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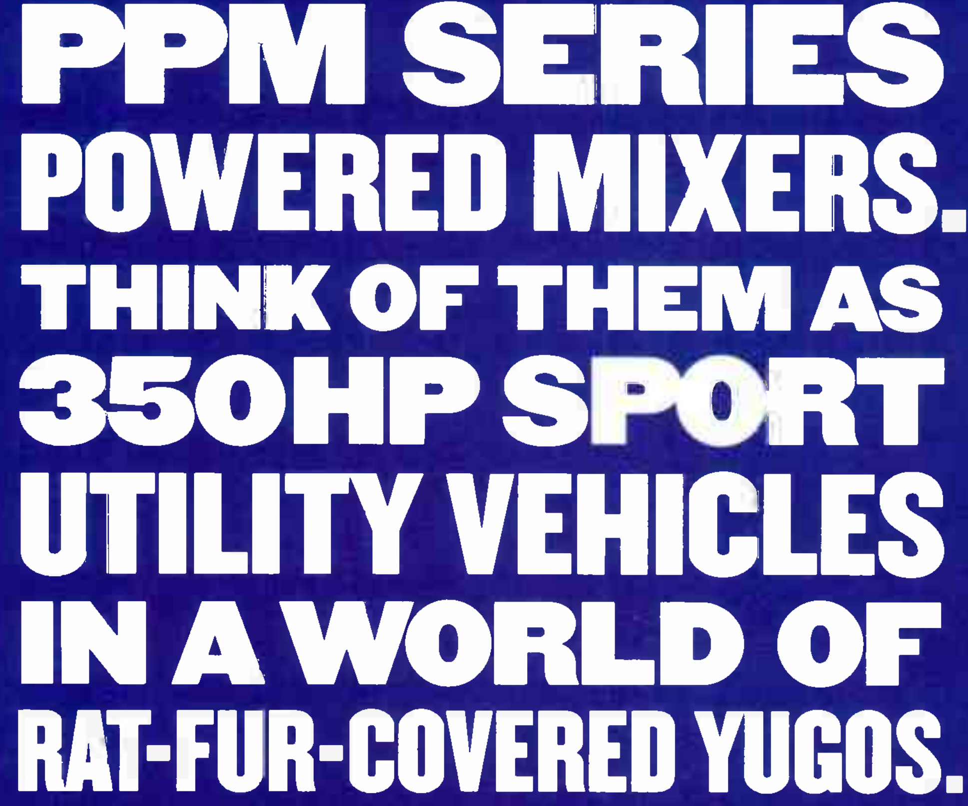

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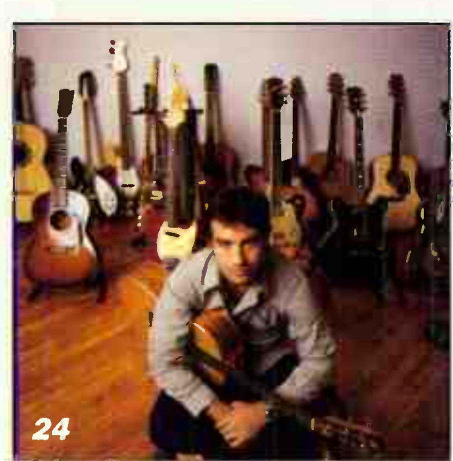

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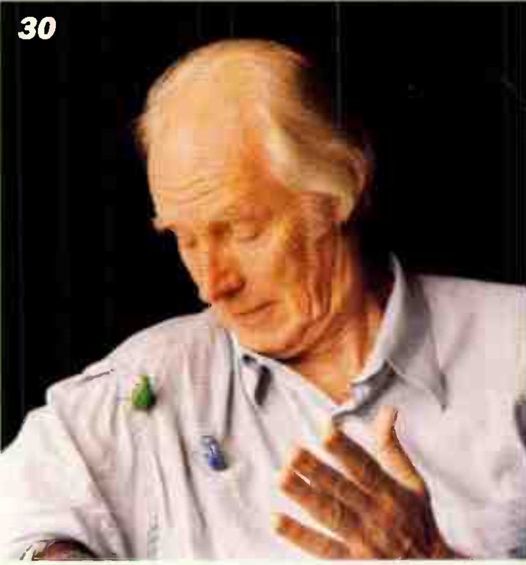

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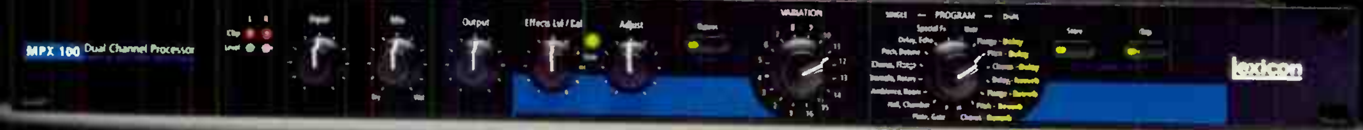

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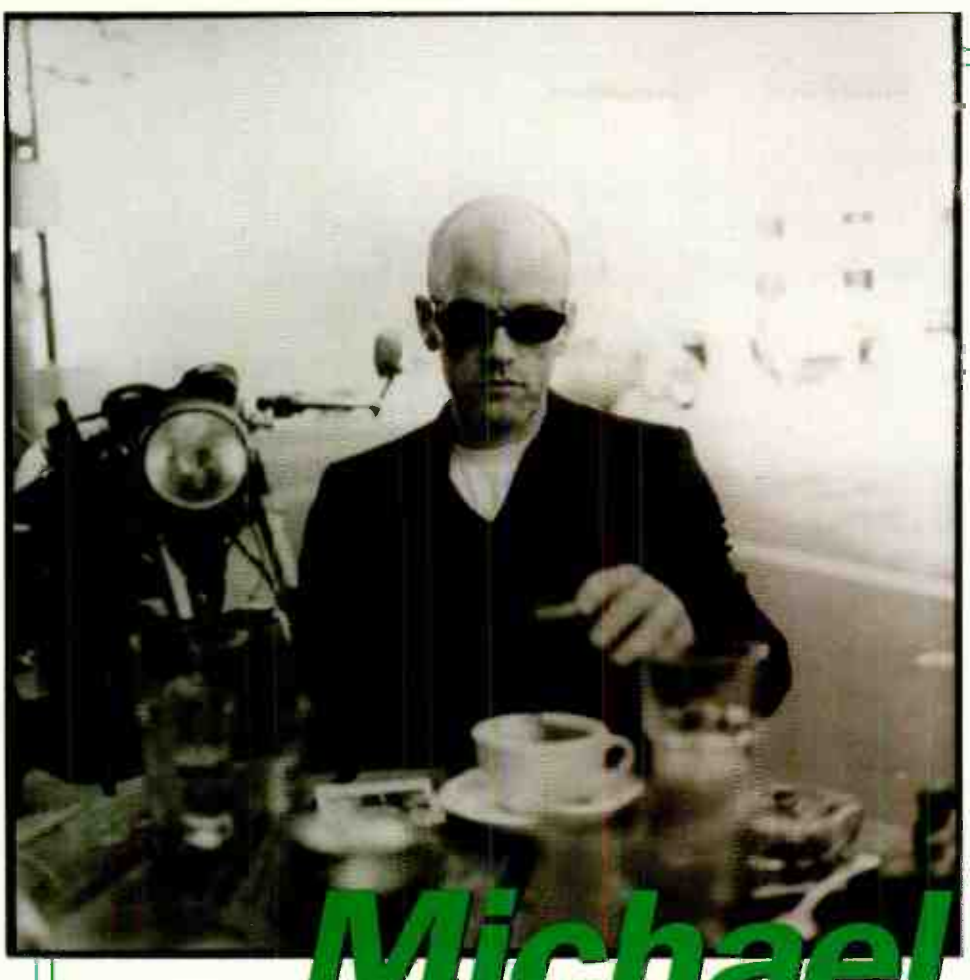

"If every song I've written... were taken from some aspect of my life, I'd be in the loony bin."

Michael Stipe

Your lyrics for R.E.M. are among the most distinctive and enigmatic in music. What's your approach?

The emotion is more important than the meaning. It was only about three years ago that I realized that I had a very distinctive voice and that when people hear an R.E.M. song on the radio, they know instantly that it's R.E.M. because of my voice. The burden is that it's too easy to be lazy in terms of writing a lyric that maybe isn't so great or that maybe is like a lazy metaphor—you know, I just can't be bothered with it, so I'll just put this down and let people scratch their heads. But I don't want to do that. I want the listener to be able to find something if they dig deeper. That something could be complete nonsense, but it's going to be well-thought-out nonsense. Or maybe not; it might be just total stream of consciousness. But it's got to have that feeling.

It seems like you're more interested in getting the words across now than when you began making records.

We didn't always want to make records. Back then I could just let the energy of the night carry you on, because my performance was pretty wild at the time. I eschewed language and meaning, didn't even think about it. It was more of a primal moaning or screaming. If you listen to the early R.E.M. bootlegs, it's pretty scary. So when it came time to make records, I had to start honing my craft a little bit. I had to have actual thoughts and words, and language and music really don't mix well.

You've maintained that virtually none of your songs are autobiographical.

Yeah, I'm insulted by the whole autobiographical slant that's often given to our work. If I had written about a very real experience of my own, then I would fess up to it, but that's not generally the case. I'm not that fascinating a guy. If every song that I've written on the last three records were taken from some aspect of my life, I'd be in the loony bin.

How did Bill Berry's departure affect the making of the new album, Up*?*

Making records is real hard anyway, but this record was extremely difficult. We had to either pretend like he never left and hire someone to be him, or pretty much dump the whole thing out the window and start over again, and that's what we did. The record was already on its way to being pretty experimental in that we recorded all forty-odd songs with drum machines. We were really excited about this more Young Marble Giants aspect of what we are, going all the way back to "Perfect Circle," which has a drum machine, and "We Walk," which has this insane kind of billiard-balls-crashing-together as part of our percussion. Taking the elements that have always been in our music, coloring and laying underneath the main instruments, and pulling those up to the top—that's what we did. It was hard, though. I had more writer's block than I ever had.

You're often kind of hard on yourself, yet R.E.M.'s music always feels compassionate.

I don't know if compassion has ever been a conscious thing to infuse into the music or the lyric, but I think it's inherent in me as a writer. Hope is the most inherent. I can't change that. I can't be a nihilist, as much as I might have tried.—***Mark Rowland***

Photo: Ian McFarlane

World Radio History

sideman

Billy Bremner

Your playing has always reflected a strong country sensibility—those twangy string bends show up even on the Pretenders' "Back on the Chain Gang."

I grew up loving the Everly Brothers' records, which had great guitar parts, as well as Ricky Nelson's, because of James Burton's playing. So I've always gone in that direction with the guitar; there's lots of bending. Which is why I have to use such light-gauge strings, obviously, though they make things easier all the way around. I even use really light strings on my acoustic, as opposed to [Dave] Edmunds, who uses ship's ropes.

Exactly how light are your string sets?

Well, I never buy whole sets of strings; I have to get them separately, because I like a certain configuration: .10, .11, .15, .24, .34, .44. Of course, that way it costs a lot more than buying a complete set.

Your sound is very bright, yet hardly clean. What's the secret?

I go straight into a 2x12" combo, with the thing turned up so it's always as nasty as I want it, or as clean as I want it. I've never used effects of any kind, with the exception of a really old digital delay box. And I like to keep the guitar's volume control up the whole time; when I play rhythm, I just physically play quieter. That way I don't have to touch anything when I get to the solo.

That makes sense, because whenever you decrease the guitar's volume control to go back to rhythm, you lose the bite.

That's right. If you have a really nice sound on the guitar at full volume, why change it? Keep it the way it is by having it up all the way and just play rhythm with less force.

When it comes to adding fills, what's your approach?

I steal [*laughs*]. I'm a good thief. I'm always looking for new sounds. I don't care who it's from. If the worst guitar player in the world suddenly plays something I like, I'll go home and try to figure out what he's been doing. Any idea that interests me, I'll pursue.

What's a good recorded example of something you've nicked?

The solo for "Switchboard Susan" [from Nick Lowe's *Labor of Lust*]. I copped it from a song called "Quite a Beat," which was the B-side of an old single by [drummer] Sandy Nelson. I liked it so much, I stole it! It just fit so good into that song. It was so out-of-the-ordinary, I had to use it, though I made it clear to anyone who'd ask about it that it wasn't my idea. I didn't use it as an outright theft, but as a compliment.

A lot of your most creative bits, such as that slurred break in "Switchboard Susan," come from using a capo.

Because the guitar sounds so good with one on. Of course, whatever gauge strings you're using, you have to go at least another gauge lighter, because it's hard to bend with the capo on, the tension is so much higher. But the capoed guitar presents all kinds of new ideas.

résumé
Nick Lowe
Dave Edmunds
Rockpile
The Pretenders
Elvis Costello
Paul McCartney
Johnny Cash
Carlene Carter
Little Richard
Kelly Willis
Jim Lauderdale

"I liked the solo on 'Quite a Beat' so much, I stole it!"

It's been said that Chrissie Hynde's favorite Pretenders recording is "My City Was Gone," which is all you on guitar. Again, simple, almost country licks, but very effective.

That was another one of those rhythm-lead parts, where they just blended together throughout the song. It worked really nice.

And you get to hear it every day of the week at the beginning of the Rush Limbaugh Show.

Actually, a lot of DJs have that as their theme song. But I've had quite a few mentions here and there, thanks to Rush using it, so I guess it doesn't harm me at all. I'm not too sure about Rush himself, of course.—***David Simons***

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Add Voltage to Your Vocals

Adam Paskowitz is an original: a Hollywood surfer/scientist dude who applies computer programming and modified electronics to his Captain Beefheartish, sci-fi-addled vocals. On the ***Flys'*** *Holiday Man* (Trauma), Paskowitz's voice is lush and appealing in one song, distorted and horrific in the next. But this is no studio trickery: Paskowitz controls all the effects, both onstage and in the studio, via the Paskowitz Nebulizer.

Developed with two scientists from the National Instruments Corporation, Paskowitz (whose father worked on the Manhattan Project—yep, the same folks who gave us the atom bomb) initially wanted only to emulate the band's guitarist by modifying Boss distortion and chorus pedals with larger resistors and changing ohmage.

"I take a normal pedal and make it do abnormal things," says Paskowitz. "At first I just wanted to make the vocals sound funny, but then I realized I could change effects faster, and with better control, than the sound man could." The resulting sounds created by the Nebulizer have caused MTV's *Loveline* to dub it "Viagra for singers." (Paskowitz prefers "sound man in a box.")

"Using G Programming, which is a machine language, and Data Acquisition, which is a theory, I can take my Electro-Harmonix Soul Bender pedal, for example, and control its voltage with a computer," Paskowitz explains.

R. L. BURNSIDE

IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW...

Aw, I guess I'd have just hung on in there, like a dirty shirt. You see, I love playing the blues, but I don't like takin' those long tours, you know? I love to be out there a few days and go back home. Maybe to hire a manager would've been the best thing to do, but the thing about it is, I wanted a pilot, and after he told me he couldn't fly, I said, "Aw, well, I won't hire him."

Yeah, we've been managed, but they've managed to fuck us up a bunch of shit. The musician's always the last one on the totem pole when it comes to money. He gets his money *last*. A manager and a publicist would've been great. [Epitaph Records is] doin' fuddy good. If they keep on doin' it [working Burnside's new record, *Come On In* (Fat Possum/Epitaph)]

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To get things rolling, he sings through two modified Shure SM58s, which are taped together. The mics run into a series of seven switchable Boss distortion and chorus pedals, all of which have upgraded wiring and larger capacitors. The signal from the pedals goes into a custom-made amplifier/controller with Neve-style preamps, which acts like a way station. (The amplifier/controller is governed by a Sony 505GX laptop computer, equipped with G Programming, and feeds its data to the mixing board via a CV-to-MIDI converter.)

The Flys

The Sony 505GX works with a digital-to-analog interface that Paskowitz calls the CA1000. "The interface has Fast Florinal Timing (FFT), a real-time manipulation of the signal chain that allows me to run spectral analysis onstage," he says.

More importantly, the Nebulizer makes it possible for Paskowitz to control the voltage going in and out of each pedal. "Voltage and amplitude control everything," he says. "You think that those knobs on your foot pedal control delay and EQ, but they really just control voltage. So once voltage is determined, the computer makes adjustments using FFT and real-time analysis, so it's always making adjustments. Everything is taken into consideration, from room size to the bounce-back delay."

Paskowitz estimates that the Nebulizer cost $30,000 to develop and patent, but he claims that a major manufacturer could easily produce it for under five grand. And with interest from both Joan Osborne, Third Eye Blind's Stephan Jenkins, and other artists, sales could be right around the corner.

"With the Nebulizer, nothing does what it appears to do," says Paskowitz. "It can't do what it may be designed to do, but it can do what doesn't appear to be its main function. If you see someone singing into two microphones, you figure one is EQed low and one high. With the Nebulizer, both mics may be on, or one mic might be off, or one might be controlling a signal path and the other picking up capture information that updates the computer. I could direct the lighting with this thing. There's no limit, because I can control voltage with the Nebulizer, and voltage is everything."—***Ken Micallef***

and gimme the money, I'll let you know what's what and how much I made, and I'll be doin' all right.

I'm gonna stick with the blues. I'd love to keep the blues going, if I could. I'd love to keep doing it. I'm glad now that the younger people are realizing that the blues are the roots of all music; that's where it all started from. I've done fine these days from what I was doing, but still that ain't good enough. It took going out with rock bands before it started getting over to where we were selling out places. We went out with Spencer [Jon Spencer's Blues Explosion], and then everybody wanted us. So you just gotta keep doing it for years and take every opportunity you get. You've got to be out there a long time.

We're making more money playing blues now than ever before. There were years where we couldn't even make a living playing the blues. That's what I'm talking about. That's why I worked on a plantation, driving the cotton pickers and then flying over to Europe when they weren't hiring the rest of the band to play with me. I could've done a lot of things [differently], but I just love to stay with the blues. I guess if I had three million dollars, I'd sit down and retire, you know, and go to sleep. But no, no, there ain't nothing I'd do differently, 'cause I'm happy.
—***Michael Gelfand***

WHAT'S A Mic Pre?

Investing in a professional-quality microphone while skimping on the mic preamp is like recording your vintage Les Paul through a megaphone. So what, exactly, does a good mic preamp do? In the same way that you'd plug your guitar into a high-quality amp to properly reproduce your "instrument-level" signal, a mic preamp is charged with the task of boosting signals as minuscule as -60dB up to the +4dB level required by most professional mixing consoles. And this needs to be completed while adding the least possible noise and without radically altering the signal's equalization. In fact, good mic preamps are so crucial to making good recordings that successful producers and engineers often bring a favorite to every session they work, regardless of what the studio owns.

Better mic preamps feature input gain reducers (known as "pads"), supply 48V of "phantom power" to condenser microphones, and allow for phase reverse. (The latter is important if you are using multiple microphones on one instrument—miking a snare drum from above and below, for instance—which, unchecked, can sometimes create phase cancellation.)

Just keep in mind that mic preamps with a large adjustment range and plenty of gain are most desirable, because microphones all behave differently. For example, a low-output ribbon mic needs a lot of gain to function at a usable level, while a condenser mic generally delivers a high-output signal, which means it could load down the mic preamp if the signal is too hot.—***Brett Ratner***

Photo: Bob Berg

World Radio History

rehumanizing JUNGLE

Who says that all jungle music is geek-tronica produced by a horde of DJs welded to sterile samplers? Percussionist/programmer ***Talvin Singh*** goes beyond jungle cliché on *O.K.* (Island), which features eclectic musicians from around the globe—including singers from Okinawa, string players from Madras, *sarangi* and *veena* players, and bassist Bill Laswell—alongside Singh's electrified tabla rig, which he calls Tablatronics. According to Singh, it's the involvement of these real-life players—on real instruments—that makes his brand of jungle sound as organic as, well, a jungle.

Singh

"I'm a musician," he notes, "and I don't have to rely on an electronic palette. For the recording, everything was miked up, from monitors to keyboards to drums, so we were constantly pushing air. People forget that even with electronic sounds, you need to push air, whether it's from a speaker or from someone drumming. That vibration gives it a different sound. People like sampling the records that have that sound, but they don't always understand how to get it."

To craft his unique sound, Singh mixes high-tech gizmos with traditional Indian instruments. His typical electronic gear includes a Virus Simulator analog synthesizer, an Otari RADAR hard-disk recorder, a TC Electronic Finalizer EQ, a Roland JV-1080 with "World Card" for percussion, vocal, and chorus sounds, an E-MU sampler, and a Kurzweil K2000, but this mass of electronic equipment doesn't overshadow his drums: two pot-shaped tablas (the *bayan* and the *dayan*), two talking drums (the *dholak* and the *naal*), various Bandere frame drums, and the *pakhawaj*, a large, two-headed tuned drum.

Singh isn't dainty in his approach to this rig. His Tablatronics are often pumped up to a volume usually reserved for lead guitarists, while his bass tabla's low-end resonance rivals that of a bass guitar. His ability to use technology to emphasize the organic power of his drums carries over to the band as a whole: "In my band, we're not playing on top of a DAT or a sequencer," he says. "Our pulse tells the computer what tempo we're playing at."

Using current Western standards as a guideline, the swirling strings, colorful melodies, and churning rhythms on *O.K.* definitely meet the criteria for jungle, but *O.K.* is also an unusual Indian concept album that draws on Singh's cultural heritage while acknowledging jungle's currency of manic melodies and voluminous bass bombs. "What we call Indian classical music is actually progressive music," Singh explains. "People are more accepting of the organic side of India as opposed to the forward side, but technology is Indian culture," he explains. "You can have a vocal phrase for each stroke of the drum. But it's not just mathematically complex; it's also very poetic."—***Ken Micallef***

Gettin' THE BENDS

Even though Chicago blues legend ***Otis Rush*** has one of the most soulful throats in the blues, his practice of drinking three fingers' worth of cod liver oil before a performance—to "oil up the pipes"—is a bit too obscure for most musicians. But the 65-year-old guitarist also has a more palatable discipline, developed through forty years of gigging and recording, and it involves his authoritative approach to bending strings, as evidenced on his latest album, *Any Place I'm Going* (House of Blues).

His cardinal rule: Pin 'em, hard. "Watch this," Rush says, laying his fourth finger on his Gibson ES 345's B string at the seventh fret, with his middle finger on the sixth. Then he pulls the string up two whole steps, from F# to A#, and makes it sing with vibrato. "Now watch again," he says, repeating the move with his index finger added to the sixth fret.

"Always use two or three fingers to bend," he notes. "Makes it easier and more accurate, and you can shake the strings better for vibrato when your grip is stronger. But don't put two fingers on the fret you're bending from; that's not as strong. Space your fingers out."

Rush has the advantage of being a lefty with his guitar strung upside-down, which means he

Rush

can pull the strings down to achieve the same effect righties get by the more difficult chore of bending up. If you're a northpaw, however, don't feel left out. Rush suggests that you try pulling down on the oft-neglected low strings to bring a low spooky moan to a solo in the A or E pentatonic scales.—***Ted Drozdowski***

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Photo: Joseph Cultice (left); Paul Foley

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Brea

seems willing, even eager, to try.

On MMW's latest Blue Note release, *Combustication*, as well as their five previous albums, Medeski has a ball with the Hammond. There's something childlike in his bizarre drawbar combinations, subversive volume pedal phrasing, and anarchic glee as an improviser. So it surprised us, just a bit, when Medeski swears that just like all the mainstream jazz organists, he's got a jones for the blues. Which is not to say that he's a blues *zombie*. Rather, he knows where a big part of his music comes from, and he's not about to forget that even as he pushes into new territory.

"Blues bands were where I started playing organ," he explains. "When I was playing with Mister Jelly Belly, he had tons of albums by Jimmy McGriff, Don Patterson, and all those guys, and he inundated me with it. I listened to it, and it was cool, but right away it seemed strange to me how similar all of it was. There were certain tones that everybody used all the time; nobody seemed to be exploring. So I started checking out the possibilities and getting comfortable with stuff like this. . ."

Luckily, we're at a Manhattan studio with a B-3 purring in front of Medeski. He plays an ascending diatonic scale, but he does it by repeating the same sequence of four notes while adjusting the drawbars. As the overtones of the drawbar setting change, the ear hears a scale climbing smoothly into dog-whistle range. More than a coloristic device, it's obvious that for Medeski the drawbars are as much a melodic tool as the keys themselves.

"I love John Coltrane and Jimi Hendrix, and those guys were pushing the limit of the sounds of their instruments," Medeski continues. "So I felt that if I was gonna play something really bluesy, I would try to find out how to make the organ more vocal, rather than just linear and

Organ wizard John Medeski on letting your solos lead you away from clichés.

Sometimes your axe can work against you. Take John Medeski, whose genre-busting exertions on Hammond organ guide the adventurous performances of Medeski, Martin & Wood. You could say that his creative options, like those of anyone who plays a tone-wheel organ, are confined by the instrument's association with the funky blues sound pioneered decades ago by Jimmy Smith. I mean, just hold down one note on a B-3, and you can't help but think of "Walk on the Wild Side" or "I Got My Mojo Workin'." Smith *owns* the Hammond organ, and everyone who has followed his footsteps has had to borrow it for their own work.

Most of that work, alas, has been imitative. Except for Larry Young and a couple of other free spirits, few have proven capable of breaking the stranglehold that Smith has on that sound. Medeski, though,

World Radio History

Free of the Blues

by robert l. doerschuk

percussive." He plays a blues lick, slowing down at the peak to repeat one note while adjusting the drawbars to squeeze it through the timbral wringer. Clearly, they didn't teach this stuff in Groove Holmes 101.

But what about note choices? There's a temptation, when one plays the blues, to fall back on licks that everybody recognizes, as if to cue the audience, "Go *whoo-hoo!* here." How does one learn to play the blues with true originality?

"One thing I did was just to listen to a lot of blues without actually focusing on the notes that people played," Medeski suggests. "I always try to listen *behind* the notes and try to figure out, okay, for me, when I say the same thing, what's the way of saying it? You can even take a blues riff [*Example 1*] and find ways of building other figures or harmonies." He plays Example 2, noting, "That's almost like a diminished, but it comes out of the blues. And you can build lines with that kind of thinking.

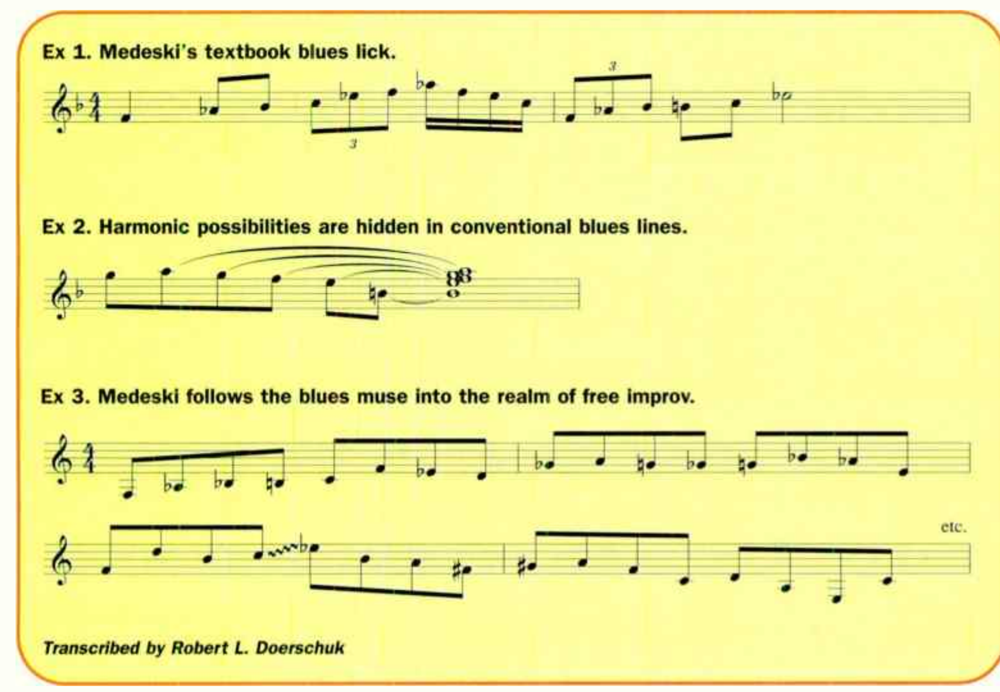
"The whole idea is that you've got internal and external levels in music," he continues. "The internal you keep really simple; it's the framework. Then the external can go out, and that includes letting the melody go where it wants to go. I got that from Ornette Coleman: Instead of having the harmonic constraints of the form define the melody, he would let the melody lead itself, while at the same time keeping the form underneath. Really, he's the guy who freed the melody in improvised music."

To illustrate, Medeski blows through four bars of single-line melody, shown in Example 3. The feel is definitely bluesy, yet the line strays way beyond any implied three-chord foundation. "See, I'm letting the melody lead itself. You don't even have to come back; just let it go as far as it wants while still keeping the feeling of the blues, which you've learned just from listening a lot.

"It's kind of like being in every note," he elaborates. "Also, you want to build a kind of mental independence, where you can keep two things going and not lose either. The most obvious way to develop this kind of thinking is to see the link between what we [Medeski, bassist Chris Wood, and drummer Billy Martin] call clavés—not just Afro-Cuban clavés, but the skeleton of any rhythm. You can trace versions of the two-three [*i.e.*, backbeat vs. triplet] clavé from Africa into New Orleans music, Caribbean music, South American music, everywhere; you can find those clavés in James Brown. But to hear it you've got to break the rhythm down to the simplest level and internalize it. As long as you keep that inner level simple, you can keep the clavé going.

"The same applies to harmony," Medeski concludes. "The harmonic form could be like a clavé; it's a skeleton that defines the form. Then, on top of that, you can do anything, as long as that skeleton is still in there."

It sounds as if it doesn't matter what the rest of the band is playing, if your solo is driven by the kind of logic that Medeski sees in the clavé analogy. "That's right," he agrees, "because you're *going with it*. Music is about whether you can say something, not whether you're caught up in conforming to a style. If you're going to do anything original, some people aren't going to like it, especially people who are addicted to the notes that define a certain style. I mean, I love the blues *style* too; I can listen to a blues band, or an R&B band, or a jazz trio, and it'll make me feel good. But I'm not *bound* by style. I'm more excited by people who push beyond it—who push *themselves*. In the end, it's about not being bound by the way things are done."



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songwriting

by robert l. doerschuk

Somewhere in Houston, there's an old house that Lyle Lovett's grandfather built back in 1911. In those days, of course, there was plenty of space in the neighborhood. Lyle himself remembers when Houston was still a distant mystery, some 25 miles away from this place where he grew up.

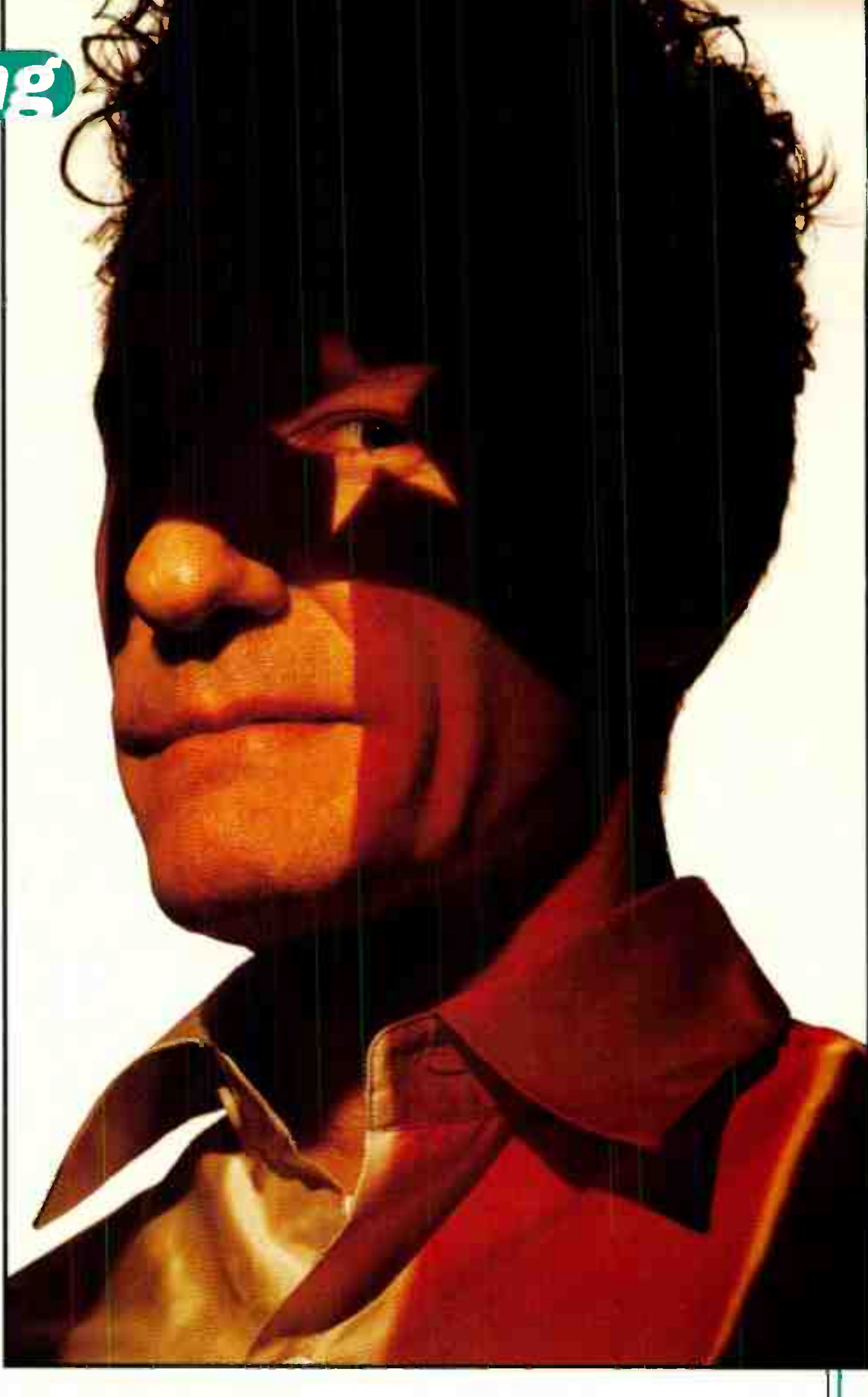
Today he lives in that same house. It hasn't changed much since his childhood, but the view from the front door is radically different. Where the Lovett home once dominated an open skyline, it's now just one part of a sprawl of malls and suburban tracts.

So did Lyle do any remodeling to keep up with the changing scenery? Not really. The biggest alteration he could think of was to peel up the linoleum floor his grandfather had laid down, so that the original pine wood stands uncovered once again. If anything, his vision was to restore what was important in the past, rather than streamline it into conformity with the future.

Obviously, roots are important to Lovett. He's never lived in Nashville or L.A.—in fact, never lived far from Houston at all. Like his house, Lyle's music is steeped in a sense of history; his songs draw from raw strains of backwoods gospel and country music, and he plays these tunes mainly with instruments his grandfather would have known. He's no nostalgist, though; a sprinkle of fashionable irony and genuine wit give contemporary listeners easy access to the otherwise timeless images painted in his lyrics.

It's a technique that Lovett picked up

(continued on page 22)



Lyle Lovett celebrates Texas songwriters—and explains the secrets behind their mastery of the evocative lyric.

Ridin' the Narrative Train

Photo: Albert Watson

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(continued from page 21)

from his mentors, the Texas troubadours he heard in his nascent days as a singer/songwriter. They concentrated in Houston and Austin, where Lovett played his earliest gigs, and their works had the power of transcending the very regional references they so vividly established. Lovett paid tribute to these influences, now his colleagues, on a remarkable album, *Step Inside This House*, released last September on Curb/MCA. The material consists entirely of songs by Steven Fromholtz, Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, and other Texas writers whose work began blossoming some 25 years ago.

There's a lesson in these kinds of songs, and we asked Lovett to help us figure it out.

Is there something in the songs you perform on Step Inside This House *that reflects a sensibility that's common to Texas songwriters?*

I would think that one of the big consistencies is narrative, the great descriptions of narrative in detail. It doesn't get any better than Guy Clark, but that's a pretty consistent quality among all these songs.

Is there a particularly Texan aspect to the way these artists approach their lyrics, as opposed to the similarly narrative works of, say, an East Coaster like Bruce Springsteen?

If you want to talk about Springsteen in this context, I'd have to say that he's one of our greatest narrative writers. I see his style as being closely connected to Guy's, for example. But the thing about these songwriters and this group of songs in particular is that many of these guys are contemporaries. Robert Earl Keen and I came up at the same time, but Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt both lived in Houston in the late Sixties and the early Seventies. They hung out every day and played their latest new song to each other. So there was a lot of going back and forth, of these guys influencing each other, which made for some consistency in their styles. Willis Alan Ramsey, Michael Murphey, and Steven Fromholtz were all part of the Austin music scene in the early Seventies, when singer/songwriters from Texas were getting record deals.

So a confluence of geography and certain creative personalities can stimulate an artist's work.

There's absolutely something to a community of people and how they interact. That's what was going on in the late Sixties and early Seventies there, in a similar way to what was happening in the singer/songwriter community that was in Los Angeles in the Seventies. Even now, when we're out there working on a record, we go into Lucy's El Adobe Café and hear Lucy say, "Oh, yeah, Jackson came in, and Don Henley came in." All those people hung out there every day, and they knew each other, and they'd play each other their new songs. There's really something to that.

The L.A. songwriters connote certain images of driving down freeways, the sun setting over the Pacific, and so on. What comparable images did the Texas songwriters evoke for you?

There was a lot of specific detail in their narrative. Guy Clark's writing about Monahans, Texas, really spoke to me over in Spring, Texas. Because of the way he wrote about west Texas, I could relate to it, even though I was from southeast Texas. Maybe he was writing specifically about Monahans, but he did it in such a way that it communicated on a universal level.

Is there a specific lyric you can point to?

Oh, gosh. Listen to any of Guy's songs. "Let 'Em Roll"—with the alternating thumb pattern that he plays on the guitar, I used to love to play that song—has such a great story, about an old wino who's passed away, and they find a picture in his wallet of a girl from his youth, and she turns up at his funeral. It's a beautiful narrative. And I love the "Texas Trilogy" [by Steven Fromholtz], which is about a small place that the railroad has passed by; it's a town that's withering. The place where I grew up didn't wither; it disappeared because it got swallowed up by the city. But I very much relate to the theme.

The image of a town blowing away in the wind has a different resonance than one about an area being taken over by urban sprawl.

But it's essentially about the same thing, which is the end of an era.

One characteristic of this music is that it isn't clogged with metaphor.

Yes, obscure references are kept to a

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"We wrote without a commercial contention. [That] can lead to a different kind of song."

a song, I just kinda start playing it. It all works together: A certain word will sound a certain way.

Maybe that comes from writing solo more than with a collaborator.

Well, there are many ways to approach writing a song. In a place like Nashville, for example, it's a real craft.

But back in the heyday of these Texans, songwriting was a largely non-commercial, non-competitive endeavor, and different in that sense from Nashville.

Bingo. Good point. The world was different then. Striving to commercial success wasn't always admirable. Then, in a place like Austin or Houston, the music business didn't really exist. There were always plenty of places to play. The audiences were great. I found that I would want to have a new song or two for next month, when I would come back through to play the Cactus Café in Austin. I never thought in terms of writing something that might get on the radio; I just wanted to have something new that might interest the thirty people I thought would show up. So we wrote without a commercial contention. Not being part of the music business can lead to a different kind of song.

How have you adapted to the presence of commercial pressure in your career nowadays?

You know, I've still never been on any kind of commercial track. I really feel fortunate that the AAA formats play me on the radio, but I've never been a big success on mainstream commercial radio. So I've never had to conform to any of that. See, there are different reasons to make up songs. You can do it because it's your job to get songs cut and played on the radio. But I've always admired singer/songwriters like Guy Clark. Even before I knew Guy, I never felt like his songs were trying to sell me something. He was telling me something that made sense. As I got to know Guy, I came to understand that he writes about his own life. In a way, by doing that he's explaining to the rest of us how life works. That's the kind of songwriting that attracts me, and that's the kind of work I aspire to do.

minimum. It's a very clear story line.

How exactly does a narrative songwriter look at the world and come up with a story, where the rest of us look at the world and, at best, come up with journalism?

Boy, that's a good question. For me, it's never about the words as much as it is the story. Having a complete idea is essential to any kind of writing. When I'm onto a good idea for a song, I end up having to weed out verses; I write too many of them. When I have sort of a half-idea for a song, maybe a catchy chorus phrase, and I try to write a song around that, I'll come up with a verse and a half and have to wrack my brain to come up with another verse and a half. So having the complete idea is essential.

Do these complete ideas tend to come as epiphanies?

Sure. That's pretty scary, really, because it's unpredictable.

And therefore harder to control.

Or duplicate.

Do you think mechanically about your lyrics as you write? "Too many adjectives"? "Not enough active verbs"?

Not in songwriting. In writing journalistically, I'm aware of that kind of stuff. But in songwriting . . . I don't know. Songs are mysterious. It has a lot to do with not just the lyrical content but with the sound of the words. I guess some people write words and music separately, but I've never been able to do that. When I get an idea for

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home studio

Duncan Sheik

by paul verna

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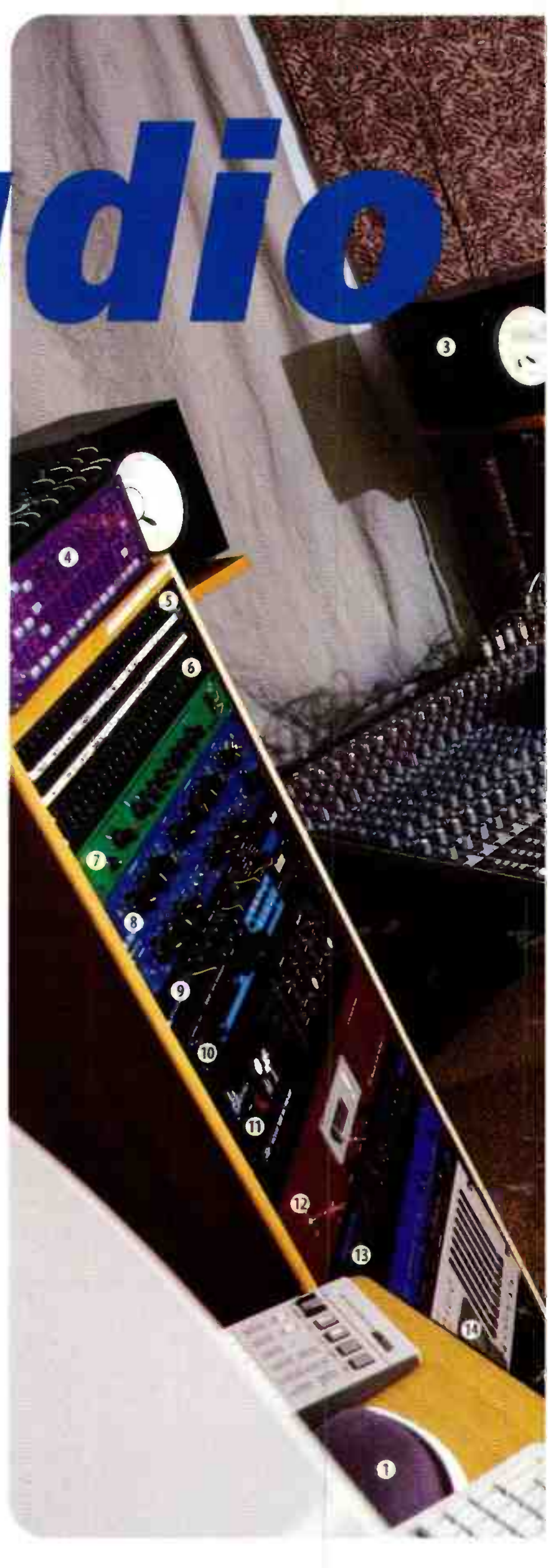

When project studios emerged as a viable force in the recording industry in the early Nineties, there was a strong distinction—and an often-crippling lack of compatibility—between that new category of rooms and the established professional facilities. To the old-world order of recording, in which it was taken as gospel that most pre-production, tracking overdubbing, and mixing had to be done in large, well-appointed, and expensive rooms, the small studios represented a clear and present danger.

Luckily, enough time has passed since then, and enough technological progress has taken place, to produce a world in which most album projects migrate seamlessly from bedrooms to world-class recording sanctuaries.

A case in point is pop/rock solo artist Duncan Sheik's second Atlantic album, *Humming*, the follow-up to his gold-certified, self-titled debut. Recorded partly in world-class studios in Spain, the U.K., and the

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U.S., and partly at Sheik's Warm Pod loft studio in New York, *Humming* testifies to the degree to which home studio operators can coexist with the big boys.

Basic tracks for the album—co-produced by Rupert Hine (Tina Turner, Thompson Twins, Rush) and Sheik—were cut at El Cortijo Studios, located in San Pedro de Alcantara in the Andalucia region of southern Spain. Strings were added at Angel and Abbey Road Studios in London, and most of the guitar, vocal, piano, and incidental overdubs were done at Warm Pod, which is situated in the Tribeca section of lower Manhattan.

In addition to the overdubs on each of the album's tracks, the leadoff cut, "In Between," was recorded almost entirely at Sheik's because it was written after he and his band had returned from Spain. The only parts of "In Between" not done at Warm Pod were the strings, which were overdubbed at Abbey Road's venerable Studio 2, best known for the bulk of the Beatles' oeuvre. Because the Abbey Road sessions took place late in the recording process, the parts cut there were beamed via ISDN to Mix This! in Pacific Palisades, California, where proprietor and world-renowned engineer Bob Clearmountain did the mix.

For Sheik, the sprawling loft studio into which he moved at the beginning of 1998 represents not only a comfortable home and creative haven, but also a cost-effective alternative to big-budget recording. "I got this big of a space so that I could do recording," he says, "and I was able to get Atlantic to help pay the rent a little bit with the idea that the studio would be in there. That way we could work here and it would save a bit on recording budgets."

Although modest by late-Nineties standards, Warm Pod does contain some choice items. The nerve center of the studio resides in a control room that's framed out from the rest of the loft. What ends up spilling over into the residential space, inevitably, is an impressive collection of guitars (including many of the usual electric and acoustic suspects, plus a Mexican *guitarrón* and other rarities), a Yamaha grand piano, a drum kit, and a nice array of microphones that includes a Neumann U 87, two AKG SE3000B condensers, an AKG 414, an AKG D3400, and two models built by Dave Royer of Mojave Audio: an AKG C12-derived tube and a ribbon unit.

Inside the control room, or "pod," the studio boasts an impressive range of mid-to-high-end gear, all of which centers around a **Macintosh 9600** computer ❶ loaded with Emagic Logic software. To the left of the **Mackie 32•8** console ❷ and **Yamaha NS-10** monitors ❸ is a rack that includes an **Apogee AD-8000** eight-channel, 24-bit, analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converter ❹, **Re-an** ❺ and **Neutrik** patch bays ❻, a **joemeek VC6** stereo preamp/compressor ❼, a **Tube Tech 2B** stereo compressor ❽, **Lexicon MPX 100** ❾ and **PCM 90** ❿ reverb units, a **Giltronics 2TMP** vacuum tube preamp ⓫, a Hawaiian-made two-channel unit, a **Telefunken V72A** preamp ⓬, a **DigiTech Vocalist II** ⓭, and a **TASCAM DA-88** ⓮.

A typical signal chain for Sheik might consist of an acoustic guitar or piano captured by the AKG SE3000Bs arranged as a stereo pair into the Giltronics preamp, then the Tube Tech, and finally a hard-disk medium.

An **ammunition box** ⓯ underneath the console serves as the power supply for the Mojave condenser mic. Just to the right of the board is a **Minimoog** vintage analog synthesizer ⓰ and a keyboard stand that holds three units: a **Roland Juno-106** ⓱, a **Roland JP-8000** ⓲, and a **Kurzweil K2000S** ⓳.

To the right of the keyboard rack is another stack of gear that includes a **Moog** synth module ⓴, a **TC Electronic G-Force** ㉑, a **Valley Autogate** ㉒, a **Lexicon Jam Man** ㉓, a **Peavey Valverb** ㉔, an **Ensoniq DP/4** ㉕, and a **Roland RE-201 Space Echo** ㉖.

Not shown are an Akai DR16 hard-disk recorder, a Digidesign Pro Tools interface for Logic, a Roland VS-1680 hard-disk recorder, Roland Revo 30 and Ampeg Rocket amps, a Hammond L-122 organ, and vintage percussion instruments, accordions, an autoharp, and other exotica.

Like many home studio operators, Sheik got into the game gradually and learned as he went. "I got a four-track recorder when I was fourteen," he recalls. "I was so afraid of playing live my whole life that my way of expression, my way of making music that was full-sounding, was to do it in my room by myself."

Though perfectly qualified to be his own producer and engineer, Sheik prefers not to get bogged down in the technical side of the process. "When you're engineering and producing yourself, you're not the artist that you should be," he explains. "Usually, you're not going to get the performance that you could, should, or would get. If you're in a situation where you can be outside and then walk into the room and cut three vocals, chances are they're going to be way more inspired than if you've been trying to figure out why the SCSI drive hasn't been mounting properly for the past half an hour."

Given the diversity of formats at Warm Pod, and the fact that most of the basics were cut on analog 2-inch tape, consolidating all the music onto open-reel digital tapes for mixdown necessitated a full day of transfers at nearby Chung King Studios. "We had a whole bunch of formats, starting with 24-track reels that we did in Spain on a Studer through a Trident board," says Sheik. "Then we came back here and made slaves on the Akai DR16 and continued recording onto Logic. So we had the DR16 slaves, with the Logic stuff on top of it. Then I gave [guitarist] Gerry Leonard my DA-88 and he did a bunch of stuff on that, so in the end we had five formats running around that had to be consolidated—and the requisite synchronization nightmares that go along with that."

Fortunately, Sheik and his team overcame the technical hurdles they encountered, and the mixing and mastering—the latter done by Greg Calbi at Masterdisk in New York—went without a hitch.

The process left Sheik exhilarated and raring to tackle new projects. For the moment, he's torn between buying a small Neve broadcast board to use on the front end of the signal path (and for monitoring), or going the full-blown digital route with a Yamaha 02R or comparable console. "I have no idea what I'm going to do, in terms of a board," he admits. "I'm either going to simplify my life and get a broadcast board, or make an investment and buy something major." He shakes his head and smiles at the possibilities. "I think I do have a spending addiction; that's the *real* problem." Spoken like a true home studio owner.

Contributors: *Paul Verna is pro audio/technology editor and reviews editor at* Billboard. *He is also co-editor of* The Encyclopedia of Record Producers, *scheduled for publication by Billboard Books in the spring of 1999.*

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Soul Coughing

Artist interviewed: **Mark De Gli Antoni**
Home base: **New York City**
Style: **Alt-funk with plenty of improvisational space**
Latest album: **El Oso (Slash/Warner Bros.), released September 29**

How do you get the most out of your rehearsals?

Pressure. The best kind of rehearsal for us is when we're in the process of writing—and the time when we're most productive is when we're in front of a live audience. For the first three years we were a band, that's basically how we rehearsed: Cells of songs would exist, or we'd get an idea during sound check that we'd put in the middle of the set. Force yourself to play it for people, project a little attitude and confidence into the piece, and don't be afraid of train wrecks in front of audiences—we have them every night. Very rarely is rehearsal about "this is how the song goes. Let's think about it and practice it." Our songs evolve by our playing together. It doesn't mean practicing parts; it means the parts are written over time. It might take three months before all the nuances are worked out, before everybody knows what they're doing.

From left: Sebastian Steinberg, Yuval Gabay, Mark De Gli Antoni, M. Doughty

How do you save time and money when recording?

When we're in the studio, we're always working. We're not the kind of band that'll sit around and chill and order lunch. We don't come in late; I always like to get to the studio very early in the morning with the assistant engineer before the main engineer or the producer comes in. Because we're so improvisational, we always have the tape rolling—if not the two-inch, then it's the DAT, so we can pick it up if someone has a great idea while they're playing, either individually or within the band. See, our nature as improvisers isn't soloistic; it's not about each person and his instrument *per se*. We improvise all the time, but always with the goal of coming up with a part. We even have the same approach in the studio: Instead of jamming for hours to see if something spirals out, it's always about the song. It's really about having the confidence to go into a room with no material or just small ideas, and to write the parts right there.

How do you find the right management?

You need to look for someone who works harder than you do, somebody who spends all his time working but always takes your call and always comes to your gigs. In other words, you want someone who's living like *you* are. People who are really good managers are just as passionate about what they do as anybody who's doing anything else. Same thing with your lawyer, your accountant, and your agent: There are people out there who wanted to do these things all their lives, and you have to find them.

It's important, though, to not sign really long-term agreements with your manager, especially early on, when you really don't know people that well. Even if you work together for a good two years and you want to call it quits, very often management contracts will say, "Okay, the manager has options for two to three more years." You want people who aren't gonna flake in six months, so there has to be some kind of written agreement. But don't get into a long-term deal where you're still with some awful manager four years later. That's why we went year-to-year with our manager.

You know you can quit your day job . . .

. . . when you want to! I moved to New York in 1984 or '85 because it's the kind of town where, if you really want to, you can make a living off of music. It might not be your favorite job, but there's always room for people who work hard. When I left school, I went to a studio for work, and I said, man, all I can tell you is that I've got good ears, and they took me in. I saw plenty of bands who came in and, just because they weren't mixing in a day or in two weeks, they got discouraged and left. But I knew that it was a lifelong commitment; it's not like the payoff is tomorrow. So get in there and work, and you can find some kind of a place in music—and *that* might be your day job.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

WEBSITE EXCLUSIVE!
To read more of Robert L. Doerschuk's interview with Mark De Gli Antoni, visit Musician Online at www.musicianmag.com.

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Photo: Snorri Brothers

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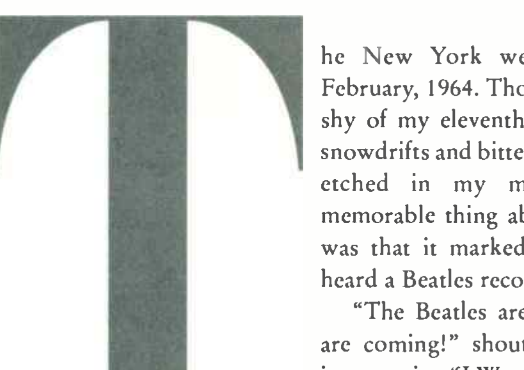
George Martin

The legendary producer reflects on his retirement album, the Beatles, the influence of music technology, and the Chaos Theory.

by Howard Massey



The New York weather was brutal in February, 1964. Though I was five months shy of my eleventh birthday, the massive snowdrifts and bitter cold are still indelibly etched in my mind. But the most memorable thing about that bleak winter was that it marked the first time I ever heard a Beatles record.

"The Beatles are coming! The Beatles are coming!" shouted the hysterical DJ, interrupting "I Want To Hold Your Hand" every thirty seconds, but so transfixed was I with the *sound* I was hearing, I hardly paid any notice. What the hell was this?? It was so different, so much bigger than life than any record I had ever heard before. I listened to it over and over again on my crappy transistor radio (pick a station, any station—it was being played more or less continuously), finally deciding I had to experience it on something a bit better—which in this case was my plastic monaural record player, with

Photo: Allen Clark/Thunder Image Group

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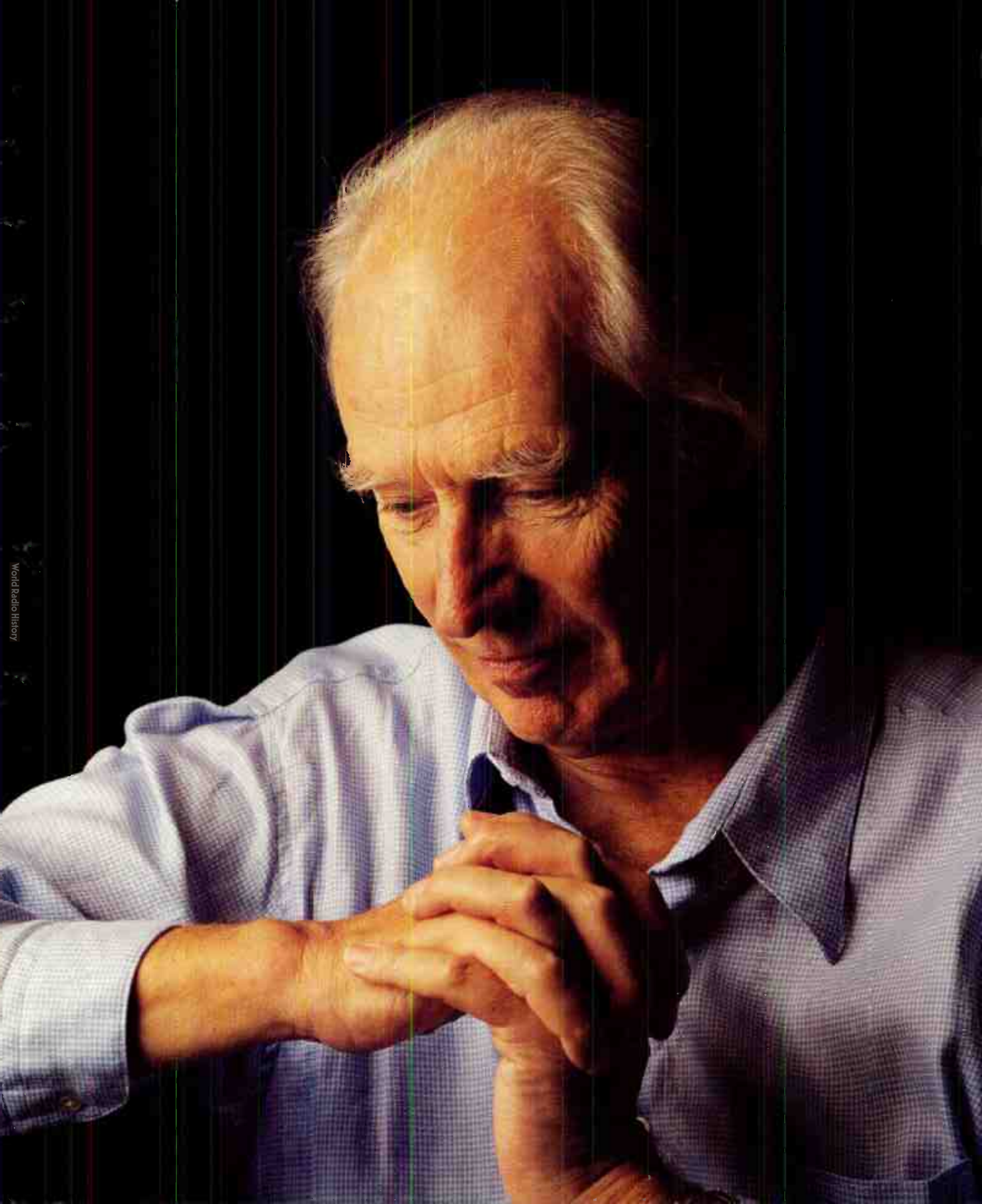

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its *five*-inch speaker. Scraping together the better part of a week's allowance, I bundled up, trekked to my neighborhood record store, and bought my first-ever 45.

I still remember trundling home and excitedly examining my new purchase. The faces on the sleeve were familiar —the Ed Sullivan appearances were coming up and the Fab Four's publicity machine was grinding away in high gear—but on the label there was a name and a job title that was unfamiliar to me. "Produced by George Martin," it said as it spun endlessly on my turntable. "So he must be the guy that made it sound this way," I thought. "I wonder how he does it. . . ."

Fast-forward nearly 35 years into the future. The precocious ten-year-old is now a grown man, sitting somewhat nervously in the lounge of a London recording studio, waiting to—at long last—meet the name on the label. He's pretty sure he knows what record producers do—he's met plenty of them and even produced a few records himself—but he's still in awe, still wondering how George Martin actually crafted that amazing sound all those years ago. In a few minutes, he hopes to find out.

Best known, of course, as the man who signed the Beatles after every other record label in England turned them down—and as the gifted, resourceful producer of every one of their records—Martin has also had a long and illustrious pre- and post-Beatles career, working with artists as diverse as Peter Sellers, Jeff Beck, America, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Cheap Trick, Dire Straits, Ultravox, and, most recently, Elton John. Last year, after nearly half a century of been-there-done-that, Sir George (yes, he's been tapped on the shoulder by the Queen) announced his retirement. But, determined to call the shots to the very end, he has literally orchestrated his departure with *In My Life* (Echo/Chrysalis), a self-described album of "friends and heroes" that not only showcases his formidable production abilities but also pays homage to the four lads from Liverpool who put him on the map.

To call this album an eclectic mix would be an understatement. On the one hand, you have an ultra-hip Jeff Beck (who can still outgun most of today's guitarists) wringing out a gut-wrenching performance of "A Day in the Life"; on the other, you have Celine Dion mangling an exceptionally puerile rendition of "Here, There and Everywhere." Phil Collins delivers a workmanlike "Golden Slumbers" (so true to the original, one is forced to ask, what's the point?), while

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Photo: Jonathan Mark

Goldie Hawn giggles and vamps her way through a lounge-lizard sendup of "A Hard Days Night." Ever the master orchestrator, Martin drapes a poignant symphonic landscape around the title track, which then proceeds to be marred by Sean Connery's hammy (and soppy) read-through of Lennon's lyric. There are surprisingly powerful contributions from Robin Williams and Bobby McFerrin, who shoomp and whoomp through "Come Together," and Jim Carrey, who delivers a manic "I Am the Walrus," but other tracks (Vanessa Mae, John Williams) are so pretentious as to be nearly unlistenable. Add in Scottish comedian Billy Connolly hoarsely shouting his way through "For The Benefit of Mr. Kite," and it's hard to imagine even the most die-hard Beatles fan actually being able to sit through the entire album without wincing at least once.

But—and this is a very big but—the record is beautifully produced and engineered, as clean and crisp as anything Sir George has ever turned out. Recorded mainly at his new north London studio (Air Lyndhurst, a converted nineteenth-century church) and aided ably by his son Giles, *In My Life* gives you a good sense of what went into making those classic Beatles records as well as an intriguing glimpse into how they might have sounded if they had been recorded with today's technology. On that level, it succeeds far more than Jeff Lynne and the surviving group members' 1996 reworking of Lennon's "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love."

And now, all these years, all these miles later, I find myself awkwardly shaking George Martin's hand and following him up a flight of stairs to the converted rectory (it figures!) where we'll be convening. There's no question that Sir George means business—as soon as he settles his lanky frame into a chair, he issues the first direction of the day to me: "Right then, off you go." Feeling somewhat like a novice singer entering a vocal booth for the first time, I clear my throat and start the interview, with the sounds of February 1964 still ringing loudly in my ears.

It's hard to believe that In My Life *is really your last record.*

This *is* the last album I'll ever make, for several good reasons. One is that I'm very old and I think it's about time I stopped; I've been making records for 48 years, and it's a long time. Secondly, my hearing isn't very good now because I damaged it when I was younger, and old age affects it too. So I know I'm not as good as I used to be. But in making a final album I decided I would make one I could enjoy. It's not a Beatle record, it's a record of friends and heroes. For a hook to hang it on, we used Beatles songs. It could equally have been Cole Porter, or Gershwin, or Jerome Kern.

What's most clearly conveyed in this album is the sheer pleasure that the artists were taking in participating.

A lot of the people involved were old friends, people like Phil Collins, Jeff Beck, John Williams; they're old pals and it was just like having a real get-together. But there were a lot of people who were heroes of mine, people I hadn't met before: Goldie Hawn, Robin Williams, Jim Carrey. Of course, the danger of doing a thing like this is that you get so enamored of each other that you forget about the audience. But I don't think we did. I think we really tried to make it a good record too.

On some of the tracks, you stick very closely with the original arrangement, and on others you change the feel radically.

Well, the obvious one [that follows the original arrangement] is Phil Collins' version of "Golden Slumbers." That is such a special piece of music to me, I didn't want to change it, though we did make the drum solo longer. Obviously, with Goldie Hawn, "A Hard Day's Night" had to be a different kind of score. And if you're doing a thing with Celine Dion, you've got to write something that's going to work for her, rather than the way we did "Here, There and Everywhere" with Paul. Those decisions were easy. It was more difficult to decide to stick with a score than to change it, because we knew people were going to say, "Why did he do it that way? Why didn't he do something new?" But the only valid reason must be, because the original way was the right way to do it. To change it, you've got to have a good reason.

"I Am The Walrus" uses the original score, but because everything is recorded with Nineties technology, you can hear all the individual instruments much more clearly.

Jim [Carrey] wanted very much to do that one, and he was so used to the original, which did seem to work well. I have very fond memories of when John first brought me the song. We always had the same routine: I would sit on a high stool and he would stand in front of me with his acoustic guitar and just sing it through. When I heard him do "Strawberry Fields" [that way], I fell in love with it—enormously—but when he first ran through "I Am The Walrus" for me, I said to him, "What the hell is *that*?" [*Laughs.*] I asked him, "What are we going to do with it?" and he replied, "Couldn't you do a score?" I mean, when you hear it with just guitar, it's really weird.

Sure, there's not much to it, melodically.

"The song is the most important thing. Without a good song, you're nowhere."

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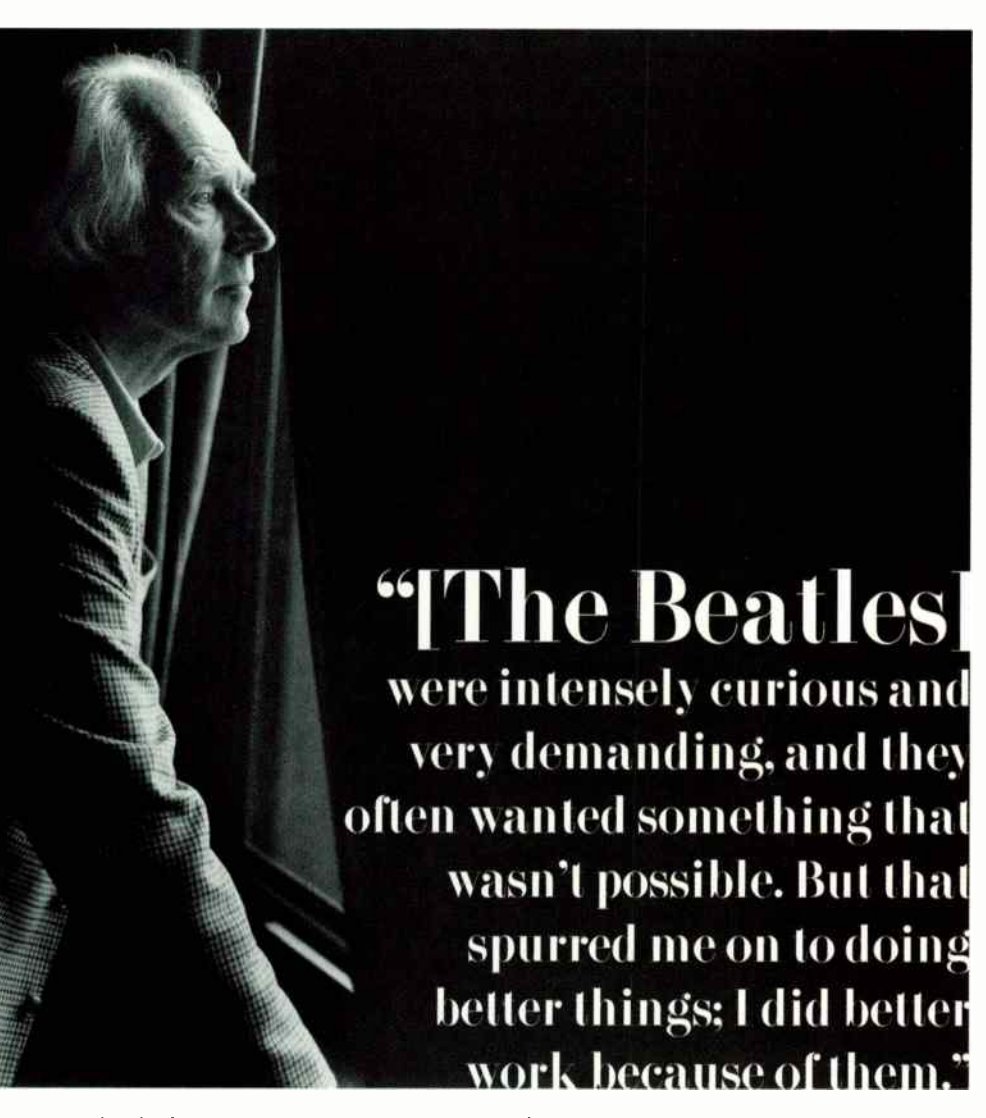
Really. So I said, "Well, what do you have in mind, John?" Because John was never very articulate about orchestration; he'd never sit down with you and say, "I'd like some brass to come in here, or some cellos to do that," as Paul would. He would just say, "Do something good." So I went away and thought about it, and I wrote with four cellos and some trumpets in mind. But then I knew that we had to have kooky effects, so I engaged a twelve-piece choir: the Mike Sammes Singers, who were the



kind of regular, dare I say, hack singers of radio and television. They were very proficient: They could read music just like that, and they had good voices, but they weren't who you normally would pick for the Beatles. But I needed those kind of people because I actually wrote into the score the "whoooo's" [*demonstrates*] and "ha ha ha hee hee hee's," all those kinds of things. When we recorded it, John had no idea I'd done this [*laughs*], and when they started doing their little bits and pieces, they were really so professional about it, so serious, you know, counting off, one, two, three, "whoooo!" That in itself was hysterical: Everything was bar-lined and John fell around laughing, saying, "What the hell have you done?" I said, "Well, I think it's going to work," and he agreed: "Yeah, it sounds great." So it did work very well, it went extraordinarily well. In the outro, Jim says something about ruining a masterpiece . . .

"I have defiled a timeless piece of art!," I believe are his exact words.

Yes, that's right. We filmed the whole thing, you know. Jim was playing to the cameras a lot, doing all of his funny faces, and he was very amusing, but eventually I had to get rid of the cameras because we had to think of what we were going to sound like.

The odd thing about the original recording is that you have this wild score juxtaposed against Lennon's vocal delivery, which is very restrained, delivering these nonsense lyrics in a very dry, almost acerbic way. Here, you've taken a completely different vocal approach.

I knew we needed someone crazy, and Jim was the right choice, I think.

And he can sing too.

Yes, he's a very good singer, he really is. I didn't realize how good he was until I worked with him, actually. Getting your tongue around those words is quite tricky; there's some weird stuff there.

Jeff Beck was offered his choice of songs, and it was his decision to do "A Day in the Life." Why was he the only artist allowed to pick his song?

Generally, people don't like being given completely free rein; people like to be guided a little bit. So in most cases, I did actually assign the song. With Celine [Dion], for example, I didn't want any big buildups. My first thought was "Blackbird," but then I thought "Here, There and Everywhere" would be a good one, and she went along with that.

Which Beatles song would you have asked Hendrix to cover?

Probably "Revolution #9," I would think [*laughs*].

You would have had to score it, though.

I don't know about that. . . . Actually, there's one other one I'd like to have done—and Hendrix would have done a great job on it—and that's "Yer Blues." I love the meter of it, I love the quirky time changes. I thought that Jeff [Beck] would do something like that. I was surprised when he chose "A Day In The Life." Hendrix was a fantastic player. Jeff knew him, I never did. Jeff once said to me, "You know, I found out that Hendrix uses very, very thick strings—almost like piano wire—and they're very difficult to bend." But he had enormously powerful hands; his fingers were like steel, he could bend those great notes. Jeff told me, "I couldn't do it, not the way his guitar was strung."

The album contains only two McCartney songs; all the others, except "Here Comes the Sun," are Lennon songs.

I love Paul's songs, but, as I've told him, "The trouble with you is that you've written all the popular ones and I don't want

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Photo: Allen Clark/Thunder Image Group

this album to be full of songs that everybody knows backwards!" I didn't want to do "Fool On the Hill" and "Michelle" and "Yesterday" and "Let It Be." The thing is, if you analyze Lennon/McCartney songs on the [total] number of performances—and I'm quite sure somebody has—then you would find that Paul's songs probably form seventy percent of the performances. John actually said to me once, about the popularity of his songs—and sometimes he was a bit irritated with the fact that Paul's songs were so popular—he said, "Let's face it, George, I don't expect to walk into a bar in Spain and hear someone whistling 'I Am the Walrus'." [*Laughs.*] That's the reason why there aren't too many of Paul's songs on my record. It wasn't a question of taste, and Paul understands that.

Most Lennon songs have a simpler melodic content: They don't operate over such a wide range of notes; they have more to do with the lyrics and how the chords are changing under the melody.

That's right, but I think that the similarities between John and Paul were greater than the differences. Most people tend to regard Paul as being the softie, and John as being the rebel and rocker. But Paul was pretty rebellious and pretty rocky—look at "Helter Skelter." And, don't forget, Paul was the avant-garde man: He used to hang around arty places in London and he loved Stockhausen, while John would go back to his place in Weybridge with his wife and have coffee by the fire. So the public image of them isn't exactly true. John was just as capable of writing a soft song as Paul: "Julia," "Good Night"—that was a great song.

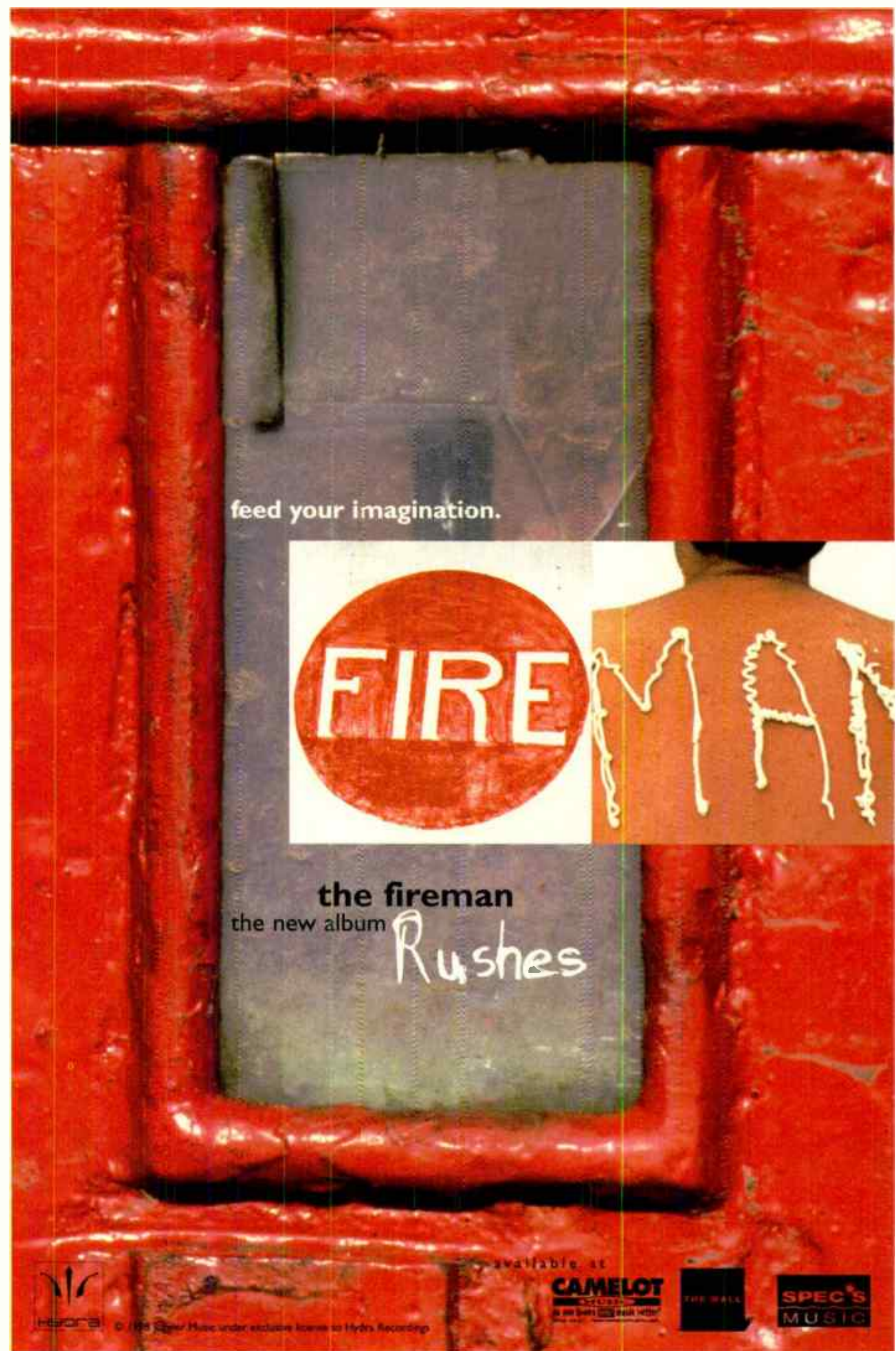
The Next George Martin?

With the announcement of your retirement, people are already talking about who will be the "next George Martin." You've singled out Brian Eno as a producer you admire.

The thing I like about Brian is that he's a lateral thinker. He doesn't go directly to the target; he thinks about it a great deal and goes around the sides, contributing something that's quite refreshing. I think that his musical work has always been stimulating, always been interesting. He doesn't just follow the herd, like most people do. That's why I admire him very much.

Eno also uses a lot of random elements in his approach to music. Do you think randomness is an important component in creating innovative music?

Randomness is good, up to a point, but it can be chaotic. Mind you, some people like chaos. In fact, some people think it's the answer to *everything*—look at the chaos theory of the universe. But the idea of doing a lottery with music, just bringing in sounds at random—well, sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't. The Beatles were into randomness when we were doing "I Am the Walrus." When we were mixing it, we brought in a radio set and God smiled on us that day because



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there happened to be a Shakespearean play on, and that did work. But it could just as easily have been rubbish.

Paul used to spend a lot of time putting on a record and then [simultaneously] watching a movie. He was interested in the random juxtaposition of images with unrelated music. He once came to me and said, "You know, it's remarkable how things do actually work out well in randomness." He was quite right, but if you do that, then five percent of the time, you'll have the music hitting particular spots and you'll say, "Wow—that brings it to life!" But, of course, the other 95 percent of the time it doesn't, and you tend to forget that.

But it was also randomness that brought together two of the greatest songwriters of the century—growing up within a couple miles of each other, within a few years of each other, meeting, sticking together despite adversity and then eventually connecting up with you. Surely, if the three of you hadn't found each other, the music would not have been as good.

But that's life. That's like saying, "What would have happened if Hitler hadn't invaded Poland?" or "What would have happened if I hadn't met my wife? My children wouldn't have been born." There's the "if" factor. But randomness is what life's about; life *is* random.

So randomness has its place in music, too.

Yes, but art is also human endeavor and human desire. You can put a lot of colors into a blender and come up with something, or you can put a lot of sounds into a mixing board and come up with something, but if it's not designed—if it's chaotic and random—then it's not necessarily good. It could be good, but it's more likely to be awful.

The Profundity of Pop

Your greatest influence on popular music may have been that, after Sgt. Pepper, *pop musicians wanted to be taken seriously. Before then, the genre was just light entertainment—afterwards, it became an art form.*

I've never subscribed to the view that pop music is trivial, though it's ephemeral in many cases. There have been great moments in popular music, as there have been great moments in classical music.

When we were doing *Pepper*, we seemed to stumble upon something which was a little bit more lasting. The combination of using classical influences with rock & roll seemed to me a very good one, and I thought we were doing something which was actually bringing the disparate worlds together. I'd always resented the snobbishness of classical musicians towards rock & roll, and rock & roll musicians towards classical music—the people who had musical blinkers, who could only see what they saw in front of them, they couldn't see either side. I thought, how crazy. Music is a wonderful, big world; why limit yourself to one thing? I liked this combination of classical influences, and I tried to persuade the Beatles that this was a way forward. Paul was pretty interested, and he kind of went along with it. George wanted his own little things, but John was very resistant. John said, "No. Rock & roll is rock & roll. I'm a Teddy Boy, you know, let it all hang out." As a result, as we went from *Pepper* through "All You Need is Love," through *Magical Mystery Tour* and the *White Album*, we moved further and further away from that concept [of integrating classical influences]. And what killed it, momentarily and inevitably, was the rise of punk rock—suddenly music became little boys dropping their trousers. That was the opposite end of the bell. But also, John really didn't like it. One of the problems with the *Let It Be* album was that he was rebelling against production. He said to me, "I don't want any of your production crap on this record."

[Laughs.] That's reassuring.

I asked him, "What do you mean by that?" He replied, "I want it to be an honest record. What we do, we should do it for real. We shouldn't do any overdubs. We should sing live, with the band." And it didn't succeed. It *couldn't* succeed. Because with new music, you're experimenting, and each performance is going to be different. They said, "We'll get it," but of course they didn't. We went on, and it became very boring. Take 52, well, maybe the bass had a bit of a blip in it though you've got a great vocal or whatever. You'd never get the perfect match. Alongside that were all the other problems they had at that time. Eventually, *Let It Be* was put on a shelf and left. I made up a version of it with Glyn Johns which was warts and all, like a documentary, and that was it, left on a shelf.

Then they came back to me and said, "Would you come back and make another record?" My reply was, "Not really. I don't like that game." And they said, "No, no, really, produce it the way you used to." So we made *Abbey Road*, and it was then that I went back to my idea and I suggested to Paul, "Think symphonically. Bring some of your tunes back as certain subjects, work them contrapuntally, put them in different keys. Think in terms of *any* instrument: You've got the world, you can have whatever sound you like. We can wrap this into something that's really worthwhile." So it became a piecemeal assembly into the side that ends up with my favorite song, "Golden Slumbers." Funnily enough, John actually went

"I hate putting down a drum track and then a bass track. Almost everything I've done—even now, on the new album—is done with musicians playing together."

Photo: Allen Clark/Thunder Image Group

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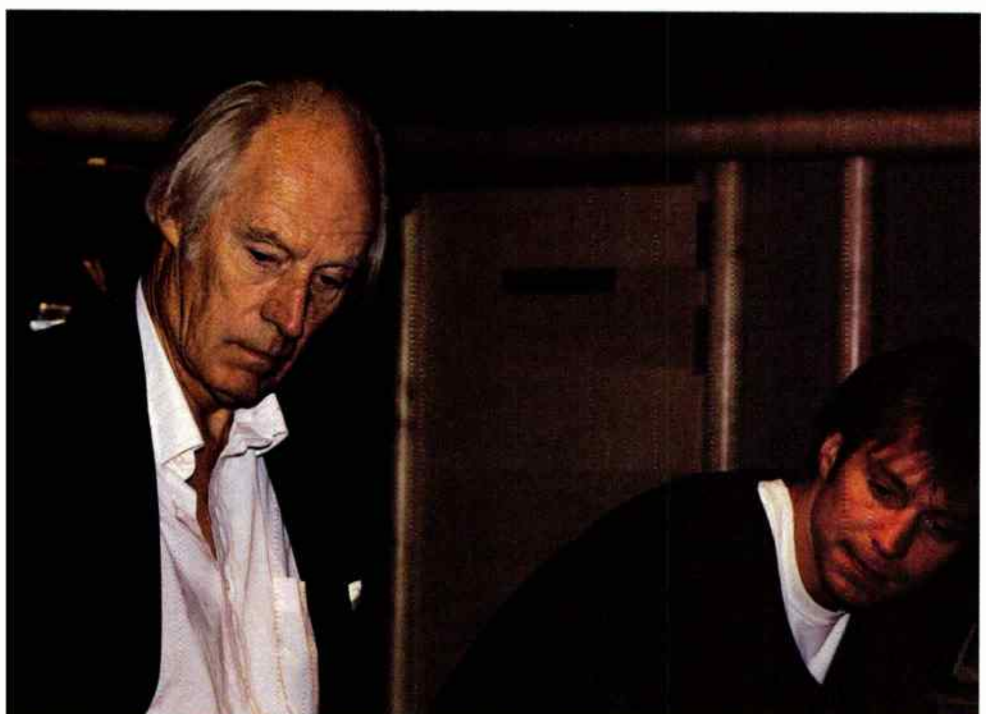

track and then I'd say to them, okay, let's do another track with slightly different harmonies. We did three tracks altogether, so we had nine voices. It worked well.

I gather there were still a lot of tensions in the band at the time of Abbey Road.

Much less than during [the recording of] *Let It Be.* I think probably we all knew it was the last record. Sure, there were tensions, because John was still very, . . . well, the John and Yoko scene was the one that pulled everything away. When Yoko was ill, they brought her bed into the studio, that kind of thing. It was very odd.

How did you deal with those tensions?

Well, there were two alternatives you had. Either you walked out or you stuck it out, and I wasn't one for walking out. I just hoped it would change. During the making of *Abbey Road* it was okay, it was much happier. The music, too, was good, which made it all worthwhile. But I think we all knew it was the last one. John had gone through a tremendous upheaval in his private life, and he was a very odd person at times; he wasn't at all himself. There was the famous interview he did for *Rolling Stone*, which has been reprinted many times, in which he says many unfair and untrue things, slagged everybody off, including me. I took him to task over it later on, asking him, "Why did you say all those things? It wasn't very nice." He said, "Oh, I was just stoned out of my head." That was his only apology, really. Unfortunately, that has become history now; it's accepted as the Bible.

"We had no such things as click tracks or drum machines in those days; they didn't exist. So we got a drum machine of our own, which was Ringo Starr."

along with that to a limited extent; he actually contributed some of his songs—"Hey, I've got something that can go in here, what about it?" But as a compromise, the other side had to be single tracks, and what great single tracks they were. Out of that came "Come Together" and "Because." "Because" was amazing; that was a complete flip for John.

Did you write the vocal arrangement for "Because"?

Yes. The way it worked was that John had this arpeggio-type accompaniment he played on guitar. I learned all the notes he was playing and I duplicated them on electric harpsichord so we played in unison, and Paul played bass; that was the original track. We had to keep ourselves together because it had to be *exactly* right, and I'm not the greatest time player in the world; the others were much better ensemble players than I was. We had no such things as click tracks or drum machines in those days; they didn't exist. So we got a drum machine of our own, which was Ringo Starr. We put him in a little corner of the room, we surrounded him with screens and pads and locked him up. And he just sat there playing quarter-notes on the hi-hat while we played; he enabled us to keep together. Then we started adding voices, with the three of them together. They were so good at singing, so good at working together, that we'd lay down one

The Lessons of the Beatles

You've stated that you learned as much from the Beatles as they did from you. What exactly did you learn from them?

The main thing was never to accept the obvious, never to accept second-best, and always to look beyond what's there. They were intensely curious and very demanding, and they often wanted something that wasn't possible. But that, in a way, was also good because it spurred me on to doing better things; I did better work because of them. If they had been lesser people, my work wouldn't have been as good. I'm sure of that. I think I opened their eyes to a few things, too. They were very difficult people at times. They expected so much that when they got something that was really good, they thought it was normal.

What did you think of the so-called "classic rock" bands of the Seventies—bands of classically-trained musicians like Yes or Emerson,

Photo: Jonathan Mark

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Lake & Palmer? Did you feel that you'd created a monster?

[*Laughs.*] I think it was quite healthy—I don't think it was a monster! I've never believed that a little bit of learning does any harm; on the contrary, it's quite beneficial. A lot of pop musicians are concerned that, if they learn music "properly," it might rob them of inspiration, of creation. I don't hold with that view. Any inhibition that might arise from that is something you can control. The more you find out about things, the better you're likely to be. Ignorance—which is quoted as a virtue by some people—is not a virtue. Indeed, it can be a hindrance, and people who are really brilliant would be even more brilliant if they weren't ignorant.

Were you familiar with the records that influenced the Beatles so much in their early years? Had you listened to Chuck Berry and Little Richard before you met the Beatles?

I'd listened to Chuck Berry and Little Richard, but I wasn't aware of most of the Motown stuff. They generally got hold of that stuff earlier than most people. I was aware of the mainstream artists of the day, people like Jerry Lee Lewis. The Beatles exposed me to the more sophisticated records, like the stuff coming out of Motown. It was quite interesting, and I loved it.

So you weren't really familiar with some of the originals before you recorded the cover versions.

Not really, no.

Tools & Techniques

As you were working with the Beatles in the early years, were you actively listening to the contemporary producers of the day and studying their techniques?

No. The fact of the matter was that I was too busy to listen to much of *anything*. I was really working all hours of the day. When the Beatles came along, I already had a full roster of artists, I was head of the label [Parlophone], and I was making most of the records on that label. When you're working that hard, you don't get time to go and look for recordings. If something comes your way, you listen to it, but you don't start actively looking for what's happening elsewhere; you're too busy with what you're doing.

But in the Fifties, you visited Capitol Studios in L.A. to study American recording techniques.

I think we're talking about 1954 or '55; Abbey Road was pretty crappy in those days. I'd gone to America with Ron Goodwin; I'd had a minor hit with him in the States called "Swinging Sweetheart," and we took the opportunity to go to Capitol and see what they were doing. They were recording on Ampex 3-track half-inch [tape]; we were recording on mono quarter-inch, though our classical people were using stereo

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quarter-inch. We never used stereo in the pop world; stereo pop records didn't exist in England at the time. I went to a Sinatra session, and they recorded five titles in four hours. I sat in the control booth and I was enormously impressed with the professionalism of everybody as well as with the technical side of things. This 3-track Ampex meant that you could record the band in stereo, on the outside tracks, put the voice in the center track, and you had the freedom to balance them afterwards, after everybody had gone home. And that wasn't the end of it. The microphones they were using were better, and the compression and limiting was infinitely better [than at Abbey Road]. It was my first experience with the Fairchild limiter, which we still use to this day. We didn't have them at Abbey Road, we had nothing like that, so we weren't able to make records that were so dynamic, so brilliant. I came back from America telling everybody in England, "We've got to do something about this, we've got to re-equip the studio, because without it, we're not going to make any good records, ever." And that was a kind of turning point; Abbey Road started getting its act together. It wasn't until the Sixties that people started saying, "Wow, they're making good sounds."

The first Beatles album was essentially a snapshot of their stage performance. Did the technology of the time allow you to accurately capture the sound of the band live or did the studio's limitations change their sound?

[The first album] was a mono recording done on a stereo machine separated into twin-tracks. It was all done live; I put all the instruments on one track and all the voices on the other. That was to give me the separation that Sinatra had. But it was a live recording in the studio, so it was like doing a radio broadcast. I knew the pieces, I knew their repertoire from the Cavern. We set up the balance and we just ran through the repertoire during the day. We started in the morning, and we finished up about eleven o'clock at night, and we had an album.

What a phenomenal day.

It was hard work. We deliberately kept "Twist and Shout" for the last track, because I knew John would never do more than one take. We did two takes, actually, but we used the first one. But it was really like doing a broadcast.

The Beatles certainly benefited from having a producer who was musically literate, as opposed to a technical engineer/producer. But these days a lot of producers come up through the engineering ranks and have limited musical knowledge. Are there ever times where an artist will benefit more from having that kind of producer as opposed to a musically-oriented one?

It depends how much the artist is in control of their own product. A technical producer will help them to bring out the sounds that they want. A musical producer will be able to give them extra sounds, will be able to feed them other ideas. Generally speaking, I'd say that you can always get a good technician, you can always get a good engineer to do what you want, so it's useful to have someone who can contribute musically as well. But, by definition, engineers who want to be producers want to be more than engineers: Hugh Padgham, for instance, or Glyn Johns. There are a lot of people who are good producers who provide a musical input as well. Phil Ramone was a technician who was also a fine musician. I think you've got to be specially talented to think of all those things. It's useful for an engineer to concentrate on the technical aspect, and for a producer to concentrate on the musical aspect.

These days, everything is becoming very self-contained, and a lot of musicians are engineering and producing themselves in home studios. Do you see that as a healthy trend?

I think home recording can be very limited, and slightly illusory too, because a lot of young musicians know about nothing else. Personally, I like mixing with different talents all the time. To be cocooned in one particular place is not my style. I like working with lots of different people. Anyway, I get bored very easily, which is why I've done so many different kinds of recording.

You've stated that Sgt. Pepper *would not have sounded as good if it had been recorded on a 24-track, that it was the limitations of 4-track recording that actually acted as a stimulant to creativity.*

I do believe that. There's a curious thing here, because what 4-track imposed on us was, firstly, you had to think ahead as to what you were going to do. Secondly, you had to get things right at the time; you couldn't just say, okay, let's leave that because we can fix it in the mix. All those kinds of decisions, that kind of discipline, imposes constraints on you, but it also makes you focus much more, makes you think. It put a strain on the performers, too. It made them perform—they *had* to be good.

For example, in the case of "She's Leaving Home," I luxuriously used four tracks for the orchestral tracks, and then I mixed those down to two on another four-track [recorder]. I knew the song, and I knew Paul and John would be singing together, and I did want to double-track them, but I didn't really want to go to another generation. So I made them sing live, the two of them together, on two mics. When John sang the counter-melody ("We gave them most of our lives . . ."), he had to be further back and he had to have a different echo, which we fixed at the time. They had to get it right the first time, the two of them together—then they had to do it *exactly* the same on the second track.

Would you extend that as a general principle for younger musicians starting out, to work in fewer tracks and force yourself to really get the performances right?

It's difficult to tell people to do that nowadays, because the equipment is so available. All I'm saying is, because we had nothing else in those days, that's what we had to do. And I do believe that if we had more, the result would have been less.

One of the classical musicians who played on Sgt. Pepper *has described the sessions this way: "They would make changes all the time, sort of cutting and pasting as they went along." This, of course, is the way that people use digital editing today, proving, I suppose, that you were 25 years ahead of your time!*

If I'd had today's technology [available for the *Pepper* sessions], I would have loved it. The techniques we used were just a way to create interesting sounds. We had no synthesizers or computers, so we made up our own sounds. The only synthesizer we had in those days was a Mellotron. We actually had a Moog Series III by the time *Abbey Road* came along, but that was pretty primitive too.

A lot of the signal processing you were doing in those days consisted of tape varispeed, which is a lost art today.

We used it a great deal, to alter drum sounds and vocal textures, that kind of thing. We used to varispeed the machines for tape echo

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too. The original ADT [Automatic Double Tracking] we did was developed as a result of my continually saying to the Abbey Road people, we've got to do something about this. It was Ken Townshend who came up with a way of taking the signal off the sync head and then delaying it through other varispeeded recorders, so the gap between the two could be adjusted. If you got it slightly out, you got phasing. But if you got it out to about 25 to 30 msec, it became a form of ADT. If you took it way out to about 80 msec, you got an Elvis Presley "Heartbreak Hotel" kind of sound. All those variations were on a knob on a tape machine. It was better because it was so unstable: Someone had to monitor it all the time to make sure the tape speed was correct, which is why it was so good. Now, if you press a button, once it's there, even if it's scanned a little bit, it's still a little bit mechanical. John Lennon rang me up from New York while he was doing vocals with ADT on *Double Fantasy*, and he said, "It doesn't sound as good as we used to get!" I said, "You're right, John, it doesn't!"

Beyond the Horizon

What do you see as having been the most important technological advances in recording and production over the past half century?

Unquestionably, the digital revolution is the most sensational thing that's happened, and it's still not perfect. It's getting there now, with the 24 bits and so on. The very fact that it is digital is changing the way we think about music altogether. That's a revolutionary thing, though everybody still hankers for the analog sound—me, too. But the new digital gear is getting pretty close to that.

Was "In My Life" recorded digitally?

Yes, I'm afraid so [*laughs*]. But, you know, I don't think technological advances have helped production very much. What I welcome in production is the fact that you can create synthetic sounds much more easily than you used to, which is useful. But I'm a great traditionalist: I still like orchestras, I still like people playing together. I hate putting down a drum track and then a bass track. Almost everything I've done—even now, on the new album—is done with musicians playing together.

In some of the orchestrations you did for the Beatles, you asked highly trained musicians to play very simple parts—often unisons—or to break the rules altogether, for instance telling them not to listen to one another. How did the classical musicians react to this? Did you encounter any resistance?

Not often, no. The most radical thing was on "A Day In the Life," when I asked them to do that climb w[illegible] the musician next to them. H[illegible] learned all their lives, especiall[illegible] players, to play as one man, a[illegible] asking them *not* to play as one [illegible] play as forty people. So that was a [illegible] shock to them. But some of the thing[illegible] asked them to do were very difficul[illegible] think the most disappointing thing f[illegible] those people was when it wasn't

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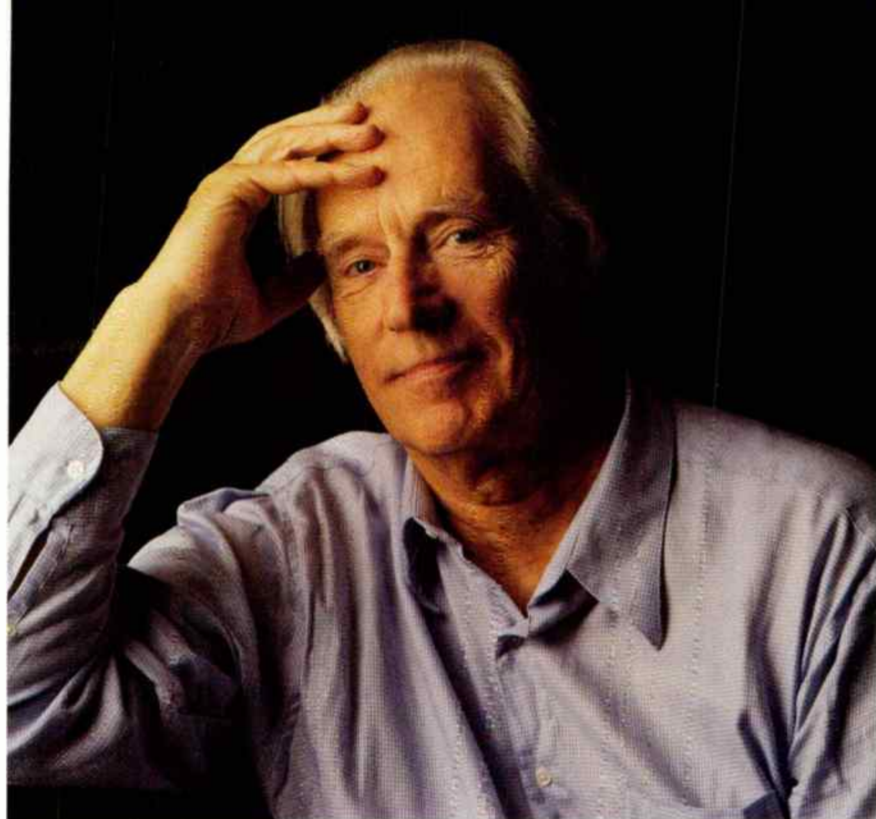
...ged how difficult it was—when ...olo trumpet that David Mason ...[in "Penny Lane"] was accepted as ...nal. I remember Paul asking David to ...ay that solo over again. I said to Paul, "You can't ask a man to do that again, it's fantastic." And the guy, red-faced, said, "I can't do it any better." I felt embarrassed for him, because they were so demanding, they didn't understand.

Paul McCartney once said, "There may be some sort of correlation between the speed of making a record and how good it is. I think there is some sort of secret in not having too long to think."

Paul said that?

Yes. Then he qualifies things by pointing out that there are no hard and fast rules, with Sgt. Pepper *as a case in point. But is faster usually better than slower? Is it usually counterproductive to keep pushing and dragging things out?*



We're talking about variables here. First of all, I think the "raw" factor is something you have to consider. There are cases where you go on so many times that everybody gets sick to death of the bloody thing, and they don't give good performances. This happened during *Let It Be*, when we were doing take after take after take, and it started turning into mud and you started sinking up to your knees. That's when you mustn't go on and there *is* a certain time frame where you should complete everything. It's not fixed; you can't say, "I've got to do this in three hours," it's just a question of reading the emotions. There's a kind of curve where you start from nothing, you learn the piece, and gradually get better and better at it until you reach a peak—then you start to go down. You need to catch people at that peak.

"Never accept the obvious, never accept second-best, and always look beyond what's there."

What do you think is the single most constructive thing a band just starting out can do to help themselves?

Write a bloody good song. The song is what's the most important thing. Without a good song, they're nowhere.

What's the single most destructive thing a band can do to hurt themselves?

Take drugs.

Some people might say, though, that Lennon and McCartney's involvement with acid—the fact that they were in a little world all their own—may have added something unique to Sgt. Pepper.

I don't believe that. I think that *Sgt. Pepper* would have been just as good without them doing what they did. Anyway, John was the [main] one who was into LSD. Their principle criminal offense up to that time was smoking marijuana. They used to go down to the canteen, have a puff and come back, looking seraphic, all smiles, thinking I didn't know. But they slowed up after that. They didn't write on drugs; the material was already there. No, I think that drugs are very destructive.

On a more philosophical note, you've observed that music is the one art form that needs time to develop, that it can't exist without someone at the other end to listen to it.

Well, you can't look at it and say, "What a nice piece of music that is." You've got to spend a bit of your life in order to appreciate it. Every time you listen to a symphony, you invest forty minutes of your life. You've only got a finite amount of time on this earth, and you've just spent forty minutes of it listening to a symphony, or to an album!

The fact is that music doesn't exist at all without time; time is the dimension which makes it work. I suppose that's true of dance, also, but music is the most sublime of all the arts. It's the most intangible, it's a mystery, and it's been with us since we were primeval. Human beings were making music eighty thousand years ago, before they could talk. I think it's the most fundamental part of our lives; in fact, without rhythm, we wouldn't exist. Your heart is pumping out a rhythm, and when it stops, you don't live anymore, so rhythm is actually the difference between life and death. Everything has a rhythm—the sun, the moon, the stars. It really makes you think. . . .

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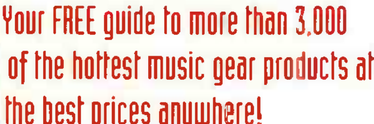

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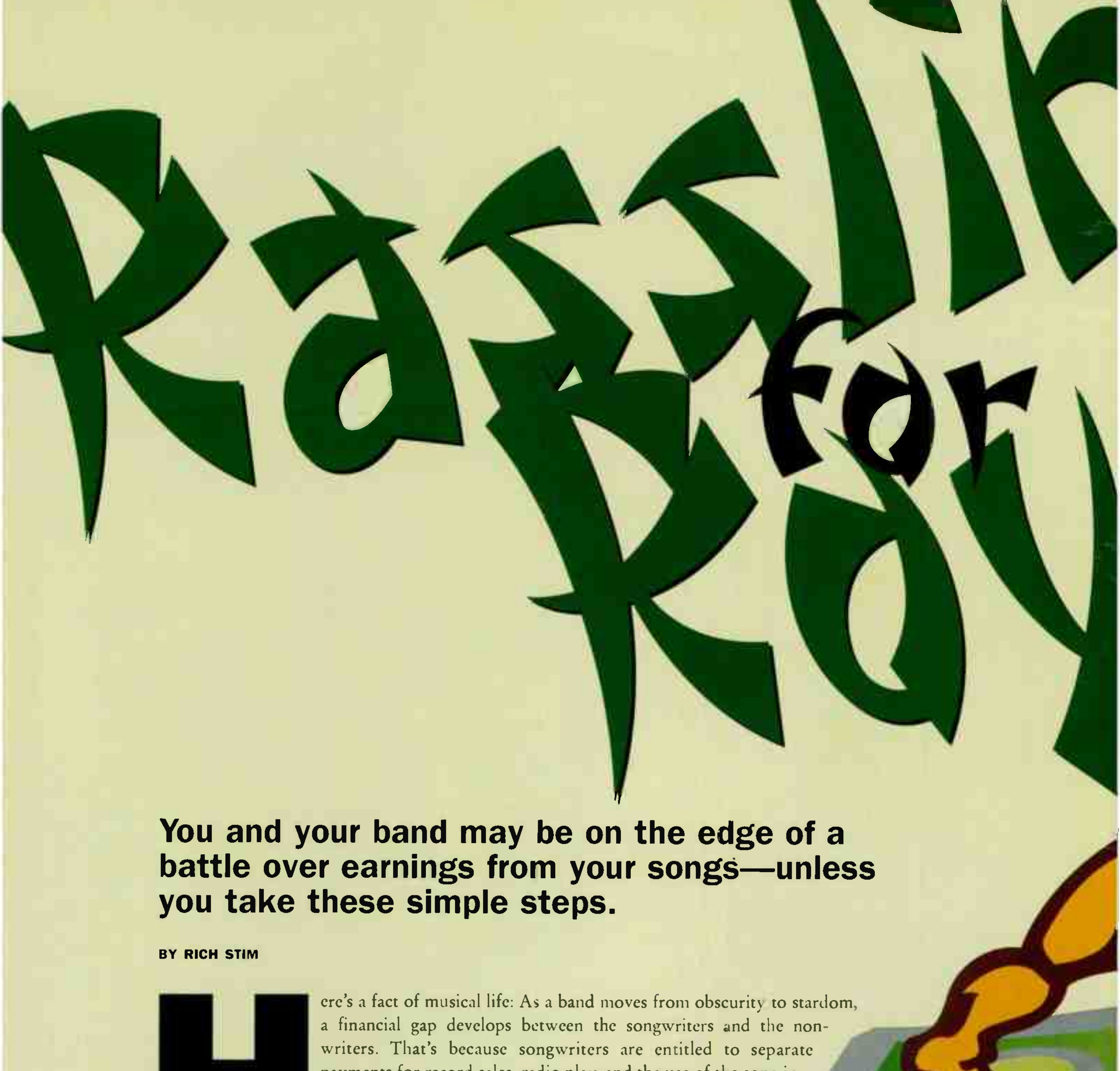

You and your band may be on the edge of a battle over earnings from your songs—unless you take these simple steps.

BY RICH STIM

Here's a fact of musical life: As a band moves from obscurity to stardom, a financial gap develops between the songwriters and the non-writers. That's because songwriters are entitled to separate payments for record sales, radio play, and the use of the song in films. This money doesn't have to be used for band expenses; it's the songwriter's reward for laying the golden egg.

"Songwriting income is without question one of the most divisive issues facing a band," says entertainment attorney Ron Bienstock. "If you have a band with four or five people and the income is skewed toward the songwriters, there's going to be a lot of resentment. It can ruin a band's domestic bliss."

Non-writing band members can receive a percentage of song income—but only if the songwriters are willing to share. Deciding on whether and how to do this is a balancing act. "It doesn't seem fair if one guy in the band is riding around in a Porsche

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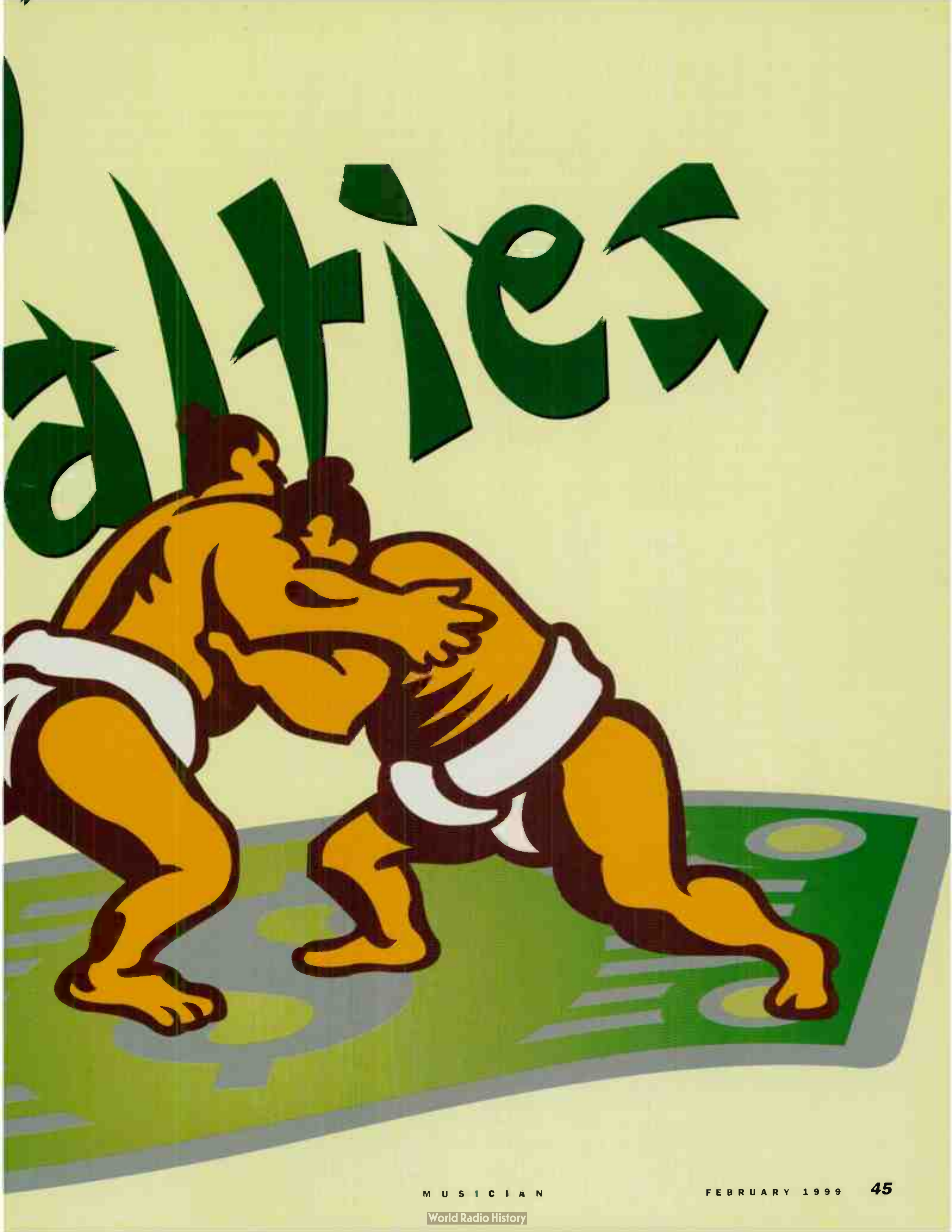

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and the others are in beat-up station wagons," says Tomas, whose band, Flu 13, had a college radio hit with "My Beijing Hot Rod." "But for the songwriter to share all of the money equally doesn't seem fair either."

Once the issue of song income is on the horizon, your band should devise an approach for dealing with it. "That's one piece of advice I would give," says Jeff Darian, a songwriter for Mach 5, whose Island Records release led to licenses for two songs on ESPN. "The band should devise some sort of system for band songs and then stick with it."

What type of system would work best for your band? Before you consider the options, begin by taking two important steps:

You can create a terrific interpretation of [a new song]. But don't expect songwriting credit for being a great musician.

Determine the Songwriters

The first step in sharing songwriter income is to agree on who wrote the band's songs. You and your colleagues don't have to divide the song income based strictly upon this determination; this is just the starting point for the discussion. It does, however, resolve an important issue, which is who gets his or her name in brackets under the song title.

"To be a co-writer," says copyright expert Steve Fishman, "a person must contribute more than mere ideas. They must provide concrete material, such as lyrics or music." For songwriting purposes, "music" generally refers to the melody, chord changes, and order of the parts (verse, chorus, bridge, etc.). It does not usually refer to riffs, solos, and harmonies. Think of it in terms of sheet music: The song consists of the elements that are included on sheet music or tablature. Anyone who contributes substantially to these elements would be a co-writer.

A lot can happen to a song after this basic structure is created. You can, for example, create a terrific interpretation of it in your performance. But don't expect songwriting credit for being a great musician. Band members may add fabulous drum beats, swinging bass lines, incredible guitar solos, and beguiling vocal harmonies—but these "arrangements" do not qualify you as a co-writer. As one court stated, "Neither rhythm nor harmony can in itself be the subject of copyright."

"Songs today are no different than thirty or forty years ago," says Steve Greenberg, vice-president of A&R at Mercury. "They have always relied heavily on good arrangements, but the arrangements are not protected."

Unfortunately, there is no official rulebook as to when a contribution merits getting a songwriter credit. The standard used by the courts is pretty slippery: Judges ask whether the contribution, by itself, would be copyrightable—that is, could the contributed part be protected apart from the song? In asking this question, judges are checking for evidence of a high degree of creativity. They found it in one recent case, when the court determined that Billy Strayhorn's sophisticated harmonies on "Satin Doll" were distinctive enough to merit co-writer credit with Duke Ellington. By the same token, if he hadn't already shared writing credit for "Satisfaction" with Mick Jagger, Keith Richards would have a strong case, based on his opening guitar riff; unless you're a member of Devo, that hook is as indispensable to the song as the lyrics or the melody.

Sometimes songwriters share credit equally with band members who make no such substantial contribution. For example, John Phillips gave his wife, Michelle Phillips, a co-writing credit—and half of the royalties—for simply writing down his words for "California Dreamin'." Not surprisingly, this kind of charity can lead to problems later, including battles between spouses, children and parents, and other co-writers. Given all this, it might make sense just to pay money out of pocket rather than give credit to someone who doesn't technically qualify as a co-writer.

Once your band has determined who wrote the songs, the writers should weigh their individual contributions. If total songwriting credit equals 100 percent, what share should each songwriter receive? The traditional splits are 50 percent for music and 50 percent for lyrics, but bands can use any formula they want. One band interviewed for this article grants 33 percent for melody, 33 percent for lyrics, and 33 percent for chord changes, often subdividing these categories among band members.

Music Publishing 101

We're halfway to our goal of setting up a system for sharing songwriter income. The rest of the journey involves reviewing some basic rules of music publishing.

Let's start at the beginning. A music publisher is a business that owns and exploits song copyrights. Initially, if you write a song, you are the copyright owner and the *de facto* publisher. Nothing formal needs to be done—that is, you don't need to set up a business—until it looks like you're going to start earning money from your song. At that point, you need to choose a name for yourself as a publishing company, clear it with a performance rights society such as ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC, and then file a fictitious business statement with the county clerk.

Sometimes a songwriter sells song copyrights to an established music publisher, such as Warner-Chappell or EMI Music. These publishers are effective in collecting songwriter money and promoting songs for use in movies or commercials. If your band makes a deal with a large publishing company, you will give up ownership of the song and a portion of the song income—usually 25 percent. In return, though, the publisher pays an advance against your future royalties—often more than $50,000 per record for a major label act. (For a detailed look at the pluses and minuses of signing a publishing deal, see Fred Koller's Business feature, "The Perils of Publishing," in our Oct. '98 issue.)

Songwriter payments have long been based on an antiquated system in which all song income is divided into two pots, with half going to the music publisher and half going to the writer. More typically these days, if you sign with an established

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publisher, you'll give up 25 percent of the total song income. This is accomplished through a system known as co-publishing.

Here's how it works. Let's say your band sold its song copyrights to an established music publisher—we'll call them Megaglom Songs. If your songs earn a total income of $10,000 from radio play and record sales, Megaglom would get $2,500, or half of the publishing portion of the pie. The other $2,500—the remaining half of the publishing portion—goes to the publishing company that you and your band have set up. That still leaves the writer's share of the payment ($5,000), which is divided by the writers (or among the band members, depending on their agreement). Of course, it would have been a lot easier to ditch this fictitious fifty-fifty split and just handle income like any other business, but the traditions of music publishing are too firmly entrenched to be changed.

Sharing the Income

Now that you've got a grasp on how music publishing works and you've determined who writes the songs in your band, the next step is to determine if the non-writers in the band will share the earnings derived from your songs. And if so, what type of system will you use?

If songwriters don't want to share, it's a "writer-takes-all" situation. This approach is common among bands that center around a charismatic songwriter/leader, such as Trent Reznor with Nine Inch Nails. The "writer-takes-all" approach is also typical for bands in which two members write most or all of the songs—the Rolling Stones, for instance, or Oasis. In these scenarios, the only way other members of the band can earn song income is through writing their own material and getting it onto the band's album. "The problem," says music attorney Kathryn Roessel, "is that individual band members wind up fighting to get songs onto the album. And does the world really need more songs like 'Octopus' Garden'?"

If writers do decide to share song income with their band, they would pool all of their songs under one band publishing company and then divide the income from those songs based upon an agreed-upon formula. This way, everyone gets a taste of each song's income, which can allow the band to concentrate on choosing the best material to record rather than compromise on quality to give everyone a share of the pie. Predictably, there are several approaches to divvying up song income. Let's look at each one.

The Three Musketeers. Under this system, all of the song income is split equally among all band members. Let's say we have a quartet in which two members write the songs but the plan is to share the song income equally. For a $50,000 advance, then, each member would pocket $12,500.

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This system works best for a techno, acid jazz, or dance band, in which members build songs around grooves, or jam-oriented bands of the Phish model, where songs tend to evolve at performances or in practice. "We split everything equally," says Riq Poguet of the Latin rock band Bay of Pigs. "It's part of our philosophy as a band. I'm the main songwriter, but everybody pulls his own weight. A lot of our music comes out of the percussion, and that kind of improvisation makes for more collaborative work. So it just makes sense to split it equally."

Writers & Publishers. The formula here is for the band to split publishing income equally while the songwriters divide songwriter income according to how much they each contributed. Going back to our example of a quartet that includes two songwriters, with one of their songs earning $50,000, under this system each of the two writers would get $18,750, with the other two members of the band receiving $6,250.

"A lot of our music comes out of the percussion, [which] makes for collaborative work. So it makes sense to split [royalties] equally."
—Riq Poguet (Bay of Pigs)

"This approach is often used because it allows the writers to get the artistic recognition they deserve and to profit more than the non-writers," says Roessel. "It also makes sure that the non-writers share in publishing income. They'll need a share to live on, since most bands won't ever see any record royalties after they spend their label advances."

Note that under this system, if your band later signs with a large publisher, that publisher will probably take half of the publishing income. When that happens, band members will find themselves sharing a quarter, not half, of the song income. Thus, if a publishing company buys half of the publishing for a $50,000 advance, the two songwriters in our quartet would each get $20,812.50, with the remaining two members of the band each getting $4,162.50.

Credit. This compromise system allows one credit for performing on a song, and two credits for performing *and* writing on a song. Looking again at our quartet, if we count four players and two writers for a particular song, that adds up to six. Those band members who write and perform on that song get two credits, or 2/6 of the income, while those whose contributions involve only performance get one credit, or 1/6 of the song income. Regardless of the source of this income, all of it is pooled and the money divided according to this formula. If a publishing company buys a song from our quartet for a $50,000 advance, then, the two songwriters each get $16,666.60 while the other members each get $8,333.33.

The credit-based system works best for bands in which songwriting and performing are equally important tasks—for example, jazz outfits in which members improvise on each song.

Your band can modify any of these systems or come up with a hybrid that reflects your unique needs. One major label act splits advances from publishing companies equally—"just so we can all make a living," says the band's founder—and divides performance royalties according to a formula that favors the writers.

Chiselling in Stone

Whatever system you and your band choose, you need to spell it out in a written agreement. If you've got the contractual smarts to draft such an agreement on your own, great! Some legal self-help books can help you iron out details. Otherwise, finalizing an agreement on distributing song income will involve working with an attorney. Since this can be expensive, wait until income from a song actually seems imminent—that is, you're signing a record, music publishing, or management deal—before actually sitting down with a lawyer.

There are two ways to keep costs down when dealing with lawyers. The first is to prepare the basic elements of your agreement ahead of time—in this case, a general outline of how your band wants to split the song income. And the second is to ask the attorney for a written estimate before he or she begins drafting the agreement. Low-cost legal assistance for artists is also available in most states: In New York, for example, check with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA), and in California call California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA). Contact information for these and other similar programs are available from VLA at (212) 977-9271.

Before signing any agreement, be sure to affiliate your band with a performing rights organization to guarantee your right to use your chosen publishing name. These groups—SESAC, BMI, and ASCAP—work for music publishers by collecting song income. You can only affiliate with one of these organizations at a time, and it would make life simpler if all of the songwriters in your band shared membership in just one of these three.

Once you've signed up, remember to file clearance forms with your performing rights organization for each of your songs. Six to eight weeks after submitting each form, be sure to review the organization's website to make sure that your material has been registered properly. If you spot any errors, contact the organization's indexing department.

To register copyright for your songs, check out the copyright office website for forms and application information. Registration isn't necessary for you to obtain copyright protection; you've got protection the moment your song is fixed on paper or tape. But registration could offer you advantages if there's ever a lawsuit over the song.

This whole process—determining songwriters, deciding whether and how to split the income, implementing an agreement, and administering the songs—takes a lot of time; it can even distract you from chasing your musical or artistic goals. For this reason it's probably okay to postpone all of this work if your band isn't about to release any material. But when that time arrives, grit your teeth and do what must be done to address these issues before you're fighting over who will benefit from your songs.

Contributors: Rich Stim is an attorney, musician, and author of several books, including Music Law: How to Run Your Band's Business *(Nolo Press).*

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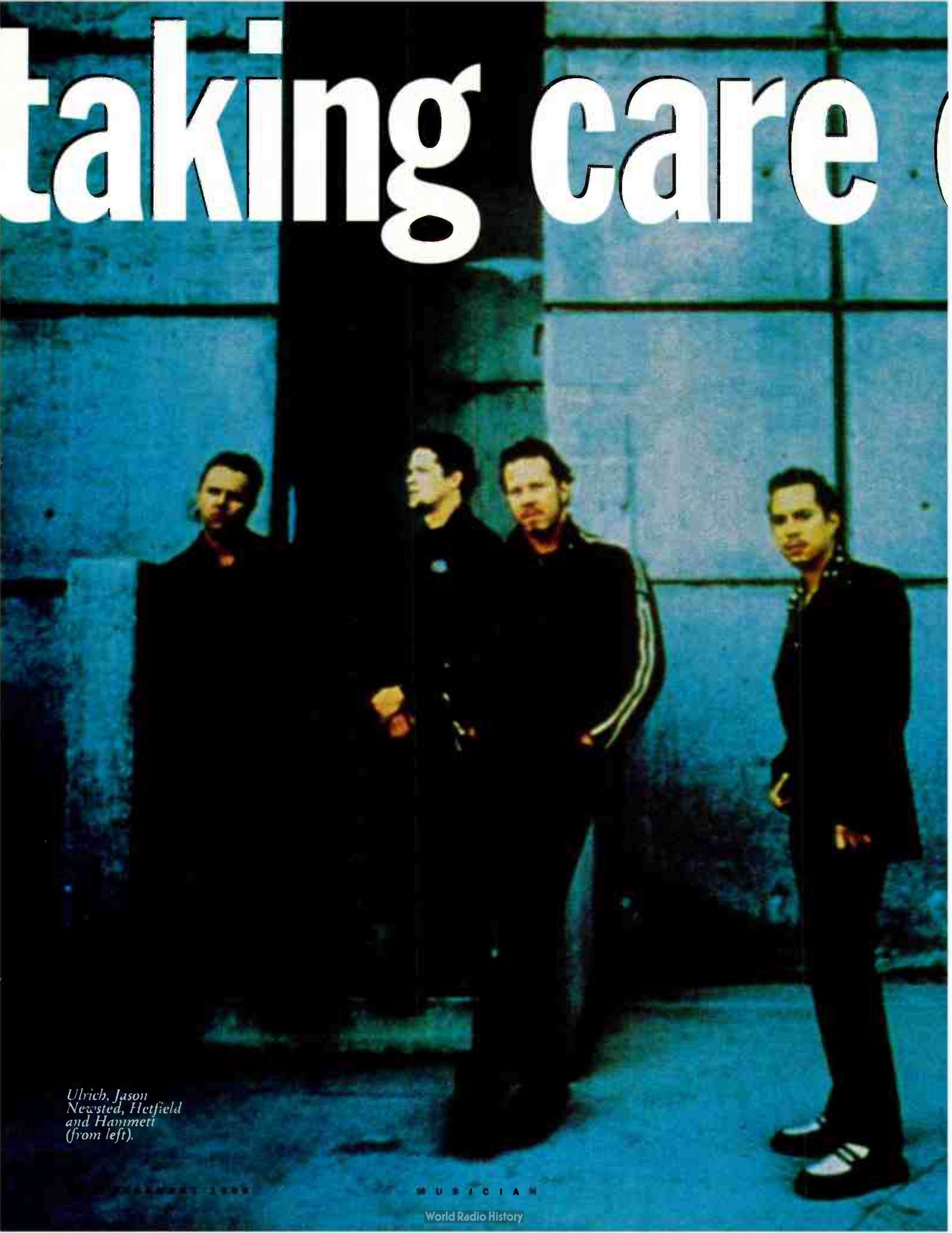

Ulrich, Jason Newsted, Hetfield and Hammett (from left).

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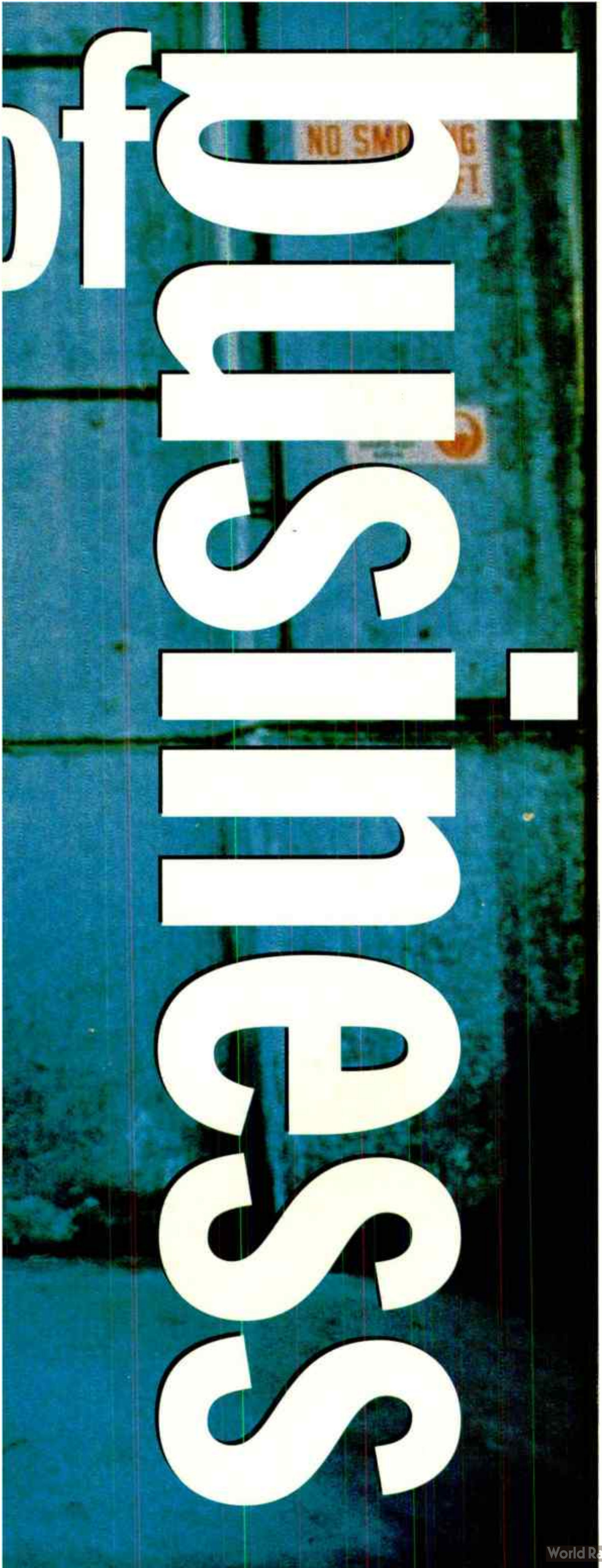

Metallica's Lars Ulrich shares a wealth of music business experience.

BY JASON ZASKY

It's early October, less than a week before Metallica's self-imposed deadline for completing their new double CD, and drummer Lars Ulrich & Co. are experiencing *déjà vu.* As was the case with *Load* and *Reload*, Ulrich, guitarist/vocalist James Hetfield, and longtime producer Bob Rock are holed up at The Plant in Sausalito, California, scrambling to ready the new material in time for release. The difference is that the 27 cuts on *Garage Inc.* (Elektra) are all covers; eleven brand-spanking-new ones originally recorded by the likes of Discharge, Diamond Head, the Misfits, and Mercyful Fate, as well as sixteen previously released tracks. Though a majority of the music is "old," it's not necessarily familiar. Most notable is the inclusion of the five songs from *The $5.98 EP/$9.98 CD—Garage Days Re-Revisited* (1987), which has been out-of-print since 1989. Also included are the eleven B-sides that have been commercially released—in one part of the world or another—during Metallica's illustrious career.

When I arrived at The Plant I found Ulrich bouncing back and forth between the control room—"doing battle," as he put it, with Hetfield and Rock over mixes—and the studio lounge, attending to myriad non-musical chores requiring the band's attention. "Usually, by the time I have to sit and think about artwork and promotional tours the drums have already been done for six months," said Lars. "This time around, the drums were only done a week ago, so in terms of juggling, it's been one of the hardest."

But taking a more instinctive approach allowed the band to record 65 minutes of music in only a month—blinding speed by Metallica standards. "We didn't even know what eleven new songs we were going to record until the day we walked in here," notes Ulrich. "This run-through has proven to us that it's possible for us to make records that don't take a year, where we don't have to sit with a microscope and go over things piece by piece. Whether it's possible for us to do that with our own material I don't know. As recording technology advances, you've got to be mentally strong to avoid the help it can bring you. Once you start understanding the possibilities of what a [Digidesign] Pro Tools system can offer you it's pretty difficult to walk away. Maybe somebody will start Pro Tools Anonymous: Everybody will meet and talk themselves out of using it again."

With Metallica releasing an album that recalls their garage days I thought it was about time to examine the band's career from a business perspective, and, give Ulrich the opportunity to impart his advice on navigating the minefield that is the music business. During the course of our conversation at Lars' Bay Area home, we touched on some rarely covered territory: His brand-new record label, the Internet's effect on Metallica, the Metallica Club, and his opinion on how the Internet is going to affect the record industry.

Photos: Anton Corbijn

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You've always taken an active role in the band's business affairs. You never said—although maybe James did—"I just want to play music." If you weren't so hands-on, do you think Metallica would be where they are today?

I would say that that's turning it around a little bit. I'd say, "I want to play music, I want to be in a band, I want to have fun." But at some point you go, "Wait a minute, there's all this shit that comes in the keel with that." And then you're left with two choices: You can take either an active role or a passive role. My active role came probably a little bit by default, in that James is so passive about anything other than music just by nature. When we were sitting there, in say 1982, and we were writing songs and making demo tapes and doing whatever you do when you're at that level, we said, "Okay, we've got to get some gigs." Well, who gets the gigs? He [James] wasn't going to get them because it just isn't his thing. So I got them. And then, "Who's going to send demo tapes to all these fanzines?" So it started like that. And then you have to start collecting money, and then it starts rolling, and someone says, "Come make a record for me," and then. . . . A lot of bands go through these processes where one day they're a band in a garage and then somebody comes and dumps a half-million dollars in their lap and then they're signed to a major label, and it goes from here to here [*indicates low to high*]. For us it always just went like this [*indicates gradual incline*]. Along the way I was the one who ended up dealing with all of it.

"We went in front of a judge and said, 'This guy's fucking us, and it's not fair.'"

If you read interviews with me from five or ten years ago I would sit there meekly and say, "Look, I'm doing the business because somebody has to and we don't want to get fucked." I think I've realized in the last couple of years that I do actually enjoy it. It's kind of fun to deal with the non-musical issues that come with what we do. Even going out on a limb and saying that I'm actually fairly good at it, trying to find a balance between artistic purity and having three guys in the band who depend on me to be something of a liaison between all the entities we have to deal with. After seventeen years I'm comfortable with it, I'm comfortable talking about it, and I think I'm at least adequate in what that role requires.

How much time do you spend on Metallica's business affairs?

Right now, I'm spending too much time on it. Everything in our world is in cycles, which means you write, you record, you tour, you have down-time. When you're four weeks away from putting a new record out, obviously there's a lot of shit that has to be dealt with. At the moment I'm probably dealing with it three to four hours a day.

When the buzz around Metallica really got going, say in early 1984, how did you get your team together?

We did everything in layers. We started doing a lot of our own shit. Then we moved up with Johnny Z [Jon Zazula], who was both manager and record company, and he had a team around him. Then we came up to the "A" level with Peter [Mensch] and Cliff [Burnstein], and everything changed.

It was the summer of 1984 and we had put out *Kill 'Em All* on Johnny Z's label, which was Megaforce Records, and we had recorded *Ride the Lightning* when I got a call from a journalist at a magazine in England called *Kerrang!* He said that a guy named Peter Mensch, who was Def Leppard's manager, was interested in talking to me. At that time Def Leppard had just finished the whole *Pyromania* thing, and they were just about the biggest fucking thing in this country. And it was like, "Oh, Def Leppard's manager wants to talk to us." I remember Kirk [Hammett] and I went into a record store and we were looking at the Def Leppard album and it said, "Management: Q Prime Inc." And we were standing there going "Q Prime Inc. Oh fuck, that sounds like this big boardroom with all these guys in suits and ties making these multi-million dollar decisions. That's so cool, blah, blah, blah." So I spoke to Peter Mensch, and he says, "My partner and I were over in England last week and we noticed a lot of kids had Metallica T-shirts on. What are you guys about?" I gave him the short version of the story and then sent him a copy of the record [*Ride the Lightning*].

And then, while we were still being looked after by this other guy [Johnny Z] we went to Hoboken, New Jersey [to meet with Cliff]. We were expecting to drive up to this area with big, palacial mansions, but we were in this really seedy neighborhood, and we were thinking, "Did we make a wrong turn somewhere?" When we knocked on the door, this little guy with a big beard and gray hair—he looked like Rasputin—answered the door. He said, "I'm Cliff Burnstein," and we looked at each other like, "What the fuck is wrong with this picture?" So obviously, we didn't know anything about how different these guys were. We talked to him, and said, "We're signed to a different record company and have a different manager, but we'd really like you to work with us." He said, "Okay, well the first thing I've got to do is get you a lawyer." So he hooked us up with Peter Paterno, who he knew really well.

And then, a lot of people aren't aware of this, but one place where you can get money from—even more so than a record company—is a merchandiser. If you've got a good buzz in the underground you can get an advance on T-shirts. So he got us some money to get by on from the T-shirt thing, and then basically the whole process started of trying to get out of the situation we were in with Megaforce and Johnny Z Management.

Was your deal with Megaforce a fair deal?

Well, the whole argument that they were going on to get us out of it was that it wasn't and that it should be annulled [*laughs*]. So of course we went to court. Fourteen years later? It's a very

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tough question to answer, because what is fair? Was it unfair that this guy wired us a big pile of money and told us to come out and play shows in New York and that he wanted to make a record with us? I think in retrospect he knew in his heart that we were on the verge of getting too big for him to deal with and, I know it sounds corny, but we were really outgrowing each other. He didn't have the capacity to deal with it anymore. And so of course we went in front of a judge and said, "This guy's fucking us, and it's not fair." But in retrospect, he certainly gave us some good breaks. I'm not saying those breaks wouldn't have come later, but he took a shot, and that's a good thing.

Since you mention going in front of a judge, how many lawsuits are pending against Metallica right now?

We get about one a week. Let's say we get fifty a year. I hear about two or three of them. I get deposed about once a year, and get to the point of an actual deposition about once every two years.

What are you getting sued for?

It's "I went to your show and the bass drum through the P.A. hurt my back," or "I went to your show and some guy was moshing and he hit me in the eye and it's your fault because you're the band."

A lot of young bands don't realize you have to protect yourself from that, even at the club level.

Oh yeah. . . . And we have to go after p[...] someone has a carpet called Metallica or t[...] too, like when South America that sells a color of paint calle[d...] someplace in it was Sears Roebuck that last year started s[...] called Metallica. So you go after them, and by th[...] I think a hundred grand back from them you've spent [...]sses grand in legal fees, at least.

Back to setting up a team; what advice do you hav[e...] who are looking to assemble their team?

The key thing to me is, you have a half-dozen entities an[d...] all need to be separate from each other, but at the same time [...] need to have a relationship with one another. If you want to go through a food chain, the person you're closest to—closer than your manager—is actually the lawyer. The next closest person is your accountant, because all the money goes to your accountant. If you talk about that kind of a food chain, it's interesting that the manager is a bit farther down the line than people think.

Try and get a good financial office set up—good accountants. We've had the same accountant since 1984, we've had the same manager since 1984, we've had the same lawyer since 1984. The next thing you've got to get is a booking agent. We've been with the same agent for eight or nine years now. Then you have the merchandiser. One of the key things in the way we're set up in

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. . . that we have three different record companies. . . . ely trying to have the best company in each terms of our . . . Elektra in North America, PolyGram worldwide . . . North America and Japan), and CBS/Sony Japan.

And did you renegotiate your deal with Elektra?

. . . nink it just came to the point where—you used the term earlier—that term could be applied to the relationship we . . . nad with Elektra. We were generating 25 percent of their gross every year, we had just come off a record that had sold nine million copies in America, and we were still getting the same royalty rates we were in 1984. Record contracts and royalty rates are very different in 1998 than they were in 1984. There never really had been anything adjusted for the way things were going. We said, "Look, we'd like to stay with you forever plus one day, but things need to be balanced better." So we went in and balanced it a little better [*laughs*].

And I'm not just saying this, but we have an incredible relationship with these people. I can't imagine being on a different label. We felt that we were not being unreasonable. I don't think we were being greedy, we just wanted more of a fair share of the money that was generated. Were we unhappy? Not particularly, but when you start selling ten million copies of a record it's just a little bit different than when . . . . [*you're selling a few thousand*]

"The only band that can put the same record out every two years and be good at it and somewhat successful is AC/DC."

You also have to remember, "What is a record company? What is a record company to baby bands?" To me, a record company basically acts like a bank. They front you money to do the things you need to do to make records and potentially sell records, and then you pay it back. And when you pay it back they get a much larger chunk than what you get, and I think you can say that's fair. Because when you're a baby band and somebody takes a chance with you it's fair that way. But when you get to the level we were lucky enough to get to, then you sit down and say, "Let's talk about this." Just like so many other bands have done.

It's more of a partnership at this point, right?

Yeah. A lot of bands that want to make headlines: "So-and-so just renegotiated their record contract for $75 million." Nobody really knows. These numbers sound great in short press releases, and somebody who reads this in the entertainment section of the newspaper says, "Wow, R.E.M. just got $75 million." These numbers don't mean shit. It's just things to brag about.

Basically, the way we work—without giving away the store here—is that we don't take advances on anything, because we're lucky enough that we don't need to and we're not greedy enough that it's a "give me the money now!" type of thing. We're much more interested in long-term partnerships. We both take the same amount of risk and we both share in the profits. So some of the setups we have fit more under the umbrella of a partnership-like agreement than the regular structure that most bands have where there's a big pile of money up front and then you pay it back.

Are there any mistakes you made early in your career that you'd like to warn young musicians about?

Stay away from white leather jackets [*laughs*], because when you see yourself in a white leather jacket years later. . . .

Major mistakes? [*Thinks for a minute*]. You're going to have to dig pretty deep for that. I gotta tell you—without bragging too much about it, and I want to emphasize not bragging too much about it—we have an incredible team all around. I think we're very fortunate that we have that, but patting ourselves on the back . . . We do what we do and we have a lot of fun doing it, and we're not fuck-ups. We're not the sort of guys who go missing for two weeks, and when something needs to be done we're checked into rehab or something. I think that Peter and Cliff are tremendous and have been an incredible source of inspiration to me and very mentor-like as friends and as managers. A lot of artists are so paranoid or such control freaks that everyone gets fired every couple years just because they have the power to do that or whatever. The fact that we have something that works—the fuck-ups are few and far between. . . . [*knocks on wooden coffee table*].

Without necessarily equating it to problems we've been in, again, the main thing is that all the entities you end up dealing with have to be separate. And if somebody says, "sign this piece of paper," you've got to find a lawyer. You've got to get someone independent to represent you. A lot of people, like record companies, will give you money, but remember that they are only acting as a bank. Nobody is going to come and just give someone else money; that's just not the way capitalism works. If someone is going to give you money there are strings attached, and most of those strings are right back in the pocket where the money came from, plus a lot of profits. Be careful that you don't sign your life away because it can be really miserable to get out of that.

Luckily, we haven't made . . . there was some murky stuff there back in '83 or '84, but we sort of wiped the slate clean and got out of it. If you sit down and talk with Steven Tyler, or even a Gene Simmons, the mistakes these people have made. Aerosmith were broke. They were one of the biggest bands in the world up through the early Eighties, but the business things that they did just fucked them. Those days, thankfully, are long gone, where these entrepreneur-like characters showed up and acted as the accountant, agent, and record company.

How else has the music business changed since 1984?

In the Seventies everybody was chasing a major label record contract. Now there are all these independent labels so there are alternatives, instead of having to mold what you're doing into

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something the major labels can accept. The whole business is slowly getting more artist-friendly because now there are so many more options where artists can go to try to make music and get music to people. So the major labels—the deals they're offering—are becoming more artist-friendly. As with anything in free enterprise, anytime that there becomes more choices things become more consumer-friendly.

You've started your own record label, is that right?

Yes I have. . . . My own vanity label [*laughs*].

Have you chosen a name yet?

No. I thought "The Record Company" was kind of cute because it was as non-specific as possible. It turns out that there's someone in New Jersey who has a company with that name so, as we're speaking, I haven't decided on a name, but I've got two bands signed, and I'm making records with two artists, and I've got a distribution deal. I think it was pretty obvious to myself and most people around me that sooner or later there would be some kind of penetration of the music business for myself outside of Metallica.

Why a record company?

The difference between a management company and a record company is that when you're a record company—and this comes from Peter and Cliff, this is great advice—it's easier to clock in and out. When you're a manager you've got to leave the phone on 24 hours a day. And I just thought it would be easier to slither in and out. And at the end of the day, you deal with bands, you deal with developing songs—they're not really that different from each other, but it's centered around specific times, rather than having to go bail somebody out of jail or something.

What are you looking for in acts to sign?

Bands that will sell a lot of records and make me richer. That's it.

Makes sense.

Well, at least it's honest. I'm not going to sit here and give you some horseshit about credibility, or I want to help my friends in garage bands, or I want to take music to another level. I want to find guys that make music I want to listen to, but who I also think have a shot at selling a million records.

There's just different ways. Trent Reznor's record company is about Trent Reznor. I don't want any more publicity about me. It's something I enjoy doing. Whenever people say, "Lars Ulrich's record company," I cringe. I have a lot of respect for Rick Rubin as a friend but I would never want everything about my record company to be about *me*, and here are all these articles about *me*, and pictures of me in a Rolls Royce and pictures of me in bed with sunglasses.

I want it to be about the bands—low-key, making records with bands that I enjoy and that I think have the potential to sell records. It's really that simple. I'm not interested in credibility or interested in helping friends out—not that I really have many friends to help out [*subdued laugh*]. It's a commercial enterprise. I know that can sound kind of crass, but it's the truth and why try to sit and bullshit people?

How do you see the Internet affecting the relationship between bands and record companies?

There are possibilities where the record companies could get the short end of the stick because if you get to a point where bands can finance their own records and then sell their own records through the Internet then record companies become somewhat obsolete. That means that the artist gets a bigger chunk of the money. At the other end it means that the consumer price could also go down.

There's also other things in terms of computers and the Internet, like the record stores. Between the consumer and the artist there are two steps: There's a record company and there's the retail outlet. Even if the artist doesn't go directly to the consumer; if the artist bypasses the record company the retail situation could change to the point where if you want the new Marilyn Manson album you go down to a record store and they download it, and there's actually no stock of the record. You wait for two minutes and they make it on the spot.

I personally think that one of those two could happen, where either the record company gets bypassed or the retailer gets bypassed, but that's something that can work for a band at our level, who can finance our own million-dollar record, but if you have baby bands the money is going to have to come from somewhere. Other than recording techno music in a home studio—in terms of live rock music and recording drums—records work their way up to a hundred grand fairly quickly, and that money has to come from somewhere. And if there's no record company, then where are these baby bands going to get that kind of money? So I don't think record companies are going to become extinct, but I think that there are going to be a certain number of artists that are going to be able to bypass them sooner or later because they'll be able to finance it themselves.

But the multi-platinum acts are where the record companies really make hay. If you take the biggest bands out of the equation . . .

It's where they make the bulk of their money. Does it mean they will become extinct? Probably not, because I think they can make enough profits to make it work.

Speaking about the Internet, the other thing is—taking the record company out of it—the artist's relationship with the Internet is kind of difficult, I would say. It's an entity that can't be ignored, but it's something that makes things harder for bands like us. Things like set lists. A band comes to town and you haven't seen them on this tour. You go in and have no idea what they're doing. Now you play a show, and whatever you do that show, everyone can get the

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information five minutes later if you want. I think it ruins the experience a little bit for the punter. At the same time, I will say that it keeps artists more on their toes. I think we're a little more adventurous with our set lists than we were before, simply because the information is so public. The hardest thing is when somebody comes down to the studio at the wrong moment and there's a tape playing—all of a sudden people can download—it gets into murky territory. I will say that I have accepted it. It's something that's there and you try to find the best ways to deal with it.

How's the Metallica Club [Metallica's band-operated "fan" club] working out?

It's working out well. It's kinda difficult because there are certain services you want to offer. . . .

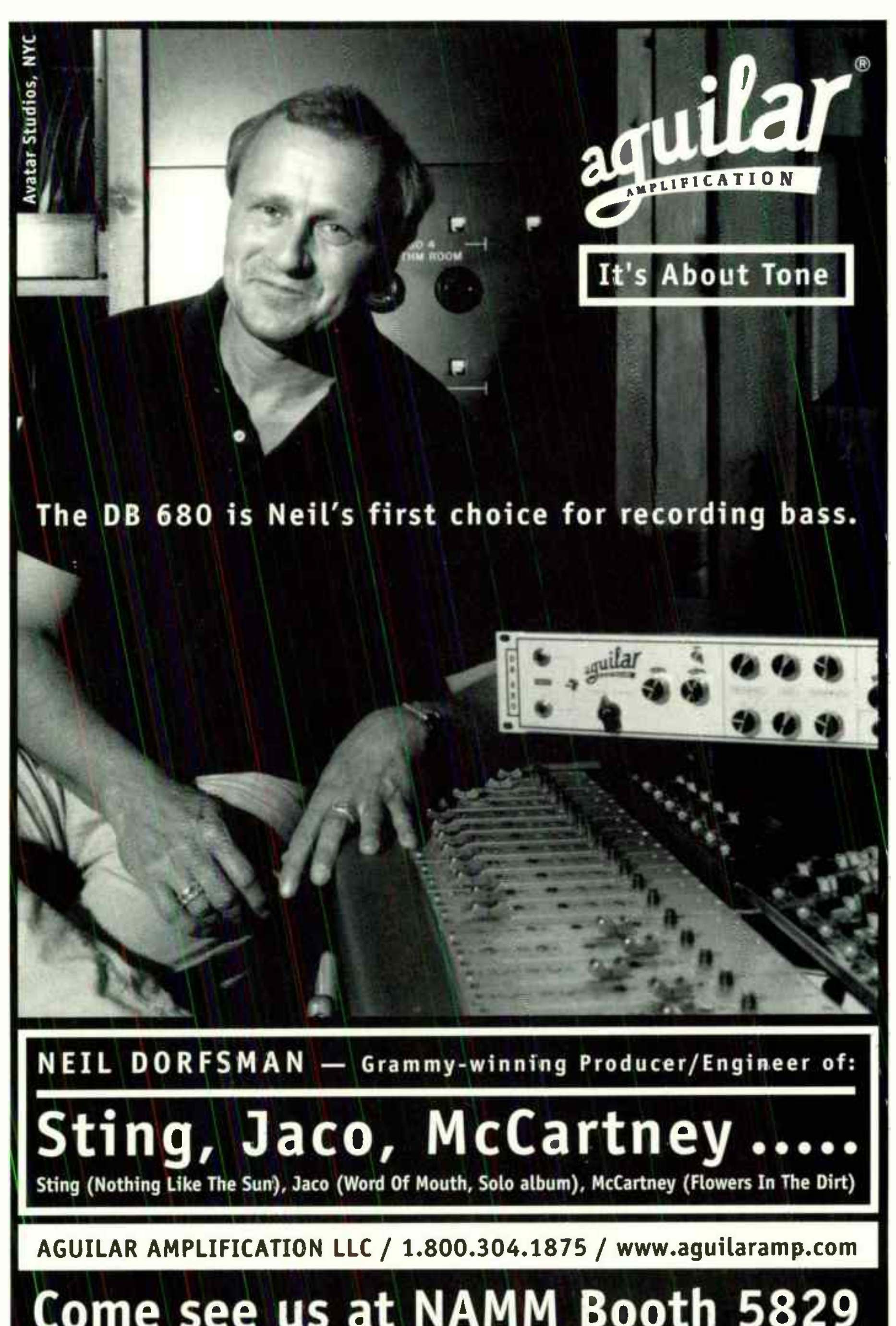
There are two or three ways you can do fan clubs. Fan clubs can become incredibly impersonal; you send some money to a P.O. box and you get a signed 8 x 10 and a T-shirt or something, and that's how you can make money on it. If you want to try and really personalize it, it costs a lot of money.

We've had the Metallica Club going now for five years, and we have, give-or-take, twenty thousand members. That's more than most bands. We offer a glossy, high-quality magazine five times a year, and we try and do a lot of personal things. We have probably lost close to a half-million dollars on it. We want to keep the prices down. All the merchandise we sell is at cost. We don't make any profit; we do it as a service. My reasoning is, "Is it not worth it as a cost of doing business?" Even though it loses money every year, it makes people feel closer to you, and that balances out somewhere else. Even though it's a consistent money loser and our accountants and our managers go "Why are you doing this?," my belief is that by offering this service that half a million is a wash because that fan club member will buy an extra concert T-shirt or an extra import single or four concert tickets instead of two.

A couple years ago we had to raise the price three dollars, and we got all this, "Fuck you! Fucking capitalistic. . ." It's just the nature of how it is. One thing I hate doing is defending myself, like "Listen, we really have to do this." People aren't going to believe any of that anyway. It is what it is, but I know it's a money loser. God knows, there's enough money generated that in the big picture a half-million dollars doesn't really mean that much.

Does the Metallica Club help you stay in touch with the fans?

To a certain extent. To be truthful, this whole thing about staying in touch. I believe that for a band of our level, we are as close to our fans as you could be. I mean, look at this [*gestures around room*]. I live in a big mansion on a hill, I drive around in big cars, travel around in a private plane, and stay in big suites at Four Seasons hotels. We're on the same level as the fans? Wrong. You could say that ten years ago, and it's kind of a cute thing to say. I believe—as you can probably tell—in honesty above everything else. We try. I believe we have



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about as good a balance as anyone at our level, and I'm proud of that, and I think the Metallica Club is one of the elements that helps that, but the thing that helps the most is that we try to be . . . I'm not going to say regular . . . I think the best word would probably be either reachable or approachable. We don't set up roadblocks around the hotel and walk around with 25 security guys. We go to restaurants, we go to bars, we're accessible. You can choose not to do that, but then I don't think you'd have very much fun. The people that hide behind those walls must be really fuckin' miserable.

Doesn't the fact that you're accessible help you?

It helps us maintain a level of sanity.

Somehow you've always put out records at exactly the right time. For example, Master of Puppets *came out when people were seeking a band with a "no compromises" approach.*

Yeah, if you sit down and write the history of this band, and go "why are you so successful or why are you so popular?" the one thing I always make sure people understand—the one thing you should never overlook in that equation is timing. And the next step is luck. Timing and luck go hand in hand. You can talk about what a wonderful songwriter you are, but timing and luck have a lot to do with it. We were lucky enough to be doing what we were doing at a time when there were a lot of people who were looking for something else.

What do you think it is that causes major acts to stumble?

I think it's a combination of a lot of things. Some bands just fall apart because of personality [*pauses*] shortcomings [*laughs*]. Then there are the kind of bands that go from obscurity to the center of attention overnight, and that really can fuck your mind. And then in rock music there has to be a sense of attempting different things, just because stalemate. . . . The only band that can put the same record out every two years and be good at it and somewhat successful is AC/DC. If you don't keep evolving, creative standstill is something that can kill you.

We are lucky enough to not have any personality disorders, and we were lucky enough to come to it more the European way of album, tour, album, tour. If you look at the first five records each one sold about twice as much as the last one. A lot of other bands have their biggest record first. And the last thing is believing that you will stay at that level no matter how hard you try and how many things you think you're doing right. I believe that you don't have more than one gargantuan record in your career. I don't think it's possible. You have a record like *Back in Black*. You have a record like *Synchronicity*. You have a record like *Nevermind*. Or you have a record like the Black album [*Metallica*]. But you don't have more than one like that. If you're stupid enough to think that *Load* is going to sell forty gazillion copies also, that's just sheer ignorance.

In recent years you've been criticized for selling out . . .

. . . every day.

For whatever reason a lot of fans wanted Metallica to continue making the same album, but different. Wouldn't it be selling out to try to make the Black album again?

Yeah, sometimes I feel like defending that [sellout charge]. Sometimes, I just go, "Yeah, I'm a fucking sellout. What do you care?" Sometimes I just like to be sarcastic about it. But to me, in all seriousness, if you really evaluate it, the true definition of selling out is not being creatively pure to yourself. That is it; there's nothing else. To put the same record out every two years in a different sleeve, if your heart is not in that, that is selling out. To—as you say—make the Black album again, that would be selling out. To put a record out in 1999 with new versions of "Fight Fire with Fire" and "Battery" that would be selling out because my heart and soul wouldn't be in it. Here we are doing what we want to do, and whether you like it or not is a whole separate issue, but don't call it selling out. Because we're just following our natural instincts as they're evolving and taking us in different creative directions.

"Sometimes I feel like defending that [sellout charge]. Sometimes, I just go, 'Yeah, I'm a fucking sellout. What do you care?'"

You could argue that Metallica's "no compromises" approach was even more evident with Load *and* Reload.

I think so. It's obvious that we're becoming more and more comfortable with doing it in our own way. I've got to be honest with you. I kind of revel a little bit in some of the shitstorm that's created. I have real issues with the way the hard rock community functions and thinks in terms of what you're supposed to do, what you're not supposed to do, how you're supposed to look, how you're not supposed to look. There's no other music form that really has these guidelines about how it's supposed to be, and I take great pleasure in challenging those as much as possible.

Do you miss the garage days at all, playing the clubs and traveling by bus?

I'd certainly be very happy if I never had to step on a tour bus again. But, yeah, I miss it sometimes. I miss it mostly because I like the fact that I didn't know then what I know now and there was an innocence to it. When you're 21 years old playing in a rock band, all you want to do is get drunk, get laid, play music. You don't care about anything. A few years later you wake up one morning and go, " Oh, that's kind of boring." Now I've got a wife and kid. Touring is a lot more of a chore now. Spending four weeks in Germany is just not my idea of a good time [*laughs*].

Could it be that you won't tour anymore?

No, it's never going to be that black-and-white. I draw a lot of inspiration from bands like R.E.M. who don't have set rules. We make records more often, we tour less, and we tour more sporadically. If you say, "I'm not going to tour anymore," then you're just waiting for the time you can call it "The Comeback Tour" and get twice as much money.

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DREAM TEAMS

Bands can learn a thing or two from jocks . . . and vice versa.

BY REVEREND BILLY C. WIRTZ

They begin with dreams. Almost every child dreams of being a famous athlete and/or a rock star. Most of them play a few years of Little League or jam with some guys from the neighborhood, and that's enough to get it out of their system. By the end of adolescence, Mel Bay books give way to accounting texts, and the old amp transforms into a shelf for the baseball trophies.

For some, though, the dream never quite goes away, and against the advice of parents, guidance counselors, and "youth leaders" at church camp, and often against our own common sense, we go for it. A few of us do become rich, world-famous superstars, but for the rest of us success is measured by our associations with and contributions to great teams. And that, when you think about it, is an accomplishment in itself.

Being able to throw a curve ball and play a shuffle are important skills, but unless you can work as part of a team, you won't pay many bills doing either. That's what we learned by speaking with a number of artists with strong opinions on the subject. These include Bob Greenlee, bassist and owner of Kingsnake Records, as well as former defensive tackle at Yale and a draft pick of the NFL's Miami Dolphins; Joe Keliikipi, leader of Average Joe, fresh off the H.O.R.D.E. tour; Mark Wenner, blues harp virtuoso with the Nighthawks since 1974

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and a thirty-year veteran of the bar band circuit; and Kevin Eubanks, jazz guitar giant, leader of the *Tonight Show* band, and, briefly, key player in a professional wrestling encounter involving Jay Leno and Hulk Hogan. Their reflections on sports, music, cooperation, and "the game" can help us become the kind of team players that emerge as winners in the long run.

"MICHAEL [JORDAN] RAISES EVERYBODY ELSE'S GAME. THAT DEFINITELY HAPPENS IN MUSIC TOO."

—Kevin Eubanks

BEGINNINGS

Greenlee: "I started playing sports right from jump street, junior high through high school. I started out in music playing an old flute that my granddad had laying around. I listened to the blues on WLAC late at night. The first instrument I played in bands was sax, back in the days of instrumental tunes like 'Tequila' and 'Raunchy.' I switched to bass when the British Invasion hit and no one wanted horn players."

Eubanks: "I never really played any organized sports. I was a short guy, and I was always the last guy to get picked, so it wasn't like, well, I'll pass up on sports to play music [*laughs*]. I started playing guitar at around twelve or thirteen. I had played other instruments before that, but when I went to see James Brown play, the guitar had a strobe light on it, and I got inspired."

Keliikipi: "It occurs to me that I started playing football because of a girl. [Music and team sports] are both deals where you do it to get girls [*laughs*]. Yeah, I had played a lot on the playground, but I started organized sports as a junior in high school because of a girl. I started playing music as a junior in college. The real reason I started messing around on guitar was, when I tore my thigh playing football, I came to Orlando and realized it was just too damn hot to play football. I started playing covers solo, and then after about a year I started writing my own stuff."

Wenner: "I'd have to go back to Elvis' second movie. I went to see it with my brother. I was eight, he was seven; we were probably the only males there, and the girls were screaming! The theater seethed with this energy that, as an eight-year-old, I hadn't been aware of before. The movie made a phenomenal impression on me: In the last scene he comes in, and he's wearing jeans with cuffs, engineer boots, and a denim jacket—and that's basically been my uniform ever since. I've come in and out of fashion about four times since then [*laughs*]. I took to putting goop in my hair and standing in front of a mirror with a broom, lip-synching to Elvis records. I never in my wildest dreams aspired to do it; it was more the harmonica that led me into actually playing."

TEAMWORK

Wenner: "You're functioning as a team, the way you're out there in the world. You're traveling together, you're eating together, you're on the road together. If you're an athlete, it's the game. If you're a musician, it's the gig. But the rest of it comes down to a very similar road life."

Eubanks: "When I first got to New York, I was learning from everybody. Of course, the people you go out on the road with, you learn the most from, because every day you're going through some of the same experiences they are, with the traveling, playing, and stuff like that. You learn a lot, you learn more than you think."

Wenner: "Whether you're in a bus or some kind of van, as a team or a band, going from place to place, you're trying to keep your sanity from the boredom and rigors of travel. Imagine a team that flies cross-country, and there's a three-hour time difference, but they have to play at a certain time, which is not the time of day they're used to playing. A band is almost the same thing, when a musician ends up somewhere where his body clock says it's eleven in the morning and he's supposed to play at eleven at night. So you deal with the rigors of the road, and when it comes time for the game or the gig, you have to be in that frame of mind to go out and take care of business. And it's a similar psyche thing in that you do all this together. As a teammate or a bandmate, you may not share external interests other than doing the gig or doing the game, but because of this one thing you do, you end up with people you might not share a lot of time with on other levels of your life."

Greenlee: "I played defense. I had to cover for the next guy. I couldn't be out of position, doing some freaky freelance thing, any more than I would start playing some outback jazz chorus in the middle of the blues. You have to be part of what's going on. If the defense moves, you gotta move with them; that teamwork aspect is important. It's the same with a band. There's nothing sadder than to have people in a band who don't like each other."

Keliikipi: "Playing team sports does help with that, because you don't always like the guys you play with—you may not like them at all—but you learn to play together because you have the same goal."

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Eubanks: "What people take away from it is the feel. Everybody wants to play the great solos, to be this and be that; that's icing on the top. But what people really take away from a performance is a certain feel, whether they left the concert feeling good or feeling stronger, or feeling whatever it is. They might not remember each individual solo, but if they take away something good from the whole thing, you got a fan, and jazz fans are fans for life."

Wenner: "I really have to credit a pal of mine, Malcolm Wesselink, with this; he's now the basketball coach at Phillips Exeter Academy. Back in the early Seventies we traveled together and discussed some of these concepts: If you look at a five-man basketball team and a five-man band, and at what happens to each of them physically as a group in the course of an evening in front of an audience, it's an event for which they've got to be prepared, but each evening is different. Even if you're working from a similar set list as a band, you still go out there to entertain a different audience each night. You view the audience as the other team, and the challenge is to win them over. . . . Actually, I like to look at the audience as a woman to be seduced and ravished [*laughs*]."

Greenlee: "If you're part of the rhythm section, your job is to get the groove going. I mean, the rhythm section is definitely part of the defensive line [*laughs*]. There's no doubt about it."

Wenner: "Going back to basketball, there's a very similar thing as to what's going on and where everybody's looking and what's happening. The ball is the thing: The team gets the ball, and then they set up the court, go to their spots. There's always motion: One guy is dribbling, the ball is always moving, and then *boom*, there's a pass, and *boom*, a pass back to him. There's this interaction, and then *boom*, hopefully someone makes a basket. Think about it: A song starts, and a guy's singing—that's like he's setting up the play. He's got the ball, and he's dribbling it, and everybody's watching him—and *baboom*, there's a pass off to the guitar player, and the guitar player moves it around for his solo, and *baboom*, he passes it back, or maybe he passes it to the piano player, who passes it back to the singer. This movement, the dynamic of a pass, is the same as, when it's right, my solo's over and now it's your solo. It's a dramatic shift of who's got the ball and who's doing what with it.

"In a basketball game, then, there would be the equivalent of hundreds of short songs. In each night during three sets, you might have thirty plays. The length of the plays may be different, but the dynamic is really the same in terms of where everybody's looking. Then it moves, it comes to completion, there's a pause, and then it starts all over again."

Eubanks: "I guess it's kinda like, yeah, you could come up and take the jumper every time, but if you get the whole team involved, then everybody's doing his part. The different ways you can play a game are the different ways that a band can be effective. That's not just with one person soloing; it's with the whole band feeling this way. That takes the music past what just one person can do. Of course, sometimes you have people like John Coltrane, who make everybody ride to a different level and a different intensity, and that starts a whole other thing. It's kind of like what Michael does for the Bulls: He raises everybody else's game, and that definitely happens in music too."

TEAM PLAYERS

Greenlee: "In football you just don't freelance. It's the same if I'm doing a blues session: We want people to play their parts. We don't want a bunch of overplaying; that's just not happening in what we do."

Keliikipi: "I would ask, 'Do they work well with others?' before I'd ask, 'Are they great musicians?' Our bass player was a section's champ basketball player. I didn't know that until later, but I could kind of tell when it came to things like loading in and out. Some people who have played sports, they never question the work; they work together. Athletes are also real good at taking directions."

Eubanks: "It's hard to tell somebody [to do] those things. It's easier if a young player already has a certain level of

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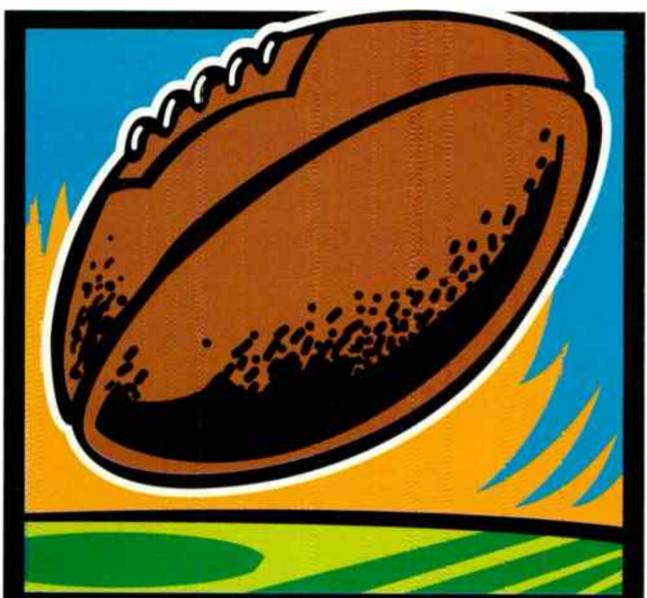
respect for you, and they're coming in looking to learn something. Another person might be coming in like, 'I'm bad. I'm gonna break all doors down and do it my way.' That kind of person is hard to say anything to. But if you have somebody who's open to listening and they're a really great player, then by pure example you can express a lot to them. I mean, you just do the best that you can, and if you really mean it honestly, somehow everything else around you will be okay. But if you have a sense of selfishness about it, that will come through too."

Wenner: "When you get a guy who you know is going to want to be your basic cocky frontman, he's a very likely come-and-go. We're very team-oriented; we've had some players come and go because they decided they wanted to be out in front a little more. We've still got three out of the four original members we've had since 1974; the spotlight does get shared, and everybody's got an active part in the presentation."



"CALLING THE WRONG SONG IS LIKE CALLING THE WRONG PLAY. YOU WATCH IT FALL FLAT, THEN YOU REGROUP AND TRY SOMETHING ELSE."

—Mark Wenner (The Nighthawks)

then *boom*, and you move downfield; that's what a good segue, a good sequence, does. There are certain songs that I know if one works, I know which one I'm going to next. Sometimes I'll try to second-guess myself, just to keep it interesting for me and the band."

THE GAME

Greenlee: "Sports is an obsession, and music is an obsession. You have to be born to do either of them on a competitive level. They're both extremely competitive, because everybody wants to make a living doing something that's fun."

Keliikipi: "There's kind of an obligation to play. If you're gifted at a sport, you almost feel like, God gave me this, I have to play. It's the same way if you're a gifted singer or musician."

Wenner: "It takes about ten years to master your craft or your game. Then it takes another ten years to learn what to do with it. Somewhere, at around twenty years, you go from being a craftsman to being an artist. Then you can actually go out, do the thing, have something to say and know how to say it."

Eubanks: "Art Blakey told us to serve the music and not have the music serve us. Try to reach the level of the music. The music is always up there, waiting for you to get it."

QUARTERBACKS

Greenlee: "Every team has to have a quarterback, somebody who can make the decisions. Democracies don't work."

Keliikipi: "I've seen more bands break up because they've got two chiefs, or four chiefs, or six chiefs. Even if it's little things, like the bass is too loud, somebody has to have the authority to say, 'Okay, it's too loud!' From little things to big career moves, too much tugging in either direction can pull it all apart."

Eubanks: "Sometimes the burden of it weighs psychologically on you, because you have to deal with so many things and you have to take a lot of care not to abuse the position."

Wenner: "Nothing is written down. I try to read the audience and guess where they're at and where I want to take them. Calling the wrong song is like calling the wrong play for sure: You watch it fall flat, and then you regroup and try something else. Calling the right series of songs is very similar to a quarterback calling the right series of plays. It's *boom*, and

THE DREAM

Learning to play as part of a team is crucial to success in music. It also increases the chances that after years of practice, disappointments, and paying dues, you'll reach those rare moments when everything clicks, and the band, the audience, and the music go together to another level. Some call it the Zone: It's that point where everything flows effortlessly, time stands still, and there's a surreal quality to the moment.

It's the moment that musicians, like athletes, live for.

It's like being in a dream.

Contributors: Reverend Billy C. Wirtz is a contributing editor to Musician, *a recording and touring artist for High Tone Records, and tall enough to play in the NBA.*

World Radio History

editor's pick

The Beauty and the Beast

by michael gelfand

DigiTech's BP8 Valve preamp/processor unleashes the full power of your bass.

That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger, and in the case of bassists nothing has emboldened our low-end endeavors more than other musicians—particularly guitarists—telling us what we can't do. Back when the electric bass was invented, many people used to say "You can't plug a bass in," "the bass should be felt, not heard," and other axioms that time has since proven wrong. Given these misguided notions of the past, you'd think people would stop trying to convince us that the bass *has* to be plugged directly into an amp.

That argument may have had some merit years ago, when running a bass signal through a bunch of effects usually meant squashing the living hell out of the lower frequencies. But it's not necessarily the case any more. Technical strides have made it possible for bassists to use effects that don't introduce the tone sucking problems of yore—and furthermore, there's no law that says guitarists, keyboardists, and vocalists are the only musicians qualified to enjoy the fruits of effects. I mean, come on—Miles Davis broke the rules by playing his horn through a delay pedal.

This kind of unconventional creativity is just what we see from the folks at DigiTech, whose user-programmable BP8 Valve vacuum tube bass preamp/processor ($449) opens up new frontiers for bassists who want to reveal their inner poetry. With an arsenal of great-sounding effects and precise tone-shaping capability, the BP8 is positioned to radically shift the balance of power within the traditional band format, which means all you guitarists out there with your skinny little strings are finally gonna get what's coming to you.

the gist

The BP8's rugged metal chassis and assortment of lights, buttons, and dials give it the familiar look and feel of a traditional guitar multieffect pedalboard, but if you skip the manual and dive right in, you'll find that this is no typical guitar processor with the word "bass" stenciled on the outside. Forty factory presets run the gamut from dry-and-clean tube amp sounds to wet-and-wild fantasia, and a quick jaunt through them will give you a strong sense of the deep potential that awaits within once you start creating and storing your own sounds.

The BP8 is equipped with a tube preamp (a single 12AX7) that offers both tube and solid-state voicings with a complement of full bandwidth effects, all of which are referred to as "parameters" in BP8 lingo. Each sound, whether a factory preset or a user-defined program, is built from a combination of available parameters set to specific "values": You can use the BP8's monstrous capabilities to create your own perfect sounds through a simple process of editing and storing each parameter's values, setting the INPUT and OUTPUT levels, and choosing the best route to connect up to your amp(s) or a mixing board.

But such a serious piece of gear needs to be fully understood and properly controlled before it can be used correctly, which means you really should read through the manual with the BP8 sitting at your feet. Once you've absorbed the manual and familiarized yourself with all of the various controls, you'll be ready to enter new realms of sonic creativity.

the nitty gritty

To operate the BP8, you need to access the user interface, which is viewed via an alphanumeric LED panel; the pedalboard employs six major footswitches, along with other controls that we'll deal with in a minute, to maneuver through the interface. Two large MODE OUTPUT footswitches sit in the middle of the board, while four footswitches, numbered 1 through 4, line the bottom of the board; pressing the two MODE OUTPUT footswitches simultaneously for a second toggles between BANK and PROGRAM modes. The BANK mode lets you scroll through the factory

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DigiTech BASS

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and user banks (ten each), using either the "up" or "down" MODE OUTPUT footswitch.

The PROGRAM mode uses the MODE OUTPUT footswitches to toggle through the same factory and user banks, but unlike BANK mode you scroll through the banks one program at a time.

Stepping on different combinations of footswitches activates various functions. Stepping on the MODE OUTPUT footswitches at the same time and holding them down for three seconds lets you select the BP8's output mode (dual mono, stereo, or biamp). (In biamp mode, the left output sends low frequencies, and the right output handles high frequencies, with a selectable crossover point between 80Hz and 500Hz.)

The parameter matrix, which displays all of the effects and parameters found in the BP8, resides across from the MODE OUTPUT footswitches. Horizontal effect LEDs and vertical parameter LEDs provide a visual representation of the effects (COMPRESSOR, PREAMP, EQUALIZER, GATE, EXPRESSION, WAH, MOD/PITCH, DELAY, REVERB) and their respective parameter values; you can check, scroll through, edit, and store parameters and values via the VALUE and PARAMETER SELECT buttons that sit next to the LED display window. (The PARAMETER SELECT buttons are only active in EDIT mode.)

The display window, which is prominently located above the parameter matrix at the top of the pedalboard, shows operating and programming information in two parts: A numeric LED displays whether you're in a user/factory bank, the bank number and program number in use, while a three-LED column shows whether a signal is present and whether it is being compressed or is clipping, and whether an edited parameter needs to be stored. (The CLIP light only shows *analog* clipping; digital clipping is displayed in the parameter matrix when the third vertical LED from the top flashes.)

The only remaining pedalboard features are INPUT and OUTPUT knobs and a large expression pedal; the level knobs are to the right of the PARAMETER SELECT buttons, while the expression pedal, which provides real-time control over whatever parameter it's linked to, is to the far right of the pedalboard.

The rear panel consists of a 1/4" input jack, a 1/4" headphone jack, left and right 1/4" output jacks, a 1/8" "Jam-Along" jack that's intended for plugging in your CD player or cassette deck, and an AC line input that's equipped with a strain relief for the included AC cord.

Figure 1: *A close-up view of the BP8's parameter matrix.*

the sound

There are lots of features and functions that need to be understood for the BP8 to be used to its fullest potential, but once you've reached this point of enlightenment—and the learning curve is not nearly as steep as you might think—all your hard work will prove well worth the effort. The BP8 delivers a wide variety of tonal options (none of which ever step on your bass's character), and the broad palette of sonic tools and lush stereo effects make it all but impossible to not come up with spellbinding sounds.

Each of the bypassable parameters offers a great amount of control, and it'll take a bit of experimentation before you become familiar with how small adjustments can affect the overall sound. For instance, there are four different COMPRESSOR types, and each one has a distinctive EQ filter; adjusting the attack time, threshold, ratio, and gain can dramatically affect how the compressor works. Using it in conjunction with the PREAMP, you can seriously shape the dynamic character of your sound. The PREAMP offers thirteen discernibly different preamp sounds (from WARM TUBE to SATURATED TUBE DISTORTION), gain, and separate level controls for when the preamp is on or off.

The rest of the parameters offer the same level of adjustability: The EQUALIZER offers a four-band, sweepable EQ with +/-15dB of boost/cut; two NOISE GATE types offer five attack times each; there are three different wah types, a litany of MOD/PITCH effects (chorus, flanger, phaser, tremolo, panner, pitch-shift, bend, fretless simulation, octabass, envelope filter), one- and two-tap DELAY, and nine REVERB types. (Every effect but the COMPRESSOR, PREAMP, EQ, and GATE can be linked to the expression pedal for real-time control.)

I used the factory presets as building blocks to create sounds. By listening to their character, looking at each parameter's values, copying select presets to user programs, and making my own edits, I was able to craft sound programs and arrange them logically within the brains of the BP8. It's up to you whether to access sounds via BANK or PROGRAM mode.

connect the dots

Here's an example of how to create a sound: I copied DigiTech's "Reggae Mon" factory setting and stored it to a user location in order to change it from a dub bass sound to a heavily distorted sound with more midrange bite and a bit of delay. I changed the preamp setting from CLN5 (clean5) to OD (overdrive), boosting the gain and the preamp bypass level.

The original sound relied on compression for most of its EQ, but I wanted more of a grinding midrange, so I adjusted the frequencies and amount of boost for each of the four EQ bands, turned off the noise gate, linked the expression pedal to DELAY, switched on the delay, selected the stereo two-tap delay, changed the delay's effect level, set the delay time and feedback (the amount of delayed signal fed back to the effect)—and *voilá*, instant psychedelic fuzz bass. Not bad for five minutes' work, eh?

Overall, there's little to criticize here. Considering its wealth of talents and low price tag, the BP8 is the perfect tool for bass players who practice at home, record in studios, and perform onstage—that's probably all of us. If you've been searching for a way to enhance your bass sound and make it express all that's in your soul, there's no better way than the BP8. Trust me—your guitarist will be green with envy.

Thanks to Paul Howard at DigiTech.

World Radio History

The Korg D8

Studio on a Stick

by julian colbeck

A digital recording studio in your home for under a few thousand dollars? Is it too good to be true?

It used to be so simple. Homes were places you lived in. Recording studios were places you went to in order to cut an album. They were professional places of Great Science and Mystery, places staffed by men (always) in white coats (mostly). We're talking, what, just thirty years ago?

Cracks began to appear in this cozy scenario when Paul McCartney and bands like Yes and Genesis amassed enough money to install studio facilities in their country retreats. Soon after that, serious aspiring songwriters started buying Revoxes and Roland Space Echoes, and before long the recording world was turned upside-down by TASCAM and the so-named Portastudio™.

Meanwhile, the professional recording studio, with its evil ticking studio clock, was given its last rites. . . . But, wait! As the Eighties droned on, the only significant casualty turned out to be your friendly neighborhood, egg-carton-ceilinged *demo* studio. Pro studios proliferated, fueled by a gazillion Portastudio™-wielding songwriters coming in to add gloss to their grainy four-track efforts.

The Eighties offered home studio-ites some choice of recording tool, but the choice of medium, for all but a handful of adventurous souls wandering down the Akai 1212 path, was analog tape. You went for reel-to-reel if you had the time, room, and money, cassette if you didn't.

Then came digital.

Digital didn't exactly blow in like Hurricane Monica. In fact, it crept in slowly, first as a house-priced facility on block-priced instruments like the Synclavier, then dressed up as that quasi musical instrument called a sampler, then cunningly glued onto lengths of videotape . . . F1, DAT, hard disk, bubble memory, proprietary digital tape, sound cards on the coattails of a sequencer, MiniDisc, CD-R . . . *help!* What does it all mean? What do I really need?

Let's face it, there's more crap talked about digital and its various possibilities, freedoms, and cost-savings than you'd hear in a green room full of A&R guys after an MTV awards show. But digital *is* tempting. Digital *is* where it's at. Today I really can have a top-flight digital recording studio, the facilities of which George Martin would have killed for on *Abbey Road*, on a stick. On my Pentium II.

Can't I?

basic choices

This isn't the place to discuss the audio merits of digital vs. analog, nor even the place to talk about life expectancy of the various digital media—though do at least be aware that the shelf life of any digital medium is based largely on presumption and speculation; digital is simply too young to have yet been proved reliable. What we're looking at here is the range of all-in-one digital recording possibilities

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for non-commercial applications, with costs that max out in the low thousands.

Your first thoughts should be to assess the pros and cons of a system centered around a computer or one centered around a piece of hardware. The choice is one of style and personality as much as anything else. What do you want for a control surface—a screen and a mouse, or physical faders and knobs? Whichever path you choose, the tasks, the sounds, the features, and even the results will be pretty much the same.

Computer-centered systems have the lure of upgradability, in terms of add-ons and plug-ins—things that you can at least metaphorically bolt onto an existing system, like effects processors. But how long does anyone keep his or her PC or Mac these days? Two years? Three at the most? Processors, operating systems, memory—all continue to yo-yo in price and power weekly. The reality is that you'll want to make a clean change on a computer-centered system just as quickly as you'd feel the need to overhaul a hardware-based system.

In terms of ergonomics, computer-based systems seem preferable: A sound card takes up less table space than most physical recorders. But consider changes of venue: What's easier to toss into the back of the van—a single box measuring 30" by 20" by 10", or a monitor, CPU, keyboard, eight miles of cabling, plus a couple of doodad boxes? Never mind losing your e-mail—consider repairs. Consider other parties, or tasks, that may also depend on your computer.

What about expense? Consider the cost of a digital audio card against the cost of a hardware-centered hard disk recorder, and once again we're leaning toward the software side. Now factor in the cost of the computer, the monitor, the fixits and upgrades, and the time it'll take you to figure it all out. Not so clear, eh?

The bottom line is that software-based systems offer more if you're prepared to put in the effort. Hardware-based systems tend to be quicker to learn, because they have fewer options.

hardware

So you're a bit wary of computers wigging out on you, trashing your life's work one otherwise sunny morning? True techno-skeptics should perhaps be more wary of dedicated hard disk recorders, physical objects that'll store your songs on slices of memory, either in the machine or on large-capacity removable media.

And what about digital tape systems (video-type S-VHS)? The Alesis ADAT and TASCAM DA-88 have become industry-standard digital multitrack formats. (ADAT predominates in music-only applications, while the DA-88 pretty much owns the post-production market.) All linear digital tape systems store audio in a pure, uncompressed format, and they allow you to archive data by hooking up two machines and copying one tape to another—much easier and cheaper than backing up a hard disk system. But it's not an all-in-one solution. It is a recording medium, pure and simple. In and of itself, it offers limited editing and no processing to speak of, though obviously many people feel comfortable handling their audio tracks with tape systems and using their computer or external devices for mixing, processing, and tweaking. And it's not inexpensive: A studio based on a tape-based system will probably cost upwards of $5,000, once you've got all the rest of the gear.

Then there's the MiniDisc. Like cassette-based Portastudio™s, these units offer recording and mixing capabilities in one package. Most MiniDisc machines offer four-track recording, though Yamaha recently released the MD-8 eight-track, and it seems likely that the other MiniDisc champions, TASCAM and Sony, will do the same.

But the Achilles heel of the MiniDisc is the data compression system it uses to squish multitrack digital audio onto 140mB MDD (MiniDisc data disks). Considering that ATRAC (Adaptive TRansform Acoustic Coding) compresses data almost 5:1, the audio deficiencies are really not that great. But they are there. If you want to bounce tracks, expect to lose the gloss of MD's digital sheen pretty rapidly.

If you're already using a sequencer, MD systems normally come with MIDI ports and a variety of sync options (MTC, MMC), so you can run the recorder from, and with, your computer. This is a matter only of synchronization rather than the sexy fusing of MIDI and audio tracks on one screen, but the results can be the same and it's a whole lot less problematic. (Some hard disk systems, including the Fostex FD-4 and the Akai DR8/16, come with MIDI jacks as well, and can be synched to MIDI sequencer tracks via MIDI Time Code and/or MIDI Machine Control.)

Great: MiniDisc offers digital features like random access (homing in on a song, or a part, in an instant), undo, minimal noise (both a lack of tape-like wow and flutter, and silent running, without the whirring hard disk or chattering Zip drive noises you get on dedicated computer and HD systems), at a knock-down price, with a very low learning curve.

Roland's VS-880EX

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Not so great: MiniDisc often has problems with backup in the digital domain, is quite expensive ($20), isn't universally available, and has some limitations in its sound.

dedicated hard disk

Hardware-centered hard disk recorders offer digital power in a hands-on package that doesn't drain your computer processing power. The problem with choosing between dedicated hard disk recorders is that there is no standard terminology or connectivity, either with each other or with computers: Units that do essentially the same thing are called MDMs (modular digital multitracks), digital workstations, digital personal studios, etc.

Systems range from genuine all-in-one types like the Korg D8, Akai DPS12, and Roland VS-880, to recorder-only units (you'll also need a mixer) like the Fostex D90, to systems that are hybrid software and hardware, such as Ensoniq's PARIS and Lexicon's Studio.

On all systems, virtual tracks abound, restricted by the amount of storage you have available or the time you need to record, so even though systems are advertised as 8- or 16-track, you aren't necessarily limited to—or, conversely, offered—this precise number. The **Korg D8**, for example, offers eight tracks of digital recording with no compression. You might be a little cramped for space with its internal 1.4 gig hard drive, but you can contact the computer/storage world outside via SCSI, and you have bags of convenient features, like built-in effects, instant input for guitarists (you won't need a preamp), and even onboard drum patterns.

Meanwhile, the **Akai DPS12** offers twelve record tracks but compromises a bit on sound quality and has the noisy old Jaz drive to contend with. And the **Roland VS** series, of which only the VS-1680 is beyond the financial range of this article, offers the smooth running you'd expect from this company, and though the baby VS-840 is shackled to the Zip drive medium, the VS-880 offers a choice of external storage media.

The stock in trade of dedicated hard disk recorders is CD-quality uncompressed (or if compressed, as in the Roland VS series, nearly inaudibly so) multitrack recording, with the digital advantages of copy, cut, and paste. More expensive units may offer genuine non-destructive editing, which means you won't eat up space or alter the original recording when you copy or manipulate a section.

The Fostex FD-4

Built-in effects are a staple, which is good and bad. Effects on tap are handy, but the phrase *plug-in* lends a compelling allure to software-based systems. Plug-ins for hard disk systems tend to be just that: You buy an effects unit, and you literally plug it in. On the other hand, a software plug-in can cost as much as $1,000 and is only usable with one piece of host software; hardware-based effects units, which start at around $200, can be used with *any* audio system, analog or digital, software- or hardware-based.

How much editing do you want to do? Do you spend five minutes singing a phrase and five hours editing it on a waveform editor, or would you rather just sing it again? Consider the fact that dedicated hard disk recorders are great for cut, copy, and paste, but aside from a few units such as the Akai DR16 and DR8, with their graphic display option, they're not going to offer sample-by-sample editing.

These hard disk systems normally offer a full range of MIDI synching options that let your MIDI sequencer and its host computer handle and process your MIDI tracks while you handle just the audio. This approach tends to get messy only if you have a lot of MIDI tracks to assimilate into your final recording and your dedicated hard disk unit runs out of tracks or effects. With careful management of virtual tracks, a good solution is often to record your final MIDI data onto your hard disk recorder, so at least everything ends up under the same roof.

Great: A dedicated hard disk recorder offers computer-like control without sapping power from your computer. Being dedicated units, they have a learning curve that's restricted to understanding a single piece of equipment rather than several plus their attendant hook-up problems.

Not so great: What you get at first is what you tend to get stuck with; upgrades are neither very easy nor prevalent. Plug-ins tend to be physical. Though sync is possible, there are clear-cut separations between the technologies of dedicated digital audio and MIDI.

A final thought: Hybrid hardware/sound card systems like **Ensoniq PARIS** and **Lexicon Studio** are admirably flexible and musicianly. With their plug-ins, direct access to effects, and upgradability, PARIS and Studio may well offer the best of both worlds: computer power, with physical controls.

Contributors: *Julian Colbeck is the self-described "major dude" at Keyfax Software, and author of the Keyfax Keyboard buyer's guides.*

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1 Generalmusic Equinox 61 and 76

Generalmusic's new pro synths offer all the features of a flagship workstation at a reasonable price. The 61-key Equinox ($1,995) and 76-key Equinox ($2,195) both feature 64-voice polyphony. Equipped with 16 MB of RAM, both synths come standard with over 1000 sounds, and both can read samples from floppy disk, CD-ROM, SyQuest, Zip, Jaz, and others in a wide variety of formats. User RAM for samples is expandable up to 40 MB. An onboard "Groove Machine" provides over 1200 fully-editable, pre-programmed rhythms, and the built-in sequencer allows for 16-track recording with a capacity of 250,000 events/16 songs, resolution of 1/192 ppq, groove quantize, and other editing functions. There are 32 MIDI channels and 16 programmable MIDI zones with eight programmable sliders, eight assignable buttons, two wheels, and three assignable pedals. Optional features include a 2 Gig internal hard disk, and a SCSI interface to allow loading and saving to CD-ROM, Zip, Jaz, external hard drive, and other devices. ➤ ***Generalmusic Corp., 1164 Tower Lane, Bensenville, IL 60106; (630) 766-8230; www.generalmusic.com***

2 PureSound MM-1 Mic-Mute

One way to instantly improve your stage sound is to add Mic-Mutes to your live setup. Placed between microphone and mic cable, this pager-sized device uses an infrared beam of light to detect when a performer is near, automatically turning the mic on when the user approaches and silently switching it off when the user moves away. The Mic-Mute eliminates background noise and bleed-through of other instruments into unused mics, and also allows you to kill feedback by simply moving out of the "hot" zone. The range is adjustable from 3" to 3', and a red LED lamp indicates when the mic is "on". In addition to the battery-powered MM-1 Dynamic ($199) [pictured below] and MM-2 Standard ($249), PureSound is now offering four phantom powered models, including the standard in-line connector-equipped MM-3 Phantom ($299). ➤ ***PureSound, 1012 Morse Ave., Suite 19, Sunnyvale, CA 94089-1634; (408) 744-1321; www.puresound.net***

3 Prime Amplifier PM-50 P.A./keyboard amp

If you're a vocalist or keyboardist in need of a self-contained, portable amplifier, Prime's two-channel, 60-watt combo amp warrants your attention. Each channel features a 1/4" line input, XLR mic input, and individual gain controls, allowing the user to amplify his or her instrument and sing through the P.A. simultaneously. The RCA input—also with individual gain control—enables playback from a cassette deck, CD player, or other music source, so you can accompany pre-recorded performances. Master controls include bass, high, reverb, and master volume. Other features include a 10" bass driver and high frequency tweeter, a standard socket for tripod stand-mounting, a 1/4" headphone output jack, and an on/off switch with LED status light. The PM-50 ($249.95) weighs 31 lbs., and comes with a one-year limited warranty. ➤ ***Music Industries Corp., 99 Tulip Ave., Suite 101, Floral Park, NY 11001; (516) 352-4110; www.musicindustries.com***

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4 Pignose G-60VR guitar amp and B-100V bass amp

Traditionally, Pignose amps have been cloaked in brown, but the company has broken with tradition and covered a pair of new models in black tolex (prototype—in brown—pictured below). The switch was made to make the new units as rugged and roadworthy as possible. The G-60VR ($599) features a 12" speaker, 60 watts RMS/120+ watts of peak power, reverb, effects loop with send and return jacks, and high/low sensitivity switch. Front panel controls include volume, master volume, treble, mid, bass, reverb, and presence. The B-100V ($699) utilizes six tubes (two 12AX7A preamp tubes and four 6L6GC power tubes), and features a 15" speaker and 100 watts RMS/200+ watts of peak power. Its front panel controls include volume, treble, mid, bass, and presence. ➤ ***Pignose, 400 W. Alondra Blvd., Gardena, CA 90248; (323) 770-4444; www.pignose.com***

5 Neumann M 147 Tube microphone

Any Neumann carrying a list price under $2,000 is certainly news. Built around their K 47 capsule—responsible for the warmth and clarity of the U 47 and U 47 FET—the M 147 transformerless tube microphone ($1,995) exhibits an acoustically well-balanced frequency response (20Hz-20kHz) and features a supercardioid polar pattern with even attenuation of signals from the rear of the microphone. The M 147 has unusually low self-noise for a tube mic (13 dB-A) though it can handle extremely loud signals (up to 130 dB SPL) without distortion. An aluminum carrying case with a standard mount, power supply, and cable is included. ➤ ***Neumann USA, One Enterprise Dr., Old Lyme, CT 06371; (860) 434-5220; www.neumannusa.com***

6 Sibelius mu[...] notation softw[...]

Sibelius for Windows ($599) was [...] British composers/computer [...] by two seemingly ideal candidates for creat[...] that allows you to notate, edit, play back[...]rs, professional-looking scores. Starting [...] electronic replica of manuscript paper users [...] music notes using a mouse or computer keybo[...] "play" the notes into their PC with a standard [...] instrument. Completed manuscripts can then be printed on common inkjet and laser printers, or simply published on the Web. In playback mode, Sibelius does more than just read the musical markings and cue the instrumental sounds; the Espressivo feature adds phrasing and expression, creating a more realistic performance. Included are a number of plug-ins that allow music scanning, checking for parallel fifths and/or octaves, and writing note names above notes. And, using the built-in computer language called ManuScript, you can write your own plug-in features. A Mac version is expected in mid '99. ➤ ***Sibelius Software, The Helms Building, Suite 216, 8800 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034; (888) 4-SIBELIUS; www.sibelius.com***

6

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From Hendrix to Home Stud

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Photo: Allen Clark/Thunder Image Group

Hands-on insights from veteran producer/engineer Eddie Kramer.

by howard massey

Heavy metal may owe its heart and soul to Hendrix and Led Zeppelin, but it owes its powerhouse sound to Eddie Kramer. The diminutive South African engineer/producer not only worked with both artists in their heyday but later went on to produce such second-generation metal mainstays as Kiss, Anthrax, and Twisted Sister, as well as mainstream artists like Carly Simon, Brownsville Station, and Peter Frampton. Clearly, the guy's got a résumé to kill for. More importantly, through the years he's developed a distinct sonic signature that has made him a true legend in record production.

Which is not to say the guy's a dinosaur—these days, he's as busy as ever, working with a variety of both new and established bands, as well as continuing to remix and remaster previously unreleased Hendrix material. (His latest, a double CD called *Jimi Hendrix: Live at the Fillmore East*, is scheduled for release in early 1999.) He's also finding time in his busy schedule to serve in an advisory capacity to the MARS chain of music stores. "The underlying thrust in my association with MARS is education," he tells us, "and I'm very attracted to that because I want to pass on to the next generation of kids something of what I've learned. It's a great gift we can give to our kids, to educate them musically."

One of the chain's most innovative concepts is the inclusion of a working studio facility within each store so that customers can try out equipment in its intended environment, and Kramer is assisting with the design of these new facilities as well as teaching selected courses on studio production techniques. "The idea is to serve three different areas: Obviously, it's primarily a retail environment, but it's also a school for teaching kids, and it's a recording studio. After the store closes at eight or nine o'clock at night, you can come in and do some serious work."

So let's get down to brass tacks: Exactly how do you go about getting that famous Kramer sound? "Ah, record companies pay me millions of dollars for that information," he says with a twinkle in his eye. "You think I'm gonna tell you that for free?" Fortunately, the guy is putting me on. "To start with, I'm a great believer in getting the sound right then and there, put it on tape, and don't think about it anymore. I'll print with effects, I'll print with dynamics processing. The bottom line is, if I hear a sound in my head, I'm going to go for it—I'm going to print it to tape. If I'm a little concerned about not being able to change it afterwards, I might print the effects to spare tracks.

"You don't have to use a lot of radical EQ in order to get great sounds if you choose microphones for their particular qualities and put them in the right place," he continues. "But I do like to commit to the sound in my head. I'll do whatever I need to do, whether it's gating, compression, EQ, whatever it is, so I don't have to work so hard later. It's true that you could print each mic on a separate track and fiddle with it later, but that's bullshit, really; you'd be sitting there for hours. If I can't get a drum sound in twenty minutes, then I walk out. Boom, end of story."

Although Kramer tends to use a lot of mics when recording drum kits, he insists it can be done just as well with two or three carefully selected and positioned mics. "A bass drum mic and one or two overhead mics—that's all you need to get a great drum sound. But they've got to be good quality mics—you can't use cheap ones," he cautions. "Put a Shure SM52 or SM91 inside the bass drum and a good condenser at the center, the 'sweet spot' of the kit. For an overhead, I'd go for a [Neumann] U 67 or U 47, the new Shure KSM32, or maybe an [AKG] C12. I wouldn't use a [AKG] 414; I'm not a big 414 fan. You need a really high-quality condenser mic; otherwise, you might as well just forget it, you're not going to get a great drum sound—I don't care what anybody says."

Finding the "sweet spot" is a matter of both listening closely and factoring in the acoustics of the room. "You want to pick a room that has good acoustics, because that's half the battle," Kramer tells us. "A great microphone, a great-sounding kit, a great drummer, and great acoustics, and you can't go wrong. Listen to the stuff we did with Bonham—that's three mics on a kit, in a great-sounding room with a great drummer. He was the world's greatest rock drummer, I think."

But many home studios have less than optimum acoustic qualities, so what kinds of room treatments can help? "If your studio is in a garage, where it's fairly live, you have a good chance of getting something halfway decent," explains Kramer. But then he confides the biggest secret to creating an acceptable acoustic environment: "Packing blankets. They're the best, cheapest way of deadening down a room quick; gaffer-tape them to the wall, that's it. They're also great for making a tunnel for a bass drum, so you don't get any high end coming down the mic. How cheap is a packing blanket—eight bucks? They're wonderful. Very, very effective, and I don't know a recording studio that doesn't have a healthy supply of them—that's part of the deal. Let me tell you, packing blankets have saved my ass in every situation you can think of!

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"Also, you can buy 8'-by-4' sheets of 1" rigid fiberglass at a good hardware store, and just wrap it with some nice fabric, pin it to the wall, and there you go. That'll run you about twenty bucks. RPG makes a really good diffusor—those are tough to make yourself—for just over a hundred dollars. Put a couple of those in the corners, throw up some rigid fiberglass, and you're set. If you have a budget of a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars, you can do wonders in treating the acoustics of a home studio."

But what if you've got the opposite problem—an overly dead room, like one that's got acoustic panels in the ceiling? Kramer pauses momentarily. "Well, that's a tough problem. Try lining the room with 8'-by-4' sheets of plywood, the walls, the floor, the ceiling, everything, though you might as well rebuild the room if you're going to do that. It's much easier to go the other way around, so if you're building a room from scratch, build it live; you can always deaden it down later."

And the Kramer approach to recording vocals? "Kill all singers. No, just kidding. It's really a question of, what are you looking for in the song? The song and the singer's tonality dictates the vocal approach. When we do Paul Rodgers' vocals, he uses a [Shure] SM57, hand-held, in the control room. The band is kicking ass in the studio, and he's in the control room with me with the monitors blasting, and often that's the final take, that's the keeper. If you get that great performance, who cares if there's a little leakage? But some singers just sound terrible on [Shure] SM57s and you have to give them a high-quality mic like a [Neumann] U 87, U 47 or U 67. Very few singers, unfortunately, know microphone technique enough that they don't need a pop screen, so I always use a nylon windscreen. As far as positioning goes, I mic vocals dead-on. I always tell the singer to go like this [*puts hand vertically in front of nose*] and say, 'If you get any closer than that, I'll kill you' [*laughs*]. Quite often, I'll use an SM57 on a stand that they can hold onto [in addition to the "real" vocal mic] and I may or may not use it. Sometimes I have used it as part of the sound, because the singer may want to move off mic, though there can be phase problems when you mix it with the real vocal mic, especially if it gets off-axis. But it sometimes gives a singer a feeling of comfort to hang on to that stand—something you can't do with a hanging condenser mic—and that sometimes works."

Despite having been already exposed to Kramer's deadpan humor, I fall into the trap again, asking about how he goes about getting a singer in the right mood to deliver a great performance. Poker-faced, he delivers the punchline: "A two-by-four upside the head." (parrumph) Unfazed, I ask the question again, and this time he's got a serious answer. "Depending on the song, depending on the vibe, I'll do things like put candles in the studio, dim the lights, make sure there's water on a barstool nearby. If it's a big room, I'll put a three-sided screen around them, put a low light on the music stand, carpet on the floor. Anything to make it intimate and warm and comfortable so you feel like you're singing in a living room."

"If I hear a sound in my head, I'm going to go for it—I'm going to print it to tape."

Does he ever experiment with ambient miking of vocals? "Yeah, sometimes on backing vocals. But what's the point of doing ambient lead vocals, unless it's for a special effect? I want to hear the person breathing, I want to hear the lyrics, I want to hear every nuance. I think it works great on backing vocals, but I'm not so sure about using it on a lead voice."

In a similar vein, I ask if he ever experiments with different polar patterns when recording vocals. "No, not really. What's the point of using omni for a lead singer? I will, however, sometimes use figure-of-eight for two singers, put them on either side of the mic and let them balance themselves by moving in and out. Also, I always record vocals with multiple limiters patched in and sometimes compressors too. In the home studio market, dbx limiters are good, especially the 160—that's a great limiter. The joemeek is also a very nice limiter."

Though Kramer is one of the acknowledged masters of getting great electric guitar sounds, he insists, "It's the guitar player, not me. It's just correct miking and being able to define what the guitar player is hearing. Sometimes what he's hearing in his head and what's coming through his amp ain't the same thing. But, generally, most guitar players at a certain skill level have refined and tweaked their sound to the point where they know what they've got. They come in, they plug in, and you've pretty much got the sound.

"What I do is to define where the cool speakers are and to stick one or two mics up in the correct place to capture that sound. I use a three-mic technique: a [Shure] SM57, a [Sennheiser] 421, and a [beyerdynamic] M160, all in a very tight pattern. Then I can pick and choose the tone quality, because each mic is totally different. I combine those, and then I put a [Neumann] U 67 away from the amp to get the ambience. If I have enough tracks, I'll record the guitar in stereo. Then I go to town with different pieces of outboard gear. I'll process the sound in stereo, using various kinds of limiting and EQ to make the guitar jump out of the track, to give it impact—and I do all this processing before the signal hits tape. This way, when it comes time to mix, I don't have to do anything; I just put the faders up and it mixes itself. I can almost tell you where the faders are going to sit, because I know what that sound is."

This, I observe, is a very English approach; many American engineer/producers just aim to get the signal recorded as cleanly as possible so they have maximum latitude when mixing. "Exactly. But, to me, it's stupid to try to mix it afterward. I don't want to spend 24 hours in the studio mixing. I want to get in there, get my sounds together, get all the moves, and print it to tape. It's agonizing being in there twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day mixing!"

So what is the Kramer approach to mixing? "Mixing is the final stage of creating a piece of music that has been conceived by the artist, reinterpreted by me, put on tape, and tweaked and messed around with. It's a reading of a

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person's musical ability—their songs, their emotions, all the stuff is on tape and you've now got to sculpt it, shape it. It's important to have done your homework beforehand, to have done good preproduction, good early demos. This all helps the final mixing process, gives you all your options. I'll hear something in my head, it sets off a bell.

"I tend to start with the drums. I may pull other things up for just a minute or two to see where I'm going with the whole song, then I'll kill everything and start working on the drums. I really try to define the bass drum so that it has punch, it has midrange, it has low-end stuff. But then you have to tailor that low end to what the bass guitar's doing. If the bass drum pattern is busy, you don't want too much bottom end. If the pattern is such that there's a lot of air and space between each note, you can afford to put a little more woof into it. It's a constant game you're playing: If you do something here, then something else is going to change over there.

"Mixing is my last chance to really paint the final picture. I think in terms of stereo imagery, although there are mono pieces to it, like the voice and the bass drum and the bass guitar. But I like to paint out to the edges: While a guitar might be far left and far right, there might be bits and pieces that I'll be panning into the middle. And I like to leave a nice hole in the middle for the voice and the bass drum and bass guitar to sit. Then I'll start moving things around as I see fit. Not many people like to pan [dynamically], but I do it instinctively; I do it as the music is flowing. That's a trademark of mine. I started doing that thirty years ago, and I haven't stopped."

Kramer has, however, found that his approach to mixing has changed a little bit in the last few years as tastes in music have evolved. "My basic philosophy hasn't changed, but some of the sound qualities have changed," he explains. "Obviously, the sound is much drier; I use maybe a quarter of the reverb I used to use. And if I am using reverb, it's of the short kind, in deference to today's sounds: one second, a half-second, with short decay times, and also two or three different kinds of very short delays. I still use a slap delay into the plate, though I pick and choose my moments when to use it; you can't use it on everything, the way we used to do. And each instrument will have its own effect; I'll use eight or ten effects, multiple layers of reverbs. They're subtle; some of them are absolutely down in level, but usually very short now."

For all of his experience and expertise with high-end recording gear, Eddie Kramer is quick to admit that the single most important piece of equipment in any studio is your ears. "People should be able to make a record in their bedroom or basement or garage, and do it reasonably cheaply," he concludes. "Just learn where to put the mic, how to work a console, how to get a reasonable facsimile of a decent sound mixing-wise, and what it takes to run a session. There's a revolution afoot!"

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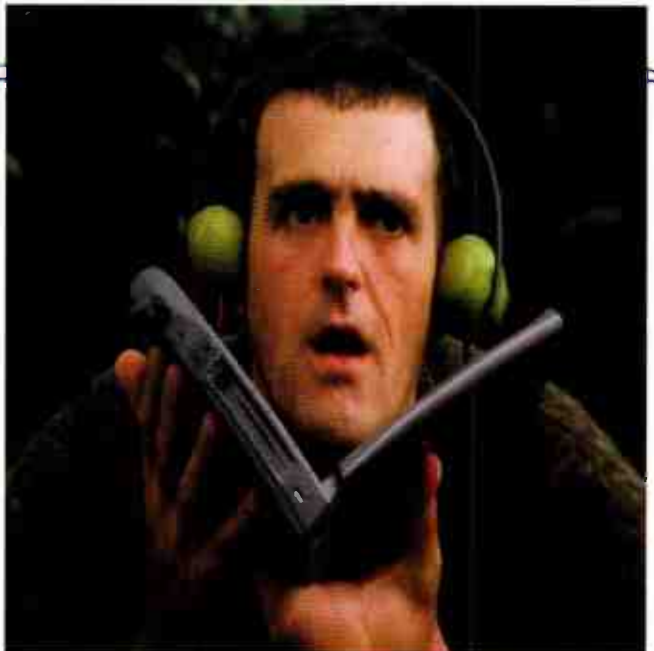

Forge Ahead

by e. d. menasché

Mark Tinley, programmer, sound designer and engineer for Duran Duran, forges a bond with Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge for Windows.

After years as a dedicated Mac user Mark Tinley sound designer and engineer for Duran Duran, has joined the growing number of musicians who convert to the Windows format. Among his most important PC tools is Sound Forge, the digital audio editor from Sonic Foundry. "When I first got Sound Forge, I particularly liked the idea that I could do high quality reverb on a laptop," he explains. "And Sound Forge creates an overview for each sound file, and once it has done this it works on the sound files very quickly."

According to Tinley, much of Sound Forge's power stems from its compatibility with a wide array of other software. "I like to work in different programs," Tinley says. "My main MIDI & audio sequencer is Emagic's Logic Audio Platinum, and Sound Forge interacts with it quite well. I tend to do all my cutting and pasting in Logic Audio, but I can link it to Sound Forge and use that as my sample editor with a simple keystroke."

That interaction between sequencer and audio editor has proven useful during production of Duran Duran's upcoming album. "Nick [Rhodes, Duran Duran keyboardist] will play a few takes with, say, a Wasp synth, and I will make a really cool composite part up," Tinley says. "We'll sit and choose specific sounds that we like, then I'll do stuff to them. One of my favorite techniques is to really lower the sample rate and resolution so that the sound takes on additional high frequency artifacts. I used to own a really cheap sampler, a Casio FZ-1, and I always thought samplers *should* sound that way."

Liberal and creative use of "real-time" computer-based effects plug-ins plays an important role in Tinley's quest for that perfect sonic hook. "The effects I use are now available as DirectX plug-ins, so I can use the same plug-ins in both programs," he says. "One of the coolest examples is a plug-in called Acoustic Mirror. With it, I can 'sample' acoustic spaces. You play a test tone in the acoustic space you want to emulate and record the results. The software analyzes this and can make any audio you process sound like it is in this space. It works for electronic devices too. I have mirrored my favorite settings on Duran Duran's Lexicon 224 and some more unusual things, like the filters in Nick Rhodes's AKS synth."

Tinley particularly likes the way DirectX plug-ins can run in any compatible Windows application, including many of the shareware programs he relies upon for synthesis and other sound creation. "Although Sound Forge now has dedicated looping tools, I still prefer the shareware program WaveSurgeon to create loops," Tinley explains. Again, Sound Forge's compatibility is a major strength. "I can set Sound Forge as my default sample editor and switch between the two when I want to do something more radical than simple loop creation. It works in a similar way to Steinberg's ReCycle, only better. It handles stereo files and has some unbelievable random and smoothing functions. You can cut any sound up into 16th notes and re-arrange the events. It's great for scrambling speech; it's like a grown-up version of wave sequencing.

"But the most interesting thing I have done recently was to teach the Noise Reduction plug-in that Warren's [Cuccurullo] guitar was 'noise,' then get it to extract the noise from one of Nick's synth passes," Tinley continues. "I set it to a really extreme level and ended up with a sound that seemed to be morphing between heavily filtered synth and pretty ethereal chirping birds, tainted with a touch of effervescent Wasp—the synth, that is!" Since the plug-in is DirectX, Tinley can hear what will happen in real time. "That way I can fine-tune the effect instead of having to wait for it to render. I can also chain some softening effects in afterwards, like flanger and reverb, and hear the lot in real time. I also use Dave Brown's Compressor plug-in, and several by Opcode. The song 'Medazzaland' has Nick singing/speaking on it, and I used the plug-in from Hyperprism to create the echo effect. It has this 'Blue Window' where you can move the mouse around and get all sorts of weird stuff happening. Because Sound Forge accesses the plug-ins in real time, when I get it right, I hit one button and all my effects are rendered in one process. Brilliant."

While Tinley applauds Sound Forge's utilitarian strengths—its speed, its capability to "batch-process" multiple files at one time, and its powerful set of mastering tools, called CD Architect, with which he can burn CDs directly from his PC—it's the program's creative power that he finds most compelling. "I never liked the idea that I could go buy a synth and piddle around on it and get something sterile. I love to manipulate sounds. Music doesn't have to be recorded well to sound good. It has to have a vibe: sonic layers, areas of sound leaping out at you, doing all sorts of strange stuff. If a track is finished at the end of the day, if it sounds different from everyone else, that excites me."

World Radio History

Photo: Richard Tinley

Phish

The Story of the Ghost (Elektra)

They're still known first and foremost as a live act, but over the last few years Phish have gotten pretty good at the art of making records. Perhaps not coincidentally, the closer they've come to harnessing in the studio the same jam-happy attitude for which they're famous in concert, the better their albums have become. The early sessions for *The Story of the Ghost*—which, like its predecessor, *Billy Breathes*, took place at Bearsville Studios in upstate New York—were, from start to finish, unscripted jams. Much as they do at their shows, the band simply made stuff up on the spot, going wherever the music took them.

"We went in not thinking that we were making an album," says guitarist/singer Trey Anastasio. "It was an experiment as much as anything. We were going to just set up the gear and play all night without any talking." But after a few nights' worth of jamming, the idea dawned that maybe some of this material they were concocting was worthy of release. So keyboardist Page McConnell waded through forty hours of tape, whittling it down to about four potentially usable hours. At the same time, Trey and band lyricist Tom Marshall retreated for several days to a rented farmhouse in Stowe, Vermont, where they wrote

Photo: Loren Haynes

World Radio History

more than thirty new songs. Excited by this burst of creativity, the band returned to the farmhouse. Armed with a TASCAM DA-88 recorder, a Mackie board, a couple of mics, and a pile of unused lyrics by Marshall, they proceeded to turn the Bearsville jam tapes (now mixed to two tracks of the DA-88) into finished songs.

As Trey describes it, the atmosphere of the farmhouse sessions was as freewheeling as possible. "We'd be sitting around, eating pizza and listening to these grooves, and all of a sudden somebody would have an idea," he recalls. "Whoever would come up with a lyric to use for a certain part would sing it onto the eight-track tape. A good example is 'Roggae.' We had this groove playing, and Fish [drummer Jon Fishman] got up and said, 'I got an idea.' He took a line out of one of Tom's poems, ran over, grabbed the mic, and sang the first line. Then that gave me an idea, and I sang a line. Then Mike [Gordon, bassist] sang a line, and then Page. We thought we were making demos, but in the end, the vocals you hear on the finished album are those same farmhouse vocals."

When Phish returned to Bearsville in April 1998 with producer Andy Wallace and engineer Chris Shaw for further recording and mixing, they had enough music for more than two CDs. Editing to a single fifty-minute album was a tough task, but technically speaking, the hardest part was to deal with the vocals from the farmhouse tapes. "There was no time code on those tapes," Trey explains, "just because we didn't think ahead. So a lot of the studio time was spent with Andy and Chris putting the vocals into [Digidesign] Pro Tools and lining them up with the original multitrack."

Lots of labor, to be sure, but the work paid off royally: This is Phish's best studio album to date. Whether the mood is hushed introspection ("France Says") or frenzied funk ("Birds of a Feather"), the band pulls it off with casual aplomb. Particularly notable is the delicacy and originality of the vocal arrangements, spurred no doubt by the relaxed atmosphere of the farmhouse sessions. "Creating an environment where you can just be yourself is the main goal," says Trey. On *The Story of the Ghost*, Phish are more themselves than they've ever been.

—Mac Randall

Randy Newman

Guilty: 30 Years of Randy Newman
(Warner Bros./Rhino)

It's about time. With so many mediocre artists getting the boxed-set treatment, it's nice to see a great one finally get his due. Belated or not, *Guilty* makes an irrefutable case for Randy Newman as one of the premier songwriters of this or any other era. Drawing from nineteen albums—ten of 'em pop tune collections, the rest movie soundtracks—this four-disc, 105-track package offers fresh perspectives on the man's art, even for those who've followed him since the Sixties.

All of the "hits" are here, of course. Actually, only the wonderfully corrosive "Short People" made a meaningful dent on the charts, though others seeped into our cultural consciousness, among them "Mama Told Me Not to Come," a smash for Three Dog Night, the sarcastic "I Love L.A.," and the sleazy gem "You Can Leave Your Hat On." Newman's gift for assuming the guise of seriously flawed people, enhanced by his merciless humor, remains unequaled, which is why even older stuff can still be deeply disturbing. The heartbreaking yet hilarious "Davy the Fat Boy," from his debut LP, brilliantly embodies unthinking cruelty. "My Life is Good," the ultimate braggart's testimonial, typifies what's so unsettling about his character studies: This creep is blissfully unaware of his sins and, as in real life, doesn't pay for them. Likewise for "Rednecks," "Sail Away," "Yellow Man," "It's Money That Matters," and so forth.

The output has been sporadic, but the consistency is striking. Newman himself agrees. Having revisited his recordings to choose tracks for this set, he says, "I was relieved. It was basically a good experience. Most gratifying of all, I don't think I've slipped any. There was good stuff early, and good stuff in the middle. And the singing was better than I thought early on."

True enough. Newman's rep as a composer is old news, but *Guilty* suggests that he's long been underrated as a vocalist. A soulful groaner with deep R&B roots, he echoes Ray Charles and Fats Domino, in part because of his funky but elegant piano (usually a Steinway) but also because, like those immortals, he wrings feeling from every syllable. ("I've been in that Ray Charles tradition right from the start," Newman concurs.) There's at least one exception: "Golden Gridiron Boy," the leadoff track on this collection's "Odds & Ends" disc, is a silly if likable 1962 attempt to emulate Bobby Vee. Many of the more than two dozen previously unreleased tracks, however, qualify as gems, from the chilling "Love is Blind" to the hilarious "Beat Me Baby" to the sly "Jesus in the Summertime."

The stylish film score excerpts that fill the fourth disc might at first seem unrelated to Newman's three-minute tunes, though albums like *Sail Away* proved early on that he had the chops to write for orchestra. Minus his familiar irony, Newman's instrumental concoctions for *Awakenings*, *The Natural*, *et al.*, underscore his gift for gorgeous melodies and point to the tension that gives the vocal records their edge. "My lyrical sense is almost the antithesis of my musical sense," he notes. "My music is romantic nineteenth-century, yet the lyrics are astringent."

Guilty is all over the map: sweet and sour, profane and genteel, raw and sophisticated. What unites the strands of Newman's sprawling career is a restless, unsentimental intelligence that has sometimes produced *bona fide* works of genius. Who could ask for more?

—Jon Young

brooklyn funk essentials

Brooklyn Funk Essentials

In the BuzzBag
(Shanachie)

What does it mean to do world music? Too often it means sprinkling exotic seasonings over a stew of Western grooves. Which is what we have here, in this encounter between the Brooklyn Funk Essentials and a group of Turkish and Romanian musicians who've never once looped a "Funky Drummer" sample or stolen a B. B. King lick. But unlike most other experiments in culture jumping, *In the BuzzBag* doesn't stop there. Instead, it tries to move toward some deeper synthesis of styles. And mostly, it succeeds.

The fact that Turkish music hasn't yet become a cliché in the West helps this happen. BFE bassist Lati Vronlund explains that his band's interest in this style dates back to November '96, when they played a world music festival in Istanbul. Their soundman, Ziggy Zerang, was familiar with Middle Eastern music through his Lebanese background, and in preparation for the gig had introduced them to a Turkish song to play as an encore. "We rehearsed it in New York, just to have it in the back pocket," Vronlund recalls. "Then when we did it as a second or third encore, in sort of a funky, dance-hall rendition, the audience went absolutely crazy. It turned out so great that the promoters said they wanted us to come back and record it."

And so they did, a year and a half later. The *BuzzBag* sessions took place at Imaj Studios in Istanbul. At the band's request, an all-star

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World Radio History

Photo: Andrea Kranlund

kula shaker finds the lighter side of doom

Listening to the huge, sound-effects-laden mix of Kula Shaker's spicy new curry, the Eastern-oriented, psychedelic *Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts*, you can't help but marvel at the towering sonic grandeur and the sheer ambition of the project. But that's what you get when a visionary artist (the decidedly spiritual bandleader Crispian Mills, son of actress Hayley) collides with, then dovetails into, the vision of a veteran visionary producer. So the sessions with the reclusive soundsmith Bob Ezrin (tracked aboard the London houseboat studio of old Ezrin protégé David Gilmour) proved both instructional *and* incendiary, chuckles an older, wiser Mills: "We had to keep Bob beaten down all the time, because these legends sometimes become difficult to deal with. So we just beat him down, and then he'd beat us down. There was a mutual beating going on for the whole album, every minute we were in there."

Ezrin—who was coaxed out of a ten-year retirement last year by longtime fans Catherine Wheel—was already familiar with the Pink Floyd desk. During his initial meeting with Mills and crew, he impressed the group by strumming one of their trademark tambouras during conversation. And after familiarizing himself with Kula Shaker's exotic, Indian-flavored Columbia debut *K*, Ezrin had ideas—*lots* of inventive ideas—for the *Peasants* tracks. Given his lavish experiments on Kiss' *Destroyer* and the first Peter Gabriel solo album, sound effects were a no-brainer. "And he didn't even have to encourage us," Mills notes. "We were already thinking like that when we met him, so we had a whole sound effects library brought into the boat, which we just started ransacking. Most days, if a track wasn't clear yet, even if it was just drums, we'd go, 'Sound effect! Sound effect! This really needs a . . . a . . . pig giving birth to a peasant! Or maybe a *pheasant!*'" And their Svengali would make it so.

Drummer Paul Winter-Hart's vintage Slingerland and Gretsch kits were given a velvet-glove treatment by Ezrin. Recalls Mills, "We'd record the drums first on 16-track, two-inch tape, get happy with it, and then put the tape away and not use it again until we mixed. As you're recording, and especially if you're recording for as long as we did, the tape can wear down, the drums gradually sounding a bit duller. But this way, when we went back to mix again, we'd retrieve the old 16-track, and it would sound really, *really* alive."

Another number, "108 Battles of the Mind," was committed to tape *sans* drums. Winter-Hart was vacationing when Mills, keyboardist Jay Darlington, and bass 'n' tabla player Alonza Bevan decided that the narrative *Peasants* morality tale needed a new low-fi chapter. "So we put down an acoustic, a bass, and a Coral sitar/guitar through this massive amp," says Mills. "We just piled on everything. Then we called up Paul, who hadn't played for over two weeks, and said, 'Paul, you wanna play some drums?' He was like, 'Yeah! *Yeah!*' And he turned up and just beat the shit outta that kit."

Winter-Hart was stunned by Ezrin's results. "He's a brilliant producer," he praises, "and we'd always wondered what a producer *was*. We'd worked with all these different people over the past few years. But he was the first guy to give us a bit of guidance, and he was also willing to compromise. We wanted to use an English engineer, and he was initially reserved about that. But once he'd seen that the engineer was shit-hot, he was really up for using him. So we had a good little team, a solid team through the entire project."

The *Peasants* cuts vary from the monolithic "Mystical Machine Gun" to the thundering Sixties blues stomp of "S.O.S." Alongside added instruments like flute and a double-reed Indian oboe called the *shenai*, a few *K* holdovers remain, in the pitch-perfect backing vocals of Gauri Chaldrie and the telling tablas of Himangsu Goswami. But the mystical Mills feels that his enduring fascination with India and Armageddon has been misunderstood in the press, that Kula Shaker has been wrongfully typecast as "prophets of doom." Again, Ezrin proved the perfect antidote. The most important lesson he taught the group, grins Darlington, was to "shut up and get on with it."

Mills adds an amendment: "If it wasn't making us smile, it didn't work. That was very much our approach on this album. Even if it was serious, it had to make us smile somewhere, somehow." One cut dubbed "Sphinx" was very grave indeed, with some of the most serious lyrics Mills has written to date. So how did he lighten the mood? "I sang it in a totally flat note, all the way through. And everybody, Bob included, was cracking up over it in the studio."

—Tom Lanham

Photo: Jonathan Mark

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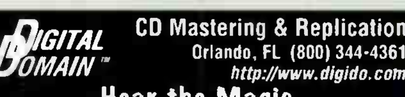

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World Radio History

On a Wing and a Prayer

Flying to your next gig can be fun. Then again, so could going to the dentist.

If you're trying to write a tear-jerker and haven't had your heart broken lately, don't worry—just fly to your next gig. If you can set down even a fraction of the hassle experienced on a typical commercial flight, you'll make Leonard Cohen sound like a perky informercial host.

On the other hand, if you'd rather not turn your flights into material for musical misery, here are a few ways to make the airplane experience almost tolerable.

Ticketing

Rule #1: Ignore the full-page travel ads in the newspapers. Rule #2: I'm serious! Ignore the ads! Rule #3: A good travel agent can save you thousands of dollars; a lousy one can push you into embarrassing public displays of jabbering, twitching hysteria. A trustworthy agent can get the best deals with at least three weeks' notice. No matter when you book the flight, always check back with the agent to see if the airlines are running any last-minute specials; using this method, I've flown from Orlando to L.A. for $150!

Airport Survival

Getting to your flight will involve one of two scenarios. One: You leave on time, the roads to the airport are clear. You check your bags curbside; the courteous and knowledgeable desk person reassigns you to a comfortable exit row, and you relax for an hour in the coffee shop while watching the planes take off with a young blonde from Dayton.

Two: The right lane of the interstate is closed, traffic is horrendous. The line of confused senior citizens checking ski gear curbside is only slightly shorter and less disorganized than the gang of Jehovah's Witnesses struggling with the concept of carry-on vs. check-thru baggage at the desk. Your flight's delayed, and the computers are down.

Rule #1: Get to the airport at least ninety minutes before your scheduled departure. Rule #2: If you get a really clueless or downright nasty desk person, ask to see a supervisor. Immediately. Rule #3: If they cancel your flight at the last minute, and you have to schedule another, don't head back to the mob of stranded passengers at the main desk; get to a pay phone and call the airline's 800 number. Rule #4: When checking in at the gate, ask for a reassignment to the exit row or bulkhead; these seats offer about 25 percent more legroom.

Bonus Tip: If you're flying one of those budget airlines with open seating, try this devious but foolproof trick: Find an open row, take a seat, lay back, close your eyes, and place the motion sickness bag in your lap. Works every time!

Enduring the Flight

If you're flying out of a major airport and your plane leaves within twenty minutes of its scheduled departure time, consider your day a success. If they serve you a meal or even an edible snack, shed tears of joy. If you're seated next to an attractive specimen who finds musicians fascinating, your life's work on this planet is done . . . unless you're seated in an NPZ, or a No-Peanut Zone. No kidding: There is a portion of the population that is fatally allergic to peanuts. So if you want to get nuts on your next flight, watch where you're sitting.

You've Landed in One Piece. . .

. . . but your luggage is lost or damaged. Deal with it before you leave the airport! Make a complaint, fill out a report, and get some names before you walk out the door, or they'll turn you over to the WOOI (Weasel Out Of It) department.

Flying is a good news/bad news situation. The good news: With a little luck and a good travel agent, you can fly almost anywhere, round-trip, for less than $300. The bad news: Today's airlines are run inefficiently by overworked, underpaid, and undertrained employees. Sometimes everything runs pretty smoothly, sometimes you can improve your circumstances by being polite but assertive . . . and sometimes you just have to relax, fasten your seatbelt, and hang onto your nuts.

—Reverend Billy C. Wirtz

World Radio History

Finally, A Sequel That's Actually Better Than The Original

Alesis Synthesizers

The QS6.1's four real-time control sliders are assignable to any mod destination, including envelopes, LFOs and even multieffects.

With two expansion ports, the QS6.1 can access another 16MB of sounds for a total of 32 meg available at once. Use our QCard™ expansions in your musical style of choice, or burn your own samples to a Flash RAM card using the included Sound Bridge™ software.

It doesn't usually happen this way. Sequels are supposed to be boring and derivative. But the new QS6.1™ takes the powerful 64 voice synth engine of the original QS6 and supercharges it with double the sound memory, double the expansion capacity, new performance features and much more. So how is it that the QS6.1 got a whole lot better than the keyboard it replaced while actually costing less? The answer is that this sequel is from Alesis – the company that always delivers more than you expect.

QS6.1 New Features

- Double the sound ROM of the QS6 (16MB internal)
- Now includes Alesis' stereo grand piano sounds from the QS8
- Enhanced GM sound set
- Double the expansion capacity (up to 32MB total)
- Four control sliders
- Big new LCD display
- New dedicated buttons for Transpose and Sequence Select
- CD-ROM software pack with sequencing, editing, extra sounds, demo programs and more
- Internal power supply
- High speed serial port

Alesis Corporation
1633 26th Street Santa Monica CA 90404 800-5-ALESIS alecorp@alesis1.usa.com www.alesis.com
For more information on the new QS6.1, contact your Authorized Alesis Retailer or visit our web site.

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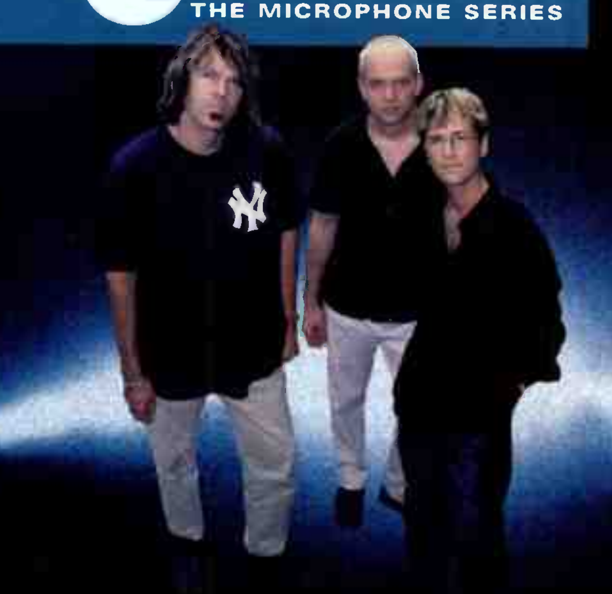
believe in evolution...
Semisonic does...

"For years I used the same batch of microphones without giving it a second thought. Then I heard the Evolution series. The E602 allowed me to give away my kick drum trigger and the E845 makes Dan Wilson's voice resonate like Barry White. I'm down with Evolution." Says Brad Kern, Front of House Engineer for Semisonic.

Evolution, a new series of microphones from Sennheiser is designed from the ground up. After extensive research into the needs of today's musician, Evolution brings together everything you've wished for in a microphone – superior sound, rugged reliability, and a remarkably affordable price. Whether you're a vocalist, an acoustic instrumentalist, a percussionist, an electronic musician, or the person who needs to make certain the audience hears good sound, there's an Evolution mic that's perfect for you. Evolution combines Sennheiser's fifty-plus years of experience in microphone design with the latest advances in manufacturing and material technologies. The results will floor you. Come see the future of microphones today. Visit your Sennheiser dealer and participate in Evolution as it happens.



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