

A collage of rock music-related images. At the top, a radio station logo for KNAC is visible with the text 'PURE ROCK 105'. Below it, a DJ is seen wearing headphones. The background is filled with various scenes of rock music, including a large crowd at a concert and a person playing a guitar. The overall color scheme is dominated by red and black.

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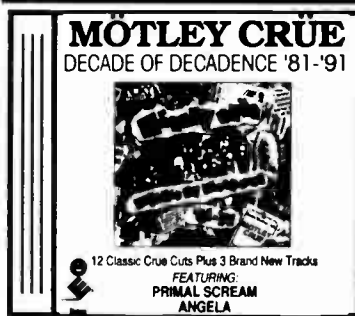
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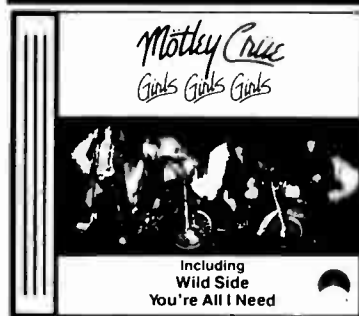
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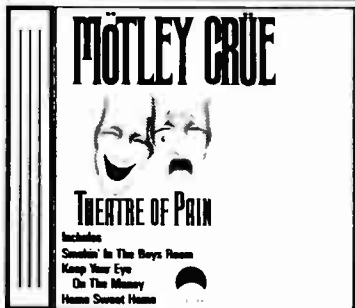
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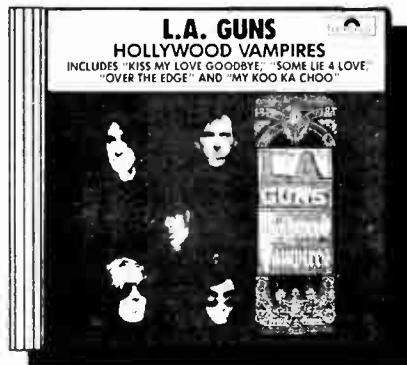
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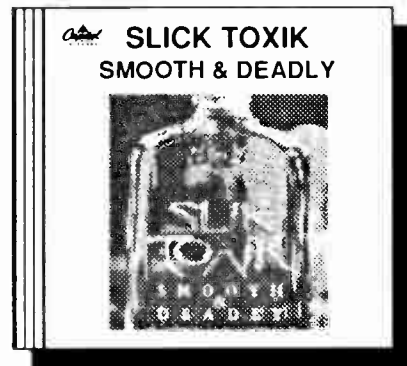
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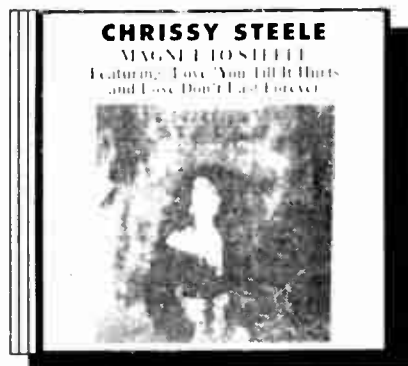
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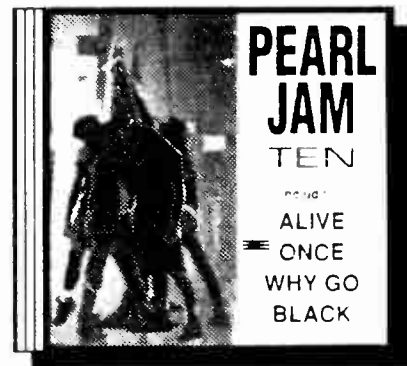
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Katherine Turman
January, 1992

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THE RADIO RENEGADES OF KNAC



METALLICA: ENTER THE METAL MADMEN FROM THE UNDERGROUND.



*QUEENSRYCHE:
SEATTLE SONS CAPTURE SO. CAL. EARS.*

PURE ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK

By Adrienne Stone

The year was 1985. New wave music, easily embraced by the collegiate crowd and acceptable to Yuppies, had enjoyed a stronghold on the airwaves for the past six years. But rock 'n' roll, particularly the sort commonly referred to as heavy metal or hard rock, was currently resurging in So. Cal. Native acts such as Motley Crue, Ratt, Dio, Great White and W.A.S.P. had gained national attention and summoned the warning bell on the demise of synthpop and the rebirth of a genre long thought dead.

Most radio stations turned a deaf ear on this call to arms. But in Long Beach, a small station had just been purchased by real estate mogul Fred Sands, who had refurbished the studios with state-of-the-art equipment. Up until this point, KNAC (105.5 FM) had run under the banner of "Rock & Rhythm," playing an eclectic mix of new wave, reggae, blues...already setting a rebellious trend by

throwing such a hodgepodge of sounds together. Things were chugging along just fine 'n' dandy, yessiree. But in the offices of KNAC, the powers-that-be were itching for a change. The format was fine, even cutting-edge at the time, although it didn't exactly shake the world. The ratings were okay, but not tremendous. The deejays were proficient and they were safely out of a scary financial situation under the new Sands ownership. Still, the old way had become, well, a tad boring. Truly, if ever there were a time to rattle some chains, this was it. Then, a window of opportunity opened.

"KMET had been known as a hard rock station," recalls KNAC President Gary Price (then the General Manager). "So when they went away, KLOS decided to protect their upper demo and dropped an awful lot of hard rock and roll out of their library. So the market was really void of the proven hard rock and

roll hits that KMET and KLOS had both played." Price and Sands huddled over this information, welcoming then-Program Director Jimmy Christopher's input on what would prove to be a dramatic alteration in the station's style--and an astounding entry into broadcast history. "We looked at the new [hard rock] acts that weren't even established and that were selling out arenas and going platinum," notes Price. "They had a following, obviously. You can tell that by their concert ticket sales and their record sales."

Moreover, the hard rock/pure rock style of music was more true to KNAC's character. If KMET and KLOS were the elder statesmen, KNAC was the leather-jacketed hood. If the others were Cadillacs, KNAC was surely a Harley. The scrappy underdog no more, KNAC was ready to show it's true colors. So with the risk calculated, riding on gut instinct, Sands gave it the go-ahead and the wheels were quickly but quietly set into motion.

Sometime before Christmas 1985, Christopher and then-Sales Manager Nicki Randolph moved under the cloak of darkness on their secret mission: to establish a hard-rock library overnight. They slipped into Tower Records just before closing time, fervently hoping they wouldn't run into any industry colleagues who might be tipped off to KNAC's plan. Nervously looking over their shoulders, they buy up a thousand dollars worth of hard rock albums—everything from Dio to Judas Priest to Motley Crue—and hurriedly toss their haul into the van. Still, word of the clandestine plan began to waft around the KNAC offices by the week's end.

"It was around the Christmas holidays," remembers Tom Maher (Promotions Director at the time), "and all the jocks are starting to rumble about what's going on. KROQ and us had a friendly competition going on and they somehow found out and started calling up, congratulating us on our change and thanking us for giving them our old listenership. We were originally going to switch over to Pure Rock on January 16, but since the staff was already upset, we decided to do it right away."

By 9 a.m. on January 6, 1986, Maher was writing press releases. By 1 p.m., one of the jocks was let go and the others advised that they could stay on if they



(L-R, BACK ROW): KNAC's LONG PAUL, JUDAS PRIEST'S ROB HALFORD, KNAC's BRYAN SCHOCK, JUDAS PRIEST'S SCOTT TRAVIS. (FRONT ROW): RONNIE JAMES DIO.

could make the transition to Pure Rock. "One of them did his airshift and then quit immediately!" laughs Maher. It was just the beginning of what would be a slew of jock resignations. At 2 p.m. there was a general staff meeting for the entire KNAC staff. And at 6 p.m. (drumroll, please). AC/DC's "It's A Long Way To The Top If

universities sent a proclamation from their student government saying that we were damned and we were banned from ever participating on the campus. They had a formal declaration drawn up from their student council." Ironically, within a year, hard rock had emerged triumphant on these very same campuses. "They came crawling

*"IN JAPAN, KNAC IS LIKE A BAND. THEY
SELL MORE T-SHIRTS THAN HALF THE
BANDS THERE."*

-- Sebastian Bach, Skid Row

You Want To Rock And Roll" officially ushered in the Pure Rock format. The reactions were immediate.

"Some of the fans of Rock & Rhythm were real unhappy," recalls Price, laughing. "They protested in front of the radio station and hung me in effigy on my patio." Others were more dramatic.

"When we switched," remembers Maher, "the buzz on the street was just unbelievable. We had pickets in front of the station, led by Dave Alvin of the Blasters and John Doe of X. They were calling people to petition. The Rock & Rhythm format was very Yuppieish. One of the

back on their knees!" gloats Maher.

Ross Goza started as an intern two weeks after the Pure Rock changeover. "It was such an exciting period," he recalls. "There were so many [rock] acts then that we were playing because there was no [other] place for them on radio, so they weren't getting exposure [elsewhere]. There was excitement on the streets. You'd go to see them in the clubs and you could just feel it. When you'd go to see Poison at one of their small shows, there was definitely something happening and all of a sudden, there was an outlet for it on the airwaves! It energized the bands and it

(continued from page 8)

energized the clubs for that kind of music."

It also energized the KNAC staff. They thought nothing of going to a club (where they might be doing a promotion) at night after a long day of work, then returning to the station after midnight to continue brainstorming or working out the kinks on a new project. "We were the David [against all the other Goliaths]," analogizes Maher. "That's what made us all band together. We didn't care if we worked 20-hour days because we believed in what we were doing."

One of Goza's first jobs (he eventually became Music Director) at the station was giving out bumper stickers at Irvine Meadows. The bumper sticker promotion would prove to be one of KNAC's most clever marketing tools. "Once we decided that we were 'Pure Rock,'" recalls Maher, "we said, 'Okay, what is Pure Rock? It's in your face. It's very bold. So let's make our whole image just a plain, simple, black and white, in-your-face imaging.' That's where



KNAC'S GOT THE WORLD COVERED

we came up with the colors for the Pure Rock format and bumper-sticker layout. It's very noticeable. The bumper sticker campaign ended up as probably one of the most successful campaigns in the United States."

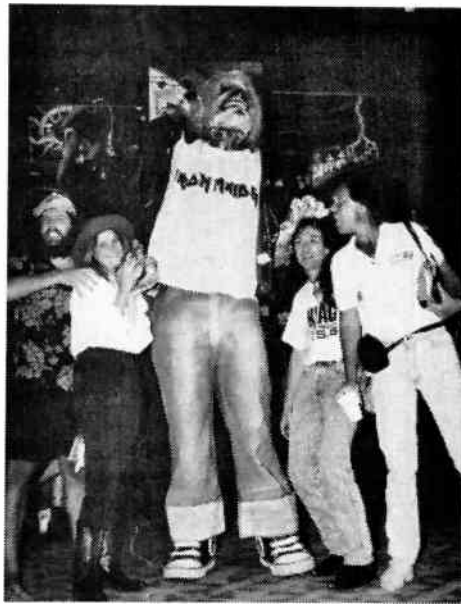
"We have bumper stickers all over the world!" says Price, six years after the promotion's onset. "A guy sent me a picture of a bumper sticker on a jeep in deep, deep, deep, dark Africa. He was down there doing some missionary work. He's a surgeon, and he was donating his time, and he pulls up and there's a KNAC bumper sticker on this jeep. They had them on planes in the Gulf War, they're all over the Swiss Alps, they're on the China Wall--they're everywhere!"

KNAC T-shirts found their way around the world, too. Touring artists took notice. "In Japan," notes Skid Row lead singer Sebastian Bach, "KNAC is like a band. They sell more T-shirts than half the bands there!" Great White's Michael Lardie remembers their first tour of Japan. "Out of eight shows, I think four or five of the nights I wore a black KNAC T-shirt. I'm not saying the fact that I

wore this T-shirt had anything to do with it, but I *did* notice a lot more there last time we were in Japan. It's like the ZZ Top song, 'I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide,' except that KNAC's worldwide!"

But how did KNAC get such a heavy reputation? Certainly it takes more than T-shirts and bumper stickers to build a tough reputation. For starters, KNAC was passionate about the music they played. The jocks were all rockers; cool, yet professional and well informed. The listeners appreciated it. With only 3,000 watts transmitting from their signal (versus upwards of 100,000 watts on competitive stations) KNAC didn't even reach most of the Valley, yet word-of-mouth was so powerful that Valley fans tuned in religiously as soon as their cars climbed over the mountains into Hollywood. Part of the attraction was that listeners were made to feel as though they were part of an event. "We always made it an event when, let's say, Metallica was coming into town and they were putting tickets on sale," explains Goza. "We always had it set up so that there were going to be banks of volunteers after the show; we made sure we had a big presence there. It was just really, really grass roots. At that time, we were just trying to build our name. So we were just going through the very basics. Going to clubs and trying to work out deals so we

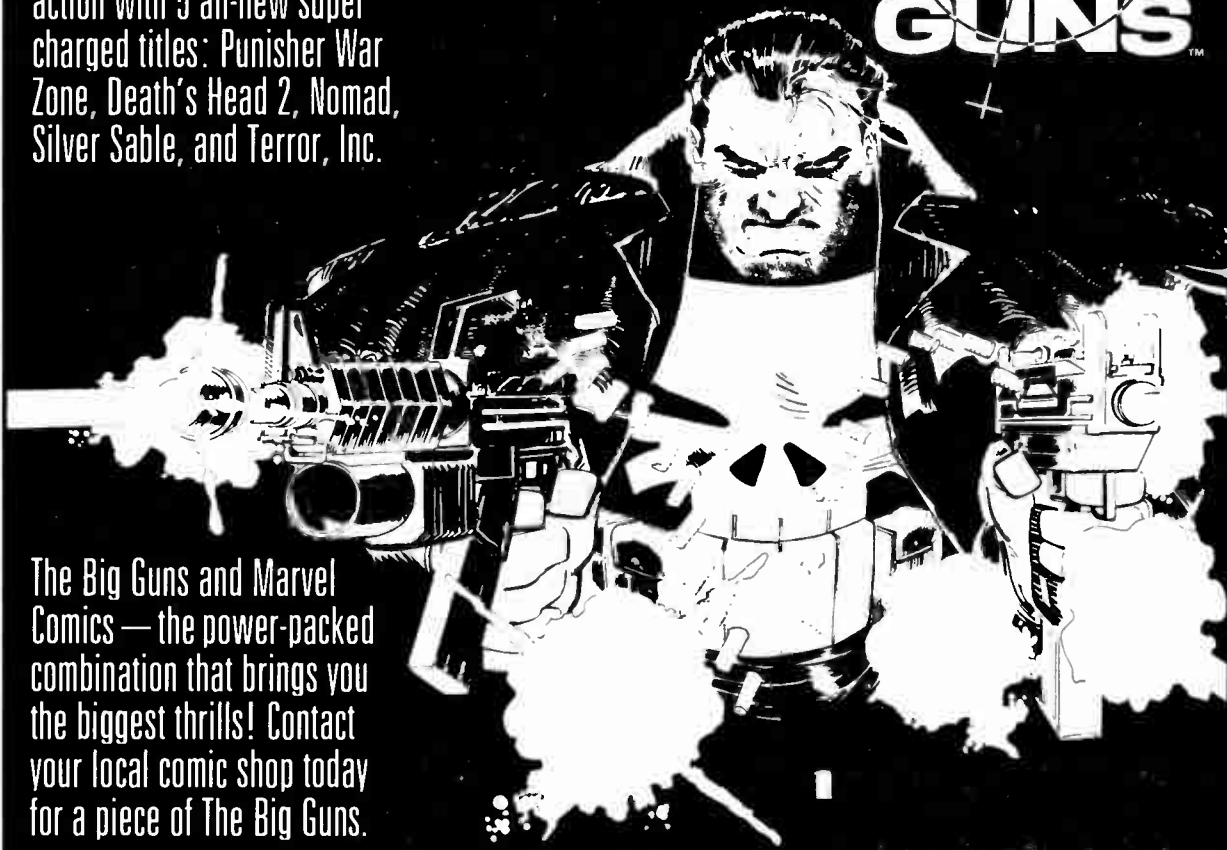
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(L-R): EPIC'S MICHAEL SCHNAPP, KNAC'S PAM EDWARDS, IRON MAIDEN'S EDDIE, KNAC'S BRYAN SCHOCK AND TOM MAHER.

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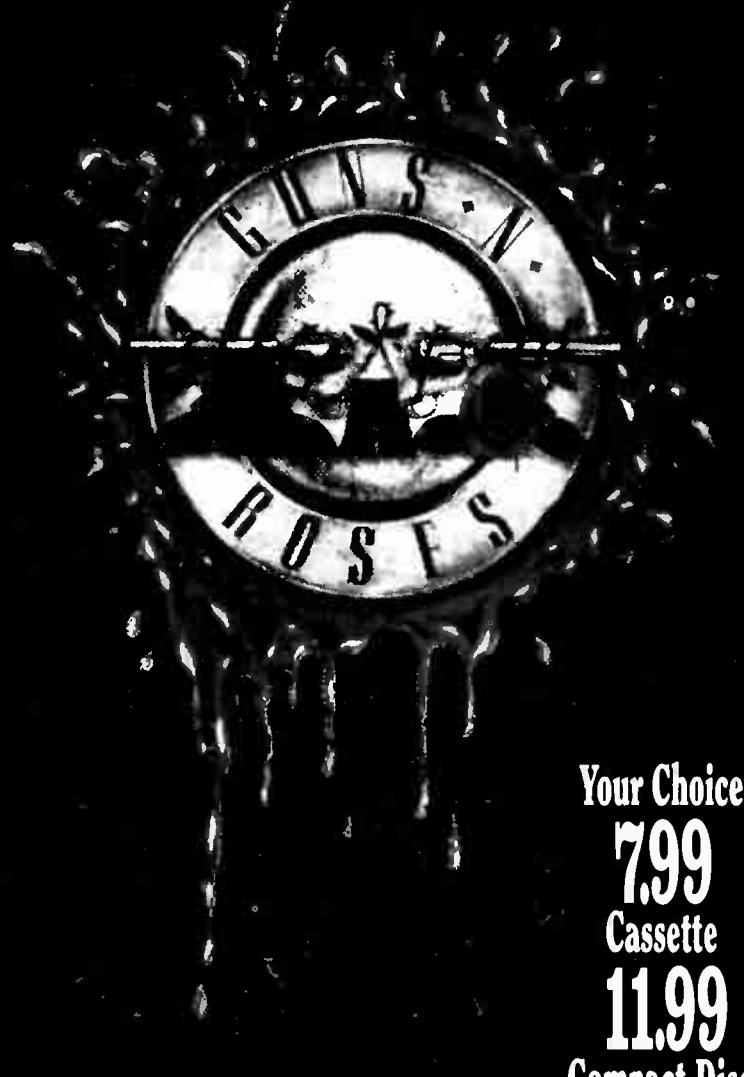
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(continued from page 8)

could get permanent signage on the building somewhere, getting local bands on the air and having contests with the clubs and tying all that stuff in."

At the same time that KNAC remained street-oriented and aware, Epic Records Director of Metal Marketing/Promotions Michael J. Schnapp credits sales and advertising for their longevity. "Selling the format has always been the toughest [aspect]," he says.

Current Program Director Gregg Steele (who half-jokingly says that he got his job because he has the longest hair), admits that "KNAC is a little bit more decadent than most other radio stations but I won't allow us to be *too* sleazy."

Extremely important to their early success was the timeliness of KNAC's renaissance. In 1986, such bands as Metallica, Great White, Guns N' Roses, Bon Jovi and Queensryche were, in various stages, emerging from their cult status. Thus, KNAC and these burgeoning rock acts were able to grow together. The artists were thrilled to stop in at this sole outlet for broadcast rock and roll on the West Coast. "The first time Bon Jovi came through [for an interview] in '86," recalls Christopher, "they weren't as big as they are now. There were all these rockers lined up outside to meet Bon Jovi. Ozzy [Osbourne] was one of our biggest interviews," he continues. "This was when

Ozzy was going through his lawsuit about supposedly making people commit suicide. Bruce Dickinson from Iron Maiden would come in a lot. Vince Neil [Motley Crue] was one of our first interviews, and it was right after his [drunk driving] accident."

As a result, bands like Metallica, who today find themselves at the very top of *Billboard's* album chart, had their songs consistently in the Top 10 requests, even though they were still considered a cult band nationally. Great White, who in 1986 were trying to get a new record deal, found

a haven at KNAC. "They really popped [our single] 'Face The Day.' They were behind it from day one," remembers Lardie gratefully. "They were putting on shows when they were just getting started and since we had a great relationship with them, they asked us to play their first anniversary party at the Palace, which was linked with [charity for abused children] Cedar House.

The first of these annual anniversary shows, it was a prophetic evening. "It was tremendous," says Christopher of that party. "Most of the hard rock groups that were in town showed up for a guest appearance.

**"THEY HAD [KNAC]
BUMPER STICKERS ON
THE PLANES IN THE
GULF WAR, THEY'RE
ALL OVER THE SWISS
ALPS, THEY'RE ON THE
GREAT WALL OF
CHINA--THEY'RE
EVERYWHERE!"**

--Gary Price, President, KNAC

Great White was the headline band and Don Dokken came out to jam, Ronnie James Dio was there, Vince Neil was there, one of the guys from Twisted Sister...it was a star-studded cast that came out and jammed with Great White afterwards. Three thousand people packed the Palace and we had a party upstairs."

And a group of rowdy upstarts made their mark that night. "Guns N' Roses are probably the best example of a band to really match KNAC's attitude," notes Goza. "We invited Guns N' Roses to the party

because I had seen them at Gazzarri's and you just knew that these guys were going to be hot. But they ended up getting so fucked up we actually had them leave the party! But I know Slash still remembers that first time he heard his record on the radio. He was in a van, heading back to SIR studios, and he called the station right after he heard it. He was still digging the fact that he could turn on the radio and hear Led Zeppelin, followed by Guns N' Roses."

And when Guns N' Roses released the now multi-million-selling *Appetite For*

Destruction album, which at first didn't get played anywhere but KNAC, and they returned the favor by performing at the second anniversary party. This display of loyalty was to be replayed many, many times over the years. Bon Jovi, who remembered that KNAC was the only station to promote *Slippery When Wet* during its release, came through town a few years later and would only talk on KNAC, even asking them to participate in several of their more recent videos and displaying their logo prominently in them. "When Queensryche's *Operation: Mindcrime* was about to be released, we were brought to EMI to hear it," recalls Maher. "We were all standing around this little room, listening to the album, with the guys from the band nervously watching our reactions. We thought it was tremendous. When they wanted to headline in the area, we got behind the shows by doing a *Mindcrime* promotion. The

promoters said they'd be happy if the band sold 5,000 tickets to the show, but by the time we got through with our promotion, they nearly sold out Irvine Meadows."

Cliff Bernstein, manager of both Metallica and Queensryche, remembers that particular show with a sense of justice. "Warrant was opening for Queensryche at the time and they decided to do a separate show at the Universal Amphitheatre because they claimed it was a different market than Irvine. They had this huge promotion going on with Pirate (KQLZ)

and a low ticket price. Everything was going against us for that Irvine show, except that KNAC was our sponsor. The net results were 11,500 Queensryche tickets sold and less than 1,000 paid for Warrant. This is an example of KNAC's power in the marketplace to actually turn people out for events. For a station with as limited a signal as they have, they have become a major factor in the market in both L.A. and Orange County. It has paid off for us, definitely in both ticket sales and record sales," concludes Bernstein. This year, both Queensryche and Metallica have shown their loyalty. "For our three nights sold out at Long Beach with Queensryche," Bernstein notes proudly, "we gave them the lead show to co-promote. For the three sold-out Metallica shows at the Forum, we again gave them the lead show to co-promote and they did a great job with both of them."

KNAC continued with their tie-in promotions—everything from flying lucky fans to Alice Cooper shows in Detroit, or to Scorpions shows in Germany, or down to Mexico for a week of Pure Rock gigs at Van Halen's Cabo Wabo Cantina. Now, half a dozen years after it's "Pure Rock" inception, they continue to promote up and comers like Nirvana, Soundgarden and Pearl Jam, while constantly upgrading their programming. One of KNAC's most recent additions to their schedule is the Saturday night show Radio Cathouse. Hosted by Cathouse owner/MTV veejay Riki Rachtman, it has gone on to be the highest rated Saturday night program in Southern California. Asked to name a favorite interview, Rachtman quickly names several. "Megadeth, Motorhead, Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne. Lemmy [Kilmister, Motorhead] is great because he talks about what he knows about—rock 'n' roll. Dirty, stupid, fun rock 'n' roll. I was the first one to come on the air and say publicly in front of millions of people that I'm a full-blown, hardcore Suicidal Tendencies fan. Then people started listening to them and now KNAC is playing it a lot, because it's a great record!"



(L-R): PANTERA'S PHILIP ANSELMO, ALICE IN CHAINS' LANE STALEY, KNAC/MTV'S RIKI RACHTMAN, ALICE IN CHAINS' JERRY CANTRELL, PANTERA'S DIAMOND DARRELL.

"WHEN A DEEJAY IS PLAYING METALLICA ON KNAC, IT'S TURNED UP SO FRIGGIN' LOUD IN THE STUDIO, AND THE DEEJAY IS USUALLY STANDING UP, SINGING THE WHOLE THING."

-- Riki Rachtman, MTV/Radio Cathouse

Above all, the factor which weighs heaviest in KNAC's favor in the eyes of staff, fans and industry is that the passion which drives the station to deliver outlaw music over its airwaves is honest. "When a deejay is playing Metallica on KNAC," Rachtman notes, "it's turned up so frigg'in' loud in the studio, and the deejay is usually standing up, singing the whole thing, 'cause KNAC deejays are into the music they play, pure, flat and simple, or they wouldn't be there. They've all got integrity, every single one of them. When (continued on page 14)



L.A. GUNS' TRACI GUNS SHREDS ON SKATEBOARD...AND SIX STRINGS.

Metallica or Queensryche or Suicidal Tendencies plays, the KNAC deejays are dying to get tickets because they want to go see those bands play. Every KNAC jock is a Pure Rocker."

Price sums up the stations charm by saying, "it's been a very unique environment. We're very street aware. We try very hard to keep ourself on the pulse of what the kids want to hear and what's happening, and take a lot more risks than anybody else in town with new music. We've been really fortunate that a lot of that new music has gone on to become monster, huge-selling acts. And the radio station, internally, operates with



(L-R): TOM MARSHALL, METALLICA'S LARS ULRICH, KNAC'S TOM MAHER AND LONG PAUL.



RIKI RACHTMAN--JOCK OF ALL TRADES.

a common goal. Everybody wants to see the station be successful. There's a lot of pride. We are the little guy against the huge, corporate radio stations. We're up against publicly traded (on the American Stock Exchange) radio stations, so we've got to be more innovative and unique to compete."

Now carried via Digital Planet to cable operators across the United

States, KNAC has even outsmarted their oldest enemy—the short signal. So the underdog won—and continues to win. Combining guts, intuitiveness, street-savvy and undying passion, in the half-dozen years of its existence, KNAC not only established themselves as the home of Pure Rock, but springboard for artists and an outlet for a heretofore ignored genre of music. KNAC's first-ever on-air song, AC/DC's "It's A Long Way To The Top If You Want To Rock And Roll," wasn't exactly prophetic—in just six short years, the station has become both cool and hot, never afraid to take a walk on the wild side.

E P I L O G U E

Although the participants in KNAC's early Pure Rock days literally lived for their jobs, personal reasons have lured some of them away. Tom Maher is now working for BFD (ironically, Guns N' Roses management); Ross Goza is Vice President of Creative Services at Hollywood Records; Program Director Pam Edwards and Music Director Bryan Schock (not mentioned above, but integral to the Pure Rock format) are National Director of AOR promotions

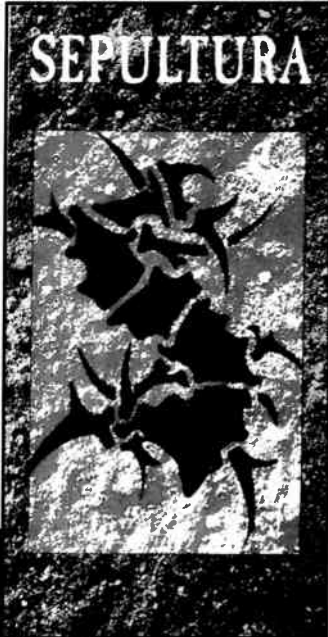
at Columbia Records and Program Director at WHVY in Annapolis, Maryland, respectively. Nicki Randolph is General Manager at WHVY (in fact, she hired Bryan); Gary Price, as mentioned already, is the President of KNAC, and Jimmy Christopher has just left a Paso Robles radio station. To a person, each of these people who were interviewed stressed that their co-workers were literally like family to them, with Fred Sands as a father figure and Gary Price a

big-brother type. Those who left, for whatever reasons, found it extremely difficult to do so. And, every one of them said, in so many words, "Working at KNAC was the best job I've ever had."

Adrienne Stone, an L.A.-based journalist, is a contributing editor to Rip, Rockbeat and Music Express, and is the associate producer of Hot Guitarists Video.

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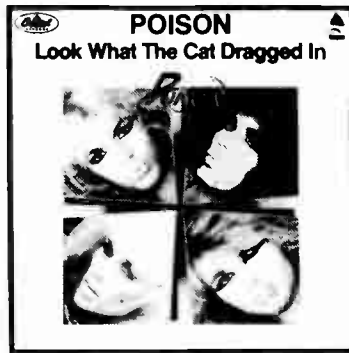
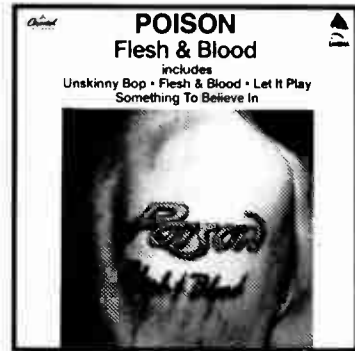
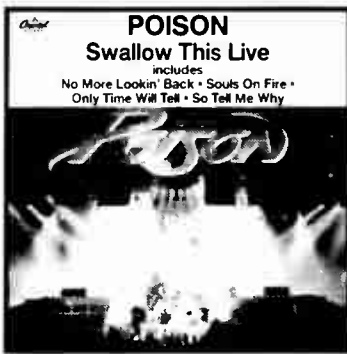
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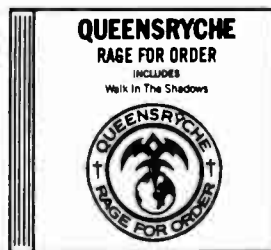
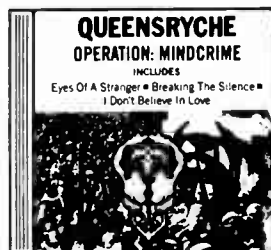
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It seems that everyone knows just exactly what "heavy metal" and "hard rock" music is—when it suits them, that is. Bands can swing from being "alternative" to "metal" in the space of moments. To define categories is a job only crazy men and conceited fools would take on. Instead, here are some definitions courtesy of Mr. Webster's dictionary. This history and these definitions are not a mere chronology. No, that would be too easy

AND too hard. Rock 'n' roll is smart, stupid, fast, slow, depending on the band and the listener. It's been around since the '50s, and it's getting louder and stronger every day (ask KNAC). So here's a categorization by subjective definition and, of course, some of your favorites will inevitably be left out, but hey, definitions and tastes are subjective, so as Ozzy Osbourne says, Don't Blame Me...

As far as geography goes, neither London, Los Angeles or New York can claim the crown as the birthplace of hard rock/heavy metal. That wonderful accolade belongs to Birmingham, England, and if you can't make sense of that, think about the fact that Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Judas Priest are just three of the great legends to have emerged from the smokestacks and gang-fights long enough to become world-renowned superstars. But let's get on with the show: put in your earplugs we're off!

HEAVY (hev'e) adj. That which is lifted with difficulty; weighty, sad, grievous, burdensome; wearisome; not easily digested; soft and miry; difficult; large in amount; dense; abundant; forcible.

If heavy is "that which is lifted with difficulty," then the rise of many influential performers has been hampered by their plain and simple weirdness. Kicking off the glam era with a resounding boot was David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust, who, while a cult hero, was a touch too much for the

in his hair, watered it all down into a gooey paste, played some superb music and went totally mad. Occupational hazard? Actually, Syd was so difficult to "lift to prominence" that he drifted from Pink Floyd and into various mental institutions before "finding himself" and settling down in Cambridge, U.K.

In terms of sheer, bloody heaviness, you can't ignore legendary New Wave of British Heavy Metal stars Saxon, and their singer, the awesome Biff Byford, who, in the early '80s, often appeared with at least

WHAT A LONG, STRANGE TRIP IT'S BEEN...

THE HISTORY OF HARD ROCK 'N' HEAVY METAL

By Steffan Chirazi

three dicks and five balls in his silver Spandex and sang such classics as "Denim And Leather." And you can't forget Iron Maiden, the Londoners who were—and still are—the heaviest of the heavy.

If secondary definitions in the heavy arena include "weighty," "sad," "burdensome" and "not easily digested," then who the hell else but Black Sabbath? Four Brummies (lads from Birmingham, that is) without a clue about anything except how to create the most superb, rumbling noises ever heard—"Iron Man" and

Establishment. Then there was Alice Cooper and his snakes, who, in '72, had British MP's (Members of Parliament, for you Americans) up in arms when they saw the Coop's naked figure trailed around on a billboard with only a snake for clothing; and the New York Dolls, who turned aggressive androgyny into cult-hero status, as did Finnish pretty boys Hanoi Rocks, who spawned such pale imitations as Poison. Then there was Iggy Pop and the Stooges, who taught self-flagellation and punk freedom, and the incredibly important Syd (ex-Pink Floyd) Barrett who influenced the lot of 'em, crushed mandrex

"War Pigs" are must-listens for rebellious youth. Their legendary debut album was recorded on eight tracks in 12 hours, and after a series of excellent releases, drink and drugs finally slowed them to the point of inertia, whereupon Ozzy did the solo split and there are no more tears there, only hit records and hot guitarists. Detroit's seminal MC5 fit neatly into this category: about as easily digested as five pounds of raw steak, their madcap rants and raves have proven an influence for many, while Manowar were perhaps the most pathetic "metal" band to emerge, wearing small dead mammals over their privates and screaming



DON'T LOOK FOR A PERMANENT VACATION FROM AEROSMITH. THEY'RE BACK IN THE SADDLE FOR GOOD!

nonsense about marching and pillaging while waving great dirty swords around. In other words, they generally epitomized the impression most uninformed folk have of all metallic music.

In the soft 'n' miry section of "heavy" we have the wimpos, stuffed chock-full of coos and woos and broken hearts. The kings? The incredible stadium rock of **Journey**, with more hit singles than hair at this stage, followed closely by **Boston**. **Night Ranger** and **Dokken** epitomized an era of big-selling bands whose fans just can't be found anywhere these days. These groups *did* have a certain popularity in their time, but they just ain't pure rock. Now, circa '92, a whole new generation of mushies is being inspired by the **Nelsons**, bless their virgin white cotton socks.

Los Angeles is the clear-cut pick for the "large in amount" part of the heavy definition. It's the second home of metal, and all the various fashion nightmares to have been born to the genre. L.A.'s heaviest include **Motley Crue**, still today an indispensable element; **Ratt**, who were once right up there with 'em; and **Quiet Riot**, who spearheaded the bang yer head '83 hard-rock resurgence with a platinum, chart-topping explosion, even if much of their success was due to the earlier songs of **Slade**, which they covered with massive success. **W.A.S.P.** (who could forget Blackie Lawless shooting fire from his codpiece—now that's hot!) and **Keel** were two more early '80s bands to emerge with any impact. The '90s, of course, has seen the emergence of **Faster Pussycat**, the rough 'n' tumble **Little Caesar**, **Junkyard**

and a plethora of others, but L.A. will always be overstuffed with hundreds of bands selling office supplies over the phone by day and playing Gazzarri's by night, hoping for that elusive record deal.

The heavy category is ripe under the "abundant" definition. The current crop of bands in this realm are beyond pigeonholing—they take the best of punk and fuse it with sub-Sabbath riffing. Look no further than Seattle, where a whole mess of fine-sounding bands have reinvented some older

“LED ZEP, KINGS OF THE ‘RIOT HOUSE,’ DEFINED THE ‘70S, AND IF THERE IS A KID WHO DOESN’T KNOW ALL THE LYRICS TO “STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN,” WELL, THEN HE MUST HAVE SKIPPED ADOLESCENCE.”

sounds, brushed them down and made them into the angry sound of today. Who? **Nirvana**, the platinum post-punkers, of course, lead the field, but lets not forget the excellent **Mudhoney**, the late **Mother Love Bone**, **Soundgarden** and the heavy (in more ways than one!) **Tad**. For once we can look at a bursting "scene" and not avow to hate it, because the music is so good, and so what if a few hundred thousand

poeurs have suddenly realized it's okay to like these bands, and catapulted the underground into the stratosphere of success.

METAL (met'l) n. An elementary substance such as gold, iron, etc., having a peculiar luster, generally fusible by heat.

Let's get down to brass—or is that gold?—tacks. If metal is an elementary substance, then these bands are the mainstays of this whole affair. Start with the **Who**, a group who invoked images of hooliganism both physically and aurally the likes of which no one had ever seen. Along came the **Rolling Stones**, purveyors of the great hook 'n' song, the aforementioned **Sabbath**, then finally, the mighty **Led Zeppelin**, who reinvented many, many things musically, and also set the trend for boorish excesses which were to plague rocks' reputation for many years to come. Snappers in snatches, wine, women, drugs, more wine, some more women, and oh yeah, a song or ten, then the whole lot over again. **Led Zep**, kings of the "Riot House," defined the '70s, and if there is a kid who doesn't know all the lyrics to "Stairway to Heaven," well, then, he must have skipped adolescence. Clearly, **Hendrix** must be mentioned as a vital instigator in the field of guitar, and **Aerosmith's** rock 'n' roll success has been greater in their second '80s phase than it was originally, though early classics such as "Back In The Saddle" stand tall next to **Pump**, and in the back of every music trade mag, musicians-wanted section, it reads "influences: early **Aerosmith**."

KISS became the first band to take music and theater to absurdly huge proportions and thus became an absurdly huge band. And though we've been avoiding naming "definitive" bands, it

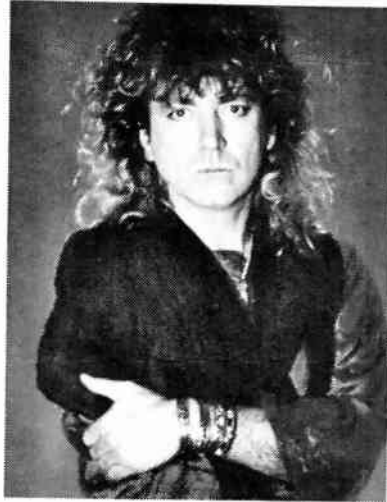


JUDAS PRIEST: BRITISH STEEL

might, *just might*, be possible to call Judas Priest a definitive heavy metal band. Coming forth in '73 but blossoming in '77 with *Sad Wings of Destiny* before marching into leather-clad monsters such as *Hell Bent For Leather*, *Stained Class*, and the multi-platinum-selling *Screaming For Vengeance*. Indeed, Priest have often been overlooked when it comes to reinventing metal's multi-platinum status in America, preceding both Def Leppard and Quiet Riot with the amazing *British Steel* album.

Anti-Christ Devils-Child? Bisexuals? Nope. AC/DC was just one hard muther of a band, who came steaming out of Australia in 1976 to remind us that, despite the different categories, all rock 'n' roll basically revolved around guts, phlegm, a decent riff and steady time. That formula hasn't failed them, and millions of dollars, fans, and a new lead singer later, the formula still cooks. A long way to the top if you wanna rock 'n' roll? Not for AC/DC. ZZ Top were indispensable to the bluesier side of rock, slipping and sliding in off the back of Billy Gibbons' wicked guitar, while Van Halen's arrival in '78 signaled a new wave of entertainment.

David Lee Roth combined the best elements of the Ringling Brothers, Frank Sinatra, and the Muppet Show's Animal and threw them out to an ever-growing



ZEP's ROBERT PLANT—STILL CLIMBING THE STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS?

audience, while Eddie Van Halen re-invented and speeded-up rock guitar. Other seminal contributors in this elemental category include Montrose ("Rock Candy" still rocks) and the Motor City Madman,

Terrible Ted Nugent. Here was a man who enthralled thousands with his savage pro-wrestling take on life, his great tunes and sexual innuendos. On the techno side of life, laying down the foundation was Rush, who had a deft touch with layers and songs, creating virtual soundscapes, while Pink Floyd's fantastical rock operas could not be topped. (No, GWAR and Queensryche don't count!). It's important to note that in the scheme of things, with new bands being born every moment, that some of these outfits could be called prehistoric, but it's worth remembering that everything came from those times, and without them, we wouldn't be where we are today. And where is that? Where metal is topping the charts in it's most elemental and visceral form. Where bands like Corrosion of Conformity sing about political involvement, Faith No More cross over genres and create new ones. Metallica, of course, fits in here, a band who invented the term "thrash metal," only to move briskly on and play songs which can only be described as "metallia-music" and who now own the rights to that phrase "legendary," while Guns N'Roses have certainly become one



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of the truly "phenomenal" bands of the last 20 years. Like the mighty Led Zep, they reinvented the past, and brought back that no-holds-barred approach to rock 'n' roll, scaring moms and thrilling kids. With great songs and an ability to mainstream the feelings of millions worldwide, GN' Fuckin' R, for all the media bull and hullabaloo, remain an intriguing, artistic and sometimes brilliant musical light. At least you can't accuse them of being normal. Skid Row, too, while less controversial than GN'R, are still a pull-no-punches band with attitude and talent to spare.

HARD (hard) adj. Not easily penetrated or separated; firm; difficult to understand, arduous; unfeeling; severe; unjust; harsh, stiff; grasping; applied to certain sounds, as sibilant contrasted with gutturals.

If we're to take Mr. Webster's "not easily penetrated or separated" to heart, then think punk. From the earliest days of

the Clash, the punk-rock movement was either a short-lived explosion killed by Malcom McLaren or an angry strain (Nirvana? Slayer?) which has yet to die. At first, neither punks nor metalheads



ALICE COOPER: SHOCK ROCK.

wanted to admit they had any relevance to each other, but as the years have unfolded, we find a whole genre influenced by the Sex Pistols, the Ramones, Black Flag, GBH, the Anti-Nowhere League, Discharge, The Exploited, the excellent, rapid-

fire **Bad Brains** and by even more subversive bands as the incredibly angry **Crass** and **Conflict**. Smack-bang in the middle of all this, circa '77, came a combined effort from **The Damned** and

Motorhead called the **Doomed**, which just goes to show how compatible to two genres have always been, and more importantly, brings us to **Motorhead**. The most underrated band of all time, Motorhead did more for music than any other band of the time. No one else garnered punk-rocker respect like Lemmy Kilmister did/does, and it's one of the greatest travesties of our time that Motorhead haven't achieved the success they're due. And let's not forget the women (what rock 'n' roller does?!) and include Lita Ford, Joan Jett, Suzi

Quatro and the Runaways, because all were/are bloody hard. Even Pat Benatar deserves a mention, as "Heartbreaker" was a groundbreaker. They've succeeded in turning a man's stage into a woman's by proving that rough, rockin' tunes are not
(continued on page 25)

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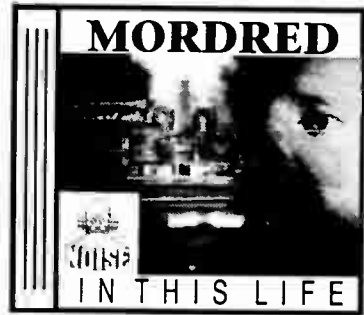
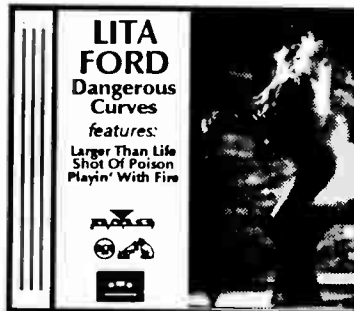
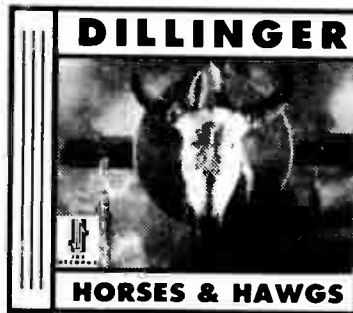


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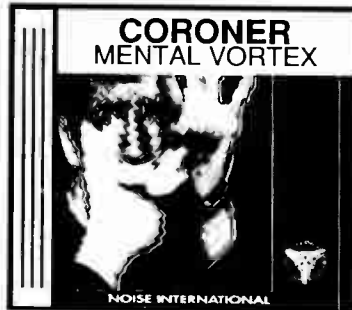
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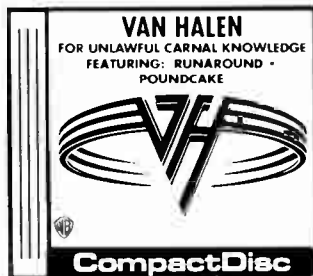
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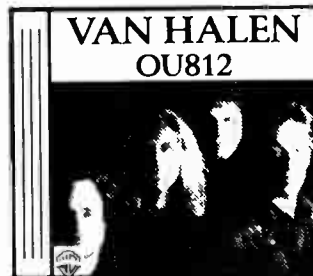
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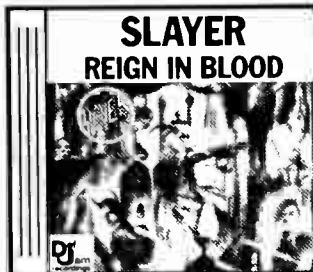
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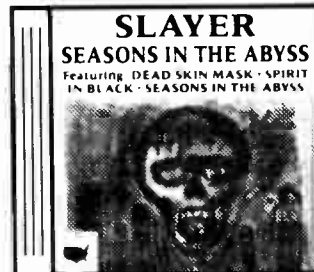
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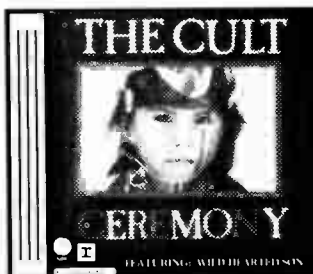
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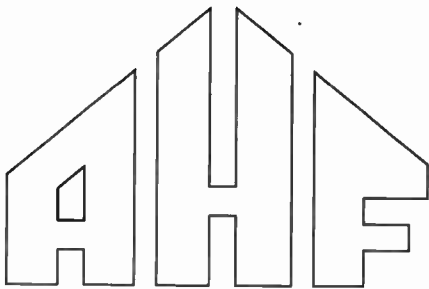
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(continued from page 21)
exclusively the province of the male gender.

In the "unfeeling, severe, unjust, harsh" corner there's just one word: thrash. Pretty much any band in the genre has no time for blue skies or pretty babies on a dewy spring morning, but make no mistake, this is the end-result of punk meeting metal head on for a fight. Slayer are the most famous of all, combining classical riffs with amazing twists and turns of speed, whilst Megadeth have established themselves as the voice of youth, speaking of the various ills in society to the backbeat of thunder-



SOUNDGARDEN GET ON THE BADMOTORFINGER AND RIDE.

it up with some funky grooves. There's always gonna be the older boys, too. the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd, adding vital dashes of slide and soul to rock 'n' roll, whilst those great legends Deep Purple were even immortalized in rock....

There isn't enough space to finish this article, because there aren't enough trees to make the paper. What? You say we left out someone? Did I hear you say Suicidal Tendencies? Bon Jovi? The Scorpions? Sweet?

Sorry, but clearly, hard rock, heavy metal or the great melting pot of rock 'n' roll that encompasses all of that is undefinable, indefinable and infinite. The future of rock holds many things and most of them are



STRAIGHT OUTTA NYC: ANTHRAX.

ous guitars and rhythms. Then there's the cartoon thrash of Anthrax, the punk riffing and unforgettable tunes of that bowl haircut band, the Ramones, and the anger and intelligence of Henry Rollins' Black Flag. Let's not forget death/blackish metal, headed up by the now-defunct British bands Angel Witch and Venom, and carried on royally by bands such as Obituary, Morbid Angel and Entombed, and forerunners in grindcore, Godflesh and Napalm Death. There's many more too, but the 1991 Guide To Autopsy could probably help you name most of these handsome young devils. Certainly the video-game of the whole heavy rock genre, death metal shows no signs of dissipation.....or dare I say dismemberment?

ROCK (rok) v. To move backwards and forwards without displacing; to swing, to sway, to reel. A large mass of stone; defense; source of peril or disaster.

To move backwards and forwards without displacing is perhaps the widest



GLAM GODS HANOI ROCKS.

still really "rock," and excluding the names already mentioned, here are most of them. The Red Hot Chili Peppers and Faith No More both signalled a new age of thought insofar as their width of scope when it comes to musical ideas, and Living Color and Primus are two more bands powering



MOTORHEAD: LOCK UP YER DAUGHTERS!

questions. Where is "it" coming from? Seattle? L.A.? New York? Atlanta? San Francisco? There's no telling, and ya know, that's what hard rock/heavy metal's greatest gift is: that you can't read it like some cheap trend, you don't know what's coming next. You just know that it's going to speak, no, shout to you, reach out and grab ya by the nape of yer neck and shake you up. Truth be told, it's a constant force that ain't gonna go away, no matter what Tipper Gore tries to do.

Steffan Chirazi is a freelance writer based in San Francisco. His work has appeared in Rip, Bam, Penthouse, Sounds and Kerrang!

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L-R (FRONT ROW): JENNIFER PERRY (AVALON), OZZY OSBOURNE, LOIS LEE (CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT), PAM EDWARDS (KNAC), SHARON OSBOURNE, TOM MAHER (KNAC).

THE HEART 'N' SOUL OF PURE ROCK 'N' ROLL

By S.L. Duff

Hheavy metal with heart? Hard rock with a conscience? Pure rock with soul? You bet! While parents decry folks like Ozzy Osbourne as the spawn of Satan, the Oz-man is busy playing a concert to benefit runaways and abused kids.

Every year, in what has become a Southern California tradition, KNAC-FM celebrates their anniversary with a bang. Some businesses are content to pop the cork on some champagne and pat themselves on the back for a job well done come anniversary time. But in keeping with the station's rockin' renegade status, they get together the coolest bands for an even cooler cause: kids, who are some of the biggest fans of the musicians and radio station who are donating their time to help them out. It's one of those win-win situations that's a must-attend event for the station's ever-growing legion of listeners, and, best of all, it gives something back to the community.

In the six years of KNAC's history, these events have, like most successful things, grown considerably. Last year's concert drew a capacity crowd of 13,500 to the Long Beach Arena, where the throngs were entertained by Ozzy Osbourne, L.A. Guns, Lynch Mob, and Alice in Chains. Anniversary and benefit or not, this is a stellar line-up by any standard, but the show didn't stop there. Part of the annual tradition is the All-Star Jam, which capped off the evening with a surprise guest appearance by the BulletBoys, and a session featuring Taime Downe of Faster Pussycat, George Lynch, Fred Coury of Cinderella, Kiss' Bruce Kulick, Mike Starr of Alice in Chains, and Lynch Mob's Oni Logan. The song: "Jumpin' Jack Flash."

But wait, there's more. Much more. The fifth anniversary blowout was capped off by a jam starring Gene Simmons of KISS, Metallica's James Hetfield, and original Guns N' Roses drummer

Steven Adler.

While all of these names might not be of the household variety (yet), to listeners of KNAC and other pure rockers worldwide, they're heroes. The concert, held on February 8, 1991, was preceded by the KNAC Rock 'n' Roll Auction, in which fans bought items ranging from Slash's top hat to a day in the studio with Alice Cooper, the latter of which included joining in on the backing vocals with the originator of shock rock.

The Auction alone raised \$45,000, and, coupled with proceeds from the concert, brought in a total of \$113,000 dollars, which was donated to Children of the Night, a non-profit organization that helps runaways and adolescent prostitutes get off the streets and get on with their lives.

In the five years KNAC has been throwing these shindigs, the amount of cash raised has steadily increased, with each new year's goal set even higher. Each year the KNAC staff wonder how they can top the previous year's extravaganza, but each year they do. Though the lineup for the sixth anniversary madness isn't confirmed yet, it will most likely occur by the end of February, and again, the Long Beach Arena will host the ground-breaking event.

"We're going to try to do a 15-dollar ticket this year," projects KNAC Program Director Gregg Steele, "and we're trying to keep expenses down. Obviously, all the bands donate their time. Costs include the actual man-hours of getting the venue together, but the venue is usually donated."

Like the station itself, KNAC's celebrations have grown in leaps and bounds since the inception. The first concert was held at the Palace in Hollywood, and was preceded by a daytime simulcast from Gazzarri's on the Sunset Strip. During the broadcast, large numbers of local musicians stopped by to congratulate the station, which had switched from the Rock & Rhythm format (a mix of post-modern, KROQ-style eclecticism with '50s and '60s oldies) to the Pure Rock format.

Back in '86, the Promotion Director was Tom Maher, who left KNAC just six months ago to work with BFD management, the company that handles Guns N' Roses. Maher recalls getting the ball rolling on the anniversary celebrations.

"We thought of doing something



(L-R): KNAC's CRAIG WILLIAMS, ARMORED SAINT's JOEY VERA, KNAC's BRYAN SCHOCK, ARMORED SAINT's JEFF DUNCAN, GONZO AND JOHN BUSH, METALBLADE's MICHELLE WALLACE. (FRONT ROW): ARMORED SAINT's PHIL SANDOVAL, KNAC's LAURIE FREE.

special. We featured a lot of local bands, [Sunset] Strip bands, and some signed bands like Black And Blue. We were broadcasting live during the day at Gazzarri's, and in the evening we had a concert at the Palace. Even Guns N' Roses stopped by Gazzarri's. We supported the

*"I DON'T THINK OUR
SHELTER WOULD HAVE
BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT
THE HELP OF KNAC, AND
THE MUSICIANS THAT
CONTRIBUTE THEIR TIME,
SUCH AS GREAT WHITE AND
OZZY OSBOURNE."*

-- Lois Lee, Children of the Night

band early on, but that was before they really started to take off."

The Palace show featured Fanz, who had won a KNAC local-band competition, and was headlined by Great White, who have played all but the most recent anniversary concerts.

"KNAC, they've been very support-

ive of us since the beginning," notes Jack Russell, lead vocalist of Great White. "They did something different and were at the forefront of heavy music. They also gave a big boost to the local scene. When the opportunity came up to get involved with the shows, of course, we'll help them out too."

The 1986 proceeds went to Cedar House, a charity for abused children, and the American Cancer Society Coastal City Units. The total donation was just under \$5,000.

"One of the whole ideas was that runaway kids, abused kids, was an issue that took to heart the kids in our area that listened to the station," remembers Maher. "We figured runaways might be listeners, too, or if there were kids that were thinking about running away, they'd find out there are helplines and people who care.

"After the first show was such a success, we decided to tie in Avalon and move to the Santa Monica Civic," says Maher.

Avalon Attractions, for years one of the most successful promoters of major concert events in Southern California, became involved in organizing all the subsequent KNAC bashes. "Our involvement is in the production and advertisement end," says Avalon's Jennifer Perry. "We do everything from the day the tickets go on sale through figuring the receipts and paying out expenses at the end of the

[concert] night."

Along with Great White, long-time local favorites Armored Saint performed at the second anniversary. Vocalist John Bush recalls his bands involvement. "When KNAC changed their format, *Delirious Nomad* had just come out, and they went on the song "Over The Edge." We were one of the first L.A. bands to get a lot of airplay, so they put us on their bills.

Many of the bands on the shows have been the big local bands. For us, it's just a way of paying them back for all the support they've given us."

Hard though it is to imagine, at one time Guns N'Roses were an up 'n' coming L.A. band. And their participation in the second anniversary show is recalled by Great White's Russell: "I remember when Guns N' Roses opened for us. I don't think that'll be happening again!"

The benefactor that year, 1987, was Find the Children, a foundation that locates missing kids via methods ranging from milk carton advertising to funding investigations.

As the celebration grew from year to year, naturally more people became—and wanted to become—involved. KNAC welcomed, as part of their third anniversary, a Party Ninja benefit, again for Find the Children. Capitol Records publicist Bryon Hontas has spearheaded the organization of Party Ninja events since their inception.

"The way the Ninjas got started; that was Autograph's secret name when they were on the road and wanted to do club gigs on the side," Hontas recounts. "They played a show at the Roxy and



GREAT WHITE: DOIN' THEIR PART FOR CHARITY.

*"I REMEMBER WHEN
GUNS N' ROSES
OPENED FOR US
[AT KNAC'S SECOND
ANNIVERSARY CONCERT].
I DON'T THINK THAT
WILL BE HAPPENING
AGAIN!"*

-- Jack Russell, Great White



GUNS N' ROSES, CIRCA '87.

invited some friends, such as Kiss and Motley, up to jam, and called that the Party Ninjas. Everyone involved had so much fun that we decided to do these shows from time to time, but we wanted to have a cause or something we could tie it together with. We decided to get involved with Find the Children, because we thought the cause of exploited children was one the audience would relate to."

Hontas took his plans for a Ninja benefit to KNAC because "we wanted to tie in with advertising and with a radio station. At first they were skeptical, but we went to a meeting there with (Great White and then-Guns N' Roses manager) Alan Niven, and got the thing rolling."

And roll it did. The fourth anniversary shindig, which featured Great White, MSG, Vain, Love/Hate, XYZ, and surprise guests Guns N'Roses, Cinderella, Don Dokken, Damn Yankees and BulletBoys, marked the beginning of KNAC's fruitful ongoing involvement with Children of the Night. Headed by Lois Lee, the charity has been immeasurably helped by these concerts.

"KNAC now is handling about one-tenth of our annual budget," says Lee.

"They are really, over time, our largest contributor." Lee's organization provides a toll-free 800 number helpline open 24 hours. They have a street program where volunteers try to get runaways, abused teenagers and teen prostitutes off the street and into organization-run shelters. "The money that KNAC has given us is being used to open a 24-bed shelter in Van Nuys, with full staff and school. There is job placement, dental care and schooling.

(continued on page 30)



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L.A. GUNS: THE HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES HELPED RAISE MORE THAN \$100,000 FOR TEENAGE RUNAWAYS AT KNAC'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT CONCERT.

their egos aside. When we did [the shows at] the Santa Monica Civic, the people were really cramped, they couldn't have their friends backstage, they had to share equipment, yet everything worked out."

As much fun as the concerts are the on-air auctions, where a piece of rock history can be had for a song. Okay, make that some hard-earned bucks, but hey, can't get much better than a great cause and a one-of-a-kind piece of rock memorabilia. Past items up for grabs included Sebastian Bach's shoes (\$2,100); Jon Bon Jovi's signed acoustic guitar and a personal call from his Johnness (\$3,000); a pair of pants and a Gibson Flying-V guitar courtesy of the Scorpions (\$1,950); and items as varied as Joe Satriani's guitar strap to Dread Zeppelin's sideburns.

"The upcoming auction will be the weekend before the show," Steele figures. "We've got a Gibson guitar signed by Slash, an Iron Maiden guitar, a Kix guitar, signed KNAC tapestries, signed drumheads. We start at low figures, and they do shoot up quite a bit. We start at the cost of the item itself. A platinum LP, for example, will start at a hundred dollars."

It's all part of being Pure Rock KNAC. As the Saint's John Bush puts it, "KNAC kicks ass, what can you say? A lot of people were doubtful when they first came out with the heavy format, but they've proven themselves over time, and I think they're taken seriously now."



S.L. Duff is a musician, journalist and producer who has been an integral part of the L.A. scene for over 10 years.

(continued from page 28)

"I don't think our shelter would have been possible without the help of KNAC, and the musicians that contribute their time, such as Great White and Ozzy Osbourne," Lee continues. "We have teenagers, and they have long hair, they wear earrings, and a lot of women's groups that typically get involved with charities such as this are often put off by the kids themselves, who are basically just teenagers, troubled, but otherwise normal kids. The musicians aren't put off at all. I think people should realize the contribution heavy metal has made."

"It's neat when you talk to Lois," enthuses Gregg Steele. "Children of the Night is definitely in need of outside funding. We like to think of ourselves as more than just a hard rock radio station. We like to give something back to the community. This is our way of doing that."

While it might seem like no big deal for a few rock bands to donate their time to a worthy cause, Avalon's Perry points out



MONSTERS OF ROCK: KISS' GENE SIMMONS AND METALLICA'S JAMES HETFIELD AT KNAC'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY BASH.

otherwise. "Bands are giving up a little more to play in this market [for charity] because they can make so much more in L.A. than, say, Des Moines. So it makes it harder for KNAC, but the bands have been really cooperative. People have really put

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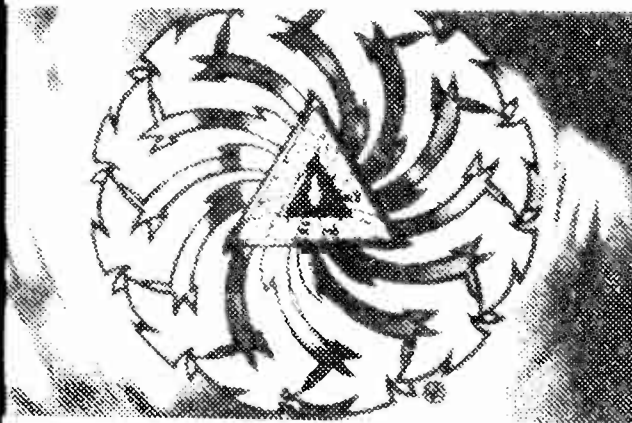
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