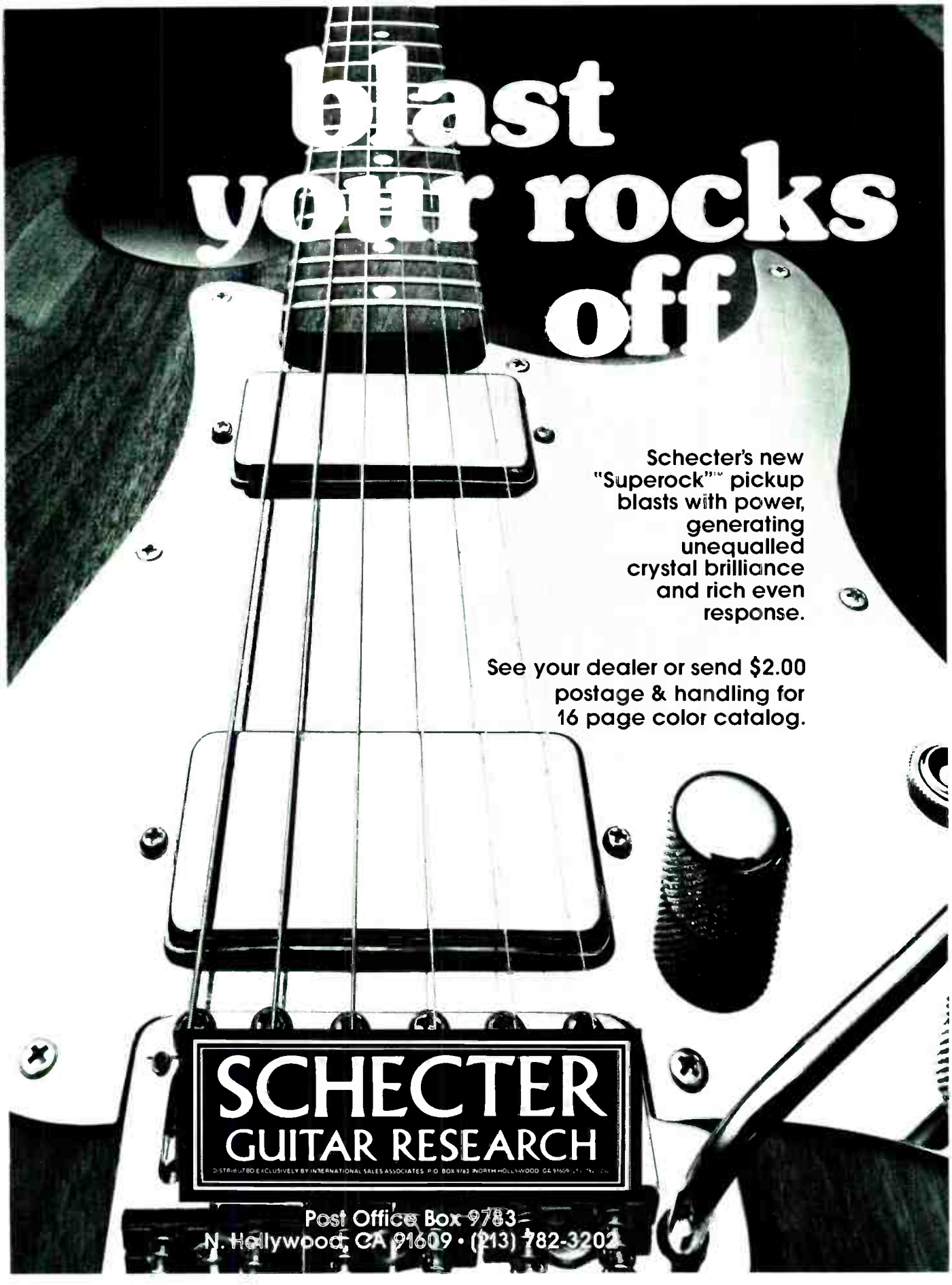
1. Star Level: $250,000 — $1,000,0000 This kind of dream-like existence does not, by definition, respond overmuch to the intrusion of common sense. So it goes.

2. Intermediate Level: $30,000 — $100,000. Recording costs for *Exposure* were $80,000, inclusive. This high figure resulted from it having been made twice, and from recording at a major New York studio, with double rates for musicians and much more for singers. I have produced albums for others between $30,000 and $60,000 without privation.

3. Garage Level: sales expectations of $50 to $25,000. Budget: $40 to $15,000. Frippertronics falls within this category of recording costs, but with intermediate sales potential. I consider this to be successful activity within the marketplace. There is nothing intrinsically grubby about earning a living; some of my best friends try to do it . . .

Epilogue: Food for Thought

Recently Bill McGaffy of Polydor and I were out to lunch at the Kitchen Kuma restaurant on W. 57th St. in New York. At the conclusion of the meal he pulled out his Polydor credit card to settle the bill. But for him to buy the meal would cost him nothing, and therefore be meaningless. So I paid. "Bill," I said, "when the artist takes the record company out for a meal, you *know* something is changing!"



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ROCK IN THE SEVENTIES

WHERE WAS IT?

It was a grand time to be alive in lieu of something better. Rock n' roll was not exactly dead, just comatose, kept alive by inertia leftover from the Sixties and the frighteningly successful marketing of popular culture that left us all as equally hip, bored and desperate as was most of the music. From heavy metal to glitter to punk, it weren't too creative but it sure was loud.

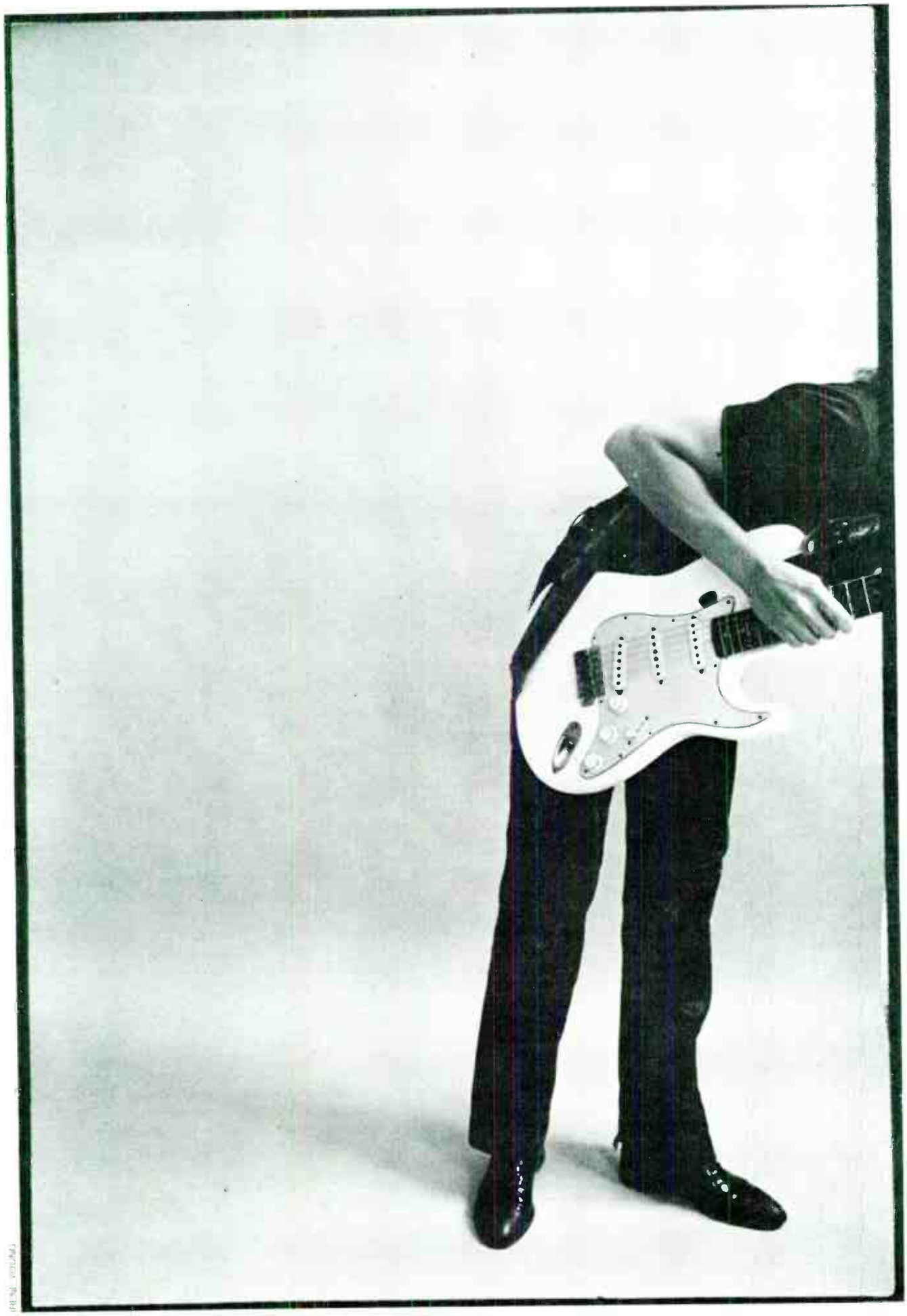
By Lester Bangs

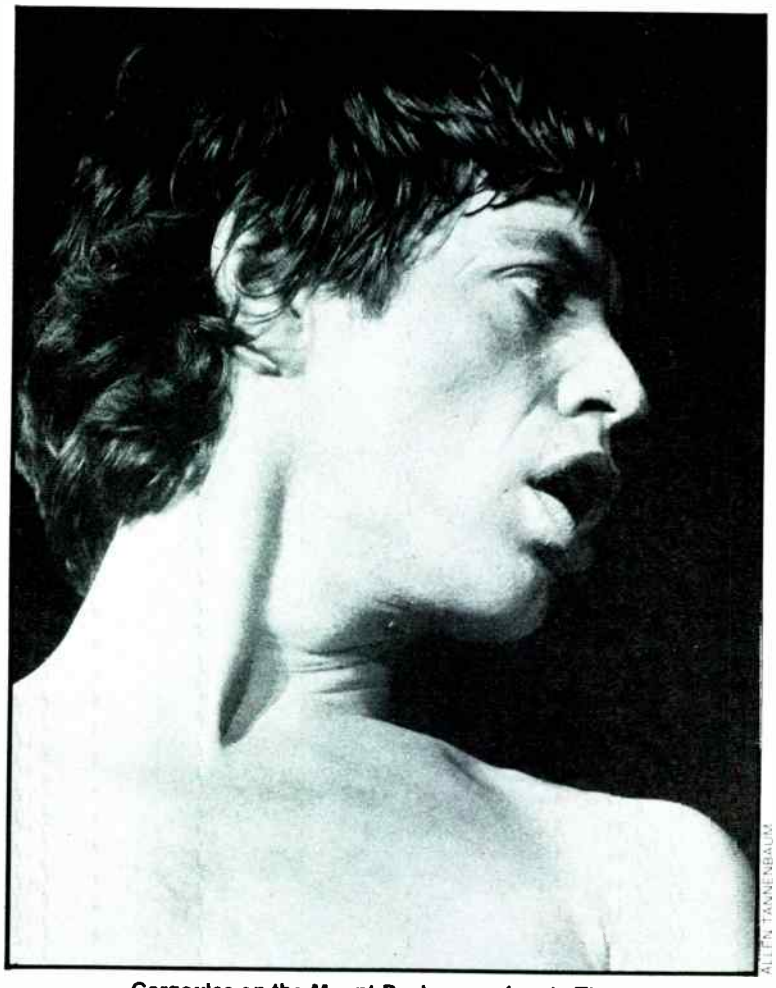
The Seventies! What a great time to be alive! A time when you didn't have to care about anything because there was no hope! When you didn't have to put any effort into your personal relationships because none of 'em worked anyway! When you might as well turn on, tune in and drop out because there's a depression coming when you won't work no matter what! When you don't have to pretend you're taking drugs for "enlightenment" instead of oblivion anymore! When you can be mean to your mommy (she deserves it)! When there are no rules for anything anywhere! When you can have all the sex you want because none of it's going to make you happy! When . . . when . . . when . . . *(orator collapses in a gurgling stupor of anthrax indifference)* . . .

Yes it certainly was a grand time to be alive in lieu of something better, and what better typified the spirit of the era than its rock 'n' roll: Foreigner! Styx! The Bangla Desh benefit! *Four Way Street!* Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Works, Vol. 2! Chicago Live at Carnegie Hall!* All the wonderful things the ex-Beatles have done this decade! James Taylor! Synthesizers all over the place! Disco, you trashy thing!

It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times. As has been observed often enough, we may well be witnessing the slow death of rock. But what the hell, easy come, easy go. Nothing else seems to have a future either, so let's throw a party. Everybody come dressed as their favorite trend from the Seventies. I'm coming as New Wave, of course. What? You're coming as Corporate Rock? Goodness gracious, what some people won't do to get attention. You're gonna look pretty wild in an invisible suit. Tell ya what — I've been looking around the late '79 New Wave scene, and I'm updating my costume: I'm gonna come as Music No One Ever Listens To.

The decade came in with a bang, of course: the Beatles broke up, hopefully forever, and one of the great cooperative dreams of the Sixties was shattered as Paul released his first solo album with a few bitchy swipes at John. Who was getting ready to bury the dream in his own way, of course, with the





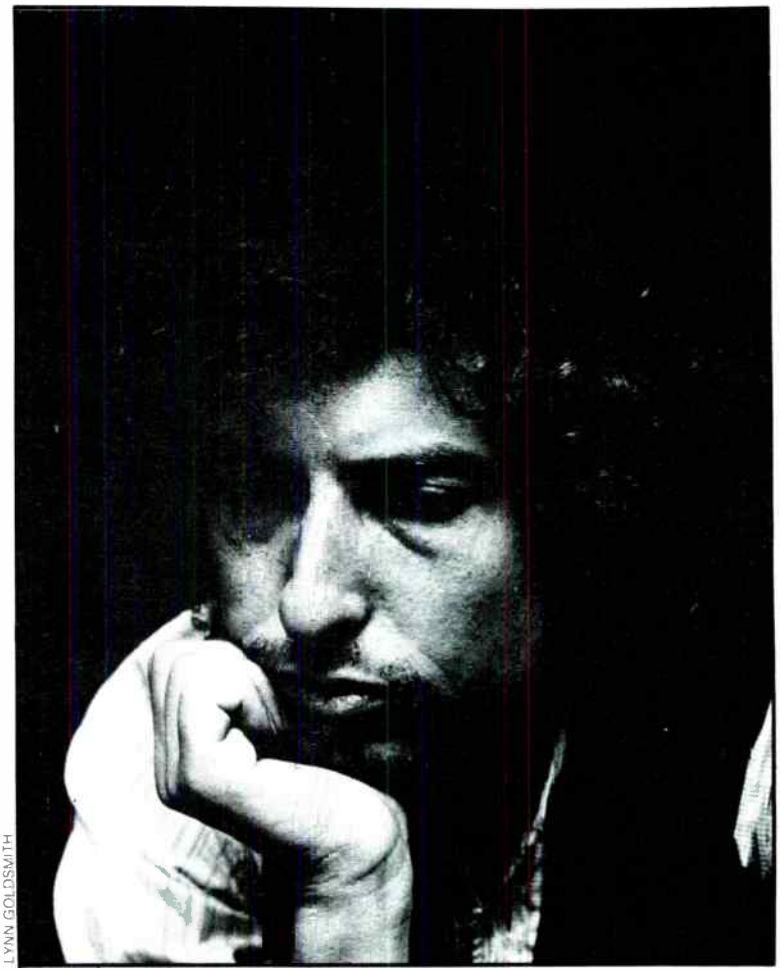
Gargoyles on the Mount Rushmore of rock. The Rolling Stones maintained their position as the finest band rock may ever produce, incorporating their weariness into their style. Jagger teased his way through a number of tours, though they only made six albums. Patti Smith came on like Jagger's kid sister and was a pivotal figure in the transition from glitter decadence to punk.

bitter, barren simultaneously self-indulgent and magnificent *Plastic Ono Band*. Thereafter, as John strove for ever-greater topical relevance and soul-wrenching authenticity, Paul got cuter, more treacly, pursuing the inane doggedly till he came right out with an anthem for it in "Silly Love Songs". And of course John wrote himself out and retired, for which we respect him until every time he and Yoko issue another communique from Twinkieland and we realize he's still as big an idiot as he ever was; while Paul, having in front given himself a less existentially perilous lode to mine, has gone on to become one of the biggest stars and richest nothings in the world. Their fates seem to sum up what the decade was all about: play it conservative, make wise investments, never spend yourself, and you might come out ahead of the game. Above all, don't be passionate and don't ever mean anything, because the next time the earth shifts underfoot you just might fall into a hole. Kinda like George Harrison, who went East and hence commercially (and, no question, artistically) Out when he coulda been smart like Ringo and gone West to Hollywood and got Richard Perry to help him fashion a series of obnoxious albums of rattly candycane music.

As for the Rolling Stones, just how kind the Seventies have been to the best band the rock 'n' roll form will ever produce remains moot. They released eleven albums of new studio material in the last six years of the Sixties and six such LPs in the entirety of the Seventies, and for years everybody, me included, has been ready to pronouce them finished at the slightest provocation. The truth, of course, lies somewhere in between. About a year ago I asked a friend, "Do you think the Stones should break up?" and he cackled "No, I think they should keep going till they're out there playing Chuck Berry riffs at *sixty*, getting a little more decrepit each time!" On the other hand, there is something interesting, even moving about all this stuff, and in some ways (perhaps auteurist terms) I prefer the records of their autumn years to the product of their prime. With the exception of *Black and Blue* they've never made a bad studio album, and in *Exile on Main Street* they had an authentic Seventies masterpiece, a brave and frightening cornerstone to the music of the age.

If the Stones have managed to grind on in a way that makes their weariness seem part of their style, time has not been so kind to most of the other English superstars and superbands who managed to survive the Sixties. It makes sense that Ron Wood should end up in the Stones, because at their best (*Ooh La La*) the Faces out-Stoned what the Stones were up to around the same time. Too bad Rod Stewart never realized that, ever since leaving them for a full-time solo career with "tighter" backup, he's seemed a lost man. Yeah, he's one of the biggest stars in ten galaxies now, but the poor guy just looks so damned *unhappy*, perhaps because as he's gotten more and more successful it's taken him farther and farther from the people and places that were the source material for his best orignals. Recently he's been puffy-faced, musically pathetic, and perhaps a caution to his old pal Elton John, who has all but retired.

Two concepts to which the decade has been notably unkind were the worship of guitar players and the tradition of the English supergroup. Eric Clapton post-junk pulled a very faint retrenchment with 1974's *461 Ocean Blvd.* and then ceased to matter at all, while Jeff Beck disappeared into fusionoid jazz and the Who and Led Zeppelin have soldiered (staggered) galiantly on in the face of quantifying irrelevance. Townshend mighta wrote some halfway decent songs the second half of the decade if he'd ever stopped worrying so damn much about the fact he didn't die before he got old, and even if Led Zep weren't a bloated, turgid monstrosity for you in front they've certainly achieved same now. The Limey guitar hero who probably best sums up the ethos of the age (in much the same



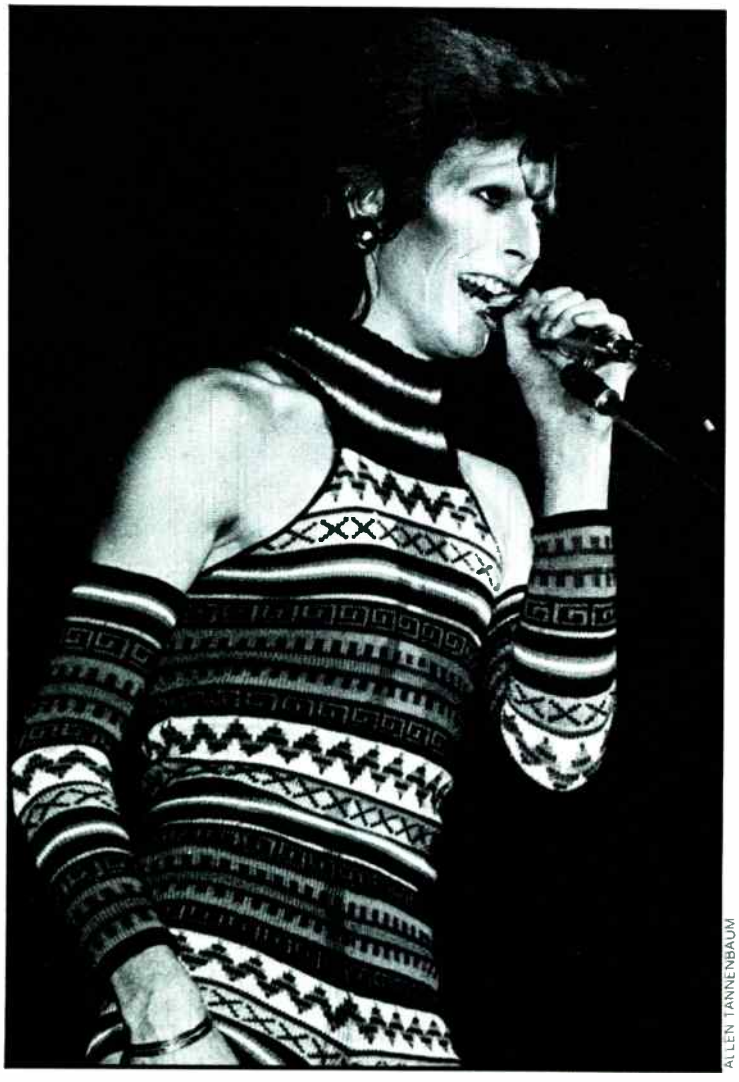
To his fans, Bruce Springsteen is the King of Rock 'n' Roll, past, present and future, though it was too bad when the media got hold of him in 1975 and all but buried him. Bob Dylan ushered in the Seventies with a *Self-Portrait*, but looked too long and hard at it the rest of the decade with varying, often unsatisfactory results.

way as McCartney) was Peter Frampton, who left boogie plodders Humble Pie for the even more plodding Frampton's Camel, after which he ruled the world for a year or so by figuring out how to make heavy metal for housewives (pour a lot of Valium in the mix). A far more compelling brand of superstar pop was dished up by Fleetwood Mac in *Rumours* and the epochal album that preceded it — they seemed truly a group that no one could dislike, making radio fodder that reflected the confusions of our own lives, though with *Tusk* it seems that they too have lost their way, either don't know any longer what they want to say, or have forgotten how to say it, or both.

Of course, there's a sub-genre of Seventies British Superbands, the arty pomp of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Jethro Tull, Yes and Queen, all of whom have survived the decade and enjoyed fairly consistent financial success. They've remained kitschy pretentious drivel the whole time, too.

And speaking of drivel, let's not forget to say a word for heavy metal, a great genre of the first half of the decade which has since been superceded and rendered redundant by punk, except that we're going into the Eighties and still almost nobody in either H-M bands or the American audience realizes it yet. In fact, in its salad days (roughly '69 - '73), metal served much the same function for Nixon-era kid disaffiliates as punk did in 1977 by not only giving them a pariah-form to rally 'round but dealing, however superficially/moronically, with current political and identity-related issues. "People think I'm insane because I am frowning all the time," complained Black Sabbath, and went on to paint some of the reasons why: "In the fields the bodies burning/As the war machine keeps turning." If ever there was a Seventies group, it was Black Sabbath — their message of utter hopelessness was put across with thick slabs of doomy bass and fuzz guitar, causing them to be labeled "downer rock," although really it was music for that torn haze when the downs and psychedelics and booze and speed are all mixed up together and your only pleasure consists in feeling like a real subhuman; in this sense, they certainly anticipated the nihilistic yawps of later punk bands. A far more humanitarian/positive version of the populist metal apocalypse was put forward by Grand Funk, whose beefcake Everyman Mark Farner exhorted all his "brothers and sisters" (for that's what he called them in the twilight of the counterculture), "People Let's Stop the War." Maybe they did, but it didn't do any good for heavy metal which soon degenerated into an empty roundelay of stale too-loud licks and male supremacist breastbeatings. By the time Aerosmith appeared (1972) it was already starting to look like a formula, and all that remained was for Kiss to come along and, stealing a lick from Alice Cooper, turn it into spectacle in which the music was assuredly secondary to the visuals. In fact, if any one person could be blamed for the decline of rock 'n' roll in the Seventies, it might well be Alice, a pioneer at marketing strategies guaranteed to deliver the package with no contents necessary every time. And the latter is what really happened to the whole fucking *culture*, not just rock, in the last half of the decade.

On the other side of the fence from the heavy metaleers in the first years of the decade were the singer-songwriters, who now may perhaps be seen as prophets of post-roll rock and the day (like, *now*, Daddio) when MOR pap would blanket the airwaves and music of guts or meaning be veritably outlawed. Then, instead of radio station demographic surveys, these purveyors of the laid-back ("wimps," we called 'em back in my kidhood) derived sustenance from the fact that the better part of a generation had been left quavering bundles of fried nerve-endings by the passing of the Sixties and needed to be told things like "You've Got a Friend" written by Carole King, whose *Tapestry* was the best-selling album of the era, and hit-recorded by James Taylor, who was so out of commission



ALLEN TANNENBAUM

EBET ROBERTS

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No, punk wasn't pretty and neither was glitter, but everyone to his own taste. David Bowie (left) was the leading android ushering in the era of non-vocals while Johnny Rotten (top) pretty much says it all for punk. Elvis Costello (right) apotheosized the Worm as Star routine wherein a mean-spirited little creep becomes a sex symbol for a fleeting instant.

when it came time to record his *One Man Dog* album that the Warner Brothers folks had to come out and cut it at his house) or asked "Where Do the Children Play?" (Cat Stevens, who also counselled about getting too rambletambled out in that "Wild World").

Around the same time the country-L.A. wing of wimp got started, through the graces of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, the Eagles, Jackson Browne and Linda Ronstadt. Mostly what these folks were up to was managing to debase rock 'n' roll, country and western music and the idea of singer-songwriters as something to be taken seriously all at the same time. Though Jackson Browne has turned out some beautiful songs in his day; he, Joni Mitchell and Neil Young almost redeemed the genre by their honesty, humanity and willingness to face some of the tougher questions of life and love. Young in particular emerges as a true battle-scarred survivor who will probably keep making vital music through the Eighties. Certainly he does not, like Crosby, Stills and Nash as well as the Eagles, represent a desecration of the Buffalo Springfield tradition. Though what the latter two bands probably were really about was the first stages of corporate rock, that distinctively Seventies trend wherein once-vital musicians regroup in faceless configurations for the sole purpose of making money by trading off their names. Such unknowables as Foreigner and Journey come immediately to mind, as well as what may be the supreme example of all, Jefferson Starship, who of course were born phoenixlike from the ashes of the oh-so-revolutionary Jefferson Airplane and went on to cut such titanic odes to cultural upheaval as "Skateboardin'." Better they'd stayed burnt-out.

What these groups generally have in common is the presence of one or more Sixties leftovers, and while most of the people talked about in this article may fall into that category, some are certainly more left-over than others. Take the Grateful Dead, who apparently meant something in the heyday of Haight-Ashbury and continue over a decade later on the basis of whatever microscopic scraps of that period's magic might dubiously remain in their tired old endless jam sessions attended by countless legions of raggle-taggle "Deadheads," a pathetic army who will refuse for the rest of their lives to believe it's not 1968 anymore. And then there's Frank Zappa, once the most scabrous voice of vitriolic cross-cultural satire, now long-since reduced to peepee-doodoo jokes like "Dont Eat the Yellow Snow." But perhaps the most indicative old shroudy-dowdy leftover of all is Bob Dylan, whom we all know meant something mighty big a ways back when even if we can't always remember just exactly what it was. Big Bob kinda *ushered in* the Seventies by releasing *Self Portrait*, an album which is either a creepily Nixonian lie about America or a good-natured jackoff (always kinda liked it myself), in mid-summer (an Indian Summer of Indian givers) 1970. Since then he's put out *New Morning* (pallid, overrated when it came out, ignored now), *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* mostly instrumental movie soundtrack with five versions of the same song which nevertheless may be his best album of the decade), *Planet Waves* (son of *New Morning*, and one of the decade's biggest hypes and most-returned by rack jobbers), *Before the Flood* (fake-intense live album No. 1), *Blood on the Tracks* (harrowing reaction to failures of love which was nevertheless much too long and kinda tired overall), *Desire* (a truly dismal and shoddily executed hype full of fake protest songs and *Pat Garrett* and *Blood on the Tracks* outtakes), *Hard Rain* (fake-intense live album No. 2), *Street-Legal* (a transparently bad attempt to return to the multi-rhymed verbosity of his *Blonde on Blonde* period), *Bob Dylan at Budokan* (fake non-intense live album No. 1), and finally *Slow*

Train Coming (wherein our hero finds Jehovah and harangues all of us herded into the pews at gunpoint). When you look at this whole mess in retrospect, what it is becomes obvious: one failed self-conscious tactic after another. Can't wait to see what kind of contemptuous horse manure he'll be slinging our way in the Eighties.

There has, fortunately, been some strong, deep-rooted mainstream American rock 'n' roll in the Seventies. Before they succumbed to personal and chemical tragedies and resultant torpor, the Allman Brothers were one of the finest bands this country had ever seen, a mixture of traditional blues, modern rock and jazz-like explorations that was honest and strong as the land they came from. Same goes for Bob Seger, who paid hard road dues for ten solid years before finally becoming a superstar in 1976 — Seger is to the midwest as the Allmans and Creedence Clearwater's John Fogerty were to the rural south, an uncompromising representation of the soul and mind of a particular place and time. Much the same might be said of Bruce Springsteen if he weren't so damned operatic — for Middle American kids today, and (needless to say) *especially* anybody from the state of New Jersey or anywhere around there, Springsteen is the King of Rock 'n' Roll past, present and future. Certainly for all those kids out there working in factories, shops and gas stations with their only freedom a little Saturday night beer-blast vrooming through redlights in their cars, he represents a dream of what else there might be, a way out. Personally I feel kinda sorry for him, because he got all but buried alive when in 1975 it was decided by whoever decides these things (everybody, really) that it was now the middle of the decade, hence we had to have new Beatles, Stones etc. So they (we) picked on him and Patti Smith and they've both suffered for it in different ways. Springsteen, in the long or short run, will probably be all right, and maybe Patti will too though everyone seems to hate her right now. Certainly we've seen damn few more *willing* messiahs, though I'd say in the long run she's more fun and interesting than the rest of those assholes out there who wanna be superstars and think that means being as big a creep as possible.

In a way Patti could be seen as a truly pivotal figure: between the androgynous stance of glitter/decadent rock in the early Seventies, and the violently nondrogenous stance of the New Wave/Punk Rock explosion of 1977. Glitter *and* Punk were really just the long-forestalled influence of the Velvet Underground coming home to roost, as Velvet's leader Lou Reed had his one big survey hit in "Walk on the Wild Side" and became more or less of a star himself, shepherded along by his onetime disciple-from-afar David Bowie. Bowie himself may be the ultimate Seventies rock figure, in that he apparently has no real core personality but just continues to try on various masks, all of which seem to fit (which many have come to think may have been all Bob Dylan was up to in the Sixties). In any case, the other children of the Velvets — Iggy and the Stooges, the New York Dolls, and Roxy Music — were generally far more interesting than Bowie, perhaps because for each of them more was at stake (which may also be why none of them are around today). Roxy Music coincided with the trail-off of glitter's more extreme fashion poses into a goon's idea of aristocracy (Bryan Ferry dressed in a maitre-d's white dinner jacket, crooning like Basil Rathbone while posing like Bogart), but their music was a brilliant collage of influences from all over the map, and they produced Brian Eno, whom I profiled at length here last month and who will be one of the most reliable pathfinders in the Eighties. The Stooges released what for me was the best album of the decade, 1973's *Raw Power*, a deranged sluice of hellbent careening noise, and the Dolls were an American garage-band Rolling Stones that made two wonderful albums but never quite got off the ground owing to multifaceted self-destructive talents.

Both the Stooges and the Dolls, along with Patti, predicted the Punk Rock/New Wave phenomenon, which remains controversial to the extent that it remains alive at all, but did manage to shake things up considerably in '77. New Wave may have been the only time the decade had a rock 'n' roll music which could truly be called its own instead of a Sixties retread. There were many who didn't like it, but it produced some fine music, although many of its best groups seemed intent on remaining true to its ethos by breaking up almost as soon as they got anywhere (thinking here of course of the Sex Pistols, Television and Richard Hell and the Voidoids). Some of the others, like the Ramones and Clash, are still fighting, hammering on the doors of acceptance by the industry, radio, etc. They have a lot of courage and a lot of style, and I think eventually they will win through sheer stamina and persistence. Others, like Blondie, used disco to gain a commercial foothold. And, of course, there's Elvis Costello, a truly Seventies figure in apotheosizing The Worm As Star. All the girls think he's sexy because he's a wizened muttering meanspirited impotent spiteful little creep. That's cool. On the other end of the spectrum are Talking Heads, some very nice people (in fact their everyday wholesomeness, they say, is designed as part of their appeal) making some incredibly beautiful music about (the most everyday-wholesome and therefore frightening forms of) late-Seventies alienation. The New Wave renaissance was, as Seymour Krim wrote of the Beats in 1962, "a great creative hour for young Americans [and Britons], freedom really rang." Too bad that, like the Beats, a combination of natural defeatism and media hype swallowed them up; for what we have today, in the wake of the Knack, is an endless industry spew of prefab power-pop groups masquerading as New Wave when they're really all gutless and probably less rebellious than Kiss. People will try to tell you that it's Pure Pop For Now People, but it's really just the same old scam.

So here we are on the lip of the Eighties. Some of this stuff will help us get through the next decade, but probably not much, because who needs yesterday's defeats? On the other hand, the artists and records that really mattered in the Seventies were the ones about something that will no doubt matter even more in the times ahead: *Survival*, as both Grand Funk and Bob Marley had it in album titles at the beginning and end of the decade respectively, though neither album was destined to last. The ones that would last were the ones that confronted the fear, vacancy, torpor and dread of the time straight-on, and told the truth no matter how depressing it came out. A list of them is appended; mostly they record how the bottom dropped out of everything we ever believed in, particularly the dreams of the Sixties counterculture, and they writhe (often all but silently) with anguish at the realization that no new values have turned up in a suddenly valueless world. Perhaps finding those values will be the function of the masterpieces of the Eighties.

PURE DREAD FOR SEVENTIES PEOPLE

Being a more-or-less subjective chronological list of albums symptomatic of the time, which is not necessarily to say always the best albums of the time. But they are all real, where not much else has been.

There's a Riot Goin' On by Sly and the Family Stone (Epic — '71): "Feel so good inside myself, don't wanna move" sang Sly way back when some people still believed in a counterculture and that we ("we"?) wouldn't get fooled again — this was and is the solipsism of a whole era in one phrase. The music holds up too, especially post-disco.

Exile on Main Street by the Rolling Stones (Rolling Stones — '72): "I always hear those voices on the street/I want to shout but I can hardly speak" sounded like the desperate, hallucinatory flipside of Sly's chemical murk. Possibly the Stones' finest hour. You could literally *feel* them fighting the deathwish everybody else was feeling too — released in a time when War's "Slippin' into Darkness" was an AM hit, irony right there. But that's what we were doing.

Superfly by Curtis Mayfield (Curtom — '72): "Freddie's Dead" — another survey hit, another irony, another glimpse

ANDY FREEBERG ENCORE

The L.A. singer/songwriter gold-dust crowd took it easy without a whole lot to complain about. By far the best were Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne and the Eagles.

EBET ROBERTS

into the post-apocalypse void. Soul music had about a year to go when this was cut.

On the Corner and *Get Up With It* by Miles Davis (Columbia — '72 and '75 respectively): Miles' even more chillingly alienated reply to Sly. Cold, technology-obsessed, possessed at times of an inhuman malevolence, this is music for the modern nightmare, so implacably negative that it put Miles on a commercial slide after his great chart success with *Bitches Brew* only a couple years before. Even most jazz listeners and former Miles fans can't take it — but if you'll give it a chance and let its relentlessness into your nerve endings, you'll find up-to-date horror and cold hard anthracite black hate.

Berlin and *Street Hassle* by Lou Reed (RCA — '73 and Arista — '78 respectively): *Berlin*, which I called "a gargantuan slab of maggoty rancor" in 1974, is at least partly ludicrous in its melodramatic overstatement, but the cumulative effect is powerful and the second side is one of the bleakest accounts of a modern love affair ever heard. The title cut of *Street Hassle* is about contemporary city people who seek love and lose in another way; it may be even more devastating and it's a lot more empathetic.

Young Americans by David Bowie (RCA — '75): Bowie's "soul" experiment was really his after-the-crash depresso testament, music so down it oddly lifted you up, perhaps because for the first time it seemed like he really cared.

Tonight's the Night by Neil Young (Reprise — '75): Neil's pit-of-the-night opus, and while, like Lou, it seemed at times as if his tendency towards the ridiculous and his aching reality were too closely intertwined ("Borrowed Tune") . . . well, maybe that was part of what made him so special.

The Clash and *Give 'Em Enough Rope* by the Clash (CBS import — '77 or in somewhat different form Epic — '79, and Epic — '78 respectively): You've read enough hype on them by now. The Clash are one of the four or five groups who've mattered the most to me in the whole history of rock 'n' roll, and if you don't want 'em that's your tough luck. But they are about taking control of your life, and what can happen to you if you don't.

Blank Generation by Richard Hell and the Voidoids (Sire — '77): This is about taking enough control of your own life to consciously abdicate it: "Who Says It's Good to Be Alive?" asks Richard, but he never reaches the next step of finding an answer. But there is a paradoxically bleak and fiery power in this record that will someday be more generally appreciated.

Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols by you know who (Warner Brothers/Virgin — '77): Really not a very good album, the singles individually are more powerful and I was tempted to put *Raw Power* instead, but what the hell: "Anarchy in the U.K." restored the feral primal force we'd nigh forgotten rock 'n' roll was capable of in one song, meaning that the Ramones were the true fathers of this particular revolution but it was the Pistols who took it to the implacably misanthropic limit — filling you up with a pointles rage that had nowhere to go. They made you want to break furniture, tear out your spine and throw it at somebody, stuff like that — they were swell. Anything that created this much rage in this many people cannot be denied. M

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JAZZ IN THE SEVENTIES

Unlike rock, jazz was suprisingly vital in the past decade from the mainstream on out. A strong group consciousness made the difference starting with the great early fusion bands engendered by Miles Davis to the collective improvisational groups of the AACM like Air and the Art Ensemble. All bodes well for jazz in the Eighties.

By Robert Palmer

"The Sixties," that quasi-mythical decade of wrenching social change and profound cultural upheaval, ground to a halt sometime around 1971-73, and it's been widely assumed that whatever was left of the seventies didn't amount to much. Tom Wolfe called it "the Me decade," which sounded like a pretty weak stab at phrase-mongering but stuck when nothing better came along. In jazz, though, the *sixties* were the Me decade. The sixties produced individuals who singlemindedly altered the course along which the music was developing — Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, the renascent Miles Davis. They insisted on going their own way even when the public and other musicians didn't want to listen, and their individual reasons for doing so all boiled down to one thing: "It felt right to Me."

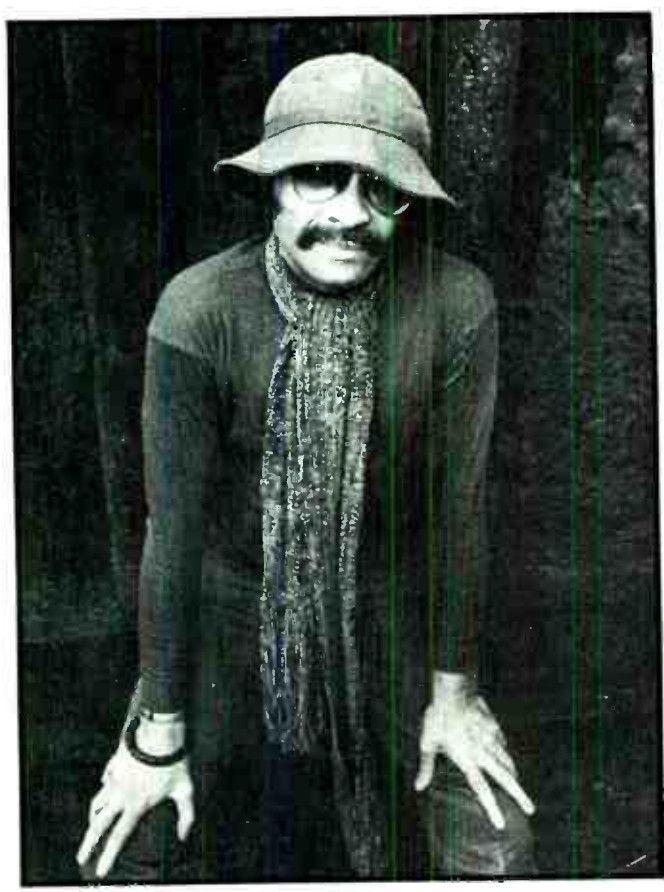
The seventies were the Us decade as far as jazz was concerned. The most profound changes in the music's forward thrust were wrought by a movement, Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians or AACM, and its fellow travellers. Jazz and jazz-related music reached the widest popular audience it had enjoyed since the swing era, and again no single musician was responsible. The modern mainstream of jazz — music that fell chronologically between the innovations of the boppers during the forties and the beginnings of free form in the early sixties — enjoyed a startling creative and commercial revival, but it was spearheaded as much by the continuing vitality of Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Rollins as by the triumphant return from exile of Dexter Gordon. And when jazz made it onto the White House lawn, it came *en masse*. Everything important that jazz accomplished during the seventies was accomplished collectively.

Did I say "important"? Jazz producer Orrin Keepnews has a sign on the wall of his Berkeley office that asks "Important to Whom?", and that's the trouble with attempting to isolate important anythings. To some jazz fans, the fact that Gillespie and Rollins were playing brilliantly in the seventies was more important than any developments in the avant-garde. To others, the playing of past masters, no matter how brilliant, could never be as significant as the innovations of the best younger musicians, whose time is Right Now. Let's assume that all these things are important, but let's begin this informal and admittedly personal survey of jazz in the seventies with a look at the decade's principal innovators, go on to examine the confluence of art and commerce in the jazz-fusion marketplace, and finish with the revitalization of the mainstream and some thoughts on the future.

Every so often, I get a letter or some other form of feedback from a musician or fan out there in America who resents the critical attention that's being lavished on a certain charmed circle of musicians from the Midwest — AACM groups and players like the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Anthony Braxton, Air, Leo Smith and Leroy Jenkins, St. Louis-bred musicians

TOM COPI

The great avant-gardists of the sixties, Cecil Taylor (left) and Ornette Coleman (right) continued to stretch the boundaries of where jazz could go. Bands like the Art Ensemble of Chicago (top) took their lead and went one better by interweaving worlds of new harmony, tonality and improvisation into a tight-knit group structure.



CAROL FRIEDMAN

JAMES HAMILTON

CAROL FRIEDMAN

The mainstream was strong with Dizzy reigning supreme, Dexter Gordon and Johnny Griffin returning from exile, and the incomparable Sonny Rollins staying hot.

like Oliver Lake, Julius Hemphill, and Hamiet Bluiett. There's been a critical backlash as well, with various writers going out of their way to discern in other young jazz musicians the sort of creative spark the Midwesterners provided when they descended on New York in the early and middle seventies. The argument usually goes that there are top-notch players everywhere who aren't getting any recognition because they don't belong to the charmed circle and don't perform in New York, and as far as it goes this argument is absolutely correct. But it ignores New York's monolithic (and in many ways unfortunate) role as the world center for the dissemination of new ideas in jazz. And it ignores what the Midwestern players and their compatriots have contributed as a movement; in the last five years, they've had an absolutely fundamental impact on the way new jazz is composed and played all over the world.

In 1970, the first contingent of AACM musicians arrived in New York. It consisted of Anthony Braxton and Leroy Jenkins, who'd made a handful of recordings in Chicago and Europe but were still practically unknown to the jazz world at large. Ornette Coleman let them sleep at his loft for months until they found places of their own. At the time, New York's and Europe's jazz avant-gardes were still in their hollering-and-screaming phase. Braxton, Jenkins, and their collaborators thought it was time to invent some new structures as replacements for the old ones the sixties avant-garde had done away with. As their work and the recordings the Art Ensemble of Chicago was making in Europe became better known, the dimensions of the new structuralism became clearer. But the movement's real impact came around 1974-77 with the arrival in New York of musicians like Lake, Hemphill, and the members of Air, and with the greater exposure of artists like Roscoe Mitchell and George Lewis, who performed in New York at Sam River's Studio Rivbea and other downtown lofts before Joseph Papp's Public Theater opened up to new jazz in 1977.

Braxton was the first of these musicians to land a contract with a mass-distributed record label (Arista), and he was the one figure who virtually forced the media and other jazz musicians to deal with the new structuralism. It's still fashionable in certain circles to knock him for being too cerebral and not swinging enough, to take one or two of his records out of context and use them to dismiss the entirety of his contribution. To me he is one of the truly significant innovators of the seventies. The Art Ensemble or Muhal Richard Abrams or several other composer-musicians could have played an equally pivotal role if they'd had the exposure, but the point is, they didn't. Braxton, out there by himself, stuck to his guns, and he made at least two albums — *Creative Orchestra Music 1976* and *Birth and Rebirth*, his recent duo lp with Max Roach — that even his most vocal detractors had to admire. Now that the Art Ensemble and Leo Smith are recording for the Warner Brothers-distributed ECM label and European independents like Black Saint and Moers Music are actively documenting the scene, Braxton's position isn't so exposed. I'm sure he's glad of that. Incidentally, after several domestic record releases that were less than overwhelming, Braxton's recent *Alto Saxophone Improvisations 1979* is a telling reaffirmation of his powers.

Still, if I had to pick one artist or group that represents the best of the decade's new jazz, it would be the Art Ensemble. As a unit, this quintet has brought a hitherto undreamed-of refinement to the art of ensemble improvisation. And collectively or individually, the five musicians in the band have contributed to every one of the important new directions seventies jazz has taken. Lester Bowie, Joseph Jarman and Malachi Favors constantly remind us that the contemporary improvising musician must be a living repository of the *complete* tradition, from African music to New Orleans jazz and swing, right up through bebop and the open forms of the sixties. Don Moye, through his work with outside musicians like Chico Freeman

Fusion came and went. Top, the band that started it all: Wayne Shorter, Jack DeJohnette, Airto, John McLaughlin, Miles Davis, Dave Holland and Chick Corea. Below, Joe Zawinul, Keith Jarrett and John McLaughlin.

as well as with the Art Ensemble, reminds us that jazz must still, in some sense, be about swinging. Roscoe Mitchell, the Art Ensemble's founder, is the premiere structuralist of the new jazz. His solo albums on the Nessa label have been too rarefied for some, but they've demonstrated that composers from the jazz tradition can exercise as much control over their materials as composers from any other tradition without having to sacrifice the spontaneity and rhythmic suppleness that are unique to jazz.

Thanks to Braxton, the Art Ensemble, and their many associates, the range of contemporary improvised music has broadened dramatically. One hears concerts by solo saxophonists and drummers, by "choirs" of trumpeters and bassists, by all sorts of untried instrumental combinations. One hears composer-performers repeatedly challenging themselves by experimenting with a variety of approaches, from meticulously plotted graph pieces to improvisations based on a feeling or an idea to straight-ahead pieces using chord sequences and rounds of solos. All this is a far cry from the jazz avant-garde of ten years ago, which was so loosely, unabashedly expressionistic that it harbored almost as many pretenders as it did genuinely inventive musicians. In 1980 there aren't many pretenders left.

The best of the younger players who have come along in the last three or four years — pianist Anthony Davis, flutist James Newton, and tenor saxophonists Chico Freeman and David Murray are four who come immediately to mind — pride themselves on their ability to play convincingly in any idiom. But they've been particularly concerned with exploring the contemporary relevance of the jazz tradition, Murray with his homages to Bechet and Gonsalves, Davis with his suites of Mingus and Monk tunes. This relatively conservative direction relates to the work of one of the seventies' supreme jazz iconoclasts, Sam Rivers, who has always insisted on swinging no matter how abstract the context, and to another formidable saxophonist whose work explores unusual instrumentations and sonorities while reaffirming traditional verities, Arthur Blythe. Between these players, the Mitchell-Braxton structuralist axis, and the improvisational collectivism represented by groups like the Art Ensemble and Air, the new jazz of the eighties offers an unprecedented range of choices and what almost amounts to an embarrassment of riches.

At the beginning of the seventies, jazz-rock or fusion music looked like it was going to be one of the decade's signal breakthroughs. Miles Davis kicked off the seventies by resolving to assemble the baddest rock band of all time, and his sidemen of the 1970-75 period did go on to initiate a number of viable and distinctive fusion approaches — Weather Report's multiethnic watercolors, Herbie Hancock's street funk, Chick Corea's jazzy hard rock, and the Mahavishnu Orchestra's visionary combination of rock's force and electricity, Indian music's melodic subtlety and rhythmic complexity, and jazz chops. All these musicians and groups connected with a relatively large audience, and for awhile all of them were making music that was both creative and commercial, even if it wasn't always first-rate in a jazz sense.

It didn't last. Mahavishnu Orchestra's music remains one of the few authentic landmarks of fusion, but it survives only on records. None of the group's members has gone on to create anything as visionary or as perfectly realized, though McLaughlin did achieve an impressive Indian-jazz fusion with the acoustic group Shakti. Corea still makes the occasional straight-ahead jazz date, but his fusion music has grown top-heavy with bombast and treacly with cuteness. Hancock is doing his best to make ordinary party funk records. Weather Report continues to perform and record adventurous music,

Sam Rivers' (top) Rivbea Studio nurtured players like Anthony Braxton (middle) and David Murray (bottom) when New Jazz meant the Loft Scene.

but it seems more and more unlikely that they'll create another lp as original and satisfying as their mid-seventies masterpiece *Mysterious Traveller*. And to my ears, the jazz-rock groups that have come along in the past few years have been either bland formula outfits or pale reflections of the music's early innovative period. Only the perpetually innovative Ornette Coleman and his former student James "Blood" Ulmer have offered really fresh insights into the possibilities jazz-rock fusion still holds for those adventurous enough to explore it without depending on cliches.

Fusion's precipitous demise as a creative idiom may have had something to do with its audience. Mahavishnu Orchestra, Return to Forever, and most of the other early fusion bands tended to attract boisterous crowds that applauded every fast lick and facial grimace and had little interest in subtleties. Watching musicians as gifted as Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke react to these audiences over a period of several years by turning in playing that was progressively more facile and empty was one of the most disheartening aspects of working as a jazz reviewer in the seventies.

After 1975, most fusion music was a frankly commercial proposition. The popular jazz stars of the late seventies — George Benson, Chuck Mangione, the Crusaders, Earl Klugh — combined their jazz roots with non-jazz elements that were derived from middle-of-the-road pop, light classical music, and disco, rather than from the more challenging and progressive side of rock. Creed Taylor set the standards for this new fusion music (which I've called jazz-pop or, less charitably, pop jazz) beginning in the sixties, overproducing gifted but pliable players like Wes Montgomery, Grover Washington, Jr., and the pre-Warner Brothers George Benson. His lessons have been learned very well indeed by newer pop jazz producers like Warner's Tommy Li Puma and the Dave Grusin-Larry Rosen team, whose latest atrocity is the bastardization of one of the decade's freshest young jazz talents, vibraphonist Jay Hoggard.

Some of the most enjoyable fusion music of the late seventies had little to do with either rock or pop. For the most part it was acoustic, and it combined a variety of jazz styles with African, Asian, and other Third World musics. Among the practitioners of this less celebrated but more rewarding brand of fusion are the group Oregon, trumpeter Don Cherry (who often collaborates with Oregon's sitarist and percussionist Collin Walcott), John McLaughlin, the Indian violinist L. Shankar, and the Brazilian eclectic Egberto Gismonti.

Gismonti, Cherry, and several of the Oregon musicians record for ECM, the most imitated and controversial independent jazz label of the seventies. Keith Jarrett's solo piano recordings on ECM set new sales records for acoustic improvised music. Jarrett's playing demonstrates an awareness of contemporary jazz currents, but his harmonies are largely derived from the European neo-romanticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, his standards of execution and tonal purity are those of conventional classical music, and his rhythms are usually rock or swing oriented except when he's being "avant-garde." To a greater or lesser degree, these qualities are also inherent in the music of ECM label-mates Ralph Towner, Bill Connors, and Gary Burton. It's been a source of considerable irritation to ECM's detractors that all these musicians, and until very recently most of the other players on the label, have been white.

But ECM is changing, and the way it's changing seems to augur well for jazz in the eighties. The latest packages of new releases from the folks at Warners have included ECM lp's by Old and New Dreams (the superb quartet of former Ornette Coleman sidemen), the extroverted tenor saxophonist George Adams, Leo Smith, and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. A Jack DeJohnette lp with saxophone firebrands Arthur Blythe and David Murray is scheduled for release early in 1980. For the first time in this decade, there's more than one mass-distributed record label with a serious commitment to innovative new jazz, and that's good news indeed.

continued on page 57

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17. *DEWEY BOND* Independent
18. *GARY SMITH* Survivor
19. *ALAN WHITE* Yes
20. *RON TUTT* Independent
21. *DARRELL SWEET* Nazareth
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23. *SANDY WEST* Runaways
24. *TONY BROCK* The Babys
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MUSICIAN PLAYER & LISTENER

POLL

Musician, Player and Listener's "Rate the 70's" survey is unique in that it is the first music poll to be answered exclusively by professional session and performing musicians. Musicians were asked to vote on artists who had made the greatest impact on their instrument or category during the past decade. Over 1000 questionnaires were sent to working musicians whose styles ranged from nightdub pop to avant-garde jazz. The re-

JAZZ GROUP
Weather Report
Return to Forever
Mahavishnu Orchestra

ROCK GROUP
Steely Dan
Earth, Wind and Fire
Bruce Springsteen

ROCK GUITAR
Jimi Hendrix
Jeff Beck
Robert Fripp

JAZZ GUITAR
Pat Metheny
John McLaughlin
G. Benson/J. Aberarombie

ROCK KEYBOARD
Richard Tee
Stevie Wonder
Keith Emerson

JAZZ KEYBOARD
Keith Jarrett
Chick Corea
McCoy Tyner

ROCK BASS
Paul McCartney
Stanley Clarke
Chuck Rainey

JAZZ BASS
Jaco Pastorius
Ron Carter
Charles Mingus/Stanley Clarke

ROCK DRUMMER
Steve Gadd
Keith Moon
Bill Bruford

JAZZ DRUMMER
Jack DeJohnette
Tony Williams
Elvin Jones

SAXOPHONE
Wayne Shorter
Sonny Rollins
Ornette Coleman

TRUMPET
Miles Davis
Lester Bowie
Woody Shaw

WINNERS

sponse was overwhelming, with respondents ranging from Larry Carlton and Melissa Manchester to Ian Lloyd and Oliver Lake and everyone imaginable in between. Most surprising was how much alike the answers were amongst all this musical diversity. Musicians are aware of a broad range of styles and respect quality more than popularity, thus some of the surprise differences between this poll and a reader's poll. Things to note: Watch how musical influence travels, as the big jazz winners were rock-influenced fusion like Mahavishnu, RTF and Weather Report, most from early in the decade, while the big rock winners were jazz-influenced, like Steely Dan, and from late in the 70's. Notice the tremendous influence and respect accorded session players like Steve Gadd and Richard Tee. Although he never saw the 70's, Jimi Hendrix still won Rock Guitarist by a landslide. And, as expected Stevie Wonder was runaway favorite all across the board.

MISC. INSTRUMENT
Airto
Roland Kirk
Ralph MacDonald

Stevie Wonder
Al Jarreau
Bruce Springsteen

FEMALE VOCALIST
Aretha Franklin
Joni Mitchell
Linda Ronstadt

SINGER/SONGWRITER
Stevie Wonder
Bruce Springsteen
Joni Mitchell

PRODUCER
Brian Eno
Manfred Eicher
Maurice White

BEST AM RADIO ARTIST
Stevie Wonder
Earth, Wind and Fire
Steely Dan

UNDERRATED ROCK ARTIST
Little Feat
The Wild Tchoupitoulas
Frank Zappa

UNDERRATED JAZZ ARTIST
Ornette Coleman
Art Ensemble of Chicago
Charlie Haden

ROCK ARTIST INFLUENCING THE 80'S
Brian Eno
Stevie Wonder
Beatles/Bruce Springsteen

JAZZ ARTIST INFLUENCING THE 80'S
Pat Metheny/Art Ensemble
Ornette Coleman
Weather Report

ROCK ALBUM OF THE 70'S
"Aja" Steely Dan
"Songs in the Key of Life" Stevie Wonder
"Court and Spark" Joni Mitchell

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE 70'S
"The Inner Mounting Flame" Mahavishnu Orchestra
"Heavy Weather" Weather Report
"Bitches Brew" Miles Davis

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Jazz *cont. from page 50*

One of the most welcome developments of the decade was the revival of interest in the modern mainstream. It was evident in New York by the mid-seventies. New Jazz clubs were springing up all over town, and young listeners were suddenly flocking to hear musicians who had been around, and scuffling, for years. The dedication of several knowledgeable jazz fans who were strategically placed in the record industry — Bruce Lundvall at Columbia, Norman Granz with Pablo, Xanadu's Don Schlitten, Muse's Joe Field — helped spread the news. But the watershed event was the return of long-time expatriate Dexter Gordon, who came to New York to test the water with a club appearance, got some admiring writeups, suddenly found himself playing to capacity crowds, and signed with Columbia, which had been concentrating on fusion almost exclusively. His pal and fellow expatriate Johnny Griffin followed him and was also warmly received. Musicians who'd been here all along — Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Joe Pass, Zoot Sims, and Barry Harris, to name a few — benefitted from the increased public and media attention by working and recording more. Charles Mingus, whose death in 1979 deprived jazz of one of its immortals and was as epochal in its own way as the passing of Duke Ellington earlier in the decade, responded to the new jazz climate with his best work since the mid-sixties. He was still creating feverishly even when he could no longer physically write or play.

Newsweek proclaimed on its cover in August, 1977 that "Jazz is Back!" Jazz hadn't been away, of course, and the irony of the headline only served to underscore the fragility and superficiality of the late seventies "jazz boom." It's true that the music has penetrated middle America, perhaps more deeply than ever before. Time-Life is marketing vintage recordings by Ellington and Armstrong to the masses. Among the most spectacular Broadway successes of the late seventies have been "Ain't Misbehavin' " and "Bubbling Brown Sugar," both built around pre-World War Two jazz and related idioms. Jazz has permeated popular music, not just as a component in fusion but as an important ingredient in the recordings of funk groups like Earth, Wind and Fire, folk-pop singers like James Taylor, and countless disco and rock acts. Musicians as uncompromising as Cecil Taylor and Sam Rivers are actually making a living. But for every success story there are countless struggles.

The reason is that jazz remains in a unique cultural limbo. It's too much a high art to be really competitive as mass entertainment, yet most jazz artists do compete with rock and pop musicians for record company promotional budgets and audience dollars. And since it's both a music whose major creators have been black and a music "tainted" by its association with show business, it still isn't accepted as high art by the people who routinely grant enormous subsidies to ballet comoanies and symphony orchestras. There's been considerable progress in this regard; national, state, local, and private funding for artists working in the jazz tradition has increased by leaps and bounds, and museums, universities, and other institutions seem to be much more attentive to the music. But the total amount of money devoted to encouraging the art of jazz is still ridiculously small when compared to the support granted European-derived culture.

It seems to me that both the amount and the concept of public and private funding for jazz needs to change. Most of the money that is going to jazz is going to support the writing and performance of new works, into research, or into projects that get the music on radio and television. That's as it should be. But I can't see any good reason why shoestring commercial operations like Xanadu or Nessa records, which have made invaluable contributions to the preservation and dissemination of jazz, shouldn't be eligible for matching funds or other aid that would allow them to record big bands and other projects beyond their present financial capabilities. I can't understand why we don't already have a fully funded network of performance centers geared to creative music and

TOM COPI

TOM COPI

TOM COPI

Standouts amongst the many great players of the decade; Wayne Shorter, Jaco Pastorius and Chick Corea created their own landmark fusion styles.

scattered all across the United States, both as a means of enriching the cultural life of local communities and as a means of enriching the artists' lives by getting them out of New York and the other big cities and into the heartland. To me, these and other projects aimed at establishing jazz as the most significant American art form — not just rhetorically, but in terms of public, institutional, and private recognition and support — are the most important order of business for the eighties. The fluctuations of the economy and of popular taste aren't very dependable, and we could easily find ourselves in another period like the late sixties, when even New York City boasted only a handful of jazz clubs and very few jazz records were being made. That worries me, but I spend a lot of time listening to younger musicians in New York and other cities, and the direction and vitality of the music doesn't worry me at all. The music can take care of itself. M

STEVIE WONDER

A Star's a Seed's a Star

A musician above and beyond category, Stevie is unquestionably the artist of the decade. His latest work is the film score for "The Secret Life of Plants." It's a long composition, a masterpiece of orchestration, a rainbow — but not as accessible as his other work. We say he's America's greatest living composer, but what will the people say?

By V. Gaits

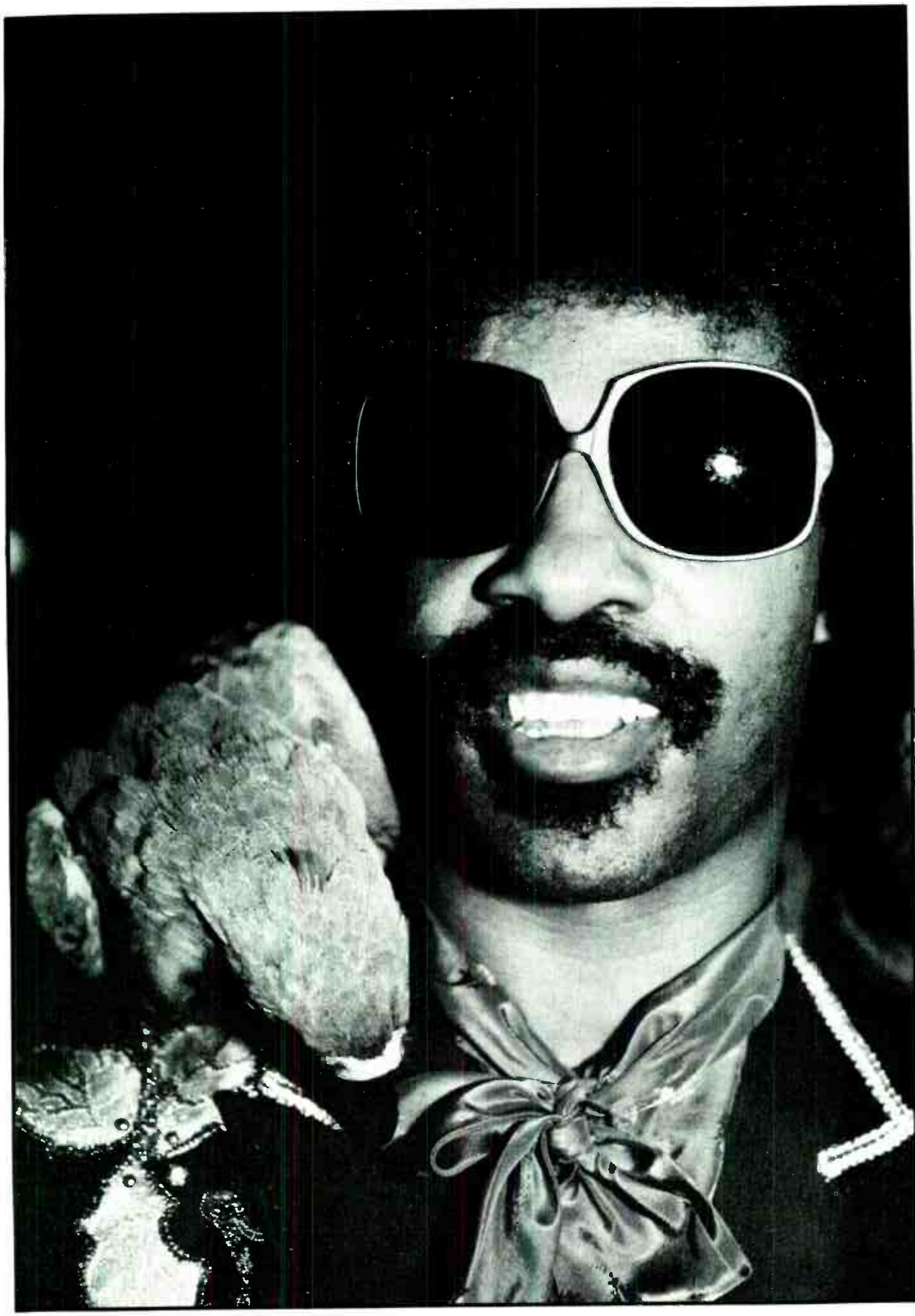
If we're lucky, in any given epoch there is a small number of artists beyond category, the universality of whose work has so overwhelmed their individualities that it also has a chance to overwhelm our own and awaken our sense of possibility. The three musicians who most forcibly come to mind in this connection (at this moment, to this listener) are Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden and the man who was given the showbiz name of *Wonder* when he was a kid and has since begun to live up to it in ways that no one could have predicted or imagined. Of the three, only Stevie Wonder reaches the kind of audience one would wish for all of them: huge, understanding and enthusiastic. He has become one of the recognizable figures of the modern world, liked by kids, adored by romantics, respected by musicians without exception, and occasionally patronized by intellectual journalists for pollyannism and related crimes. It's no secret to you that he's just released an album called *A Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants* and that it's a score for a film. As I write this, it's been out for a couple of weeks but as yet there has not been a whisper about it in the daily and weekly press, not that I've heard. Are my brother critics too overjoyed to speak, too appalled, trying to digest it, what? Maybe they're just beginning to hit their typewriters now, same as me. I had been looking forward to defending this glorious music from its attackers, but maybe there will be no attack. Maybe they're all going to be as enthusiastic as I am. How to proceed? Usually here at *Musician*, coming out as we do every six weeks, we enjoy the false, narcotic security of having the last word, putting the last brick on the pile, last dab on the canvas. But what do I do now?

When the album came out I was in a little house in the English countryside listening to a crackly AM radio. A BBC disc jockey began talking about the record. He had been listening to it all weekend, and although it was disappointing he had found one or two good songs on it. There weren't enough songs on it (he said) but it was a film score so what could you expect. The album was going to disappoint everyone, he was afraid. Then he played a ravishing song called "Black Orchid," which, especially in its harmony and details, seemed a distinct advance over everything Wonder had done in that mid-tempo, balladic vein before. The next day I heard another DJ go through the same routine, and another gem communicated itself through the snarls and static of the radio. A few days later I chanced to see a review of the album in the New Musical Express. It was entitled "Pass the Paraquat" and was one of the most nauseous, wrong-headed and just plain vile and stupid pieces of writing about music I had ever seen. *Plants* was so shapeless and overripe (it said) that even the baggy *Songs in the Key of Life* seemed tight by comparison. Even WHAT? So much for the punk press, I decided; let it stew in its own infantile nihilism, let it reap its own cold and empty harvest . . . but was this a trend? Were they going to do this in the States too? How could they? Wonder is a master musician. They can't smartass him at home; the deed would stink unto heaven. I hadn't even heard the full album yet, but it was getting to be like the old days, when you had to protest that the "naivete" of *Key of Life* didn't matter (it no longer even exists); or the even older days, when you had to explain to people that there was something transcendent in the joy that built up in "I Was Made to Love Her," and new mastery in "If You Really Love Me" and "For Once in My Life." The days before *Talking Book*, when only musicians knew what a great tree was growing in Motown . . .

I left the little house in the countryside and began house-painting in an Oxford barbershop/restaurant/cafe, where John and Habib (the owners) bought the new album in cassette form and played it continuously for a week or so. Two things struck me about it at once, even before I began to get a handle on how sweetly it was put together. For starters, it was a masterpiece of orchestration, an unprecedented *coup* for Wonder the arranger. No one had been able to do so much with a synthesizer before. He had gotten an enormous, orchestral variety out of the instrument, none of it gratuitous or redundant. More on the subject later. The second thing that impressed me was the global, all-inclusive scale on which Wonder had conceived and realized the project, world-spanning not only in the content of the lyrics but even more so in the magnitude and expressiveness of its *sound*. Another musician might have been trivial on the subject of plants and flowers, but not Wonder. I was reminded of one of Wilhelm Furtwangler's monographs on Beethoven. In response to critics who though the *Pastorale* symphony trivial because of its references to rides in the country, babbling brooks, cuckoos, village musicians, lousy weather and shepherds (in that order), Furtwangler (a great Beethoven conductor) maintained oddly and nobly that the Master was constitutionally incapable of triviality, and that his portrait of country life was not bucolic but cosmic: the land was Peace, the storm was the Flood and the shepherd was an image of Our Lord. So it is with Wonder.

To modern *homo domesticus*, a plant is a small thing that lives in the corner of your apartment in a pot; it gets all brown if you forgot to water it last week. To Wonder the story of plants begins necessarily with the creation of the world and goes on

Interview material courtesy of Georgia Christgau.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

to elucidate a Kingdom that covers the Earth except for the deserts and the parts we've paved; breathes oxygen back into the air; makes life possible on the planet; has its own guiet and dignified sentience and links us to each other and to the stars. To be sure, he was pointed that way by the book and the movie, but it speaks the size of the man that his film score will be the tail that wags the dog. The film is now being re-edited to accomodate the music, and audiences will fill the movie houses just to hear it in Dolby Digital Quad. I haven't seen the film, but I know they will at least *hear* something universal. The music not only advertises but demonstrates the interconnectedness of everything that breathes. Wonder has raised up a real rainbow here, a glorious counterweight to the gravity-bound heaviness of so much other current art. It will stand.

Naturally, as a housepainter there were parts of the album I missed. Sometimes I had to go out for masking tape, more paint, white spirit (turps to you) or just a pint of bitter to get me through the afternoon. As a result it was a few days before I heard "A Seed's A Star and Tree Medley," and so it was a while before I had even a glimpse of the true magnitude of Wonder's accomplishment; but even under ideal listening conditions it takes three full sides to reach that peak, which can be a long way to go without a roadmap. Maybe I'd better go through the album one piece at a time, now that I'm back in the States.

Like any masterpiece worth taking seriously, *Stevie Wonder's Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants* (full title) is imperfect, flawed. (Relevant quotes: "You do it first and then the others come along and do it neat." — Picasso. "It is the nature of the Divine perfection to include what we regard as imperfections." — Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi.) With that point in mind let us begin:

Oh yes, one more thing first. The pop music press is better-educated now than it was in the Sixties, when it told you that *Tommy* was an opera, but I suspect that someone out there is getting ready to tell you that *Plants* is a symphony. If you ask Stevie Wonder if he has written a symphonic piece he will answer, reluctantly, "I guess . . . somewhat. I did what I felt good about for that particular film." The word Symphony will come up because *Plants* is a single suite with a high degree of thematic unity, and the word Symphonic is routinely used to designate scale. We know that a symphony does not have to have four movements anymore, two *allegros* framing a slow movement and a minuet; the twentieth century, palace of wonders that it is, has shown us that a symphony can be anything a composer wants to *call* a symphony. Stevie Wonder has chosen not to, and I suggest the word be used with some caution. This is self-defining music.

It begins, and why shouldn't it, with the creation of the world (interestingly, a subject Milhaud deflated earlier in the century by setting it to Black music, "jazz"). Wonder has chosen to go the pomp and circumstance route here: a ponderous three-note motif goes striding through the synthesized bass, a subliminal army of nattering Martians (or, more likely, dancing Dogons) scurries in, and then the main theme squeals and roars its message at you, heralded by electronic thunder. Not bad at all, but the only Western creation-of-the-world music for my money is still the opening of Beethoven's Ninth, and no one since has come close to it (the entire nineteenth century tried). Wonder has fallen short too, although certainly not in every respect. His orchestration is something special. He has not simply used the synthesizer — Yamaha's latest, with computer memory functions — to approximate a conventional orchestra; he has made it into an orchestra of a new kind, unique to himself. His arrangements for it on the new album go far beyond even the greatest triumphs of *Songs in the Key of Life*, and they do a lot to sustain this long work.

The "pomp" theme modulates in an oddly homey way at the end of each of its choruses, then fades as a bass line picks out the melody of "The Secret Life of Plants," the main theme of the score and a near-twin to "A Seed's a Star," the album's climax. "The First Garden," which follows, is also the first unequivocal miracle of the date. Amid computerized birds and a celeste, Wonder's harmonica picks up the "Plants" theme where the bass had left it and extends it out into the fullness of melody. As the orchestration assembles and the synthesizer poses as a string bass, the harmonica repeats the theme with growing eloquence and the full flavor of Wonder's singing style. There is a brief interlude for Mother Nature, after which the "strings" enter to play the melody of "Come Back as a Flower," a gracefully beautiful tune executed with skipping, Mozartean lightness over an apposite bass line. The selection fades on the "Plants" motif again, but this time it is taken by the "strings." If the listener is not enchanted by this point in the music he probably will never be.

The "Voyage to India" that follows floats bits of thematic material out over the "Creation" figure and a slightly *ersatz* timelessness. Unimportant. So far thirteen minutes have passed without a vocal, and Motown has lost nearly a million dollars in sales. The vocal arrives: "Same Old Story" now introduces the verbal themes of the album and tells, perhaps too elliptically, the story of George Washington Carver, a psychic who discovered some of the secret life of peanuts, sweet potatoes and crop rotation in order to feed the poor. Stevie Wonder is the greatest pop songwriter since Lennon/McCartney, and this song is typical of his work. In "Venus' Flytrap and the Bug," a hilarious jazz-bug on the make is seduced to his doom over walking bass, Gil Evansisms and a development of the main theme. Everywhere in the world soon, people will turn to their friends, leer, and sing, "Hell-o flow-er, heh heh heh heh." In "Ai No, Sono," the themes are given another turn and Japanese children sing. Very nice. End of side one.

Side two contains what is for me the weakest music of the set. "Seasons" opens with a narrative sequence of what sounds like a new ice age in which, while a gift music-box chimes out "If It's Magic" from *Key of Life*, a mother tells her child about the gardens of side one, but in the freezing electronic winds her story seems like a fable of lost innocence, dead forgotten worlds. A pretty melody evolves, but turns cocktailish. Pan sings "Power Flower," drowned in a sweetness foreign to his nature. The harmonica solo helps, but not enough. This is just the sort of treacle-well I was afraid Wonder might fall into when I first heard of this project, but then I was never big on coy pantheism anyway. The song's brief. "Send One Your Love" is played by "strings" at a cocktail party. This must be the stuff that had the BBC jocks apologizing for the album and muttering into their tea about film scores. Bother them. "Race Babbling" sounds like it's going to be a great disco rave-up, but then the words are incomprehensible to the unassisted ear and the background stays undeveloped and bare. You have to read the lyrics to feel the power of this piece, in which the possible apocalypse is hazardously balanced against a vegetable plea for help. At this point in the album, Wonder's identification with, or self-projection into, the plant world becomes positively eerie: he seems a transmuted, electronic Bodhissatva out to save a few billion sentient beings.

Side three and we're in the clear. "Send One Your Love" is the successful single. Its "flower from your heart" might be more than an ad for the local florist, like the twelve-petalled mandala of the heart chakra, but then again maybe not. "Outside My Window" is another good song, but "Black Orchid" is one of Wonder's masterpieces. Lyricist Yvonne Wright proves herself a poet, as she had earlier on "They Won't Go When I Go" from *Fulfillingness' First Finale*. "Ecclesiastes," the "classical" organ piece, builds on the work of Albinoni, Buxtehude and Bach (who used to swap ground bass lines on Sundays) but also on the aforementioned "They Won't Go," which unfortunately it does not equal. The part-writing seems all right, but the ground bass is lumpy and dis-

continuous. No flow. I wonder if I'll hear it differently a month from now. "*Kesse Ye Lolo De Ye*" is the African piece. I like it, and some acquaintances of mine from Mauritius tell me it's wholly idiomatic and satisfactory (just as a Colombian gentleman told me that Mingus' *Cumbia & Jazz Fusion* is better than anything coming out of Colombia today — genius will out). "Come Back as a Flower" subjects Wonder's exquisite melody to Syreeta (not Yvonne) Wright's jejune lyrics. Their Reality Quotient is too low for them to qualify as poetry: you can't come back only as a flower any more than you can come back as a sex organ or an ear. As Wonder knows, you would have to come back as the entire plant, assuming you can come back at all.

Side four. "A Seed's a Star and Tree Medley" is where the album comes completely to life and then stays there, but it helps if you know what this song is about. Without information, it's merely the greatest piece of disco anyone will ever record. Exegesis anyone?

In the mid-Sixties two French anthropologists were travelling through Mali in West Africa, where ultimately they encountered the tribe of the Dogon. (Musical cross references: Julius Hemphill's *Dogon A.D.* and Chico Freeman's *Kings of Mali*.) Something unusual transpired during their conversations with the tribe: the Elders, against all precedent, felt moved to reveal their ancient tribal cosmology, which the Frenchmen dutifully copied down and published in an anthropological journal, where one usually deposits such mythological arcana. According to the Dogon (and I am using the nomenclature consistent with Wonder's on the record) life came to Earth from Po Tolo, the heaviest and most dense thing in the universe. Po Tolo travelled in an elliptical orbit around the star Amma (our Sirius), which was situated, in compliance with Kepler's three Laws of Planetary Motion, at one of the focii of the ellipse. Po Tolo took fifty years to make its circuit; every fifty years the Dogon would celebrate the event, in commemoration of the genesis of life on Earth.

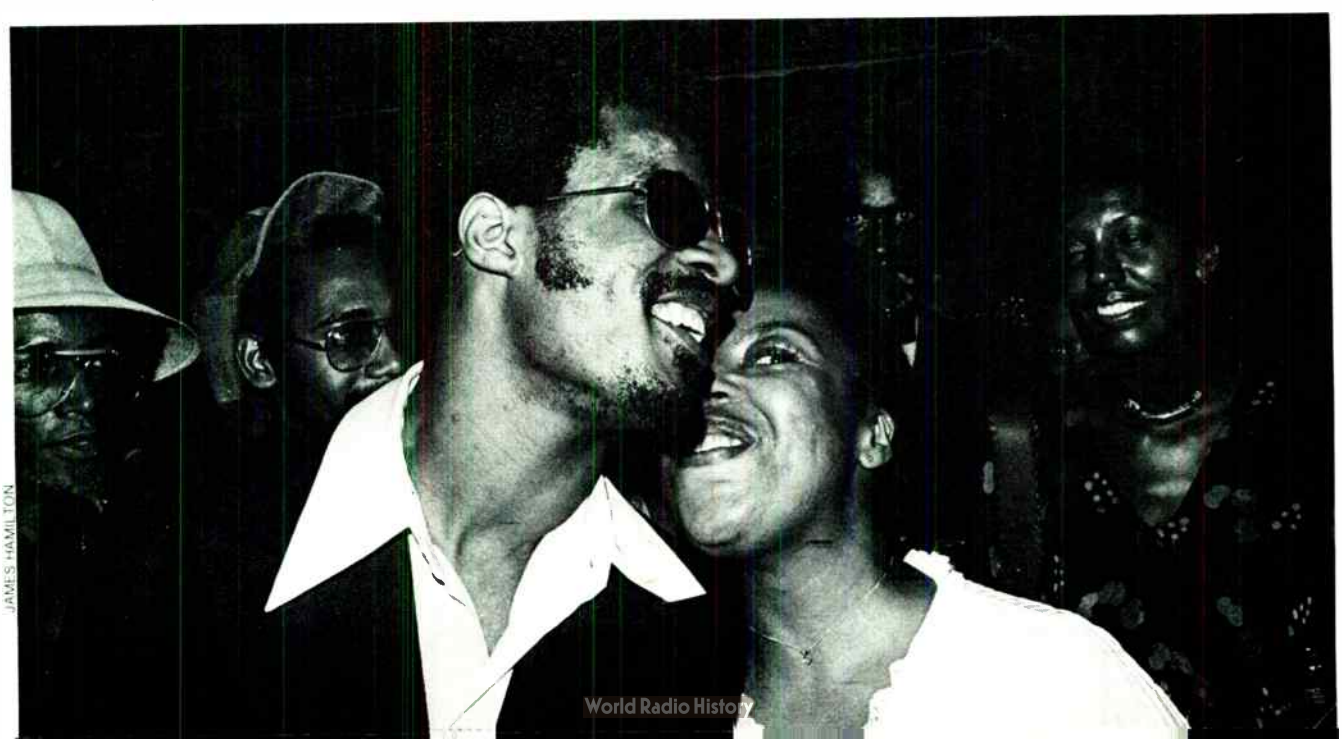
A hundred years before this, it had been postulated by Western scientists that *something* was orbiting Sirius, but since there was no telescope powerful enough to see it, the idea remained a supposition based on the observable motions of the dog star. Only in the early 1970's, well after the publication of the French article, was such a telescope devised. It picked out, sure enough, a remarkably dense dwarf star orbiting Sirius in an elliptical path once every fifty years, with Sirius at one of the focii. Anthropologists and astronomers do not read each others' journals every day. It was awhile before Robert Temple of the University of Pennsylvania noticed the astonishing correlation, exact in all its details, between the panmillenial (and non-telescopic) cosmology of the Dogon and the latest discovery of modern science. He embarked upon a seven year study of African mythologies and found that a version of Amma and Po Tolo showed up in ancient Sumerian and Egyptian myths, always accompanied by the number fifty and by what might have been accounts of beings that had come from Po Tolo to Earth and created or altered life here. Temple's findings can be examined in his book, *The Sirius Mystery*.

Elsewhere in the West, in the Thirties and Forties, other mills were turning. George Gurdjieff used to tell his students that he wrote and acted obscurely because it was necessary to "bury the dog deeper." "Don't you mean bury the *bone* deeper?" his followers would ask. As J.G. Bennett reported: "He would turn on them and say it is not 'bones' but the 'dog' you have to find. The dog is Sirius the dog star, which stands for the spirit of wisdom in the Zoroastrian tradition." Another student of Gurdjieff's, Rodney Collin, was to point out in *The Theory of Celestial Influence* that Sirius was "the sun of the sun," the star around which our own Sun revolved, the central point of our life-system. Was life on Earth sown from To Polo? I detest easy chatter about spaceships, and would prefer to think it true in some less literal sense.

Back to the album, music fans, and keep your lyric sheets handy. All this numbing esoterica, believe it or not, tumbles into Wonder's song and becomes alive there. The tune opens with a cycle of chords that will be familiar to fans of the James Bond films (and of Mahler's First, and Scriabin), rising fourths capped by a minor third. From this point on the rhythm takes over, and the lyrics are given extraordinary life by the incessant repetitions, always one of Wonder's strongest suits, his voice rising above the rhythmic collectivity like the soloist in a church, the lead chanter of a tribe. The "people black as is your night" are the Dogon as well as American Blacks; the truth that is spread is the seeding of Earth from Po Tolo, but it is also the collective wisdom of Black people on Earth, passed down orally and transmitted through the Spirit (cross reference to Malachi Favors, "Great Black Music," the Art Ensemble of Chicago) to all men. The parallel mystery to be unfolded is Sirius seeding Earth, a seed becoming a tree. "A seed's a star" is to say that the microcosm and macrocosm are identical, and when Wonder, in the character of the Tree, sings "In myself I do contain . . ." he is at once a literal and earthly tree, the tree of life extending between Po Tolo and Earth, and the taproot (dropped from there to here) of a still larger tree that extends beyond either.

continued on page 90

Stevie (here with Roberta Flack) hasn't toured for a long time. Two performances of *The Secret Life of Plants* will take place in New York this month. As yet no word on any further tour plans.



JAMES HAMILTON

THE BEAR

CHAPTER II

As the band hit the chorus, the bear felt a great mammalian warmth begin to fill his deep barrel chest like an original form of Power itself. He heard McCall's unfashionably simple cymbal beat open up a free infinity of time and space. "Only I can prevent forest fires," he thought as he raised the saxophone to his snout.

By Rafi Zabor

Despite the fact that the Bear weighed almost four hundred pounds, carried a sax case and wore baggy pants, a raincoat and a hat, only a few people noticed him in the twenty blocks from his apartment to the Tin Palace. He was trailed by Jones and a remnant of Grace. Jones bit his nails and wondered when to make his move. Grace kept the police cars on other streets and serious trouble-makers out of the Bear's path. Some people saw him coming from a block or so away, but even at that distance they were sufficiently impressed by his size and shape to cross the street and feel their heart hammering against their ribs until he was gone. They did not get to see what he really was. One youngish man came out of a doorway and saw the Bear up close, but he had just come back from a year in an ashram in India and took him immediately for a curveball God had decided to throw him that night, either that or a Nature Spirit off his turf. A second individual was merely confirmed in his opinion of what life in New York was coming to, and only two hours later in the middle of a movie uptown did it dawn on him that he had seen a large and literal *bear*; he gripped the arms of his chair and screamed. The third human encountered by the Bear was the inevitable wino two blocks north of the Palace who, the time-honored gag to one side,did not swear to give up drinking on the spot but offered the Bear half his pint of Night Train. The Bear took it. "I haven't seen you since lemme see," said the wino.

"Only you can prevent forest fires," the Bear advised him.

The Bear came through the doors of the Tin Palace like a force of nature. The band, he noticed, was between sets and the house was half empty: a long room sided by a brick wall on the right, a long mirrored bar opposite, cheap tables, an old wooden floor, and a diminutive piano and bandstand tacked on as an afterthought. He headed for the tables at the rear of the club, behind the bandstand and past the end of the bar. Most of the people in the club failed to notice him in significant detail. The few that did were too wary of being uncool to say anything. A jazz critic sitting at a front table decided that since Lester Bowie was in the house the guy in the bear suit was Joseph Jarman stopping by to say hello. The bartender, a large man with Hemingway hair and beard, had taken the Bear in calmly.

It turned out that the band was sitting at the tables at which the Bear had aimed himself. Without nodding hello, he swivelled his enormous body into a seat and did his best to exude the air of being where he belonged. The first person to speak to him was the girl who worked the door. She had been on the phone when he came in and had hurried to the table to ask him for three dollars. She looked just before speaking. "Gack," she said.

"Gack," said the Bear, and politely raised his hat.

Steve McCall, the drummer for the night and, it must be admitted, a large and bearlike man, was in the seat next to the Bear. He had a large round face, the bottom half of it covered by a beard, and wore round-lensed steel-frame spectacles. "It's okay," he told the waitress. "The gentleman is with us."

The woman backed uncertainly away. She felt overwhelmingly sleepy now, and wondered if coffee would help. Coffee would not help. Her body temperature had dropped to 95.4 degrees, a severe shock to the system often requiring medical attention.

Lester Bowie, who was not on the bill for the evening but who had dropped by to sit in for a couple of sets, had meanwhile come out of the men's room and was staring at the Bear with a wild, delighted grin on his face. His goatee was waxed to two fine points, he wore an immaculate white surgeon's coat and a stethoscope hung from his neck. "Holy shit," he said finally. "Ho-lee shit." Bowie had recently come in from the street, where he had been smoking an unusual cigarette that rendered him peculiarly susceptible to hilarity and awe. "Hey," he concluded. "I like it."

"Doctor doctor I got this terrible pain," said the Bear. "Every

time I walk into a room people make a fuss and I feel just awful."

Bowie's grin became, if possible, even wider.

"Want a beer?" asked McCall.

"Sure," said the Bear.

McCall waved to the bartender, who nodded back.

"I love it," said Bowie, and jolted himself into his seat. "And I know I'm gonna love it one hundred fucking times more when I find out what it is."

"It's a bear," said the Bear.

"One . . . hundred . . . fucking times more," repeated Bowie, with the kind of rhythmic variety for which he is noted.

Jones had been hung up at the front door trying to get three dollars out of his pants while watching with mounting panic the tables at the rear — it's all over, it's all over, he was thinking, it's only a matter of minutes before someone calls the cops — but he had gotten clear and now he lunged into the seat opposite the Bear and ran a hand through his sweat-soaked thinning hair. He was in mental tatters. "Now this is not what it looks like at all," he said to the assembled company in a hurried voice. "My friend here is my friend here he's okay and there is absolutely no need for for for panic. Right? Nobody move."

McCall raised two fingers to the bartender, who nodded again. "Who's this guy," he asked the Bear.

"My manager. My best friend."

"How you doing," said McCall.

"I'm a little edgy," said Jones.

"I see that," said McCall. "Try to relax."

"Look," said Jones, "if he's seen here, if anybody sees him, and the cops come in, or the scientists, it's all over, I mean his freedom goes out the window, you know? It'll be all over. It's very dangerous for him here."

"He's right," said the Bear. "He's absolutely right."

"Wait a minute," said Bowie authoritatively. "If anybody tries to fuck with the Bear they're gonna have to deal with us, with me, with Steve, with the management and with ev-ry fucking musician in this place, you understand? So just you take it easy, ain't nothing gonna happen to him and ain't nobody, no *body*, gonna fuck with a friend of mine while I'm around. Okay?"

The bartender brought the beers himself, put them on the table and nodded a discreet hello to the Bear. "Anybody tries to leave here in too big a hurry," he said in a low voice, "or has to make a sudden call on the phone, is gonna run into significant delays. Make yourself at home."

The Bear nodded and took a first sip of his beer. Cold. "Aah," he said. "Well, I want to thank you all for your, um, hospitality, and while I'd really love to sit around and talk," he went on, "what I really came in here for is to play. Would it be all right if I sat in." Noticing the general look of incomprehension that greeted this speech, he picked up the alto case and set it on the table.

"Can you sit in," said Bowie.

"Goes without saying," said McCall.

"Where's Hilton and Fred?" asked Bowie.

"Outside," said McCall. "What do you say we all have another beer. What do you want to play?"

"Say we start with a blues?" said the Bear.

At length and a few beers later, the band reassembled and regained the bandstand, although the Bear had chosen to remain in his seat, hat pulled low, until it was time for him to play. The blues the band had decided on was "C.C. Rider," mid-tempo, no shuffle but loose-limbed. *au courant*, at its ease, a groove. The main thing that the Bear had failed to realize about the band was that it was Arthur Blythe's date, and as the band finished the repeat of the head and the human altoist stepped forward to the mike for his choruses, the Bear marvelled at the fluency of his playing. It was a pleasure, as he remembered having read somewhere, to hear the alto saxophone played so well. I could never play like that, he thought, and took his own axe out of his case, turning toward the rear wall and warming up inaudibly before returning his attention to the bandstand and Blythe.

He saw the short, round, brown man in profile, the golden saxophone held delicately out in front of him toward the microphone, each note coming out of it perfectly shaped and finished as if turned on a lathe. The saxophone, as Blythe held it and played it, began to seem less and less like a musical instrument and more like some part of a jeweler's apparatus, something that might be used to cut and facet a precious stone. He enjoyed Blythe's approach, but it was far more polished and deliberate than what he felt drawn to, and although he knew he could not match Blythe technically — listen to those two-octave leaps, those cleanly articulated sixteenth-note runs over chord substitutions — he felt a competitive edge rising in his chest, felt, for the first time as a musician in fact, he very bearness rising in him to assert itself against what he had always thought of as the merely human world. He felt a great mammalian warmth begin to fill his deep barrel chest.

"You sure you want to do this," he heard Jones' thin voice ask him.

"Abyssolutely," said the Bear, feeling his great fur-covered body sitting like an original form of Power in its seat. Soon, this Power would act. Only I can prevent forest fires, he told himself. Only I can shape, harmonize and render generous and benign this rising conflagration. Do not forsake me O my darlin, he sang to his Muse, on this our weddin day. Like Frankie Laine, my heart goes where the wild goose goes, over the aching winter woods and over the seas wrinkled like the palms of God, over the rising hopes of men and the descending fog of human history. Or maybe I better save the prose poems for after I play.

Blythe was finishing up his solo with a series of fast runs that ripped repeatedly into the lowest octave of his horn and came up shining, then, no, he was returning to the poised, perfectly positioned blues figurines with which he had begun. The Bear, realizing that his moment had come, rumbled up from his seat and made his way to the stage, finding himself thinking with unusual rapidity as he did so. He was led instantaneously to consider, now that he was onstand with the demonstrably bearlike McCall and the smaller but equally ursine Arthur Blythe, whether there was some deep, even fundamental connection between his own species and that of the jazz musician in general. Bird had taken on some bearish qualities when he put on the weight and years. Mingus was a grizzly. Jaki Byard. Jack the Bear. But Ellington was a tiger, everybody knew that, elegant too. What was that line Diana Rigg had about bears and healers in the movie *Hospital*?

Finding himself completely onstage now, and Blythe stepping discreetly backward, the Bear dismissed his thinking as frivolous and prepared himself to play. Lord what a rhythm section, he found himself thinking as he raised his saxophone to his snout and heard McCall's unfashionably simple cymbal beat opening up a free infinity of time and space, Hopkins' bass sinking deep shafts of darkness into the beat and Ruiz' chords, even from that scandalous piano, feeding him strength and ideas from bar one.

The Bear proceeded to do a few things he had never really done before, partly in reaction to Blythe's lapidary style but far more for reasons that overwhelmed him and which he could not all identify. He began his solo with violent, almost inchoate downward smears of sound — hadn't Ornette Coleman's early recorded solos always reminded him of broad smears of red paint? — which bled down over bar lines and the beat but stayed somehow within the framework of the blues. He heard

someone in the audience call out "Yeah!" and this, surprisingly (since he had always thought such exclamations tasteless and out of place), spurred him on. He continued squeezing sound out of himself like paint out of a tube until it was gone and then, having established this crude, expressionist impasto for a few choruses, began to raise up out of it fast runs that blurred past him like fireworks, like ambulances at night. From this he passed to something nearer a conventional blues, as if riding the storm of what had gone before, but not entirely. The conventions, like the notes and phrases themselves, had been bent, bled, and burned away: they were collapsing houses and flaming cities of themselves, they were flying doorways and bursting lives, they were pretty damn good. This is all right, thought the Bear as he played, this is really all right. He reared his head back to take a breath, and had he been aware of the audience he would have realized that the sudden sight of his opened jaws — great white tearing teeth, red gums and broad, slavering tongue — had made it collectively gasp and jump back a foot, where space allowed.

The critic had already leapt from his front row seat and made his rapid way to the phone at the end of the bar. He had already dialed the first four numbers of his photographer's private exchange when the bartender dashed the receiver's brains out against the wall and told him, "Sorry, it's temporarily disconnected."

The musicians in the house — and David Murray was among them, his savvy eyes already calculating what use he could make of what the Bear was putting down — all found themselves most impressed by what the Bear took most for granted in his work: his unmatched capacity for breath, the incredible volume he could get from the instrument without breaking up his tone. As for what he was playing, yeah, it was all right. Maybe there was a new musician in town, maybe not. One solo does not an artist make.

The Bear found himself doing a few more unexpected things, although there was precedent for one of them in Dolphy: he began incorporating ideas that had no proper place in the solo, stray thoughts, overheard sounds, freaks of inspiration, arguments played out rapid-fire in the dark theatre of the mind. He inserted them when he felt like it or when they obtruded sufficiently — he liked the idea, why shouldn't the solo pick up on what's going on outside it, why shouldn't it interrupt itself to say something irrelevant and inspired? — but then just as suddenly he got sick of them and began playing as many notes as he possibly could, as if to blot them out and obliterate the divided mind in which an argument could take place, even an inspired one, and substitute for it the more whole and harmonious instrument that had been given him from above in the street on his way to the club. He became aware that the illumination he had received, fragmentary and unsatisfying to him now but wholly adequate to the needs of the music, was beginning to inform what he was playing, and his solo had begun to even out, even reflect, in the middle of what was still a tumult, a kind of peace. Yes, he thought, there is my true, eternal self and song. How did I even begin to get interested in this other shit? And he attuned himself to what was most complete and timeless in him and tried to let its native music through.

Something came through for a couple of choruses and floated miraculously above the time, but then, even before he was aware of it, he had lowered his saxophone and begun to walk offstage. His solo, apparently, was over. Trouble was, he wanted to go on. He raised his saxophone to his lips again but found himself apprehended by the Law of what he had already done. *Ich habe genug,* his spirit told him, and with uncharacteristic docility he nodded okay and left the stand. Lester Bowie came up past him and began a sputtering, electric trumpet solo. About halfway back to the table he felt the material New York world return to his consciousness with a crash. A sweat of terror broke out under his fur. Holy shit, he told himself, we got to get out of here. "Jones?" he said weakly.

"I'm with you," said the man who was his friend.

"We gotta split," said the Bear.

He made his way back across the nightclub through the blur of his mixed emotions and the unanimous recoil of the audience. He did not remember having packed up his instrument, although he had, and partly cleaned it too. When he and Jones left the club through the two sets of doors and turned right, the Bear found himself facing the Avenue: it was a wilderness of human darkness and unnatural light. The Bear began to shake.

"I can't deal with it," he told Jones. "I'll never make it home. I can't do it, I'm caving in."

"There's only one way," said Jones, and although the Bear saw little or nothing he recognized in all the tumult of the street the sound of Jones unsnaking his length of chain.

"Right," the Bear said immediately, and began to strip. When he had gotten all his clothes off, Jones compressed them into a bundle and the Bear attached the chain to the ring in his nose and got down on all fours. "Ready," he said, and they started uptown.

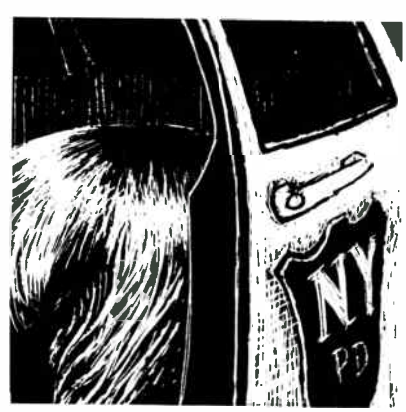
The Bear applied all his attention to getting his brainless, rolling, after-work walk down, and was terrified of not being able to get it right. He found himself, surprisingly, on the verge of tears. A sorrow was welling up from deep in his body that had the shape of his whole life to it, all the captivity and loss, all the quirks and pitfalls of character and fate, everything, everything. Oh Lord, he thought, here it comes, the Big Sad, not portioned out but all in one gulp. I am about to disappear.

"Be cool," he suddenly heard Jones hiss at him severely.

"What?" asked the Bear hopelessly, and began to sink to the pavement on his belly, as if ready to vanish into the earth.

'That's it, play dumb," he heard Jones say. "It's the police."

The Bear was just able to stop himself from saying, The what? He was aware of a red light — ha, the lower worlds, he told himself — whirling around in a profitless and eternal cycle on the roof of a car, and then of an officer shining a bright white light directly into his eyes, which began to water in response.



He heard an unkind and dehumanized voice asking Jones a question: *"Have you got a license for that animal?"* No he's not evil, the Bear reminded himself, only unfortunate, only bereft of his sustaining principle. How can people live like that? How did they manage to get that way? It's all illusion.

"Of course, officer," he heard Jones say, and then the unrustling of a thick piece of paper. The Bear felt his earlier sorrow change its shape, and himself filling with compassion — he was having a busy night — and it came to him that he should stand up and heal the police officer's sick spirit merely by speaking the truth to him. You must, he told himself, live the unconditioned life. You must adhere to the Real or consent to die piece by piece. If this night has taught you anything it must be that a life lived halfway is the deadliest thing on earth. You must be fully born.

"You know you're not supposed to be out with him at night," he heard the voice say. One day that man's spirit had looked at him in the mirror and watched him walk away. "And what's in the suitcase?"

"His things," said Jones. "I had to take him to the vet in a hurry. Just look at him how sick he is, there wasn't a cab that would pick us up on the way back, it's night out, so we started walking."

"What was wrong with him?"

"Distemper."

"Hey, my dog had that."

"Bear's just a big dog," said Jones.

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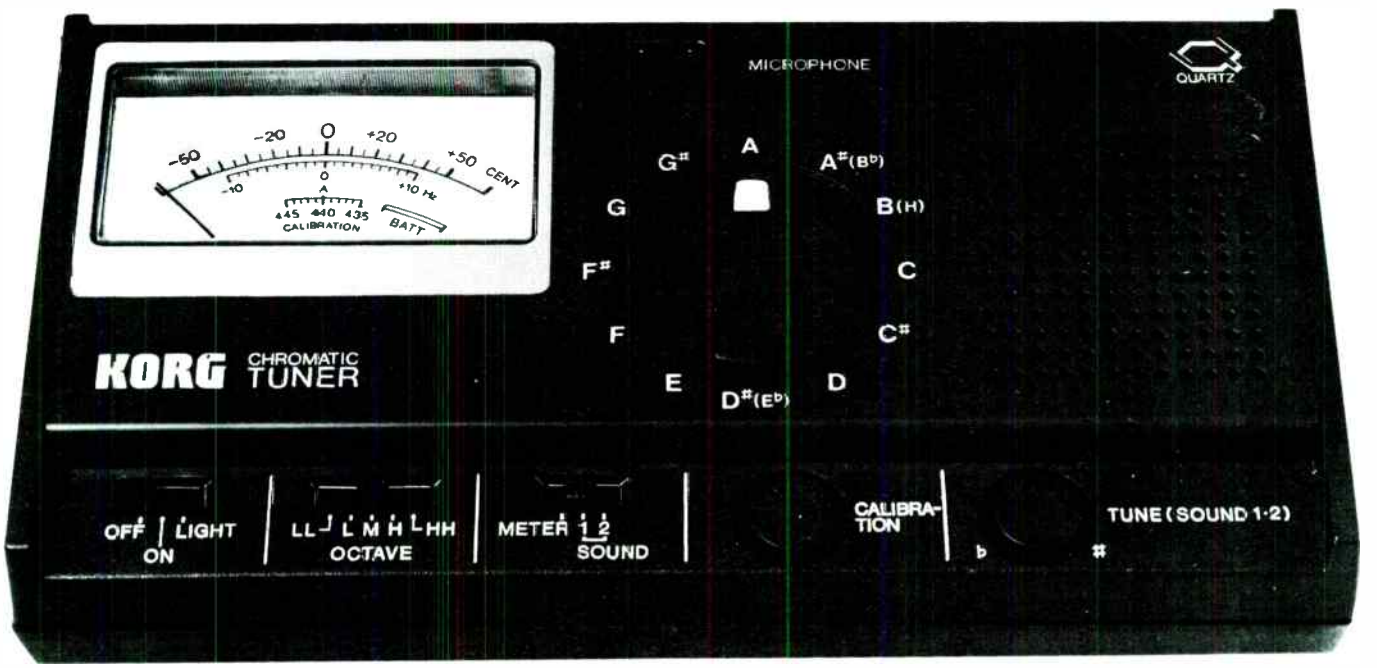
STAY IN TUNE...



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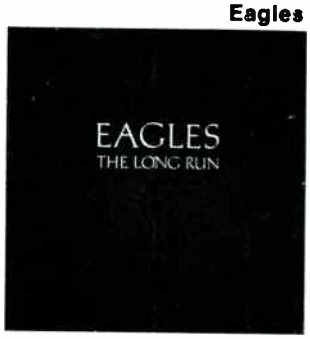
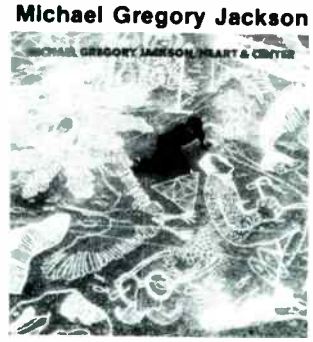
RECORD REVIEWS

Eagles

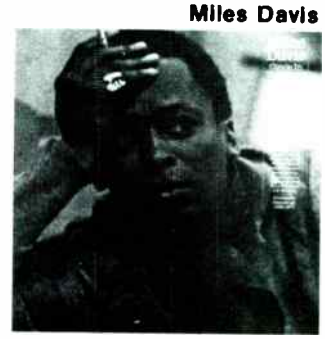


Pat Metheny

Michael Gregory Jackson



Miles Davis



THE EAGLES

The Long Run, Asylum 5E-508.

"I spit on luxurious pleasures, not for their own sake, but because of the inconveniences that follow them," wrote Epicurus, whose moral philosophy was later butchered by a generation of rock & roll stars. Not so the Eagles, whose music has always been their morning-after confessional. The music was where you found the by-products of pleasure: fatigue, remorse, post-coital depression, the bottom-line costs of fun. *The Long Run* is a similarly unsparing journey across the terrain of modern American disappointment. In fact, it is so single-minded in this pursuit that it appears the band has sworn off hope completely. Beginning with a clear statement of purpose ("I used to hurry a lot/I used to worry a lot/I used to stay out/till the break of day/all that didn't get it/it was high time I quit it/I just couldn't carry on that way"), the album catalogues a long series of variations on the theme, before winding up with a guilt-sodden remembrance of innocence past ("The Sad Cafe").

Such concerns do not make for very good party music, nor do the Eagles' meticulous, airy sound and deliberate pacing. What rescues them from consumptive plaintivness, of course, is their high-harmony, for the Eagles possess at least three of the finest high-range voices in pop music. Don Henley, Glenn Frey and ex-Pocoite Tim Schmit sound individually like the ghosts of teenage past, but in combination their voices make the mood transcendent.

Otherwise, there are few idiosyncracies or coarse elements to clog up the smooth pop package. Joe Walsh and Don Felder offer perfectly rounded, tasteful guitar solos and Henley's thick drumming is strictly studio state-of-the-art. The Eagles have been known to disparage 60's revivalism and it is no accident that the weakest cut on the LP is a half-hearted and shrill new waver, "The Greeks Don't Want No Freaks."

At the time of this writing, *The Long Run* is the nation's number one album. With every ring of the cash register, one can hear another lament in the making. The Eagles have found their own built-in suffering. — *Mark Mehler*

BENNIE WALLACE

The Fourteen Bar Blues, Inner City IC 3025.

A passionate introduction to one of the boldest tenor voices to emerge in many a year. Wallace is a future traditionalist who has absorbed the lessons of the earthy sax giants of the 30's (Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins . . .) and the bold post-Bird modernists (Rollins, Ayler, Coleman . . .), fashioning raw history into a devoutly personal sound that is reverential without being referential. Wallace can swing his ass off, but usually he opts to carve in silence, splicing billowing puffs of notes into wildly textured garlands of melody; he's a singing player, even when tearing violently at the pulse; and the way he ranges through the tenor's overtones is simply gorgeous. Eddie Gomez is a bad dude with a bow, and together they create airborne vocal textures that rise and fall and burst into white light. Eddie Moore hambones, feints and plows along on drums, making this among the most rewarding of jazz trios. There's plenty of brooding lyricism, rhythmic brinksmanship, and whooping exultation here for those who love real saxophone playing. — *Chip Stern*

PAT METHENY

Garage Band (ECM-1-1155),

MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON

Heart and Center (Arista/Novus AN-3015).

Two young guitarists with markedly different "jazz" backgrounds; two records that fall, in different ways, into the loosely defined no-man's-land known as the "fusion mainstream." One succeeds (artistically); the other doesn't.

Both albums sound smooth, accessible, "commercial." The differences between them lie in their divergent *gestalts*, the ambience and attack which are the legacies of the artists' respective backgrounds. Metheny's prior involvement with ECM's cool, immaculate chamber-jazz has, on the evidence of *Garage Band*, locked him into an all-too-predictable, feckless formalism: languid, seamless, safe, bland. Hollow virtuosity floating on the mentholated breezes of the status quo.

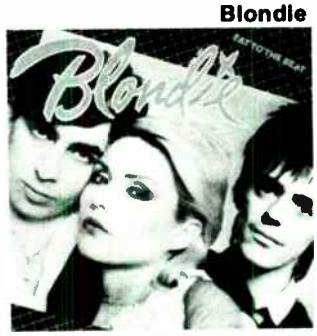
Jackson gained limited notoriety in the mid-Seventies as one of the premier guitar experimenters on New York's "Loft Jazz" scene. *Heart and Center* — like his Arista/Novus debut *Gifts* — belies his avant-garde heritage: four short songs, four brief instrumentals; subtly inventive, unflinchingly distinctive fusion-pop that retains integrity as well as an easy intimacy.

Metheny's *Garage Band* opens with a gorgeous suspended web of guitar and keyboard arpeggios, on "(Cross the) Heartland." The effect is bucolic and cinematic, evocative of sylvan glades and rolling wheatfields, hinting at the sublimated country/bluegrass influence in Metheny's playing and composing (Chet Atkins/Norman Blake meets Joe Pass/Jim Hall?). It's the best

moment on the record, which goes immediately downhill into the pastel fusion formula which Metheny has failed to improve on since his debut, *Bright Size Life*. It's accomplished, yes, but it has a limited dynamic range, veering between the innocuously pleasing and the downright dull. Which makes me wonder why Pat called it *Garage Band*: even with a too-cute quote from the Beatles' "Get Back" and a rather hamfisted rave-up (both on "American Garage"), this music is as far removed from the primitive spunk one associates with a "garage band" as is Mantovani

Bennie Wallace

Blondie



Lee Konitz

Thelonious Monk

With Strings. A garage band should be *feisty*. And furthermore, there are people in New York City right now — people like James "Blood" Ulmer, the Lounge Lizards, Material, and the Ray-Beats — who are promulgating a punk-jazz/garage-fusion that's infinitely more potent and provocative than Metheny's mellifluous, vaguely architectonic jazz-rock musings. Pat plays to form, and the rest of the band — Lyle Mays (keyboards), Mark Egan (bass) and Danny Gottlieb (drums) — sound competent but uninspired, mired in a faceless fusion rut.

Heart and Center is a different story altogether, although it sounds at first listen every bit as accessible and even more simple than *Garage Band*. It takes a few listens for Jackson's achievement to sink in, but sooner or later one has to realize that here, finally, is someone with the brains and taste (not to mention chops) to fuse deep-seated jazz roots with emotive/communicative pop feel — without sacrificing the idiosyncratic delights of either. Jackson's abetted by his voice, a sweet falsetto that sounds uncannily like Stevie Wonder and/or George Benson. There's an open-ended freedom here that's delicate yet tenacious; a disciplined lyricism that flows freely through an almost feminine sense of intuition.

Finally, there are the players. Particularly noteworthy is the rhythm section of Jerome Harris (electric bass) and Pheeroan Ak Laff, normally Oliver Lake's drummer, who provide a supple, lightly funky rhythmic focus, springy and mobile and entirely sympathetic to the general feel of the arrangements. Baikida Carroll (trumpet, fluegelhorn) and Marty Ehrlich (reeds), two stalwarts of the New York jazz scene, dig their very respectable teeth into the intriguingly colored charts to particularly good effect in the tight ensembles on "Falling Rock" and "Of A Highly Questionable Nature." Jackson himself is commendably restrained, emerging only periodically for terse, tart statements.

So, while Pat Metheny's garage unfortunately sits comfortably near the middle of the road, Michael Gregory Jackson's newest waxing is so full of heart and vitality that it stands front and center ahead of egregiously homogenized pop-fusion hybrids. — *Michael Shore*

LEE KONITZ

Yes, Yes Nonet, Steeplechase SCS 1119.

Those lamenting the dearth of vision and creativity in what is loosely called "the mainstream" can rejoice in this expansive set by Konitz's small orchestra. Powered along by air-cooled rhythm team of Buster Williams (bass) and Billy Hart (drums), this music is always surprising, varied and unified, exploring the length and breacth of the bebop tradition and finding ever-fresh vistas through carefully plotted arrangements. As Mingus so vividly demonstrated, composition can channel the prodigious technical resources of modern jazzmen so that they don't come off sounding like emotionless machines. I think Konitz's group achieves the rapport (if not always the Olympian heights) of Mingus's best groupings, and the soloing of trombonists Sam Burtis and Jimmy Knepper, trumpeters Tom Harrell, pianist Harold Danko and baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber is rhythmically daring, harmonically inventive, and blissfully heedless of ostentatious pyrotechnics. The version of Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" is an instant classic, and Konitz's glassy, intricate alto inventions (dig "Languid") stand out like a diamond among emeralds. — *Chip Stern*

THELONIOUS MONK

The Riverside Trios, Milestone M-47052.

In Dizzy Gillespie's autobiography, *To Be Or Not To Bop* tenor saxophonist Budd Johnson (an eternal modernist whose musicianship has spanned five decades) is summing up the contributions of bebop's founding fathers, and he offers these thoughts of Thelonious Monk. "Now Monk was in there, too. I gotta give Monk a lotta credit because, actually, at that time, Monk, being just a little bit different from Diz, had something going. And, of course, there is a familiarity between the two of them — that is, as far as modern harmony and the new things. But Monk actually had tunes down on paper . . . Now I do remember this about Monk. Monk's feelings got hurt because Dizzy and Charlie (Parker) was getting all of the credit for this music, this style — I used to go over to Monk's house with him. 'Come on, I want you to hear what I'm doing,' he said. 'I'm gonna let them take that style and go ahead, and I'm gonna get a new style . . .' All this funny-type music that he was playing. And he had gone altogether different from what he had been doing . . . I never thought of Monk as a great piano player. But he would fumble on that piano and get these things out and made all the dissonant chords, and major seconds, and minor seconds. And I said, 'Hey man, that's outtasight.' "

Monk hasn't performed since 1976, but like Miles, his importance grows every year. Monk is a Picasso of space, meter, pitch and harmony, often working with a bare outline of a motif, then overlaying cubist shapes and deliberate distortions of familiar faces. The melody is constantly broken down and abstracted, but Monk leaves enough room for the other musicians to add their own melodic commentary. A brilliantly eccentric composer, his vinegary harmonies are chromatically obtuse, yet orderly. What Monk sacrificed in the way of conventional pianistic technique, he gained in rhythm, symmetry and *economy of means* (perhaps Monk's most important contribution).

These trio performances make up Monk's first two sessions for the Riverside label. One record features an all-Ellington repertoire, the other some selected standards. The Ellington trio — with the innovative bassist Oscar Pettiford and the equally important Kenny Clarke on drums — has the resonance of the finest chamber music due to the richness of material, and the delicacy of detail. Clarke confines himself to brushes, providing a transparent bounce and accenting Monk's characteristic strong beats (the 1 and 3). Monk and Pettiford hang tethers of long

tones (whole notes and half notes) over the pulse, which adds to the uniqueness of Monk's swing — a more relaxed behind-the-beat approach than the eighth-note attack of bop. Monk displays great reverence for the orchestral dimension of Ellington's songs, as in his ringing solo performance of "Solitude;" the intro and stride feel of "Mood Indigo;" and a classic desert nights interpretation of "Caravan."

The second record features Art Blakey on drums, who provides more robust drive (the propulsive "Liza") and jumps into the holes in Monk's improvisations with witty puns and paraphrases; on "Just You, Just Me" he and Monk occasionally let off-beat accents collide, yet never lose a sense of the pulse. Fats Waller's "Honeysuckle Rose" is the best cut; three seemingly independent melodies criss-cross, always resolving ringing dissonances into mutual climaxes.

Always resolving . . . there is discord, melancholy, cold irony and sardonic humor in this music, but the way "I Got It Bad, And That Ain't Good" moves from desolate romanticism to jaunty swing shows that Monk's music is ultimately playful and childlike, finding beauty in a frown or a smile. — *Chip Stern*

BLONDIE

Eat To The Beat — Chrysalis.

Having witnessed the evolution of this outfit from a ratty, three-chord garage band to its current position as spearheaders of the New Pop, it is not easy for me to be objective about Blondie's fourth album. I have heard the group hone these tunes in the studio until they've reached their current state of pristine pop perfection, so you will have to understand that I am somewhat reluctant to be too critical. Nevertheless, despite *Eat To The Beat*'s high-gloss finish, it is a disturbing album in its attitudes. With an irresistible package of hooks impressive in its versatility, *Eat To The Beat* proceeds to systematically dismantle the pleasure principle only to reveal a gaping vacuum at its core. Like Debbie Harry herself, Blondie promises everything and then cruelly teases you to accept appreciably less. The songs are impeccable, the band's performance inspired, the Mike Chapman production hit-bound, and, yet, Blondie's calculations give the whole affair a curiously bad after-taste.

"Dreaming," the single, opens up the album with a patently fake, totally marvelous counterfeit Spector production, setting out the album's major concerns of escape from reality, fantasy and alienation. When Harry croons, "Dreaming is free," it is with a tragic awareness that suggests no, it's really not. Indeed, disillusionment, more often than not, mars the very attainment of those dreams, which enslave you with their promises of perfection. "Accidents Never Happen," which closes out side one, mocks the striving for a perfect state, though its own conception makes it as close as you can come to the ultimate pop expression.

Side two offers a wonderfully artificial reggae tune, "Die Young Stay Pretty," a clever parody of that age-old youth culture credo, delivered with tongue-in-cheek seriousness by Ms. Harry. "Slow Motion" cries out to Stop The World, while Debbie sings background vocals with Lorna Luft. "Atomic" is Hugo Montenegro meets Giorgio Moroder, a synthetic synthesis of spaghetti westerns and Eurodisco that underlines keyboardist Jimmy Destri's acute musical sensibility. "Living In The Real World," the final track, reiterates the theme of escape into apocalyptic fantasy with chilling prescience. As far as popular music goes, this collection has it all — hummability, danceability, an unerring ear for modern sounds and a hip, detached sensibility that allows ideas to be communicated with a sophisticated sheen. Blondie's sense of world-weary irony has given all their material a dark edge of joylessness and depression that doesn't fit with the group's emergence as bubble-gum faves. Although the confidence that comes with success is apparent all over this album, the disillusionment of having your wishes come true gives *Eat To The Beat* a cynical, self-serving tone impossible to ignore. Blondie has come up with a gleaming piece of product that is just that and nothing more, but, not only do they know it, they admit they can't help it.
— *Roy Trakin*

MILES DAVIS

Circle In The Round, Columbia KC2 36278.

This two-record set arrives like a picture post card from a long lost friend, and it bespeaks the power of this great musician — to wit, without a single recording since 1975, Davis' *Circle In The Round* rings louder and clearer than most of the aural decor passing itself off as jazz in 1979. Certainly few of the sidemen here have done anything this moving in years, which isn't meant to bind them to the past, merely to take note of the challenging leadership of Miles Davis.

This album is compiled from unreleased Columbia sessions stretching from 1955 to 1970: works in progress, embryos of future schematics, signposts of stylistic innovations; all charming, most inspiring; probably just surfacing today because these performances didn't fit the contour and balance of Miles' albums and final intentions. But the variety of strengths and the scope of Miles' visions makes *Circle In The Round* an ideal introduction for the uninitiated, and a prismatic surprise for older fans.

Side one follows the progression of

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Miles' 50s rhythm section; pianists Red Garland — Bill Evans — Wynton Kelly, who together and separately had a tremendous cumulative effect on most contemporary pianists; drummers Jimmy Cobb and Philly Joe Jones, the later joyfully featured with the "Round Midnight" quintet on Dizzy Gillespie's and John Lewis' "Two Bass Hit" (swings), and in a challenge round reunion with Miles in 1962 on "Blues #2" (*really* swings, and dig Miles' curved, cornerless bends; that tone — shades of Louis Armstrong). Bassist Paul Chambers and reedmen John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley and Hank Mobley are also on board — that should tell you all you need to know.

The title tune takes up all of side two, twenty-six minutes of bottomless mystery and near-eastern/oriental imagery; a fascinating performance, which James Isaacs points out is a link between "Sketches of Spain," "Nefertiti" and "In A Silent Way."

Side three is given over to kissing cousins of "Miles Smiles" and "Miles in the Sky" from the classic mid-60s quintet. "Teo's Bag" is a ferociously swinging piece, driven along by the kinetic mirth and aggression of Tony Williams, who is heard here at his peak, igniting brushfires all over the place; Miles' solo is symmetrically brilliant and Wayne Shorter just lifts the rhythm section off their feet. "Side Car #2" and "Splash" are equally riveting in their explorations of the James Brown beat, the former notable for the chordal ping pong match between Herbie Hancock and George Benson, the later for it's melodic cathedrals and amoebic group logic.

Perhaps no one is more challenged by Miles than Miles himself.Poor health and widespread rejection of his apocalyptic electric ensembles (*Get Up With It* and *Agartha*) combined to pull Miles from the apex of music. Why hasn't he come back? Got me, buddy. Perhaps he's been off his horn and prefers to go out a champ like Ali. Instead of dropping dead and receiving posthumous recognition, Miles has simply receded and observed his influence enveloping everything from free jazz to punk rock. Miles Davis combined the best elements of European harmony, be-bop icons (Bird and Diz), blues, rhythm and electronics, conjuring a wistful sanctuary of space and song. Always singing, always swinging. Taste and grace personified. I for one would like to say thank you. — *Chip Stern*

Philly Joe Jones — *Advance!*, Galaxy GXY-5122. After an extremely tired debut effort for Galaxy, the great drummer bounces back with a first-rate set of modern jazz gems. Typically excellent soloing by Cedar Walton; fine arranging by the sadly overlooked trombonist Slide Hampton; an impressive new saxophone voice in the person of Charles Bowen; and dancing, double-clutched drum breaks by one of the aristocrats of modern rhythm. — *c.s.*

David Murray — *3D Family* (Hat Hut U/V). Hat Hut is yet another new, small, independent jazz label bringing you great music by great musicians. In this set, recorded live at the 1978 Willisau Jazz Fest, tenor sax blaster Murray is accompanied by Johnny Dyani on bass and Andrew Cyrille on drums. The music is wide-open, smoking freebop, emphasis on the *smoking*. Spurred on by Dyani, a blistering, bedrock-solid marvel, and Cyrille's free-as-the-breeze, rolling-and-tumbling intuitive fire, Murray leaps tall intervallic and multiphonic conceits in athletic, energetic leaps. His Ayler influence is still readily apparent, but it's an honorable homage and Murray builds on it well; he's gaining authority and panache all the time, and is undoubtedly one of the major voices on his instrument today. The storm-gale force may be too intense for some most of the way through (it's a 2-record set), but at least Murray throws in some respite with "Patricia" (wide-eyed, child-like, innocent yet voluptuous) and "Shout Song" (ominous, thoughtful, full of barely submerged power). If you can't stand this kind of heat, stay out of the kitchen. — *m.s.*

L. Shankar — *Touch Me There* (Zappa SRZ-1-1602). This is an open and unashamed attempt by bad old Uncle Frank Zappa to market the incredible Indian violinist L. Shankar through fusion-chopsmanship channels. L. Shankar is the only reason to buy this album: regarded as a master in his native land, it's easy to hear why. There's no mistaking his quirky, bleating tone, his mercurial fingering, and the serpentine fluidity of his phrasing. The reason to be wary of this record is Zappa, who produced, arranged, and partially co-wrote the tunes: he really seems bent on remaining a humorlessly sarcastic, self-consciously nasty idiot for the rest of his days. So you get the patently bored (and boring) baritone Zappa vocals on "Dead Girls of London," an odious ode to necrophilia backed by an accurate take on *Dixie Chicken*-era Little Feat. The album succeeds only when Shankar 's native melodic sense manages to come through the homogenized accessibility of the mix with character and intensity intact: the vividly sensual, Middle East Bolero of "Windy Morning," the snake-charmer funk (*a la* Bowie's "Yassassin") of "Knee Deep In Heaters," the slithery swoop-and-dive of "Darlene." — *m.s.*

Booker Ervin — *The Freedom And Space Sessions*, Prestige P-24091. One of the best of the Milestone/Prestige/-Riverside reissue series — absolutely

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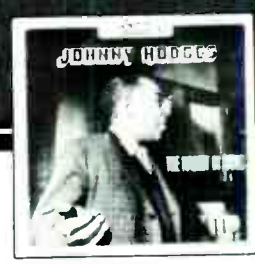

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BUCK CLAYTON
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essential listening. Ervin was one of the truly great tenor voices of the 1960s, a Texas tornado whose improvisations were fantastically swinging and visceral. The sound of the sanctified church rings through in every shout and whimper (the hopelessly beautiful dirge "A Day To Mourn"), and the level of interplay with the dream team of pianist Jaki Byard, bassist Richard Davis and drummer Alan Dawson is inspiring. The music they make is not quite avant garde or traditional — merely timeless. — *c.s.*

Shelly Manne *French Concert* (Galaxy-5124). Another date from France, 'live,' circa 1977. Manne's trio, with the daring, resourceful pianist Mike Wofford, and the sturdy bass of Chuck Domanico, play a pair, including an elusive, painterly "Body And Soul," before alto giant Lee Konitz joins the festivities. Konitz's airy, removed sound propels laconic, rhythmically-dynamic statements into our ears on such warhorses as "Stella By Starlight," taken at a nice medium-up, and a lazy "What's New." Manne is his usual happy self, creating percussive mayhem under his friends. — *z.s.*

Lucky Thompson *Lullabye in Rhythm* (Biograph BLP-12061). Like tenor giants Coleman Hawkins and Don Byas, Lucky Thompson is a deep-toned, open-throated player, projecting a massive, smooth sound, running chords with their resolutions, and just generally swinging. His is an ingenuous style: supple yet angular. It is also refreshing. This date, cut in Paris in 1956, has a musty, cloudy sound and the playing is right out of that era: only standards are performed, and the band cooks without question. Thompson's luscious tenor gets the most space, though Martial Solal's piano sneaks in now and again. A superlative return to the past. — *z.s.*

Various Artists *Havana Jam 2* (Columbia PC2 36180). Obviously, everything was taped when CBS took a gang of their folks to Havana in March, 1979 for that historic get-together, and it gets released in little bits. This is the second two-record set and it's given over to Weather Report, who knock out a lively "Teen Town," with Wayne Shorter taking a long, rocking soprano solo; Ikakere, an effusive, showy Cuban band that wallows in cadenzas; the Trio of Doom, which is just Tony Williams, John McLaughlin and Jaco Pastorious raising Cain, especially on the boisterous "Continuum;" and the CBS Jazz All-Stars, who play four tunes. One highlights the heartwarming marimba magic of Bobby Hutcherson; another has Stan Getz imitating geese honking melodically; a third finds Hutcherson, trumpeter Woody Shaw and reedman Jimmy Heath exercising their formidable chops on Heath's "Sound For Sore Ears," a late'60's bop line. — *z.s.*

Jan Hammer — *Hammer*, Asylum 6E-232. This is 99 and 44/100% plod. An indictible war crime. *Really* Jan, I wouldn't even be going to the trouble to insult you if I did not feel, in my heart of hearts, that you are making a buffoon of yourself. Quite clearly you have taken leave of your senses. Perhaps all you really need is a dose of penicillin (or Eno). Seriously man, do you think this crap is rock and roll? Jan Hammer: a towering figure on keyboards and synthesizer with people like Elvin Jones, John McLaughlin, Horace Arnold and Jeff Beck; playing with Colin Hodgkinson, one of the founding fathers of modern bass guitar and Gregg Carter, a powerful young drummer. Just when you think it could get interesting, here comes that silly son-of-a-bitch singing lyrics that are so square they could have been written by Edwin Newman. Just because you wear your shirt open to the zipper and hump your portable keyboard don't make it rock 'n roll. Roy Orbison may have to sue you . . . ah well . . . goodnight sweet prince. — *c.s.*

Mike Nock — *Climbing*, Tomato TOM-8009. This is a very good example of what used to be known as fusion, which in Nock's case is probably a misnomer because this music is accessible without being detestable. Nock is an excellent pianist and electric keyboardist with a rich harmonic sense and a fine sensitivity for ensemble colors. Nock refines funk, Latin and incantatory moods into crystalline settings for fellow musicians Tom Harrell, David Friesen, Al Foster and John Abercrombie. Compositional elements and improvisational excitement are well balanced here in a group music that can be introspective or inflammatory. Impressive.—*c.s.*

Jimmy & Doug Raney — *Stolen Moments*, Steeplechase SCS 1118. A jazz guitar record so sweet and effortless you'll think you're inhaling helium. The legendary Jimmy Raney and his prodigal son Doug play with sultry, pitch-dark sounds, weaving their voices into brightly swinging jazz fugues, sambas

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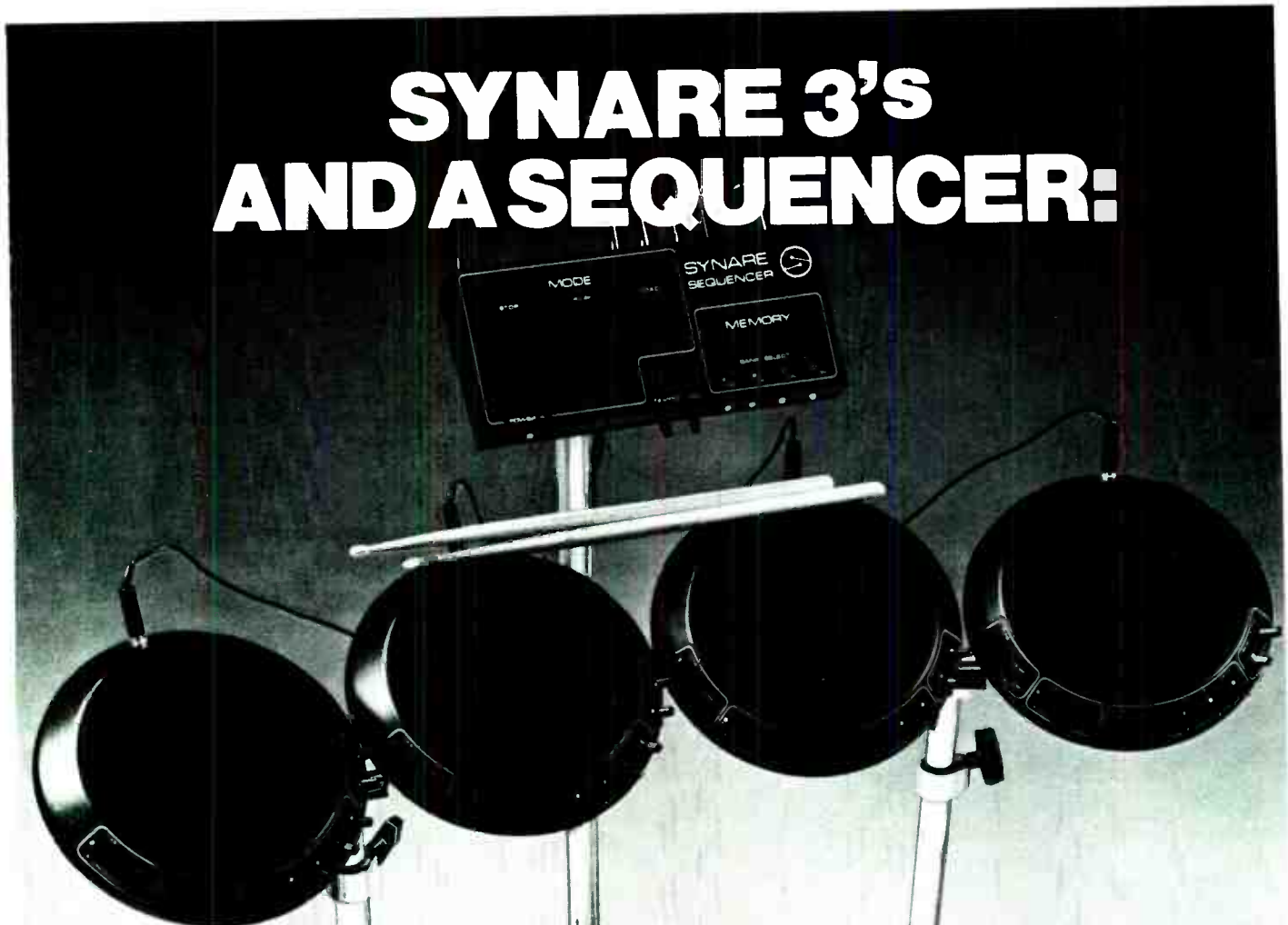

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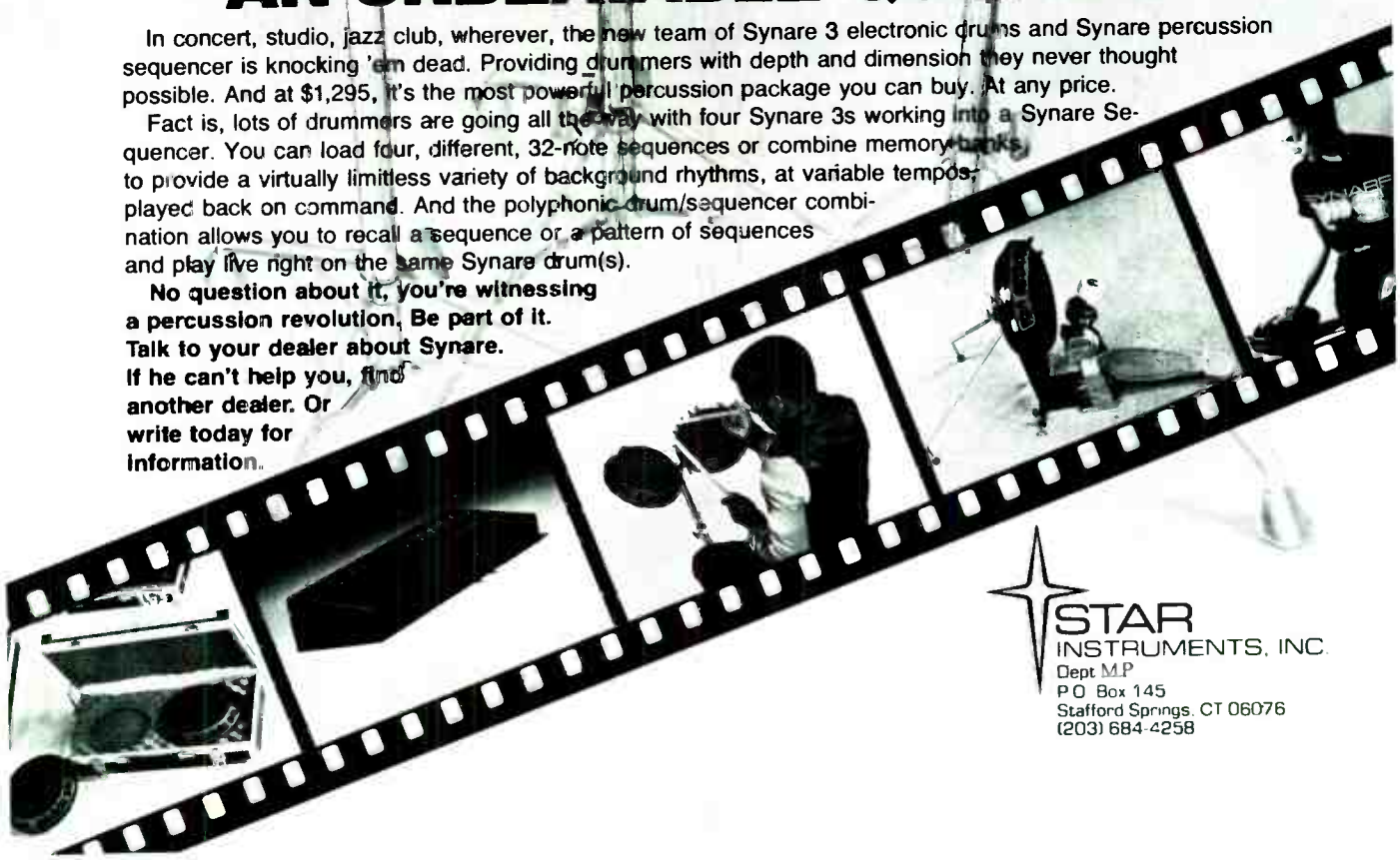

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and ballads. Bassist Mike Moore's choice of bass notes amplifies the beauty of their lines through his self-effacing melodic intelligence, and Billy Hart's drumming is colorful, witty and discreetly inflammable. Steeplechase producer Nils Winther shows great sensitivity for the sounds of all the instruments. For those who favor a cool burn, *Stolen Moments* is impec-cable. — *c.s.*

John Jackson — *Step It Up And Go*, Rounder Records 2019. A delightful country blues album from one of the unsung masters of the idiom. This is playful, bucolic music, animated by the logic and intricacy of Jackson's ragtime picking and the gentle mahogany growl of his voice. — *c.s.*

Johnny Shines — *Hey Ba-Ba-Re-Bop!*, Rounder Records 2020. Shines is not the guitarist that Jackson is, being more firmly rooted in the rawer, more expressive idiom of a Robert Johnson. But Shines' voice is his real instrument, a full-throated collection of moans, whispers and shouts. Shines is not about elegance and cleanliness, his music deals with harder realities. — *c.s.*

Peter Hammill — *pH7* (Charisma/Polydor CA-1-2205). Being the Soren Kirkegaard of rock, Peter Hammill doesn't have it easy: writing angst-laden, bitterly excoriating self-analyses-in-song means he often comes dangerously close to being unbearably lugubriously indulgent. On *pH7* several tunes had me ready to lift the needle from the disk, muttering "Give me a *break*, Peter." Take the thoroughly wet sentiments of "My Favourite" or "Careering," in which Peter sneers again and again "I don't know, don't ask me." Hey, Peter, I never *did* ask you, so put up or shut up, okay? I hate having to write this, because Hammill's been better in the past and has provided many a discomforting-yet-fulfilling moment of intensity. But this may be his weakest, most erratic effort yet. Still, *pH7* has its moments: the suitably ominous and evocative "Porton Down," the pleasant rocker "Polaroid," and the stunning "Mirror Images," wherein Hammill looks at himself and intones: "With your infant pique and your angst pretentions, sometimes you act like such a creep . . . in cheap imitation of alienation and grief." I can envision a whole phalanx of hard-line rock critics behind the studio glass, mouths agape as Hammill attacks himself with less mercy and more vigor than even they could muster. Suddenly I feel sympathy for Peter. Oh, well. — *m.s.*

Sly and the Family Stone — *Back On the Right Track*, Warner Bros. BSK 3303. Sly was among the most influential forces in funk and rock at the beginning of the 70s, but a combination of personal trips, jive announcements and changing styles combined to deal Sly out of the picture. Side two here is pleasant, yet somehow caught up in current fashions without ever defining them. But side one is very interesting. Is it a rebirth? No. The groove is more reined in than the frisky early records, but not so much as the plodding re-mix Epic did on their mean-spirited re-release. The horns, keyboards and vocals have a bright revivalist feel, but where the voice used to swell like a crab nebula, now it is more reflective and confessional. Images of re-assessment ("If It's Not Addin' Up . . .") and bootstrap pulling (the title track) abound. There are nods to Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock, who certainly owe a debt to Sly, and everything comes together on "The Same Thing (Makes You Laugh, Makes You Cry)," which is among Sly's strongest songs. (Check out his use of the vocoder). Still there's barely a half hour's music here, and the whole album has a bionic feel to it. Sly's back all right, but we'll have to wait and see if there's a riot going on. — *Chip Stern*

Louis Armstrong — *Integral Nice Concert: Vol. 1 & 2*, Jazz Anthology, 30JA 5154 & 30JA 5155. Tenuous recording quality is the only drawback to these wonderful live sides which document the great Armstrong small group of the 40's. Recorded in 1948, the Nice Concerts are Breakfast of Champions all the way: besides Armstrong there's Earl Hines on piano, Arvell Shaw on bass, Big Sid Catlett on drums, Barney Bigard on clarinet and Jack Teabarden on trombone. The group polyphony is buoyant and urgent, Catlett provides a drive and subtlety missing in most of Armstrong's later drummers, and Satchmo's trumpet cuts like a sweet acetylene torch — a rose garden of melody and tonal shadings. This is the real thing. — *c.s.*

Sirone — *Artistry*, Of The Cosmos Records OTC 801. Dark, brooding and noble modern jazz ruminations by the powerful bassist Sirone, bulwark of the Revolutionary Ensemble for most of the 70's (not to mention Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman). This is a tense, driven group music that is a test of endurance on the part of players as well as the listeners, though there are hints of serendipity and back woods dances as well. Sirone's bass and Muneer Bernard Fennell's cello create an elastic, glissing rhythmic-melodic flow, a continuous collage of multiple images, ably supported by Don Moye's spirited percussive mobiles. James Newton's flute adds a bright, airborne lyricism to the turbulent ensemble. *Artistry* is for strong spirits, but worth the effort. — *c.s.*

John Scofield — *Who's Who?*, Arista/-Novus AN 3018. Scofield unwinds long, angular melodic lines with the rhythmic/-harmonic imagination of a bopper but the touch of a rocker. The guitarist's debut for Arista/Novus is 2/3 fusion and 1/3 straight-ahead jazz (with Eddie

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Gomez, Dave Liebman, and Billy Hart). The jazz is more or less in the ballpark Miles and Wayne Shorter used to play in, and the fusion is accessible without being detestable, full of interesting rhythmic juxtapositions and melodic surprises. Scofield is a fine improviser, and the level of spontaneity on *Who's Who* sets it apart from much of the fusion "product" that has debased the genre.—*c.s.*

Art Pepper — *Today*, Galaxy GXY-5119. Prodded on by the redoubtable rhythm section of Roy Haynes, Cecil McBee and Stanley Cowell, altoist Art Pepper has produced his most pleasurable recording in recent memory. Along with Lee Konitz, Pepper is about the toughest white alto player to have emerged from the penumbra of Charlie Parker but Pepper has a harder attack and a more convoluted, bluesy style of phrasing than Konitz. Check out his improvisations on the slow blues "Patricia" and the jumping "Lover Come Back To Me;" there's a hint of melancholy in every note (as well there might given Art's turbulent past), but ultimately every tune is celebratory, swinging and triumphant.—*c.s.*

The Only Ones — *Special View* (Epic JE 36199). Another very timely compilation, drawn from two strong-but-uneven imports by this Anglo permanent wave band. Permanent wave? Well, after hearing band after English band emerge in the past few years, all bearing the same abrasive amateurism and roaring, identipunk sound, it's a positive joy to hear the Only Ones. Theirs is a classy, melodic, accessible, and mature form of English rock with echoes of mid-to-late 60's no-longer-fashionable stuff. Yet they manage to avoid sounding anachronistic, proving that one mustn't jettison all that has come before the Sex Pistols, or at least that one *can* make this kind of stuff work with the proper execution. Singer/songwriter Peter Perret sounds like Ray Davies might if the latter wanted to sound like Lou Reed: very fey and English, but purposefully deadpan. His themes of doomed romanticism, combined with the melodic sleekness of the band's sound and especially John Perry's lucid, flashy guitar solos, makes them an English version of Television, another late-70's band that recalled 60's roots i.e. the Grateful Dead. Most significantly, the Only Ones are the first really *good* English rock band of the last few years who should be able to make it on American radio in a snap, with no compromise of intensity or integrity involved.—*m.s.*

Steve Lacy — *Stamps* (Hat Hut K/L). Most people think Steve Lacy is the greatest post-Coltrane exponent of soprano sax there is. And they're probably right: his command of the small, thin horn is awesome, evoking comparisons with Trane on tenor, Bird on alto, or anyone else you want to name. On this 2-record live set he's accompanied by the estimable rhythm section of Kent Carter (bass) and Oliver Johnson (drums), along with Irene Aebi (cello, violin, voice) and Steve Potts (alto and soprano). Some might question the

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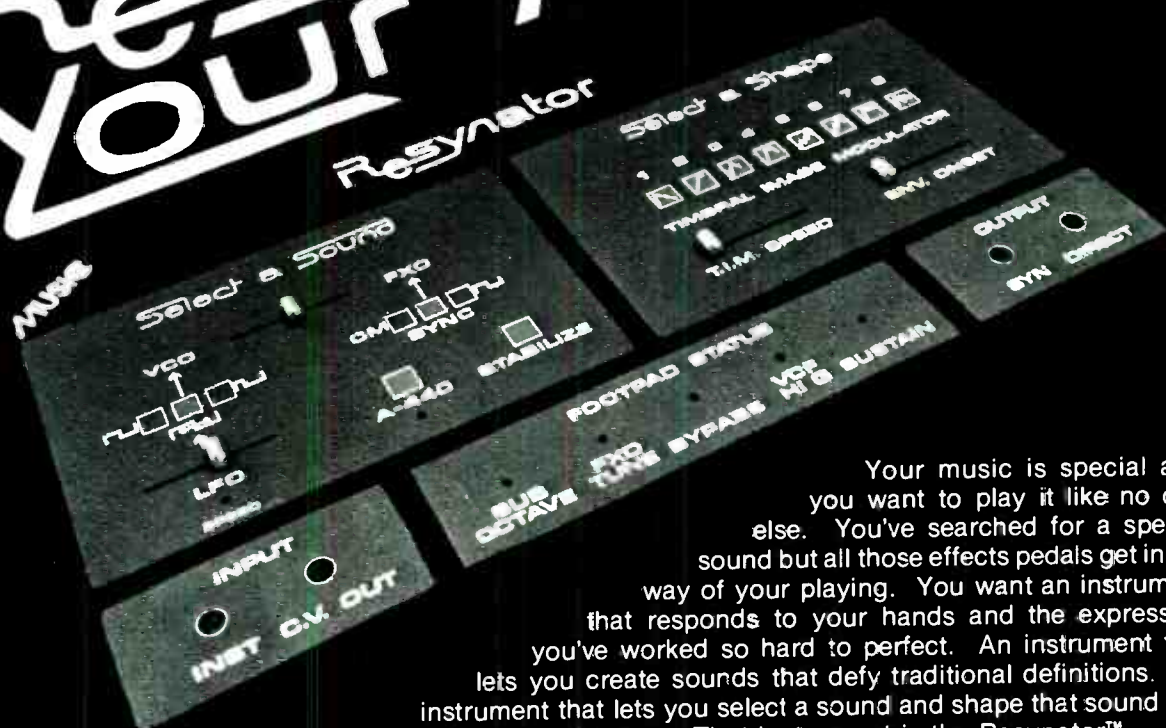

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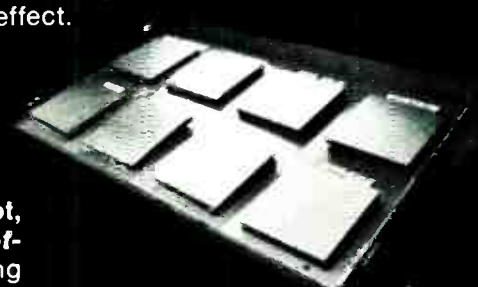

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merit of having *another* soprano sax on stage with Lacy, but Potts (on alto) acquits himself well on most of the tunes, especially "Stamps" and "Wickets". Otherwise, he manages to make it difficult to tell who's doing what on soprano, and in Lacy's eminent company that's no small feat. Johnson, too, is particularly noteworthy, kicking this turbulent hard and post-bop along with a telepathic, succinct sympathy that might almost be called Zen swing. The writing is interesting — ranging from harrowing ("Duckles," which sounds like what went through the minds of those crows that attacked the kids in "The Birds") to elephantine ("Stamps") to skittish ("Wickets") to cooking hop-scotch bop ("The Blinks," "The Dumps"). The soloing is hard-edged, full of intensity and ideas. Lovely, distinctive packaging, too, sort of child-like and charming. Another winner for Hat Hut. — *m.s.*

The Great Jazz Trio — *Love For Sale*, Inner City IC 6003. This excellent album proves a number of things. That Hank Jones is one of the great pianists, an urbane craftsman who recalls the spats and silk gloves elegance of Teddy Wilson while at the same time advancing the rhythmic power and symmetry of the Bud Powell generation. That Tony Williams is as commanding as ever when in the company of his peers; perhaps not the 180 proof moonshine of his youth, but distilled and bonded like the finest scotch whiskey — a craftsman and elder of drumming. And that Buster Williams is a much more interesting bassist in this trio's context than Ron Carter, with a wider choice of notes and timbres. *Love For Sale* is the best recording so far by the Great Jazz Trio. — *c.s.*

Cedar Walton — *The Pentagon*, Inner City IC 6009. Walton's style harkens back to the pianists of the 50s that played with Miles, as well as people like Ahmad Jamal. Walton's impeccable swing, richly chorded accompaniments, subtle harmonic sense, and ringing melodies make him one of the most esteemed pianists in jazz, and, ironically, one of the most overlooked. Walton, tenorist Clifford Jordan, bassist Sam Jones, and drummer Billy Higgins are effortless virtuosos, and their music proceeds with such unflailing melodic logic that you might mistake lack of tension for lack of intensity. Don't. The Joint Chiefs of Jazz are tight, swinging, and above all tasteful. Ray Mantilla adds sly conga commentaries; Jordan recalls the great tenorists of the 30s in modernist clothing; Sam Jones is an accompanist's accompanist and Billy Higgins the happiest of drummers. Excellent recording, too. So why are you sitting there? — *c.s.*

The Harmonica Blues, Storyville SLP 4008. A smokey, intimate album comprising the work of four of the greatest storytellers of acoustic harmonica, stretching from the backwoods primitivism of Doctor Ross to the more urban power of Sonny Terry (and Brownee McGee, of course). Whether howling at the moon or stomping round the fire, this is blues with an otherworldly resonance. For me the three cuts by Sonny Boy Williamson are worth the price of the album — the man gets a tone from the harp like a baby cooing in the cradle. — *c.s.*

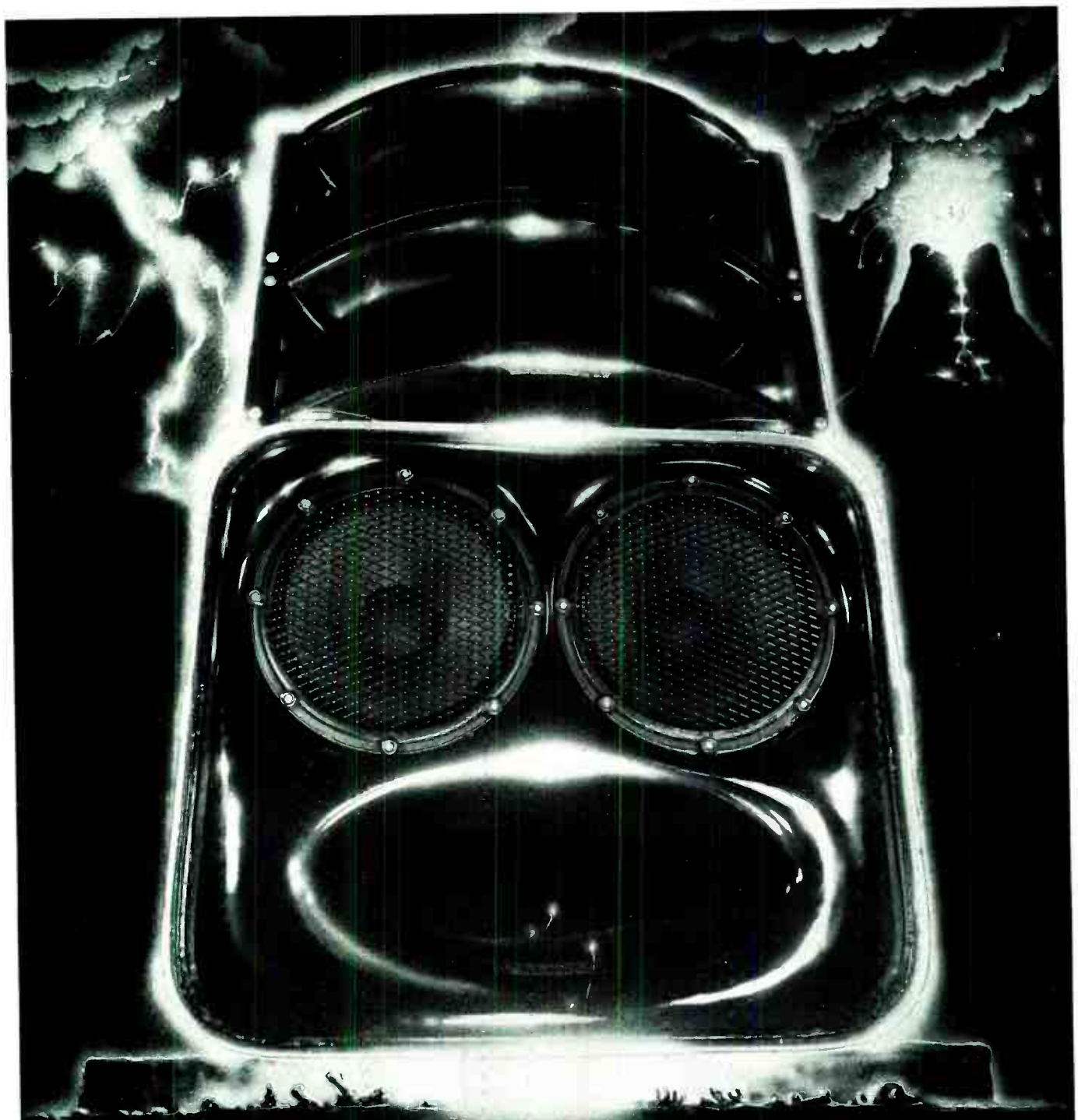
Funkadelic — *Uncle Jam Wants You*, Warner Bros. BSK 3371. Some listeners, struck by the congenital silliness of so many of George Clinton's funk productions, might be wondering why the funk mob has been anointed and elevated by members of the rock and jazz press. *Uncle Jam Wants You* offers both reasons to doubt and cause to celebrate. Side two is given over to theatrical pep rally filler like "Uncle Jam" that is infinitely more alive in a concert setting than on record, where it tends to bog down and become redundant. Pleasant enough, as with Uncle George's hoarse vocal on "Holly Wants To Go To California", but certainly not enough to make me wanna enlist. Side two may be 4F but side one is what it's all about. "Freak Of The Week" and "(not just) Knee Deep" showcase Clinton's genius for arranging and production. Vamp upon vamp of vocals slide through an ever changing backdrop of percussive and melodic cross-rhythms like a Venutian revival meeting. Guitarist Mike Hampton and keyboard whiz Bernie Worrell make pungent commentaries; Ray Davis' low-register cannonballs and Jessica Cleaves' glassy, operatic contralto create a marvellous color contrast; and Philippe Wynne's rhythmic vocals are to funk what Dizzy Gillespie is to the trumpet. So although Funkadelic's records are not all they could be, they still cut the competition.—*c.s.*

Buzzcocks — *Singles Going Steady*, (IRS/A & M SP 001). Forget the Raspberries. Forget Klaatu. Don't even *think* about the Knack. The Buzzcocks are this decade's only legitimate answer to the early Beatles. Y'know, short, direct, energetic, simple rock tunes dealing with traditional teenage-romance themes. Peter Shelley, who wrote nearly all the tunes on this anthology of U.K. singles spanning 1977-79, has come up with just the right mixture of innocent yearning and worldly wise angst. There are tons of melodic hooks and delightful background vocals submerged in a surging, Ramones-styled drone; this music's as relentless and right as rain. From the all-time lover's question of "What Do I Get?" through the still-hopeful disillusionment of "Ever Fallen In Love (With Someone You Shouldn't Have Fallen In Love With)?" to the naked, ironic ambivalence of "Everybody's Happy Nowadays," every one's a gem, as the saying goes. Along with Epic's reissue of the first Clash LP, this is the best rock and roll album of the year. — *Michael Shore*

Tommy Flanagan & Kenny Barron — *Together*, Denon YX-7544. Flanagan's new piano collaboration is an excellent companion disc to his previously released duo effort on Galaxy Records. With Kenny Barron now holding down the second keyboard chair, the two musicians romp through several popular standards and one jazz original. Their up-tempo, bebop-based work is featured extensively on "Stella By Starlight" and Miles Davis' "Dig," the latter including several remarkable musical exhanges. On the other hand, the pianists' more introspective side is well captured on the lilting "If I Should Lose You." (Available through Discwasher, Inc., 1407 North Providence Rd., Columbia, Mo. 65201.) — *C.J.S.*

NRBQ — *Kick Me Hard*, Rounder Records 3030. Garrulous, bloozy, and slightly inebriated saloon eclecticism from this veteran band. NRBQ touches on blues, country, and modern jazz with a fresh looseness and humor that is very appealing. — *c.s.*

Johnny Griffin *Bush Dance* (Galaxy GXY-5126). Griffin is one of the leading presenters and preservers of the modern jazz aesthetic. He is tireless, uncompromising, fruitful improviser who finds crisp, invigorating avenues to express the honored feelings he embraces. His playing is marked by a seething, almost startling presence that is balanced with a quiet sense of luminosity and grace. On "Dance," his vehicles are potent: a rumbling "Night In Tunisia," opening with an Afro-Cuban vamp that leads into an outrageous double-time, with soaring solos from the leader, furiously and even-handedly exclaiming his passion; the plucky guitarist George Freeman; and pianist Cedar Walton, whose amazing hands dance dervishly over this oft-trod landscape. The soon-to-be-classic blues line, "The Jamfs Are Coming;" and the tale of love lost, "Since I Fell For You," are also read with ardor. On this outstanding date, as Miles once said of Wynton Kelly, Johnny Griffin is the spark who lights the match; without him, there would be no smoking. — *z.s.*



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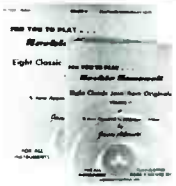

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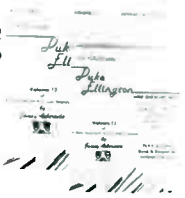

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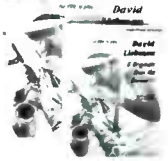

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Soul *cont. from page 16*

increasing in popularity. The Meters, Graham Central Station (led by ex-Sly bassist Larry Graham), Tower of Power and Rufus were busy spreading their individual brands of funk throughout the land.

In 1974-75, the Parliament-Funkadelic organization released "Chocolate City" and "Standing on the Verge of Getting it On". P-Funk was at its healthiest during this period, and I certainly haven't heard Bootsie Collins' bass craziness any better than on "Chocolate City." But when Clinton blessed Chocolate City and its vanilla suburbs, he realized that vanilla America was not ready to deal with its chocolate neighbors. It wouldn't be till Clinton took his funk out to space transported by means of Mothership power that people would be willing to listen.

But while all this music was starting to go for the gold, a new sound was hitting the clubs in cities like Boston and New York. A watered down, mono-rhythmic sound compared to R&B, disco was a sedated alternative to the rhythmic complexities that the mid-70's funk and soul bands had to offer. As disco worked its way into the play lists and production of the industry, R&B bands found themselves in a tough bind.

Some people claim that disco had been there all along. Well, that's partially true in the sense that people have always danced to some type of music, be it Ornette Coleman or Donna Summer. I am certainly not one of those who believe that "Disco sucks," because if "Bad Luck" by the Blue Notes is to be considered disco, then long may it live! In fact, it's still my favorite Pendergrass performance by far. (That song was almost responsible for my losing control of my VW bus and driving off the Tappan Zee bridge one crazed night).

The fact that disco has dominated the market is not what concerns me. What people choose to listen to is ultimately their decision. But the pressures and inevitable demise that some quality R&B bands experienced I find disheartening to say the least. Let's take a look at one of these groups, the Meters.

In 1974 this New Orleans based band produced by Allan Toussant released an LP titled "Rejuvenation." Their down home vocals and razor sharp ensemble poppin' still have me convinced that this is one of the greatest bands of the past ten years. In 1974 Toussant also co-produced another album — this one by Labelle called "Nightbirds". From "Nightbirds" came the hit single "Lady Marmalade" which met with instantaneous success across the board, while "Rejuvenation" became popular with the more urban R&B crowd. With those two LP's in the same year, I figured that the future looked bright for the New Orleans funkmasters. But only two years later, the Meters found themselves out of the scene, as their 1976 release "Truck Bag" met with disaster. Could it have been possible that the band lost their funky touch in such a short period of time? I believe that part of the answer can be found in the first track of that album " Disco is the Thing Today." The Meters recorded one last time, and then silently exited from a fading R&B scene, victims not only as R&B stylists, but as black artists. A commercial black R&B band trying to get a contract in the late 70's, had to be prepared to succeed in the disco market, a market that many assumed would conveniently intertwine with R&B. The fears that I referred to in the beginning of this article were beginning to crystalize: The industry had found a way to drastically increase the popularity of this music by simply nurturing a hybrid form. Too often the music lacked syncopation and ironically became almost anti-rhythmic, losing much of its direction, its feeling, its "soul". By making these formulas a pre-requisite for recording dance music, some musicians just could not, or would not, survive.

When Van McCoy's disco anthem "The Hustle" was released around 1974, the throngs started steppin' to their local discos, dance halls, ballrooms and bars en masse. Many young whites who at one time had gone the concert route for their entertainment pleasures found a new outlet for exerting their energy. In 1976, Donna Summer's "Love to Love You Baby" further charted the course chosen for disco through moans and groans, four on the floor, and longer tracks. In Donna Summer, the industry discovered its "First Lady," a genuine talent willing to be packaged, promoted and molded to pristine perfection. The Bee Gees and Saturday Night Fever in 1977 would break sales records that no one could ignore, and by the end of the year, names ranging from Rod Stewart to Barbra Streisand would have disco hits. Fortunately, there were still artists that survived the disco test while maintaining their musical integrity.

Wonder *cont. from page 61*

Returning to his own character but jumping an octave and a second to emerge in the higher, younger voice of "Little" Stevie Wonder, Wonder addresses this Tree — the most electrifying moment of the record and the climax of the whole composition — to say that it is the largest and longest living thing we know (since it is all of life on one level, a literal sequoia on the other). He jumps another third to say that history (botanical, cosmic and human) is encoded in its branches. Wisdom, apparently, is there too, and a musical tradition, and I am reminded of Gurdjieff's cosmology, Pythagorean and Central Asian, at once spiritual and physical, with its hierarchy of suns arrayed, like Kepler's universe, on a tree of musical octaves, a great Jacob's Ladder of sound. The song goes on to describe Po Tolo and the Dogon, then chant the title in English and an unnamed African language: "A star's a seed's a star *Lolo Ye Kesse De Ye*." For you there should be another star. The cuckoo clock at the end wakes Wonder from the dream in which this song originally came to him. "It's supposed to be a dream. It was a dream I had. I get my best ideas in dreams." How, *Musician* asked him, do you know? "I wake up. I wake right up, and if I can put the idea on paper I do." An interesting point: a number of mystics have pointed out that one of the ways to tell a veridical, or spiritually prophetic dream from an ordinary one is that often you will wake from the revealed dream with a clear mind and total recall. In this case, Wonder dreamt that he performed at the festival of the Dogon. Maybe in some real sense he did ("sleepers lie while they dream things true"), and some of the power of the song may be the power of the history of its images, running from prehistory to the present, the infinite to the infinitesimal. I am thrilled and awed by it, and I feel myself present at a significant and compound event. Either I am more eccentric than I think or I am not alone in my response.

Wonder comes unhurriedly down from the peak, unveiling the title song with its lyrics for the first time, then presenting "Tree," the central moment of "A Seed's A Star" expanded into a romantic *larghetto* for piano and "orchestra." If you have loved the music so far, you love this more. If you are uneasy about such expansive emotion, you recoil. To my ears, the force of the album releases itself into this lyrical vessel and is made complete there, incorporated into the whole. "Tree" is the reason that the album sounds better after the first hearing. When "Tree" is done, the "Finale" sums things up, all the album's motifs and themes dovetailing seamlessly into and out of each other, as they will in your memory once the music has become sufficiently familiar to you.

Finale

Stevie Wonder's work shines over the wolf-strewn winter of the past decade like a sun, a unique and numinous *oeuvre*. He bought himself back from Motown in '71 and has been increasing his freedom ever since. "You're only as free as you allow yourself to be," he told *Musician*. "You can overcome most obstacles if you're willing to deal with the consequences." Wonder has overcome enough of the obstacle of racism to communicate freely to an audience of all races, no easy trick in America or anywhere else, since self-identification

continued on page 90

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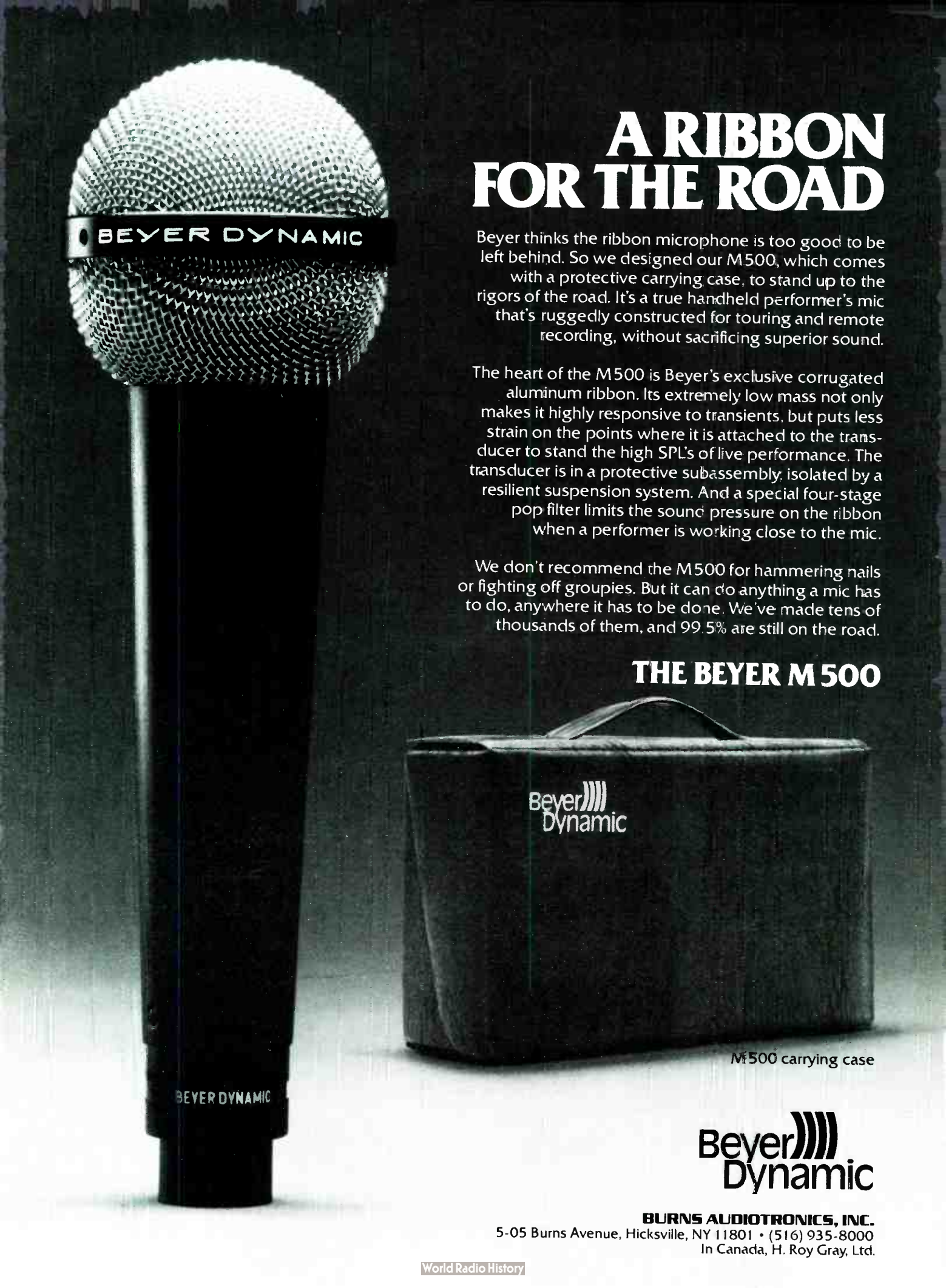

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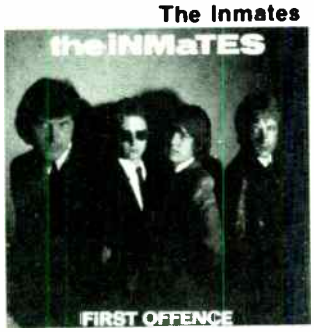

Horslips

The Now

The Police

Richard Lloyd — *Alchemy* (Elektra) Dear Santa, I used that second turntable you sent me to play both this and the Tom Verlaine album at the same time — but it *still* didn't sound like *Marquee Moon*. Next year, how about just sending me a new Television? **Alan Parsons Project** — *Eve* (Arista). Parsons is rock's answer to Giorgio Moroder. He applies synthesizers and swelling background choruses to what are basically garden variety Foreigner/Styx song structures, resulting in what could be termed Heavy Metal for the Easy Listening crowd. Ho Hum . . . **U.K.** — *Night After Night* (Polydor). With keyboard/violinist Jobson desperately scrambling to fill in the gap left by Alan Holdsworth's departure, a live album is the last thing these guys needed at this point. The old tunes sound truncated and lame, though they do a surprisingly effective job on the trio material from *Danger Money*. There are some hauntingly beautiful melodies amidst the murky doodling, (especially "Rendezvous"), and the absence of overdubbing somewhat curbs Jobson's tendencies toward Gothic excess. Time to start shopping around for a guitarist, guys. There's plenty of talent here, but the broth is getting a mite thin. **Tony Banks** — *A Curious Feeling* (Charisma). And Then There Was One. No Genesis hasn't broken up, but the next time this Garboesque impulse strikes, let's hope Banks dispenses with the ersatz Stevie Wonder vocals and half-baked ballads and concentrates on what he does best, pleasant light classical fluff like the neo Griegian "Forever Morning" that closes side one. It may still wind up in the cut-out bins, but $1.99 is better than nothing.

ZZ Top — *Deguello* (Warner Bros.). ZZZZZZZZZ - Pure Plod For Cow People. De Nada. **Jefferson Starship** — *Freedom At Point Zero* (Grunt/RCA). This is the hardest rocking project Paul Kantner's been involved with since the salad days of the Jefferson Airplane. (I guess he figured with Grace and Marty bailing out, the best defense was a good offense.) He pulls out all the stops, coming on like a heavy-metal folkie on both the title cut and "Girl With The Hungry Eyes," and while I approve of the energy level, much of this stuff is a little too close to Kansas-style stadium rock for comfort. That includes Mickey Thomas' vocals, though he does sound uncannily like Grace Slick in drag on the harmonies.

Whitesnake — *Lovehunter* (E.M.I.). Former Deep Purple organist Jon Lord's newest aggregation recalls a Long Island lounge band with a Journey fixation trying to imitate Bad Company, and since Bad Company was a spiritual stepchild of Deep Purple, it would follow that these guys are actually derivative of *themselves*. Get it? Neither do I. Let's move on. **The Wailers** — *Survival* (Island). If, as Max Roach once stated, it is rhythmic innovations that are responsible for changes in musical styles, then the Barrett brothers must be ranked as the most influential rhythm section of the decade. They're as solid as ever here, but I'm a little worried about what's happening topside. A lot of Marley's pop and R&B influences have been coming to the fore lately, shaving off the rough edges that were at least partly responsible for the fervent, evocative power of albums like *Burnin'*. The spirit's still intact here, but a touch more funk wouldn't hurt. **Santana** — *Marathon* (Columbia). Gregg Rolie and Neal Schon needn't have defected a few years back to form Journey, they could have just stayed and waited till Santana devolved into the turgid heavy metal posturing and formulaic jazz-rock displayed here. Oh, all right, I guess it's not that terrible, but slip this on after listening to *Abraxas* and try not to wince. **The Police** — *Regatta De Blanc* (A&M). White Reggae indeed. The Police have effectively synthesized reggae, pop, and New Wave into an attractive hybrid that's usually equal to (and sometimes more than) the sum of its parts, with "Message In A Bottle" ranking as their finest attempt yet to simultaneously integrate these various elements into a coherent and entertaining whole. The rest of the album retains that reggae feel, but is texturally more refined and spacey. (White Dub?) The spare instrumentation often sounds as delicate as crystal, especially Steve Copeland's exquisite drumming. The overall effect is best described by one of their own song titles, "Walking On The Moon", and while this lunar reggae is initially less arresting than the material on their debut album, it'll suck you in sooner or later if you give it half a chance.

1994 — (A&M). I can't quite place this as either progressive hard rock or regressive New Wave. Big deal. Who cares? In any case, I'm impressed by this effort to infuse some taste and intelligence into what's normally a pretty heavy-handed medium, even if the effort usually comes to nought. (Lotsa' chord

continued on page 90

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SINGLE TWELVES

By Chuck Hughes

As the price of space, transportation, and time go up, there is a renewed interest in small, self-contained amplifiers. Refrigerator sized amps can now be found used at a fraction of their original cost. While a segment of electric musicians still need the sheer volume and/or impression of a large stack of amps, many have decided that money is better spent in high quality sound reinforcement gear (a good P.A. system). The one 12-inch amp goes back as far as Charlie Christian, who used one as an integral part of his horn-like sound. The one 12-inch configuration gives a characteristic sound; not as punchy as two 10-inch speakers, but not as dark as a 15-inch. An amp with one 12-inch speaker can be small enough to get in a compact car, but loud enough to put out sufficiently for most rock gigs. This month's article takes a comparative look at quite a few of the amps available with one 12-inch speaker. As you will see, the range in price and features is extensive. Check the features of each as they run horizontally across the page (numbers refer to how many controls and/or features the amp has i.e. number of outputs, channels, volume controls, etc.). The features end with the manufacturer's suggested retail price — check with your dealer as prices may vary.

CONTROLS AND FEATURES

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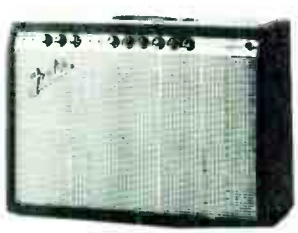
Acoustic	1		1	2		50	1	1	1	1		1			1	1				1				$379.00
Crate I	1		1	2		20	1		1	1		1			2	1	1		1					$239.95
Crate II	1		1	2		60	1	1	1	1		1			2	1	1	1	1					$379.95
Fender Deluxe Reverb	2			4		20	2	2				1	1			2			1	1				$410.00
Music Man 112 RD	2		2	2	1	65	1	1	1	1		1	1		3	1	2	2	1	1		1		N/A
Music Man 112 RP	1		1	2		65	1	1	1	1		1	1		3	1	2	2	1	1		1	P	$495.00
Music Man 112-65	2		1	4		65	2	2	1	1		1	1		2	2			1	1				$495.00
Marshall 2150	2		1	4		100	1	1	1	1														$995.00
Peavey Pacer	1		1	2		45	1	1	1			1		1	1	1								$239.95
Polytone Mini-Brute I	1			2		60	1	1								1	HP			1	1			$310.00
Polytone Mini-Brute II	1			2		60	1	1				1		1	2	1	HP				1			$350.00
Roland GA 30	1			2		30	1	1				1		1	1	1	HP							$295.00
Roland GA 40	1			2		40	1	1				1		1	2	1	HP							$395.00
Roland GA 50	1			2	1	50	1	1				1		1	3	1	HP							N/A
Roland GA 60	1		1	2		60	1	1	1		1	1		1	3	1	HP	1	1	1				$595.00
Roland GA 60 RP	1		1	2		60	1	1	1		1	1		1	3	1	HP	1	1	1			C	$795.00
Roland Cube 60	1		1	2		60	1	1	1			1		1	2	1	HP	1		1				$440.00
Roland JC 50	1			2		50	1	1		1		1		1	2	1	HP						CH	$495.00
Roland JC 60	1			2		60	1	1	1			1	1	1	2	1	1			1			CH	$630.00
Sunn Alpha 1-12 PR	1		1	2		50	1	1	1			1			1		HP	1	1					$369.00
Traynor 6Y-3 64-3	1			2		40	1	1					1											$290.00
Yamaha 30-112	1			2		30	1	1	1			1		1	2	1	HP							$259.00
Yamaha 50-112	1			2		60	1	1	1	1		1		1	2	1	1							$369.00
Stage 65	1			3		20	1	1				1		1		1								$199.00
Stage 400	1		1	2		40	1	1				1		1	2		1			1				N/A
Lab L3	1		1	2		60	1	1	1	1		1					1	1		1				$395.00

Peavey Pacer

Marshall 2150

Lab L3

Roland GA 60 RP



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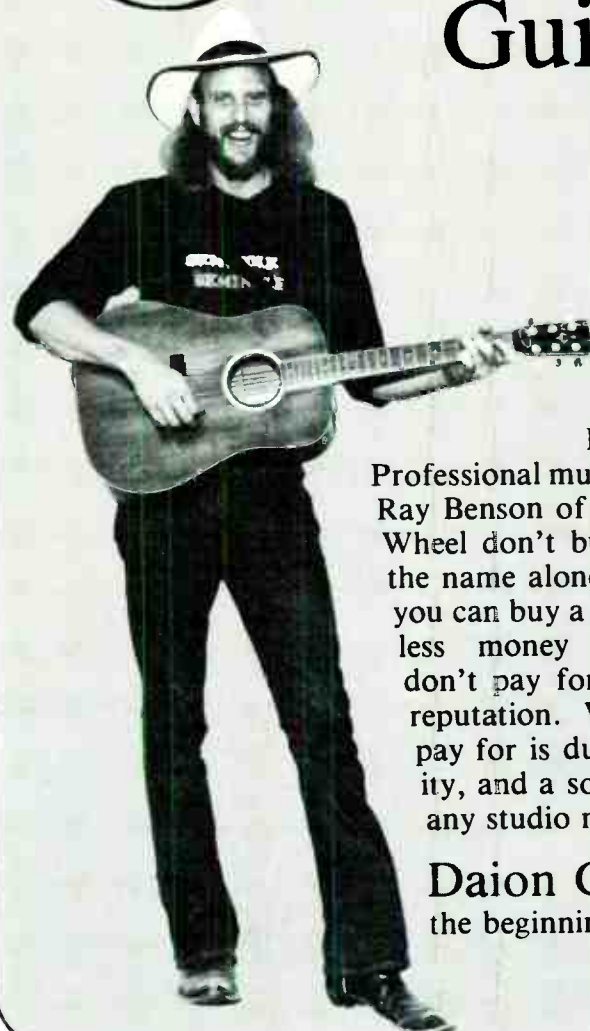

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continued from page 85
changes do not a good song make). Karen Lawrence's soaring, resonant, vocals deserve better vehicles next time. A few solid original tunes or worthy covers and these guys could become contenders. **Atlanta Rhythm Section** — *Are You Ready?* (Polydor). Little Feat *sans* Funk. ARS draw more heavily on pop sources than do their Southern country-blues cousins The Allman Brothers, which is only fitting for a band who brought us AM goodies like "Spooky" in their previous incarnation as the Classics 4. This double live set shows that they're still pretty decent tunesmiths, with plenty of catchy hooks emerging from what I'm forced to describe as "laidback" MOR Southern country/boogie. Never threatens to boil over mind you, but it simmers along quite nicely. **The Inmates** — *First Offence* (Polydor). This is what the Stones might sound like if they were just starting out today; remarkably tight, spare, R&B flavored rock and roll — all meat and no fat. Their stripped-down bare-bones sound captures the raw immediacy of The Yardbirds and J. Geils as well as the early Stones, and they play with a straight-forward simplicity and intensity that recalls Creedence in spirit if not in style. No frills rock at its best. **Rod Stewart** — *Greatest Hits* (Warner Bros.). It's hard to be objective about Stewart's recent music — it's a long way from Gasoline Alley to Gucci's — or from "Maggie May" to the Cosmo pin-up in pink satin duds (cut from Liberace's bedsheets, maybe?) on the front cover. Every Picture Tells A Story, Don't It? Still, sometimes he wears it well, as they say. "The Killing of Georgie" is a genuinely moving eulogy for a murdered gay friend that shows there's still a heart in there somewhere, and there's enough of a hint of gentle self-deprecation in his Cavalier sense of humor to keep him from taking himself completely seriously. In the end the syrupy strings and cloying production (which sounds like it was mixed in a Waring blender rather than a recording studio), spoils much of this stuff for me. Still, I can't help hoping that the folksy common sense he once displayed will resurface and help him get back to where he once, (and still), belongs.
Nicolette Larson — *In The Nick Of Time* (Warner Bros.). On her excellent debut album Larson's verve, humor, and sauciness helped her tasteful renderings of country rock, folk, and funk material avoid that sterility that's often the result of working with L.A. session pros. Heck, she even made Burt Bacharach seem hip. But on *In The Nick Of Time* she is simply overwhelmed by the lifeless arrangements, bland material, and generally listless energy level. A disappointing (but hopefully only temporary) setback. **The Now** — (Midsong International). Here it is folks, the Lower Priced Spread. Chintzy reworking of the old "Good Lovin' " riff, among others, replete with adolescent nasal vocals and delightfully tinny guitars. Charmingly insincere, ("T.V. Private Eye" is an incredibly blatant rip-off of "Watching The Detectives"), they combine the best and worst of The Ramones, Dwight Twilley, Sha Na Na, Elvis Costello, and the Monkees. Loved every trashy moment of it! **Horslips** — *Short Stories, Tall Tales* (Mercury). The traditional Irish instruments have been shelved, but their grounding in Gaelic folk tunes is evident in the lilting vocals and graceful melodies. Their open, ringing guitar sound delivers all the impact of heavy metal without any of the excess, especially on "Guest of the Nation", their buoyant version of the "Sweet Jane" riff. Curiously refreshing.

Wonder *cont. from pg. 82*
with a fantasy figure is the bread and butter of artist-worship and few humans can identify with other humans of a different color. Blindness is too casually spoken of as an obstacle to some things and a doorway to others; none of us who have eyes would want to lose them in order to find out what rich worlds lie hidden in the darkness. For Wonder it is an obstacle in some major sense transcended. There are artistic obstacles, and those of habit and expectation. After producing, with *Songs in the Key of Life*, the "perfect" collection of songs, Wonder has dared to go on being born, abandoning a project called *The Writers* in order to accept the challenge of an extended score for a film he cannot see.

To my mind, in daring and accomplishing so much, Wonder has inherited the mantle from Mingus, who had it from Ellington himself: with Ornette Coleman, he is our greatest living composer. He has produced something on a scale no one else has even attempted, and I imagine those who would condemn it for its few necessary imperfections conducting their colloquy standing on a diminishing iceberg, drifting southward, on the empty sea. His next intended projects are a Gospel date and (*what?*) a Country album. I believe him capable of doing the unlikely, even the impossible, and bringing it off. I await these albums' arrival with an open mind. So much sheer wonderfulness has come through Stevie Wonder that I routinely ask myself what power a Name might have over the Named. Who is he in all this: the seed, the star, the source of the music, the obedient vessel into which it pours? Oddly enough, I was reminded of the ending of a poem I have hardly read since college. Willie Yeats knew a thing or two about plants himself, and liked to watch phenomena vanish into the noumenon and come back out again. What more apt way to close:

O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

Bear *cont. from page 64*
"Whaddaya say, Jack?" said the policeman.

"I dunno," said a similarly dispirited voice nearby. "I dowanna take him in, the animal shelter, the paperwork, it's a drag. Man's got a sick bear. It's not my job, sick bears."

"We can't leave them out on the street, Jack," the first officer reminded him.

"You're right about that," the second officer said.

"We're a working team," he heard Jones tell the policemen. "A street act, taxpayers. We just got written up by *New York* magazine," he lied.

"Really?"

"A revival of a great old tradition, it said."

"Oh. Hey. Hum."

"Listen," said Jones, sounding as if he'd had a sudden inspiration, "how about it if you guys give us a lift home, it's only a couple of blocks and we don't wanna scare any people on the street. He's cool in cars, won't crap or anything."

There was a moment of silence, for deliberation. The scales of justice were raised aloft to balance the possibilities of the moment. The night hung suspended. A cloud covered the moon. "Okay, get him inna car."

As the Bear shambled obediently into the back seat of the police car he was preparing himself to speak — all the world's compassion, sorrow and love had gathered in him and was ready to flow out and change men's lives — but then he saw the strong steel mesh that separated the front seat from the back and he remembered, or foresaw, some more decisive encounter with everything that was wrong with the world, everything prematurely dead and heart-destroying, and his spirit dampened, chilled, and resolved itself into a mire. He felt numb. The night was over.

The ride home took only a matter of minutes, the farewell warning from the policemen another minute more.

A subdued Bear followed Jones up the stairs. "*When you see me coming raise your window high,*" the Bear sang quietly on the second landing.

"*When you see me going hang your head and cry,*" returned Jones.

On the third landing Jones looked for the keys. He opened the locks, they went in. The television was still on but they both sat down and looked at the floor. M — *to be continued* —

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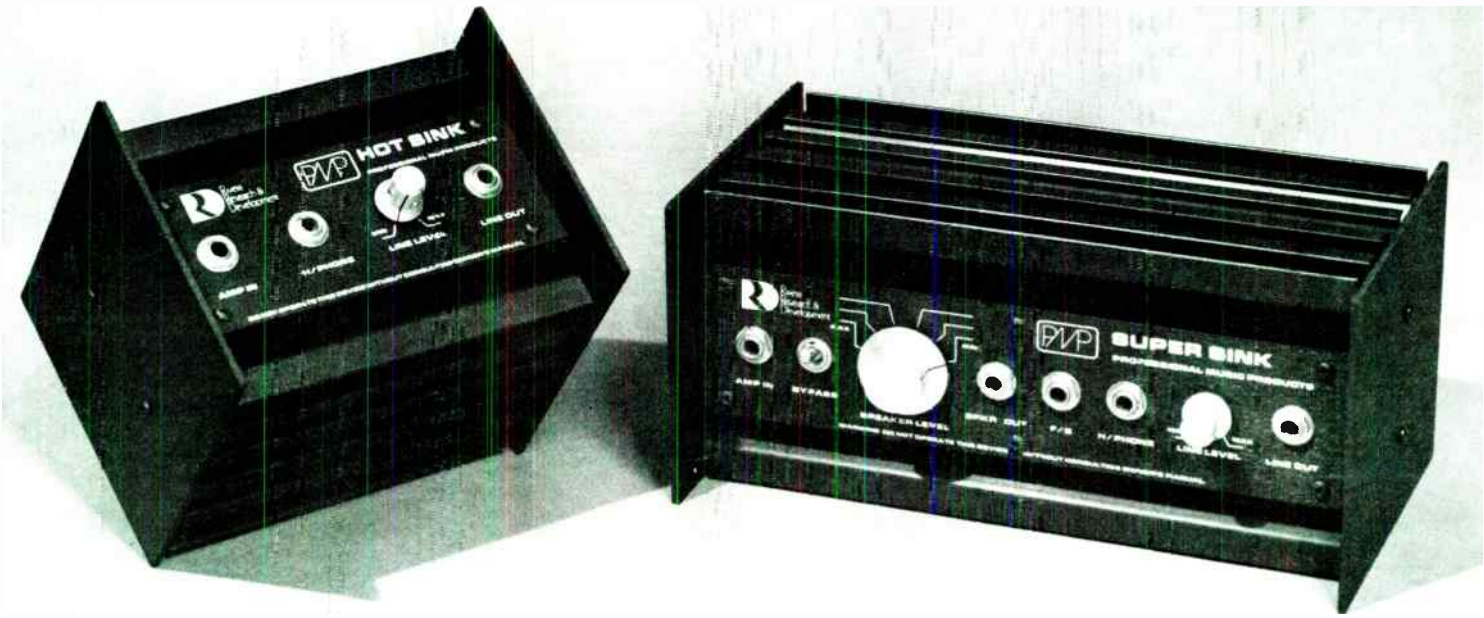

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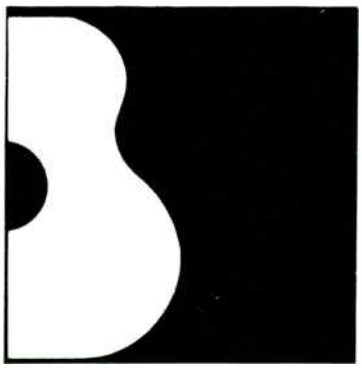

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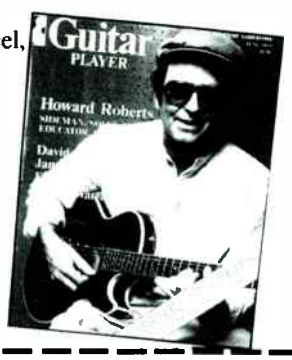

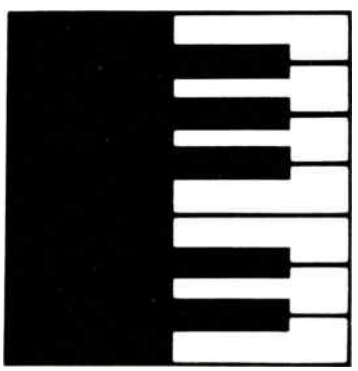

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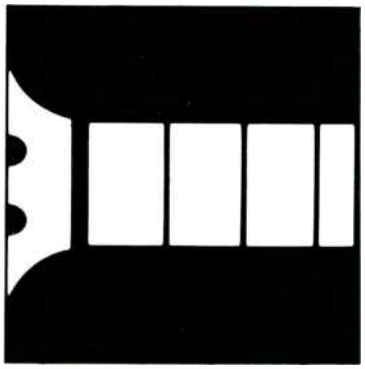

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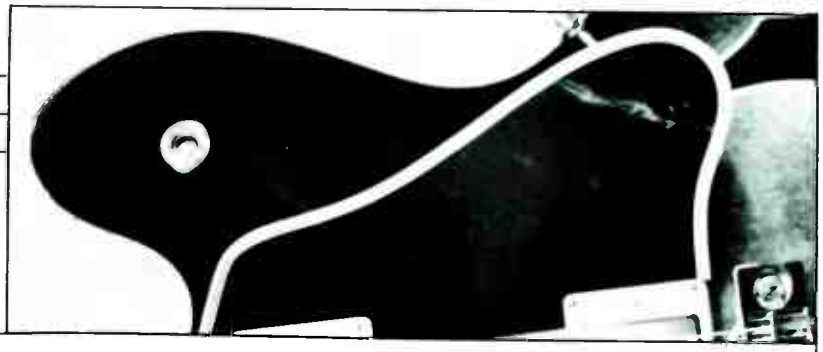
STUDIO

GUITAR/JOHN AMARAL

REFERENCE RECORDINGS



Last time I gave you a list of printed materials that I feel are important for becoming a well-rounded guitarist. An effective record library of representative guitar styles is equally important. This month and next I'll list records that will help you learn the various traditional guitar styles. Although these are definitive recordings, some are unfortunately out of print. If you don't have a used record store near you, one way to come by these is to send a list of your "wants" to a mail order service. I'll list a few at the end of Part II. Others can be found in the back of hifi magazines and *Downbeat*.

The records listed are definitive for the particular styles, but not necessarily the "original" sources for them. It isn't my intention to provide historical perspective here, by going to the absolute original sources, but to indicate the most helpful recordings that, in my opinion, cover the styles.

Many of these records have been learned note-for-note by various players over the years. The philosophies behind this traditional method of learning a style are that if you can memorize music and play along with a record, you can modify that material to fit other musical situations, and also learn something of the state that the player was in when he made the record. In addition, playing along is a test of technical facility and ensures that the music is played at its original tempo, where it will usually sound best. Some players are so accomplished that they can take material (licks, phrases, rhythms, harmonies, forms, etc.) from one style and fit it into another, creating a hybrid. The more styles you're familiar with, the more creative material you will have at your disposal.

Recently, transcriptions of many important guitar records have become available. The use of a transcription while learning a record can save you a great deal of time. Adding the visual element makes it easier to learn, and provides excellent sight reading practice and valuable research material. Although making your own transcriptions is a valuable experience, the time you save by using prepared ones can be used to learn more material, work on soloing, or for fooling around. An asterisk next to a title indicates that a transcription is available.

I use cuts from these records in my Guitar Styles classes at the Berklee College of Music. If you would like a complete list of the cuts, send a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to me in care of *Musician, Player & Listener*. You could also help me by listing any preferred definitive recordings of your own. My admittedly subjective selections are based on the criteria: "Would musicians, in general, draw *unique* inspiration from listening to this player, and regard him as innovative?" or "Does this record encapsule much basic repertoire for this style played in an authentic or accomplished manner?"

FINGERPICKING

DOC WATSON: *On Stage*, VSD 9/10; *Southbound**.
CHET ATKINS: *Down Home*, LPM 2450.
JERRY REED: *Guitar & Voice*, LSP 3956; *Nashville Underground*, LSP 3978.
GUY VAN DUSER: *Guy Van Duser**, Rounder 3021

FLATPICKING

CARTER FAMILY: *Mid the Greenfields of Virginia*, LPM 2772.
DOC WATSON: *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* UAS 9801.
ROY CLARK: *Lightning Fingers*, CAP 1780.
ARLEN ROTH: *Arlen Roth*, Rounder 3022.

PRE-ELECTRIC JAZZ

EDDY LANG: *Blue Guitars VOL. I, II*, PMC 7106, 7109.
GEORGE VAN EPS: *Fun on the Frets*.

EARLY JAZZ

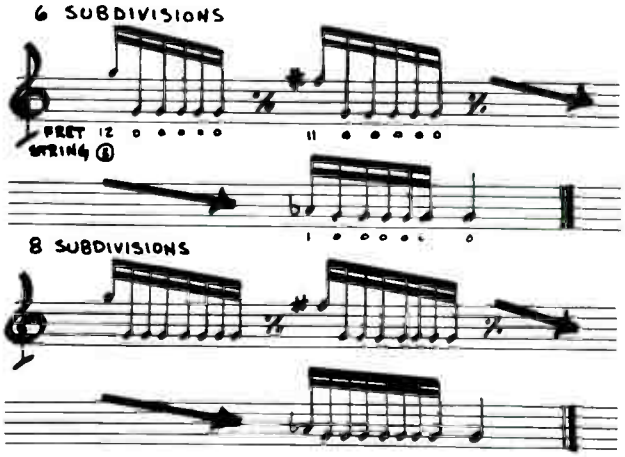
DJANGO REINHARDT: *First Recordings*, P 7614.
CHARLIE CHRISTIAN: *Solo Flight*, COL 30779; *Charlie Christian*, FS 219.

BLUES

JOSH WHITE: *Best of Josh White*, EKS 75008.
DAVE VAN RONK: *Sings the Blues*, FV 9006; *Gambler's Blues*, FV 9017.
JIMMY REED: *Best of Jimmy Reed*.
FREDDY KING: *Hideaway*, KSD 1059.
B.B. KING: *Live & Well*, BLS 6031; *Live At the Regal*, ABCS 509.
ERIC CLAPTON: *Bluesbreakers*, LON PS 492.

I learned this month's exercise from Mack Dougherty. Mack graduated summa cum laude from Berklee a few years ago, and has since worked his way into being #1 call in the Dallas studios. He is the most technically proficient melodic line player I have ever heard. In addition, he has acquired the ability to conceive and develop melodies which have weight and inner significance by long ago taking the aim to never play a note he didn't hear.

Using a metronome, start the exercise slowly and cover all the strings once before advancing the metronome two notches. Build speed to your limit at each practice session, *resting frequently*. This is an ear training exercise. Technique is in the ear.



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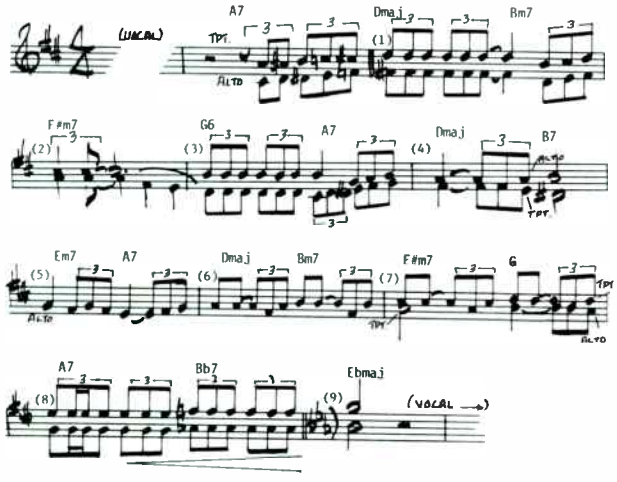
STUDIO

CONTEMPORARY HARMONY/RON DELP

ARRANGING: HARMONIZING A MELODY

This is a continuation of last month's studio. I thought that rather than go into another technique for harmonizing a melody, I would give you a practical example of last month's technique: harmonizing in 3rds and 6ths.

The example below is eight bars of "Love Me With All Your Heart" drawn directly from an arrangement I did for a club date band which consists of trumpet, alto sax, vocal and rhythm. The tune is a straight-ahead dance thing . . . certainly not jazz:



The chart begins with a two-bar horn intro (not shown here), then vocal does an entire chorus with rhythm back-up. The horn parts above make up the first half of the second chorus; vocal takes the second half of the chorus, then horns come back in on the ending (also not shown here). The tune is a medium-slow 4/4, actually felt in 12/8. Because it is merely a dance tune nothing fancy is called for, and 3rds and 6ths work just fine . . . and remember, there are only two horns available. I'll dissect the horn parts bar-by-bar.

After the chorus of vocal I wanted the horns to come in with a 'big' sound and, with two horns, 'big' means 6ths, so that's what I used in Bar #1. I composed a chromatic line (called *pick-ups*) for the trumpet and harmonized that in 6ths for alto.

I could have used 6ths for Bar #2, giving alto an E below the trumpet C#. But for kicks I went to 3rds. The alto leaps from F# to A but, you'll remember from last time, a leap of a 3rd in the harmony is generally alright. I really didn't want the horns to hang on the C# and A for the whole bar, so to provide some motion I gave the alto an F# and E for two reasons: 1) to provide motion and 2) to work him more smoothly down to his D in Bar #3.

Bar #3 is back to 6ths, but notice the 3rd beat. The A7 chord happens here and if I had kept the alto on D, I would have an avoid note. (D is the 11th on A7 — the avoid note). So, to avoid the avoid note I could use either the note a step above (E) or a step below (C#). As C# is the 3rd of A7 it is the preferable note. Looking ahead, I wanted to go to 3rds in Bar #4 for contrast and I worked into it by putting the alto in 3rds with trumpet at the end of Bar #3. In Bar #3, the notes alto has on the 3rd beat (D and D#) are just for fill-in.

The B7 chord in Bar #4 is a biggie — a V7 of II — and I wanted to add some weight there. Bar #4 in 3rds would sound like "Doooo-doo-doo-doooo", but I wanted more impact than that so I went to a 6th on the B7 chord. That gives the sound "doooo-doo-doo-wahhhh". For contrast, I thought the next two bars might be nice for a solo horn and, as trumpet has been carrying the lead so far, a switch to alto lead would make a better contrast. I wouldn't want alto to jump from D# way up to G — that would be distracting. So I crossed parts in Bar #3. Notice that trumpet and alto play the F# (Bar #3) in unison; at that point I make the alto move UP to A and B, and the trumpet move DOWN to E and D#. Alto plays solo through Bars #5 and 6.

In Bar #7 I sneak the trumpet back in by giving him sustained notes in 3rds with the alto. (His dynamics indicate a soft entrance with a crescendo).

Bar #8 has to be big . . . it has to bring back in the vocalist, plus there is a modulation (key change) up a half-step to *Eb*. Remember, 'big' with two horns means 6ths. The melody note in Bar #8 is E and the change is A7. To get to the key of *Eb*, I merely added the V7 chord — Bb7, and moved the melody up to F, then to G on the *Eb* chord in Bar #9. Harmonized in 6ths I get a big fanfare-ish sound to introduce the vocal. But I have a problem.

Alto is on lead going into Bar #8 and the melody notes (E, F and G) are right at the top of his range. All horns at the upper limits of their range tend to screech, or grate on the ear, and I didn't want to bring in a nice female voice on a screech, so I switched, or crossed, parts again, putting trumpet back on top. (Trumpet's *normal* high note is C, a 4th above the G written here.) Notice at the end of Bar #7 alto and trumpet play the B in unison, so I just reversed direction at that point moving trumpet UP and alto DOWN.

As I said, this is a straight-ahead, garden-variety dance chart, with nothing hip insinuated. It does its job when this tune is called for on the gig and that's why I wrote it. It took me less than ten minutes to write the parts, including the intro and ending.

If you can play piano, play the example (with chords or at least roots in the left hand) or, better yet, get a couple of horn players and transpose the example for them; you could use two trumpets, two saxes, or one of each.

3rds and 6ths are equally used on jazz and rock tunes, so don't think they are limited to shmaltzy dance tunes. The same basic concept also applies to larger groups as you'll see next time.

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The Little Big Horn

STUDIO

DRUM CLINIC/MAX ROACH

INTO THE 80'S

As any drummer knows, Max Roach owns the patent on the basic stuff of modern jazz drumming. In addition to being consistently one of our most musical, impassioned and precise precussionists, Roach has always been outspoken on the subject of world and American culture, on historical injustices and the power of art to help set things right.

Musician asked him recently to comment on the changing of the musical decade — one ship pulling out and another one coming in to dock — on what has been and what's to be. In our next issue, a number of other artists will comment. Here is what Max has to say now.

"I consider my music to be a part of the American musical experience. Whatever you want to call it — jazz, blues, bluegrass, pop — I don't go for categorizations. I think it's all part and parcel of one big thing, the American musical experience. Everything influences everything else, there's lots of mixing. It's the old melting pot idea, and it's really true. I think it's great.

"Anyway, the musicians have been pretty well able to take care of the *music* itself. What I think should've been done in the 70s — as well as the 50s and 60s — is that these public and private funding agencies, like NEA, NEH, and all the others, should be giving us enough money to perpetuate this music and help the people who are making it. I mean, the N.Y. Philharmonic needs plenty of money to do what they do, and they get it; what about *our* music, *American* music? It's an old story, I know, but it's still as true as ever: these Mozart Festivals and Bach Festivals are always organized, and that's fine, but what we're doing, we do with little or no assistance from these funding agencies. And, you know, where *else* are we gonna get the money? When we tour Europe we find their governments do support this kind of music, and the music always sells out large halls. Like, Sun Ra plays small clubs here most of the time; I drove through Paris last year when he was playing there, and you couldn't even drive through the street outside the stadium he was playing, there were so many people milling around outside. That's how it should be here. If American musicians are going to really be able to progress, we need help. With the rising cost of living it's getting harder and harder. So, to me, the most important thing is that, in the 70s, this *didn't* happen.

"I hope, in the 80s, that it *will* happen. I can't speculate or predict on the music itself, that's always too unpredictable a thing. But from talking with a lot of club owners and musicians, I think that a lot of people feel the same way I do and want to do something about it. We want to succeed *in spite* of the situation. It's very ironic to me that our institutions of so-called higher learning, or conservatories, teach everything *but* American music. We have to start dealing with the culture that comes out of America. I'd like to see some government validation of what we're doing. Like, in England, when you reach a certain level of popularity and respect, you achieve knighthood. The government puts the rubber stamp on the artist. There *is* forward movement in the music, but for people to really know about it, we need help. If there's forward-moving music in a tiny club with 20 people inside, that's great, but it's also tragic in a way. There's music for entertainment, and there's music for enlightenment. Enlightening music needs more help. That's what I'm working towards, and that's what I hope will happen in the 80s.

"I'm glad you people are taking this survey. I hope that, by talking, other musicians and the media will pick up on these ideas."

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J. D'Addario Co. has introduced a line of 13 entirely new string types for acoustic, electric and electric bass guitars, named for the famed guitar luthier, James D'Aquisto. They are designed for the professional musician and do not duplicate any types now in the D'Addario line. They are available both domestically and internationally. J. D'Addario Co., 210 Rt. 109, East Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735.

Texas Amplifiers presents the Twister as the latest addition to the Texas line. A heavy duty 10" speaker mounted in a ¾" wood cab, the Twister board is slanted at a 17° angle to better project the sound. $129.95 is the list price from Texas Amps who also make pickups and transducers. International Music Corp., Box 2344, Ft. Worth, Texas 76113.

Electro-Harmonix' new Bass Microsynthesizer is designed to give the bass player all the capabilities of a lead player's synthesizer voicings at a very small cost. The unit has four continuously mixable voices, including Sub-Octave and Octave Above, and covers the spectrum from funky growl to sweetest high notes. Without mortgaging his home, a bass player can afford to surround himself now with all the screaming, divebombing, dog-barking sounds he's dreamed about. Electro-Harmonix, 27 W. 23rd St., NYC, NY 10010.

JBL here shows their brand new 7130 Compressor/Limiter, a solid-state, dual input device capable of automatic gain control over a range of 30 dB. The unit offers three selectable functions (Out, Compress, Limit), as well as three selectable release and attack times. The 7130 can operate as a line amplifier in its Out mode and may be utilized to maintain the proper gain structure within a system. JBL, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, Cal. 91329.

Here is The **Roland** Rack, a state-of-the-art combination for on-the-road or in-the-studio instrument amplification, sound reinforcement and modification applications for musicians and engineers. Pictured are the Roland Bass and Guitar Pre-amps, the brand new SVC-350 Vocorder, The P/V Synth, the Dimension D and two Roland Power Amplifiers. The manufacturer should be written for definitive features and applications, however, two of the units should be mentioned for their uniqueness here and now. The Vocorder is an instrument designed to process the spoken or sung human voice and use this information to trigger another musical signal, giving the instrument the ability to "speak". The Dimension D is designed to be used with virtually any instrument (especially voice tracks) and brings richness and life to recorded music, what Roland refers to as a "psychoacoustic effect" to the music through the use of spatial modes. Write Roland, 2401 Saybrook Ave., L.A., Cal. 90040.

Guild Guitar introduces their new NS-20 guitar cord, "The Silencer". A heavy-duty 20'-long cable with two solid brass plugs, the cord allows silent plugging and unplugging and protects your amp's speakers. Guild Guitars, Box 203, Elizabeth, N.J. 07207.

From **Peavey** is their Mark III Series Bass amplifier head designed with the road musician in mind. Featuring wide-range pre-amps with reduced noise, increased gain and maximum dynamic range, a six-band graphic equalizer and individual channel equalization, the unit uses the latest circuitry and electronic components. The Mark III offers a simplified Automix circuit with LED channel indicators, pre and post gain controls (giving each channel its own "master" for complete control over gain, sustain and overload), a built-in compressor and a variable electronic crossover. Best of all, it's a Peavey, a company oriented towards giving the working musician his moneys worth, something this column has always endorsed. Peavey, 711 A Street, Meridian, MS 39301.

The multi-pronged scraper for the **LP** Multi Guiro has been changed to a longer version yielding a more variable sound with greater ease in playing. The Multi-Guiro, in addition to the unique 2-surface design, offers the exclusive tailor-to-fit changeable shaker-fill removable cap design. At $3.25, it's a true bargain. LP, 454 Commercial Ave., Palisades Park, N.J. 07650.

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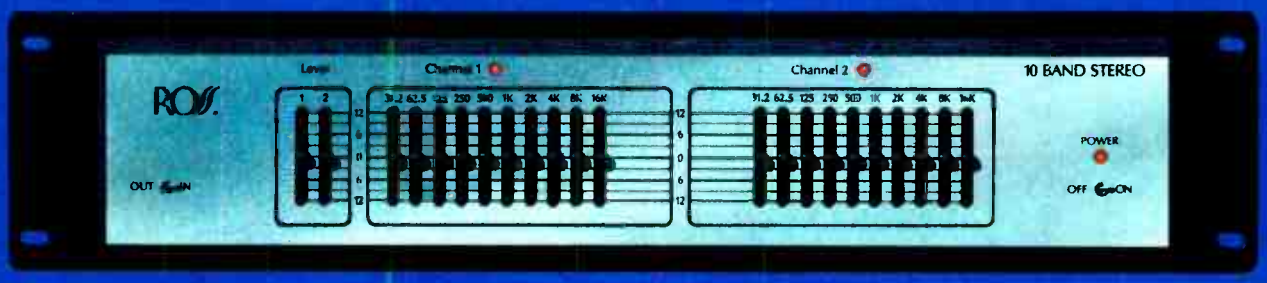

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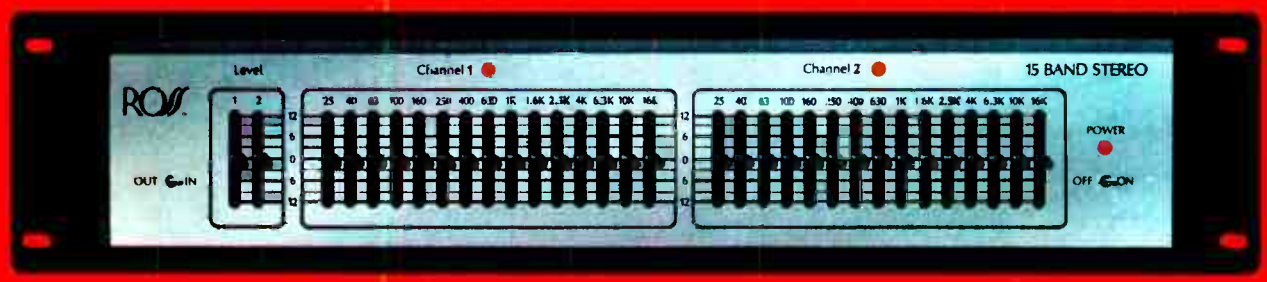

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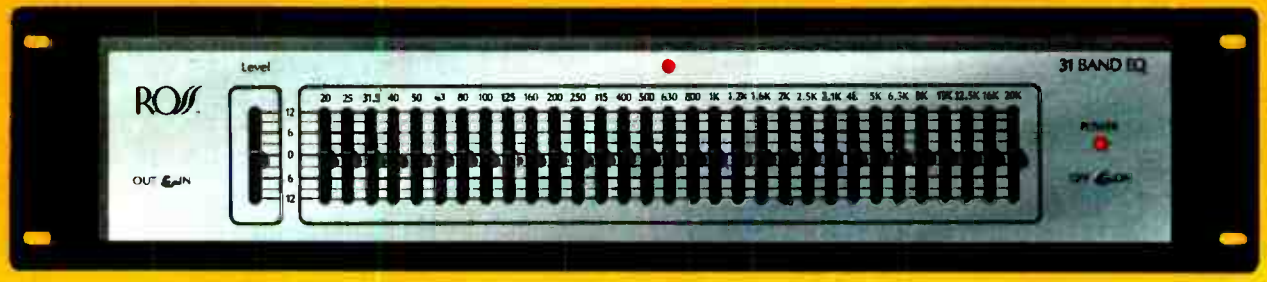

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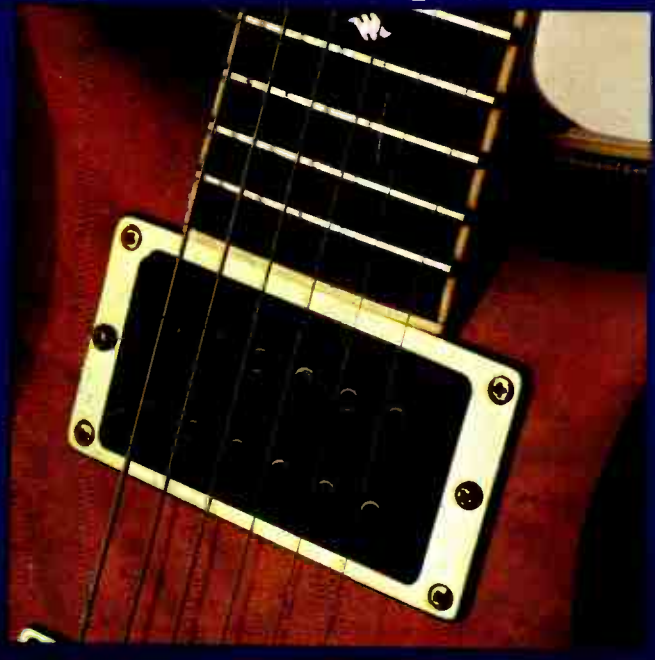

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