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Music Publishing: an investigation
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12 Cheap Tricks For Expensive Guitars



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The argument for having an annual exhibition of musical instruments and rock hardware open to the public who are going to buy those instruments and that hardware is clear - manufacturers must have an opportunity to gauge the popularity (or otherwise) of new and newish product lines and musicians must have an opportunity to see for themselves these new lines. For two years now we've had to put up with the annual 'Live' Music Show (1979) and British Music Fair (1980), two equally mistitled and evidently similar shows staged at the indifferent Olympia Hall in west London. Now, with the trade association AMI's announcement (see News page 5) that the show is to move this year to the National Exhibition Complex in Birmingham, the argument has shifted slightly to that of the suitability, both physically and geographically, of this new venue. Already there are rumours of alternative shows to be staged in London, supposedly to be organised by non-members of AMI who have not previously been allowed to exhibit at the annual beanfeast. Whether AMI's recent invitation to non-members to exhibit at Birmingham has been rejected out of hand remains to be seen. Certainly the inter-trade squabbling does nothing to help us customers on the receiving end, who would surely be happiest going to one venue and being sure of seeing the vast majority of manufacturers and distributors there. Will Birmingham '81 realise that possibility? Where in the country would you prefer to see an annual instruments/hardware show? Or do you think the trade would be much happier keeping themselves to themselves at a non-public trade show where they wouldn't have to worry about snotty-nosed *SI/BI* readers asking difficult questions on things like where the mains lead is?

Tony Bacon

Man in Jam says 'Vox got me into it'

We're in a caff (spelt cafe) somewhere in the West End of London. The tape recorder's on, sausages are off and the tea is verging on the drinkable. We're talking to Paul Weller and Dave. Paul Weller is the man in the Jam. Dave is the chap who looks after his equipment and stuff. We're the italics and ask the questions.

... So when did you first get hold of an AC30?

Soon as we got signed up. This geezer Chris Parry from Polydor came down the Marquee. Polydor were looking for a token punk band. So they signed us. Soon as we got some money, I went out and bought a few AC30's...

How do you find them on the road?

Ahh... well for what we're doing now they aren't loud enough... but for your small halls and middling venues they're great... we used them a lot at the beginning... and of course we always use them for recording... all the new album has been done on AC30's... most of the previous stuff too... (AT THIS POINT DAVE INTERJECTS) They need to be broken in as well... you get a new one and the sound isn't quite there... you need to burn the valves a bit... get the thing hot for a while...

Do you find much difference between what you're doing now and what you were doing a while back...?

... well last year we went back and played the Marquee... that was a bit of fun... it's stupid trying to hang onto that kind of thing though... five hundred people is the same as five thousand... it's the same feeling... you're not losing contact...

How about touring now?

Knacker and boring apart from those two hours you're on stage...

What do you think of record companies?

Well, the deal we've got with Polydor has got better as we've got more successful, but the thing I'd say to young bands is keep your eye on them. Even when you get successful and it's all smiles and handshakes, it's a fickle business... you see young kids getting really screwed up... when we first signed we'd take anything we could get our hands on... we were skint. It's good to see all the independent labels coming up now...

Any final words on the business in general and Vox in particular?

Vox I'd recommend to anyone... can't say the same for the business.



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VOX

Newsnotes

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TONY BACON editor
ROB MACKIE production
LIZ MACKIE art
WENDY MARSHALL secretary

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Roger Adams
Josh Benn
Steve Brennan
Richard Burgess
Gary Cooper
Dave Crombie
Fred Dellar
Ralph Denyer
Ben Duncan
Robert Fripp
Dave Hastilow
Mel Lambert
Robin Millar
John Morrish
Roger Phillips
David Sinclair
Sue Steward
Dave Stewart
Adam Sweeting
Steve York

ADVERTISING

Manager Alan Griffiths
Production Karen Cutler
Secretary Audrey Slatford

PUBLISHER

Tony Ellis

SOUND INTERNATIONAL

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the Audio Engineering Society.

Well ladeez an' genulmen, we have a news file bursting at its very seams this month, every item just itching to get on to this hallowed news page. So, without too much ado, into the file we dive... We've had two press releases previewing stuff to be shown at next month's big international instrument trade fairs (in Frankfurt, West Germany and in Anaheim, California). The first we can't tell you about because **Sequential Circuits** have put an embargo on it – suffice to say that the makers of the renowned *Prophet* synthesisers have come up with something in the sort of price-range us mere mortals can contend with. More next month. Meanwhile, **Kramer's XK** range to be premiered at the shows boasts two guitars, the *XKG10* and the *XKG20*, and two basses, the *XKB10* and the *XKB20*. Prices (US) for the 10s is \$399 and for the 20s is \$499. All the models will be available in what Kramer describe as 'eight dazzling new vibrant *Decorator Color* selections at no extra cost'. Yes, they are American. More info in our show reports later in the year... The rest of the best (maybe that should be *vice versa*) of this month's new products: amps get smaller dept – a company called **Zeus Audio Systems** residing in Alhambra Ca (watch out) tell us of their *Mini-Amp* which measures but 7 1/2 in x 3 in x 1 1/2 in. It gives you one whole watt 'for a warm jazz sound' or 2.5 watts for 'that sledgehammer distortion', or drives any 8 or 16 ohm speaker instead, and gives 21dB of boost. Check with ZAS, 511 S Palm Ave, Alhambra, Ca 91803, USA, Tel: (213) 281-0023... Clogged cassettes? Tangled tapes? Try a *Fix-otape* (groan...), a device just launched by **Jorephani Exports**, Park Lane, Corsham, Wilts. Tel: 0249 714855. It's a winder device which slots on to a table or similar object and, when the handle is connected to the faulty cassette's spool and turned, is claimed to free tangles, twists, creases and knots 'within seconds'... **Peavey's new Mark III** series 16-

channel mixers are now available, and 12 and 24 channel versions should follow shortly. The *Mark III's* features are too numerous to mention in this limited space – if you're interested, write to Peavey (UK) Ltd, Unit 8, New Road, Ridgewood, Uckfield, TN22 5SX, Sussex, Tel: 0825 5566... **John Hornby Skewes** are bringing into the country a range of metronomes and tuners made by Japanese company **Seiko**. This range extends from the *SQM357* metronome which JHS already import, up to the top-of-the-pile *SQT369* quartz tuner which can be set to any note over a range of seven octaves and



Di Marzio TDS-1

will retail at about £60. More info from JHS at Salem House, Garforth, Leeds, LS25 1PX, Tel: 0532 865381... The new **Di Marzio** pickups, the *DLX-1* (replacement for mini humbuckers or soapbar coil pickups, with 12 adjustable polepieces), the *VS-1* (claimed to reproduce a 'vintage' *Strat* sound) and the *TDS-1* (single coil *Strat*-type with adjustable polepieces) are all now available from UK distributor **Rose-Morris** at £24, £21 and £23 respectively... Going shopping in London? Two new ventures should be of interest to you, then. First is the **London Rock Shop**, an unassuming

BMF Brings Bands To Brum

This year's British Music Fair will be held at the National Exhibition Complex in Birmingham for the first time since the public show began at London's Olympia two years ago. The change of venue stems mainly from the music trade's dissatisfaction with Olympia – complaints of dirtiness, inaccessibility and lack of facilities have followed both previous shows there. Ken Achard, recently elected chairman of the Exhibition Sub-Committee, described 'a very deep groundswell of opinion against the venue itself. None of the alternative London venues looked too attractive – so the NEC was decided upon, and for once takes the show away from London.

Ken is adamant about the need to promote the British Music Fair as part of the big 'leisure industry' shows – the Motor Show, the Boat Show, and the like. 'The vast majority of people realise,' he said, 'that if we're going to push this trade forward and expand it we've got to meet our public. If we're the only part of the leisure industry that doesn't meet its public in some national exposition then we're not exactly doing our job, I don't think.' The organisers also claim that Birmingham is as easy to get to as London (perhaps more easy as far as road travel is concerned, with Birmingham right at the centre of the motorway system), and the train from London to Birmingham, for example, can take as little as an hour and twenty minutes, taking you virtually into the heart of the NEC buildings.

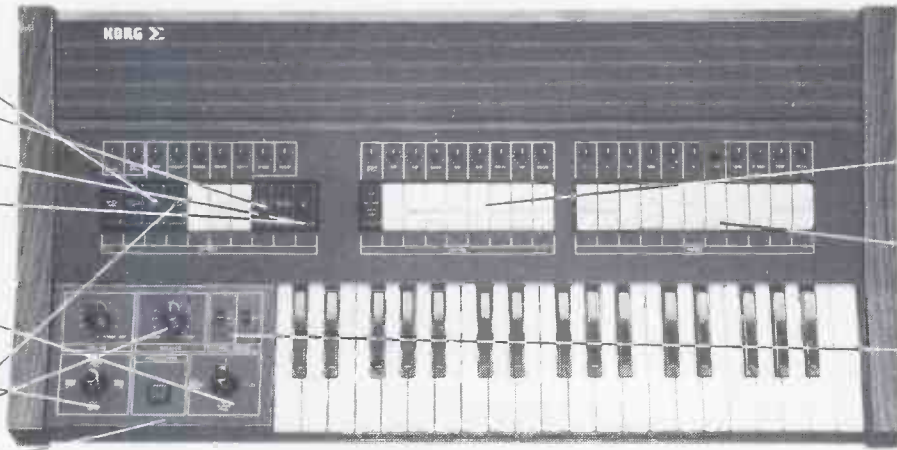
The British Music Fair will take place for 5 days from the 14 August. Whether the organisers will manage to fire the enthusiasm of non-Association Of Musical Industries members who have previously been barred from these shows, remains to be seen. More info soon...

little title for a very ambitious exercise. The shop is managed by Ed Jones, who you may remember from *Chappells*, and was officially opened on November 5th last year. It's open seven days a week (ie Sunday strumming is permissible) and emphasis seems to go currently to Roland, Boss and Hamer ranges. You'll find it roughly half-way between Dingwalls and the Roundhouse, at 26, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1, Tel: 267 5381. The other new one is the **Guitar Grapevine**, situated in the same building as Argent's keyboard shop and hopefully continuing the reputation that this particular establishment has gained over the years. Manager Stuart Sawney spoke keenly of *Les Pauls*, *Sonexes*, the new *Fender Strat* and *Precisions*, Roland guitar and bass synths and lotsa vintage instruments when he opened the shop officially on November 6th last year. Talk to him at **Guitar Grapevine**, 16 Denmark Place, London WC2, Tel: 836 3300... Pirates Corner: NOP Market Research found in a survey of nearly 2000 people last September that 41% buy blank audio cassettes – more than half had bought one within the last three months, and 8% had bought one within the last week. All of which implies that a lot of people are taping a lot of music. Now read John Walters' article inside... A very expensive survey charts the international connection scene – that's, er, electrical connections – in the **British Standards Institution's Electrical Plugs** – *An International Survey*, destined not to become a best-seller at £25 to non-members of the BSI, but which could be a boon to touring groups (some still do, you know...). Info from BSI, 2 Park Street, London W1A 2BS, Tel: 629 9000... **David Symonds** is head-hunting (Hi, Herbe) for British rock musicians (hey, that's us!) who are interested in appearing in future editions of the *Robert W Morgan Special Of The Week*, which is carried by over 200 radio stations throughout the United States and for which David is the UK representative. Ring David now on 070541 2499... **Mike Johnson's** claim that he's better than anyone else at guitar playing published in the July '80 issue of *BI* drew one telephone call – from a bogus 'James Page of Aylesbury'. Apart from that, two people came to a pub in Derby where Mike plays occasionally and both refused to take Mike on once they'd seen him in action. Steve Orme, Mike's personal manager, is keen to hear of any serious contenders for the title of *Finest Guitarist In The World*. Applicants please write to Steve c/o the *SI/BI* editorial address, Link House, Dingwall Avenue, Croydon CR9 2TA... Two recent moves in the rather shaky-looking British music industry – **Richard Jefferies**, who we always found to be a helpful, friendly, pleasant sort of chap, has left **Custom Sound** to work for Plessey Communications, and **Tony Taylor** (who could easily be described in the same way) has left **Carlsbro** to set up his own marketing services company. Good luck, yous guys. ■

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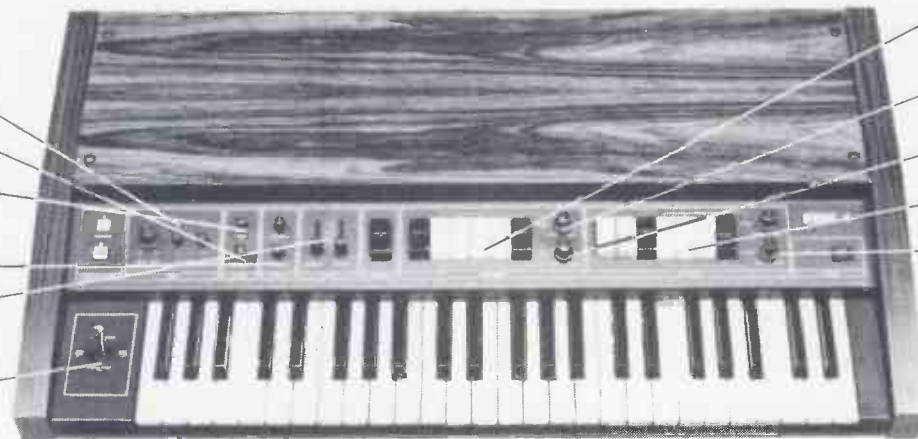
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I would like to know more about Korg synthesizers, please send me all the latest information and brochures.

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Valves To Go Down The Tubes?

Every now and again you start researching a story and it begins to mutate strangely before your astonished eyes. This month I was planning to issue a public wealth warning about the dangerous practice of replacing valves in instrument amps with apparently identical replacement types, a syndrome which is beginning to worry several of the major valve amp makers. But something rather disturbing came looming out of the past which took over that basic idea. To show you what happened, and what it might lead to, I'll follow the story through in the way it started revealing itself. If I'm right, then you could end up as alarmed as I am, sitting here, one eye on my typewriter, one on my trusty valve amp, wondering if it's got any life at all left in it.

The idea about replacement valves originally sprang from a chance conversation I was having with Ken Achard, bossman of the UK arm of Peavey and a person I tend to listen to very closely. What he has to say makes sense.

Ken was telling me that he and the service department of Peavey UK have been getting very worried lately by the number of Peavey amps he's getting sent back to the factory fitted by customers with valves which seem to be suitable replacements for the Sylvania brand. Peavey normally fit Sylvania but the bogus replacements in fact emanate from eastern Europe and are, Ken has found, frequently totally unsuitable for driving his instrument amps.

To understand why this is the case you have to realise that most of the valves currently in use in guitar amps were never initially designed for that purpose. Some of the models in regular use date back to the 1930s in their original forms when they were conjured up to power 'steam' radios. In that application they could cheerfully expect to sit on someone's sideboard year after year with no vibration and, more importantly, never be driven to their full theoretical limits. With guitar amps, however, this is not the case. Even the basic British EL34 (a highly creditable power amp valve, and one which has been used in probably millions of guitar amps over the years) is reckoned to be unsuitable for bass combo use by Marshall.

Fit a valve from a less reliable source, or one that is unsuitable in some other way, and the amp will begin to sound worse than it should.

Part of the reason, my informants were beginning to tell me at this stage of my investigations, is that like may not be like in some cases. One amp maker warned me about a foreign valve called a 6L6GT - sounds familiar? Well, you may have encountered an American valve called the 6L6GC, a very common American power amp valve to be found in many Fender amps and others. The 6L6GT is not, however, made to the same specification as the 6L6GC, it is claimed, and will not work in the same way.



Thus far it looked as if this was the main part of my story for this month, that fitting apparently similar valves into British or American valve amps was a practice to be avoided for mainly tonal reasons. But, I learned next there were other problems of a potentially more serious nature. Apparently (in the most extreme case imaginable, admittedly), the use of duff valves can seriously damage the circuitry of your

amp. It is just possible that you could blow internal components and that they could, ultimately, even take your output transformer with them in the long run.

So why do people do it? The main answer is cost. Valves are getting expensive now and it is tempting for unscrupulous repair people to fit valves which would be perfect for radios and televisions into guitar amps and then charge the price up to match what they would have charged had they sought genuine maker's replacements.

Another problem is availability. It is still fairly easy to get valves through the pages of electrical component supply mags at 'wonderful low, low, prices!' These may not be the same quality as you would get from going back to the amp's maker.

Let's take Marshall as an example. Apart from in their combos, Marshall fit Mullard EL34s. But they don't just use any old EL34 - far from it. Jim Marshall has a call-off from Mullard's production which ensures him Grade A valves. As his amps tend to drive valves as hard as they drive our ears they need the best they can get.

Anyway, the moral of this part of the story is to make damned sure that when you re-valve your amp, you go back to the supplier and get the valves you want, and don't go to your local discount radio buff's hangout. There is, however, worse to come, as the saying goes.

The last time I researched a story on the availability of valves was a few years ago for an article in *Beat Instrumental*. At that time it seemed as if the long-threatened valve manufacturers' close-down was never going to happen. Ever since the first transistorised guitar amp hissed and crackled on to the market, those responsible for pushing transistors had been saying that valves would soon be out of production. The only hope, apparently, would be for amp designers to develop transistor application technology to such a point that no-one would be able to tell the difference. Well, they've certainly got a lot better, but many players with whom I talk (myself included because I talk to myself!) reckon that a decent valve amp is still a pretty unique beast and that whilst your Lab Series, Carlsbros and what have you are pretty close, they still aren't there yet.

The argument rumbled around right through the Seventies and, by the time I wrote that original article, I (like everybody else) had become convinced that the general unavailability of valves was many years off if ever. If the amp makers all clubbed together there was more than enough business there to keep at least one producer going. The (then current and exciting) news that GEC had re-committed the MO Valve company to production of KT77s (a direct and superior replacement for the EL34) finally put my

mind at rest.

This time I went on talking to people in the business, however, and several very disturbing stories started emerging. The first is that Mullard are no longer producing EL34s. Years ago they said that they were stopping and now they have.

The official party line from British amp makers is that this doesn't matter because either Mullard have enough suppliers to keep them going for several years or the amp makers themselves have stockpiled enough of their own to guarantee production and service requirements for the foreseeable future. But how long away is the foreseeable future?

Two possibilities now present themselves. Let's take Marshall again as an example. In Britain they can, so distributors Rose-Morris tell me, keep making EL34-powered amps for a long while to come: Jim Marshall has literally a massive stockpile to draw from and each of them up to his required high specification.

But one day, surely, that supply will go. Marshall won't endanger their reputation by using sub-standard valves (their component quality is legendary), so what will they do? One answer, and not a very nice one, is that they possibly could go for the same valve as American-destined Marshalls use, the GE6550. This valve is fitted to Marshalls sold in the States because it suits American conditions better than the EL34. It is said, however, that American Marshalls don't sound quite the same as British ones as a result of this. Another problem is that the American makers might decide to stop making valves too.

The better solution would be to switch to the considerably more expensive GEC KT77. But will they do this when they have a large stock of EL34s? And if they wait until these are used up, will GEC have been prepared to hang around waiting for people to switch to them, or will they have given up altogether?

The other Rose-Morris valve amp makers, Vox, are in a similar position, except that they don't have such large stocks of Mullards as does Marshall. Will they go to KT77s and help keep the valve alive? Burman already have, of course, and Marshall have been using a few for some time where they need the physical strength of the KT77.

What all this boils down to, then, is that if the British valve amp makers don't get behind the one valve producer left in this country (GEC/MO Valve) pretty soon, then there may be no British maker left when they eventually run out of their stocks. Frightened? Probably not, because I bet you're thinking, 'Well, they can always get valves from the States, can't they?' The answer may be no.

Despite the fact that you can still get 6L6GCs boxed as RCA valves, the



chances are that they are *not* made by RCA. That august company did a Mullard and stopped production even further back than did Mullard themselves. According to CBS/Arbiter (Fender's UK arm), all RCA valves fitted to Fender amps are now actually made either by General Electric or Sylvania. They aren't worried. Ed Jøahns, the man who has designed almost every Fender valve amp since way back when, claims that all of Fender's valves are made to a rigorous standard which he has personally laid down. They have to meet that standard to be used.

Nevertheless, this concentrates valve production in the USA into the hands of Sylvania and General Electric. Forgetting General Electric for the time being (most US amps that I have seen tend to use RCA or Sylvania valves), this effectively creates a monopoly in the States. If Sylvania decides to pull out...

Now to really get to grips with this one, you have to understand just how few people there are left making valve amps. Over here you've got Hiwatt, Marshall, Vox, Burman, Matamp and a few very small people like Zoot Horn and Lion. In the States you've got the big two, Peavey and Fender, and then Music Man and, maybe, Sunn. There are probably a few others that I can't call to mind just now but these are the biggies. If any one of those big makers either here or in the States were to decide that they'd had enough of

valves (say Peavey, for example), would Sylvania bother carrying on?

The problem is that, in the West, ICs (ie trannies) have just about finished off the valve in every application except amateur radio (where the valves are very different) and some defence applications (where the same is true). There is probably enough musical instrument amplification business going around to keep one maker in business in the UK and one in the States. What I fear is that if the British makers don't get behind GEC over here pretty soon, they may give up. Of course, GEC won't admit that there's much chance of them giving up, but I would say that they don't sound as

optimistic about continuing KT77 production into eternity as they did several years ago.

Part of the reason why British manufacturers might not switch to them soon enough is price. GEC valves are expensive and so are all the other general components in valve amps. If switching to KT77s would push the price of valve amps up even more, then you can see why the amp makers will avoid using them for as long as they can. The trick will be to keep GEC interested until people finally run out of EL34s.

In the States much the same applies. Everything looks fairly safe at present with the big two amp makers

keeping Sylvania happy. Should one of them stop (and could that be a political or marketing decision one day?), then Sylvania might just call it a day.

And in case you feel that the Comrades will come to our help if the worst comes to the worst - forget it. Can you see an 'all American boy' like Hartley Peavey using Russian valves? And if he did, could they do the job?

Unless Britain starts to obtain its valves through one maker who can gather enough business to keep plodding on, re-tooling when the production line gets old, making enough money to stay happy, then there just may be no more British valve amps in, say, 10 years time. If the Americans fall victim to the same syndrome, then that finishes them too. And that - I hate to admit this - could really mean the end of valve amps.

Three or four years ago I was one of the brigade who pooch-pooched this worrying possibility. Now I'm not so sure. Mullard and RCA have stopped. That leaves GEC in the UK and Sylvania and General Electric in the States (no relation to GEC by the way). Right now we're on a knife-edge, we can't afford to lose another one. Unfortunately, it just may happen. From there on you'd just have to learn to love the solid state sound and remember your old valve amp fondly. It'll be a thing of the past. □



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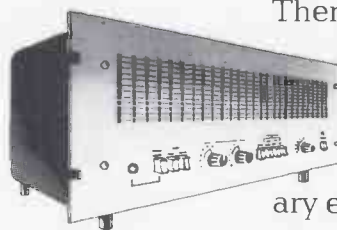
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Why there isn't a Westbury in Peter Haycock's guitar collection.

To the rock world, **Peter Haycock**, guitarist with the Climax Blues Band, is a skilful and imaginative player of international status.

So you can imagine our enthusiasm when we discovered that the guitar Peter uses for both studio and live work, was a Westbury, (a Custom II, gloss black actually), quite a modest guitar pricewise, for a musician of his standing. So with almost indecent haste, we tracked him down and asked him over the phone if he'd tell us why he chose and used a Westbury.

And could we put it in an ad? 'Sure' he replied, 'as long as you mention the Climax Blues Band's new album coming out shortly on the Warner Brothers label'.

It was a deal, and the conversation went like this:

Peter, why Westbury?

I think because it's such a versatile guitar, yet so easy to use... I can still get a lot of widely differing sounds quickly.

You're obviously happy with the sound.

Yeah, it's great, as I said, it's very versatile... used with a variety of amps you can get anything from a screaming humbucker sound to a really slicing single coil sound.

I understand you collect guitars.

Yeah, right, I've got sixteen so far... including an ES355 - a gift from the Marshall Tucker Band, a black Les Paul Custom and a Veleno which has a weird aluminium neck.

And yet you use the Westbury to the exclusion of the others?

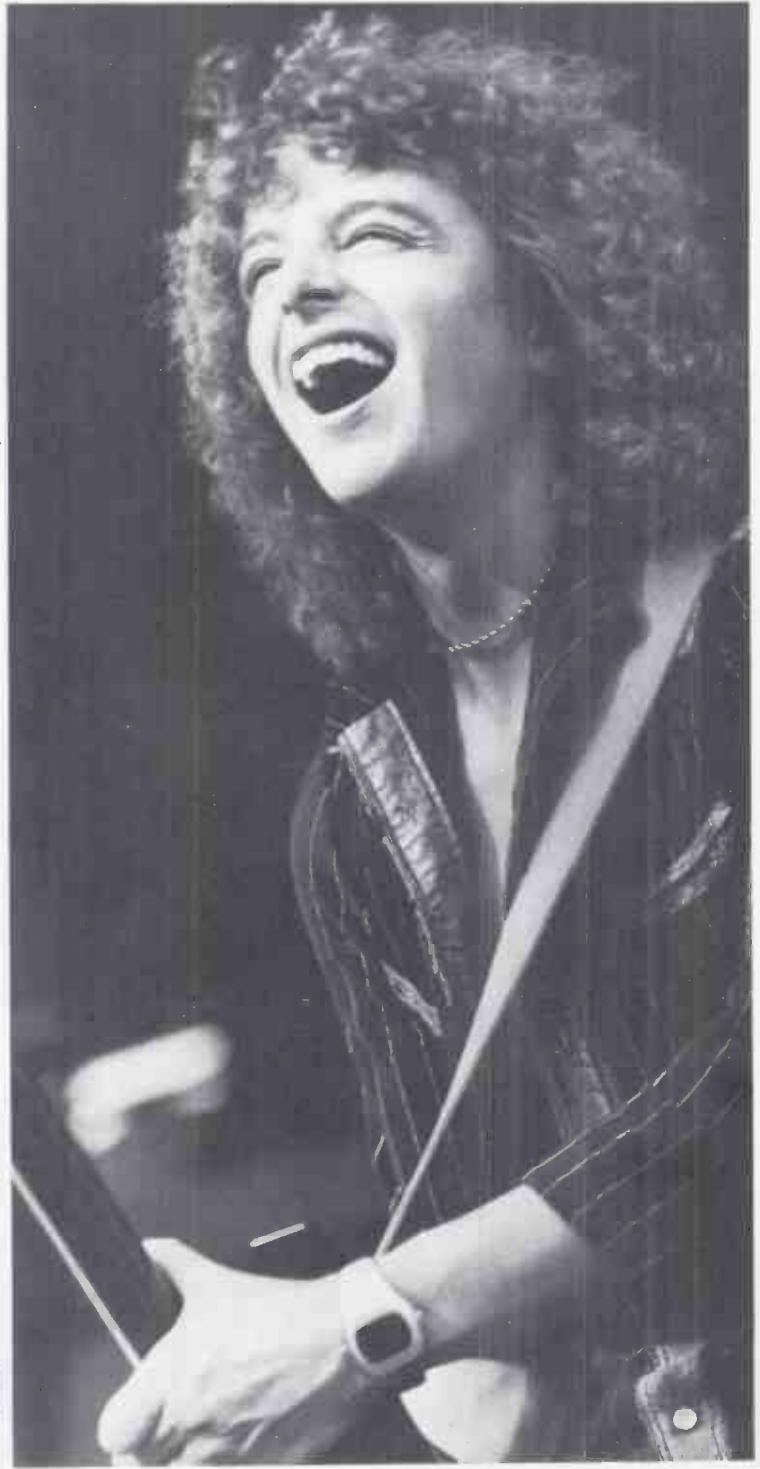
Right, I've now got a room full of guitars, just collecting dust.

What about the old adage - you're not a guitarist till you've owned a Gibson?

It's nice to own one... I would say try a Westbury first... you'll be pleasantly surprised... you can, over the years, spend a lot of money trying to find the right guitar... starting with perhaps a second hand Fender... through the Les Pauls, 355's etc. You'd be far better off buying a versatile one like this, as they certainly aren't a lot of money. In fact I'd say that a Westbury is a short cut to finding the ideal guitar for stage and studio work.

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SI WA 1

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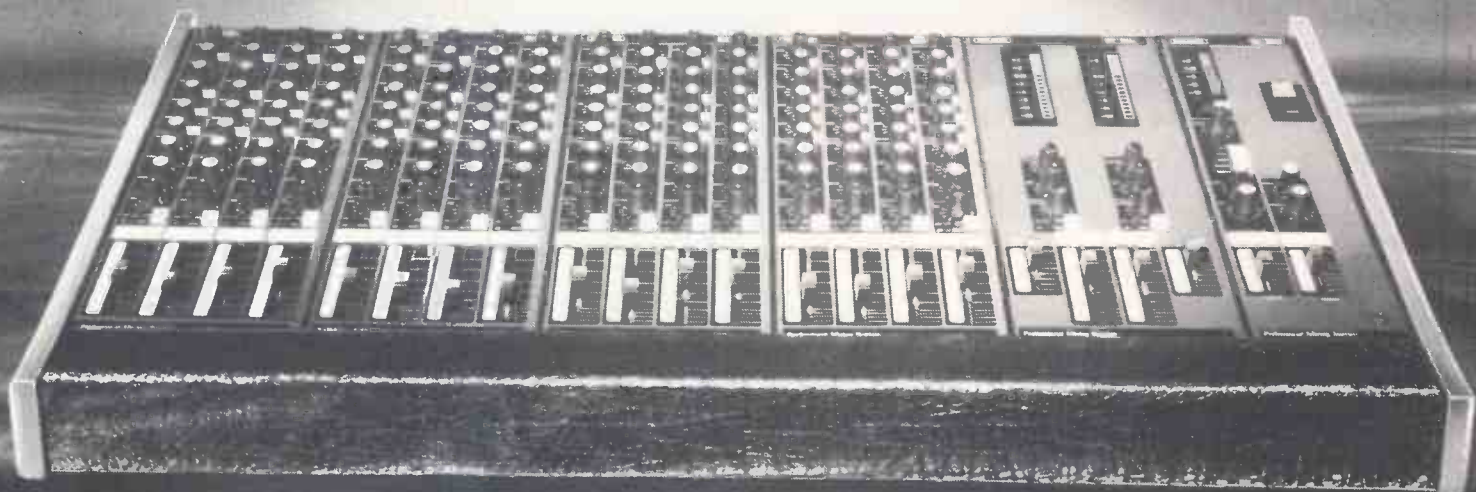
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Starting this month, Paul Day instigates a series on the past history of the electric guitar. Here he outlines the ground to be covered.

Strange as it may seem to some of our younger readers, back before the Japanese guitar 'invasion' – which commenced in earnest in the early Seventies – there existed many alternatives to the well-known models offered by the established American big names. In the boom time of the Sixties many brands came and went, some achieving great popularity among the countless thousands of musicians in the groups spawned throughout the world during that era, most of whom were attempting to emulate their main inspirations, first The Shadows, The Ventures and other instrumental idols; then, of course, The Beatles. Many aspired to own tools of their trade similar to those used by these various heroes, gleaming Fenders, Gibsons *etc.*, but finance usually dictated that they had to be content, at least at the outset, with less illustrious counterparts, and as such the choice was wide and wonderful!

The later onslaught of the Japanese 'copy' guitar, designed to provide the aspiring players with the guitars of their heroes, at least in appearance and at a far lower price, finally put paid to many second division manufacturers in the western world. Being unable to compete financially, many well-known names disappeared, some to re-emerge in more recent years on products from the Far-East – an even sadder fate in my opinion: I prefer my memories intact and untainted by misleading recent re-makes! Other manufacturers have survived this market upheaval, of course, but with varying degrees of success. Only time will decide their ultimate fate in the face of ever-increasing competition.

In those early days the copy guitar didn't really exist as such, although many manufacturers obviously opted to base their designs on the most popular models at that time, the

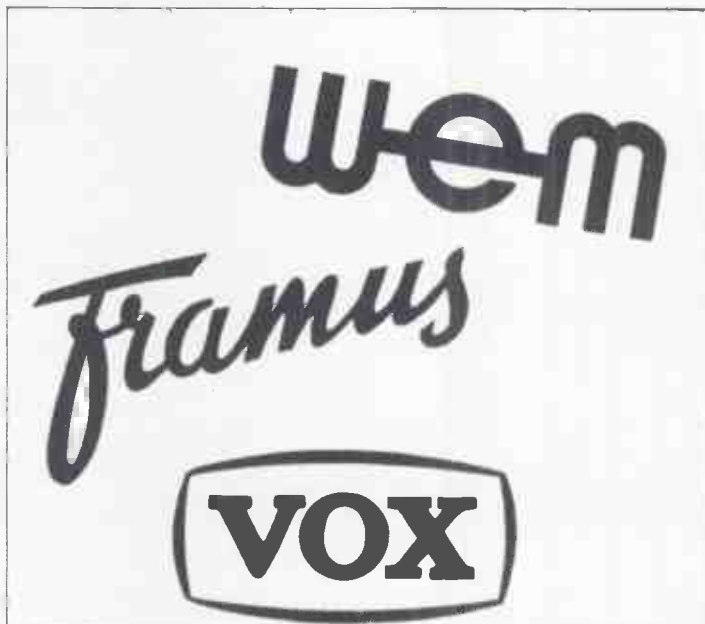
Stratocaster being one of the main sources of inspiration, of course. The more conventional *Les Paul* had yet to achieve its true potential in the rock world. That came in the late Sixties, and one unforeseen by-product of its popularity was the first flood of Japanese copies that soon followed, an omen of things to come.

The 'alternative' guitars from the Sixties often possessed great character, design flair and originality, being good instruments in their own right, regardless of price. Although often aimed at the lower price brackets not covered by the more expensive imported American models, some were definitely up-market, matching their US counterparts in quality and playability. Obviously, though, there were quite a few cheap'n'nasty planks produced, to cash in on the huge demand for electric guitars at that time. I hope to sort the wheat from the chaff during this series: nostalgia for nostalgia's sake isn't a good thing, and I intend to be as objective as possible! However, regardless of their respective merits, all these instruments have played their part, however small, in the promotion and evolution of the electric guitar – not necessarily in design or innovation, but often in terms of player inspiration, provided by their very price and therefore availability to the embryonic guitarist. This gives them a value far beyond their actual worth and as such they should not be dismissed lightly. Nowadays the all-important 'budget' market is catered for mainly by the cheaper Japanese and, more recently, Taiwan-produced electrics, most of which I'm afraid lack the style, character and often the quality of their predecessors. Although the choice of model still appears wide, at least in brand names, common sources and general similarities considerably curtail genuine variety.

With the advent of the new wave, many of the by-now lesser-known vintage Sixties guitars took on a new lease of life – re-fulfilling their original market intentions, in fact. Over the years they had diminished in popularity and second-hand value, finally assuming junk-shop status, and as such their low prices made them attractive to this new breed of musician, who

make sure you're paying attention!

However, as space is at a premium within the pages of this hallowed publication (I'm boot-licking again!) it's obviously impossible to provide in-depth coverage. Thus a reasonably informative, gently nostalgic overview is all that's intended. Interest shown by guitarists of all ages in these vintage unsung heroes has now reached a



then put them to good use (although not always in a way the makers originally intended!). Their very 'un-fashionability' also appealed to certain new wave factions, who rejected what they regarded as the established BOF/Poseur guitars, at least until they'd made it that is (please excuse my cynicism).

However, whatever the motivation for their use, the wheel has finally turned full circle and, in addition, the Sixties' revival, promoted by certain of the new bands, has provided a further boost to interest in these instruments, not forgetting that displayed by ageing nostalgics like myself, of course. No longer do the junk-shops or dim and dusty corners in music stores yield such treasures from the past (unless you're lucky!) and prices have risen quite dramatically, to unrealistic extremes in some cases.

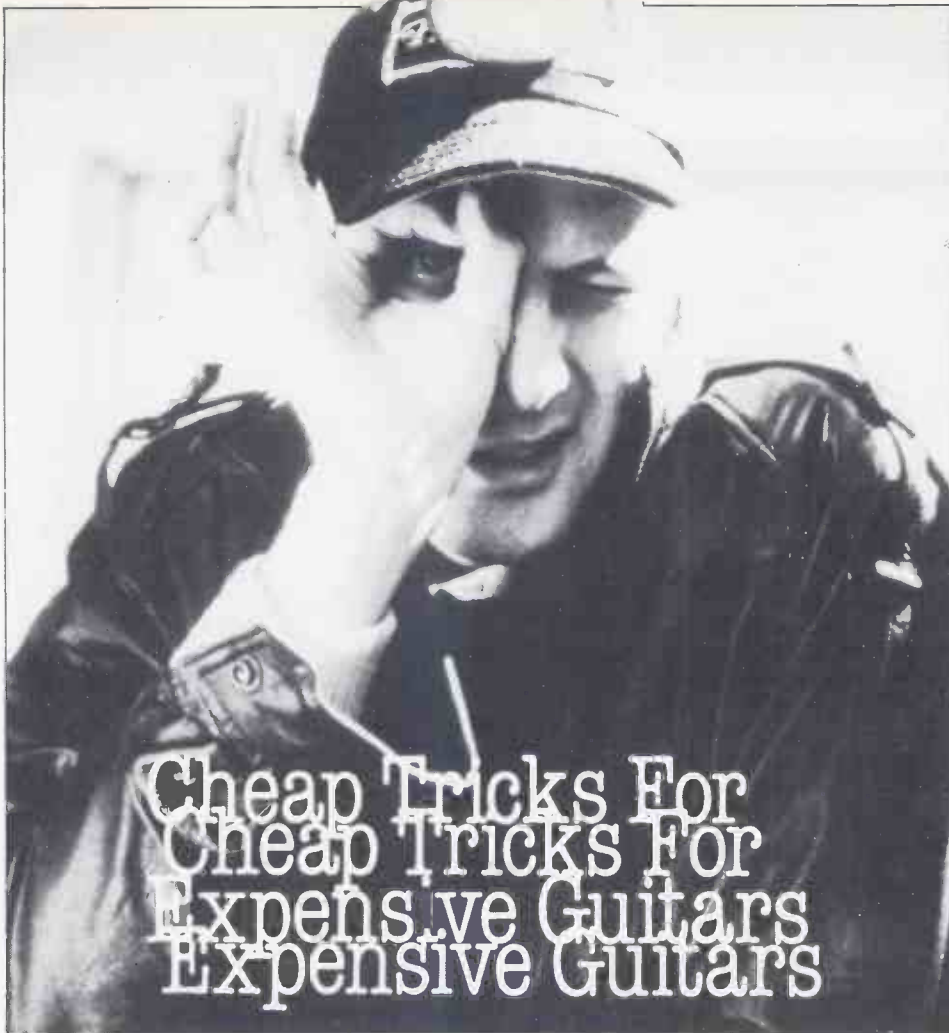
During what I hope will prove to be a long-running series (reader interest and editor permitting) I intend to introduce as many different brands as possible from the period 1957 to 1972, concentrating at first on makes other than those of American origin. These have had enough coverage of late, but be patient, I'll get to them all eventually. Many countries had their own home-grown brands, some little-known elsewhere due to lack of exports, and I'll be including makes from Germany, Sweden, France, Italy, Australia and New Zealand, as well as those from Britain and America, plus the occasional rare bird quiz-pic just to

new high, and it's hoped that this series will satisfy some of the desire for additional knowledge, without making too heavy reading. Should the reader feel inspired enough to want to know even more, then I can recommend my forthcoming book on the subject, which provides far more detailed information and scope. I'm biased of course, but who better to plug it? (*Us. We'll review it, natch - Ed.*)

It's hoped, therefore, that this series will at least provide for some discussion and thought, plus some memory jogging for those who go back that far! All worthwhile, in that it maintains interest in these forgotten vintage electrics. If any of the brand-names shown on this page intrigue or interest you, or even perhaps stir some vague nostalgic memories, then watch this space. Some, if not all, will soon be revealed on these and more.

NEXT MONTH:





Here's looking at you, kid.

Rick Nielsen has been harassed by SI staff members in Chicago, Frankfurt and the Hope & Anchor since rashly promising to write us a piece on his favourite 100 or so guitars.

Now busy Cheap Trick person comes up with the goods.

I'm doing this off the top of my head which being covered by a baseball cap may not come out quite the way you want it but there you go.

I'm going to talk about, I guess, my guitar collection and how I go about finding things. Well, I've been collecting since about 1963 and through that whole period of time I've collected some great pieces, some pieces of junk and some unbelievable great finds. The collection now numbers around 135, 140. I'm really not even sure. In the past two years I've been collecting some interesting pieces, some of which I don't use, which is not the way I normally like to do things: cos I like to play the instruments I have, but I have picked up a few things that you might think are quite rare.

A couple of things I found up in Canada: a guitar that actually was owned by Mr Jimi Hendrix. In the past 10 years I've been offered maybe 150 guitars that were supposedly owned by Jimi Hendrix, but this one was and it's been documented and all that stuff so I believe it is. It's actually a '58 *Flying V*, which I

happen to be the proud possessor of three of. I have a red one and two natural ones and also I picked up a great little guitar that has on the pickguard 'Gene Cornish, the Young Rascals', so when he was in one of his low ebbs, he got rid of his guitar to probably make the car payments back in the US. I've spoken with Gene since then and he said that yes, indeed he did pawn it off in Chicago. Yes, yes, yes.

In my travels around the world, probably some of the most exciting places that we found to pick up guitars would have been out in the country, out where the real country players, the *real* guitar players came from; not so much finding them at Mannys in New York where the only things that actually ever turn up if they're there in the shop are either doggy items or the ones that are so expensive that anybody that really cares to collect or to be around either can't afford or doesn't want to have to shell out the money. They're probably not as good value as some of the things I've found through the years: going out to the farmer, the little guy out somewhere, and I'll read the paper and

see an ad for a Gibson guitar and amp.

'Want 65 dollars or best offer' and you'll go out there. I've actually found reverse *Firebird* 3s and 5s selling for under 100 dollars. In America that doesn't come around too often and when I do this, I actually just read the normal newspapers. I get correspondence from all the major companies around – guitar makers and sellers and dealers. Usually their prices are so close plus so high that it would really rule out getting a collection except for just the numbers.

With my collection, I pride myself in saying that even though the guitars may be valued in excess of \$150,000, maybe even \$200,000, I've paid really only a fraction for those things. Very rarely have I paid near a market value, because I don't collect guitars just to hoard them or have the numbers, I collect guitars because I really enjoy the work that was put into them and the fact that I do like to roam around, scrounge through antique shops and guitar shops, look for the bargain and the good ones. It's too easy to get the money and just find a guitar and have it just to say you have it. Now, that's not the fun of it, the fun is to really look around and find that extra-special piece.

Some of the rarest pieces that I've gotten in the past few years, I could even give you some idea of how much they cost. The guitar that I talked about earlier that really belonged to Jimi Hendrix I paid \$1450, which is roughly £650, which is very cheap for a '58 *Flying V* Gibson. Also I found a 1958 Gibson *Explorer* that I tried to buy at one time or trade and the guy wouldn't sell it to me. It ended up at another store and I happened to have a few *Stratocasters* that the store owner wanted, so I ended up trading pretty much even. So the money that I put into the *Stratocasters* – which is really a fraction – made that guitar only about £500, whereas today in the States they cost (if you can find 'em) maybe upwards of \$5,000.

I have a few *Les Paul Standards*, I'm up to about four right now. I have '58, '59, '60 vintage: I have one '58, one '59 and two '60s, two with beautiful curl and two with pretty average curl, but they're quite nice instruments. I also have a '52 Gibson *Les Paul* with a trapeze tailpiece with no binding on the side, which is an extra-special unit. I'm just telling you about a few of the special-type ones that I have. I also have a '58 Gibson *Les Paul Junior* with leather binding that was made for one of the old country and western players way back. It has original leather binding on it with a leather top. It sort of looks like a leather glove fitted over the body.

Another thing that seems to be very popular is the dot-inlay 335s. I now have three of them: one actually came from Selmer in England. It's a blond dot-inlay, much like what Dave Edmunds uses. Last year at Reading, I gave Dave a spare dot-inlay 335 which I haven't seen him using



The whole collection made even the widest-angle lens we could find seem decidedly useless – so here's a small part of the Nielsen collection standing proudly upright in the corner of an unnamed dressing room. So what can you identify? And all just a tenth (or thereabouts) of His Guitars!

lately, but if you see him maybe you could mention that he should bring that out a little more. A nice find a couple of years ago was a pair of matching 350Ts. They have the normal cutaway and they have two humbucking pickups – it was like the first year – and they have consecutive serial numbers, these blond 350Ts, they're quite interesting, with all-gold hardware.

Another interesting piece I've got is a 1959 Gibson ES5 Switchmaster, like Steve Howe was playing, and this has a Florentine cutaway which is very rare; normally you see the rounded cutaways. At the moment I also have three Fender String-benders, which are made by Parsons White. It pulls the B-string either a half note or a full note up to give it sort of a country sound. I used it on one of the solos on our brand new album, *All Shook Up*, a solo on *Baby Loves To Rock*. It's on the third and fourth solos that I play there. Otherwise those licks that I play are virtually impossible to do, but with moving a strap up and down while playing it gives it sort of a weird effect.

Stratocasters I've been collecting for a long time, because they are the instruments. One of the rarest things I have are right-handed and left-handed pre-CBS maple neck, both from the '58 period and both coral orange Stratocasters, both with gold hardware, and the serial numbers are only about 200 numbers apart. Those two are probably some of the rarest I have. I also have a white or cream colour with gold hardware and I'm also into collecting some of the non-vibrato Stratocasters. I

have three pre-CBS maple necks and three pre-CBS rosewood necks, because normally I don't collect the rosewood necks unless they're special – like a non-vibrato or left-handed model, which I have a few of. Also something that was very nice was when I went to the Fender factory this past year, and they gave me a number 00007 Stratocaster of the Special Anniversary model – that was real nice. I think of the first seven, one went to the Jimi Hendrix family, one went to the Buddy Holly family, one to Ritchie Blackmore, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Rory Gallagher and myself. We got the first seven, so that was nice of them, and it's quite a nice instrument. I have two of the maple-neck Fender mandolins which are quite rare. They didn't make very many of those.

I was talking about the String-benders: when I did the John Lennon sessions (for John Lennon and Yoko Ono's *Double Fantasy* album), I brought my String-bender there and I actually gave Lennon a String-bender to fiddle around with. He hasn't given it back yet so if you see him tell him I'd like to get it back, cos I could use it for the upcoming tour.

Couple of other interesting items I have are two maple-neck pre-CBS Esquires, I have one that's coral orange and I also have one that's two-tone or three-tone sunburst, which is kind of a rare item for that period, and I also have something which came out in the Sixties, a Fender Swinger, which I've only seen three of. I believe the guy in Talking Heads has one and I've also seen one in a collection out

in Los Angeles, and I have one.

I also have a few Fender basses which are kind of interesting. I have two maple-neck pre-CBS Precisions. One's in sunburst and one's in red, a candy apple red and a foam green pre-CBS rosewood neck. In my Firebird collection – I used to have a lot of Firebirds but I don't have many any more – I have one very nice Firebird 1 in sunburst, and two Firebird 5s (one orange that I take on the road which is a real beauty, except the pickups are a little weak) and a Firebird 5 that is just a natural sunburst.

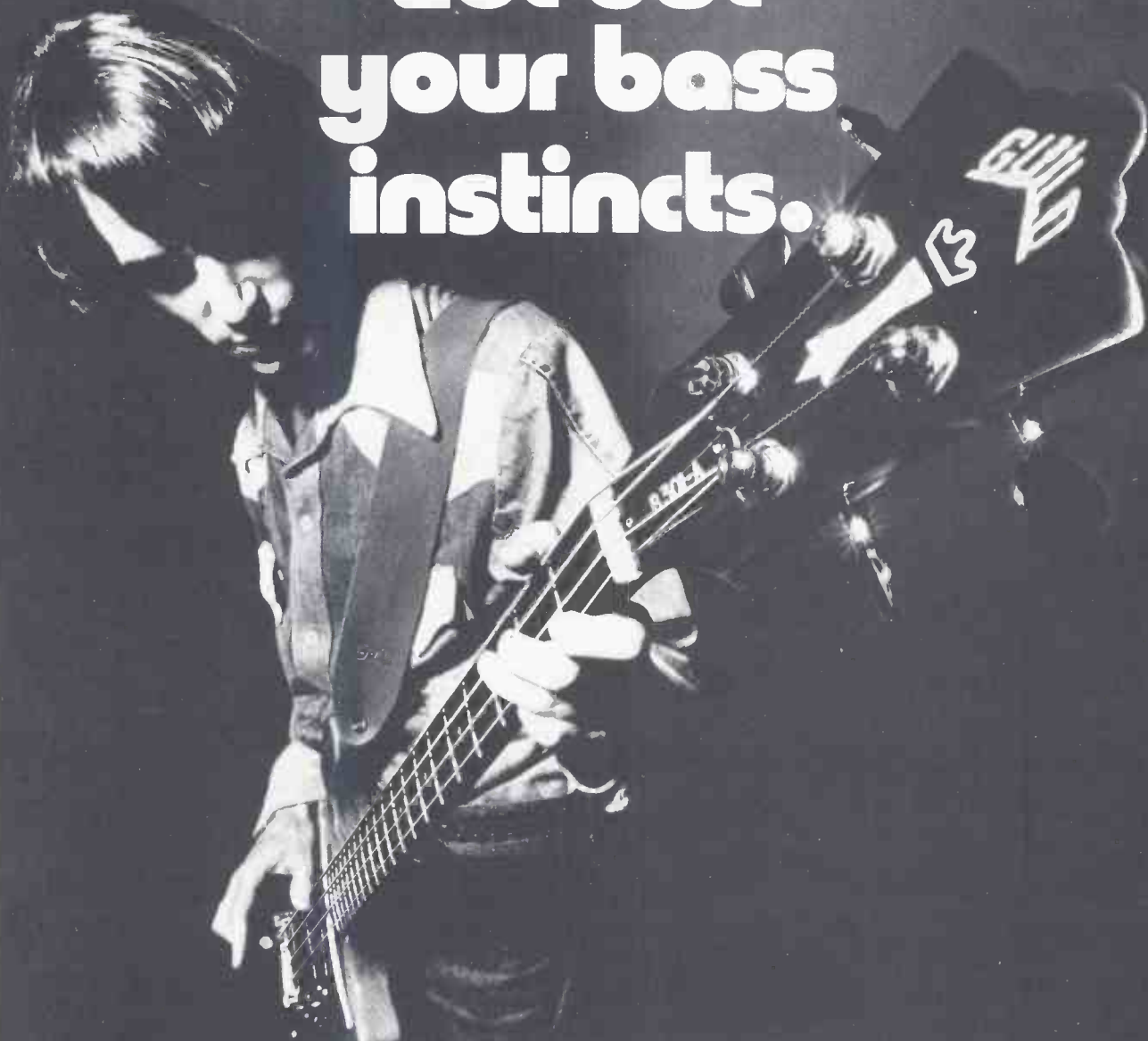
Some of the weird off-brand models I have include a Guild Blues Bird which has a natural finish with gold hardware. It was made back in the Sixties and it has, like some of the Les Pauls of that vintage, cream coils in it: when they ran out of the black plastic they used cream colour. It has a German bridge and a German tailpiece.

Another instrument that I have that's a real dog – but I still have it anyhow – is called a Lebay 2x4. They were made up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, actually made out of 2x4 pieces of wood. Not too interesting, but they're fairly rare and they play like crap too.

I have very few acoustic instruments, but the few I do have are an 1865 and an 1869 Martin acoustic which has its own coffin-case, I think they call 'em, it's kind of a crazy thing. I have a Gretsch Round-up. It has leather binding. They have the original leather-bound strap which has cowboys and cacti on the side. Also I have



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The surprised author relaxes with a Les Paul Junior, atop the prototype Hamer Standard. Below right: Nielsen celebrates finishing *SI*/BI article.

the Gretsch amplifier with the longhorn steer-head right on the grille cloth of the amplifier. I found a Gretsch *Round-Up* for Martin Belmont of the Rumour last year. He thought I was going to steal it but no, I offered it to him. Also got a nice guitar from Gene Simmons. It's a Kramer guitar, but he has it shaped in the form of an axe symbolic of Gene's, er, great sense of humour. Quite a few Japanese guitars I've had given to me and made for me. They've made some crazy stuff for me cos they are definitely some crazy people.

Let's see: two other Epiphones – these are both rare – both early Sixties. An Epiphone six-string bass, sort of like the *EB6*, very close to it, and also an Epiphone tenor four-string. It has the regular pickup but it has the outside two poles of a regular six-pole pickup just completely blocked out. It's quite a rare instrument, with the vibrato bar, and it was made for little kids, I believe.

As you know, Mr Paul Hamer has made quite a few instruments for me. Many of them I've designed, many they've designed, many we've co-designed. I have the original prototype *Explorer*-shaped *Standard* that he made (see review in last month's *SI*) and it's quite an interesting instrument, the only one he ever made that has the knobs that go straight down instead of at the angle. I have the original prototype mandocello. That was my idea

and I had them make it. It's eight strings. It's tuned CC, GG, DD, AA, tuned as you can tell like a cello, and it has a very low end ring. I use it on a couple of songs on past albums. One song that I can remember, actually on our first album (issued here 1980 – Ed) is the song called *Mandocello* where I used a mandocello made by the Gibson company around the early 1900s. And then I used my Hamer mandocello on the song called *Heaven Tonight*. If you listen it has a very low end drone.

Some of the other oddball instruments Hamers made for me – I have an *Explorer*-shaped checkerboard, that was a prototype with a proto finish, where they had to call the 3M company just to find out how to block it off just to get the finish on there correctly, and also a checkerboard *V* that has one of my favourite guitar players' pictures on the back – which of course as you might guess would be me. I also had a prototype of the $\frac{3}{4}$ -size *T* made for me. I also have the prototype *Explorer*-shape with the very first vibrato that he made, and the prototype which sort of looks like a *Les Paul Junior* which they call the *Sunburst*. I have the Ramones' guitar which they made for the Ramones' guitar-player. The neck was too big and so at Christmas about three years ago, Paul asked if I needed it. He wasn't about to give it to me for free but he

gave me a nice price on it so I picked that one up. And I also came up with the idea that whenever we go to different countries I like to show off that I really care about the country I'm in, so I've had a 'flags of the world'-type guitar made where the body is the same, but I interchange the top for whichever country we're going to – seems to go over quite well. We used it last year at the Reading Festival. Mr Hamer also gave me his prototype practice guitar that will fit under the seat of an airplane, which is sort of fun: sounds pretty terrible, but it's a fun guitar. Last year on an EP we did a song, *Day Tripper* by The Beatles, and I had Paul do a collage of pictures and all kinds of crazy stuff, and I have the date of the original *Day Tripper*, when it was released, back in '65, and then when ours came out in 1980. That's kind of an interesting guitar.

I plan on giving most of my guitars away eventually – not just giving them away, but donating them to a rock 'n' roll museum that I hope to start, so aspiring young guitarists like yourselves can come and look over some of these weird instruments that normally you might not get the chance to play. I happen to be in a good position for that – I've been collecting for so many years I happened to have gotten a few. Merry Christmas, happy new year, and all that crap. ■





The Wrong Side Of The Tracks?

It's perhaps hardly surprising that as the major labels have been cutting back on staff and only laying out moderate advances to the more established bands, larger 16- and 24-track studios have been feeling the pinch. Not only is there less work around anyway, but a growing number of musicians are waking up to the fact that budget-priced 8- and 16-track facilities can very often do just as good a job as the big leaguers. And if you're after a relatively simple demo tape – and don't have too much money to play with – then there are literally dozens of cheap'n'cheerful 4- and 8-track studios who'll be glad of your business.

But straight economics aside, there are other reasons why bands and newer producers are turning more and more to the smaller studios for both demos and budget releases. Quite often such facilities are owned by ex-musicians recently turned engineers, who can strike a more sympathetic note with musicians new to the recording process. In addition, many studio-based independent labels are becoming a viable alternative to the majors. Quite a few smaller studios are also beginning to set up their own associated production companies, which can help a band with any or all of the stages from recording to record distribution. If only because a growing number of musicians are beginning to turn on to the 'small is beautiful' approach – or, to be realistic, it's beautiful until you've got sufficient clout to argue decent terms with one of the bigger labels – many new groups are beginning to look at the possibilities offered by do-it-yourself productions.

One such studio that has literally grown up with the industry over the past five years is **Gateway**. During Gateway's former days as a 4-track studio in Balham, co-owner and

It's no secret that many of the larger recording studios in this country have been having a rather lean time of it during the summer months. While August and September are, by tradition, pretty quiet anyway – holidays and all that – with less commercial releases plus general cutbacks throughout the recording industry, quite a few 24-track studios have had to scratch around for work. But how have the smaller demo and budget-release studios been faring during the last year? As **Mel Lambert** has been finding out from several owners of 4-, 8- and 16-track studios, the low-cost end of the market, while not exactly turning anyone into instant millionaires, is currently going through some interesting changes.

engineer Dave Ward concentrated almost exclusively on demo sessions, plus the occasional new wave single. Following a move two years ago to its present location in Wandsworth – and a dramatic increase in control-room and studio space – Gateway Studio has upgraded to 8- and now 16-track working. Dave Ward attributes the studio's rapid success to two factors: he has always tried to offer very good value for money, and – more important, he stresses – goes to great length to put a band at ease when it first comes into the studio.

Of prime importance, he says, is that musicians embarking on their first demo session should fully understand what's involved in multitrack recording. He encourages a band to visit the studio before booking any sessions, when he can show them the hardware and explain how the desk, console,

effects and all the rest will be used. Just as crucial, however, is that the band understand how their material will be recorded in various sections. Not only should all the songs be well rehearsed – to save valuable recording time – but also that the rhythm section, for example, can play by themselves while the backing tracks are being laid down. And, when the time comes, that the guitarist and lead vocalist can work by themselves in a studio, and understand what foldback is all about. After all, he says, members of a band that are used to playing together on stage often find it very off-putting – if they aren't prepared for it – to have to break the song down so that it can be recorded in separate stages. By carefully explaining the various steps required in recording a demo, Dave Ward finds that, not surprisingly, many bands who did their first sessions at Gateway are still coming back after several years.

I asked Dave about the sort of work the studio is attracting now Gateway has gone 16-track. To my surprise, it turns out that despite the increased costs involved, many groups are recording their demo tapes on 16-track these days. As Dave explained, this not only gives them extra track space for more complex productions – and he finds that an increasing number of bands soon grow out of 8-track – but also allows high-quality singles and even albums to be mastered from what was intended originally as a demo session. While he concedes that this doesn't happen every day of the week, it's always handy to have the option of perhaps remixing your original tapes when a record deal is in the offing.

Nevertheless, if Dave feels from talking to them first that a band is being too ambitious in its plans, or is working to a tight budget and

possibly hasn't prepared the material as well as it should, he advises them to look for a cheaper 4- or 8-track studio. By offering such friendly – and hopefully, unbiased – advice to musicians, he expects that they'll return to Gateway for subsequent sessions.

Another facility that has also just upgraded to 16-track is **Chestnut Studios** near Farnham in Surrey. Studio manager and engineer Tim Wheatley tells me that, being located on a farm mid-way between London and the south coast, Chestnut is attracting a lot of business from bands in south-east England. The move to 16-track was only made a couple of months ago, and Chestnut still intends to offer both 8- or 16-track facilities. Tim would prefer to keep all his options open for a while longer, to see how the music industry fares during the next six months. He intends to hold on to his trusty old 8-track Scully machine, since Chestnut has been lucky enough to build up a regular amount of 8-track business, and now simply wants to offer an alternative to those who can afford it.

As Tim points out, most bands are on the look out for *cheap* demos, and don't necessarily need the extra facilities offered by 16-track. He emphasises that an 8-track studio like Chestnut is heavily dependent on *local* work; if he went exclusively 16-track Tim would have to hassle the more financially well-endowed London-based production companies and independent labels. At present, sessions booked at Chestnut are mainly for demo tapes, but around 20% of studio time is for budget-release singles to be sold at gigs and through local record stores. The studio also has its own label – Chestnut Records – and has recently formed a record company, Go Records, to be distributed by Stage One. (The first single on Go Records, entitled *The CB Song* by Citizens Band, is reported to have sold around 6000 copies within three weeks of its release.)

Despite his now being involved with a record company, which can hopefully help to set up recording deals for local bands, Tim Wheatley still sees his main role as being an owner of a recording studio. Tim, his wife and an engineer run the studio by themselves – Tim's wife looking after the administrative side of the business – and this takes up all their time at present. Rather than try and wear too many hats at any one time, Tim and company would rather concentrate on offering a good service at a price bands can afford. Nevertheless, he foresees a small studio like Chestnut as representing a good base for an independent label, since it can offer possibly cheaper time to its clients, and – more importantly perhaps – provide an extra degree of involvement and commitment to a band whose future depends on a successful single or album.

Cherry Studios in Croydon also have their own production company, and plan to set up an independent label sometime next year. Co-owner John Dendy feels that an in-house label is very important for a studio. Not only can dead studio time be used to record their own artists, but an independent label would also help to establish a studio once it has been fortunate enough to produce a successful single or album. Word soon gets around, he says, and a studio is bound to attract a lot more work from bands and record companies once you've got a hit on your hands, however modest.

Like Chestnut Studios, Cherry also offer a choice of 8- or 16-track. John tells me that 8-track proved most popular over the summer months, but that during the period leading up

to and just after Christmas a lot more 16-track sessions have been booked. He attributes the increased interest in 16-track to bands and independent labels wanting to capitalise on the traditional Christmas spending spree, or line up single or album deals for release next Spring.

Time booked for 8-track sessions at Cherry, John explained, is divided almost equally between demos and budget-release singles for small labels. John reckons that there is a growing emphasis towards singles financed and released by bands themselves – especially in the London area where there are many more specialist record stores and gigs where their vinyl offerings can be sold. Sixteen-track time is almost exclusively booked for single and album sessions, usually by direct contact from producers or record companies. Cherry also attracts a fair amount of work from musicians and producers who simply need to overdub a couple of tracks, and from bands who have already used the studio for 8-track demos. John readily acknowledges that clients booking 16-track sessions are usually more experienced in multitrack recording, and look for a lot more 'toys' in a studio. However, rather than fill up its equipment racks with every sound bender known to man, Cherry much prefers to offer basic facilities – echo, reverb, a digital-delay and a compressor-limiter or two – and then hire in whatever is needed during mixdown. Since the client is only charged half the hire fee, everybody stands to win.

As well as a series of weekly seminars on recording techniques that are proving to be extremely popular (see news item in *SI* Dec '80), Cherry is also offering a free video cassette to prospective clients. The studio recently invested in a JVC VHS recorder and camera, and will record a simple demo cassette of a band miming in the studio to a mono mix of their song; all Cherry charges is the cost of the blank cassette. Alternatively, the studio and video gear can be hired for £25 an hour, if you bring in your own tapes.

Quest Studios in Luton is another facility that went 16-track earlier this year. Studio manager and principal engineer Dave Cook says that one of the main reasons for the studio's up-grading was to try to break into the lucrative demo market for publishing companies, including EMI, Chrysalis and Rocket Music, as well as concentrating on single and album sessions. Recent singles recorded at Quest include *Anthems* by Andy McRory Shand for Criminal Records, *Wake-up England* by the Maddy Prior Band on EMI, and several sessions for a local company, Plant Life Records. He considers that while it's possible to obtain good results with 8-track, for commercial releases a band really does need the flexibility offered by 16-track.

In addition, Dave found that the 8-track market was beginning to get something of a bad reputation from the growing number of *Tascam* ¼ studios that have been springing up around the country. Aside from the quality of the end result – Dave argues that with one or two notable exceptions, studios haven't fully realised the technical limitations of ¼ multitrack – Quest simply couldn't compete with the very low rates charged by such studios. Rather than compromise on quality and cut corners to keep the rates down, Quest decided to change direction and concentrate on other markets.

It's a move that's paid off, though, because the close working relationship formed with Criminal Records and Plant Life Records, in

particular, has led to a regular supply of work. Money was always tight during Quest's 8-track days, Dave explained, but now that an increasing proportion of studio time is being booked by publishers and record companies, the future for the studio looks far rosier. He also enjoys working with, to put it diplomatically, more 'competent' musicians, who already know something about studio techniques. Some people place a greater demand on him as an engineer and (unpaid) producer, he finds, leading to greater involvement in a session.

Down in sunny Bognor Regis on the Sussex coast, Richard Sharples of **Airship Studio** is still toying with plans to upgrade from 4- to 8-track. Richard has built up a good reputation for classical and folk recordings – many of which were done with a coincident-pair of stereo mics connected direct to his Studer A80 mastering machine – as well as the occasional 4-track demo for local bands. He feels that, with sufficient care and attention to the technical side – well maintained equipment, for example – 4-track is sufficient for the majority of demo tapes being recorded at Airship.

But more important than the recording hardware, he emphasised, are the type of people running the studio. Richard and his crew are all ex-musicians, who feel they can communicate more freely with bands new to the recording process. For the majority of groups wanting to record a demo tape, 4-track is sufficiently simple for everyone to become involved with what's going on. Eight-track, on the other hand, despite less hassles with track-bouncing and so on, is far more complicated and can easily distance musicians from what's happening in the control room, he finds.

Having been asked on numerous occasions where a band could arrange to have a budget single cut and pressed, Richard Sharples decided recently to set up his own record company. All too well aware of the sort of delays involved in continually chasing a pressing plant for a missing batch of singles – and also co-ordinating the printing of labels and sleeves – Richard now offers a complete package deal. He does his level best to maintain a turn-round period of 20 working days, from master tape to singles.

It goes without saying that the 8-track market in London, traditionally the heart of Britain's music industry, is far more competitive than out-of-town. Hugh Portnow of **Phoenix Studios**, based in Euston, feels that too many local bands simply scan the classified pages of the weeklies looking for an 8-track studio, without giving sufficient thought to the sort of service being offered. Like all the small-studio owners I talked to, Phoenix offers 8-track on 1in sessions; Hugh is particularly caustic in his remarks about the number of bargain-basement *Tascam*, Otari or Itam ¼ studios that have sprung up in and around London. Having heard some of the tapes coming out of such studios, Hugh regards the ¼ format as pretty much a waste of time. Not so much because of noise build-up or similar reasons, but because of the sheer inexperience of the people using *Tascam* gear.

With proper maintenance, a clued-up engineer and a professional working environment, Hugh says that a 1in studio like Phoenix can produce some outstanding demo tapes. His custom-built desk, for example, is provided with two foldback lines to the studio, with overall equalisation on both sends. Hugh and his partner Jamie Roberts have extensive



experience as performers and engineers, and are particularly sympathetic to a musician's needs – particularly when it comes to setting up a respectable foldback mix.

Several budget singles have also been mastered at Phoenix, including recent sessions for Charge and The Helicopters. Hugh also has plans to form a production company and is currently putting the finishing touches to an in-house project, in association with Simon Renouf, entitled *Daffodil Valley*. Described loosely as a 'different kind of concept album,' involving a liberal mixture of orchestral and rock music, *Daffodil Valley* was recorded entirely on 8-track – including a dozen or so track bounces – and is still good enough quality, Hugh says, to be released commercially. If nothing else, he commented, the album at least shows how far you can go with 8-track gear and still get acceptable results.

Derrick Radcliffe has been running **Ark Studios** in Kingston, south west of London, for just over a year now. He found that his low studio rate of just £6 an hour for eight on 1in sessions helped attract initial interest in Ark, but still likes bands to come and have a look round the studio before making a final booking. Besides offering good value for money, Derrick places equal emphasis on looking after musicians making their first demos, and ensures that engineers at Ark are as helpful as possible.

The studio has been involved in one or two private production deals for bands – it also has its own associated production company – but Derrick emphasises that his main function is to produce demo tapes for people. In the past he has found that to provide the best possible service to bands coming in to record, he needs to concentrate on the recording side. He'll offer advice on where bands should send tapes afterwards, but leaves it up to them to sort out the final details. The majority of bands, however, seem to know what they're about. Derrick reckons that 75% of the groups using Ark Studios are well-rehearsed and properly prepared for an 8-track session; the remainder he classifies as 'star-gazers', who tend to waste a lot of time – and money – sorting themselves out in the studio, with little to show for their efforts.

Fast Buck Studios in Chiswick, west London, co-owned by Dave Kerr-Clemenson and Ed Hamilton, concentrates on 8-track on 1in demo sessions for local bands and London-based publishing companies. Dave says the studio has done quite a lot of work with Roger Chapman and Whitesnake, plus Chappells and Quarry Music. Both Dave and Ed are musicians themselves, and know all too well how not to run a studio; with many years' experience of playing and recording they try to ensure that a band will feel very much at home in Fast Buck. Engineers working on 8-track sessions have to do a lot more than simply push the faders around, Dave feels. Bands new to multitrack recording need to be gently guided through a session, the engineer often acting as a combined bum-kicker, surrogate mother, diplomat and, more often than not, ideas person.

'Maintaining a useful dialogue with new bands is very important,' Dave offered, since far too much time can be wasted during a session on relatively unimportant aspects – like spending four hours getting a 'miraculous' drum sound. Far better to do an honest job of capturing a good performance on tape, and leave the frills and extras until the band has more money to spend. The key to Fast Buck's continuing success, Dave concluded, was

down to its building up a reliable supply of clients – hence the emphasis on recording demos for publishing companies; to providing a creative and productive recording environment; and last, but by no means least, getting a good sound in the studio.

Tudor Studios began its life nearly two years ago as an 8-track facility housed in a barn a couple of miles outside Swindon. Because of impending redevelopment of the site, however, the studio had to move into the town itself. Studio manager and resident engineer Terry Alderton doesn't regret the forced move though, since he wants to diversify into other areas besides demo sessions for local bands. The acoustics at the studio's new home have been kept fairly lively, and should prove ideal for brass bands and string quartets that Terry now hopes to attract to Tudor. Also, when laying down backing tracks with rock bands, he tries to arrange for the whole group to play together in the studio. Solo and lead vocals can be overdubbed later, but the live sound he is able to achieve with the rhythm section gives a far better result, he finds. Lack of sufficient isolation is seldom a problem, Terry says. Anyway, he hates the 'clinical' dead sound you find in most studios, and aims to get a good open drum sound without having to tape up half the kit.

If at all possible, Terry prefers a new band to bring along a cassette recording at a live gig, so that he has a rough idea of the line-up and the sort of sound the group is after. Sessions at Tudor are divided roughly half and half between conventional demo tapes and self-financed singles. The studio is also geared up to offer package deals of recording time plus 500 or 1000 singles. Eventually Terry hopes to upgrade to 16-track, but realises all too well that a studio needs to spend a lot more money on 'toys' and special effects to compete in the bigger league.

Swindon, however, is rather isolated from the rest of the Midlands, and it could take Tudor a couple of years to establish a name for itself as a 16-track. There is plenty of rehearsal space available at the studio's present premises, which has been used on more than one occasion by XTC and other local bands, so Terry may opt for gradually turning that into a separate 16-track facility, while still retaining his present 8-track area.

Mike Crowther-Watson of **Squirrel Studios**, based near Brands Hatch in Kent, has only been in business now for a few months, and offers both 4- and 8-track facilities for demo sessions. He finds that 8-track offers more than adequate flexibility to bands going into a studio for the first time. He hopes to maintain a relaxed atmosphere at the studio – and not, as he says, simply turn Squirrel into a 'recording machine' – by letting bands involve themselves as much as possible with what's going on, including using the console to mixdown their own tapes.

Mike's background as a composer, musician and recording engineer stands him in good stead, he feels, in being able to work out how much time a band should reasonably need to spend laying down each demo, and how to use their time most economically. If the studio is empty, he'll even hire it out for rehearsals at £2 an hour. By letting bands gain experience and build up their confidence in the sometimes

strange and off-putting surroundings of a recording studio, Mike finds that he can get to know members of the band – and *vice versa* – and that they drop into the technique of multitrack recording more easily. And when the band begins to feel somewhat limited by 4-track, the transition to 8-track is relatively painless.

Squirrel Studios is situated in an acre of land, well away from noise-conscious neighbours, but still within easy reach of London and the Home Counties. Mike encourages bands to come down for a couple of days, or even over a weekend, and can even arrange to feed them if necessary.

Octopus Studios near Stowmarket in Suffolk also offer weekend deals – £80 for 14 hours of 8-track recording time. Dave Haser, who runs Octopus with his partner Tony Phillips, tells me that 60% of demo and singles sessions are booked by bands who travel from as far as Brighton, Birmingham, Lincoln and Newcastle. Dave finds that some bands like to come to Octopus to compose their material as well as record it. Studio rates at Octopus are sufficiently cheap, he feels, that many groups can afford the indulgence.

Because of Dave's previous association with the music production side of the business, rather than recording, Octopus can handle just about every aspect of a package deal. He will supervise the cutting, pressing and printing of labels, and then only charge a band for the actual costs involved, plus any reasonable expenses. The studio is also moving into video productions, in association with an Ipswich facilities house. Now that live gigs are getting scarcer and scarcer, it's becoming increasingly difficult for a band to find a venue that will allow A&R persons to see how they perform on stage. One way around the problem is to record a video cassette of your act and post it off to the record companies.

Above all, every tape that leaves Octopus is of the highest possible technical standard; Dave stresses that the *quality* of a demo tape is very important these days. Partly because there's never any excuse for sloppy handiwork, but mainly because a properly-recorded demo tape helps to inspire greater confidence in the person receiving it. And by ensuring that musicians are made to feel at home at Octopus – even if it is their first time in a studio – a band should get the best of both worlds.

During my long discussions with a dozen or so small-studio owners dotted around the country, I was impressed with the way in which they care about offering the best possible facilities for bands. It's obviously a struggle for a 4-, 8- or budget-priced 16-track facility to keep its head above water, such is the intense competition between studios these days. Nevertheless, none of them ever forget that recording is a creative process on both sides of the glass, and that many musicians new to the game need a lot of help during the early sessions. Any studio that loses sight of that fact hopefully won't last very long in the business. ■

Bits and pieces in the control room at Octopus studio (right)



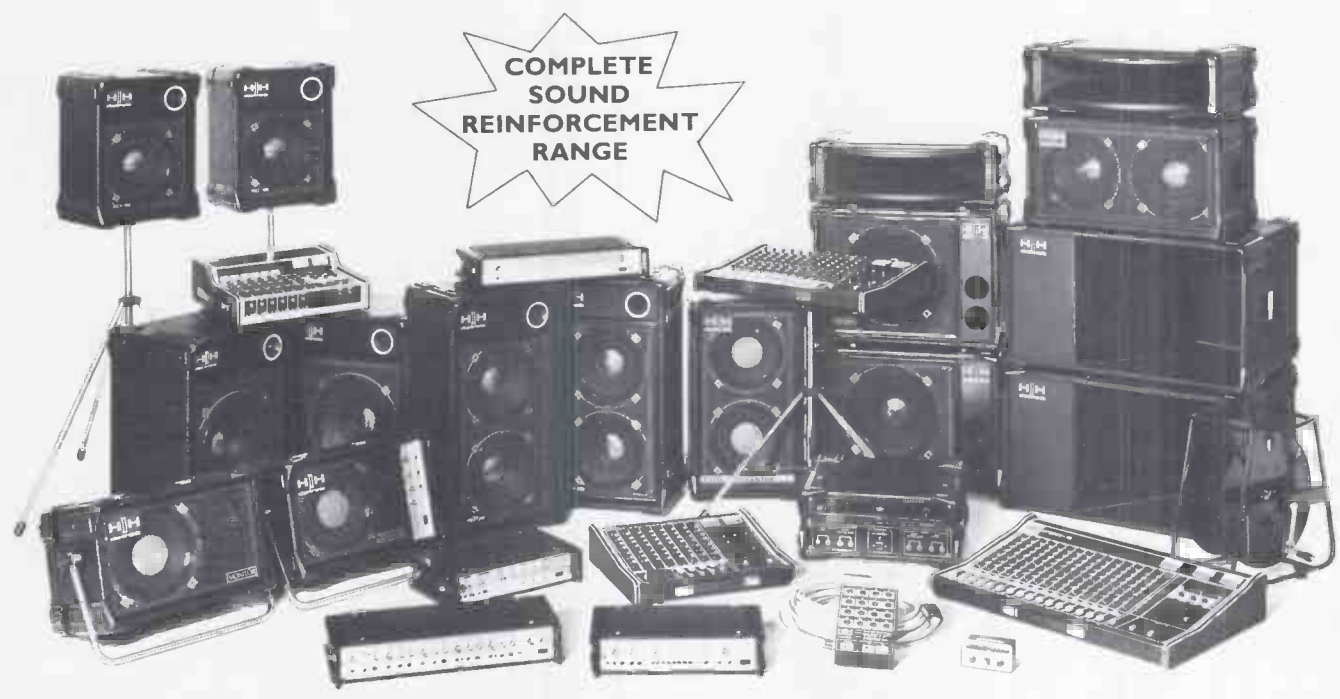
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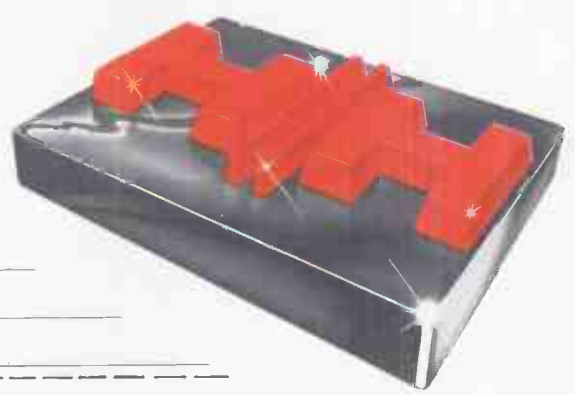
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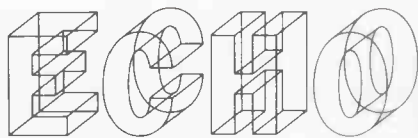


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and the Bunnymen

**Continuing our Road Works series,
Adam Sweeting swaps words with the band
that was named after a drum machine and discovers
the rules of the National Conker Championships.**

Echo and the Bunnymen could be the best news 1980 brought. My first inkling that something was brewing came in the form of a single called *Rescue*. Bracketed between a simply explicit guitar opening and a steel hawser bassline of awesome propulsiveness, here was a pop song of classic proportions.

Not only could you twitch around the living room to it, you couldn't ignore the words either. Touse-headed Ian McCullough is the man with the voice about which many contradictory things have been said, but more of that later. Anyway, how could I resist lyrics like these? 'I'm jumbled up, maybe I'm losing my touch, but you know I didn't have it anyway.' This was it. The essence of doubt on a mere seven inches of vinyl. I felt moved enough to utter the word '*caramba!*' more than once.

For some reason the Bunnymen seem to have acquired a reputation for being 'difficult' in interviews. Perhaps it was just the damp and enfeebling air of St Albans, but the band proved to be outgoing and above all witty. Also, they've been lumped together with bands like the doleful Joy Division and other Factory products without good reason, except that they come from the North. Liverpool, to be exact, possibly a little too close to Factory's Mancunian dugout for safety.

But the Bunnymen are developing so fast that all such comparisons will quickly be seen to be meaningless. Wisely they've ignored all efforts to label them, and treat these with amused contempt. 'I've heard us called all kinds of things,' says Ian McCullough. 'Positivism or negativism, the positive side or the negative side. I dunno. Positivism? I hate these terms. Why don't they just use layman's language?'

Somebody suggests that positivism might mean being not dark and gloomy. 'Not dark and gloomy?' asks Ian incredulously. 'Oh well, we're definitely negativism then.'

Ian, a sharp-eyed, clever young singer, has, of course, spotted the *NME*'s critical *T-Zer* published on the day we met, accusing the Bunnymen of resuscitating 'guerrilla chic'. The reason for this was that the Bunnymen were then touring clad in complete camouflage outfits, with camouflage netting draped over the stage.

Fresh-faced drummer Pete de Freitas had already explained about the camo gear before McCullough had joined the conversation. 'Did you explain about the humour?' asks Ian. 'Yes,' says Pete. 'I said it was fun.' McCullough adds: 'The thing is, we might think it's funny, we might think we're funny. Probably we're just the most unfunny people in the world, and that's why nobody laughs. Some of us did think it was a risk and we could get criticised for it, for

glorifying whatever it's supposed to glorify. The Clash did it without a sense of humour. They probably thought they were in the Army.'

Earlier, Pete de Freitas had laid out a few more details. 'It's just fun really. We're not into militarism. I dunno, there's all these people who have to take everything so deathly seriously. It's quite funny actually, cos when the band began, before I joined, one of the things they were known for was having no image at all. The camouflage thing helps with the whole tour, you can sort of get into it. Rather than like a string of separate gigs, everybody's tied together, the road crew and everybody, in this



McCullough: positively negative

camo thing. It's great.'

Bassman Les Pattinson chips in. 'It all started with a joke really, we just got all this camouflage netting for the stage gear, to make it look like the album cover I suppose. Then the road crew started wearing camo, then Pete started wearing it.'

Pete: 'It was kind of born out of the road crew more than us, really. Bill Butt, our lighting guy, designed the tour really. He wanted to make the stage look more interesting, so he came up with the idea of the camo nets, and once he got the nets all the crew turned up to rehearsals in the camouflage jackets and that. There were some creative ideas - we were gonna get a jeep, and just before we came onstage the road crew were gonna drive up the

centre of the hall to the stage and jump on with all this camo net and throw it over the PA. But that never came about. Bill's got the jeep, but it wasn't working or something.'

On a more practical level, Ian McCullough reckons the camo gear is much more comfortable than most clothes. One thing's for sure, the complete package of clothes and stage set-up looks dramatic, especially when linked in with spotlights which angle starkly through clouds of smoke which are sporadically pumped out from behind Pete's drum kit. How the poor sod can see his hi-hat through all this is open to debate.

Whatever the avant-hipguard might say about the Bunnies' apparent recruiting drive for HM Forces, the very fact that they've evolved a complete audio-visual touring package is significant. Why? Because when I first saw them at the YMCA in London's Tottenham Court Road (quite near Lasky's, who do rather a good Riesling), they were generally sloppy and disappointing. This was especially sad in the light of the fact that their debut album *Crocodiles* was a corker.

But now things are different. You can hear all the instruments onstage, the band have managed to stop breaking strings all the time, and McCullough sings with a passion and power which can only come from a marked growth of confidence. McCullough's new-found command of the stage lets him project the Bunnies' impressively strong songs every bit as well as he did on *Crocodiles*.

He's given strong support from the other Bunnies, even if they don't move around much. Les Pattinson and guitarist Will Sergeant both have their territory clearly marked out, and Pattinson's bass rolls like a heavy sea between vast splashes of cymbal from de Freitas. Sergeant tops it off with clanging chords and deceptively simple twiddles, usually standing motionless. He looks very odd because he's got a length of camouflage netting wrapped round his head with the ends weighed down with conkers. They dangle down the side of his face as he studies the fretboard of his *Telecaster*.

The songs benefit a good deal from the no-man's-land ambience of the stage décor. The menacing *Happy Death Men* is like a trip down a neon-lit subway with only a demented chauffeur for company. *Rescue* is taken a little quicker than on record, but still works well. And the ominous *Villiers Terrace* is just strange. What do you expect with lyrics like: 'There's people rolling round on the carpet / Biting wool and pulling strings'?

'At some point people will understand that you should take our songs with a sense of humour,' Ian McCullough is saying. 'A lot of



the things I'm writing about are pretty serious things, I s'pose you could say. But I cover them up – they could mean anything. *Villiers Terrace* isn't about drugs or anything – but now it is. I mean, I think it's about drugs now. It's funny, that.' The power of the press, y'see. 'What was the one that was about Cambodia?' asks Pete de Freitas, causing a small gust of mirth to sweep round the increasingly smoky dressing room. 'Happy Death Men,' says Les Pattinson.

Ian does admit, though, that both *Villiers Terrace* and the oddly backwards-sounding *All That Jazz* are about the dangers of being attracted to danger. Perhaps that's why several writers have said that McCullough's vocals sound like Jim Morrison, a hypothesis which has led on neatly to the Bunnymen being touted as the front line of a psychedelic revival. Maybe they'll be playing 'Nuke the Whale' benefits in 10 years time. McCullough throws up his hands in despair as the labels fly thick and fast.

'Jim Morrison, Neil Young – how can you get anything more extreme? Somebody wrote that I sounded like Neil Young, and then everybody started saying it. Like now it's Jim Morrison. Somebody said I had a non-voice the other week – "For what is really a non-voice, he makes it sound distinctive," he said.'

But do you feel typecast by all this, or pressured into fulfilling somebody else's expectations? 'No, they know that they can't typecast us really. For all this psychedelic crap, one person out of 10 has called us psychedelic and the other nine have mentioned psychedelia and said that we're not psychedelic. But because those nine have said that, then that word sticks, I suppose.'

Here's how Les Pattinson sees it. 'I remember a bloke in *Sounds* saying that since punk was dying, surely the next step was going to be psychedelic. And that was back in 1978. They've probably been waiting that long to put a label on somebody.'

The word is leaked that Adrian Thrills from *NME* has turned up for the gig that night, and indeed was even seen paying for a ticket at the door. 'Oh God, not Adrian Thrills,' says Ian. 'He's a mod isn't he?' inquires Will Sergeant, who's just come in. Ian doesn't really mind journalists, but he prefers ones who can write. 'I don't like reporters who are not very good at writing being over-critical of us. I don't mind people who can write or who know what they're talking about but... we got reviewed by (insert name of your choice here) in *Sounds* last week – he's obviously crap. I used to like Charles Shaar Murray but I keep hearing that crap song of his on the radio this week. He's writing about other bands who are like good, and he shouldn't be.'

To change the subject. I accost Les Pattinson about how he managed to get the

amazing bass sound on *Rescue*, in particular. I try to describe why I like it so much, but the best word I can come up with is 'linear'. Fortunately Les seems to know what I mean. 'It's sorta sparse and basic, yeah. It's just a basically clear sound. It was recorded in a very live room for a bit of atmosphere.' However, the Bunnymen are not very hung up on recording technique. 'I don't go in much for all that,' says Ian. 'It wasn't us that produced the album anyway, but we know whether we like a particular sound or not. That's basically it, really.'

Rescue itself was produced by Ian Broudie of the Original Mirrors, while the rest of *Crocodiles* except *Pride* was the handiwork of David Balfe and Bill Drummond, alias The Chameleons. You might still be able to find a rather wonderful single by Lori and The Chameleons called *The Lonely Spy*. It appears, though, that Balfe and Drummond will no longer be working with the Bunnymen as producers. The band weren't too impressed by the way their last single *The Puppet* came out, though the B-side, *Do It Clean*, is one of their best efforts to date, both live and on record. Thus it looks as though McCullough's protestations of studio artlessness are not quite as simple as he says.

It's not easy to describe the Bunnymen's sound without making them sound like other bands – hence, I daresay, the confusion among critics. Let's have a go anyway. The notion of linearity isn't a bad place to start, because the band tend to build their songs along simple bass/drum patterns. Rhythmic emphasis then centres around McCullough's expansive vocal style, resulting in tightly controlled clusters of sound as de Freitas turns up the percussive temperature under a vocal crescendo or a change of key.

Pretty well all the tracks on *Crocodiles* repay careful listening. *Stars Are Stars*, for example, kicks off with an intro which could almost be The Searchers, with chiming guitar and an air of Top-40 innocence. *Pride* offers a dazzling display of textures. McCullough's vocals switch from measured description to a tortured intensity. Then Will Sergeant drives into a floating middle eight coloured by a thin organ drone and brittle percussion.

Villiers Terrace finds the Bunnymen waxing a little more expansive with the aid of some splanging piano, courtesy of David Balfe. Here the band's ability to create almost unbearable urgency is telescoped into a hectic two and a half minutes, complete with vocal counter-points and some smart changes of tempo. Then there's the brooding *Pictures On My Wall*, which was released as a single before *Rescue*. This one's a bit more reflective, dominated by baleful synthesiser and eschewing rhythmic attack in favour of oppressive atmosphere.

The album closes with *All That Jazz* followed by *Happy Death Men*, both heavyweight pieces. 'Where the hell have you been? We've been waiting with our best suits on,' McCullough growls menacingly at the start of *All That Jazz*. Slashing guitar and an angular bass riff combine with doomy vocals to produce a kind of *Waiting For Godot Meets Apocalypse Now*. It's more fun than that might suggest, if only in a bemused way. *Happy Death Men* is a lengthy exercise in rhythm, with brass and atonal piano making guest appearances.

The Bunnymen's deliberately restricted tonal range is probably what's caused them to be compared to the likes of Joy Division, but they have the ability to use relatively small variations in texture or rhythm to suggest limitless possibilities. They could hardly be further from the stagnant introspection which Joy Division have been guilty of, because they've combined a knack for writing tightly-constructed songs with a gift for instant creation of different moods. If they enjoy stretching out instrumentally, as in the unrecorded *Over The Wall*, songs like *Rescue* or *Villiers Terrace* suggest that here is a band which could knock out hit singles without much trouble. This is not a very common combination of factors, and it certainly isn't psychedelic.

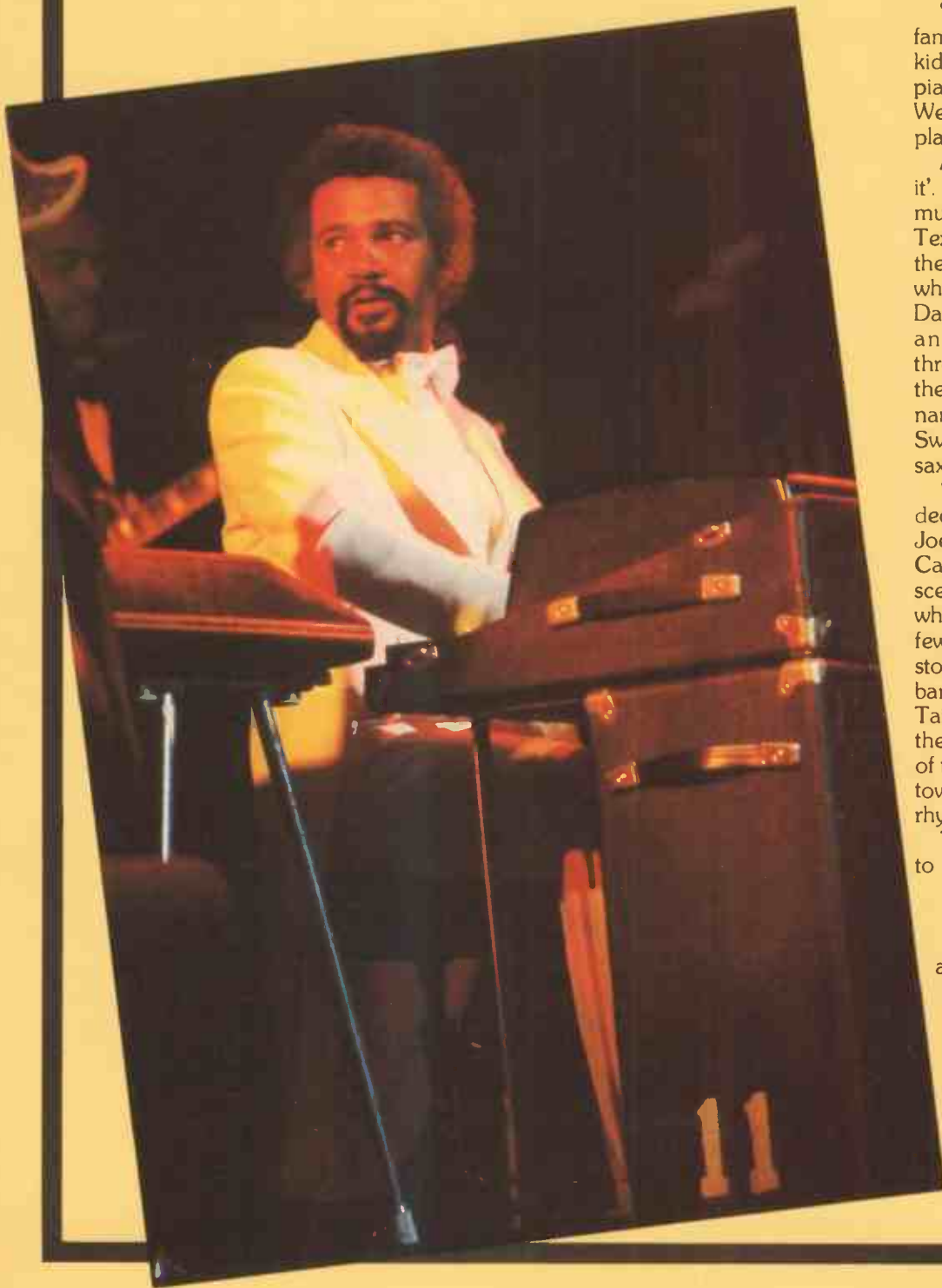
'Something's happening there, on our album cover,' says Ian McCullough. 'Life itself.' Or in Les Pattinson's words, 'Something definitely being born.' Well, could be. Perhaps it's because the Bunnymen are now all people and not three people and a drum machine. Before Pete de Freitas arrived, the band used a drum machine called Echo. How does Pete compare with his mechanical predecessor? 'The machine had a better sense of humour,' claims McCullough, 'And it didn't smoke as much dope either.' While we're nearly on the subject of gear, let it be known that Pete de Freitas doesn't like Tama drums. 'A *Chorus Echo* for me next,' announces guitarist Will Sergeant, who currently restricts himself to common-or-garden effects like reverb.

On the whole, Echo and the Bunnymen much prefer to let their music do the talking for them. That's probably why Ian McCullough has been known to give different explanations regarding what his songs are 'about' to different people. It's understandable, when every time the geezer opens a paper he finds he's turned into some other mythic figure from the pantheon of rock history.

After the gig, the band members seem just the same as they did before they played – relaxed to an absurd degree, and quite happy to chat away about anything. Ian McCullough returns to the pay phone near the band's dressing room where I'd first seen him earlier in the evening. Will Sergeant displays the conkers wrapped in his camouflage netting headband, and starts giving a well-informed *resumé* of the rules of the National Conker Championships. Contestants aren't, for example, allowed to soak their conkers in vinegar and then roast. This means that everyone has to use natural, untreated conkers, and the skill lies in the way you swing them.

Eventually the gathering breaks up. The Bunnymen are very polite and shake hands, and McCullough asks me how I managed to get my hair to stand on end. He guesses rightly that I slept on it while it was still wet. It's hard to believe that this was the band which shortly before had played a mesmerising set. Could this be the new Merseybeat? ■

Pre-dating such worn-out terms as jazz-rock, fusion and other attempts to sit on the fence separating rock from jazz, the Crusaders are still there more than 20 years later, with their respect and following intact. *Tony Bacon* talks to their perennially in-demand keyboard man, Joe Sample



Joe Sample started to play piano at the age of six, and was influenced initially by an older brother, Alexander Sample, who played in big bands and whose presence ensured that there was always music in the Sample household in Houston, Texas. Joe remembers how all the local kids would indulge in piano 'boogie wars'.

'In our neighbourhood nearly all the families had a piano,' he recalls, 'and the kids would consequently sit around the pianos playing blues and boogie-woogie. We used to have boogie wars: who could play the fastest, or whatever.'

At 13, Sample 'became serious about it'. He decided he was to be a jazz musician. Stix Hooper (then a fellow Texan musician, later to be drummer of the Crusaders) had formed a band, into which Joe came at the age of 14, in 1953. Dances and campus concerts ensued, and Sample's ambition continued through high school into college, where the band was known variously by such names as the Modern Jazz Sextet and The Swingsters, and also included bassist/saxist Wilton Felder.

'After three years of university we decided it was time to leave Texas,' says Joe, 'and we went out to the west coast, to California. At that time (1958) the jazz scene out there was winding down from what they called the cool jazz. We played a few gigs as a jazz band, and then it stopped. Then we went to work as a dance band at a local Hollywood club called The Tailspin; at that time we were known as the Hollywood Nighthawks. We were one of the hottest of the dance bands around town - it was because of that Texas rhythm.'

The embryonic Crusaders spent 1958 to 1960 in Las Vegas as a show band: this singing and dancing set-up was evidently not the direction the band were keen to take. Fortunately, an audition in 1960 in Hollywood for the Pacific Jazz label was successful, and the Jazz Crusaders, as they were known, had their first album, *The Freedom Sound*, released in 1961.

Pacific Jazz, which soon after changed its title to World Pacific in an attempt to throw off the restrictions implied

Sample

then by the word 'jazz', held on to the band until about 1966 when, after a short stint with Motown, the Crusaders signed to Chisa Records. The band too had been indulging in some soul-searching about jazz, or rather Jazz.

'At that particular time we changed our name to the Crusaders,' explains Sample, 'because of the word "jazz" and the problems that we found. Whenever I would play, if I told someone I was a jazz musician they expected me to play in a certain manner. It was inhibiting me - in other words I found that whatever I felt, it didn't fit into the format of what someone personally thought of as jazz. We got a little tired of that, and I felt inhibited and boxed in. At the same time, I didn't like the habits of the jazz players - it was like you had to act a certain way, speak a certain way and your moral values had to be of a certain nature. I also found jazz bands travelling all around the world creating an atmosphere of What A Jazz Band Is. One day, when I heard that the Japanese government had barred all American jazz bands from coming into their country because of the problems with the drug laws and all that, I knew that I had to take that banner away. One jazz band was going some place in the world and representing me, all because I was called a jazz musician. I didn't like that. We decided then to change the name to the Crusaders.'

Sample underlines the necessity for the musician to be given freedom to express individuality, by explaining the particular Texan attitude to the problem. 'We are Texans. We do not play like a guy from Los Angeles, or New York City, or Boston - I don't have the attitudes that they have, or the mentality. We knew that we were in a constant fight with that whole syndrome. So consequently we did change the name... those years were the beginning of what they call funk jazz.'

The Crusaders, then, retaining the core of Sample, Hooper and Felder, plus trombonist Wayne Henderson, moved into a period where they began to play many sessions, and when their own music began to achieve heavy AM airplay, pop-quantity sales. More notably, the Crusaders

achieved recognition by discerning rock musicians throughout the world as an instrumental group with few equals. The band's near-total reliance in the early Seventies on the recording studio as their medium of communication with the outside world was broken in 1975 when the Rolling Stones invited them to open the

shows on a British tour. The Crusaders were then known principally for their own records and for their extensive session playing on the records of others.

'The popularity of the band had grown on a worldwide basis,' Sample describes modestly yet accurately. 'We sort of had a second wind about going out and playing, and then the Stones asked us. They knew

people we knew, and I was always told



Tony Butler

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that the Stones were fans of ours. We did about ten dates with them. Every night, at the opening of the show, to be booed by 16,000 people really was an incredible feeling! And I wondered, what in the world are we doing here? But then, after about 10 minutes, the booing would actually stop, and we'd do about a 40-minute show. At the end we would have people standing, and also screaming. But I didn't like it, and I couldn't wait to actually stop doing it. It was just like a terrible feeling.

'We began playing a catch-up game all round the world – in those seven years that we had been just in the studios, we were only doing a couple of concerts a year. Even though the albums were coming out, we were turning into... ghosts! People had only heard the albums. Since then we have been on a crusade to broaden the base of the band, worldwide.'

Not only that, but the Crusaders have continued to lead the way in, as Joe has identified, the funk jazz area – or, to use two more recent labels, jazz-rock and fusion music. But mere labels belie the depth, innovation and artistry evident throughout the band's recorded and live career. In 1972, Larry Carlton's guitar playing became part of the Crusaders, and part of a new tradition of guitar playing that made the fullest use of the ambiguity offered by working in such a musical environment. Guitar players and bassists come and go, but the nucleus of Sample, Hooper and Felder maintain the Crusaders' justified claim to being one of the greatest instrumental groups in the world.

'My life's work is based on the acoustic piano,' admits Joe Sample, but the pianist enjoys a continuing love/hate relationship with the necessary electric instrumentation which the Crusaders' full sound has demanded. And while the essential nature of electric keyboards has permeated the Crusaders' music, Sample's own solo albums (*Rainbow Seeker* – 1978; *Carmel* – 1979; and a third to be released in the next few weeks) have charted his voyages of rediscovery of the acoustic piano's powerful dynamics and creative resourcefulness. The composer looks on these solo works as a natural progression from his earliest jazz ambitions; as a listener, I find these records – and particularly the first one – to contain some of Sample's finest compositions and most sensitive playing.

'I have been practising the piano since I was six years old,' says Joe, and describes how his solo records grew out of a need to return to the acoustic piano: 'I was reaching a point where I realised... I wanted to play the piano. In other words, in the Crusaders I'm part of a band. And we get along and we're friends and all of that simply because, as Texans, our lifestyle is such that you respect the next guy – even if you walk into a bar or some teenage dance, you never stand too close to the next guy. Every guy has his own space. And when you get on a bandstand,

you never inject your personal things over the band or dominate it. You just have sort of... conversations in the band. I've seen bands there that I've played with – if some guy began overdoing it, he would end up in a fight. So you learn how to ease back: if there are four guys in the band, I comprise a fourth of the band.

'Through the years I was a member of a band, and yet I still had this personal side of everything that I had to get out – I couldn't wait to play the piano. My music has a broad range, and in the Crusaders I only use a portion of it. And that's the same thing with all the other members. We each have thoughts and ideas and desires to do other things, and the only reason that it hadn't happened in the past was because there was a tremendous fear that if I did a solo album it was the beginning of the end of the band.'

In the Pacific Jazz days, Sample had been using acoustic piano. 'But,' he points out, 'in the funk jazz days I was using the Fender Rhodes and the Wurlitzer a lot.' Obviously, this was as much to do with the vagaries of the band's sound as to Sample's personal taste – the acoustic piano simply took up too much of the musical space, whereas the electric pianos offered a colour that could be used to shade-in between the clearer lines of an electric rhythm section and large drum kit.

'The acoustic piano – how I play it and the songs that I actually write for it – is a solo vehicle,' states Sample. 'It takes up all of the room. As a solo instrument it would take up the space, the room; in the band it was too much space. I can play acoustic

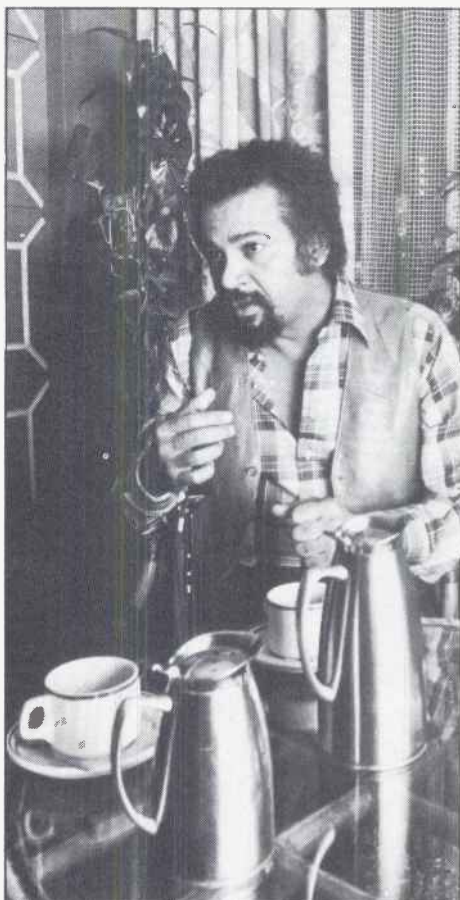
piano any way that I feel like playing it – I can do numerous things on it, every feeling. I don't have to think, "Don't hit it too hard." If I'm on a Fender Rhodes, I think I may break the tines, I may have some noises or some distortion in the instrument, and I know that I can't go into the bass of the Fender Rhodes and attack it because it won't come back to me – the Fender Rhodes is used as a colour and for certain moods.'

Joe agrees that the acoustic piano and the electric piano both have their individual properties and uses, but explains that, 'You shouldn't attempt to play the acoustic piano in the same manner as a Fender Rhodes piano, and vice versa.' He also points out that, while in the late Sixties his fine-breaking activities on the Rhodes reached an all-time high and forced him to move to playing Wurlitzers, in '71 Rhodes strengthened the tines but have since, Sample feels, altered the tone quality of the instrument to a point where it doesn't have as much power. But his attitude to electric and electronic keyboards generally is pretty unenthusiastic.

'What I find in the world of electronics,' he explains, 'is that just about every band, when they go into the Minimoogs and the ARPs and that, is that I begin to hear a similarity of sound out of all of the records. When I hear things like that, I choose to just wait and see what is going to happen. I didn't want to join that group of keyboardists who got into that. Even at this present time now, and in the last 10 years, you have hundreds of gadgets out on the market now. When a bassist has between him and the amplifier a line of little gadgets... I think that some of those things are wonderful, the same as synthesisers and all of that, but I'm beginning to miss the personal contact with the instrument: my fingers hitting a key, and the hammer going to a string and hitting it, where I know I control the actual sound of the instrument, just through the fingers. Like in the old days, those blues players – T-Bone Walker, B B King – they got the distortion out of the instruments and those long, singing notes, they did it personally with their hands.

'I can hear the difference of power when you do it with your hands than if you use a gadget. It isn't the same – it does not have the power, and it tends to make everyone have a similar sound. The personality is actually lost. I'm finding also now a problem in playing with younger musicians – if I strike a key with like 10 pounds of power, and also Stix is hitting his bass drum with 10 pounds of power, a young bassist is barely hitting his strings with 1 lb. There is a difference, and we find that if a guy suddenly had to have a little amplifier his fingers would, I believe, fall off or he'd get cramps in them.

'There's a tendency now not to dig into



Tony Butler

Sample emphasises point in mid-interview while sampling Holiday Inn coffee

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your instrument and really, really play them like they should be played. I don't mind all the gadgets, the synthesisers and all that, but what I do mind is this void that is happening now where a guy should be getting the *personal* thing out of his instrument. The gadgets take the personality of the individual out of the music, and the musicians tend also to become *lazy* as far as playing the instrument with the physical power of their hands.'

Sample's set-up for the most recent Crusaders' UK tour late last year was a fairly simple combination of grand piano (rarely used on the gig I saw), Fender Rhodes (constantly used), Moog Polymoog ('I can change the frequencies of the filters, but basically it's preset') and a Moog Minimoog ('I use that every now and then for an effect'). He's also constructing a studio up in Mammoth Lake, California, where, among other things, his aim is to use synths in 'an orchestral way', and to this end Moog have agreed to build him what he wants. But synths take a back seat in the live and recorded Crusaders sound where Sample's self-confessed role is that of rhythm maker, or 'machine for the mood and the feeling.' One thing is certain - Sample is not concerned with the excitement of live performance.

'We have a very strange way of playing,' the pianist explains carefully. 'I find that most of the bands I hear deal with *excitement*. In our band, we deal with

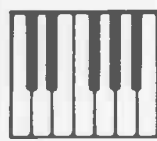
moods and feelings. I get very bored in the situation of excitement. Every song starts sounding the same to me, every solo begins to sound the same. So consequently, whenever I take my hands off the Fender Rhodes or off the acoustic piano, the other members of the band will then have a tendency to go into the area of excitement - that particular mood of that particular song has now changed, and whatever Stix was playing, he begins to fight with the other wave that it's just gone into. I am the workhorse of the moods and feelings of the Crusaders' music. I keep it locked up, in the direction it should be in.'

One track that the band almost threw out because of problems maintaining the stability of the piece was *Street Life* (which, of course, went on to become a big hit for the band in Summer '79 and was, incidentally, the first Crusaders composition to feature a vocal - contributed by the vociferous Ms Randy Crawford). As the track's composer, Sample felt a certain frustration after the song had entered its tenth hour of recording time and continued to defy his attempts at imposing a continuity on the musical flow of the piece.

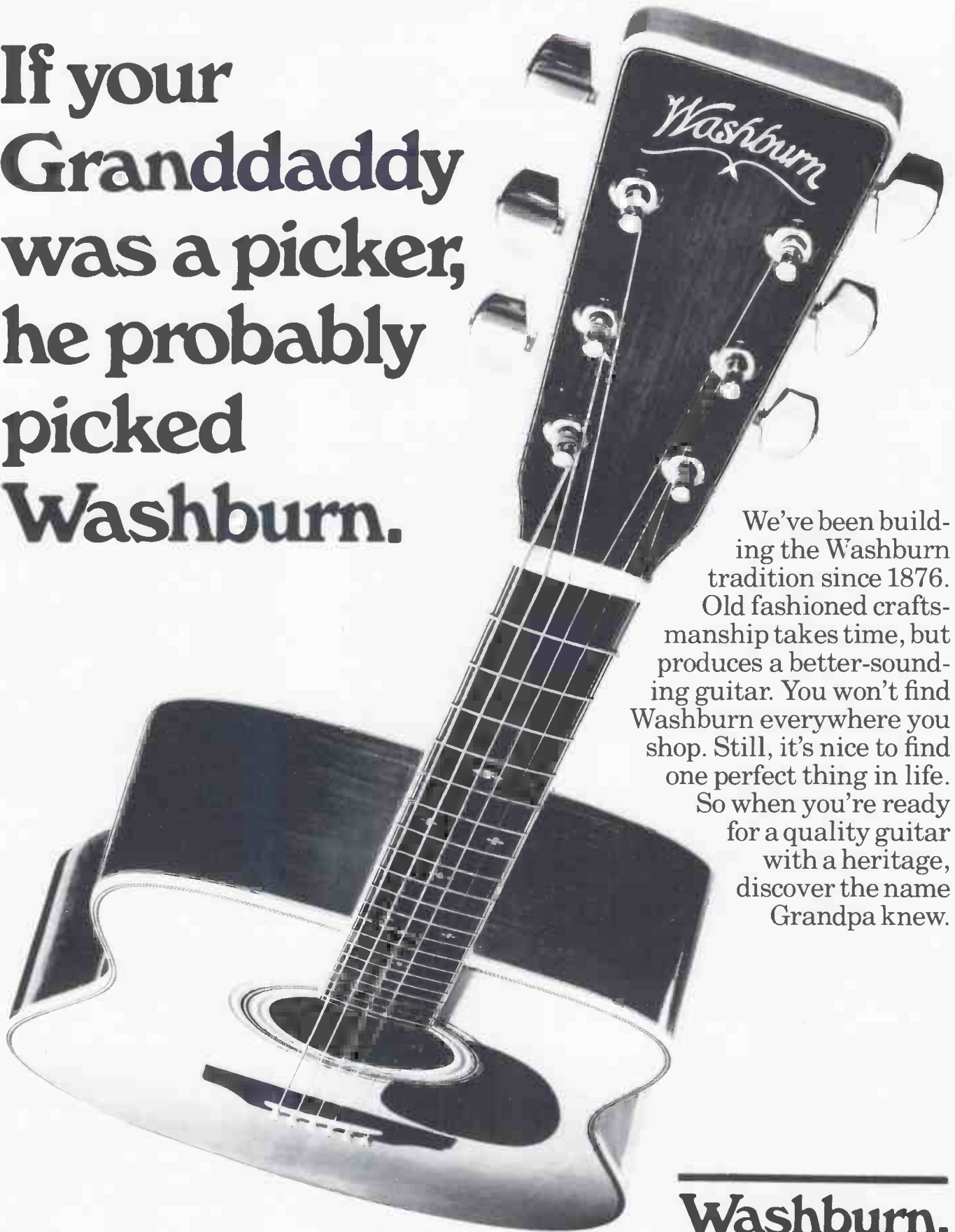
'That song is a composition,' Joe assures me, 'and is not a vehicle to play with the luck of freedom. It is a composition that went from this mood to this mood, or this rhythm to this rhythm. So we had to get the band in the studio (Arthur Adams,

Roland Bautista and Billy Rogers on guitars; Paulhino da Costa on percussion; Robert Bryant Sr and Oscar Brashear on trumpets; Robert Bryant Jr, Jerome Richardson and Bill Green on saxes; Garnett Brown and Maurice Spears on trombones; Wilton Felder on bass and tenor sax; Stix on drums and Joe on keyboards) to realise every single section. And once they'd learnt each section, you'd try to put it down on the tape, but after you go from the first mood to the second change, to this section, to that section, by the time those same sections came up again they didn't know what the feeling of the first section was! And that's when you find that the song begins to get faster, or it slows down. The whole thing just changes on you. A lot of thought *must* go into recording: you have to know what the melody is, what it's supposed to feel like, in this section or in that section. That is the most difficult thing: I find that musicians do more listening to themselves than to the next guy, so we've discovered that if everyone stops saying "I can't hear myself" ... our success now, I believe, is based on the fact that I will get the players to focus on me, or on someone. Everybody, just stop listening to what you are actually playing and listen to this guy, to that guy. He is now holding everything down, he is the focal point, because he knows *exactly* what this song is supposed to feel like.' ■

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Publishing Be Damned?

**Didy Lake
thinks not,
and here outlines
the facts behind the
music publishing biz
in the first article
of our two-part
investigation**

When you negotiate your recording contract, the record company may ask you to sign your publishing to their subsidiary publishing company. They may even intimate that if you don't they won't give you the coveted recording contract. 'Well,' you may shrug, 'if they are so keen on something as boring as publishing, let them have it.' Could it be that you think publishing is one of those areas in which music biz execs like to play out their little games, yet another example of besuited business people wheeling and dealing in something which is a mere commodity to them ('product'), but the most important thing in your life to you – *music*?

If you do think this, then you are wrong. On the other hand, the company's very keenness might stir up that little device located somewhere in the back of your brain which whispers lovingly to you: 'Hang on a minute – there's money in this.'

And so there is. Any song or piece of music you write, regardless of who records or performs it, including yourself, has the potential to earn you, the writer, considerable royalties. Whichever publisher you sign to will expect a sizeable (though never more than 50%) portion of these royalties, so before you blithely sign away half of your songwriting fortune, examine exactly where that fortune will be coming from and what your publisher will do to earn his or her bit.

The part of your publishing contract dealing with royalties will probably section them as Mechanicals, Performances, Sheet Music and Miscellaneous.

Mechanicals

Whenever your work is mechanically reproduced, whether it be on record, film, video, tape or radio, you are entitled to a publishing royalty. If you are also the performer this is separate from your recording royalty. The law demands that these royalties be paid to the copyright holder who is automatically the writer of the song or piece of music; *ie* you. When you sign a publishing deal you are virtually selling a percentage of the copyright to the publisher, but for the time being we'll simply refer to the copyright holder and talk about records.

When a record is released (*ie* offered for sale to the public) the record company has to pay the copyright holder for the use of the songs contained on that record. The amount paid is fixed by law at 6½% of the recommended selling price less VAT. The more songs there are on the record (be it single, EP or LP), the more divided will be the 6½%. The percentage varies from country to country but it all works out roughly the same. These payments are made to the copyright holder regularly, twice or four times a year. Record companies can also make these payments to a collecting agency, the biggest of which is the Mechanical

Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) who collect for members (writers and publishers) who prefer to get all their royalties from one body rather than lots of different record companies.

This is all very well, you may be thinking, but how does this concern me? How much CASH can I get from the sure fire hit I wrote when I came home from the pub last night?

Let's assume it's going to be released as a single. It doesn't matter who's singing or playing it, we're talking about your *writing* royalties here. We've already said that the record company releasing it is obliged to shell out 6½% for the mechanical copyright. If the single costs £1, knock off 15% VAT and you're left with 85p. 6½% of that is roughly 5p. But that is for both sides, so if someone else's song is on the B-side this has to be split between you. Depending on the percentage your publisher takes (negotiated in the terms of the contract, but as we have said, never more than 50%) you would be left with around about 1p for every record sold. If you wrote both sides you'd be getting 2p! Incidentally, it does make sense if you are performing on a record but playing someone else's song to slap one of your own compositions on the back.

1p doesn't sound a lot but after the record has sold about 150,000 copies and gone Top 5, who cares? Knock off the last two noughts and call it pounds and you'll see what I mean.

But enough of this idle dreaming because when you woke up with a hangover the song didn't sound that good after all, did it? So where else will the money be coming from? At least enough to buy a round.

Performances

Remember that this is about your *publishing* royalties. If you are a performer you'll get your fee for playing a gig as a musician, but if you are playing your own stuff you can also expect to get a performance fee – that is, the public performance of the song you wrote. If you perform someone else's song they get the performance fee. Ideally.

It isn't actually that simple as obviously a fee isn't paid for every single song ever performed. But the proprietor of any place that allows music to be played on the premises has to obtain a licence (apart from the licence they have to get from local councils) from the Performing Right Society (PRS). This is a wonderful non-profit making organisation that

collects up all the licence fees (the bigger the venue the more they have to pay) and shares them out, twice a year, amongst its members. It is the responsibility of the proprietor to send lists of the songs played at that particular venue during any given period, but obviously the PRS would be snowed under if they had to log every single song that was heard in every single venue. So they take a sample and calculate the payments, on a *pro rata* basis, on that.

PRS also licence radio and TV stations and collect very detailed information from them. They receive all the playlists weekly and calculate the number of plays for another *pro rata* share out. This too is made twice a year. As with size of venue, size and importance of the station is taken into account – airplay on prime time Radio One is worth more than late night Radio Medway, for example. Radio Luxembourg counts as foreign so you'd have to wait until PRS collected from its (in this case) Belgian associate. Pirates don't count at all, natch. Your publisher will be a member of PRS and MCPS. You should join too just as soon as you can fulfil the basic requirements which are that you should have three songs, or pieces of music, in some way 'taking off'.

These are the two main single sources of publishing income. Another, which is what you thought publishing was all about anyway, is...

Sheet Music

You don't often find whole families gathered around the upright following the dots and singing the words these days as people simply go out and buy the record, but there are a few clever dicks who prefer to buy the music and have a go at playing it for themselves.

Sales of sheet music aren't what they were, but once a song has become remotely popular – say Top 75 – a publisher will print a few thousand and pay you about 10% of the selling price. The printing costs and the fee for the person the publisher gets to write the music out (the 'copyist') are not your responsibility, though some publishers may try to recoup these costs from your royalties.

Fees are also payable if your song is included in a general songbook or the lyrics published in a magazine or newspaper for your kid sister to mouth while you are on *Top Of The Pops*. You won't get much for these though – you'd be better off selling the story of your sordid sex life – but what you do get is the percentage you have worked out with your publisher in the contract.

Time for another daydream. Where can you hit the really big money?

Miscellaneous

Films, TV shows, stage shows, commercials and video can reap large rewards for the talented young writer, though generally you have to be pretty well established before your



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work grabs the attention of a producer. In most instances you would get your usual mechanical and performance royalties but it gets a bit complicated when you start to differentiate between the types of media.

Obviously, if your band and your music are featured in a general release, up-dated *West Side Story*-type film that goes on to be a box office smash you don't need me to tell you the difference between your elbow and a certain other part of your anatomy. Just remember that money isn't everything.

But if your songs are included in a film, whether it is a potential box office smash or simply a short strip for the local education authority, you would grant to the producer the 'film synchronisation right'. This enables said person to reproduce on the soundtrack your music for use *anywhere*. In return you will get either a fee (size depending on type of film and how famous you are) or a percentage of the box office receipts. Or if you are very famous, both. But you would also get mechanical and performance rights for the public performance of the film, by way of the licences granted by the MCPS and PRS to cinemas etc.

You wouldn't get anything from PRS, however, for what they term 'grand right works' which, basically, is anything performed on a stage in a costume and of some kind of dramatic nature. The 'grand rights' of your music, if it is used in this kind of thing, would be granted to the producer in the same way you would grant them to a film producer.

Any fees you get from music written by you for use in any of the above will be divided in the usual way between you and your publisher, and you retain the first rights to any of the songs contained in the film, play or whatever. That means that although the producer can show the film anywhere, having bought the film synchronisation rights, he or she cannot permit the use of the songs by anyone else. So if any other artist wants to cover them on record you would still get your copyright holder's mechanical royalty. Good isn't it? Don't start looking through estate agents catalogues for that mansion house in the country just yet, though. By the time all this happens you'll probably have a manager to feed too: your manager's percentage comes out of your percentage. But that's another story.

Meanwhile, back here in royalties, we've covered pretty much every source of publishing revenue except

Foreign Rights

This isn't really a separate category for income as it is simply an extension of all of the above. It is extremely unlikely that your entire source of income, whether publishing or otherwise, will be derived solely from the UK. The UK in fact is only fourth on the list of big record-selling markets. The first, natch, is the US, followed a close second by Japan, and then Germany. You can generally make a bit when touring France but they are a bit on the chauvy side as far as buying British is concerned. Your publisher will try to acquire the rights to your music for the world and, while this is less usual or at least negotiable when dealing with recording contracts, it is quite normal in publishing.

Some big publishers have their own affiliated companies in some countries while others sub-publish, ie do a deal with a foreign,

or, indeed, even a British, publisher similar to the one you have with your publisher. What this means is that while you will still receive the same *percentage* from your publisher of the royalties collected, the *amount* the publisher collects will be less.

And there you have it. Lotsa money. But do you really need to give half of it away to some publisher? There is no reason why you should. Provided you fulfil the conditions of membership you can join PRS and MCPS who will collect all the royalties due to you from record companies, radio stations etc. But before you decide to go it alone, consider what publishers can do for you.

What Publishers Do

If you are a non-performing songwriter or composer your livelihood will depend on a publisher performing these four basic functions:

Collecting from record companies, collection societies, foreign publishers and so on, all publishing royalties earned by your songs/music.

Paying cash advances against expected royalties, or subsisting you in the form of wages.

Printing sheet music and selling it.

Making a lead sheet (showing the melody line, lyrics and chords) of your songs and demonstration records for the purpose of interesting A&R personnel of record companies, record producers and artists in recording them.

You must make sure that any publisher you intend signing to can fulfil all of the above. Once you have found one you think to be reputable and honest and who is interested in your work you can start to work out the terms of the agreement. If you are a complete unknown the publisher will be taking a risk with you, so don't expect them to go showering you with money straight away. It should be said again that you should never give a publisher more than 50% of any of your royalties.

However, if the publisher is prepared to give you a substantial cash advance, or pay you a living wage while you sweat over your scores at home, a 50-50 deal would not be unreasonable. If this is not the case you would be perfectly within your rights to ask for a much higher percentage, 70-30 say. If you already have a recording contract or a song which is making the charts you could try for 80-20 and if things are really happening for you, you can ask for an advance as well. You should be able to get an advance on the basis of having a recording contract alone as obviously this is a guarantee of at least some mechanical royalties.

The recording costs for demos should not be made recoupable from your royalties, and while we are at it you should never pay anyone to publish your songs. If they are good enough you will find a proper publisher sooner or later. Good publishers will want to nurture their up-and-coming writers and some like to involve themselves more personally in an artist's career. They can help in:

Obtaining a recording contract.

Leaning on record companies to give your royalties more 'push'.

Assisting with record promotion.

Procuring film scores and commissions for films, plays, TV commercials, etc or placing

your existing songs within these media.

Offering general advice and encouragement.

Can you do all that? No. So how do you get a publisher interested in your work?

Getting a Publisher

If you already have a recording contract there is no problem. As we said at the beginning, the record company will probably want your publishing rights too. No harm in checking out the publishing deal they are thinking of offering you and, if by all the above standards it seems OK, then go ahead. Otherwise, you have quite a bit of slogging to do I'm afraid.

The first thing you must realise is that no publisher is interested in lyrics alone. You will have to find yourself a melody writer. The two of you would then be signed to a publisher but the split between you of the artist's percentage should be agreed right from the start. This applies also to groups. A group starting off with the idea of being very democratic and splitting all the publishing royalties equally between them regardless of who wrote what will quickly come to grief as one or two particular members find that it is their songs which are getting all the attention. So make sure you are all agreed on this point before signing a contract.

Having sorted that out, the next thing is to make a demo. A good quality cassette recording with the best performance on it of the song is sufficient. It is the song the publisher will be listening to, not the singer. Don't go trying to cram your entire repertoire on to the tape but concentrate on your best song and put that one first. Follow it with your second best, but unless you are convinced they are all absolutely brilliant don't put more than half a dozen songs on the tape as publishers get hundreds every week, and if you don't grab their attention right at the beginning they probably won't listen to any more anyway.

It is doubtful that you would be able to get in to see a publisher as, like A&R people, they are very busy and have to have a certain amount of protection from crazed composers. If you actually do manage to get in and whip your kazoo out of your pocket, remember that by this time you would probably be too nervous to give a proper rendering of the tune anyway. Better stick to sending in a cassette where you have more control over the performance.

Send a short covering letter with it and a stamped addressed envelope if you like. But make sure your name, address and the titles of the songs are written on the cassette itself as bits of paper rapidly become separated from tapes which are not necessarily listened to just in the office.

It might be an idea to include any recent publicity you may have had, like a rave review of your Hope & Anchor gig in the *NME*, particularly if it points out your songs. Don't bother though if it was just a couple of lines in the *Sodbury Gazette*. Then wait a couple of weeks. If you don't hear anything after that you can phone and find out what's happening, but if all you get is a straightforward 'no' don't expect reasons why. They may give you one (too similar to another artist or whatever) but they are certainly not going to go into any great detail, so don't go blubbing on about what if you changed the chord sequences or did it again with different words, because they just won't listen.



Some people get a bit paranoid about sending in their songs as they believe that if the publisher is just a teeny bit unscrupulous the songs just might get ripped off. There are ways to protect yourself and they come under the heading

Copyright

When you write a song or piece of music, the copyright, as has already been said, is yours automatically. You don't have to do anything 'official'. But to prove at least that you wrote the song before a certain date you can do any of a number of things. The simplest is to write the song out (if you can write music) or record it on to a cassette and post it to yourself. When it arrives try and remember who sent it (you did, dum-dum), because the point is that you shouldn't open the package as the Post Office will have obligingly dated it clearly enough for any court of law to see that the song contained therein did indeed exist before that date. Put the title of the song on the outside of the package. If you don't have anywhere to live you can deposit copies of the song with either your bank or solicitor. If these songs, or any others you might send out, are from a tape you have made for demonstration purposes, make sure you hang on to the master and only send out copies (this includes copies you send to publishers) and make a list of when and to whom the copies were sent.

This action will safeguard you in the event of anyone else coming out with an identical song and suing you for breach of copyright when yours appears on the market as written by you.

If this should happen a court would probably rule that it is simply a coincidence that the songs are the same. If, however, you think that your song has been ripped off in some way and you can prove that the people claiming the song as their own had access to your song then you can sue them for the copyright royalties which properly belong to you.

It follows that if no-one else can record your music without crediting you as the writer and paying your due royalties, you cannot do the same with anyone else's music. If you want to include a piece of anyone else's music in your song or record a song written by anyone else, credit must be given and royalties paid. But you do not necessarily have to gain permission. Once a song has been published or recorded in this country anyone can record it but if you should want to record a song that has already been released elsewhere, say in the States, but hasn't yet come out over here, the copyright department of the recording company would have to gain permission from the publisher of that song. Publishers can put a 'hold' on any song for which they hold the copyright until it has been released by a particular artist, so if you write a song that you don't want anyone else to record until you do, you can ask your publisher to hold it. But you can't stop anyone covering it after that.

The copyright in a song lasts for the duration of the writer's lifetime and 50 years after that. If you record any song that is still in copyright, even if you re-arrange or write different lyrics to it, there is no way you can claim the publishing royalties for it. You can claim the copyright for

the arrangement of a song which has passed out of copyright into what is called the public domain, but if you are in any doubt you can check with the PRS copyright department. One other point: if you are an employee in, say, an advertising agency, and write a song as part of your normal working duty it is more than likely that your employer will claim the copyright. You should make sure of this point in your contract of employment.

It has already been mentioned briefly that when you sign a publishing deal you sell a percentage of the copyright ownership to the publisher. This also gives publishers permission to exploit the songs in any way they see fit. This means, apart from the publishers' attempts to get other people to record them, that they can sell their share in the songs to any other publisher. There is not much you can do about that and you would probably grant that right in a separate clause in the contract as well. The publisher will have these rights to your songs for as long as they remain in copyright. They will not revert to you once the contract has expired, though obviously any songs you write after the expiry date will be yours to do with what you will.

If, as occasionally happens, a song is recorded before a publishing deal has been made, that song appears as 'copyright control' for your protection. The publishing royalties will go to you but the song may later be included in the publishing contract, especially if you wish your publisher to obtain further 'covers' of it.

Still interested? ■

**Issue
no 2**

The Citizens Band radio magazine

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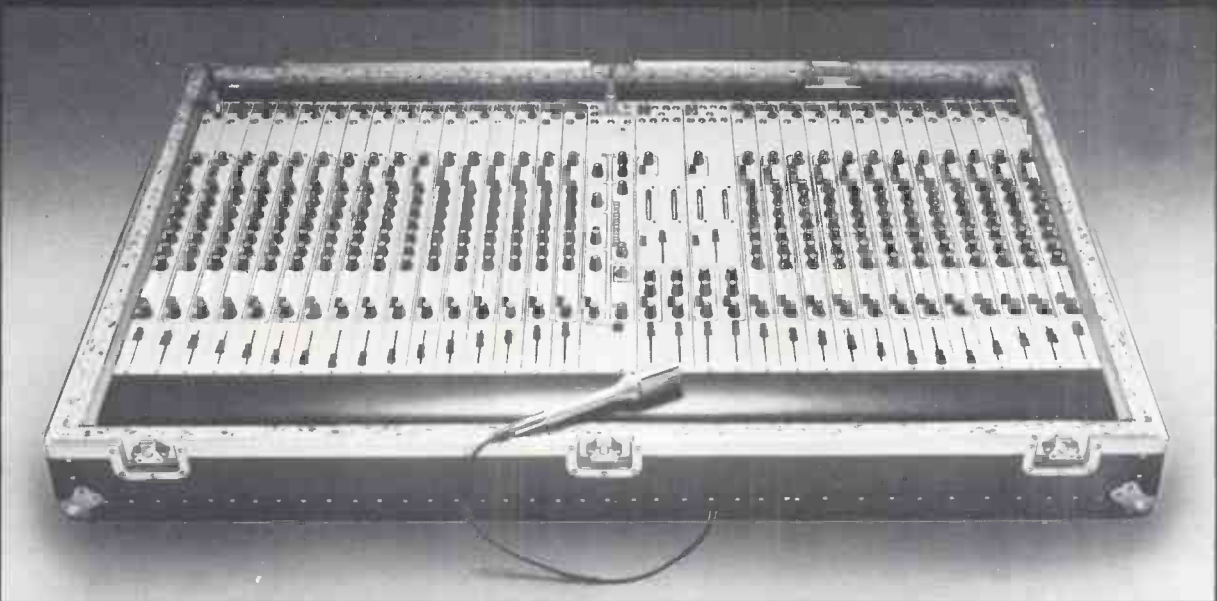
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Songwriting: The Protection Rackets



Lesley Ruda

If you had sat down one day in the early Fifties and written 'Awopbopalobopalopbamboom' on your typewriter and then set it to music, how much money would you have made by now? As John Walters explains, it depends a lot on who is looking after your interests...

P PL, MCPS and PRS. What do these initials mean to you, if you write and play music?

The Copyright Act 1956 provides for two distinct copyrights: one in *sound recordings* and the other in *musical works*. The public use of sound recordings is licensed by Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL). Public use of musical works (on or off record) is licensed by the Performing Right Society Limited (PRS). Mechanical reproduction of a copyright musical work is authorised by the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Limited (MCPS).

These companies are in the business of processing information. Who recorded or wrote what, and when? Who heard it and how often and where? How many copies were sold for what price? On the basis of this sort of information they collect and distribute large sums of money. Big business? Yes and no: these organisations are the servants of the copyright holders. Copyrights are owned by all manner of people, from the humble composer to the independent record company to the music business arm of a huge multi-national.

The workings of the PPL, MCPS and PRS affect the livelihood of everybody connected with the music business, but there is widespread ignorance of the way they work among some of the most directly affected parties.

PPL

Phonographic Performance Limited is the only one of the three organisations to deal with the 'rights' of performing artists, although it is not required to do so by its articles of association. Through something like 220 member companies it handles more than 1200 record labels who have assigned their UK broadcasting and public performance rights to PPL.

Last year they collected a net revenue of £6.1 million: £2m from the BBC, £2.6m from Independent Local Radio (ILR) stations and the remainder from TV companies (small amount) and public performance licences (discos etc). Before sharing out, 8% goes to MCPS and 2.4% for admin. The first chairman

of PPL, Sir Louis Sterling, established in 1934 the principle that a one-fifth share should go to recording artists themselves. This commitment has continued to the present day and a further 12½% goes to the Musicians' Union. The remaining 67½% is shared between the record companies.

What does this mean to you? If you are a featured recording artist or group and your record company is a member of PPL you should get a share in that 20% of £6.1m. Assuming that your records get played, that is. For example, if you play second trombone in a fifteen-piece soul revival band and your three minute version of *Sex Machine* was played once by mistake in Richard Baker's *Start The Week*, you're due for 13p from PPL (BBC Radio pays £216.88 per hour of recorded music.) And PPL don't pay out amounts less than £5. But never mind; as an MU member you are entitled to all the benefits that their £3m can buy.

One might imagine that tracing thousands of artists and paying out the mainly small sums due to them is a difficult business. According to

PPL secretary John Love, it's a 'pain in the arse' and a major re-think is under way at present. If your record company has given PPL your address, the computer will pay out automatically. Otherwise they have to track you down, and I know that in mid-November of last year they claimed to be still tracing artists owed more than £1000 for the year ending May 31st 1980.

In the course of my enquiries it became clear that very few musicians are aware of the PPL's existence. Singer and composer Pete Atkin first drew my attention to them, commenting that cheques for small amounts arrived through the post from time to time. He wasn't quite sure where the money came from. When I told Julian Marshall about the PPL he almost exploded at the other end of the 'phone. Julian, of Eye To Eye and Flying Lizards fame, had huge amounts of airplay for *Dancing In The City* when he was one half of Marshall Hain two years ago. 'That's pathetic!' he expostulated. Julian phoned PPL and discovered a quite considerable sum waiting for him (and not gathering interest). Apparently Julian's old record company (EMI) hadn't informed them of his whereabouts. Julian and I speculated on how many more artists might be unaware of the money waiting for them.

John Love admitted that PPL 'keep a much lower profile than the PRS' because they are mainly concerned with commercial users and record companies. A new independent label often only finds out about PPL when it signs an agreement with the MU where one of the conditions is that performance rights are assigned to the PPL. New labels are joining at the rate of about 15 a month.

Discos, clubs, universities and so on are much more aware of PPL because they have to pay licence fees for permission to play records in public. Although members of the 50-strong staff regularly go out of London to administer the fees, there is no regular field force. This, in John Love's opinion, reduces the temptations of and opportunities for bribery. 'Blanket fees' are negotiated with large-scale users like Mecca, chain stores and the BBC, whose fees are relatively easy to collect. But small-time users are more difficult to licence.

PPL claim their licensing policy to be unique, in that it is designed to protect and further the careers of musicians. In a leaflet entitled *Records And Musicians - The Sociological Problem Explained*, they point out that the entertainment business depends on the continuance of a healthy musical profession. John Love maintains the view that 'most major changes in popular tastes over the last 20 years were originally live performance phenomena', and he welcomes the 'fragmenting process furthered by the post-punk groups' with their greater individuality and more interesting instrumentation. There are agreements with the MU over needle-time (the amount of recorded material PPL allow radio stations to transmit) and they insist that music venues employ musicians some nights a week as a condition of the PPL licence. John Love admits that this policy is 'difficult to implement'.

The PPL is a virtual monopoly, and under the '56 Copyright Act it is answerable to the Performing Right Tribunal. In an 80-day Tribunal case last year the ILR stations challenged the PPL's licence fees on the grounds that extensive radio airplay supports the record industry, whose performance rights the PPL controls. A decision was reached which largely upheld the PPL's claims. To

quote: 'We are not satisfied that there has been any increase in the total sales of records, as distinct from the sales of certain individual records broadcast, as the result of airplay.' The Tribunal adjusted the PPL tariffs (a percentage of net advertising revenue) in a way that slightly favours the smaller stations like Plymouth and Beacon and hits Capital, BRMB and a few others for a lot more.

Under the new terms an 'airplay hit' on, say, Capital radio will be worth a lot more. A hundred plays of *Sex Machine* would bring in around £1375: £250 for the band, £160 for the MU, £115 for the MCPS and £850 for the record company. The Association of Independent Radio Contractors is lodging an appeal against the decision of the Tribunal - the arguments could drag on for a long time.

Meanwhile, make sure that PPL isn't hanging on to your money because the record company didn't give them your address. If you have ever played on a record as an artist or contracted member of a group *let the PPL know who and where you are.*

If you ever played on a record, let the PPL know who and where you are.

Composition

American composer Virgil Thomson once explained how the writer of music keeps body, muse and soul together. At the bottom of a long list which included wife's income, doles and the performance of Other Men's Music came 'The Just Rewards of his Labor' - the royalties from performances and recordings of his work.

There is often little correlation between the work put into writing a piece of music and the financial rewards that may accrue from that same piece. Weeks might be spent on a finely-wrought masterpiece which is never performed. Elsewhere a simple riff-based song which took half an hour to put together might go on to be a global hit. The global hit might be the only success the writer ever has. It could be the richly-deserved peak of a long career or a fluke by someone not remotely interested in 'composition'.

But how do you define The Composer when so much modern music making, like film making, is a group effort, and the interests of performers and arrangers less well protected? 'There's money in writing,' has become a music business tautology. One grim result is that a lot of bad compositions are brought into the world as B-sides and filler-tracks on albums. Talented jazz soloists play lacklustre 'originals' rather than their favourite standards.

One solution adopted by several music groups is to share the compositional credit equally between the writer(s) (the originator(s) of the material), and the whole band. This acknowledges the compositional contribution made by a truly co-operative group and helps prevent the glaring financial discrepancies which sometimes force bands apart.

MCPS

The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) administers the rights negotiated by the Mechanical Rights Society (MRS). Membership of MCPS stands at 4600 writers and publishers. Their turnover is around £8m a year: £1¼m from broadcasting companies who record copyright material (unless they wipe the tapes within 28 days) and the remainder from record companies. Mechanical royalties are also due on any video-cassettes or video-discs ('videograms') incorporating copyright material, and MRS and MCPS, who share the same address (Elgar House in Streatham, South London) are directly involved in this new and complicated field.

MCPS has an appalling reputation within the music business, as everyone within the society seems to admit. Whereas most people have a good word for the PRS and hardly anyone has heard of the PPL, mention of MCPS elicits groans and complaints from most quarters. If they collect mechanicals on your behalf it can take a long time before you get the money. They undertake to pay your royalties within five months of the end of the quarter in which they were earned. The record companies are given 45 days to pay and that leaves three and a half months for MCPS to process the details. A lot of time is spent keying the record company information into the computer by hand. Delays occur, and MCPS is obliged to pay interest at 3% over the bank rate on all outstanding amounts.

Kevin Osborne, of the Society's Data Processing staff, outlined their problems in some detail. One and a half million cards get tatty and illegible and take up a huge amount of space. Only 10% of the information received can be keyed in straight away - much time is wasted decoding semi-legible documents. There are fewer staff coping with more and more work and no room for more people in their cramped premises.

The new Adaptable Database system promises great things, and Kevin sees a dramatic change within two years' time. A proper database means that all the information can be cross-referenced and viewed simultaneously by different departments on Visual Display Units (VDUs). Publishers and writers will be able to get computer print-outs of their copyright details and agreements and can correct mistakes early on, instead of having to wait until the wrong money arrives nine months later. Kevin painted a very rosy future but added that it would take nine months to clear the current backlog. Like PPL and PRS, they receive their BBC broadcast details on computer tape, and these have yet to be sorted.

So how does MCPS affect you? If you don't have a publisher you will just have to be patient and wait for your money. Publisher members of MCPS can collect mechanicals direct from the record companies, leaving the Society to collect from broadcasting companies, library music suppliers and any overseas sources not covered by sub-publishing deals (with foreign publishers). Writer/artists with their own labels can, after a suitable agreement is signed, collect mechanicals direct from themselves. MCPS seeks out small companies through an arrangement with all the record pressing plants, and they will have to collect from you if you have recorded someone else's songs.

The official MCPS word is that, 'A



publisher's livelihood depends on his skills at promoting his clients' works,' but I know that many writers choose a publisher for his or her ability to collect mechanical royalties quickly and efficiently. In some territories, where rates are subject to negotiation, your publisher may get a better deal than MCPS. It will be interesting to see how the new streamlined database will affect this state of affairs.

While discussing their 'terrible reputation' with MCPS executive Graham Churchill, he referred to the 'legacy of '60 years of mismanagement'. The acquisition of MCPS by the Music Publishers Association four years ago led to the appointment of a new managing director, a new management team, the introduction of data processing within the company and a new system of agreements with writers and publishers. A new set of informative leaflets have been published to further understanding of MCPS' functions but have only been sent to new members and licensees. Feedback from members is generally in the form of complaints about missing royalties and incorrect credits.

So, is it worth joining MCPS? It certainly isn't difficult to join, and you are free to make other deals 'which will, for their duration, negate the MCPS control'. Some royalties, however small, can only be collected through them, and they can act as a safety net for these bits and pieces. Your publisher may have lost interest in a song you recorded on Radio 1 two years ago, but MCPS are only just getting round to it.

To make absolutely sure you eventually get everything due to you it's well worth reminding them of all your copyright details – simply and legibly. Think of all those dog-eared cards in creaking filing cabinets in Streatham, and set out every relevant bit of information as clearly as you can.

What about home taping? The manufacturers of tapes, cassettes and the increasingly ingenious tape decks and music centres prosper without any of the wealth that changes hands reaching composers or performers of music. The music industry has been very slow to act on this unfair and ultimately destructive and cancerous state of affairs. MCPS is finally putting its efforts into the campaign for a levy on blank tape. The old Amateur Recording Licence, described by Graham Churchill as 'a sop to consciences', brought in less than £15,000 last year and has now been suspended. But this brings us back to the Copyright Laws.

Audio and video tape recorders and photocopying machines are indispensable tools for people working in music, and home taping is an established facet of modern life. But some of the money this creates should be put back into circulation for the creators themselves. Interestingly, it was a similar situation at the beginning of this century – the widespread pirating of song sheets through cheap printing presses – which compelled composers and publishers to band together to protect their copyrights. This resulted in the formation of the PRS in 1914.

PRS

Most of the composers I spoke to had a good word for the Performing Right Society (PRS). This ranged from informed appreciation and constructive criticism to grateful amazement that the money keeps coming in every quarter. PRS administers an enormous amount of money on behalf of its 12,000-plus writer and publisher members. In 1979 they collected nearly £13m in broadcast royalties, £8m for

public performances and received over £10m from similar societies overseas. Because these payments always have to hang around while they discover how the money should be shared out, the Society is always in a state of extreme liquidity. There is a sizeable investment income – about £1.7m in 1979. Two-thirds of the total revenue – over £20m – goes to PRS members (the remainder goes in administration, and to overseas societies).

If you have a song published but are a member of the PRS, your share of the performance royalties comes direct to you. This is of great significance, since many of the writers I've spoken to claim to have been ripped off one way or another. PRS royalties bypass managers, publishers and record companies and end up in your bank account. The constitution of the PRS actually recommends a 2:1 division of writer(s) and publisher royalties and specifies that the latter's share should never exceed 50%. (Note that there are some foreign royalties which you can only collect through the PRS.)

Several songs went uncredited because the song titles didn't show up in the photocopies

PRS are quite concerned about their image to members and interested non-members and employ a full-time public relations person, Lesley Bray, and several assistants. At one time there were suggestions within the society that they take out television and other large-scale advertising. The view prevailed that it was not worth spending members' money on something so vague and general, but there is now a whole sheaf of explanatory leaflets with titles like *What is PRS?* and *Music, The Law And You*. Large amounts of information are stuffed through members' letter-boxes with the always-welcome PRS cheque. There is the glossy *Performing Right Yearbook*, the *Performance Right News*, general information letters and blurb about candidates for the General Council (there are elections each year).

The computer print-out that follows each distribution gives a detailed breakdown – there is a separate code number or letter for every source of revenue, title by title. If one of your numbers has been played on, say, Mike Read's Radio 1 show in the period July to December 1980, it will turn up in April 1981 distribution with a letter A (for BBC radio) alongside it.

But what if it doesn't? A lot of the communication PRS has with its members is to sort out missing royalties from broadcasts. Mistakes often occur when programme details are logged incorrectly. In TV, for instance, the producer's assistant is required to fill in a programme-as-completed form which includes song titles, durations, composers and publishers. This may be made out in a hurry with mistakes and omissions – the producer isn't obliged to sign and verify it and the form is photocopied many times. One writer I know

discovered that several songs she had contributed to a programme went uncredited because the titles didn't show up in the photocopies. I've also seen local radio Programme-as-Broadcast (PAB) sheets full of misspelt and inconsistent details.

When these sheets reach the PRS they have to be translated or corrected and carefully re-written by hand so that someone can key the information into the computer. BBC radio information reaches the PRS (and MCPS and PPL) by way of a four-year-old computer tape system called Rapiet. When these tapes are put into the PRS computer only a tenth of the information matches up with PRS records. Spelling mistakes, 'noise words' (the, and, a, in, etc) in the wrong place and other discrepancies cause the other 90% of the titles to be spewed out on green cards which have to be sorted by hand. The 600 staff of the PRS are kept very busy with enormous amounts of tedious and repetitious work.

To check the accuracy of these returns the PRS has set up pilot schemes to monitor radio broadcasts. A commercial company called Sham Tracking has recently appeared to monitor Radio 1 and Capital for publishers and record companies.

Collecting and allocating royalties from live performance is an even more difficult and expensive business. Whereas roughly 8% of broadcast revenue is absorbed by administration costs, the live figure is nearer 40%. (The overall cost of administration is nearly 15%.) A 30-strong field force collect royalties from any venue that plays live or recorded music in public. Whether your song is played by an Irish showband, on a juke box, on a radio playing in a clothes store or by a folk group in a village hall, your rights are protected. The system of tariffs is detailed and complex and is negotiated with the Performing Right Tribunal to whom both PRS and PPL are answerable. At the present time the typical rock club or pub pays 2% of its total musical expenditure to the PRS.

To share all this money out the PRS use sampled programme returns, the largest BMRB sales charts, disco charts and any other relevant information they can find. If you are playing your music on a tour you can get a Programme Exemption Certificate. The titles performed are listed in one document with all the venues on the tour, so there is a lot less paperwork. Programme returns are theoretically the responsibility of promoters and tour operators, but it's in your interests to see they are filled in correctly and sent off. (BMI and ASCAP, the American societies, don't attempt to analyse live performance. All their distributions are based on radio plays, but of course there are a lot more radio stations in the States.)

The Jazz Centre Society has a policy of sending out a PRS programme form with each gig contract. Charles Alexander, administrator, told me that only about 30% of these are completed and returned to him and commented that 'a lot of musicians don't look after their own interests nearly enough'.

One feature which earns the PRS both detailed criticism and broad praise is the Society's policy of active discrimination between different classes of music. They attempt to collect and analyse programmes from as many 'serious' concerts as possible (although sampling is practised) and the amount distributed is heavily subsidised. Of the £430,000 paid out to serious composers last year, approximately £369,000 was drawn from

the rest of the live revenue.

The Broadcasting Point Award plan also favours particular writers. Longer works attract a higher rate than short pieces on the assumption that it is harder to write the former(!). This means that on a station where a one minute song is worth £1, a five minute song would earn £8 and a 32-minute epic £76.80. The whole plan is highly complex: for instance on TV, background music rates three-quarters the value of theme music and test card music only gets *one fiftieth*.

The points system for live music distinguishes between Class 1 – pop or dance music; Class 2 – including cabaret and show songs; Class 3 – light orchestral music and electronic music amongst others; and Class 4 – serious music. In the border areas of present-day music this can lead to bizarre results. A three minute work rates two points if Class 1, four points if in Class 2 or 3, and 12, 14 or 16 points (according to orchestration) if Class 4. Jazz, electronic music and 'classical' arrangements of pop songs can all confuse this system. The underlying assumption is that serious music is that which is performed at serious concerts and that these are rare occasions. In the 1980 Yearbook the PRS claim that serious music 'involves a far greater investment of time and labour on the part of their creators than most of the popular forms of music' and additional aid is given in the form of donations to festivals, music societies and the like.

Membership of the PRS is 'rocketing quietly' (Lesley Bray's words) and it is now more difficult to join than in recent years. Minimum requirements for a writer-member are three works which are obviously going to attract

royalties. This means you must have three songs which are definitely going to be played on the radio or TV, released on a record or be published by someone. The pleasant and helpful Anne Clark of Rough Trade Music said that she always encouraged her writers to join PRS. Anne pointed out that the three-song minimum requirement excluded songwriters who start out with a one-off single. They would have to convince the Society that another one would follow.

When you do finally join the PRS you must inform them of all your works likely to be broadcast, recorded or performed using the 'notification of works' forms. They also welcome any additional information which can help them in the mammoth task of sorting out all those titles and composers' names. It helps if you have an unusual name or middle name and keep them informed about changes of address and bank account and pseudonyms.

I'm told (by Neil Ardley and Ian Carr) that Gil Evans lost all the composition royalties he was due from *Miles Ahead* and *Sketches Of Spain* because he registered the titles under his real name of Ian Green. They went to another Ian Green, who refused to return them. Perhaps that anecdote belongs more properly in an article about the very different American royalty system. (However, MCPS once sent my royalties to another John Walters, who was honest enough to return them.)

Conclusions

The implications – political, legal and financial – of the PPL, MCPS and PRS are vast. I have collected a great many opinions and facts which I can't properly cover in this article. This

is for reasons of space, patience and (as a full-time composer and nascent publisher) subjectivity. My thanks to all the musicians and music people whose views and experiences I canvassed, and all the representatives of the three big organisations.

My own strongly-held view is that creative writers and musicians should keep a very close watch over their rights and protect their interests wherever possible. The smallest amounts involved can add up to make a crucial difference to your survival as a writer, band or independent label. If I can draw any useful conclusions from this piece they must be:

1 Process your information well! (Make sure all is accurate.)

2 Be vigilant – make sure you get all the royalties due to you.

One thorny area which demands closer investigation is the question of who creates and owns a copyright. The composer's rights are well-protected by the Performing Right Society – in Pete Atkin's words 'a shining example of what co-operative effort can do' – but performers have no such organisation. The *sound recording right*, as we have seen, is the property of the record companies, administered by the PPL.

I hope that the wider issues can be observed and discussed from all directions. Tony Haynes, currently completing a mammoth work (*Music In Between*) on the creative musician in the UK, suggests that a new organisation might be necessary to represent the interests of both performers and writers. If there are to be any changes in the Law it is certainly important that the views of all those who create copyright material are taken into account. ■

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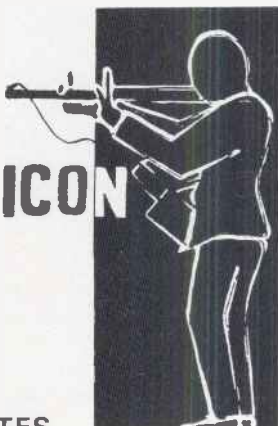
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CHAS JANKEL



**A Blockhead goes straight,
exchanges an 'S' for a 'Z'
and strides down his own Corrida of Power.
Ralph Denyer presses the buttons
and taps the keys.**

When I arrived at Chas Jankel's new recording studio at 2.30 on a Monday afternoon I was greeted by ex-Blockheads soundman Chris Warwick who left Ian Dury's band to work with Chas. Chas, of course, has built up a formidable reputation for his work as the Blockheads MD and arranger, as well as writing the tunes for most of Ian's songs.

Chris informed me that 'Janx' was in the boozier and would return soon – probably, that is. The studio is in a light industrial area of London and is surrounded by small manufacturing companies of one kind and another. It's been unpretentiously put together by Chas, his

engineer Philip Bagnall and Chris Warwick. Chris also played percussion on Chas's new album, as well as being one of the co-producers along with Pete Van Hook and Mark Isham.

Chas returned from the pub and sat down at his brand new Steinway grand while a couple of people shot off a few frames. He confessed to already being quite merry, while performing a cabaret version of *You Are The Sunshine Of My Life* and then giving a demonstration of how he had at one time tried to get the Blockheads to all dress up as rabbis and go on *Top Of The Pops* singing *Vot A Vaste*, throwing their hands in the air at

the end of each line.

He's virtually had to mortgage an arm and a leg to set up his own – not for hire – 24-track studio. Philip, Chris and Chas are in seventh heaven at the moment. They've created their own recording environment tailored to Chas's needs and they are ecstatic about the venture and the future.

Philip and Chris have obviously been most instrumental in getting the studio together. Their efforts and willingness to busk have helped Chas to set up a studio at a much lower cost than if he had employed acoustic engineers and all the rest. I started off by asking Chas to explain how he had come to organise his own studio.

'I met Philip when I was doing the last demo session for *New Boots And Panties*. He built his own mixer to go with his Teac tape recorder which he had in the basement of a friend's house in Bermondsey. We had a mutual friend who also knew Ian Dury. So we went down there to demo the material for *New Boots And Panties* with Norman Watt-Roy and Charlie Charles. That was when I first met Philip.

'Every now and again I'd leave Ian to get on with it, working on my own material which was predominantly instrumental compared with the stuff I'd been doing with Ian. On occasions when I wanted to record material with various friends I would phone up Philip who would come round and engineer for me at my house, or we'd do it at his friend's basement flat. So we'd make these little recordings and I seem to remember doing eight tracks with Philip and a couple of friends and putting them on a cassette to send to Ian to see if he wanted to use any. Nothing really happened except that he put *In-betweenies* to one of the tunes.

'I went back to Ian and then I later left him again. I wanted a bit of a break after that – round about August '79 – so I left Dury. I said I wasn't going to perform with him for the time being. I went off on my own to San Francisco for a holiday.

'When I got back I felt the need to do some recording. I just felt inspired to write some music. I had a Teac but I'm a hopeless engineer so I called Philip. I find it difficult to engineer, I'm not technically oriented in any way. When it comes to recording music I tend to work best at a distance with regard to recording techniques. So Philip – with whom I get on like a house on fire – came round with his headphones and mixer and recorded it for me. It was obvious that we enjoyed working together, but we were reaching a point at which 4-track was becoming difficult to work on. Because of having a lot of overdubs we had to mix down at a very early stage and it was going to be difficult.'

Was Chas beginning to think in terms of an album at that point, or was he still

All pictures Ralph Denyer



just working on musical ideas? 'We were trying to look just a bit further ahead than we had been doing before. Philip mentioned getting an 8-track recorder and the conversation went from there to 16-track. I don't know who really popped the question of 24-track but eventually I thought: Why not?'

'Philip – who is very logical – said what would have to be done. We put our heads together and I realised that if I was to use the money I'd earned with Ian Dury, get a loan from my bank, get a record contract and use the money I would get from the advance, I could put that money into a studio.'

So the first problem in setting up the studio was solved, Chas had the financial side organised. Philip is an architect by profession and so he set out to find a suitable building. His wife was pregnant and to avoid too much upheaval, Chas agreed to move down to the Holland Park area from a house in Pinner. Philip had spotted an ad for 1,000 square feet of light industrial floorspace in Kensal Road, just off Lad-broke Grove, and when Chas saw it he was immediately sold on the place.

'I came down and loved it, I thought it had a great ambience. It is a Victorian building which had been used for storage. I like the place which has a foot in yesteryear but at the same time has great potential.'

Though Chas had a good selection of keyboards, as he said, his only piece of recording equipment was his Teac 4-track, so off they went to a recording equipment trade fair to see what was currently available.

'We were throwing ideas around but it turned out that we could get a discount if we got a package deal of the Trident desk

and Otari tape machine. We had a budget and we were not setting out to put together a commercial studio. It was a studio for us to use as a private enterprise, but to have potential to be a commercial studio at a later date. When Philip and I went to the trade show the Trident desk had just come out and had facilities that others didn't.'

The Trident *Series 80* desk and the Otari *MTR 90* 24-track recorder set Chas back somewhere in the region of £30,000. Though the equipment may not offer the ultimate in hi-tech, it does have ample facilities for Janke's requirements. When the lease for the studio was signed in April '80, Philip set about mobilising his friends into a cheap workforce.

Chas continued, 'While Philip started to get the studio together I recorded *Ai No Corrida* at the Townhouse. We signed the lease on April 1st, so that was when it all started.' In between sessions at the Townhouse, Chas kept calling in at the new studio to 'tell jokes and make tea', and generally to try to look as if he knew what was going on. He freely admits that he had not previously thought about having his own studio and knew little about recording equipment when they started to organise the studio.

'*Ai No Corrida* turned out to be a bit of a marathon job because a lot of work went into it. By the time the track was finished I was able to start work in this studio and did the rest of the album here. We had a deadline to get the album out for an October release date. So I had about three-and-a-half to four months to make the album. We played back one of the tapes I'd recorded at the Townhouse in our control room as a test. Firstly we tried with Tannoy monitors which were fantastic in the soft areas. They responded beautifully to piano and strings. A very wholesome rich sound.

'Then we tried the same tape through JBLs and they pushed out the middle (frequencies) and really emphasised anything that was hard, like a snare drum. The JBLs would actually throw it out. I think Philip had always been a Tannoy man but I think he realised that for the types of music we are likely to be involved in, JBLs would be much better because they are a much harder speaker. The Tannoys didn't have the attack in the middle area that I wanted. I've got Tannoys at home so I can make comparisons with them to a degree. I suppose monitors are about the most important thing in a recording studio. I think every speaker has its own idiosyncracies and will never sound as good as when your ears hear the sound while you are in the studio actually playing and performing music. Though I do find that the JBLs have to be winched up pretty loud before they start sounding good.'

On the electronic keyboard side of things, Chas's first buy was his Wurlitzer electric piano. 'Three years ago, when I joined Mr Ian Dury (in the last Kilburn and

The High Roads line-up), I got my gig as a result of buying my Wurlitzer piano from Maurice Placquet in Shepherd's Bush. I had a couple of gigs at the time which aren't really worth mentioning. I got quite friendly with the manager of the shop, Mike King, and gave him my number in case any gigs came up. He called me to say Ed Speight of the Kilburns was looking for a keyboard player and to give him a call.

'I did, and he asked me down to The Nashville the following night to hear Ian and the band. I was amazed by Ian and the rest of them and the next day I was asked along to a rehearsal. I went along armed with my Wurlitzer which was all I had at the time in the way of keyboards and got the gig, which was quite a surprise. And that's when my electronic keyboards began, all I had before that was the Spencer upright piano over there.

'Before that I had electric guitars. I started playing guitar first when I was seven. Then I ambled over to the piano in my parents' house a couple of years later. So for me, keyboards and guitar have always been inter-related. The only difference is that you play them in different ways. But it is useful to use one to bounce ideas off the other.

'Anyway, the Wurlitzer was my first keyboard. So then it had always been a desire of mine to have a Fender Rhodes which is one up from the Wurlitzer. When I was in New York with Ian I tried out the one I've got here and was knocked out. So I had it freighted over.'

Was that because of the price being much keener in America? 'Yeah, that was the reason but it is worked out not to be as cheap as I thought by the time I paid freight, VAT and all that. So then I had two different keyboards and suddenly realised that the actual instrument that you use would give the inspiration as much as me – the musician – having the idea first. If I had an idea and sat down at the Wurlitzer to work on it, it would sound like a Wurlitzer piece compared with sitting down at the Rhodes.'

So logically, if Chas started to write a song on guitar and then finished it off at a keyboard, the piece could be totally different than if it was composed completely on guitar? 'Totally. I think that is why Keith Jarrett tends to play solo piano pieces on a grand piano. He uses that medium to manifest the ideas he has. He makes the piano develop his personality. So I think that is why I got into these keyboards.'

For his final tour as a Blockhead in '79 Chas got himself a Polymoog which he then traded in for an Oberheim OBX. But soon, he was finding the limitations of a two-oscillator synthesiser. 'We needed something stronger. As we were going to be creating music ourselves here we needed something to give more permutations and variety of sound. So we got hold of a 4-voice Oberheim and then an 8-voice Oberheim. We wanted to be able to



Chas, as he now is, in ivory contact

create most of the music ourselves and the 8-voice has so many permutations that we could create our own sound rather than have to work with factory preset sounds.'

Thanks to a bit of good reconnaissance on the part of Chris Warwick, they were able to buy a handsome C3 Hammond organ which Pete Townshend had been sniffing at in a shop. It is complemented by one valve Leslie speaker and one JBL Leslie. Various additional gadgets through which the keyboards go include a Boss Chorus pedal, various Oberheim pedals and digital sequencers. As Chas mentioned, his Spencer upright piano is now in the studio along with a magnificent brand-new Steinway grand piano.

Around 68/69 Chas bought his Gibson 330 from Orange Music for the sum of £110. He changed one of the two single-pole pickups for a humbucker and used the instrument for quite a few years. 'Then I got a Gibson 335 for things that I wanted a harder sound on. The 330 had a pretty unique sound but didn't have the hard rhythm sound I thought I'd need for the work I was doing.'

Chas has a Yamaha acoustic guitar which he used for the track *Lenta Latina* on his album. At the moment he keeps it in a D tuning which he devised for himself. The tuning is: sixth string tuned to D (one tone below usual bottom E), fifth string tuned to D one octave above the sixth string, fourth string tuned to F#, third string tuned to A, second string tuned to D and the first string tuned to F#.

'I just fell on the tuning. I was living in a flat in Highgate and getting pretty stoned and one night I found this tuning with which I got some incredible chord shapes that made the guitar sound like a whole band and it's very inspiring. As a result I composed three or four different pieces and one of them was *Lenta Latina*.'

The fact that Chas has a love for South American music has in the past been just as well publicised as his tendency to leave the Blockheads from time to time. I and others understood from Cosmo Vinyl (Dury/Blockheads manager and mentor) that Chas's absenteeism from the band was the result of his trips down Mexico way. When I asked Chas about the visits there was a brief silence before he said, 'Well, I've never been. That's auto-suggestion, I've realised in my life that if someone says Coca-Cola then I get thirsty. South America was just a thought of mine but I mentioned it, once, and looked quite serious while I was saying it. I didn't laugh at the end and everyone thought: Fuck me, he's going to South America! I have got an invitation to go for Christmas.'

When I told Chas I'd come along expecting to have a long discussion on the finer points of South American music he said, 'No, I'm not a weirdo.' Just a bit strange? 'Yes, but I'm not a piss artist.' Chas demolished another glass of wine and had a chuckle.

So he didn't want to talk about South



Chas, as he was, in *Riot In Cell Block No. 9* gear, fills in behind Mr Dury on *Do It Yourself* tour.

American music? 'Yeah, I'll talk about South American music. I don't know much about it, actually. All I know is that it has various rhythms and stories to tell. I think a lot of it comes about as a result of South American people's intuitive feel for happiness which is an instinct that we all have which can be used as a sort of discipline. A higher awareness, as it were. What is to people in the western world a sort of concept. But it's not really, it's just the way they know. They've had oppression just like Europe has. Salsa is a music of the people. From what I've heard it was an outlaw peasant's music, anyone that wasn't hierarchy.'

Ian always had his foot coming down on the four, whether it was Louisiana or uptown funk

Chas was reluctant to talk too much about his previous songwriting partner. When he left the Blockheads the cry went out 'DURY AND JANKEL IN SPLIT SHOCK HORROR DRAMA'. But in truth, Jankel had just reached the point where he wanted to write and get his own music together and stretch out. He certainly is totally open to the idea of writing with Ian again at some point. Wilko Johnson has, for the time being, replaced Chas in the band. The critical response to the Dury/Blockheads single *I Wanna Be Straight* was a virtually unanimous thumbs-down. The record lacked the musical undercurrents of Jankel's writing and playing which had been part of Dury's 'vision'. Though Chas plays it down all the time, his contribution to the songs they wrote together was formidable.

As I tried to ease the interview in the direction of discussion of the songwriting partnership, Chas's response was, 'Oh no,

I've been dreading this.' His attitude was understandable. After interviewing Chas, one pop journalist took the precaution of phoning Dury - against Chas's expressed wishes - and tagging Ian's comments on to the end of the Jankel interview. My interest in discussing the union was the result of being highly impressed by the oddball combination of Dury's potent cockney lyrics and social comment with Jankel's jazz/soul/funk/rock musical backdrops.

As far as Chas is concerned, he'd prefer to get away from being tagged as the man who writes the tunes for Ian Dury's songs. For the rest of the interview I did my best to get him to talk about his songwriting with Ian while he did his best not to. Highlights from that verbal fencing match follow. I should mention that by this time Chas was swaying gently from side to side and I was catching up with him in terms of liquid content. Chas had to contend with less than concise questioning.

Ian does very little in the way of writing music. As Chas had been the keyboard player in the last Kilburn And The High Roads he was a natural choice as a songwriting partner for Ian. So it was that they started work on *New Boots And Panties*. 'Ian had his flat in Vauxhall at the time and I would go up there. I think I left my Wurlitzer in his front room by his desk. I had a guitar there and I was working out tunes for his words. Ian would work out his lyrics at his desk. I would have ideas for the rhythm section which wasn't really a worry because Ian always had his foot coming down on the four. Whether it was Louisiana or uptown funk, he was a lyricist involved with the metre of 4/4 which was something we'd both been very much involved in.

'But, more specifically, at that time we were involved in finding music for his songs. That was what drew us together. We both had an involvement in rhythm,



music and expression. So we combined by Ian giving me a lyric and then I would present him with the appropriate music. I would play guitar and we would both hear the kind of things that would go with it because it was so obvious with things like *Blockheads* and *Sweet Gene Vincent*. All you have to do is bang your foot on the floor and you get a beat. Add a drum kit and a bass and you have your rhythm section. I don't mean to be glib, but that is where it's coming from. The rhythm section and the chords are the middle area. The vocals, back-up harmonies and other little bits, that's the top. So we were quite clear on what we were going for. Looking back on that album I think we overdid it a bit on the rhythm section. We could have done with a little more orchestration.

'I saw Ian as the spearhead of the thing. Also it was Ian's gig right from the beginning and I was on the periphery. Not periphery, I was close to him, but he was the one who had to go and stand out front. I'd always realised that the vocalist is the person that people watch and music is something that people feel in a sensory way.'

I told Chas that when I interviewed Norman Watt-Roy and Charlie Charles as the Blockheads rhythm section (*SI* Oct '79) they had said that when they ran through the numbers for *New Boots And Panties* for the first time as a quartet they

found the experience weird and exciting at the same time. They knew something good was happening but they couldn't quite put their finger on it.

'That's a far more interesting question. Surely it is the same in a lot of situations. Maybe the chemistry was the combination of people. Norman and Charlie were a very alive rhythm section and were open to influences. Ian and I were a couple of guys who were also open to a lot of influences and we were looking for a rhythm section.'

'I play instruments not in a technical way but more with feeling.'

Chas discourages any talk of the partnership being – for want of a better word – magical. 'I think it was to do with the awareness between us and the time. He is about 10 years older than me and so he has lived on this planet for 10 years more than me. He's a very perceptive guy who is full of his own neurosis like I am. I think that magic can exist between any two people, it is only possible to talk to one person at a time.'

I mentioned to Chas that I had found the same thing inasmuch as two close

friends of mine live in the same house but I quite often find it better to see them at separate times. 'Exactly, I'm a believer in that. You're the first person who has actually replied to that thought of mine. I think it is true to a certain extent, you tend to make friends as a result of being one-to-one rather than being in a party atmosphere. I think that relationships can exist with anyone, but Ian wanted to make an album and he got me into that vibe so that we were concentrating on making a great album. So when you talk about magic, that is all it was. There was no black magic or white magic.'

I am pleased to report that at the time of the interview Chas was back in touch with Ian and I would not be at all surprised to hear some new Dury/Jankel compositions at some time in the future. But Chas is quite adamant about having to break away and work on his own music. 'I did an intuitive thing by leaving which is actually going to help everybody. OK, there was a bit of ego involved. Whatever it was that made me set up an operation that was outside everything that was happening already, was good.'

'I'm a pretty odd sort of guy because I basically work off my instincts. I don't have a lot of technical skill. I play instruments not in a technical way but more with feeling, going on my instincts. So when all is said and done, I don't know if what I am doing is right.' ■

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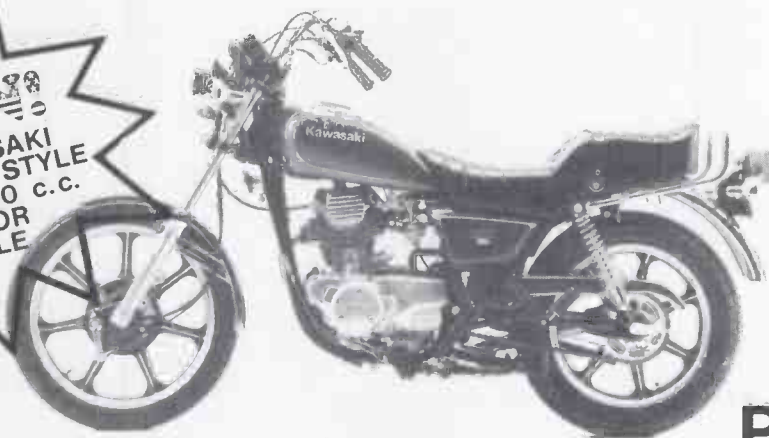
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Here are two tenets of conventional music business wisdom:

- 1 Touring is needed to promote records.
- 2 Records are needed to underwrite touring.

The background to the first proposition is the empirically established fact that the appearance of the artist sells records; television most of all, radio next and live performance thirdly. Since the politics of television and radio are complex and for most artists insuperable, live performances are the most readily available form of promotion.

However, there are drawbacks to touring: with the exception of an *élite* (and often among the *élite*) it loses money. At the time that King Crimson ceased to exist (last gig July 1st 1974) the average cost of one gig in America was \$5000. This covered the wages of road managers, hotel bills and travel, light and pa hire and equipment maintenance. The average income from playing to audiences of 2000-3000 a night was \$5000. Only one King Crimson tour made money: the *Earthbound* tour of America in the Spring of 1972. This tour was conducted in the knowledge that the group would disband afterwards and consequently booked in a way which catered little for a group maintaining its self-respect: in a word, cheaply. Because this was logistically an intermediate-level tour it earned each musician \$3000 for three months work. This is the only King Crimson tour which made a profit.

The provision of music is expensive.

Current figures for a band at the same level, ie four musicians playing in theatres of 2/3000 people, are a cost per date of \$10,000-\$12,000 with an income of \$8000-\$10,000. This means a successful group with a sell-out five week tour of America would consider their tour a triumph if it lost \$50,000 and a success if it lost \$100,000.

Should any reader consider this elliptical logic the product of irrationality cultivated by having my brain scraped along the roads of two continents over a period of eleven years, I write from having access to hard information near to home. Where the personal conceits of the artists exceed the excessive it is even possible to lose \$2 million on a three-month tour (information one step from home). Whereas costs to modest performers have more than doubled since 1975 (notably in travel), ticket prices have not inflated proportionately while concert-going has fallen.

The shortfall was met in the early 1970s by the artist from record advances; ie from record sales presumed to be about-to-be generated by the promotional aspect of touring. The real income of the artist was considered to be writing royalties. In the second half of the Seventies, with increasing road losses but increasing record sales, record companies were approached for tour support, a form of advance which was not recuperable from record sales itself (although taken into account as part of the overall terms of contract). This meant that if Megabucks Records wanted an artist to tour and move product it would have to at least contribute to the cost of that promotion. The current position is that record companies are increasingly wary of tour support commitments, especially those made two years ago when the paralytically obvious changes needed within the industry could be seen by anyone except executives within the industry. For their part, successful artists, whose record sales might seem to be guaranteed, often refuse to tour except when minimum tour (promotion) requirements have been made contractually, a recent example

Robert Fripp has been back on the boards with the
He follows last month's diary of events with an
at the principles behind touring, with passing
the Great War and the Industrial

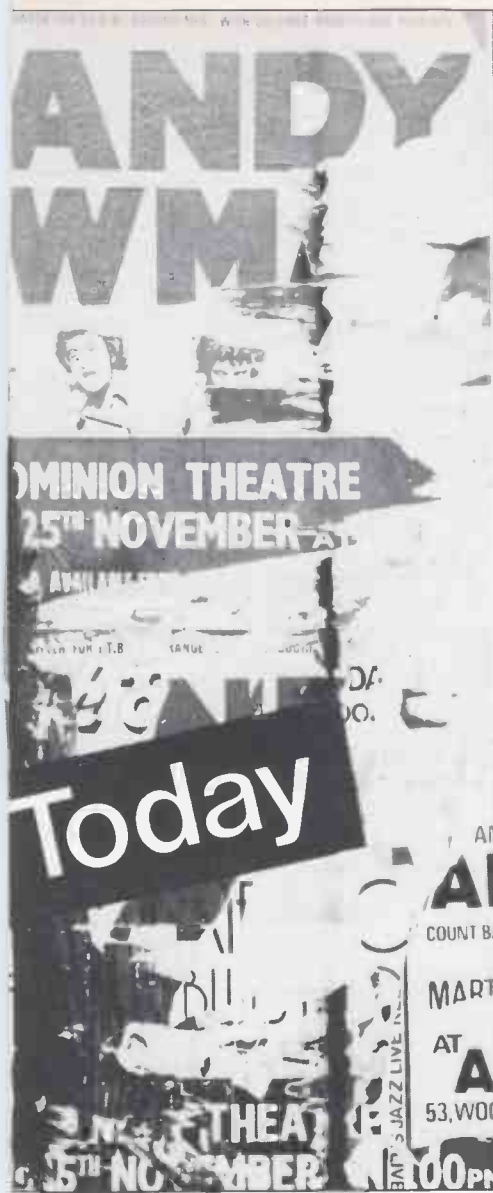
being Pink Floyd. To this question of artist reluctance to tour we will shortly return.

There is clearly, then, a connection between touring and recording. It could be added that this connection is reinforced by the media tending to support performers more when a tour is organised around a record: there is a 'peg' on which to hang an article. But the obvious implication to me seems to be missed: if, as conventionally assumed, touring is to support records and records to support touring, any intrinsic value in either recording or performing is obviated.

During the period of time I have spent on the road, the most obvious assumption shared by virtually all Big Movers is that touring is a wholly wretched affair. The only three exceptions which spring to mind as supporters of the road lifestyle were all desperately busy avoiding a quiet moment in which they would have to be with themselves. It is difficult to convey to anyone who has not experienced the strain involved in touring for, say, a continuous period of two years how dangerous the process can be: 28 airports in 31 days, yet another hotel

in a depressing industrial city, poor diet, incessant emotional, mental and physical exhaustion with only one's will as driving force; no continuity other than pressure, impermanence and movement. What can be a remarkable education in moderation becomes crippling, sometimes permanently and occasionally with finality. In this state the artist becomes prone to manipulation. The obvious resorts to chemical enthusiasm and alcohol may be taken advantage of by the more calculating; I have seen a Big Dealer involved in group affairs pulling out a polythene bag to tickle the other musicians while with a look of resignation in my direction give up trying to find the particular string to make me jump.

Touring, as generally conceived and executed by the industry, places greater strains upon the performer implementing that conception than can honourably be borne. The physical, mental and emotional fatigue in the touring musician is a major contributing factor to the control of artists by the industry and the psychological distortion evident in so many artists: rock'n'roll keeps you young and kills



Pic Roger Phillips

League of Gentlemen. in-depth look reference to Revolution

you early.

There are three major assumptions I have seen quite clearly for myself to be held by the bureaucracy responsible for shaping tours:

- 1 Tours will lose money.
- 2 The only possible satisfaction is from sex, drugs and alcohol.
- 3 Touring, like war to General Sherman, is hell.

I have further noticed that people who hold these assumptions about touring will arrange tours that:

- 1 Lose money.
- 2 Only provide satisfaction from sex, drugs and alcohol.
- 3 Are hell.

Yet the pressures in the field are rarely experienced by the bureaucracy, rather like the Allied Generals during the Great War sending their own troops to drown in mud. The psychological principle that nothing is really understood unless experienced by the organisation holds true. There are few managers, agents or record personnel who commit themselves to perceiving the full results of their labour alongside the artist. Generally, one can

expect an appearance at a capital city, although the choice visitor might well be staying in a more luxurious hotel than the group. And, of course, business arises elsewhere when secondary markets appear, perhaps even requiring a three-month absence during a particularly pressured three-month tour.

I have toured for two months staying in hotels of a class I could not afford, and specifically asked to avoid, so that a record person accompanying me for one week would be comfortable. Going on the road with the artist can be fun for a few days, especially when business demands expensive dining. When I complained that the recent League Of Gentlemen tour was wretched, a close personal and professional acquaintance replied that it was no worse than any other tour I had done. Presumably, one should not scream from the rack if one has been tortured before. And my complaints were described as 'irrational'.

So why would one tour? Simply, for the reasons anyone might work. I suggest:

- 1 To earn a living.
- 2 To grow as a human being: ie the process is a continuous education.
- 3 To enjoy the intrinsic qualities of one's work.

And one could add a fourth, from Schumacher:

- 4 To integrate oneself socially.

The industry reflects values which have become concretised in its structure and taken overall restrict the possibilities for creative work. For the creative musician to function within the music industry their actions will inevitably be political since, in order to work, creative musicians will necessarily try to change the industry simply that they may express themselves essentially. As T S Eliot wrote of the poet: 'Being incapable of altering his wares to suit a prevailing taste... he naturally desires a state of society in which they may become popular, and in which his own talents will be put to the best use.' And then: 'He is accordingly vitally interested in the use of poetry.' There are three parts to this:

- 1 Seeing the need for change.
- 2 Wishing to participate in that process.
- 3 Believing that participation can have effect.

This participation involves three levels of operation:

- 1 Changing the structure of the industry.
- 2 Changing the value system which gives rise to the structure.
- 3 Reciprocating with and influencing other forms of industry beside the musical, and in a wider context than the market place.

Taking these in more detail:

1 Changing the structure of the industry.

Organisation in large units brings about authoritarian control. The authoritarian personality is fixed and unresponsive to change. Therefore, the kind of personality drawn to a large organisation will be exactly the kind of person who will kill it in a time of change by failing to adapt.

The growth of large scale organisation is a result of the aim of maximum profitability; that is, pursuing economies gained by a large level of operation. Traditional economics would attribute this to economies in the use of factors of production (such as division of labour, geographical concentration and self-financing), in administration and management, in marketing (buying, selling and distribution), and in research (although British industry's Research and Development is notoriously and

chronically feeble). Growth of large units has been facilitated by a colossal increase in demand for material things during the last 150 years, the development of the limited company (restricting the personal liability of shareholders in the face of a company's demise to the extent of their shareholding) and the growth of cheap transport.

The last is a critical point: large scale units or organisations in our society are based on cheap energy. The Industrial Revolution in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries was powered by cheap coal in factories and trains, the railway boom of the 1850s providing the 'take-off' point of irreversible industrialisation, in Rostow's terminology. Coal also fuelled the strong right arm of British industry: the Royal Navy. In the 20th century large units have been powered by cheap oil and rely extensively on a wide range of petroleum by-products, such as vinyl for records. Even assuming the continued supply of oil, its expense effectively undermines the structural base of large scale industry, the continuation of which is made unlikely.

The replacement of large-scale industry by an alternative is vital. Because of inertia in the system, traditional industry will not collapse immediately and in the transitional period should be persuaded by argument, example and co-operation to increasingly divert resources under its control to a second-level tier of industry while this is still feasible and before certain possibilities evaporate: eg the closure of a coal mine is a final event: the mine cannot be re-opened. My personal sense of timetable is that this second level of operation should be established by the end of 1981, consolidated by the end of 1984 and fully functional by 1987, while the years 1987 to 1990 will be characterised by the honourable burial of dinosaurs with all rites pertinent to their station.

As I have written elsewhere (on a record label, actually), the future unit of organisation is the small, mobile and intelligent unit where intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive rightness, mobility the capacity to act on that perception and small the necessary condition for that action in a contracting world. The function of the small, mobile and intelligent unit in the 1980s is to drop in and form an intra-culture rather than, as in the 1960s, to drop out and create a sub-culture (although I doubt if it is possible to remain outside a social process in any real way).

Given that changing the structure of the music industry is political, the most effective politics are the politics of impartiality. The phenomenon of Inductive Resonance indicates that 'whenever one group of components in a system deviates from its standard course, the rest automatically change course so as to counteract the distortion of the pattern of the whole' (Laszlo from Weiss). It follows that 'a system composed of independently stable sub-systems can withstand perturbations to a significantly higher degree than systems built directly from their components'.

Earlier this year I attended Zigzag magazine's party, having been invited to play *Sister Morphine* with Marianne Faithfull, who couldn't make the show because she was busy at Shepperton, and *The Lord's Prayer* with Siouxsie and the Banshees, but Siouxsie had laryngitis. A solo singer accompanying himself on guitar was performing a piece reflecting his recent *contretemps* with the Special Patrol Group. His song made frequent reference to



the words: 'Kill! Kill! Kill! the S.P.G.', declaimed with considerable enthusiasm. It seemed to me that he was trying to establish the principle that to kill whomsoever one sees as a non-congruent element of the larger social system is permissible. If this principle were to be accepted by the social organism no doubt the SPG would also embrace it: in which case the singer would be at a considerable disadvantage when settlement came between the two sub-systems.

Several points were raised by this:

- i) The elimination of either of the two parties would be at least an inefficient use of resources.
- ii) Force breeds an (at least) equal reaction and on a practical level is therefore ineffective, ethical considerations aside.
- iii) Impartiality is a higher level of operation and therefore an inherently more stable state than prejudice. Can one work with people one personally dislikes, or whose values seem contradictory and offensive, in the service of a common aim? A subtle problem I found on the recent League Of Gentlemen tour was that one rarely deals with big, nasty, horrible villains who are obviously the baddies (although I met some!) but often with pleasant people who are one's friends and with whom one has worked for several years, but who have different aims and aspirations.

So, the key to hierarchical functioning is impartiality. Impartiality contains more possibilities for interaction: *ie* one has more freedom. As a more stable state it can order an inherently less stable system by involvement: *ie* more stable systems cohere, where order is defined as that impartial action required to give any unit of organisation coherence. This definition of 'order' is in contradistinction to the 'order' which accompanies 'law', where law is the refuge of a privileged *élite* and order the force required to maintain that privilege.

2 Changing the value system which gives rise to the structure. An appropriately sized unit of organisation may not have a 'better' ethical system: one can be a small bread-head as well as a large bread-head. But greed, which is neither mobile nor intelligent, is becoming unrealistic and impracticable.

Politics are increasingly determined by economics, economics increasingly determined by technology and technology increasingly determined by energy efficiency. Efficiency defines a relationship between input and output. The relationship between input and output implies a definition of aim which, historically, has been maximum profitability. The only possible aim during the 1980s can be survival. This aim, which runs counter to the plans of Megabuck International, demands an alternative social metric to the dollar. If the quality of life is assessed in monetary terms, the quality of life comes to be determined by quantitative measurement. Stafford Beer has 'come to see money as a constraint on the behaviour of eudemonic systems, rather than to see eudemony as a by-product of monetary systems'. In other words, by measuring the greatest happiness of the greatest number in terms of money we equate greater happiness with greater money, ignoring the 'social net cost' of narrowly defined economic activity.

3 Reciprocating with and influencing other forms of industry beside the musical, and in a wider context than the market place. Action is substantially governed by the quality of information. Since Norbert Weiner, information is considered

negentropic, *ie* it counters entropy. In trying to find a formula to express information content in a system Weiner found the exact negative of the formula for entropy in structural mechanics. Therefore, 'although entropy inexorably tends to increase, that tendency is barred by injections of information' (Beer). This moves against the Second Law Of Thermodynamics, the 'entropy law', which sees heat moving from hot to cold objects resulting in the eventual 'heat death' of the universe. Information theory, then, implies that

Mobile Units

- i) 1 One can work within any structure
 - ii) 2 Once one can work within any structure, some structures are more efficient than others
 - iii) 3 There is no one structure which is universally appropriate
 - iv) 4 Commitment to an aim within an inappropriate structure will give rise to the creation of an appropriate structure.
 - v) 5 Apathy, *ie* passive commitment, within an appropriate structure will effect its collapse
 - vi) 6 Dogmatic attachment to the supposed merits of a particular structure hinders the search for an appropriate structure
 - vii) 7 There will be difficulty defining the appropriate structure because it will always be mobile, *ie* in process
- II
- i) 8 There should be no difficulty in defining aim
 - ii) 9 The appropriate structure will recognise structures outside itself
 - iii) 10 The appropriate structure can work within any large structure
 - iv) 11 Once the appropriate structure can work within any large structure, some larger structures are more efficient than others
 - v) 12 There is no larger structure which is universally appropriate
 - vi) 13 Commitment to an aim by an appropriate structure within a larger, inappropriate structure will give rise to a larger, appropriate structure
 - vii) 14 The quantitative structure is affected by qualitative action
- III
- i) 15 Qualitative action is not bound by number
 - ii) 16 Any small unit committed to qualitative action can affect radical change on a scale outside its quantitative measure
 - iii) 17 Quantitative action works by violence and breeds reaction
 - iv) 18 Qualitative action works by example and invites reciprocation
 - v) 19 Reciprocation between independent structures is a framework of interacting units which is itself a structure
 - vi) 20 Any appropriate structure of interacting units can work within any other structure of interacting units
 - vii) 21 Once this is so, some structures of interacting units are more efficient than others

information contains an energy, analogously 'heat'.

An idea is a piece of quality information; it contains energy and can have a life of its own. This idea might be a musical idea. Music is a high-order language system; *ie* it is a meta-language. The function of a meta-language is to express solutions to problems posed in a lower-order language system. To find a solution in the same terms (language) in which a problem is posed is to put the solution on the same level as the problem; *ie* to deny the possibility of any novel or creative element entering the formulation. Simply, any solution requires a higher order of language than that

of the problem. In Schumacher's sense, this is divergent as opposed to convergent reasoning.

If one accepts that music is a high-order language system, it follows that music can be negentropic and problem-solving. The function of the musician in this sense, then, is to convey high-quality information; *ie* the musician is a source of negentropy. This does not have to be complicated. John Heilpern, travelling with the Peter Brook troupe in North Africa, came across some remarkable players: the Peulh. 'The Peulh music showed us that a universal language might be as simple as one note repeated many, many times. But you must discover the right note first.' To discover this note most musicians require a discipline to reduce 'noise', or superfluous notes, and increase 'signal', the essential music. To be open to ideas, *ie* to be able to use the energy of musical 'information', while playing is the aim of all improvisation: this is active performance. A mime in ancient Greece named Memphis was said by Athenaeus to convey in a brief dance faultlessly the whole essence of Pythagorean doctrine, although Memphis did not necessarily understand it.

Jean Renoir grew to doubt whether the cinema could prevent war. My feeling is that through music an alternative structure can be built on the inside, regardless of outer forms of politicalisation. Handel, Bach, Mozart, Verdi and many more lesser figures in music, quite apart from Shakespeare, became adept at working in (for us) very difficult political and economic conditions, quite apart from rigid conventions and musical taste. Surely the most surprising point is how much inspired work had prosaic origins. By creating an industry structure which facilitates the growth of musicians as human beings they become more productive in a real way and acquire a measure of independence, independence defined as the capacity to work with others. Larger changes in social and political organisation inevitably follow from this: 'The new technologies will be in the image of the system that brings them forth, and they will reinforce the system' (Schumacher).

There was a popular idea in the 1960s that rock music could change the world. This evaporated along with hippies, kaftans and beads during the 1970s as it became increasingly apparent that rock music could also underwrite the conventional wisdom of the music industry. It is my conviction in 1980 that rock can, in fact, change the world, but as part of an overall action and not in any way which we might expect. The 'new world' may well be the 'old world' but with a subtle difference involving not much more than a change in perception.

Is it reasonable to suggest that a qualitative shift in the world can be made possible by the quality of music? 'Any communication process, once initiated and maintained, leads to the genesis of social structure - whether or not such structure is anticipated or deemed desirable' (Klaus Krippendorf). 'The "style of life" is today one of the most positive forms of revolutionary action' (Jacques Ellul, writing in 1948).

If one were interested in political change one would not enter political life, one would go into music. Since the first aim of any system is to perpetuate itself, the professional politician would tend to perpetuate rather than solve political problems. The self-interest of the professional musician, on the other hand, lies in perpetuating music. ■

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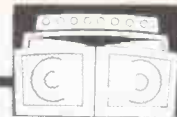
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Trouble with your PA? Not got a PA? Never heard of PA? Hired a PA and it's blown up? Whatever your station in life, catch a train with Ben Duncan's new series, and find out what those big black things at the side of the stage do.

Musicians depend on 'the PA' to communicate with their audience. Yet some musicians will invest heavily in instruments which will provide a certain 'sound', while neglecting the equipment which will transmit every nuance of their music to their audience. The basic aim of any PA rig is to put across complex and subtly textured sound to your listeners. It must be loud, it must be clean and it must be realistic, regardless of whether you do it in a big reverberant hall, a claustrophobic club or a muddy field. And you have to be able to carry it around! However, rock sound systems are like no other, for they border on being much more than a mere means of reproduction. In some cases, the PA becomes an extension of the musician's own body in the same way as a Gibson or a Hammond – or it may become a giant musical instrument in its own right in sympathetic hands.

'The PA' is never perfect and the knack is to arrange for the deficiencies in the system to empathise with the music.

Essences

Much rock exudes a sensation of power, majesty and passion. This derives primarily from loudness – high sound pressure levels (SPLs). Generally, loudness (SPL) doubles each time the system's power is increased *tenfold*. So 1kW is only twice as loud as 100watts, and paying a lot of money for a 2kW PA won't usually result in an audible increase in SPL over 1kW.

Other things being equal, you'd need 3½kW to produce even a *subtle* increase in level. In any case, just as important is the efficiency of the rig and whether it is passively crossed-over or tri-amplified, amongst other factors. Thus it's not unknown for a 1kW rig to be far louder than a 3kW rig simply because the former used more efficient speakers. Note that there

It's All Right, PA

Ben Duncan

are also several ways of rating the power of the system, based say on the average or peak power of all the amps, or the power capacity of all the speakers, and none of them are necessarily representative of the available loudness. Closely related to SPL is dynamic range – variation in loudness. Compare the tight, highly compressed sound of The Jam with the lazy (!) dynamic range of classic Deep Purple numbers. In general, the *original* heavy metal depended more than any other type of rock on massive variations in loudness, and the characteristic explosive crescendos require very large amounts of reserve power.

Another characteristic of the pattern of sound waves is frequency. At concert levels, our hearing extends as low as 18Hz, though frequencies below 30Hz tend to be felt rather than heard. For most of us, 15 or 16kHz is the upper limit, but hearing response really does vary from one person to the next, so we shouldn't generalise too much. For realism, the sound system should be able to provide full power over and above the audible range of frequencies, hence a good sound system will cover 18Hz to 20kHz. A system with this response has a 'full' sound. Often this requirement cannot be met, loudspeakers being the major culprits, and clearly the percussive instruments are the first to suffer.

A sound system must also respond to all frequencies equally. A coloured system exhibits tonal distortion – some frequencies are accentuated, others are belittled. Microphones, loudspeakers and the acoustics of auditoriums are primarily responsible for colouration. Because live rock music can only have an arbitrary objective reality, colouration cannot be judged either as bad or good, particularly since the PA can be simultaneously *both* a generator and a reproducer of the music. For instance, painful, ear-ripping colouration was arguably an essential part of the Sex Pistols' act. On the other hand, hire companies usually aim for very clean, uncoloured PAs, intended solely as reproducers; colouration can easily be introduced by equalisation, but it's much harder to correct if it's inherent in the

system. Finally, minor colourations will often pass unnoticed if the audience already know the band's numbers or the gig is particularly mindblowing. Much the same goes for mild doses of other acoustic *faux pas*.

Overtones are the 'spices' that give instruments their characteristic sound. When you hit the bottom string on a bass, the fundamental frequency is around 43Hz, but depending on how you play, you also generate multiples of this frequency in varying degrees. In this case, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th harmonics occur at 86, 172 and 344Hz respectively. Harmonics are a desirable, essential quality in musical instruments – whether Chrissie Hynde's vocals, Nik Turner's sax or a Marshall lead stack. But like all 'spices' they must be sparingly applied in critical proportions.

Sound systems also generate harmonics, the effect is known as harmonic distortion, and the attitude is not so appreciative! The reason is simply that harmonics produced ad-lib by electronic equipment (excepting valve instrument amps) are rarely in a pleasing, musical combination, and to a lesser extent, these harmonics are frowned upon because they're not part of the original sound. Fortunately, it's relatively easy to design desks, crossovers, equalisers and amplifiers with effectively zero distortion (it exists, but you can't hear it).

However, if you overload any of these pieces of equipment, you can expect to hear an ear-ripping, brittle, metallic sound that is largely composed of high, odd-order harmonics – 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th. Microphones – and loudspeakers in particular – generate relatively large amounts of 2nd and 3rd harmonic distortion well before serious overload, but the effect is rarely distressing; in large doses, it adds character – 'punch' and warmth – while in small doses it's usually inaudible.

Far worse is intermodulation distortion (IMD) which is heard as muddiness and causes fatigue. IMD is similar in principle to the dissonant effect when someone plays a bum chord. A 'non-musical' combination of notes! Notes can also interact in sound equipment – the chords so

Ben Duncan is hedonistic and speaks fluent Zen Buddhism with no trace of an accent.



formed are often dissonant and the more instruments you put through your sound system, the worse the dissonance or intermodulation. Driving a PA amp into overload generates 100% IMD, which is simply *nasty*.

As with harmonic distortion, the generation of IMD, assuming the amps aren't overloaded, is greatest in the loudspeakers. But, unlike the former, it is unsympathetic to music. However, a lot can be done to clean up 'muddiness' (IMD) with impressive results by using suitable loudspeakers and crossover techniques. IMD, colouration and high order harmonic distortion (caused by overloading a rig) are grossly offensive to the ear, and such dirty sound rapidly causes nausea, which is rarely beneficial to the relationship between musicians and their audiences.

Unfortunately, impecunious players long ago discovered that by driving an inadequate PA into overload, they could achieve large subjective increases in loudness, hand-in-hand with *hyper*-brain-damage distortion levels. IMD in particular gives the impression of subjective loudness without corresponding megawatts, but gross colouration and

harmonic distortion have a similar effect. Such overloading is not necessarily unpleasant in the case of a *good* valve amplifier, but it's a distinctly anti-social habit when transistor PA amps are involved. The decision to wind up your PA and aim for loudness rather than clarity requires careful, sensitive judgement, particularly since PAs are never *quite* loud enough! If your audience is *really* into the music, then it's fair to assume that sheer physical presence of the music is the overriding consideration. The more ecstatic an audience, the more they will forgive and forget inadequacies in the sound system. But ask yourself, 'Are they *really* hearing what we play?' If not, then perhaps hours of practice and hard-won inspiration have gone to waste.

Because the ear is more sensitive to increasing than dwindling changes in loudness, a useful trick is to burst into a number at maximum level (distortion regardless) – and then to very *slowly* ease down the level. With skilful handling, this maintains the initial impression of tremendous loudness in the minds of your audience. Some types of rock, notably the jazz-rock variety, definitely thrive on *clean* sound, and fortunately high levels are not

essential with such music, it being largely cerebral. Powerful, loud, clean systems are subjectively quiet.

The misleading nature of this effect only becomes apparent when you find you can't hear yourself shout. These subjective effects, amongst others, explain to a large extent why power, Sound Pressure Levels and perceived loudness cannot be meaningfully tied together, and why so much confusion exists in the area of loudness *v* power.

Throughout this series we'll concentrate on how to achieve *accurate* reproduction from a PA – principally because accurate PAs are often sought and rarely found. Although there is nothing intrinsically wrong about a dirty sound system, if your music thrives on it, a clean, uncoloured PA is much more versatile, and not *everyone* wants to emulate the AC/DC sound *all* of the time!

Nonetheless, we'll be pragmatic and remember that rock PA is (*hopefully*) involved in much more than a glorified disco-plus-stage-act, that musicians are always dead broke, that rock (according to the 'media') died about 10 years ago and that Aunt Maggie's economic policies... □

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FCN Satellite and Carlsbro Hornet

Gary Cooper

Tempting as it always is to go for the big stuff, I thought I'd look at a pair of practice amps this month on the principle that we all need one at some time or another. Either you're just beginning to play and can't justify, or afford, something bigger, or you simply want to play at home without having the noise abatement people knocking on your door. Either way you'll want a practice amp.

Over the years I've tried quite a few of these so-called beginners' amps, for the most part with little enjoyment. It seems a pity that people beginning their careers as guitarists are often hindered by having to start with rubbish. A bad amp is at least as much of a disadvantage to an electric player as a bad guitar. Most modern rock guitar styles call for some fairly unconventional techniques by traditional standards – lift offs, hammer ons, long bends, three note chords etc. These sound pretty fine when you've got a 100-watt stack cooking away behind you, but if your amp is about as responsive as a politician's conscience, or as warm as an Eskimo's Y-Fronts, you've got problems. Regrettably, there

are still quite a few amp makers and instrument wholesalers around who don't seem to understand this yet. In the long run they're cutting their own throats because if future players give up in desperation because all they can sound like is Bert Weedon then the makers don't get to sell them expensive gear in the future. Short sighted, isn't it?

The other end of the problem is where experienced guitarists want something with a half-way decent sound for home practice or recording. True, many modern amps feature a master volume circuit of some sort or another, but the amps themselves are still big and heavy – what do you do if you want something tasty that can be carried around easily?

Two solutions are offered to this problem by FCN with their small 6-watt *Satellite* practice amp and Carlsbro with their *Hornet 30*. They're patently different; the prices are at variance, they're aimed at very different markets. So, without comparing them (which would be very unfair), I'll go through each on its own merits.

amps of the early Sixties. The manufacturers have obviously tried hard to make this one work and certainly haven't stinted in the materials/quality department. The case is remarkably sturdy for an amp of this size and the covering is very heavy-quality vinyl. On top is a substantial enough carrying handle; within are two 4in speakers.

Of open-backed design, the *Satellite* is normally mains-powered, running from a captive mains lead, but with a large metal bracket fitted to run from two *PP9s* if you prefer battery power. Just a digression this, but has anyone out there noticed how prohibitively expensive these batteries are getting? I own two transistor radios which use *PP9s* and I'm not far away from needing a mortgage when they go flat. Someone must be making a fortune out of them! Anyway, the provision of battery-powered option is a definite point in this amp's favour. Nice for a portable amp to be truly portable and not tied to the CEBG (*Live At CEBG's?* – Ed.)

The controls on the *Satellite* look spartan, to say the very least. There is just one jack input, a volume control (which doubles as an on/off switch) and a solitary tone pot. You also have two other useful features, a headphone jack socket and a slave output jack socket. Oh yes, there's also an LED light to show you when you're on.

Contrary to what you might have expected from the downright dowdy appearance of this amp, the sound is rather bright and alive. Needless to say it's a transistorised job and there is that slight scratchiness in the sound which gives this away – but it is by no means objectionable. The tone control works fairly well and there's certainly no lack of piercing treble but yet not the normal tinniness which you'd expect from something in this sort of price range.

Turn the amp up full (go on, be a Devil – six watts won't kill you!) and there's actually quite a pleasant rasp of distortion there. It's by no standards a screaming, over the top, headbanger's delight, but there's just a hint of loose moral standards about the sound which makes it quite appealing. For the hell of it, and wanting to see how far it could be pushed, I rigged up a small pre-amp to the *Satellite* and wound it up – as I feared it didn't really appreciate this at all, but you may find it necessary to boost the input signal to this amp if you want really powerful overload and have a guitar with weak pickups.

In fact the best results I got from the *Satellite* were with a Mighty Mite *Strat* copy with the volume pots slackened off a bit. Yes, very tasty.

For the money this has got to be a very



FCN Satellite 6-watt combo. Rrp £57.85 inc VAT.

This baby unit looks for all the world like the sort of thing you once saw advertised in your Auntie Mabel's catalogue, along

with the thermal underwear and the nylon sheets. It is, however, very sturdily made compared with those awful, nasty practice

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: JC 50: 50W Jazz Chorus
: PA 250: 250W 8ch Mixer/Amp
: PA 150: 150W 8ch Mixer/Amp

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good buy. If you've got any nephews or nieces who are starting to ask for something just a little more subversive than train sets and golliwogs for their birthdays, and who've started taking an unhealthy interest in your Hendrix albums, then this

would make a very fine present for them. Who knows, in five years' time they might be telling us that what started them on the road to a front-page *SI/BI* story was your present of one of these amps – it could happen!



Carlsbro Hornet 30. Rrp £139.73 inc VAT

So little Herbert or Hermione has now progressed past the stage of bashing out *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean* through the *Satellite* and comes to you for advice on what to buy next. On the other hand, maybe you've just ruptured yourself getting that 4 x 12 and 100-watt top out of the back of a *Mini* and up to your bedroom? Your Doctor tells you to take it easy for a while and you're looking for something a little lighter.

Both situations present problems because there's not all *that* much on the market here that is loud enough for home use and the more restrained rehearsals. Fear not, good old Carlsbro (who are growing in my affections yearly) have the answer in their *Hornet 30*.

The *Hornet* doesn't look as loud as it is – which is always a nice surprise. It follows that modern 'mean and nasty' Carlsbro design in having a very open weave speaker grille which looks like metal at a distance but isn't. It's a small, open-backed enclosure, well protected against knocks

and bangs by cleverly designed end-mouldings and is put together fairly well if rather obviously down to a price.

The recessed front panel offers you two inputs, high and low, and then a series of typically nice Carlsbro pots featuring Gain, Low, a parametric mid offering $\pm 20\text{dB}$ from $.75$ to 1KHz and a final High pot. Finally, you've got a master volume and a fairly unique pushbutton on/off switch with the obligatory LED indicator.

The speaker is a single 10in job with a metal dome, purportedly a Carlsbro *Powertone* but, no doubt, emanating from one of their outside suppliers.

Plug in and switch on and the Carlsbro starts to impress straight away. It's a fairly quiet amp – the old days of solid state hiss and crackle have now well and truly gone, thank the gods, and once you've set the gain to give you basically what you want by way of overload it's time to start fiddling with the tone controls. Because of its parametric mid, you might expect the *Hornet* to have a phenomenal tonal

range. It hasn't, but that really doesn't matter. There's plenty of bass there if you want it and the high frequency pot will deliver all the top you could need – and more than I think I'd ever want. The parametric mid is effective but I'm starting to worry about parametrics generally. When I first came across them I thought they were the answer to my prayers, now I'm not so sure. Is it me or does anyone else out there feel that they can induce a boxiness, a nasal hollowness, to your sound? This one is pretty good as they go, certainly it caters for offering a very precise amount of control over the midrange, but it has to be used with care otherwise it starts to run into that empty sort of nasal quality that I'm desperately failing to describe in words.

But it isn't tonal range which makes this amp a killer. Wind it up with a decently powerful guitar and it sings like a beautiful bird. I'm not kidding, Carlsbro are getting disconcertingly close to cracking the valve *v* tranny problem and whatever it is they're up to they've not stopped this *Hornet* from sharing the secret. I still reckon that the solid state circuitry which they're using is discernable from a good valve type in that it doesn't seem as touch sensitive to picking strength and lacks a certain warmth – *but* by heaven it's close! Even at low volumes this amp sings with fantastically controllable sustain and feedback – it's quite remarkable in this respect and would be at home in any studio or rehearsal room.

Run clean, the Carlsbro *Hornet* is more than acceptable for club and pub gigs or jazz work and there's a lot of useful midrange tones to accentuate those creamy, smooth jazz chords. Turn the beast up, on the other hand, and it's virtually hopping up and down in its determination to pin you against the wall with a ferocious onslaught of near demonic savagery. Just the amp for dropping on Moscow if we want to sort the buggers out without using nukes!

This one is the missing link between a basic practice amp and a full stage set-up. I'd say that it's the best of its type that I've yet tried – by a long way. The price is reasonable too. Wish they'd been around when I started playing: I had to go to 50-watt valve heads to get this sort of sound and now here it is in a pint-size package retailing at about £140 – makes you cringe doesn't it? I don't know, young people today, they've got it all on a plate for them. When I was their age I had to stoke coal on my Selmer for six hours to get this sound. They don't know when they're well off... drone, drone... cont page 94. (*This isn't IM, mate* – Ed.) □



JHS Harmonizer

Dave Crombie

Just to prove that we are more or less together here in purgatory (sorry that should read Croydon), I'm actually going to do something that I said I would in an earlier issue (November's to be exact) and take a look at the new John Hornby Skewes *Harmonizer*. Actually, I've just looked back at my well-read November copy, and I see that it was the new *Roady* electronic piano that I said I'd review. They're both distributed by the same company though, and the *Harmonizer* is more interesting anyway. (God, what a paragraph.)

The *Harmonizer* isn't really made by John Hornby Skewes, but by Logan in Italy; JHS are the distributors, and have just stuck their initials on it. It's a bit like popping down to the local supermarket where you find what are really Heinz baked beans, in a can marked Sainsbury's. The question is, are John Hornby Skewes and Co Ltd into canned foodstuffs? (I don't think that I can get away with this rubbish much longer.) (*Nor do I - Ed.*) So, on removing the black vinyl-covered wooden case from its cardboard packing, and folding off the hinged carrying lid, what confronts you?

The *Harmonizer* can best be described as a symphonic ensemble. It offers a variety of orchestral and band instrument simulations including Organ, Electronic Piano, Accordion, Musette (an accordion variation) and Brass, all driven from a single 49-note (4-octave) C to C keyboard. The price? Recommended retail is £499 inc VAT, but you don't get any legs for that.

First appearances give the impression of a very well made, sturdy instrument; the *Harmonizer* is attractively styled, the lid affords a good degree of protection (it is lockable too), the wooden end-cheeks make it look that bit smarter, and the sloping rear panel gives it a fairly modern look. It measures a tidy 39½ x 15 x 6ins and is light and comfortable to carry. The controls consist of momentary push buttons, with LEDs to show whether they are on or off, and sliders, 18 of them, with, I'm afraid, varying degrees of stiffness, though this is only to be expected for an instrument of this price. No Penny & Giles's here. There are in addition two small trim potentiometers (adjustable with a small

screwdriver) located on the front panel for setting the relative tuning of the entire instrument, and for adjusting the impedance of the output signal.

The keyboard isn't too bad for an Italian instrument. I've been knocking keyboards manufactured by our EEC friends in southern Europe for a while now, and although I doubt that they pay much attention to my humble writings, many of the more recent products emanating from that country do seem to play a lot better. Here, though, we come to our first major hurdle - it's hexaphonic. That's to say it can only play six notes at any one time (now you know why it is so competitively priced); ie it is a voice-assignable system. We'll deal with the implications of this as we go along, but I should add that the assignment priority isn't given to the last note played - if six notes are held, pressing the seventh won't make any difference to the *Harmonizer's* output signal, whereas most assignable instruments would 'rob' a note from one already being held, so that every new note played will sound. I prefer the latter system, but I know that some people will go for this method.

The *Harmonizer's* voices are divided into three sections: Brass; Pianos; and Strings/Organs/Reeds. The three sections can be mixed together, or layered as it is sometimes called, but in the third section only one of the three options can be selected at any one time (hence the slashes).

Brass

Working from the left, let's start with the Brass section, which JHS claim to be 'the *Harmonizer's* most exciting feature'. Gosh! There are two sliders that introduce the basic tones, pitched at 16' and 8'; two modifiers control the attack time and brilliance; and a further two introduce vibrato (depth and delay time). The basic brass timbre is fairly good - however, there is obviously just one filter and associated sweep envelope for all six notes, so the manufacturers have come up with a bizarre triggering arrangement. It seems that the highest note played triggers the envelope, and when this note is released the filter sweeps back down to its initial





position. The filter envelope will then not retrigger until either all the other notes, previously held, are released, or another note higher than those held is played.

I've not come across the like before, and I doubt that I ever will again, but often these restrictions or quirks can be accommodated in your playing style, and thereby turned to your advantage. I think that it would get too complicated to pursue this line any further (the editor finds these things difficult to grasp, you know), but, if you do come across a *Harmonizer*, check this triggering out. Otherwise the Brass section is nicely voiced, though I would have liked to have seen some form of sustain option, instead of cutting off dead as soon as the key is released. I also feel that the preset vibrato rate is too slow.

Strings/Organ/Reeds

As mentioned, these are only selectable individually, they can't be mixed together and used simultaneously. The Strings come up on three sliders at 16', 8', and 4'. They all have exactly the same timbre, just pitched an octave apart. This timbre is fair, but the modulation used to give the voicing more body seems to be rather excessive and as a result the sound is a bit too mushy. There are two envelope control sliders for attack and sustain, and I suppose this is one time that the hexaphonic system can be an advantage – if you like to use a very long sustain (release) time, a conventional string machine tends to 'clog up', ie notes hang on and get in each other's way with possible ghastly musical consequences. If you're into imagery then consider a musical traffic jam. Hmm. OK, but if you are limited to just six notes, the chances of a possible jumble are greatly reduced. I know it's negative reasoning, but it is applicable.

The Organ voicing uses the same controls as the Strings (including variable attack and sustain), but has a different modulation characteristic. The resulting sound can best be described as 'fair-groundy' – it's no Hammond.

The Reeds should be labelled the Piano-Accordions, though there's probably not enough room. Two sliders marked *Musette* and *Accordion* (well, it's partly there) provide the sounds, but again using the two envelope controls. Personally, I feel that the *Musette* voicing produces a better String sound than the string section; it is certainly far clearer. The *Accordion* voice itself is pleasant enough though it does have a mechanical ring to its name. It is pitched an octave below the *Musette*.

The Pianos

A 16' Piano, an 8' Piano and a Hapsichord come up on their individual sliders, and along with a variable sustain

make up this percussive section. Tonewise this bunch scores well, but there seems to be something not quite right about the envelopes. The note tends to die away at a strange rate, and then sort of 'hang on in there' until the key is released, in a fashion that doesn't seem appropriate to a piano voicing. I can't put my finger on it (ho, ho), but it isn't quite right. Otherwise it's as good an electronic piano as you'll get anywhere near that price.

On the rear there's the usual business. The manufacturers have gone for a Euro-socket mains connector instead of a trailing lead. It makes sense in this case as there's nothing to worry about when fixing the lid. Fuse and illuminated mains switch are both easily accessible, and right away from the 240v stuff are the audio output and volume pedal sockets. The pedal comes complete with the *Harmonizer* (or should that be the other way round?), and is very sturdy indeed – none of your plastic rubbish here John, just good strong metal. It is opto-coupled (there's a little bulb inside with a light-dependent resistor, and as the pedal is pivoted, less light gets through to the resistor and this in turn brings down the volume), so it's free of noise etc. Unfortunately, the *Harmonizer* has no headphone socket, which may

mean a few lost sales especially to the 'home-organist' customers.

In Brief

A few little quibbles here, but at the price you can't grumble too much. I think that the String voicing could be improved somewhat, and I did notice a fair degree of background noise breaking through, which might cause problems at high amplification levels – though to be honest I can't really see Judas Priest using one of these instruments. So, at £499 you are getting a lot of instruments which do sound the part. Also, by clever layering of sounds, other interesting and usable voices can be created – ol' big head here managed a damn fine *Clavinet* sound by messing around with the Brass and Piano sections, and a pretty fair Choir, though there's a lot more you can do.

OK, the six notes are a bit of a problem, but if you are using the *Harmonizer* as an additional keyboard to your existing set-up (which I would consider to be its prime application) you'll only be playing the thing with one hand for a fair part of the time, in which case the instrument will run fine. This section is headed In Brief so, as I haven't much else to say about the JHS *Harmonizer*, I think I'll fin... □

Yamaha CS5

Mike Beecher

Over the last couple of years, the price range of keyboard synthesisers has expanded both upwards to include the advanced micro-computer controlled system and downwards to give virtually any keyboard player the chance to own a monophonic synth for less than £300. At this lower level, there are several useful instruments available for the beginner and advanced player alike. For the latter, they can be attractive through their low cost, convenient size and weight. Even their limited amount of controls may be a deciding factor. For those acquiring their first synthesiser, choosing the right 'cheap' instrument becomes critical; you'll want to get as wide a range of basic sounds as possible.

Yamaha's CS5 synth is the smallest of their range of monophonic keyboards and yet contains the essential ingredients for sound synthesis. Let me pick out the features of the CS5 that make it so versatile for its price (rrp £239 ex VAT).

Construction and Layout

The instrument is sturdily made, yet lightweight (7lbs), with a smart black panel conveniently angled over the 37-note keyboard. The black moulded plastic end pieces and wooden base provide solid protection against knocks. Its layout follows the style of the larger CS10, CS15 and CS30 synthesisers. Although cheaper than the earlier CS10, it does in fact stretch its modulation control further and includes Sample/Hold as well. Yamaha synths have a logical control layout from left to right, from signal generation to the final output, so once you have played the CS5 you should quickly grasp operation of other machines.

At the rear is a row of jack sockets for output, in/out control voltage/triggers which connect directly to other Yamaha or Korg instruments (other makes need a suitable interface box, such as the Korg MS-02). There's also an external input





that lets you plug in an electric guitar, microphone, electric piano, organ or tape recorder. This makes its own adjustable 'trigger' that sets the synth tone and sound-shaping into action for the external sound. A bonus for the beginner, these extra connections widen the scope of the instrument considerably. Since the pitch control voltage range is 0 to four volts, it makes the synth ideal for microprocessor control – covering the whole audio range. I've used a bank of CS5s on stage for 'polyphonic' backing controlled by the Sharp MZ-80K.

Completing the physical layout is a left-hand pitchbend slider (notched at centre) for an octave jump up or down as you play the keys with your right hand. The highest note takes priority and using pitchbend with the familiar 'portamento' and modulation controls gives many exciting sound changes in performance.

Back to basics

The oscillator section provides a wide range of pitches, switchable from 64, 32, 16, 8, 4 to 2'. A 'tune' control matches overall synth pitch to other instruments. The following section (from left to right) has ext/noise, sawtooth and squarewave level controls for continuous mixing of sounds as you want. The sawtooth gives a bright sound source for brass/string tones and the squarewave is more clarinet-like unless used with the Pulse Width Modulation (PWM) control, which gives an added rich 'moving sound' quality. The Noise generator is important if you want to get all those natural sounds plus explosions, rocket-ships and other background stage effects.

The tone filter section has the usual 'cut-off frequency' and 'resonance' controls and like the final main section – the

VCA – has 'EG depth' that sets the amount of control provided by its ADSR controls. Maximum attack is seven seconds and maximum decay or release lasts 18 seconds and will be quite adequate for normal playing. A single note can take around 25 seconds to make its tone/sound shape from start to finish.

The most common type of filter is called the Low Pass Filter (LPF) – here there are two more: Band Pass and High Pass, that Yamaha mono instruments all feature. This simply enables much more choice of tone shaping from mellow (to highlight specific harmonic ranges), to thin high timbres. Yamaha filters never go into 'oscillation' but operate very smoothly over their 10-octave range to give a more natural resonance effect.

LFO modulation

An important feature of any synth is its ability to change pitch, tone or volume automatically as you play. The LFO here can do all that and uses switchable sinewave, squarewave and Sample/Hold

output. The sinewave gives smooth changes as it modulates VCO, VCF or VCA, the squarewave makes more dramatic jumps and S/H gives random voltages. The LFO 'speed' can be set from 0.3 to 100Hz for each cycle, so that random notes pour out of the synth – wah-wah, vibrato and tremolo effects can be easily generated by using the LFO 'MOD' controls.

Summary

An ideal first-buy mono synth that is sturdy, yet lightweight and small enough to be very portable. Although no case (or lid) is provided, you can carry it between gigs in its packing case for protection. A combination of low price, high quality controls and good looks should make the CS5 appeal to a lot of keyboard players who want to create their own sounds. □



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Gordon Smith Gypsy II

Roger Adams

Only a British firm would dream of marketing a product under the name of Smith and expect it to stand out from the crowd. In many respects, the *Gypsy II* is a real 'Smith' of a guitar; being not in the least prettily or originally styled, it stands a chance of hanging unnoticed for years in the back of a music shop, without anyone choosing to try it. In its vertical position alongside other instruments its name is virtually illegible as it is intended to be read when the guitar is in the playing position. It is thus obvious from the start that we have here a serious guitar intended for playing, not for decorating the wall. It is equally evident that serious players are expected to know Gordon Smith guitars, at least by reputation, as instruments to be asked for rather than to be attracted by.

So here, then, is possibly the least 'commercial' guitar I have ever seen, lying in an ugly oblong box, completely unconcerned whether I'm going to pick it up and play it or not. A bit of a shock, really, to meet such an uncompromising instrument, bearing in mind its relatively high price of £385, which includes no import costs – it's a British guitar, don't forget. This puts it in the same price range as the Washburn *Eagle*, which is in a different universe when it comes to attracting attention. We come, then, to the inescapable question – how does it play and how does it sound?

Wood

Go to any of the ever-increasing number of custom-builders, and it's odds-on that at some stage, the chap has tried a prototype basic twin-cutaway solid. It's an inoffensive, symmetrical, easy-to-manage shape, and your average luthier, who may not be an artist as well, needs no advanced sense of imagination or aesthetics to achieve it. In the earlier stages, a guitar craftsman should really be more concerned with the important aspects of building a usable musical instrument than with body shapes. It is therefore quite probable that you won't react to the *Gypsy II* as violently as you would to, say, a BC Rich, either pro or con. A looker it ain't. The review copy is a nice cherry red with (I think) a rosewood fingerboard and a lot of black plastic. The hard-to-read logo is in fine gold script, and the dot inlays on the fingerboard are brushed



aluminium, which is probably the guitar's only unusual feature.

The head is an obvious shape, in the Gibson or Guild fashion, but without any distinctive shaping along the top edge to identify the manufacturer for those who can't read (you think I'm joking? You should meet some of the musicians down here in Brighton!).

The neck is well-shaped; slim, but wide enough for uncluttered bending, vibratos, and chords. I particularly like the shape of the heel and the tidy neck joint. Taken in conjunction with the fine finishing of the edges of the fingerboard, and one of the best fret-end jobs I've brushed my fingers along, the neck overall is one of the instrument's best features.

I wish I could say the same about the body. I've already mentioned its anonymity, but I'm afraid to that criticism I must add a lack of comfort. Constructed from solid mahogany, it performs well enough; despite an almost unnoticeable lack of sustain on the lower notes, the overall feeling from the guitar is lively, indicating good timber throughout. However, the top edge really would benefit from contouring at the back for a snug fit. If this is not possible because it would upset the instrument's good balance, or even because such contouring is felt by the

maker not to suit the body design, my opinion is that there are more sophisticated body styles and perhaps one should be utilised which allows more comfort, and hopefully improved looks to boot, without upsetting the balance or the instrument's basic, 'honest' image.

Generally speaking, the finish is excellent, apart from a slight blemish on the end of the fingerboard, where it is possible that a screwdriver may have slipped when removing the small strip of plastic which conceals the business end of the truss rod, just behind the neck pickup surround.

Metal

Starting with the head, we find a set of plastic-covered Schaller machines, all of which appear to do their job adequately, although I must confess that at this price I would prefer to see the metal-cased version.

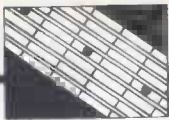
Metal has, however, ousted plastic at the nut, which is a slim, solid brass unit, held in place by two screws, a method which allows a certain amount of adjustment, as the nut has slots instead of round holes for the screws and can thus be very slightly adjusted for action height. This is surely an area where a unit with individual string-height variability is long overdue. The Gordon Smith nut is, however, a step in the right direction.

I have already commended this guitar on the quality of finish on the ends of the frets. However, I'm not quite so enthusiastic about the type of fretwire used, which is a little high and round for my taste. String bending is easy and comfortable, but faster runs can be impeded a little at times.

I find quite often, however, that this sort of thing is affected as much by the physical and mental condition of the player as by the frets. Such factors as the hardness of skin on the fingertips, the amount of adrenalin flowing, and the ratio of mind over matter during the performance can all be argued to have great effect on such techniques as string bends and vibrato, which are more often than not limited simply by the amount of pain being experienced by the player.

The most important thing about frets should really be their accuracy; once a certain basic level of comfort has been achieved, one should not be over-fussy, or inhibitions may develop where none need be. The Gordon Smith suffers from no inaccuracies and is thus a well-fretted instrument.

Roger Adams is guitarist with High Profile, and drives 3-tonners too.



A quick word about the strap buttons, which are excellent, and feature good wide flanges to prevent disasters of any description. The positioning is just right and the guitar balances perfectly, unlike one other famous British guitar I could mention, and once owned.

The *Gypsy II* has a Badass. No, it doesn't need to see the doctor; I refer of course to the combined bridge and tailpiece unit. Full adjustment for individual scale length is available on each string, as well as overall scale length by means of one horizontal screw locking on to each of the vertically-adjustable mounting bolts. The mounting bolts are, incidentally, good and thick – this is, I think, more valuable in terms of sustain than excessive size or mass of the bridge/tailpiece itself, as more of the bridge area is transferred to the body of the guitar through thicker bolts. The horizontal locking screws are probably also of use in transmitting string vibration as they ensure the tightest possible fit in both directions, on the mounting bolt collars. Altogether an efficient, neat unit, which contributes greatly to the guitar's inherent liveliness. Harmonics came screaming out at the slightest excuse. Unlike some adjustable bridges, nothing appears flimsy or prone to unwanted movement or vibration; the string saddles and their adjusting screws are as solid as a rock.

Electrics

The real key to the Gordon Smith's success lies in the electrics – notably the powerful, raunchy humbuckers – which are I believe exclusive to this guitar. They offer what all good pickups should offer – power, clarity and an even response.

I have grown to dislike pickups designed to distort, as they lack tone. Most amplifiers do the job for you, as long as the signal has no troughs or peaks in the wrong areas, and all the strings get through to the amplifier evenly and clearly. Beyond this criterion, pickups do of course vary in overall tonal character.

The pickups on this guitar can be described as 'punchy'. Less sparkle than a Yamaha, less bass-heavy than an Aria. I suppose the nearest comparison would be the DiMarzio *PAF*, to my ears at least, but one must remember that I heard all these pickups on different instruments so direct comparisons are impossible, and the definitive pickup survey has yet to be done, for it will be a lengthy business!

The pots are just how I like them, with heavy, smooth actions. The two volume controls have push/pull facilities which trigger coil-taps. When pulled out, the pickups seem to be switched to single coil operation: as the volume level drops, the tone gets a lot thinner, and the 'hum' stops being 'bucked' (in other words the level of



All pix
Roger
Phillips

background noise increases). I'm not at all sure about this feature, or rather this guitar's version of it, and would probably only want to make very limited use of it as it seems merely to 'cheapen' a very nice-sounding instrument. Fashion must prevail, of course, but there is much more to the Fender sound than half a humbucker can provide.

The selector switch functions accurately and reliably, and the jack socket is edge-mounted, which is my pet hate. It does however have a fair-sized surround, so you shouldn't do much damage feeling for the hole with your jack plug.

Below the inspection plate on the back of the instrument is a crowded but well-wired array of high quality switchgear, the cavity is coated with screening paint, and the thick plastic plate which covers it is also shielded. All in all, exactly what one would expect from a modern luthier who has set out to do the job properly, even in the areas which cannot be seen.

In use – familiarity breeds respect

Once I became accustomed to the unfamiliar (to me) shape of the frets, I began to find the *Gypsy II* an extremely likeable instrument. The tone is rich and exciting, with tremendous harmonic potential, and no apparent limitations for a rock player seeking to exploit an energetic technique. The frets, as I have mentioned, are not as immediately comfortable as some, but at high volume the cleanness and accuracy of the fretted note is welcome and one soon adjusts to the slightly more physical left-hand approach necessary.

I found the guitar to be especially suitable for hard, driving riffs and solo work. In quieter areas of music, the wide fingerboard suits open chords, especially with the use of a flanger. The clear sustained notes, aided greatly by the brass nut and the Badass, enable such effects units to be more, er, effective.

However, I fear the guitar will not find

too much favour among jazz-funk rhythm players, despite the coil-taps, as it lacks the sting of a Fender-type guitar. It is really very much a *lead* instrument, and would not enjoy being embedded in a disco rhythm track somewhere between the hi-hat and *Clavinet*.

In all then, a slight paradox; an obscure-looking guitar with a prominent, if not distinctive, sound. A guitar to let rip on in a heavy rock club, but one unlikely to be seen propping up the kind of wealthy, flashy star whose confidence lies more in the stage show than instrumental ability, and whose instrument would be aligned more to the reflection of ego than the performance of music.

Nobody is going to revamp the archetypal visual image of the rock guitarist with a *Gypsy II* in his hands, but this guitar's player may be encouraged to play a little more positively and effectively. It is encouraging to know that, in this era of the 'let's drive it round the block and see how many wheels fall off' approach to the formulation of so many aspects of music industry strategy, be it instrument sales pitching, A&R department policy, or the 'now you see me, now you don't' reader-brainwashing tactics of the weekly music papers, there is a good, reliable axe coming from this country. Because, sooner or later, if you're going to stick with this music thing, you'll realise that haunting music shops and other people's gigs and ligs, sitting back waiting for realisation of product at whatever level, and consuming other bigot's reviews and opinions in the misguided hope of self-improvement is nowhere; it's all down to the doing, and that's where Mr Smith steps out of the shadows and gives you a real helping hand. Now Gordon, about that Arcturon *Polar Neoblast Mark X* you were on about – how about a review copy so I can get all those *NME* readers back with us for the next issue? Other side of the coin, like? Not everyone thinks the answer lies in the soil, y'know! □

SECOND-HAND INDEX

Yes, another second-hand index. This month we take a gander at keyboards in second-hand land. What we've done, as is the usual scheme of things with these indexes, is to sort out the prices of about 170 electric and electronic keyboards – organs, pianos, synthesisers etc – offered for sale recently in the weekly columns of various journals. These were transferred to our office computer (a box with lots of cards in) and hastily worked into some sort of order: the listing which appears below.

The key (bottom right) should give you some indication as to how the listing actually works; you should remember, of course, that this list is not intended to be a hard-and-fast price list. It's a guide to the sort of prices that were being asked for second-hand instruments in the four or five weeks prior to press date for this issue of *SI/BI*. Some dealer ads may well have crept into the listing, but it is hoped that the Second-hand Index will be a guide to private sale prices.

Please write to tell us whether you think this listing is of any use, and also tell us of any changes that could make the page more useful. Write to: Second-hand Index, *Sound International*, Link House, Dingwall Avenue, Croydon CR9 2TA. Next month – amplifiers.

Second-hand Index No 2

Keyboards



ARP Odyssey

- ARP Axce £265
- ARP Explorer £190
- ARP Odyssey £395-£400
- ARP Omni 2 £600
- ARP Pro Soloist £395
- ARP Quadra £1550
- ARP Quartet £350
- CASIOTONE CR201 in box £230
- CRUMAR Compac Piano £130
- CRUMAR DS2 £500
- CRUMAR Multiman tatty case £200 otherwise £275-£300 +fl/cs £400-£465
- CRUMAR Performer £450
- CRUMAR Pianoman £195
- CRUMAR Roadracer £200-£275
- CRUMAR Roadrunner Two £180
- EDP Wasp Avg £130
- ELKA-ORLA Rhapsody 610 Avg £313 +fl/cs £325
- EMS Polysynthi £680
- EMS Synthi E £249
- FENDER Rhodes Stage 73 Avg £418
- FENDER Rhodes Stage 88 £500

- FENDER Rhodes Suitcase 88 £500-£650

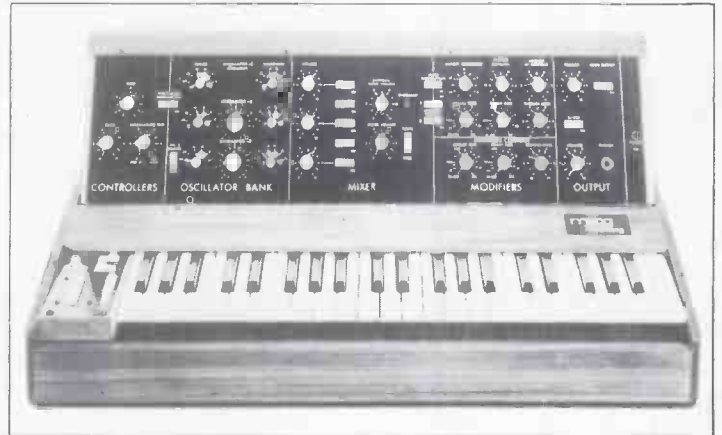


Above: Moog Multimoog; Below: Hohner Pianet



- HAMMOND B3 +pddb £1495
- HAMMOND C3 Avg £1050
- HAMMOND M100 £600-£850
- HAMMOND M102 Avg £600
- HAMMOND T100 £650
- HAMMOND X5 £600 +Ls 825 £950
- HELPINSTILL Roadmaster piano £1090
- HOHNER Clavinet D6 £250-£275
- HOHNER Duo Avg £362
- HOHNER K1 £140
- HOHNER Globetrotter £168-£180
- HOHNER Pianet Avg £144
- HOHNER String Performer £650
- JEN Pianotone £140

- MELLOTRON £450
- MELLOTRON Mk II 'working' £225
- MOOG Micromoog £350
- MOOG Minimoog £395
- MOOG Multimoog £499
- MOOG Polymoog + Polypedals Avg £1800
- MOOG Prodigy Avg £200
- MOOG Satellite +cs £200
- OBERHEIM OB1 £550-£700
- RMI Electric piano £265
- ROLAND EP10 £100
- ROLAND EP30 £275-£299
- ROLAND JP4 +fl/cs £950
- ROLAND RS202 £350
- ROLAND SH09 £180
- ROLAND SH3A £215-£250
- ROLAND SH5 £399



Moog Minimoog

- JEN String Machine £299
- KAWAI 100F £259
- KITTEN synth 'with amp' £330
- KORG Micropreset £170
- KORG Minikorg 700S Avg £197
- KORG MP500 £199
- KORG MS10 £140-£160
- KORG MS20/SQ10 synth/sequencer £530
- KORG MS50 £250
- KORG Synthe Bass £150

- ROLAND SH7 £500
- ROLAND SH1000 £295-£320
- ROLAND SH2000 £295-£395
- ROLAND VK1 £430-£450
- ROLAND 700 Studio system £2500
- SEQUENTIAL CIRCUITS Prophet-5 £2000
- VOX Continental Avg £165
- WURLITZER EP200 Avg £398
- YAMAHA CP20 £600
- YAMAHA CP30 Avg £634
- YAMAHA CS10 £180
- YAMAHA CS15 Avg £300
- YAMAHA CS30 £400-£499
- YAMAHA CS60 Avg £1130
- YAMAHA CS80 Avg £2550

KEY

Brand and model are given in heavier type. This is followed by: one price only if just one instrument has been offered for sale; a range of prices (eg £395-£400) if two or three instruments have been offered for sale; or an average price (Avg £XX) if many instruments have been offered for sale.

Abbreviations used: Avg = Average price (see above); +cs = with case; +fl/cs = with flightcase; +Ls = with Leslie cabinet (followed by model number); +pddb = with pedalboard.

Any words in 'quotes' are seller's description.

Sound REVIEWS

Shadow Boxing

Joni Mitchell

Shadows And Light
Elektra/Asylum AS 62 030

Success does funny things to musicians. Joni Mitchell's progress has been remarkable in a lot of ways. Breathless hippie folk-singer, tentatively liberated female artist, chic would-be jazz singer.

If you saw her *Shadows And Light* TV special during BBC2's *Rock Week* in October, you'll have some idea of the contents of this album. All the songs from the programme are included here and the musicians are the same. The video images on the sleeve have been taken from the TV show, too.

Impeccable as many of these performances are, they're also as cold and detached as only video can be. Since Mitchell apparently doesn't give interviews any more and only rarely performs live, it's hardly surprising that she seems cut off from her audience here. Even the first proper song, *In France They Kiss On Main Street*, has been stripped of its earlier youthful enthusiasm. For a song about good times, it's startlingly methodical. Fun by numbers.

Much of Joni's earlier appeal came from her uncertainty. I don't mean the silly giggles of *Blue*, for example, but even as late as 1976's *Hejira* she balanced precision musicianship against vocals which suggested both doubt and a will to keep on searching. *Shadows And Light* comes over as the work of a woman who's chosen sophistication in preference to involvement or challenge.

Significantly, the best number here by far is the gorgeous *Amelia*, from *Hejira*. It's performed almost solo by Mitchell, who supplies stunningly effective guitar chording behind her infinitely yearning voice. Guitarist Pat Metheny appears towards the end to add wistful moans. I reckon this is the best song she's ever written, as perfect a marriage of melody and imagery as you could hope for. It emerges unscathed here, but only just, because at the end we are treated to *Pat's Solo*.

And that's a major clue to the problem. There's a sort of oppressive piety about this album, with its hyper-tasteful sleeve and its all-star cast of flawless musicians – the best that money can buy. I can't tell if Mitchell feels a little overawed in their company or if she identifies herself with these deluxe hired guns. Whatever, it's an offensive conceit to have tracks listed

on the sleeve as *Don's Solo* or *Pat's Solo*. These are session musicians, for Christ's sake.

The felony is compounded by Joni's obsession with becoming a jazz singer. Certainly she's moved way beyond the traditional notions of rock or folk. She doesn't sound like anybody else. But she seems to think she has to become a jazz musician to win a new kind of credibility befitting her elevated artistic status. Suck on this, Willy Nash – you're just a pop star.

She's wasting her time trying to perform *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat* and *The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines*, both co-credited to Mitchell and Charlie Mingus. Her voice isn't agile enough or light enough, and in *Dry Cleaner*, especially, her pitching is embarrassing. Just like the grotesque version of *Twisted*, on *Court And Spark*.

Still, there are some impressive moments on *Shadows And Light* – *Edith And The Kingpin*, *Fury Sings The Blues* and *Hejira*, for example. But none of them are really better than their studio-recorded counterparts. The main impression this album gives off is one of stasis, a gifted artist hung up on being gifted and not sure where to go next. She can retreat into over-priced perfection easily enough. It would be tragic, though.

Adam Sweeting

Glass Of Troubled Water, Guv?

Paul Simon
Hammersmith Odeon, London

The first time I saw Paul Simon in concert was around '73/'74 when he worked without a rhythm section. With his music firmly based around his

acoustic guitar technique, he toured with the South American group Urubamba and the gospel Jesse Dixon Singers. The concerts were magical. I missed the '75 *Still Crazy After All These Years* tour, so this time around it was my first chance to hear the legendary Steve Gadd playing live. Generally regarded as the best studio drummer there is, on this tour Gadd also proved himself to be nothing short of breathtakingly stunning as a stage drummer. He can play a bass drum and hi-hat rhythm pared down to virtual non-existence that still holds the band together like *Super Glue-3*. When it comes to actual feel and tempo, there doesn't appear to be any interplay between Gadd and the rest of the band. Throughout the gig he seems to be saying to them: Here's the feel and tempo, it's perfect, so don't mess with it!

On *Late In The Evening* he showed his polyrhythmic ability, sounding like a kit drummer and percussion section combined. Reports vary but he was playing either three or four sticks at once on that particular song. At times, Gadd thrashed his Yamaha kit until the drum riser trembled and quaked under the strain. The next minute only his hi-hat would be faintly audible in the complex yet perfect mix dynamics taken to the logical conclusion. The physical effort Gadd puts into each Paul Simon concert – at times throwing most of the weight of his body into his playing – must leave him exhausted after every show. To the delight of everyone attending, his legendary drum figure on *Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover* was extended into a brilliant solo which encapsulated all the qualities I have detailed.

Though the main interplay was between Gadd and Simon, I would not wish to understate the superb work of the rest of the band which is built around the nucleus of Stuff: Richard Tee on Fender Rhodes and Yamaha electric grand pianos, Tony Levin bass,

Pete Levin synthesisers, Eric Gale guitar. The horn section comprised George Young, Howard Johnson, Anthony Tooley and John D Perrin who between them played every wind instrument from flute to tuba.

Then the Jesse Dixon Singers joined Simon on stage, adding more than a touch of gospel to a segment of the show which included *Love Me Like A Rock*, *Gone At Last*, *Rivers Of Babylon/Amazing Grace*, and *Bridge Over Troubled Water*.

Richard Tee – who also provided second lead vocals to Simon – was supreme on the electric pianos. His sound was unsurpassable with just a touch of phasing on the Rhodes (Mutron *Bi-phase?*). Pete Levin's synthesiser playing just suggested some of Simon's deft string arrangements and orchestrations: a masterpiece of understatement. His brother Tony's bass playing fitted perfectly into the spaces Gadd had allocated and left vacant for him. George Young was the leading light of the horn section, shining during his alto and soprano sax solos. Simon has always had a justified reputation as a writer and performer who puts the very best musicians together within a framework which demands discipline yet frequently spurs players on to give their best performances. At this point, maybe I should stop talking about the band because we simply do not have the space to catalogue their brilliance.

Paul Simon is a musician and writer whom I have admired ever since I developed the good taste to appreciate him. He has changed his basic approach to his music inasmuch as he now plays a *Les Paul* for all but a couple of songs in concert. He came up through the folk music scene and crafted an acoustic guitar style which was a cornerstone of his earlier music.

His electric chops are simple and in the pocket, but would certainly not get him a gig with Stuff as rhythm guitarist. When he did use his acoustic (both



Paul Simon grasps *Les Paul* (left). The three women in tents are the Jesse Dixon Singers.

guitars had radio pickups) he faltered slightly – he obviously spends his time at home playing the *Les Paul*. But his shift of approach and use of electric guitar – which was well under way on the *Still Crazy* album – opened up all kinds of new areas to him as a writer.

And on the humanistic side, there may be a new catchphrase at Paul's concerts. It has been, 'Say something,' in the past, and when called out could launch Simon into a lengthy dialogue with his audience. One night at Hammersmith someone called out, 'Buy us a round,' which he responded to by saying he would try and work out how to do that. During the intermission drinks were dispensed in the bar and Simon met the £1000 or so bill.

Ralph Denyer

Rooster Flies Backwards

Atomic Rooster
EMI EMC3341

This brings back the near legendary organist Vincent Crane, still probably more remembered for his explosive playing with the original *Crazy World* of Arthur Brown than the later and briefly successful Atomic Rooster. It seems strange that Crane has been away for so long, because he is still a quite remarkable keyboard player – a fact which he demonstrates consummately well on this new album. The problem is, however, that the name Atomic Rooster seems to be a covering title for two musicians only: Crane himself and guitarist/singer John Du Cann. Du Cann is only a reasonable singer, but his guitar work is good – pure English Sixties post-Hendrix rock. They are joined on this album by percussionist Preston Heyman, but he would not appear to be a permanent member of the band. Frankly, this shows: the 'band' feels like just a demo put together by Crane and DuCann, for all the world as if it were recorded 8-track. Another way of looking at it would be that it sounds like it was recorded in the Sixties – very empty, very clean and little imagination in the production. If this sounds like a grade-one downer, well, it is. The songs aren't at all bad and Crane's use of the Hammond C3 (that's all he plays, no pianos, no synths) is exemplary. Du Cann's guitars are quite impressive and the album would probably be fine if it was better produced and arranged – there are still flashes when Crane's penchant for sinister or melancholy atmosphere pokes through the overwhelming flatness. It is to be hoped that Atomic Rooster will persevere, as there is a great deal of potential in this partnership. As it stands the album we have here is like buying one recorded 12 years ago and only just released. If you're a Crane fan – or just like Sixties music – it's worth listening to. Interesting.

Gary Cooper

Hike 'n' Sweat

Whitesnake
Live in the Heart Of the City
Liberty-United Artists Snake 1

As good a live album from this side of rock music as you are likely to hear at the moment. It's a double, recorded half in 1978 and half in 1980, interestingly, at the same venue. Sides one and two are the latter gig, sides three and four are from a couple of years ago. Both albums open with the Coverdale/Marsden-written *Come On*, and reflect that the band has tightened up and yet loosened in that fine rock tradition in recent years. Despite the presence of Ian Paice, Jon Lord and David Coverdale there's little suggestion of Purple about them and the guitar work of veterans Micky Moody and Bernie Marsden reveals that ability is just as necessary to make good heavy rock (this isn't heavy metal; there's a difference) as it is in other musical fields. Bass is handled by Neil Murray. Someone suggested to me that Neil is wasted here – he may well be, but he does the job asked of him wonderfully well.

The newer recording shows the band to be on the right lines, very polished and yet dirty with some fine playing. Live recording for the 1980 album was by the Stones' Mobile, the earlier one wasn't credited. They both sound OK but the 1980 is better. Forget your prejudices and listen to this one: it's good, especially Micky Moody's beautiful slide guitar work on *Love Hunter*. They really sound like they're enjoying it too, drawing a lot from blues rather than more modern heavy clichés. Maybe there's a lot of jamming going on? Either way the fun is infectious – and some of the playing is really nice.

Gary Cooper

Numans For Humans

Simple Minds
Empires And Dance
Arista SPART 1140

It could be possible to confuse Simple Minds with simple minded performers like Gary Numan. They share with Numan an almost obsessive preoccupation with the cold mechanics of dance and with the hypnotic symmetry offered by the clean, clear circuitry of synthesiser and studio.

The similarities end there. Gary Numan's music sounds simple because it is. It's a lot of surfaces assembled and polished into a single image and concept. For Simple Minds, on the other hand, their superficial logic is a desperately necessary means

of expressing an amazingly rich confusion. *Empires And Dance* starts working on you right from the title and the cover artwork. The Parthenon fades into the dusk behind a statue of a military man, maybe from the Great War. The opening track, *I Travel*, sets the scene: 'Timeless leaders stand so tall... Asia steals a new born son/Evacuees and refugees/Presidents and monarchies'. *Travel* is the means of escape, vital but futile. Mick MacNeil's railroad synth riff is urgent and pushing, but it's also inescapably circular.

The album is suffused with imagery of decaying greatness. *Empires* rise and fall with monotonous regularity: 'Europe has a language problem/America a language problem/I travel/Euro-bureau-Interpol' (*I Travel*). The notion of dance is another escape, echoing back to ancient Greece but transformed in a modern age into a clinical procedure, no longer some integral cultural expression.

Simple Minds summon some romantic memories to stave off technology's progressive sterilisation. *Constantinople Line* is inspired by Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train* – more visions of travel through a misty Balkan twilight. 'These tenants speak a traveller's language/Caucasian talk, they are saying nothing.' Plenty of yearning for an innocent age, too, when the man in the trench coat carried messages in invisible ink in his pack of *Sobranie*. 'Hey waiter I'm first class/Hey waiter where are we now.'

Peter Lorre would have to be on that train somewhere. Simple Minds sing about film too, in *Thirty Frames A Second*, but now it's no longer flickering black and white. It's crisp and sharp but the images keep changing. 'The league of youth/Is coming backwards to me/At thirty frames a second', 'Some friends of mine/I thought were dead/Are coming back'.

Likewise, the music throughout always questions and modifies apparently unchanging patterns. The dark thrust of *Celebrate* is powered by synthetic handclaps, then Charlie Burchill adds shadowy perspectives with his dense, murky guitar chording. Singer Jim Kerr manages to combine machine-age monotony with a chilly sense of foreboding, often very similar to Bryan Ferry's *Bogus Man* phase. In *This Fear Of Gods*, his doomy presence is gradually eroded by squawking guitar and keyboards, until finally he's just a feathery cluster of overdubs being edged out of the picture altogether.

Simple Minds achieve their most exhilarating musical performance here in *Capital City*, where guitars lap against a heavy, striding beat. Nothing is quite what it seems to be. Toyton motifs on organ and synth are by turns starkly pretty and insistently ominous as the focus shifts from hard to soft and back again.

Ironically, it's in *Constantinople Line* that they fall a little flat. The abruptly stopping rhythm and dripping-tap synth just sound too much like Numan for comfort. But that's a minor flaw in what is overall an album of startling richness and subtlety. I'd go and hear it if you haven't already.

Adam Sweeting

Sound REVIEWS

Records Received

U2 *Boy Island* ILPS 9646 A dramatic, confident live band. U2 have been faithfully reproduced on record by the ubiquitous Steve Lillywhite. Each of the four is excellent at his job with The Edge's ringing guitar tone and Bono's strong, aggressive singing distinctive twin trademarks. *Boy* includes interesting use of percussion. As yet, their impressionistic songs are lightweight and a little too similar, but there's no doubting the power of *I Will Follow*, *Twilight* and *Stories For Boys* to name but three embryo hitlets. Taj Mahal *Going Home* CBS/Embassy CBS 31844 The eccentric TM seems to be getting more mentions as writers search for a comparison for Ry Cooder than he gets off his own bat. Mahal doesn't have Cooder's breadth or imagination, but this compilation of tracks from the 60s and 70s shows how confidently he can tackle blues, gospel or any other form of black music. He gets astonishingly close to Otis Redding on *You Don't Miss Your Water*, and turns before your very ears into a 50s blues shouter for *Good Morning Miss Brown*. Good, hand-warming stuff. Cheap Trick *All Shook Up* Epic EPC 86124 The Tricks' hookup with George Martin begins promisingly enough with Zander Lennnon/McCartneying for all he's worth on *Stop This Game*, and Daltreying himself to death on *Baby Loves To Rock*. But much of it is heavy metal to our ears. It seems to be improving with playing as these boys have a habit of doing, but as of today, a disappointment, though it was the month's best sleeve. Small Faces *Big Hits* Virgin V2166 Ahhh. Here's a band that sounds even better than it did at the time. Kindly Megahelpful Virgin have even put 'immediate' on the label to aid that warm glow of nostalgia and arranged the tracks chronologically, which means a perfect side one (*Watcha Gonna Do 'Bout It to I Can't Make It*) and an unevenly brilliant side two with the timeless *Itchycoo P* and *Lazy S*. Oooh, it's as nice as an inflatable castle. Ry Cooder *Borderline* Warner Bros K56864 Fairly excellent, as is Mr Cooder's wont of course. The black/white vocal interplay is a delight as much as the acoustic/electric instrumental mixture. Each track has its own flavour and the only disappointment is that for once there are no real surprises, and our eyebrows are conditioned to being raised at an audacious arrangement or instrumental mixture. This is merely typical excellent Cooder and could be *Younger Brother Of Bop Till You Drop* (probably the worst review Cooder's had this year).

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Pete and Pete Impresseth Us

Below, our critics are hard-pushed to name their albums of 1980, a difficult task. Anyway, the list is intended to be the Best Of What We Heard In 1980. It was compiled in November, cos of deadlines, so bear in mind that albums issued in December don't get a look in. Overall Top Two albums were: 1 Peter Gabriel (left), and 2 Pete Townshend's Empty Glass (right). If you feel active, you could always look up interviews with these two geezers in back issues of SI: December '79 for PG, April '80 for PT.



- 1 Peter Gabriel Charisma CDS4019 Produced by Steve Lillywhite
- 2 Pete Townshend Empty Glass Atco K50699 Produced by Chris Thomas
- 3 Steely Dan Gaucho MCA MCF3090 Produced by Gary Katz
- 4 The Cure Seventeen Seconds Fiction FIX004 Produced by Robert Smith and Mike Hedges
- 5 Talking Heads Remain In Light Sire SRK6095 Produced by Brian Eno
- 6 Echo And The Bunnymen Crocodiles Korova KODE1 Produced by The Chameleons and Ian Broudie
- 7 Joan Armatrading Me Myself I A&M AMLH64809 Produced by Richard Gottherer
- 8 XTC Black Sea Virgin V2173 Produced by Steve Lillywhite
- 9 The Beat Stand Down Margaret (Dub) (B-side of Go-Feet Feet3) Produced by Bob Sargeant
- 10 Abba Super Trooper Epic EPC10022 Produced by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus
Tony Bacon

- Lamb, UB40 and Ray Pablo Falconer
- 8 Eberhard Schoener Video Magic Harvest SHSM2030 Produced by Eberhard Schoener
- 9 Gerry Rafferty Snakes And Ladders UA UAK30298 Produced by Hugh Murphy and Gerry Rafferty
- 10 Jeff Beck There And Back Epic EPC83288 Produced by Jeff Beck and Ken Scott
Ralph Denyer

- Bros K56864 Produced by Ry Cooder
- 9 The Searchers Sire SRK 6086 Produced by Pat Moran
- 10 Various artists More Intensified! Volume 2 Island IRSP 3 Various producers
Rob Mackie

- 10 The Specials More Specials 2-Tone CHR TT5003 Produced by Jerry Dammers and Dave Jordan
John Morrish

- 1 Wishbone Ash Just Testing MCA MCF3052 Produced by Martin Turner, John Sherry and Wishbone Ash
- 2 Roxy Music Flesh and Blood EG POLH002 Produced by Rhett Davis and Roxy Music
- 3 Jeff Beck There And Back Epic EPC 83288 Produced by Jeff Beck and Ken Scott
- 4 Whitesnake Live In The Heart Of The City Liberty-United Artists SNAKE 1 Produced by Martin Birch
- 5 Hybrid Kids/Morgan Fisher Cherry Red A RED 5 Produced by Morgan Fisher
Gary Cooper

- 1 Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes Love Is A Sacrifice Mercury 9111 081 Produced by Billy Rush and John Lyon
- 2 Tom Waits Heartattack And Vine Asylum K52252 Produced by Bones Howe
- 3 Toots & The Maytals Live At The Palais 29.9.80 Island TOOTS 1 Produced by Alex Sadkin
- 4 U2 Boy Island ILPS 9646 Produced by Steve Lillywhite
- 5 Small Faces Big Hits Virgin V2166 Various producers
- 6 Pete Townshend Empty Glass Atco K50699 Produced by Chris Thomas
- 7 Dexy's Midnight Runners Searching For The Young Soul Rebels Parlophone PCS 7213 Produced by Pete Wingfield
- 8 Ry Cooder Borderline Warner

- 1 Elvis Costello Get Happy!! F Beat XXLP 1 Produced by Nick Lowe
- 2 Peter Gabriel Charisma CDS4019 Produced by Steve Lillywhite
- 3 David Bowie Scary Monsters RCA BOW LP2 Produced by Bowie and Tony Visconti
- 4 The Beat I Just Can't Stop Go Feet Beat 001 Produced by Bob Sargeant
- 5 Talking Heads Remain in Light Sire SRK6095 Produced by Brian Eno
- 6 Pauline Murray And The Invisible Girls Illusive 2394 277 Produced by Martin Mannet and Steve Hopkins
- 7 The Cure Seventeen Seconds Fiction FIX004 Produced by Robert Smith and Mike Hedges
- 8 Magazine The Correct Use Of Soap Virgin V2156 Produced by Martin Hammet
- 9 Joan Armatrading Me Myself I A&M AMLH64809 Produced by Richard Gottherer

- 1 Dexy's Midnight Runners Searching For The Young Soul Rebels Parlophone PCS 7213 Produced by Pete Wingfield
- 2 Pete Townshend Empty Glass Atco K50699 Produced by Chris Thomas
- 3 Echo and the Bunnymen Crocodiles Korova KODE 1 Produced by The Chameleons and Ian Broudie
- 4 Peter Gabriel Charisma CDS 4019 Produced by Steve Lillywhite
- 5 Elvis Costello Get Happy!! F Beat XXLP 1 Produced by Nick Lowe
- 6 The Undertones Hypnotised Sire SRK 6088 Produced by Roger Behirian
- 7 The Specials More Specials 2-Tone CHR TT5003 Produced by Jerry Dammers and Dave Jordan
- 8 Simple Minds Empires And Dance Arista SPART 1140 Produced by John Leckie
- 9 David Bowie Scary Monsters RCA BOW LP2 Produced by David Bowie and Tony Visconti
- 10 Talking Heads Remain In Light Sire SRK 6095 Produced by Brian Eno
Adam Sweeting

CUTS 1980

Making the Mods march
The violence of mods and skinheads should not be seen as a unique phenomenon nor as a threat to social order. Many of these "young bucks" are simply expressing their boundless energy in tribal warfare, and the nation should channel this direction in the right place. Contention came on Maggie's, and back National Service, and get something right for a change... Francis Knley, Draycot Road, Leytonstone.

Blind Blake's Reg
I am trying to obtain a transcription of a Ralph McTell number called 'Blind Blake's Reg' which was recorded in 1962. It is on the Sire label.

MUSIC
The Bang Of Four's music is not instantly categorisable, which has led to some confusion, not least amongst the critics. The truth is that the Gang Of Four do not see themselves in any one musical category but refer to many in their songs. For example, the disco rhythm section juxtaposed with an orthodox R'n'B. This sort of

Page 24 - MUSICIANS ONLY, July 28, 1980

MUSICIANS ONLY MUSICIANS ONLY

Sources: The Grauniad; Uusi Laulu; Creative Space; EMI press release; London Evening Standard; Time Out; Musicians Only.

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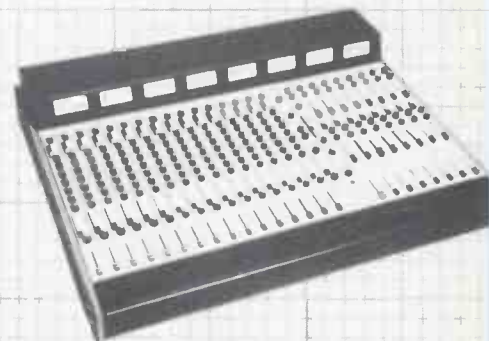
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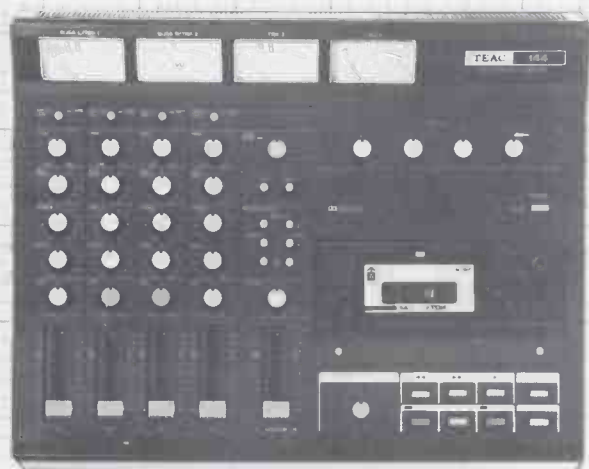
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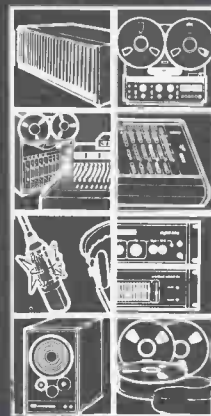
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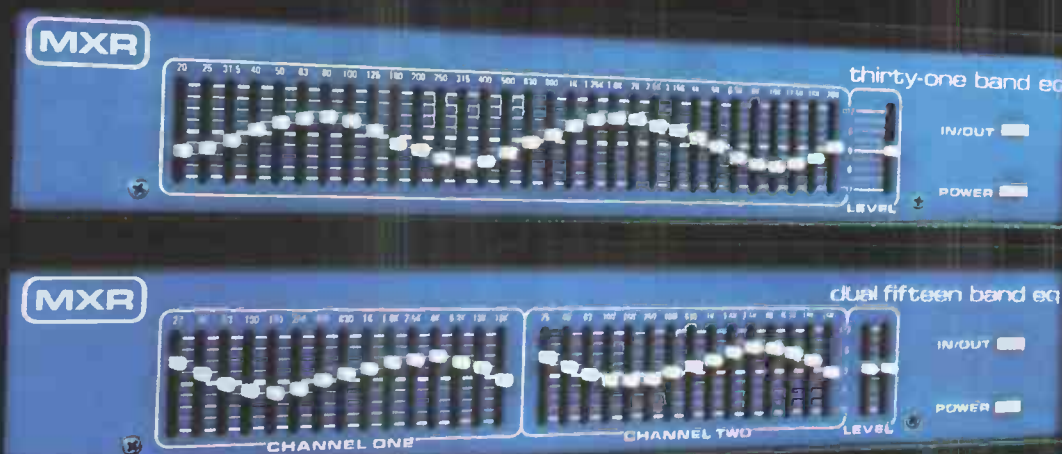
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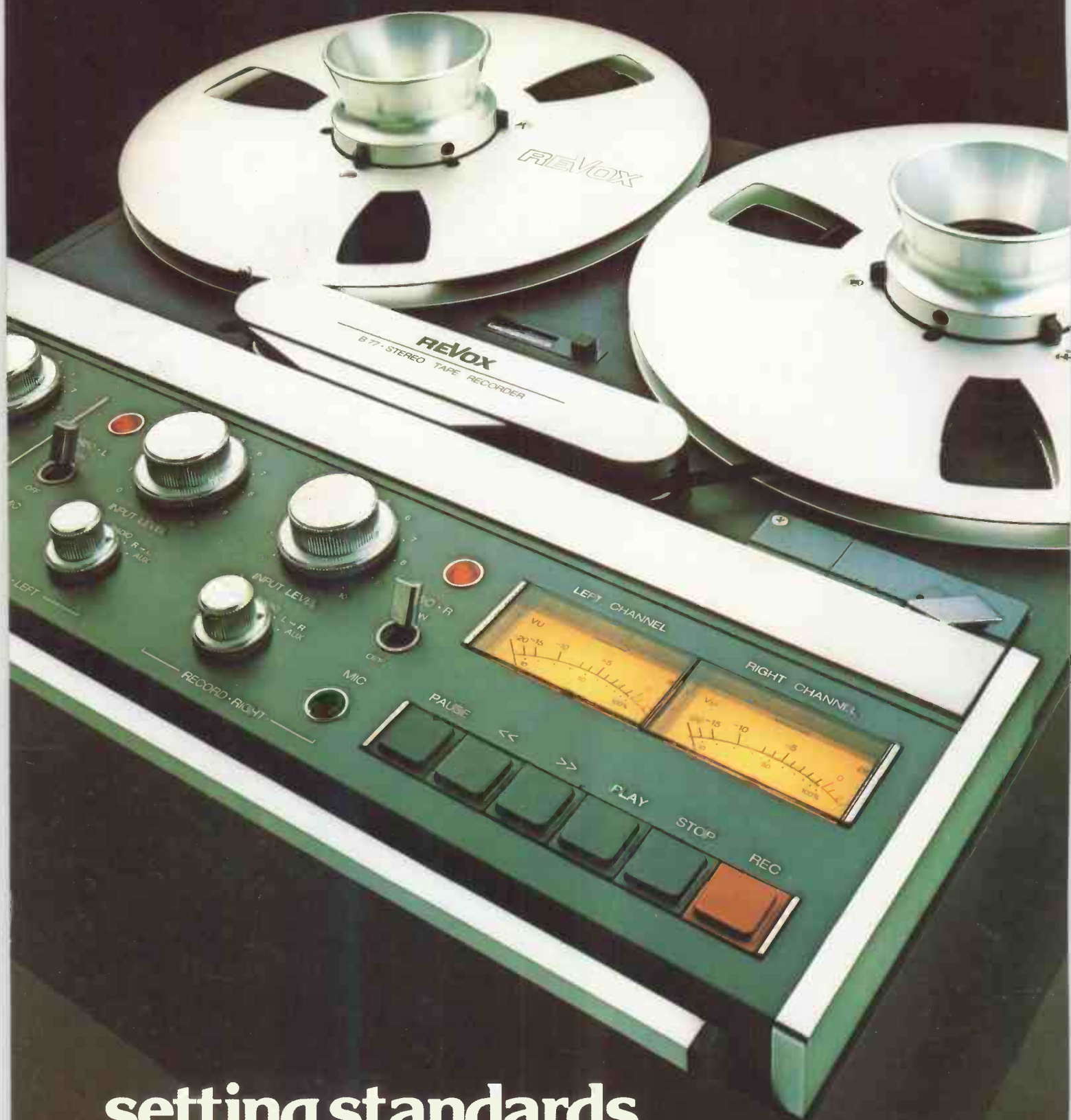
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