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MUSICIAN

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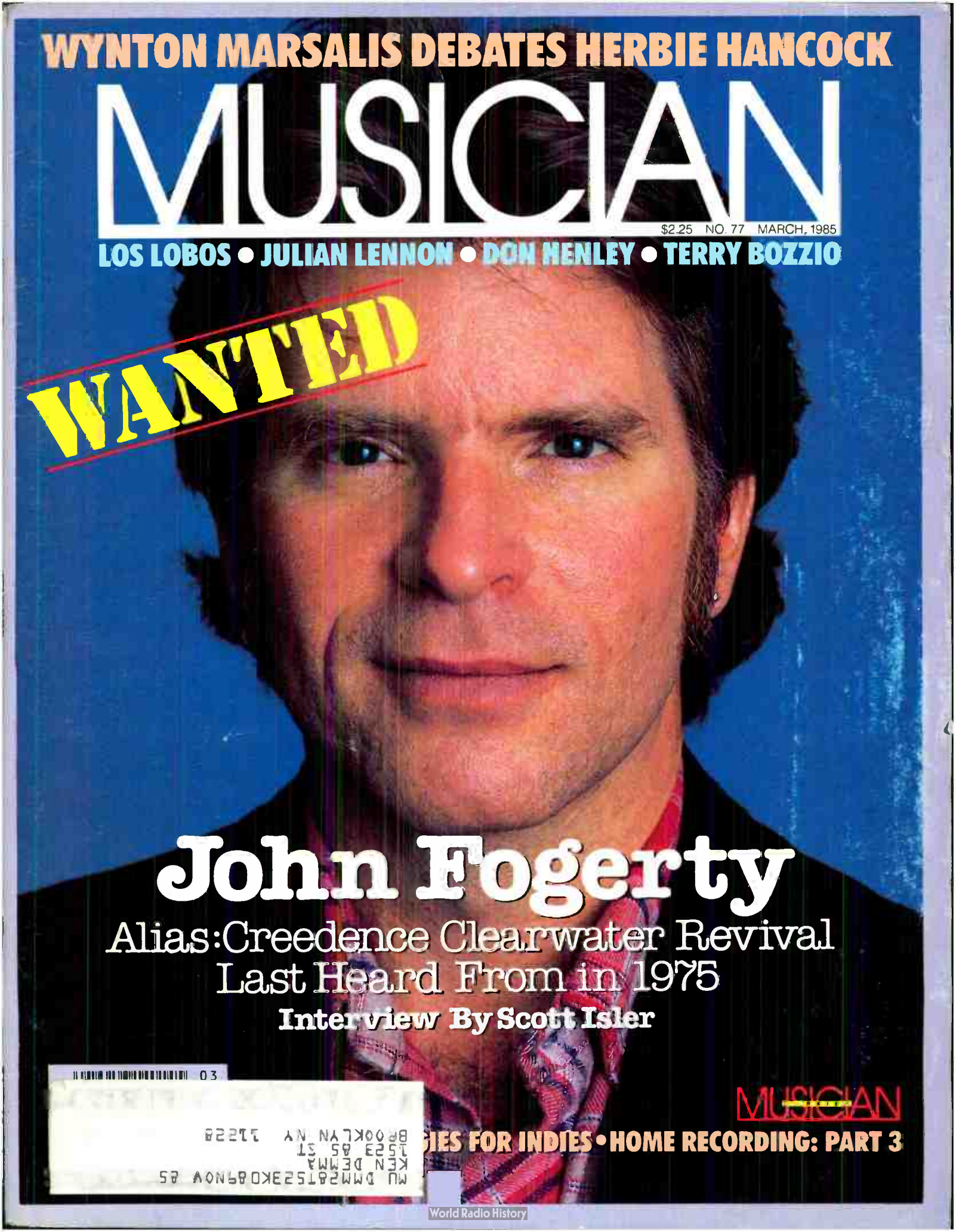
LOS LOBOS • JULIAN LENNON • DON HENLEY • TERRY BOZZIO



WANTED

John Fogerty

Alias: Creedence Clearwater Revival
Last Heard From in 1975

Interview By Scott Isler

MUSICIAN

GIES FOR INDIES • HOME RECORDING: PART 3

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KORG D

The introduction of digital synthesizers ushered in a whole panorama of new and complex sounds not previously available on conventional synths. But these instruments also brought with them an entirely new and foreign control system that made it a lot harder for musicians to get to those sounds. If you've ever tried to program a digital synth, you know what we're talking about.

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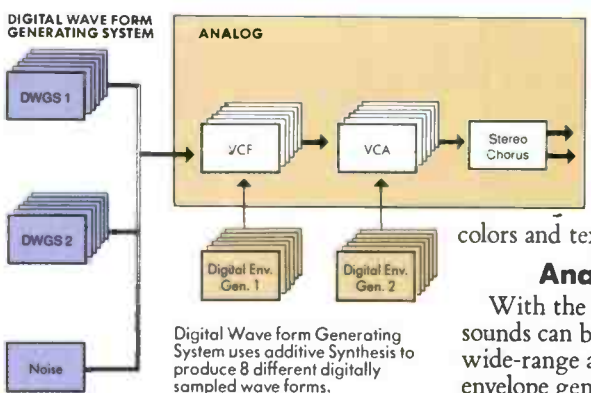
The DW 6000's 12 digital oscillators are based on the recreation of sampled sounds using additive synthesis. This advanced digital system enables precise control over 128 different partials/harmonics, which in turn allows for the exact replication of acoustic instruments and other sounds you just can't get with analog technology. Bright and percussive sounds digital is known for, like acoustic piano, "processed" Rhodes,™ "slap" bass, saxophone, tubular bells and more. Each DW 6000 voice employs two digital oscillators which can be mixed together or combined with Noise to get a virtually unlimited number of new sounds, colors and textures.



Digital Wave form Generating System uses additive Synthesis to produce 8 different digitally sampled wave forms.

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With the DW 6000, these digital sounds can be modified and shaped by wide-range analog filters, VCAs and envelope generators. You have control over 34 different parameters for the freedom to create a whole new vocabulary of synthesized sounds. And because the DW 6000's analog control system speaks your language, there are no longer any arbitrary barriers between you and your digital sounds. Each of the DW 6000's six voices features an individual VCF and VCA plus

g ves you the power of
ɔ icity of analog control.

W 6000

two of Korg's unique six-parameter envelope generators which offer significantly more control over sound than common ADSR-type envelopes.

Full Programmability

The DW 6000's 64 program memory can be quickly accessed in performance situations and custom-edited to help you create your own "personalized" programs. Rapid 14 second tape interface allows unlimited program storage. Even performance parameters like polyphonic portamento, pitch bend and key assign mode are programmable. Korg reaps the maximum benefits from today's programming technology to give you more for your music.

Full 16-Channel Capability

The DW 6000's full MIDI implementation provides control over note data, program select, pitch bend, vibrato, performance parameters, filter

mod and MIDI mode data. A MIDI THRU jack is included for convenient linking of multiple synthesizers. And by connecting a personal computer with Korg's new Voice Editing Software, you can access and display all program parameters on your monitor screen and alter program data directly from the computer. You can also graph individual envelopes and store an unlimited amount of programs on disk for instant retrieval.

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MUSICIAN

JOHN FOGERTY

Just in time for more Reagan, we get what we really need: the triumphant return of Creedence Clearwater's brilliant leader.

By Scott Isler ... **32**

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

MARCH 1985 NO. 77

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

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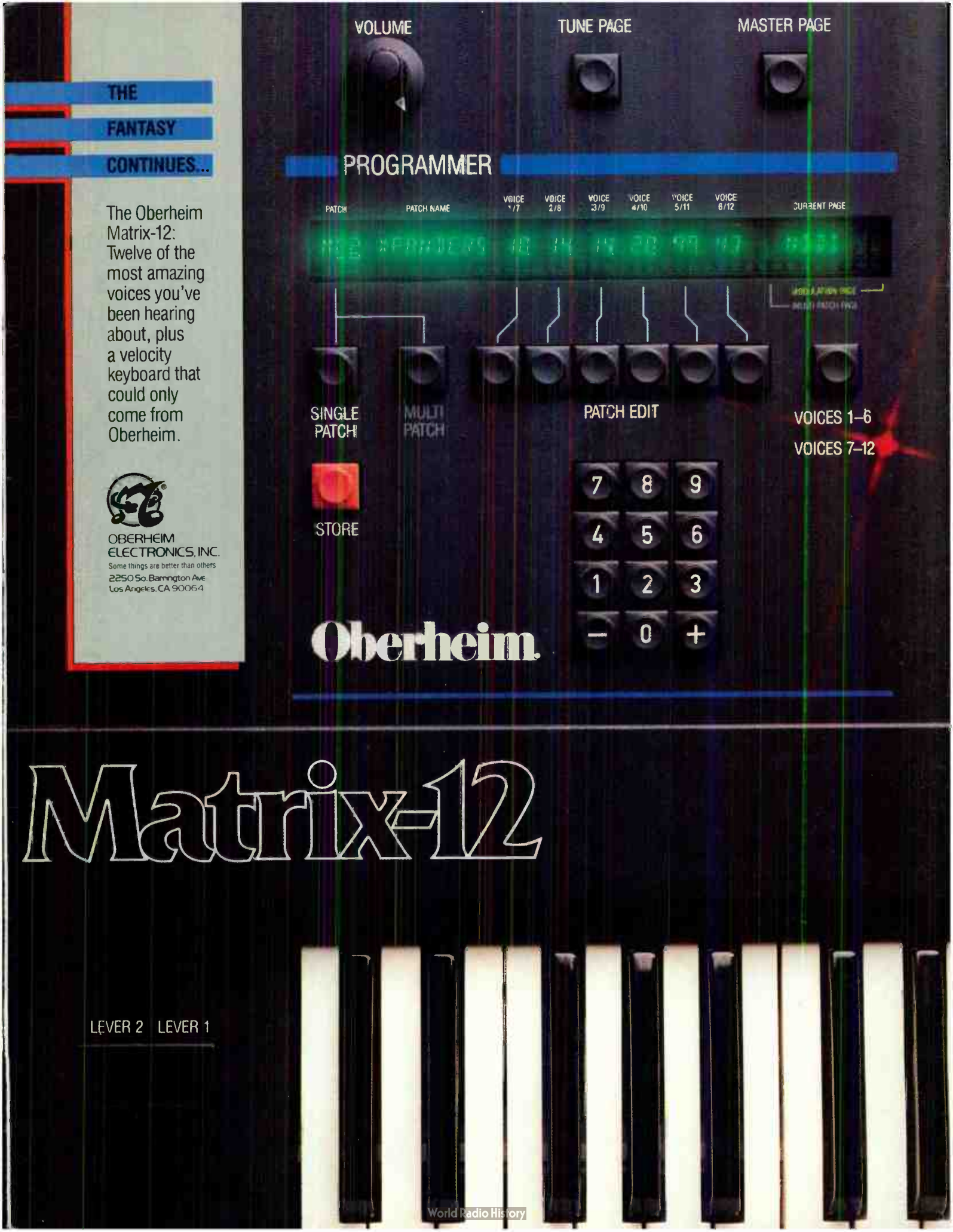

GREAT BODY

The bold body style of the G-707 guitar is just a surface reflection of the advanced engineering behind Roland's new guitar synthesizer system. The G-707 backs up its good looks with hot performance. Its graphite support bar eliminates resonant frequencies, cutting out dead spots, glitches and uneven response. With its rosewood neck and precision hardware, the G-707 is an impeccable guitar. Beyond that, it's a great synthesizer controller, fully compatible with any of Roland's guitar synthesizer modules, including the GR-700. The flick of a switch is all it takes to send the G-707 guitar into synthesis mode. Convenient controls mounted right on the G-707 let you program the GR-700 module and then adjust VCF Cutoff Frequency and LFO Modulation.

SOUND MIND

With its on-board computer, the GR-700 is a brilliant electronic mind. It follows the nuances of any guitarist's techniques and commands a spectacular sonic palette. Not even keyboardists have ever enjoyed this much synthesis power. Imagine using a guitar to play an entire string or brass ensemble, a fat synth patch or a steel drum. With 12 OCOs, 6 VCAs and 6 Envelope Generators, it's all possible. The GR-700 has a great memory, too. Store 64 different patches for easy footswitch access during performance. The GR-700's MIDI output even lets you tap into the power of any other MIDI instrument. The Roland Guitar Synthesizer System: A great body with the brain to back it up. RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040.

Roland

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Plugged In, Turned Off

I read the recent cover story on David Bowie by David Fricke with great interest. But trying to wade through the density of his writing made what should have been a pleasurable read into an exercise in logic and memory.

The evenness with which the expansions and inflations appear, the imposing metaphors ceaselessly calling attention to themselves, the general seamless *homogeneity* of the whole piece, leads me to an inescapable conclusion: You may correct (insert, delete, search, replace, destroy) me if I'm wrong, but do I not detect the signs of yet another promising writer falling prey to the scourge of this digital decade? The spectre of amphetamines and word processors!

I wish with all my might that he would have submitted the article about three rewrites earlier. Free of all the clever subthemes and complex asides, the story would have gone down like a soft spoonful of chocolate mousse rather than a prickly fistful of thorny mathematics (note hot simile).

Jeff Jourard
Marina Del Rey, CA

Anyone who sees David Bowie's *Tonight* album as anything more than transitional has got to be listening with undying devotion. It's a sure sign when Bowie has a new record in the stores: Out come the cover stories and interviews. It's an annual ritual. Is it because he's the shy, retiring type whose deepest thoughts are not easily expressed in public? The fact of the matter is he has a huge recording contract, and it's time to move those platters. It's not the Serious Moonlight tour; Serious Bank Balance tour is more to the point.

Gary Kimber
Downsview, Ontario

David Fricke should have named his article "Shit on Bowie" instead of "Serious Moonlighting." How can anyone say that Bowie's *Tonight* is inadequate, when the musical genius on every one of his works ranks up with the musical genius of Beethoven, Elvis Presley and John Lennon?

Bowie is *the* innovator who has helped to create half of the styles in rock and pop today. I'm sure if Bowie knew that the article would be so critical he probably wouldn't have contributed to it. FRANKIE SAY BOWIE RULES!

Douglas Ross
Hingham, MA

Isn't it ironic how there are so many critics trying so hard to find a flaw somewhere in David Bowie but only succeed in helping him come back to rock again and again bigger and better? No matter what they say, he's still the pioneer of New Music.

Anna Choi
Canoga Park, CA

Thanks to David Bowie there is still good music in this world.

Francine Hill
Curtiss, WI

Odd Coupla Letters

Thanks for the interview with Andy Summers and Robert Fripp. Some of us are very fond of the thing on Andy's right cheek, and don't appreciate it being airbrushed out. Not to mention dispensing altogether with his right arm. (That's our favorite arm, as well!) WE think it was a lot of cheek to do that....

The Unsigned Five

Sorry, shy ones, they're un-retouched photos. Except for Andy's make-up, of course.—Photo Ed.

Thanks a billion to Fripp and Summers and another billion to Vic Garbarini. I'm sure somewhere there's another baker that makes those green lime cakes. Mine always turn out green although the box says "white." Maybe I'll go into business.

Maiya Brogder
Las Vegas, NV

She Did—Ono She Didn't

Not only did she destroy the Beatles, it appears she drastically diminished Lennon's creativity during his hypnotic spellbound years with her. I wish Ono would just fade away and leave music to real musicians!

Steve Gurian
Toronto, Ontario

Your insightful interview with Yoko Ono is the first I've read since John's death that did not make me want to cry. She's long deserved the artistic credit that fans and critics would not give her simply because she "broke up the Beatles." Once again your fine publication rises above that mediocre and too often tired media genre known as the "rock press."

Randy M. Foley
Toledo, OH

Fixx Up Cy

Last night I saw the Fixx perform here in Baltimore. This morning, I picked up Jock Baird's piece on the Fixx. And wouldn't you know—he summed most of it up right there. Jock says the Fixx hasn't been able to strike a balance between their music, which is quirky, danceable and fun, and the accompanying lyrics, which are brooding and sometimes depressing.

This lop-sided arrangement makes for a confusing stage show. We enjoyed be-bopping to the hits, but when the band played less-familiar tunes, the audience was confused. Cy Curnin makes no real effort to draw his audience into the show. Anyway, thanks to Jock for a great piece. I hope Cy Curnin read it.

Natalie Davis
Baltimore, MD

Morse Response

It seems a bit contradictory for you to feature a favorable article on Steve Morse, followed not forty pages later by what amounts to a pan of his *Introduction* album in Rock Short Takes.

Yes, most of us do want more from our music than fast guitar playing, like skilled craftsmen laying down tight, balanced textures of technically and thematically interesting compositions.

It kind of makes me wonder what more Mr. Considine wants from *his* music: lyrics, probably. Like maybe about getting drunk or getting laid, with perhaps a little abuse of established authority on the side.

Susan Robertson
Southern Oregon

Great article on Steve Morse, especially bassist Jerry Peek. Go and get 'em, "Aw gee Jerry"!

Chuck Ketchie
Blowing Rock, NC

High dB Wake-Up Call

I just want to say thanks to Ira Robbins for the excellent article on the dB's. Wake up America: the dB's are here with real music, waiting to be heard.

Adrian Abrahamson
Jeffersonville, IN

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ANDREW CATLIN

10,000 MANIACS

More Songs About Toxic Defoliants

"I've been compared to Yoko Ono, Nico, Annabella Lwin," sighs Natalie Merchant of **10,000 Maniacs.** "I wish these comparisons could be avoided."

No kidding. When a band doesn't sound like anyone else, critics stumble all over their record collections to find comparisons. Despite a hardcore name, 10,000 Maniacs are a band devoted to "pretty music," says keyboard player Dennis Drew. That covers everything from reggae to British folk to Eno-esque electronics.

They formed in Jamestown, New York, near Lake Erie, a little over three years ago. Touring up and down the East Coast, they played for whatever they could earn in any town where one of the six members knew someone who'd let them sleep on the floor. They built a following in Georgia and briefly relocated to Atlanta, where they became friends with R.E.M. and other local heroes.

Since they still weren't making money, the Maniacs returned to Jamestown and lived with their parents when they weren't on the road. They played England, got a lot of press and had an indie hit there. Upon returning to America they signed with Elektra, who'll release their first major label album this spring.

Merchant's garret-land lyrics are fairly challenging compared to average rock dumbness. Many of 10,000 Maniacs' "pretty" songs are about war, nuclear weapons, even toxic defoliants. (Merchant has a second cousin with no arms as a result of Agent Orange.) Her writing is full of references to childhood, and enough Roman Catholic iconography to decorate a convent. Add melody and the band's wistful playing, and you get images of lost innocence and questioning adolescents.

"In a way we live in a paradise," Merchant explains. "Yet it's a paradise where we're constantly being told about Hell, the Hell that other people are going through. That's a tainted paradise to me."

– Bill Flanagan

PENGUIN CAFE ORCHESTRA

From Here to Eternity

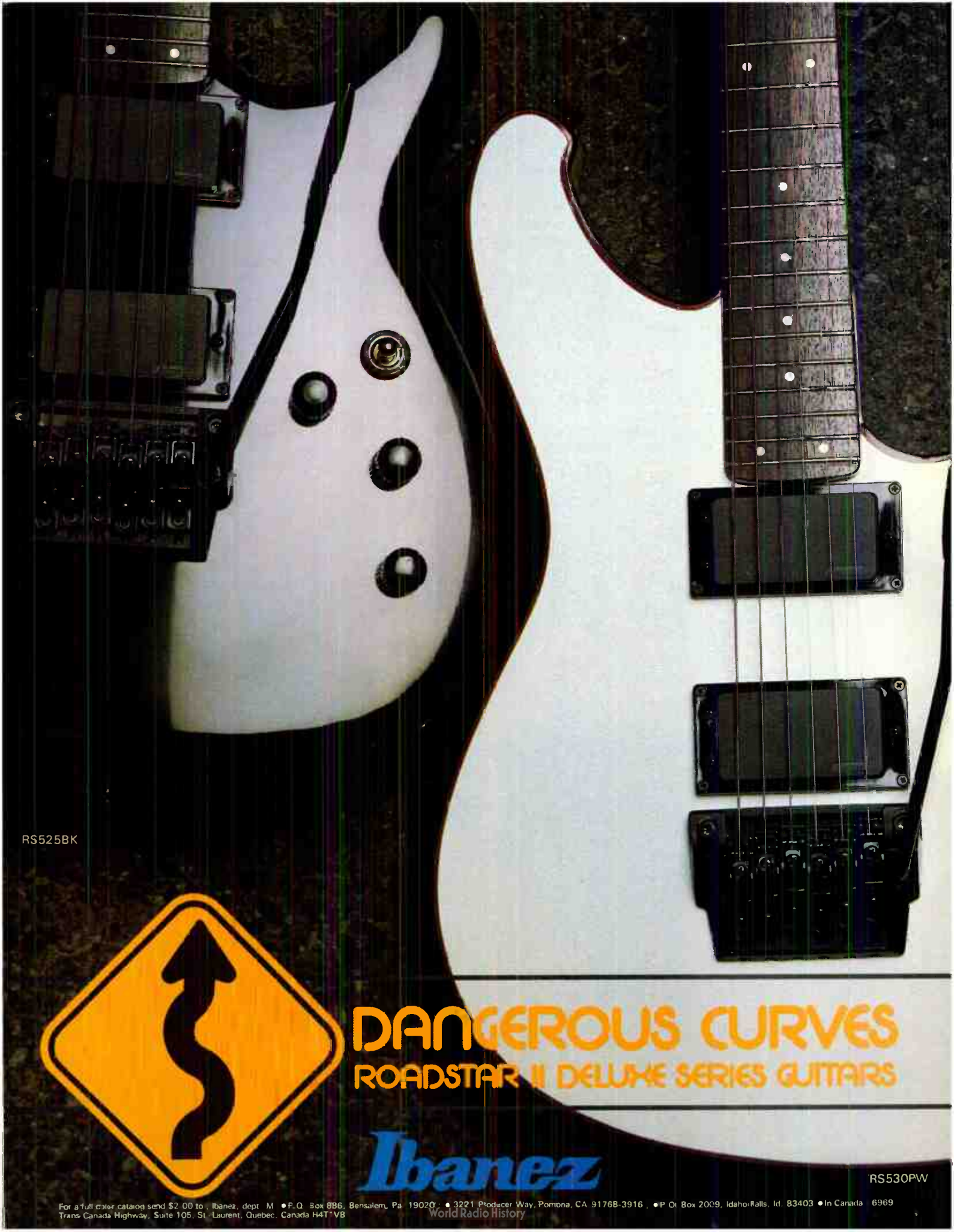
The turning point came near the end of **Penguin Cafe Orchestra**'s American debut. The audience at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, while appreciative of the band's gentle "imaginary folklore" style, was nonetheless restless, flapping programs in the overheated playhouse and giggling at the quirky movements of dancer/visual artist Gillian McGregor. But then the delicate, interwoven patterns of the numerous string instruments and piano subsided, leaving a lone viola to end "Numbers 1-4." The last note lingered in the air and faded imperceptibly. When the crowd finally erupted into applause, it was as if everyone had met in the strangely comforting stillness.

Simon Jeffes, founder and only full-time member of the Orchestra, explains that "that is where all our music is played, in that silence.... It takes you right to this portal and you stand at this gate and look through. Everybody experiences it, and then you turn around and go back and the applause starts."

It borders on trippy excess to call Penguin Cafe Orchestra, as Jeffes does, "a state of mind, a condition." But the idea of this shifting congregation of musicians *did* come to him in a dream more than ten years ago. Like a dream, the music evokes both the familiar and the other-worldly, frequently with wry humor as the bridge. "Eclectic" is the usual description; the Orchestra draws from Zimbabwe tradition, South American folk tunes, classical string quartets, and loop-like constructions of the Glass/Reich school. (Jeffes even did the string arrangement for Sid Vicious' infamous "My Way.") But Jeffes prefers that people "think of it as their own music, the music of their own home."

In ten years the Penguin Cafe Orchestra has released a mere three LPs and one mini-album. Full-scale tours are even less frequent, and the same set of players (six at present) never tours twice. "The music is delicate, and it's gentle," Jeffes says, "but it's not precious. It's not something that you can't take out, say, to New York."

And when it's greeted with occasional silence, so much the better. *– Marianne Meyer*



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LOS LOBOS

Can an East L.A. band find happiness in Hollywood? Conrad Lozano, Louie Perez, David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas think so.

HOWARD ROSENBERG

ROB TANNENBAUM

CHICANO ROCK OVER-ACHIEVERS PROVE THAT TO ADAPT IS TO SURVIVE.

One day last fall, I found a copy of John Fahey's *Blind Joe Death* in a nearby record store. Excited by this rare discovery, I played the LP as soon as I got home, expecting to be calmed by the fluidity of Fahey's acoustic picking. What I got, instead, was the disturbing modernism of the Alan Parsons Project. The Mastering Gods had played a cruel trick on me by pressing a copy of *I Robot* with a *Blind Joe Death* label and jacket.

When I first heard Los Lobos' *How Will The Wolf Survive?*, I thought the Mastering Gods were offering their apologies. The needle slid onto "Don't Worry Baby" and a blast of hell-fire rock snorted out of my wobbly speakers—romping backbeat, smokestack vocals and a Telecaster frenzy that cut like Scotty Moore in a nasty mood. "Gosh," I thought, pulling my socks back up, "this couldn't be the same band that won a Grammy Award for Best Mexican-American Performance by recording 'Anselma,' a seventy-year-old traditional Mexican song. How could any band with the milquetoast approval of the Grammies also rock you like a hurricane?"

"Nobody else has the guts to copy everybody the way we do," boasts guitarist Cesar Rosas of Los Lobos. "There's no other band like us," nods David Hidalgo, the band's large, ruddy co-frontman. The five members of Los Lobos are crammed into the dressing broom closet downstairs at the Rathskellar in Boston. They could be playing at a larger club and making more money, but they feel some loyalty to the club, which welcomed them long before their new album turned up on Best of '84 lists around the world—and besides, the barbecue upstairs is the finest in town. They could also be playing at a more sanitary club, judging from the zoo-sized rodents crawling on pipes just above our heads.

American music, like American cuisine, is just a synthesis of other peoples' traditions. "Rock 'n' roll began as a cross-pollination of different cultures," notes drummer Louie Perez. "And what we're doing is something very American; we're presenting a side of our particular background, our own musical heritage, which is, in fact, still very American. The Tex-Mex stuff we do is one of the earliest forms of Mexican-American music." This is a band that sounds equally at home on the East Coast or in American Music epicenters like Austin or Nashville or Chicago or Kansas City or Memphis or New Orleans or Detroit. Or in the *barrio* of Los Angeles, where they began eleven years ago.

Cesar Rosas, David Hidalgo, Louie Perez and Conrad Lozano were boyhood buddies in East L.A., a primarily Mexican-American neighborhood just a ten-minute drive from Hollywood. "We started hanging out in the backyard and

playing old Mexican ballads," the drummer explains. "It was just for our personal satisfaction. But we started to learn more about it, and we found that it was really challenging music to play. We started collecting all kinds of instruments. They were real easy to find in a pawn shop for ten or fifteen bucks, because everyone else wanted to buy Fender amps."

They mastered traditional instruments like the *guitarron*, *quinto* and *bajo sexto* (an oversized 12-string acoustic guitar), and released two LPs of acoustic folk on a self-distributed label. One day Lozano brought an electric bass to practice and they began combining Chicano folk with rock 'n' roll. "We started playing an electric set and we realized that the community would support what we were doing," Perez says. "We got some gigs at colleges and at community dances, and we were happier doing that than carrying a Hammond B-3 organ up three flights of stairs to play a wedding. But when the money started running out, we had to find different ways to make dough, so we ended up in Mexican restaurants doing exactly what we didn't want to do to begin with. It was just like being in a top forty band, going through the motions while people were eating."

Things changed again when Hidalgo bought an accordion and began imitating the wheezing party beat of Louisiana zydeco music. "The format of a Tex-Mex band is real close to a rock 'n' roll band, so we started bringing our amplifiers into the restaurant," Perez laughs. "Finally we got so loud they fired us. But we were excited about it again. There was nowhere for us to play, so we went back to our backyard.

"We became fans of the alternative music thing that started in the late 70s, and when roots-conscious bands like the Blasters surfaced, we felt that there was room for us in that movement. We'd met the Blasters because we were fans, and they invited us to play with them just as they were picking up speed."

Perez admits they were "scared about how we would go over" outside of their home territory, but that first show at the Whiskey earned them a bunch of invitations from other Hollywood rock clubs. Steve Berlin, the Blasters' sax man, began playing with Los Lobos on a regular basis. Berlin was born in Philadelphia but lives in Venice, California, the skateboard-and-hardcore capital of the west coast. His playing style attempts to resolve the soul of Philly R&B with the distemper of L.A. punk, and it works. Suddenly they were part of the hip L.A. underground, playing regularly with X and the hardcore bands, and opening for the Clash and Public Image, Ltd. They recorded songs for the soundtracks to the cult movies *Eating Raoul* and *Chan Is Missing*, and in 1983 Slash released "*...and a time to dance*," a seven-song EP produced by Berlin and T-Bone Burnett.

A Chicano band in Hollywood is bound to have some problems, no matter how good they are. "You've got to prove yourself," Rosas observes. "The rule is that this is America and rock 'n' roll is American, and you have to play like an Anglo."

"When we were playing these tiny places in Hollywood, we'd go into a song in Spanish and you'd hear a few snickers and a few 'ayahooo's," Perez recalls. "But once we proved that we were serious about what we were doing...."

The end of the sentence is drowned out by the cumulative terror caused by a nuclear-sized rat ("That was a fucking bear," Lozano trembles). But witness Perez' theory in action: Los Lobos could play "Don't Worry Baby" on the kazoo and still make it rock, and once an audience gets over the uniqueness of dancing to an accordion and *bajo sexto*, there are usually no problems.

"When we started touring, we were lucky to draw informed audiences who had few racial or cultural preconcep-

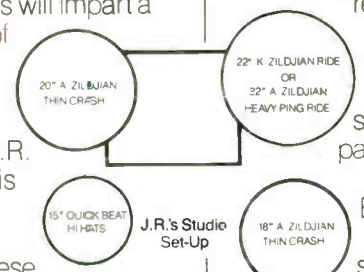
J.R. ROBINSON

CREATING "PLATINUM" CYMBAL GROOVES

His distinctively accented 16th note Hi Hat pattern triggers the seductive rhythmic pulse of Lionel Richie's "All Night Long." A combined 8th and 16th note version of this technique pins down the groove for Michael Jackson's "Rock With You." Both merge with other signature Hi Hat rhythms in the steamy modern funk of Rufus & Chaka Khan's "Ain't Nobody."

His name is John "J.R." Robinson and he is one of the first call drummers for important "A" session dates in Los Angeles. Recognized as a thoroughly schooled drummer with clock-solid time and musically sensitive grooves, Robinson is requested by leading producers like Quincy Jones because he instinctively knows what techniques will impart a special sense of magic to hit rhythm tracks without cluttering things up. J.R. underscores this point while explaining his Hi Hat work on these platinum singles.

"The 8th note thing comes from a Shank/Tip method where you hit all of the downbeats on the shank of the stick and the 'ands' on the tip to create an alternating pattern of louder and softer beats. When I go to 16th notes, I use the same method with double sticks, so I use my right hand for the shank part of it and my left for the tip. It adds a nice warmth to the song without creating sterility."



J.R.'s Studio Set-Up

Robinson's reasons for choosing Zildjian cymbals reflect his single-minded commitment to get the best possible rhythm sounds for whatever part he's playing.

"I use the 15" Quick Beat Hi Hats because they have a modern sound. They have a 'larger' sound and I can play anything from a real soft ballad to a real heavy rock song with these—they cover all bases. Lots of times I'll play between my Ride and Crash cymbals real 'ightly, then play the Hi Hat open with my foot on 2 and 4 and they 'sing' real nicely when they're struck. They have a crisper, fuller sound than any other Hats.

"I switch back and forth between my two Ride cymbals: a really nice 22" K. that's not too dark or dominant with bright overtones. It blends into most of the tracks I do. Sometimes I use my other Ride—a 22" Heavy Ping—for rock & roll and when I need a real bright sound.

"I work with the top engineers and they like Zildjians better than anything else. Zildjians are the 'spectrum' cymbal, you can play anything you want with them."

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J.R. Robinson is currently recording with leading artists like Kenny Rogers, Stevie Nicks, Jeff Lorber and David Lee Roth.

tions about what we are," Berlin observes once the mega-rodent has vanished. "At the same time, we got a lot of garbage when we opened for the Clash, but those morons weren't gonna like anybody that wasn't the Clash. 'Fuckin' spics! Fuck you! Go back to Mexico! Fuckin' beaners!'"

Los Lobos have also taken some abuse from friends in East L.A. who see the band's rock club tours as betrayal. "The whole alternative music scene has been addressed by the media as a hardcore/punk thing, and the (Mexican) community was wondering what the band was doing," Perez says. "It took them a while to realize that we're still very much the band that we started out to be, we've just expanded a little bit. They realized that we're gaining sure footing as legitimate contributors to contemporary music, and that's a special thing for us, as Mexican-Americans."

How Will The Wolf Survive? sucks the listener in, starting with Rosas' howling "Don't Worry Baby." "A Matter Of Time" is next, a beautiful ballad by David Hidalgo about a migrant worker leaving his family to look for work north of the border. And from there it branches out expertly into country and western ("Our Last Night," with Hidalgo on pedal steel), swinging R&B ("I Got Loaded," "Evangeline") and raving Tex-Mex ("Corrida #1," "Serenata Norteña"). "Li'l King Of Everything" is a 3/4 acoustic taste of the band's Chicano heritage, that segues into "Will The Wolf Survive?"

"We were trying to come up with a unifying theme for the record," Louie Perez says later, standing outside the dressing room and watching the crowded club pogo to a local garage band. If *"...and a time to dance"* had a theme, it was their cover of Richie Valens' "Come On Let's Go," and they wanted something more than a party anthem for this album. "I was looking through a copy of *National Geographic* and I found an article called 'How Will the Wolf Survive?' Since we're 'Los Lobos' (Spanish for 'the wolves'), I thought it would make a good song title.

"It started out being about the wolf and the next verse turned into a message of hope for the middle class. And the last verse is about how bands all over the country are trying to preserve something close to the heart of America. So yeah, it's about whether or not Los Lobos will survive. Not only us," he says, nodding toward the stage, "but also the band that's playing right now."

There's a lull in the conversation a few minutes later, and Rosas bursts out "Let's talk about the Circle Jerks," a big smile emerging above his goatee and below his dark glasses. The band's admiration of hardcore music is evident not only in conversation, but also onstage—not so much in their antics ("we're too old to jump around," laughs Lozano) as in their musical ferocity. So we talk about the Circle Jerks for a while, and Steve Berlin praises their drummer Chuck Biscuits. "He plays like Billy Cobham times ten," the sax man gushes, and there's another lull. "Let's talk about Fear," Rosas suggests.

Berlin proudly announces that he went to the same high school as Lee Ving, Fear's ferocious singer. He also raves about Suicidal Tendencies' hardcore rap "Institutionalized," yet it was his 45 collection that inspired the band to cover Little Bob & the Lollipops' swinging "I Got Loaded" on *How Will The Wolf Survive?*

I ask Berlin if he thinks there's a common thread that links such seemingly disparate Slash bands as Los Lobos, X, and Del Fuegos and the Blasters (who Berlin left after *"...and a time to dance"* to be a full-time Lobo). "Yeah," he snickers, "we're all broke." "But we're all broke together," Rosas interjects. "We're the bands that other labels didn't want to take a chance with."

"Actually, I think there is something all the Slash bands have in common," Berlin muses. "A lot of us have similar record collections and a shared appreciation for certain people, like Hank Williams and George Jones. The Del Fuegos' heroes are the Blasters' heroes, and they're our heroes, too. If you went to everybody's house, there would be the same bunch of records they consider important." Pause. "And nobody on Slash has funny haircuts."

LOBOTOMY INSTRUMENTS

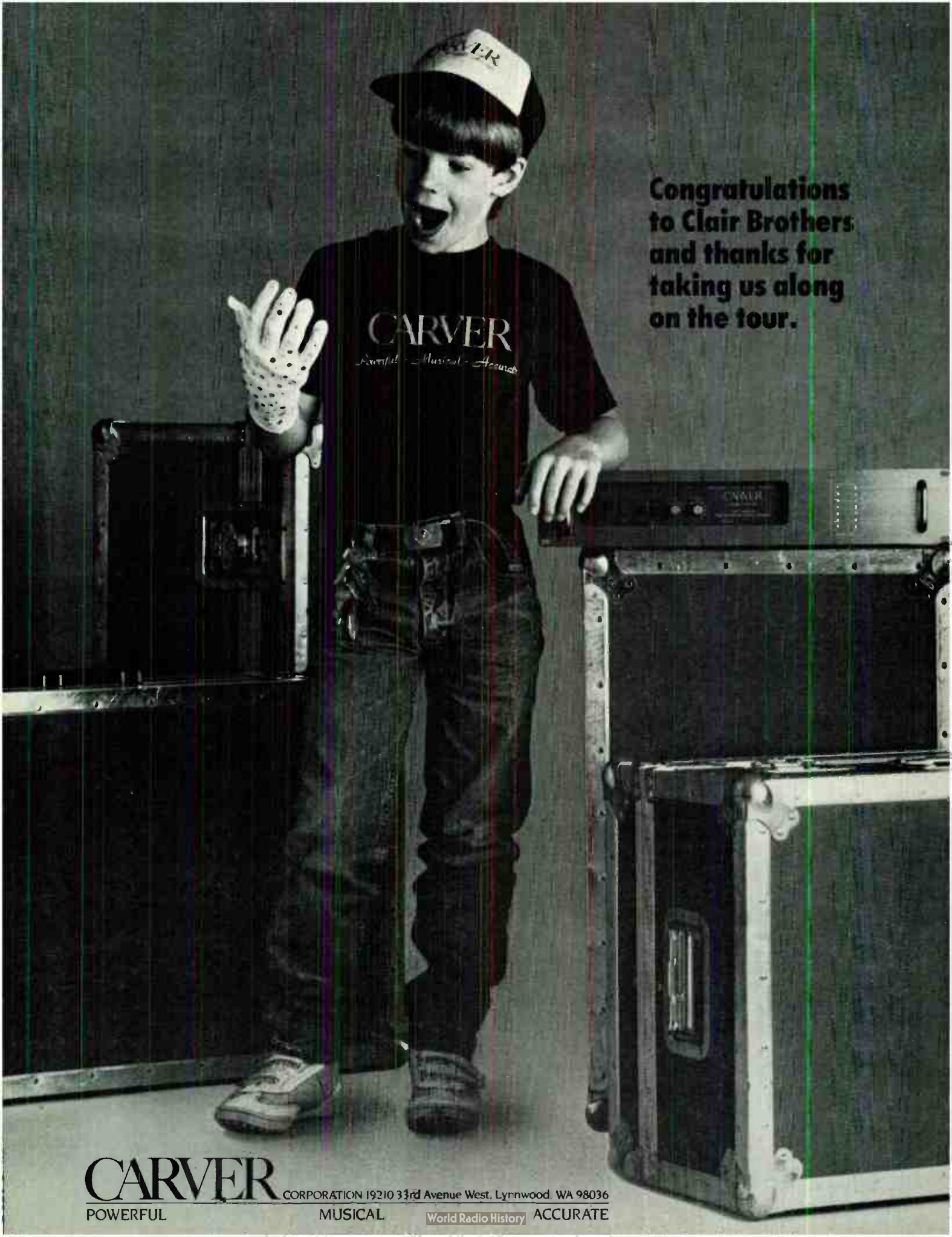
David Hidalgo plays a Fender Telecaster (mid-70s) and a '66 Gibson Firebird through four 10-inch Fender Concert amps and a Fender Vibratone Leslie extension speaker. Both guitars have D'Addario XL-11 strings. His accordion is a Hohner Corono II.

Cesar Rosas sports a '68 Telecaster and a self-made Japanese guitar with Fender parts, also played through four 10-inch Fender Concert amps. His strings are D'Addario XL-11 Rock Jazz. Rosas refused to give us the brand name of his sunglasses.

Conrad Lozano plays a re-issue of a '62 Fender Jazz bass with an Ampeg SVT bass amp and a Sonic Bass Reflex cabinet with an 18-inch Electro-Voice speaker and D'Addario chrome CB-105 long scale strings.

Louie Perez bangs on a Ludwig Champagne Sparkle Kit with a 24-inch bass drum, 12-inch rack tom, 18-inch floor tom, Zildjian cymbals and two snares—a WFL pre-Ludwig from 1950 and a 1940 Slingerland Radio King.

Honker **Steve Berlin** carries a Selmer MK VI tenor with a customized Kurg Heisig mouthpiece and Solo Esser reeds; a Buescher baritone fitted with a Stratton mouthpiece and Rico Plasticover reeds; and a Yanigisawa soprano with a Selmer S80 mouthpiece and Rico reeds.



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JULIAN LENNON

VIC GARBARINI

BLUE GENES: A FATHER'S TRUE SON LETS IT OUT AND LETS IT IN

A key strength of Julian and co-writer Justin Clayton is "we hate each other's work."

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

I like that song but, jeez, sometimes it gives me the creeps, ya know?" That's my cab driver's professional assessment of Julian Lennon's first hit single, "Valotte," currently blaring forth from the Checker's tinny radio. "I mean, how come he's gotta copy his father so much, huh?" It's not all copying, I counter. I just interviewed him and he talks exactly like his dad, so a lot of it has to be in the genes. By now the cabbie's checking me out through the plexiglass. "Oh, yeah? Is he stuck up, or what?" Naw, he's a nice kid. Very self-effacing. Very vulnerable. By now I'm launching into the whole story: Kid is born into an unhappy marriage around the time of "Please Please Me." Spends early childhood basically out of sight and out of mind of Beatle John. Vague memories of a big bus on a Mystery Tour. "All I can remember is holding a red balloon...." Gets closer to dad in his teens. Then the assassination, followed by a lost season or two trying to snuff out the pain amid the excesses of the London club scene. Finally rejoins childhood buddy and musical collaborator Justin Clayton. They form songwriting team, but with Julian playing the softer-edged McCartney role on piano and drums. Engage Phil Ramone to produce first album after hearing Billy Joel's *Nylon Curtain* on the radio one day. (Ironically, Joel intended the album to be his Beatles tribute.)

I explain that *Valotte* recalls the senior Lennon's wistful, introspective early-70s work both musically and lyrically. Naturally, Julian lacks the depth of his father's work of that period. After all, he didn't have fifteen years of anger and self-discovery to bring to *Valotte*. What songs like "Too Late For Goodbyes," "Lonely" and "I Don't Know" do share with his father's work is an uncompromising sense of honesty, the courage to explore both his inner and outer worlds, and the humility to admit his doubts and confusions and begin a genuine search for real values. And if that kind of honesty isn't the surest road to real depth then I don't....

"Gee, that's really great," says the man behind the wheel. "But we've been sitting here for five minutes already, and I'm gonna have ta throw da meter back on if ya don't get out." Okay, okay. Jeez....

MUSICIAN: *Let's start with the obvious. Valotte is laced with stylistic and conceptual references to your father's work. How much of that is heredity, and how much a deliberate borrowing?*

JULIAN: Well, take the example of when I move into falsetto from normal singing. In some cases the only reason I do it is because it's out of my range, which was the case for him as well. On the other hand, I don't sit down and consciously concentrate on copying his style or anything he did. I just let it flow.

MUSICIAN: *Did you have a kid's normal ambivalent feelings towards his father's work?*

JULIAN: I was fascinated by it all, but it was hard growing up and coming to terms with how big he was. It was just before my early teens when I first recognized the fact that he was my Dad in the "Biz," and all that. He'd just started *Walls And Bridges* here in New York and I'd come over for a short visit with no idea he was in the studio. So he dragged me along, which was great. That was the session where I wound up playing drums on "Ya-Ya." But it wasn't a conscious effort to get in time or in tune. If I'd known I was being taped I would probably have tried harder....

MUSICIAN: *Wait...you didn't know?*

JULIAN: Oh, no! He just sat down at the piano and started to play and there was

a snare drum and some sticks lying there so I tried to keep in time with him. Then after we'd finished we sat down for a drink and they switched on the tape and there I was.

MUSICIAN: *It's interesting that you cited* Walls And Bridges *as the point where you became conscious of your father's work, as that's where I'd place* Valotte *in terms of musical influences and mood—sort of mellow and introspective. How would you describe the mood being projected there?*

JULIAN: I don't know...emotional confusion, maybe. I think it was a long buildup of emotions about situations with a girlfriend, arguments, whatever. The feeling side is about growing up, especially the last four or five years.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of emotional uncertainty, is "Well I Don't Know" addressed to your father? It sounded like you were trying to open a dialogue with him on some level.*

JULIAN: Yeah, I wrote that about him but originally it didn't start off that way. We did a rough 8-track of the music and we were sitting around talking about the feeling of certain movies, with lampshades knocking over and stuff, so that got me going. To me the music sounds like a whole mixture of Dad's styles put together, little bits here and there.

MUSICIAN: *In that song you sing "I fear you, do you fear me?" Did you fear him?*

JULIAN: Yes, but because of his position. I can't exactly describe it but there were times when you'd feel that he was so worldly and well known, and people related to him...well, it was scary sometimes.

MUSICIAN: *Are you and Justin on the same musical wavelength, or is there some creative tension between you?*

JULIAN: Well, we hate each other's work. (laughs) That's how it starts out: He comes up with something and I say, "No way!" Then I'll come up with something and he'll say, "No, that sounds too corny," and we just argue and argue. Our other guitarist, Carlos, agrees with everything, so it's just Justin and I that fight, and somehow it helps things get worked out. His taste is slightly more hard-edged than mine, and I think that's a good thing.

MUSICIAN: *That tension may aid your creativity, but you rarely express any overt anger or frustration in your work.*

JULIAN: Well, yes, but you've only heard this one album. Two of the best songs we did didn't make it on this album, but we hope are going to be on the next. They're kind of political and they deal with...well, I don't want to explain them because I'd rather just have you hear them and see what effect they have, if any. One of them called "Wheel Of Fortune" started off when Justin had an idea and I said, "No way!" So I said goodbye and walked out on him, and he said to Carlos, "Listen, what am I going to do—he's just being stubborn and not cooperating." Carlos said, "Just do it." Meanwhile, after I was out in the rowboat for about an hour I began to feel guilty about just leaving him like that. I came back and he had most of the song worked out but I didn't like the music. Then we got the idea of talking about the world situation and we jotted down various notes and suddenly the whole feeling of the song changed. So we did our "I hate this, you hate that" routine and eventually that became one of the best songs we'd ever done—purely from being annoyed with each other.

MUSICIAN: *"Valotte" is also credited to the three of you. Was that another product of the "creative argument" school of songwriting?*

JULIAN: No, Justin had that lick, those first seven or eight notes, worked out on guitar and he didn't know what to do with it. So he kept playing it over and over and I sat down at the piano and worked the rest of the music out, but when we went to France we pulled it apart and put it together again from scratch. The actual chateau where we were recording was a beautiful old place, and we thought, "Wouldn't it be nice to live here?" That's why it starts off "Sitting on the doorstep of the house I can't afford...." At first we thought, "What a dumb line!", but I think it's great that it's so straightforward—it says what it is.

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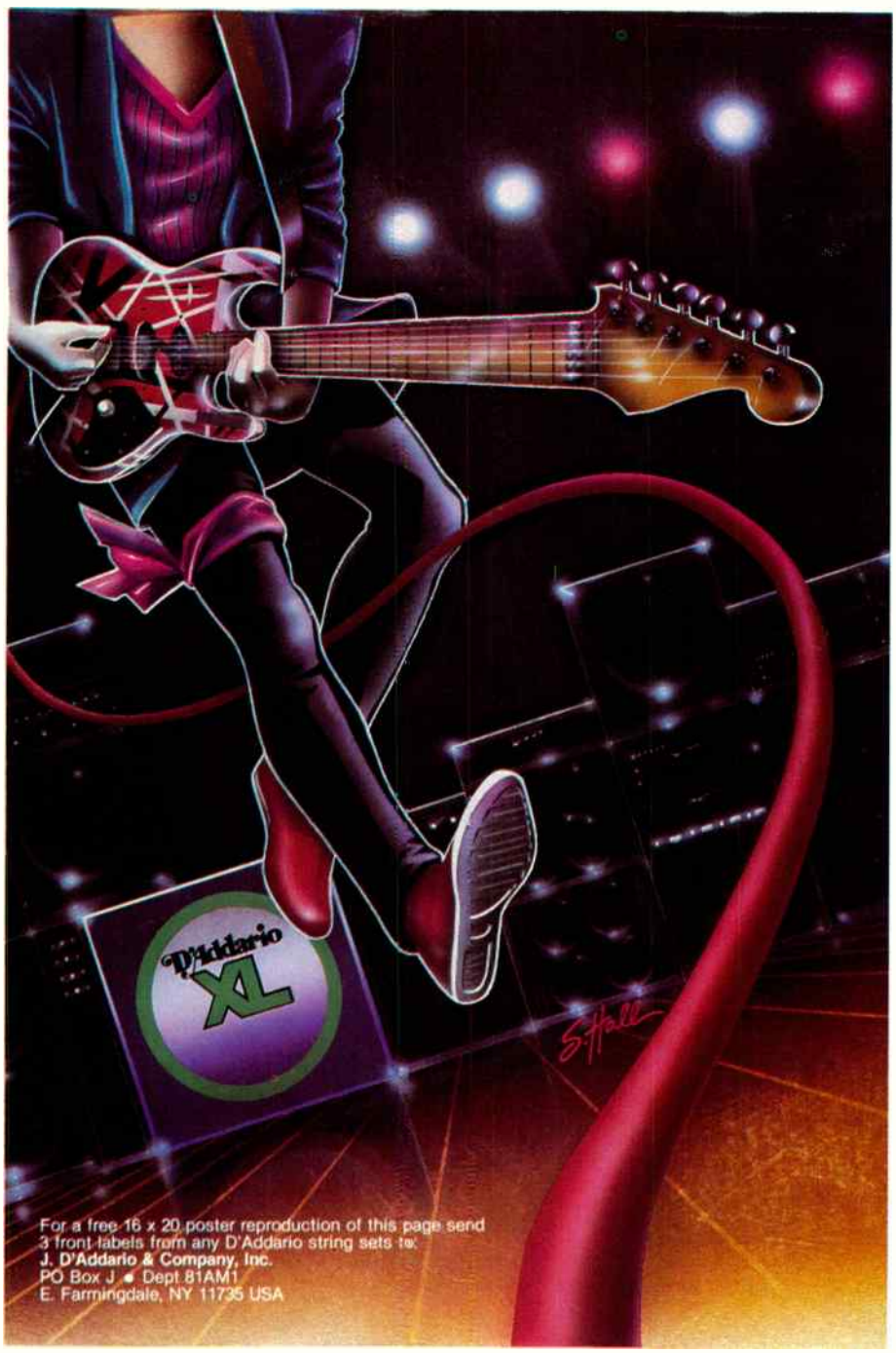
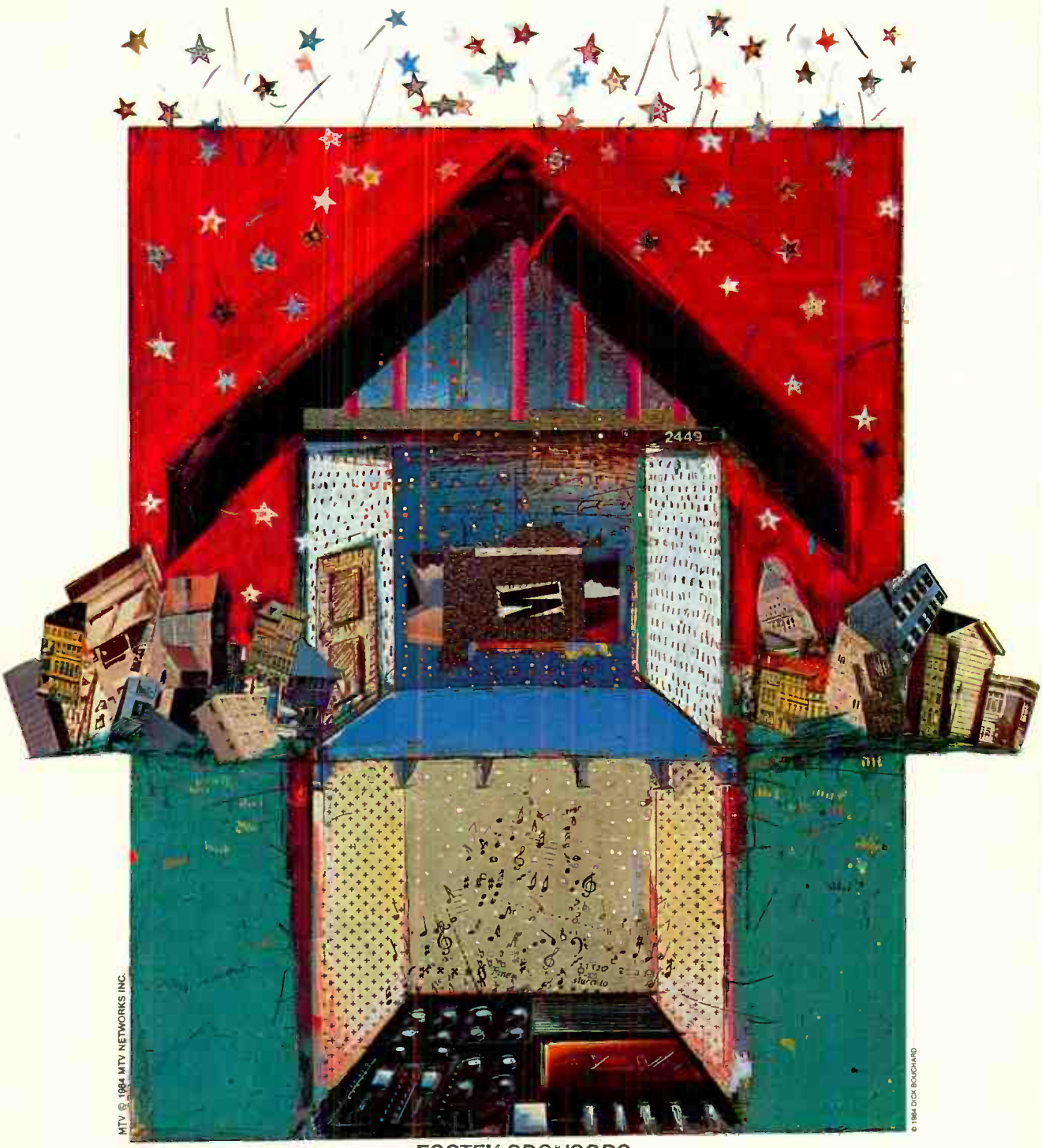
MUSICIAN: *What type of music did you listen to when you were growing up? Is there anybody you can point to as a critical influence on your piano playing?*
JULIAN: Steely Dan, the Tubes, the Police once in a while...but it was Keith Jarrett that really hit me. I loved listening to solo piano and chord progressions, not straightforward arranged songs but something that just flowed. At the time I was living at Ray Cooper's house, who was percussionist for Elton John, and he also played piano and was teaching me the drums. He put a Keith Jarrett tape on and I went, "Ohhhhhh...if only *I* could do that." And ever since then I've tried not to recreate or copy, but just to get the same feeling.

MUSICIAN: *Is writing therapeutic for you? Does your unconscious ever send up lyrics that help reveal yourself to yourself?*
JULIAN: Yeah, I often wonder why I wrote what I wrote. I'll just be scribbling away and I'll suddenly think, "Wait, what am I saying here?"
MUSICIAN: *What do you know about yourself now that you didn't know before you wrote this album?*
JULIAN: I didn't think I was as... lonely...as I am. Writing about it on paper I didn't think too much about it. But looking back on it I thought, "Well, I didn't feel that lonely." But maybe I was.
MUSICIAN: *Which songs on the album do you feel closest to?*



JULIAN: "Lonely," "Let Me Be," "Well I Don't Know" definitely....
MUSICIAN: *There's certainly a consistent theme connecting those songs. Were you lonely as a kid growing up?*
JULIAN: Yeah, but I thought of it more in the sense of you meeting people and you don't know if they're really your friends....
MUSICIAN: *...Or whether they're just interested in you because of your name?*
JULIAN: Yeah, and there are so many people around, and even if you think you have friends you're still on your own and you've got to come out into the world with your own ideas and make your own decisions...struggle to have the last word.
MUSICIAN: *On the other hand, were you mistrusted or hassled because of your name?*
JULIAN: Even now, a couple of interviewers have told me, "Hey, we thought you'd be really snobby or stuck up," and I'd ask 'em, "Where'd you get that idea?" But in school there were some people who started rumors around the town which put me in a position where everybody turned their noses up at me. The first one was, "Oh, I've seen his bedroom, he sticks ten quid notes up on the wall for decoration." I said, "Where the hell did you get that idea from? What are you trying to do to me?" There were gangs who thought, ah, rich little snob, and they'd chase us around town and try and beat the shit out of us. I'm glad I had legs.
MUSICIAN: *You didn't grow up rich anyway, did you?*
JULIAN: No way. One night I went to the local fish and chip shop with a friend. We were the last customers, and waiting for us outside was this gang. I didn't feel any pressure at the time, I thought, "Well, they're locked out, so I'll buy some extra chips to share with them." So they pinned us up against the window of the shop, but they didn't focus on me. Instead, they got my friend Dave and said, "Listen, you're one of his friends, aren't you? We think you're a piece of shit"—and threw curry in his face...why did they have to do that to him? If they were going to pick on someone...but it was all because of me. So we threw the fucking chips in the air and ran for our lives. (laughs) But it really got scary at times.
MUSICIAN: *Did you realize at the time that Paul had written "Hey Jude" about you and your problems with your father?*
JULIAN: No chance. Nobody told me, "This is for you." It was only in the last few years I was really sure it was about me. I never knew Paul that well, but it was great to find out he was concerned at the time.
MUSICIAN: *Your father felt abandoned, and yet, ironically, he didn't give you the attention you needed and deserved. Do*



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you think you reminded him of his own pain so much that it was too much for him to deal with?

JULIAN: I think it was, definitely. The thing that really upset me most was that whenever I had a holiday I could go and see him, but he never actually came over to see me, which is where I felt left out in a way. I had to make the effort. But I tried not to let it bother me too much and just got on with my life and tried to have a good time.

MUSICIAN: *During his last years you spent more time with your father. Did the quality of your relationship improve?*

JULIAN: Yeah, we started talking about things seriously rather than just running around like kids going to Disneyland or whatever. He started talking about his life, which was very educational for me. We talked about the Beatles times, and I asked him his feelings about it and what the whole idea was. Obviously at first it was to get money and be recognized—money was the main thing when they started off. But the last thing he said about the Beatles was that it was great when it took off, and he enjoyed it out of this world and he was glad he did it. But he'd never do it again (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *One last question to complete your psychoanalysis: Any recurring dreams?*

JULIAN: Um, there's one that sticks out that comes back every couple of years. It's very strange and I don't know what it has to do with. Do you know The Incredible Shrinking Man? Well, it starts off like that, with me and a couple of friends sitting on a couch and suddenly the arms of the couch are really high, and we've shrunk down till we're about two or three feet high. So we're sitting on this giant couch watching TV and eating crisps, and upstairs is Henry the Eighth in all of his outfit. We heard him coming down so we started running outside into the trees—running for our lives, you could say. So Henry the Eighth comes out with modern-day English policemen and Alsatians, and they let the dogs go after us. So we climb into these pine trees and see Henry walking round about us. That's when it always stops, just there when he's walking around. I keep getting it every couple of years...don't know what it says. Strange.

JOOLS' TOOLS

Julian used a Steinway acoustic piano while recording *Valotte*. In the synth dept. he favors the Roland Jupiter 8, which he used on a track for the film *Body Rock*. He also claims to be "freaked out" over his new Yamaha DX7. Both "Space" and "Let Me Be" were composed on his Wah Fretless bass.

Guitarist Justin Clayton plays a custom-made Schecter with a maple neck and fretboard. Julian plays both Premier and Ludwig drums as well as Simmons.

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John Fogerty's Triumph Over Evil

By Scott Isler

Is John Fogerty the ultimate escape artist? It seems so. Certainly no other pop star has managed to seclude himself so thoroughly after dominating the air and musical brainwaves during his heyday. Fogerty's decade-long disappearing act—ended only a month ago with his *Centerfield* album—makes him the Joe DiMaggio of the *Big Chill* generation.

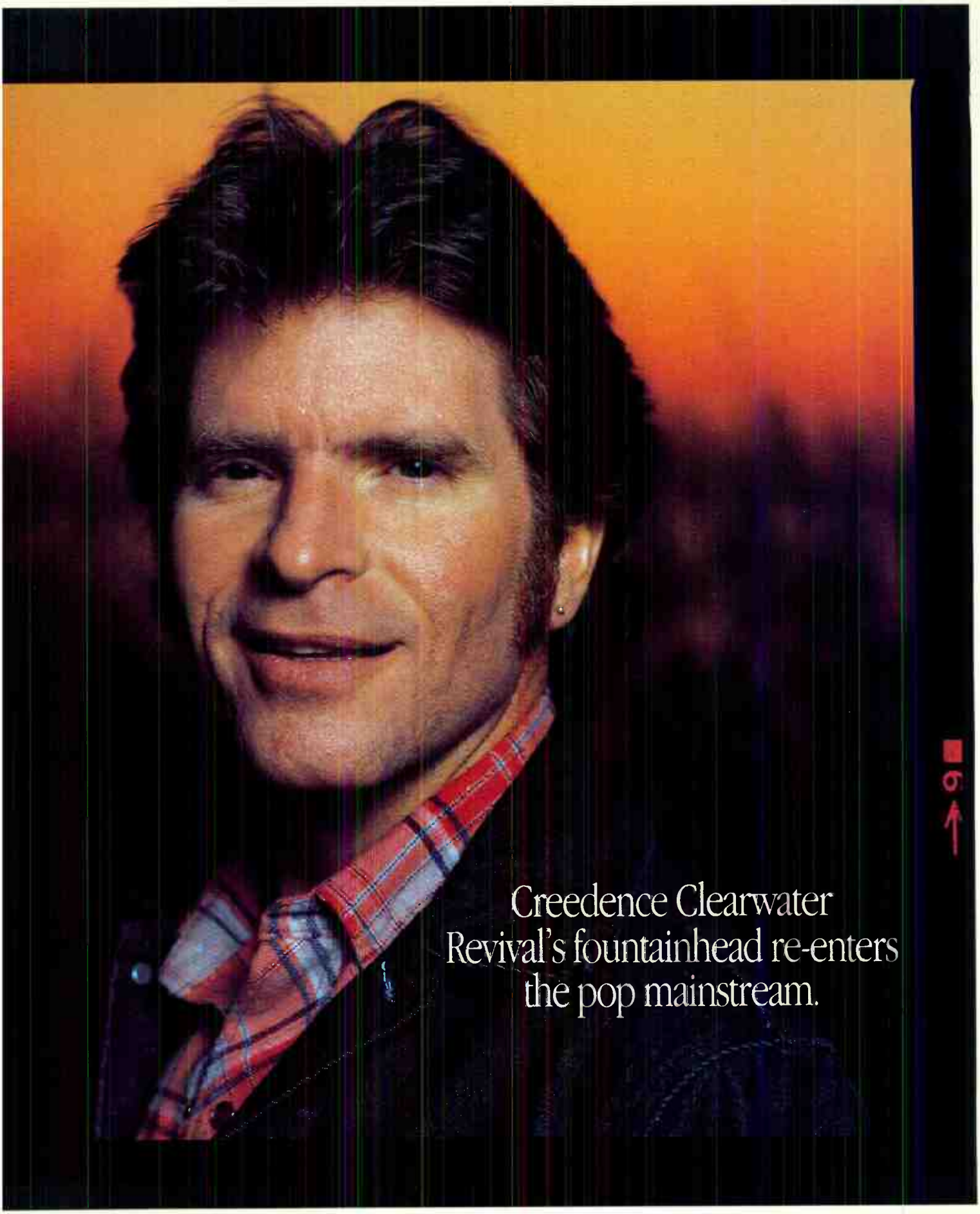
Although he has yet to turn forty, Fogerty well deserves the title of "legend." In a two-year period at the turn of the 1970s his band, Creedence Clearwater Revival, released five top ten albums, two of which went straight to #1. In about the same period Creedence also scored nine top ten singles, seven of them million-sellers and most of them double-sided hits.

The powerhouse behind this hit machine was a down-to-earth singer/guitarist/songwriter who'd been playing with the other three members of Creedence (as the Blue Velvets and later the Golliwogs) since he was fourteen. In the height of hippie fantasia Fogerty abjured drugs and stuck to his plaid shirts. Even his record label, Fantasy, was an odd choice; the company was better known for jazz and Lenny Bruce albums, and hailed from the same, less fashionable side of San Francisco Bay as Creedence itself.

But Fogerty didn't lack for respect. The multi-instrumentalist played tough guitar, wrote some of the most universal rock music since Chuck Berry, and possessed one of the grittiest, most soulful voices ever to emanate from a Caucasian larynx. The Creedence phenomenon centered around the band's astoundingly broad appeal: In those polarized times, they somehow retained "underground"/FM-radio respect while chalking up one AM-radio hit after another.

Creedence's bubble burst in 1972. The group (including Tom Fogerty, one of John's four brothers) squabbled about Fogerty's creative stranglehold, issued a "democratic" album to prove he was right all along, and disbanded. Since then John Fogerty has maintained a low profile in puzzling contrast to Creedence's ubiquity. From 1972 through 1976 he released two one-man-band albums and a few singles, none of which had Creedence's impact. A third solo album, *Hoodoo*, was withheld. Fogerty then disappeared into the Pacific northwest even more effectively than D.B. Cooper.

The reason partly became clear in 1983, when Creedence Clearwater Revival was back in the news after winning a nearly nine-million-dollar legal judgment. Fogerty brought the suit after Creedence's song and record royalties vanished. The money was in a



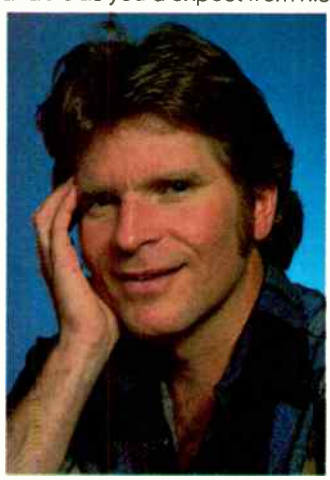
Creedence Clearwater Revival's fountainhead re-enters the pop mainstream.

Bahamian bank that dissolved. Fogerty charged he tried but was unable to move the money out before the bank moved to Panama and then folded. The multi-million-dollar loss would dampen anyone's spirit.

Still, there were occasional—sometimes tantalizing—Fogerty sightings. Creedence Clearwater Revival reunited in 1981 to play at Tom Fogerty's wedding; the Blue Velvets—Creedence minus Tom Fogerty—played in 1983 at John Fogerty's twentieth high school reunion. The passage of time only proved the durability of the well-crafted Creedence/Fogerty songbook.

Far from rusting in the boondocks, Fogerty had established a ruthless schedule to keep his chops in shape. Six or seven days a week he'd perfect his drumming and other skills needed for his one-man recording band. In late 1984 word leaked out that John Fogerty was not only alive and well, but had a new solo album in the can for Warner Bros. *Centerfield* and its first single, "The Old Man Down The Road," restored Fogerty's East Bay delta bellowing to the airwaves, where it cuts like Drano through most pop fodder. Interviewed at his Oakland business office *cum* practice studio, Fogerty is just as straightforward, open and affable as you'd expect from his

"I went through every style under the sun in my studio. I tried a little disco, a little punk, some English art-rock, Holiday Inn.... I did all that stuff, and I didn't like it. It didn't ring true. I wanted something raw and swampy."



HOWARD ROSENBERG

music. The Creedence-era Beatle bangs are long gone, but Fogerty remains youthfully fit and as sartorially unpretentious as ever in blue jeans, a Levi jacket and—yes—a plaid shirt.

Gee, it's good to have him back.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think of* Centerfield *as a comeback album?*
FOGERTY: [reverently] This is more than a comeback! This is a triumph over evil.
MUSICIAN: *That statement sounds premeditated.*
FOGERTY: It is. Every day I'd go running, and I'd say that to myself. I hate the term "comeback," but after ten years that indeed is what this probably is. I'm comfortable with it only in the sense that I prepared and presented it as well as I could. I didn't just say [hesitantly], "Yeah, I'm gonna come back now," after nine years of doing nothing, and then walk in one day and, "Hey, call some musicians, I got six songs," and they put it out, like so many "comebacks" are. This was a guy waiting until he felt he was ready to produce music of the quality he used to produce. And he wasn't gonna let it out until he felt that way. That's what *Centerfield* is all about. The next one will be better, but this one at least got me there, in the ballpark.

I expect they'll come more often from now on. The next one won't be ten years from now. I was coming from complete scratch to get to where we are now.
MUSICIAN: *Did you have a writer's block for a while?*
FOGERTY: I had a lot of legal and financial problems which indeed created a writer's block, or creativity block. My problems were more legal than musical. It's basically a fight between an artist and a greedy record company.

All our record money was in this Bahamas plan, the Castle Bank plan. Fantasy wouldn't give us a royalty increase, but when they got us in this plan it was the same thing, they told us. "We'll get you this thing that will save you taxes." [*Fantasy president Ralph Kaffel says Fogerty decided independently to get involved with Castle Bank after Fogerty's lawyer and accountant met with Fantasy's lawyers.*] In effect, it stalled off our frustrations for a while, so we made more records for them. Later, after the band had broken up and everything, I made an ill-fated album for Asylum, the one that didn't come out. [Then Elektra/Asylum chairman] Joe Smith told me to go home and straighten out whatever it was that was really bugging me. I took his advice and started trying to trim this up, this whole thing I was involved in and trying so hard to get away from. The instant I started doing that, the whole thing crumbled and was lost. Since it was lost, I began to be very suspicious about all the rest of it. I was on Asylum for the U.S. and Canada, but I was on Fantasy for the rest of the world, and I still owed them three records. The inner conflict was just mind-boggling: "Waitaminute! You just lost your entire life savings! And you've been working already eight years on this record. You're gonna hand it over to Fantasy Records?" The two things just wouldn't sit still in my stomach; it was like swallowing jalapeños and straight brandy. About '78, '79, I finally got an ulcer; that was one of the contributing factors.

I was going to an alpha-wave clinic to learn how to relax so I could go to sleep. But I didn't do much of the training because I'd sit there at the beginning of each session and I'd start complaining about how I owed them three albums! I went there for about three months in late '79 and I worked it all out. I'd say things like, "I still owe 'em three albums! The Bee Gees' whole career is three albums!" It's kinda like saying Michael Jackson's is only *two* albums! "What if I turn in stuff like that and give it to *Fantasy Records*?" So as I was sitting there over this three-month period I was coming up with an idea: I gotta get off Fantasy Records! They owed me some past foreign royalties, so I said, all right, I'll trade you that, the foreign royalties, and I'll trade you my artist royalties from now on. I don't get paid as an artist on Creedence records any more, forever. You're probably gonna see *twice* as many repackagings in the future! I wonder how big my name will start getting on those album covers now?

So that was the trade, about 1980. Things started looking a lot better after that. The trial in 1983 was more like a moral victory for me than anything else. It was a vindication for all this time we'd been fighting back, saying "You can't get away with this!" The lawsuit included four people: Fantasy Records; a man from Chicago who designed this financial plan, who later was on the board of directors of Fantasy; our own attorney and our own accountant. The judge at one point dropped Fantasy from the suit, saying no, that's a Bahamian company; you can't sue them in America, you have to sue them in the Bahamas—which is really like, "Oh, that's great." They move themselves off-shore, now we can't even sue 'em, let alone look at the books. [*Al Bendich, Fantasy vice president, business affairs, says Fantasy, Inc. is a Delaware corporation.*] Our own attorney settled with us, as any thinking person would; the case was ridiculously one-sided. But our accountant didn't settle; they went to trial. And that's why the thing got heard about in the papers. We were on trial two months, but it still goes on, up and up the ladder of justice. The whole thing may take another ten years.
MUSICIAN: *Where was your income coming from in the 70s?*
FOGERTY: We had BMI money here. BMI won't pay royalties to an entity, an "it." They want to pay it to a person, bless their heart. That money piled up in an Oakland account. So when everything disappeared, I quickly got that stuff withdrawn and put into my bank, even though I knew it was earmarked "Don't open until April 15th!" It was a cushion until the day the

"Creedence was a pretty good little rock band": (clockwise from left) Stu Cook, Tom Fogerty, Doug Clifford and John Fogerty.

axe fell and I had to pay. Also we did get some payments from the record company during that time.

The phrase in my mind at the time was, I don't want to end up like Joe Louis. I sure didn't know if Congress was gonna pass any act in my favor. I have a house here, a house in Oregon and this office. That was about it. I was really afraid that the house in Oregon was gone; what they want is more than what I got, so they'll take that and this, and let me keep my car and house, if I get an old car [*laughs*]. Everything I had earned up to a certain point was gone. It went either by disappearance or taxes. I could've been owing the next ten years too, by garnisheeing. It didn't make me feel real good, or safe. That was actually kinda scary. I came home and kicked the door on that one.

The day when I found out it was gone, that's when I got the earring. When it was gone for sure, nothing left, Castle Bank disappeared, and I looked back over our last eight-year history—and I didn't have to look far, only to Berkeley at all these people in their Mercedeses and their big buildings and their record company—I went, "You can't get away with this. You're not gonna get away with this." I need a symbol, that's what I told myself. For some reason, "earring" to me meant—maybe it's Captain Hook from childhood, I don't know—strength, integrity. I'm not gonna quit. Everybody else caved in, at least for a time. I went right out the door, went over to the mall here and got myself an earring. The next day I began actively attacking. I wouldn't say I was quite on the offense yet, but I was away from the goal line, up to about my own one-yard line, looking toward the 50-yard line, hoping to get over to their side of the field someday!

MUSICIAN: *On* Centerfield *you seem to have gone back to a more Creedence-y kind of music than you made at Asylum.*

FOGERTY: It isn't like I want to glom on to something that was hot before, like when some country stars go back and record an album of all their hits redone on a new label. I think it sounds like Creedence 'cause I love that sound. When I got strong again, that's what came out of me. I wouldn't try to ride on Creedence's coattails.

MUSICIAN: *Well, whose coattails were they?*

FOGERTY: I know, but it's not for a career move at all. "You Got The Magic" [the single from Asylum's *John Fogerty*] was a guy living in the middle of disco going, "Well, what should I do? Oh, I'll be influenced by the radio, okay." It was like a leaf in a gale. Whereas when I started to get strong my little band started to have its own style again. I started making those important musical decisions, all of which contribute to make a style, or aural picture. If you listen to "The Old Man Down The Road" and a Creedence record that's even close side by side, you'll find there's a lot of difference in the approach. But since it's the type of song it is, I guess offhand you'd say it sounds like "Run Through The Jungle" or "Born On The Bayou." Sonically they sound quite a bit different.

MUSICIAN: *Because of advances in recording technology?*

FOGERTY: That's some of it. There's a little bit of a nod to styles that have developed since Creedence was around, particularly drum-wise. It's a little more straightforward and less of a folk-rock feel than Creedence had. But the idea is still definitely to keep it simple, straight-ahead rock 'n' roll. I don't think I could consciously try to sound another way and pull it off. Once you get strong in a style and find yourself, you have to make decisions about what you like. There's a little bell ringing; every time it rings it's telling you, "Figure this out, make the right decision." If you don't listen to it pretty soon it won't ring for you any more.

MUSICIAN: *Why did you do a video?*

FOGERTY: The record company really wanted me to, and I

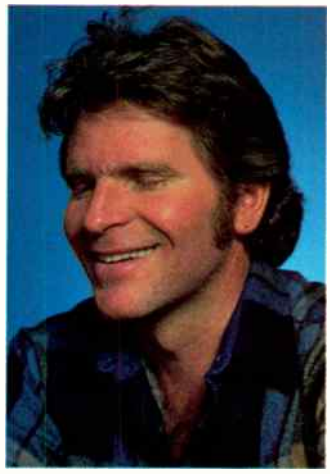
really didn't want to. But the phrase I use is, it's a way of getting your record played on TV [*laughs*]. There are a whole lot of "listeners" watching television! That's real abstract to me. As a writer, I really question the whole thing. You're filling in a visual image to someone who might go ahead and create his own image with his imagination. A writer, who likes to deal in mental pictures, hates to lose that creativity from his audience. The jury for me is still out. I have a big question mark about doing more videos in the future. Doing this video was fine; artistically, I can't tell you if it's good or terrible.

MUSICIAN: *Video might be the only way for you to get something visual out there. You can't tour as a one-man band.*

FOGERTY: I intend to put together a band in the future. I think I'll make another record by myself first. There's not enough music there for me to presume to go out with a band. Since I'm not gonna do the old Creedence songs ever again, it's a little presumptuous of me to go out with nine songs and expect anybody to come see it.

It'd be almost pandering for me to sing "rollin' on the river" at this point. I had to divorce myself from all that. There was all this ill will between the guys in the group and me, and between me and Fantasy. I had to make a mental divorce. Up to

"Ronald Reagan as President! Holy mackerel, aren't you ashamed?! All those young Republicans.... It's not healthy, but since it's happening that way, I think it's important to keep an ember glowing in the fog of apathy."



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that point I'd been defending and trying to protect the, quote, good name of Creedence the best I could—not wallow in all the things they do as a record company, like 147 reissues of Golliwogs material. That's enough, that's not me anymore. Go ahead: You guys can use it all you want. You can ride on the coattails, you can squeeze it and milk it, do whatever you want. It has nothing to do with me. I ain't defending it or protecting it anymore. Go ahead. You can be on K-Tel; it's okay. Doing that, to me, would be a step backward: "I'll endorse Exxon, sure! You want my name on tin cans of soft drinks?"

MUSICIAN: *Do you prefer recording by yourself to working with a band in the studio?*

FOGERTY: I don't know if it's "prefer." I'll take a band making records any day, as a listener. But when you have a band you're also married to each other, and you put up with all the baloney. "Why do you squeeze the toothpaste in the middle?" So you're trying to work out music but you've got all this other baggage that goes along. Pretty soon people, in some bands anyway, lose sight of what the main goal is: to make a good record, and sound good. Pretty soon you've got egos involved, and "Why can't *I* write some of these songs, or sing 'em?" If you had an outsider, he'd say, "Because those aren't very good!" But you've got to say it from within the band, and then everybody fights. I see myself doing it both ways from here on.

MUSICIAN: *Where do you see your music fitting in 1985?*

FOGERTY: I had a conscious mental discussion with myself as I started to get strong. You've gotta understand, I went through every style under the sun back there in my studio over nine years. I tried a little disco, I tried a little mellow, I tried a little Holiday Inn lounge, a little punk, English synthesized art-rock—I did all that stuff, and I didn't like it! It didn't ring true. I felt comfortable when I got something raw and swampy. Not only was it fun to play, it sounded good to me! So that's what *Centerfield* was. By late August I got six of the songs finished and was having trouble with three; it was starting to drag down, go slow. I said, god, what's going on here? I don't know if I want to finish these three, finish this project. I started analyzing: You've got three that are giving you trouble, but six are done, don't fool yourself. Take these six down to Warner Bros. and make sure you're in the ballpark. Either I'm going hunting or I'm gonna finish this record. What was bothering me was, have I done all this and it's like Jack Nicholson in *The Shining* typing that one line over and over for six months? Have I just created an album that's going to be dated 1969 and you're gonna go [*blows raspberry*]. It sounded good to me, but I didn't know how corporate minds work. To make a long story very short, they said, "You're in the ballpark. Go home, finish the other three, and come back when you're done." That's what I did.

MUSICIAN: *What type of music do you like now?*

FOGERTY: I like stuff that rocks. It's as simple as that. I hate sappy songs, I'm sorry. Someday I'm gonna write a song called "Sappy Songs." But there's that fine line between sappy and cool, elegant. James Taylor's "Handy Man"—some would think that was sappy. I thought that was a great record. It was as good as "A Whiter Shade Of Pale," just as cool. It didn't have all that power, like "When A Man Loves A Woman," yet it was still good-sounding to me. "Just When I Needed You Most" was another one—a simple little song that almost makes you cry. I like "When Doves Cry."

Hey, ya know what I like? I like Bruce Springsteen's record. I've actually heard enough cuts from it that I think I'll buy it. There's one cut called "I'm Goin' Down"; he's obviously been listening to Buddy Holly or somebody melodic like that, instead of all that Phil Spectorish/East Coast rock.

MUSICIAN: *There's an interesting parallel between you two. He's considered symbolic of America in a certain way.*

FOGERTY: Yeah, they'll probably say my Bruce Springsteen influence is starting to show [*laughs*].

MUSICIAN: *Did you ever think of your music as summing up what this country was about?*

FOGERTY: I didn't consciously do that; I don't think you could, consciously. I think that at a time when everybody else was writing songs about how high you could get, or the other extreme—"yummy yummy yummy, I've got love in my tummy"—I was trying to write straightahead rock songs that were sort of American. I knew I was American, but I didn't pull out my Roy Rogers songbook. That was my way of doing it. I couldn't write about hep-smoke-a-reefer; that wasn't my idea of life.

MUSICIAN: *Your reappearance comes at a time when Bruce Springsteen is popular selling a good-old-fashioned Americanism kids don't feel ashamed about. And with Ronald Reagan as President—*

FOGERTY: Ronald Reagan as President! Aren't you ashamed? Holy mackerel!

MUSICIAN: *Well, we've certainly passed the protest era.*

FOGERTY: I don't think that's necessarily good. Nixon was always saying "peace with honor" and "my country, love it or leave it," but we knew better 'cause the guy was obviously evil. Ronnie's trying the same rhetoric, except it's falling on a different set of people. All those young Republicans—that actually blows my mind. I don't think it's healthy, but since it's there and apparently happening that way, I think it's important to keep an ember glowing in the fog of apathy. It's great that everybody feels good, but I don't really want to join [*sings*] "the Aaaaarmy."

MUSICIAN: *Is now a particularly good time for your brand of*

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music to come back?

FOGERTY: I'd hate to think I was getting that kind of benefit, but you may be right. It's fun to feel good; I just think you can overdo it. They *really* overdo it: "Hey, don't worry about El Salvador, everything's cool!" That people aren't excited about it is a little strange to me.

MUSICIAN: *Can you do anything about it?*

FOGERTY: Well, it'd be nice. If it occurs to me in the right way, sure. I don't want to get my green card rejected and spend the rest of my life in a hotel in New York! I don't think too many people are listening right now. Reagan's great with graphs and firesides.

MUSICIAN: *So you don't see yourself as a spokesman?*

FOGERTY: Where's the phone? I've gotta get in touch with my generation! No, not like that. Who would I be a spokesman for? I'll speak for myself. I'm a rock 'n' roll musician.

MUSICIAN: *You're more than that.*

FOGERTY: Well, I hope a song like "I Saw It On TV" is definitely a sign of things to come. I'm not on a crusade of any kind at this moment. Look, I've just been trying to get my little foot out the door and away from that record company in Berkeley.

MUSICIAN: Centerfield *has a sparser sound than the Asylum recordings.*

FOGERTY: There was probably more overdubbing before. I had a guy tell me a few days ago that *Centerfield* "sounds more like a demo record," inner-instrument-wise. He meant it as a compliment. When I would work back here in my studio, the point was to get as simple as I could. Instead of having six drum parts, have one cool drum part, like Al Jackson would do. I like it simple. As you get stronger musically, you're able to do that without having to hide behind something else, or have it layered into a texture so thick you can't hear one thing from the next. My idea was to play like a four-piece band, just the way we did before. I started to sound like a guy who's consciously imitating, but I don't think that's what's going on.

Radio records—especially car radio records—are very simple because you can keep track of only a couple of things at one time. You don't need all that other stuff. I mixed this album in a car. Soon as we'd get a near-mix, after ten hours of working on getting all the stuff together, I'd run out to the car and check it. I might do that maybe twenty times. When I got to where it was really right, I could tell in a car quicker than I could tell in the studio. You sit in the same place for twelve hours, you start going bats. I actually mixed the thing in the front seat of my car.

MUSICIAN: *On* Centerfield *you use electronic drums and keyboards. Are you coming to terms with technology?*

FOGERTY: I don't have any problem with modern instruments. I met a guy about a month ago who was surprised I was wearing a digital watch! The first time I *ever* heard Simmons drums I went, what's *that*? I was watching a movie, and it was on the soundtrack. Instead of the usual roll they all do, they let the guy do more effects with it. It sounded so great I said, man, that is swampy! I knew I would put that into a swampy-sounding situation. It's the same as slap-back echo to me. That silly tone on synthesizers that sounds like two accordions sliding sideways—that's one I really don't like. I think it's a Prophet 5, and it's been on every record since 1975—except mine. But synthesizers themselves aren't bad. I've been through several. It's a matter of applying it to what *you* want to project. Some things get locked into a certain place in time, like wah-wah pedals. You have to be very careful to avoid those kind of things—*I* think, anyway.

MUSICIAN: *Do you still write a melody first and add lyrics?*

FOGERTY: I have two ways. When I do the music-first songs, I get a riff happening, like "The Old Man Down The Road." To me, a classic single has a great title; a good riff somewhere in it; a pretty good melody—it doesn't have to be real melodious; and it has to give you an image of some kind. It's the sound in the first place. I start with riffs; it's my most automatic way of triggering something. I make hundreds of different riffs, some of which I'll put on tape, most of which I'll reject. Then I start singing a melody to go with that, having no idea what the song may be about, usually. Then I have a little book full of song titles; I'll look over it and see if any of these look like they might go with this music I'm making. In this case it was "Somewhere Down The Road." So I wrote out the whole musical structure, then I started working on the words. Not at the same time—I was on vacation on a houseboat and wrote out all the words, and they didn't seem as strong as what the music was doing. "Somewhere Down The Road" is kind of abstract, not a very powerful title. It was a hook cliché but not very strong. The song was about leaving home and all the crud you meet. One of the images was this guy with a suitcase covered with rattlesnake hide and he stands right in the road. Gee, I like that. okay, scrap the song and keep that part. And I just did it all over again, into "The Old Man Down The Road," which is a much more powerful image and fit the music. It's a swampy thing and seemed much cooler to me, anyway. That's the way I write. Probably eight out of ten times I'll do it that way.

The other way, I'll just have an idea about something I want to talk about. "I Saw It On TV" was floating about in my head for three or four years. You get an idea that presents itself first,

SWAMP MONSTERS

At the heart of **John Fogerty**'s one-man band on *Centerfield* are three guitars custom-made for him by Philip Kubicki. His sunburst Tele-type (based on a Fender Telecaster) has a swamp (!) ash body and solid maple neck. A Tele pick-up is in the neck position, a Strat-type pick-up in the middle position, and two Strat pick-ups are put together as a humbucker in the bridge position. Fogerty "wanted a real versatile instrument so he could get lots of sounds in the studio," says Kubicki's Geoff Richardson, and he got it: Four mini-toggle switches provide "at least thirty sounds." A custom blueburst "Strat" was built around two Fender humbucker pick-ups provided by Fogerty. This guitar has a flame maple neck, graphite nut and no tremolo. Richardson describes it as "tight-sounding." The third Kubicki is a Precision-type bass made from the same plank of swamp ash as the Tele-type. The body has a sunburst finish; the neck is straight-grain maple. The bass has Schaller tuning keys, custom pick-ups, a Stars bridge and Dean Markley light-gauge strings. Besides these custom-made guitars, Fogerty also used a Modulus graphite; a Washburn Les Paul copy (Fogerty: "That's the swampy sound on the intro to 'Old Man'") heavily worked over by Hideo Kamimoto; and an acoustic Martin D-35. For amplification Fogerty used a MESA/Boogie, Seymour Duncan convertible, a Marshall stack, and, for the bass, a Gallien-Krueger Inc. amp with a Sunn bottom. Guitar strings are GHS Gus series, nickel .046 down to .010 gauge, or .042 to .009; a steel set "for hot lead, like 'Mr. Greed'"; and Ernie Ball—heavy bottom, slinky top—for "swampy guitar." A connoisseur of guitar picks, Fogerty uses a very thin Fender, D'Armond 58, Dunlop 88, and teardrop-shaped Stone pick "for the fast stuff"; on bass he uses a Mind pick and his fingers (model number unavailable).

The electric keyboard on *Centerfield* is an Oberheim OBX-a, sometimes with a DMX or DSX sequencer. An E-Mu Emulator provided special effects: "That home run you hear on 'Centerfield' is Joe Hardy coming out of an E-Mu." For percussion, artillery shells—"I can't tell ya the caliber"—supplied "a nice brass ring." Fogerty's saxophone is an old Martin Committee.

His drum kit is a "mish-mosh"; bass drums by Tama (16x22 maple, 14x24 rosewood); snares by Keplinger and Tama (6½x14 metal, 8x14 rosewood); Pearl fiberglass toms; and cymbals by Paiste and Zildjian. Electronic drums are Simmons.

Fogerty used a Korg foot-pedal arrangement for an effects board. He also brought his own rack into the recording studio for a limiter, clicker and AMS reverb unit. In the late 70s he installed a home recording studio, with 3M multi-track and Soundcraft mixing board, for demos and scratch tracks. His drum monitor sound system, built by Sound Genesis, is a three-way stereo P.A. with Gauss speakers and three BGW amps at 750 watts per channel each. "I call it Godzilla," Fogerty smiles.

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and you want to try to pull that in and make a song out of it somehow in three or four minutes.

MUSICIAN: *Would you say most of your "political" songs are the ones where you get ideas first and then write the music?*

FOGERTY: That's probably right, mainly because there's a point of view first. It was only recently that I put together the lines "*I* know it's true/'Cause I saw it on TV." When *that* happened, I knew something different had occurred. After that I began to see what the point of view of the song was. Up until then I had just this loose collection of shared emotions with millions of the rest of us of the same generation. All the boom babies were the first TV generation, and I wanted to address that. But when the line came up it changed the song. I went, "*This* is going to be *good*, if I ever write it!" It was the first one I wrote for this record. It broke my writer's block. Up until then I hadn't been able to focus on a thought, bring it out, find the right word, find a rhyme, figure out a construction. On "Fortunate Son" I got the idea first, and that's about all I had. Then we did all the music; I was showing the guys the music, how it was supposed to go and everything. I came home one day, sat down in the bedroom with a yellow tablet, knowing the melody, so I guess the melody was first, and I wrote it out in twenty, twenty-five minutes. But that was after fooling with it for a month and a half. To coin a corny phrase, "important themes" tend to demand—they're more stringent. You can't suddenly change the whole thing and go on to petticoats and blue eyes [*laughs*].

MUSICIAN: *Do you think the lyrics mean more in those songs where you have something to say first and fit the music to it?*

FOGERTY: If you mean "taken seriously" or more important, that may be true. I don't know which is better. If I could write a great rock 'n' roll song—"Whole Lotta Shakin'" or "Rock Around The Clock"—that's fine with me. I'm a musician first. A great record to me is great music first.

MUSICIAN: *Is there much personal feeling on* Centerfield's *"Searchlight," as far as what you were going through?*

FOGERTY: You got it right on the head. It didn't start out that way. When it first popped into my head, I was playing one of the Kubicki guitars I got, just messing around, and it sounded so great, it was full of joy. I started messing with it in solo—the same way a guy would approach "Midnight Special," doing this non-timed thing. Vocally I'd hit a note and growl a little; finally I said "oh, the midnight" and I came up with the line, "Oh, the midnight/Need a searchlight." I worked on the music for a few months; I had no idea what it'd be about, but that line was fun to say. Later I started getting close to "you've gotta make a song out of this." "Searchlight".... It's along the shore. It's all misty. Hmmmm, is he drowning? It just sorta became autobiography with a lot of metaphors in it. There are a couple of references, almost lines, from the old song "Endless Sleep." To me, that was relating to another song, one I like—like the reference to a "brown-eyed handsome man" in "Centerfield." I don't think that's ripping off, I think that's applauding something from the past that's good.

MUSICIAN: *Dave Marsh once described your music as dealing with "pessimism, paranoia and puritanism."*

FOGERTY: Is it paranoia if it's true? [*laughs*] I'd say a little naïveté has fallen off the old chin.

MUSICIAN: *Did you ever consider a non-musical career?*

FOGERTY: [*wild-eyed*] BASEBALL! I was never good enough to play ball—like twenty million frustrated centerfielders. I think I've known I was gonna be a musician starting at the age of four. By the time I was eight or nine I was real sure. Johnny Corvette and the Corvettes—that was my name. I've had a couple of relatives tell me that I was real lucky I knew my whole life what I wanted to be, rather than having to find out

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three years after college. I don't think it's coincidental that within a year after Elvis, somewhere about '57, I was trying to strum a guitar. First I fiddled with a broomstick; eventually I had a terrible little Stella guitar.

MUSICIAN: *Are you still as class-conscious as you stated in some early interviews?*

FOGERTY: I think I still am. I have to keep fighting that: Hey, it doesn't matter if I don't use the right fork. I still have a lot of affectations. My handling of personal money—I really have to kick myself to spend money on something I already have that *sorta* works. The only thing where I really let myself go is I buy a lot of records now. I bring 'em home and my kids go, "*Gawwwd*, dad!" This is a business I'm in; I have to listen to this stuff, and nobody's sending 'em to me!

MUSICIAN: *Why was Creedence as big as it was?*

FOGERTY: Could the answer be because we were on Fantasy Records? The first ingredient of a hit is the sound. Creedence was a pretty good rock 'n' roll band. You had a singer who was able to get through three minutes of a rock song without being spliced together forty-seven times in a studio. The song-writing and arranging, which are almost one and the same as they come through a radio speaker, were pure straight music without a lot of affectation. There was an intelligent approach to beginning a song, having a solo or not in the middle, and then ending without lots of redundancy or regurgitations.

MUSICIAN: *There* were *long guitar solos....*

FOGERTY: Certainly. After nine years back here trying to refine my act I heard "Grapevine" on radio and I went, "*God*, that guy went on for a long time!" Zzzzzzz. Even I had to admit that was a bit drawn out. "C'mon, have another idea!" And he goes through three, four verses and finally gets another rhythmic thing. But that was in the background against Hendrix, Cream and all the rest. It was more accessible in those days [*laughs*]. We're down to ten-second commercials on TV. Everybody's attention span is: *click*!

I think we were honest. There wasn't anything strange to us, at least I didn't think so. Wouldn't it be refreshing to have a singing star who really isn't into drugs, he's not gay—not that he makes a thing out of it—and he's actually probably a nice guy, you could even have him over to your party and he wouldn't embarrass you. And he's probably semi-intelligent, and learns when to say thank you! Wouldn't it be nice to have some guy like that around now? Hey, BRUCE!

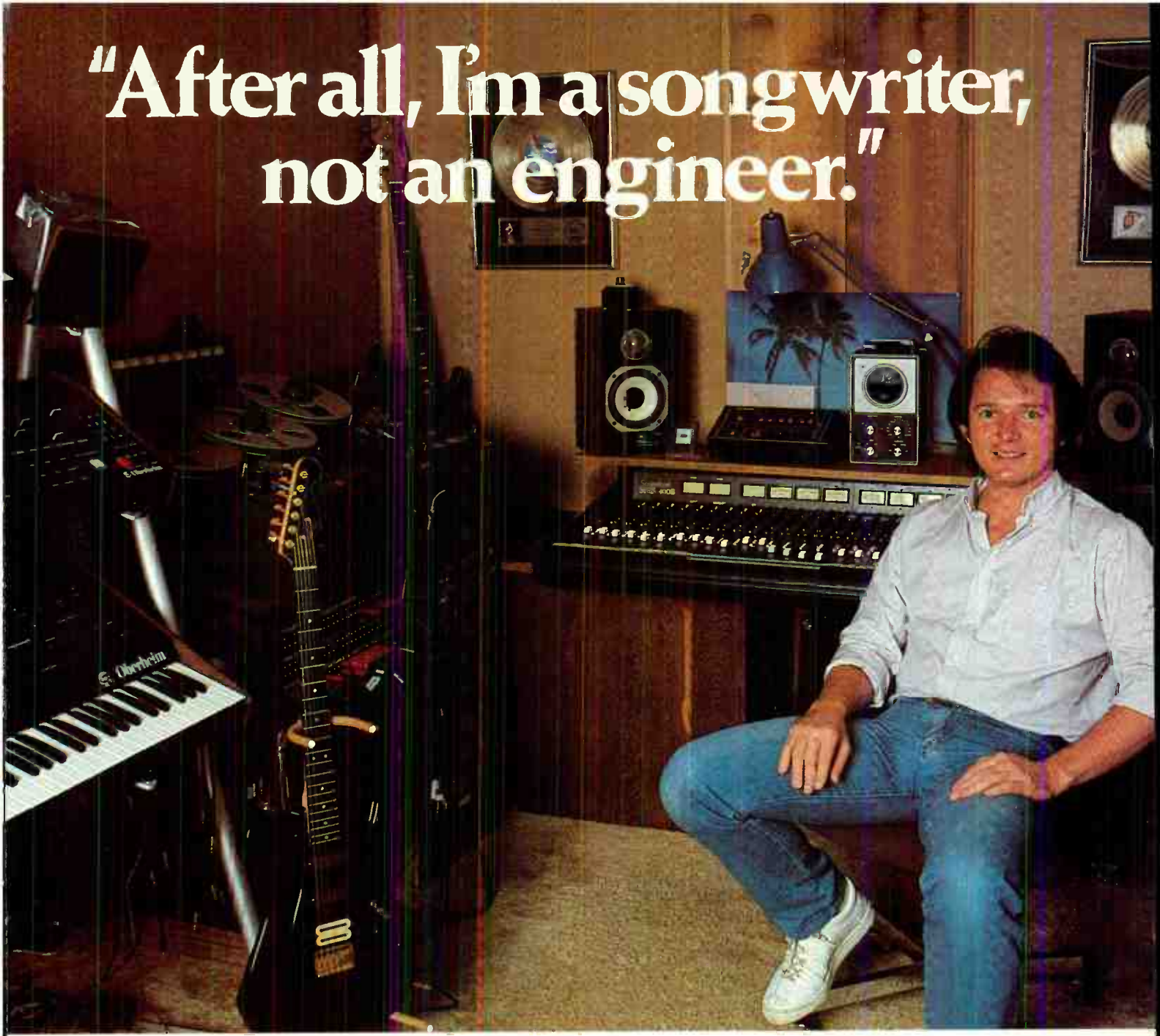
But you've gotta make good records; that's the main thing. We worked very hard at making good records, 'cause that's all there was. We weren't getting any help down there at headquarters. There was no promotion, no input like A&R, nobody that knew anything about marketing and all that other baloney. There was no publicity; we actually had to shoot and pay for our own posters and put 'em out ourselves. Every bit of publicity, including a couple of ads in the trades even, we had to instigate and pay for ourselves. It's ridiculous, when you think about what we ended up with.

MUSICIAN: *Would you call yourself an idealist?*

FOGERTY: Sure. Anybody who waits nine or ten years to put out a record because he doesn't feel he's got the goods...I'd call myself an individualist—*stubbornly* individualist.

It's a funny emotion I'm enjoying now. All summer I had assumed—even years before, when I was back there in pain on that drum stool—I had always assumed that when I finally made the record I'd get this attitude of self-assured cockiness. "Yeah, I did it! Whaddaya think?" That's not what happened at all. It was the other end of the spectrum—like, "thank you." It's real uplifting, like how I feel when I sing and have fun with it. It's enjoyment and gratitude at the same time. But I've definitely been having too much fun. Ⓜ

"After all, I'm a songwriter, not an engineer."



Songwriters and engineers are not only equipped with very different kinds of talent, they need different kinds of equipment to bring those talents out.

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It's easy to see why Steve chose the 400B. But of course, at Soundcraft we do more than build the kind of consoles that bring out the best in recording artists and songwriters. We also provide a full line of quality mixers to bring out the artist in the engineer.

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STATE OF INDEPENDENTS

Changing Patterns of Success in the Farm System

By Roy Trakin

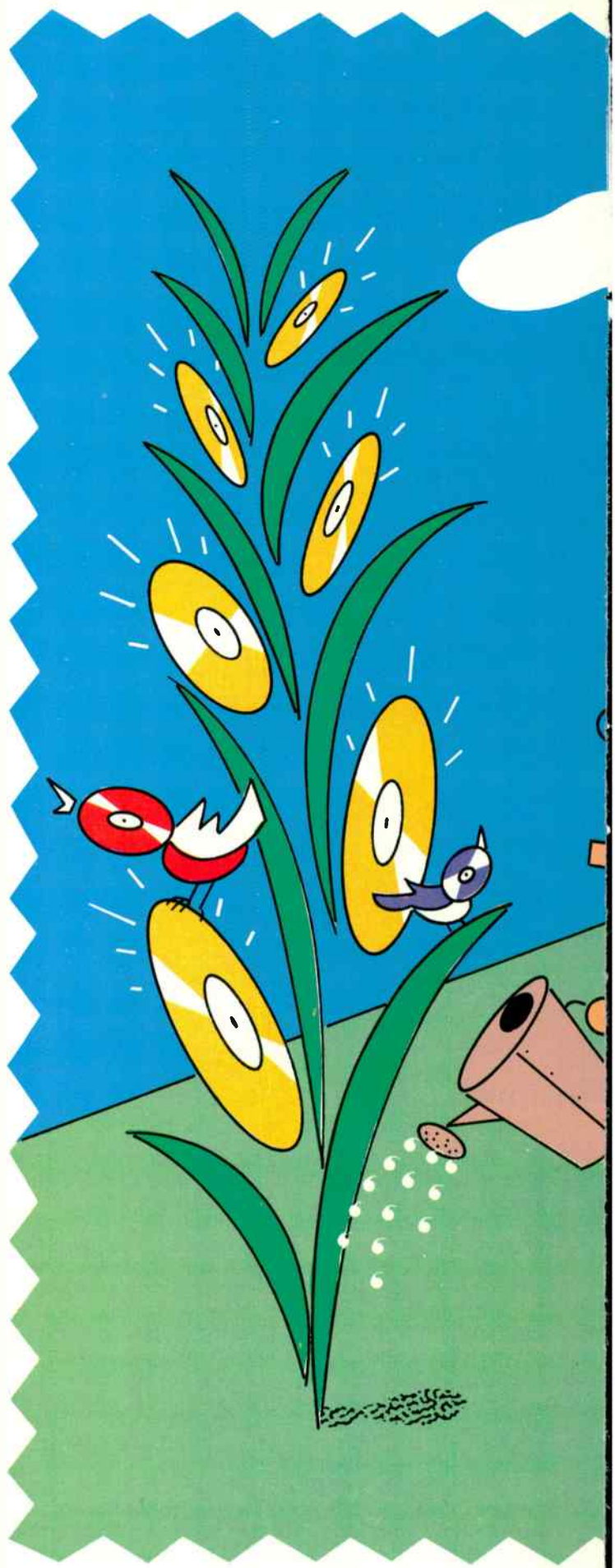
Profile Records' recently-opened midtown Manhattan offices are bustling with the activity only success can bring. Twenty-seven-year-old label co-owner Cory Robbins and his partner, thirty-year-old Steve Plotnicki, are going over artwork for rap supergroup Run-DMC's followup album, *King Of Rock*. The designer is the woman who did the cover for *Born In The U.S.A.* The sandy-haired, hyperenergetic Robbins is fondling the keys to his latest toy: a brand-new Mercedes he's just driven its first 1.4 miles from the showroom. Such is life in the music business if you have that sound "no one has, but everybody wants." Profile sold an amazing half million copies of its very first non-compilation album, Run-DMC's self-titled debut, giving it one of those very rare gold LPs for an independent record label.

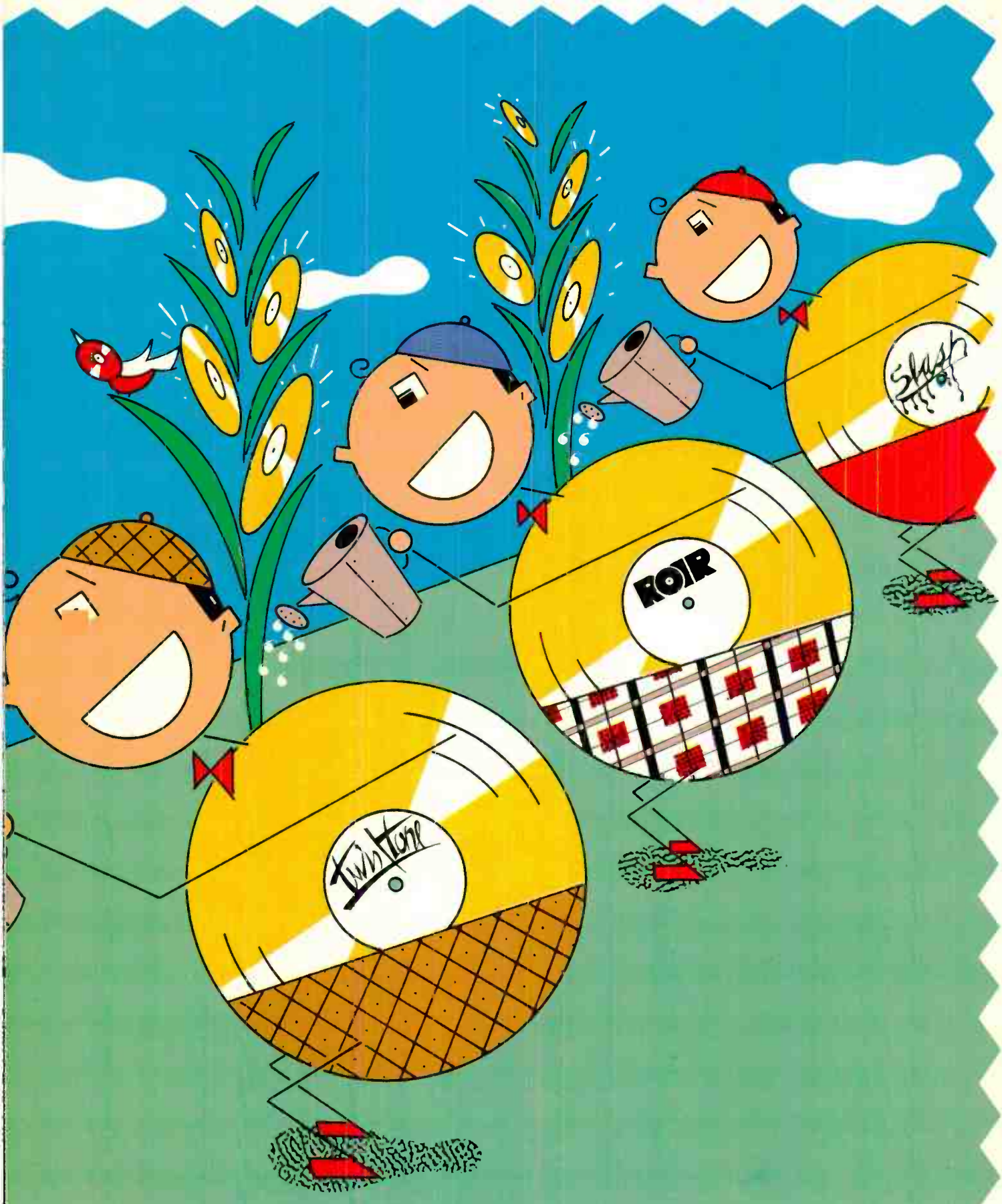
"We had no idea the album would do that well," admits a delighted Robbins. "We thought it might do 50,000, so we shipped out about half that at first." The rap LP already sported a pair of songs which were hits as 12-inch singles, but the third track released took its Hollis, Queens duo—and their record company—to another place. "Rock Box" was a historic rap-metal fusion with a searing Eddie Martinez guitar solo that did for Run-DMC what Eddie Van Halen did for Michael Jackson, crossing them over to a whole new, white rock 'n' roll audience.

And if you want to succeed in this record biz game, crossover is the jackpot. The industry's dominated by the *Billboard* charts, rack jobbers, independent promotion, CHR play and MTV Heavy Rotation, right? Well, not so fast, Multi-Platinum breath. There are some

Before you start a record company, you have to find a niche that no one has. A sound that no one has but everybody wants. And get ready to capitalize on it.

– Tom Silverman, Tommy Boy Records





Illustrations by Terry Allen

people who've found a niche in the music merry-go-round without totally sacrificing their ideals on the altar of the "Next Big Thing." In fact, in this era of monolithic, multinational entertainment conglomerates practicing corporate control through rock video, there is still a flourishing underground that's scrapping and surviving and occasionally surfacing with a mega-hit like Run-DMC, filling in the gaps left by the dinosaurs.

The six major record distributors in the U.S. today are the CBS Group (Columbia, Epic, Chrysalis, Portrait and Associated Labels), WEA (Warner Bros., Electra/Asylum and Atlantic), RCA (A&M and Arista, among others), MCA (which now includes Motown), Capitol (with EMI-America and Manhattan), and PolyGram (Polydor, Mercury, Verve, MGM and others). These conglomerates have salesmen in the field who sell directly to the major retail chains in each region and to rack jobbers, whose market is non-specialty retail outlets handling only the most popular bulk product. Most smaller record companies go through what are known as independent record distributors, middlemen who buy product from various labels to sell to retail. The advantage of the majors, aside from their cash flow and ability to give good credit terms, is the fact that their salesmen sell only one line, which enables them to devote full attention to the particular label's product.

The halcyon days of punk and hip-hop, which launched a thousand indies, are behind us. Can innovation survive in a bland new Yuppie universe?

You'd figure most small indies are merely waiting to get that all-important custom deal with a major, so they too can move their units through the distribution pipeline. After all, keeping that distribution system working is the reason why Arista, Motown and Chrysalis were sucked up over the last few years by RCA, MCA and CBS, respectively. It's also why Warner Bros. and PolyGram wanted to merge, in a deal the Justice Department frowned on last year. But not all small fish want to swim in the big pond. For every company like Slash, 415, or I.R.S., which fall under corporate umbrellas, there are major indie outfits like Profile or Fantasy and somewhat tinier labels like Twin Tone, ROIR, and SST, who are content to market their product through a network of regional distributors, or in some cases directly to retail. The history of this business may be based on survival of the fittest, but that doesn't necessarily mean having the most hits. Without small label pioneers, we wouldn't have had either Elvis Presley or Elvis Costello, Thelonious Monk or Husker Du. But the halcyon days of punk and hip-hop, two street forms which launched a thousand indies, are now behind us. Is provocative innovation still possible in an increasingly bland Yuppie Universe?

In the Belly of the Beast with Bob Biggs

L.A.'s Slash Records is the home of the Blasters, Los Lobos, Violent Femmes, Rank & File, Del Fuegos and Hunters & Collectors. The label originally grew out of the magazine of the same name, a highly partisan rag which attached to the L.A. punk scene, championing local outfits like the Germs, X, the Screamers and the Weirdos. Two years ago, the company signed a distribution deal with Warner Bros. Records.

Bob Biggs is the head of Slash Records. Thirtyish, with a degree in industrial design from UCLA, he admits to being a "structural kind of person." "I see music before I hear it," he says. He didn't start Slash for "the love of music," either. "I wanted to broaden people's perspectives," he explains. "I get satisfaction out of the success of something I consider important. If I think something is good, I want people to hear about it and know about it. I view music as having much wider ramifications than simple rock 'n' roll entertainment."

Biggs insists he signed with Warners because of dissatisfaction with the existing independent distribution system. He admits feeling pressure to produce a hit, but claims it's all self-imposed. "We're trying to get our bands, with their specialized marketing and promotion problems, into the mainstream," states Biggs. "But it's a constant battle to educate the public."

Warner Bros. has the option to pick up any Slash band, with certain groups (Del Fuegos, Hunters & Collectors) remaining on the smaller label, though still distributed by WEA. And, while critical recognition for the Blasters and Los Lobos is gratifying, neither outfit has had a runaway hit. "They have to make the right record," says Bob. "The next one is always the right one. You want to see bands like the Blasters come out with the one song that's the quintessential synthesis of all its influences. Trouble with being a small label is, you have to find groups that have yet to do that, who are still purist in their musical tendencies.

"I look for bands that are singular...they're not the kind of people who could be working in a bank. They make music because they have no choice. They believe in what they're doing and that honesty comes out in the music. That's when you've got a raw resource you can bank on. It's like oil."

About his label's own punk reputation and the possibility it harms Slash in the marketplace, Biggs stands firm. "I'm proud of that. I viewed what we did back then as heroic, rightly or wrongly. It's something I can be remembered for if I get hit by a bus tomorrow."

As for the future, Bob vows, "I won't be satisfied until I start breaking some of these bands big in America."

Stars in the Minneapolis Farm System

Paul Stark, the thirty-two-year-old president of Minneapolis' Twin Tone Record label, admits he's not a fan of the music as much as he is a fan of the artist: "Individuals are more important than the music for me," he says.

Twin Tone is an example of a pure independent, with a network of alternative specialty distributors like Jem, Important and Dutch East India Trading Company in New York, and Greenworld in Los Angeles. It's had one act, the Suburbs, signed to a major label, and its current hope is the Replacements, an offbeat garage band that specializes in eccentric covers like "Hitching A Ride" and "Easier Said Than Done."

Stark runs the record label as part of a company which includes three 24-track recording studios, one of which doubles as the only remote mobile unit in the area. He says he can do "real well" selling 35,000–40,000 copies of an album. He began the label when he "saw a lot of talent in Minneapolis which wasn't really going anywhere. There's a stigma to the Midwest that says you have to go to either New York or Los Angeles to make it."

With local sportswriter Charlie Hallman and current Replacements manager Peter Jesperson, Stark started Twin Tone with $3,500 borrowed from the local credit union. They pressed 2,500 red vinyl copies of singles by Curtiss A, the Suburbs and Fingerprints, a thousand of which are still sitting in a warehouse somewhere. "There is a minor league and a major league in this business," says Paul. "Then there's a category that crosses the two and includes artistic, non-commercial bands. That's the area I see us going in. We spend half our time on those kind of people and half on bands who should be on a major label some day."

Stark says he works on a handshake agreement with almost half his bands, retaining exclusive worldwide rights to all product recorded for Twin Tone. "If a group wants to go to a major label, they are free to do so at any point. If we've spent money on them and charged it against royalties, we expect the bands to pay back the minus amount in their account. Our profits are in our catalog. We don't profit when our groups leave to go to major labels."

Twin Tone has no desire to go with a major themselves, either. "Once a band's put out two albums, you need the kind of advertising support a big label can give you. But I don't want to get into that game," insists Stark, while adding that the company's future plans include distributing Hoboken-based Coyote Records. "If we have more product to put through our distributors, we have that much more clout in getting paid," explains Paul.

As for the long-range plans, Stark is in no rush. "I haven't assembled the right team yet. We're still a farm club and before we turn pro, it'll take another few years."

There's Gold in Them Thar Catalogs

Far from the fast lane of chartbusting and indie promotion, there is the relatively idyllic turf of the collector, a steady customer whether you're selling a lavishly annotated Richard Hell tape or an 18-record limited edition box set of jazz pianist Bill Evans. Neil Cooper's cassette-only label Reach Out International Records is but four years old, while venerable Fantasy Records has been an independent record company for thirty-five years, but both have

"I look for bands that are singular, who make music because they have no choice. That's when you've got a raw resource you can bank on. It's like oil."

"Six months ago I would have said I wanted to sign bands to a major label and make a lot of money. But that's wrong. I want to stay an indie. Let's do it ourselves. We'll never go hungry."

targeted loyal specialty audiences that don't rise or fall with the latest musical trend.

Phil Jones, vice president of marketing for Fantasy, talks proudly of the label's history of jazz releases, including a $5.98 Original Jazz Classic line that presents seminal recordings by Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Bill Evans with first edition covers and liner notes. "What we thought was a limited specialty collector's market turned out to be much larger than that," he notes.

ROIR's Cooper, a veteran of mail-order limited edition collectible art, knows the value of packaging when it comes to his own historical archival releases of "major cult artists" like the New York Dolls, MC5, Johnny Thunders, Fleshtones, Suicide and Television.

"I get more pleasure out of the artwork than anything else," he says. "I want everything to be just right...the liner notes, the inserts, the documentation. I want each of the cassettes to be like little jeweled treasures someone might stumble across on a beach years from now."

Cooper agrees that sometimes the packages overshadow the music, but points to recordings of new artists like Alfonia Tims, Prince Charles, Brother D, Silver Fox, and the recent Skip & the Exciting Illusions cassette as labors of love that come across soundwise, too. "These are groups that should be picked up by major labels," he says. "But I'm not here to service major labels. I'm here to make myself happy and maybe make a little money. I don't care if my bands break big. I want ROIR to play Madison Square Garden."

Similarly, Fantasy has just about given up looking for a major rock group to duplicate the success it had with its single most famous act, Creedence Clearwater Revival. "The amazing thing is Creedence remain constantly strong sellers for us," marvels Jones. "But the rock 'n' roll business has become too expensive. You've got to gamble with studio time, musicians, advances, independent promotion. Before long, you've spent $250,000 without any guaranteed return."

So, instead of rock, Fantasy has continued to do what it does best, mining their rich jazz catalogs (Prestige, Milestone and Riverside, among others) and "very carefully recording new artists in jazz and R&B." With a tradition in dance music that once included disco stars Sylvester and Two Tons o' Fun aka the Weather Girls, the label has begun to have 12-inch street rap hits by artists like Rockmaster Scott & the Dynamic Three and Divine Sounds. Recently, the soundtrack to the film *Amadeus*, produced by Fantasy chairman Saul Zaentz's movie company, has turned into a surprise hit for the label, selling over 200,000 copies. But it's still the jazz packages, lovingly assembled by company president Ralph Kaffel, some with the help of legendary producer Orrin Keepnews, that fuel Fantasy. Reissues outnumber original product three to two.

"There's over one thousand pieces in our catalog," enthuses Jones, a music biz veteran who came over to Fantasy from Motown six and a half years ago. "That stuff's like gold. It gets more valuable with time. Fifties jazz is the most in-demand for purists. And when you look at compact discs, it's a whole new world."

Jones says Fantasy's blossomed since Chrysalis, Motown and Arista left the independent distribution system, and looks forward to the future. "The game plan is to survive and keep doing the same thing we've done for the past five years and if we never have a hit, who cares?" he laughs. "And, if we do, it will be frosting on the cake."

The Importance of Hearing Metal

It's no mistake that black dance and heavy metal music have been the two most successful idioms in the current indie universe. Both have a hardcore of fans that pays little attention to press or radio, but responds to word of mouth and the grapevine. It's precisely the audience best served by what Robert Fripp once called "small mobile intelligent units," which are unable to secure the exposure of pop airplay because they can't afford to advertise or hire promotion representatives.

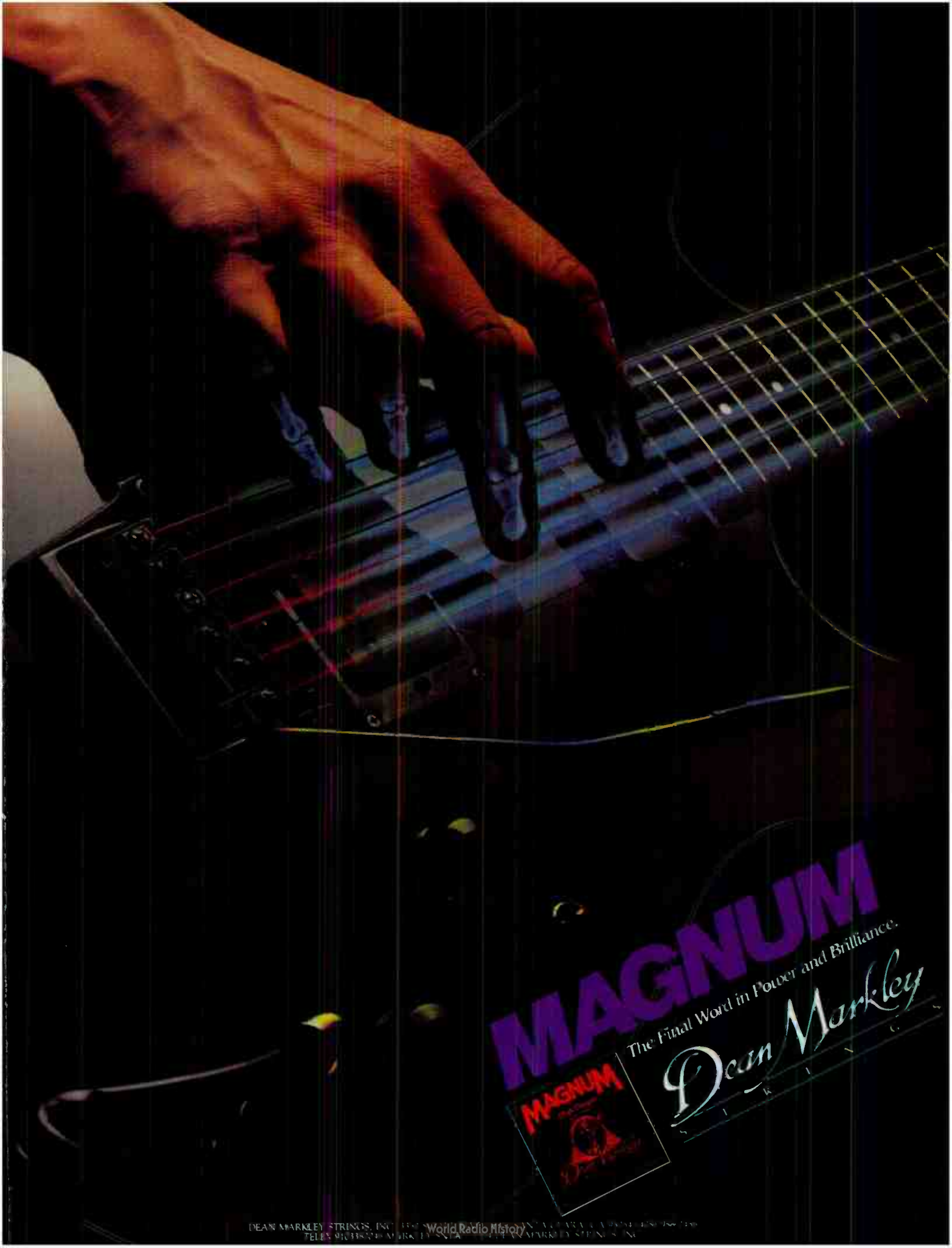
Important Records was founded by a self-described fanatic rock collector named Barry Kobrin in 1978 to import albums, and has grown from a single Long Island City warehouse to a multipurpose distributor with twenty-five salespeople in six offices across the country, including L.A., Atlanta, Chicago, Austin and Seattle. Starting out against major competition like Jem and Peters International and minor threats like Bonaparte and Skydisc, Important has gradually phased out importing in favor of distributing seventy-five U.S. indies to over 2,000 retail stores. Most every independent label head I spoke with said the forty-two-year-old Bronx native's company sold the most records for them.

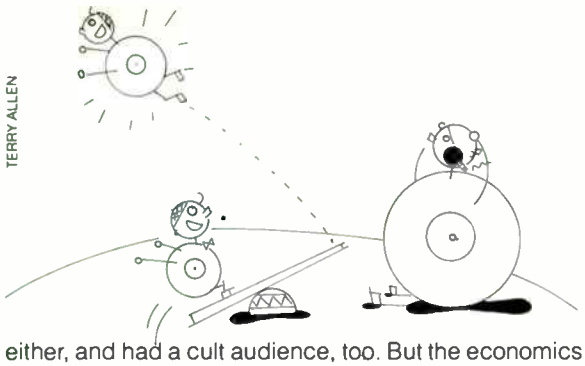
The company's vice president, Howie Gabriel, remembers the firm's big break came when Jem stopped selling the mom-and-pop stores and began dealing with chains and distributors. "They left a big void for us to go through. We began to supply those shops on a COD basis. Then we got the big chains," Gabriel says.

With the majors' recent crackdown on parallel import product, though, Important had to shift the emphasis of its business to domestic labels. That success led to an exclusive "production and distribution" arrangement with Megaforce and a pair of in-house labels in Combat and Relativity. Two of the companies—Megaforce and Combat—are specifically for heavy metal acts. Megaforce has already sent Metallica and Raven to the big leagues in deals with Elektra and Atlantic.

"We're successful because the retailer is behind us," says Gabriel. "We deal with them directly. The kid who works in the chain store doesn't usually get to deal one-on-one with the record company. They get behind our product because they know we're trendsetters. Labels like Tommy Boy and Profile are new music companies, but they still use old world distribution systems. I think we've gone a step beyond that."

Indeed, Important grossed over $12 million last year, and the attention it's beginning to lavish on its own labels worries SST Records principal (and important client) Joe Carducci, who would love to push bands like Black Flag, Husker Du, the Minutemen and Saccharine Trust into the metal market, too. "A band like Black Sabbath was in the same position we are now fifteen years ago," says Carducci. "They didn't get AOR play,




TERRY ALLEN

either, and had a cult audience, too. But the economics of releasing and promoting records is so different today. It's more and more difficult to do something outside the mainstream."

This from the company which recorded Husker Du's mind-bending double LP *Zen Arcade* in eighty hours of studio time for $3,300! "Of course Black Flag would love to tour with Black Sabbath. But the metal audience is pretty fragmented. They don't know if they're into Twisted Sister, Van Halen or Metallica and they're not exactly the quickest audience in the world. But, if the Sabs aren't on the radio, what's Metallica gonna do?" asks Carducci, who runs the company with founders Gregg Ginn, Chuck Dukowski and Steve Corbin.

Barry Kobrin is only too familiar with Carducci's complaint. "Six months ago, I would have said I wanted to sign bands to a major label and make a lot of money," admits Important's prexy. "But that's wrong. Most independent labels need distribution. We have that. What we could use is a promotion department. It's tough to get radio play for independent product.

"But I want to stay an indie; I'd like to think we're different than other companies. So let's do it ourselves. Once I think I'm the same as every other independent record company, that's when I'll say let's take the money and make a deal with CBS. But we'll never go hungry. We have a direct relationship with the key retailer in every community. I'd just like every AOR radio station to realize Important is important."

Profile of Success

So, what still draws people to this ultimately frustrating, though glamorous, business? The thrill of the crapshoot? Cars? Girls? Drugs? Profile's Cory Robbins says he thought he could do better than the guys who were selling 30,000 copies of a 12-inch out of their car trunks. Slash's Bob Biggs wants to spread the word with the fervor of a gospel preacher. Twin Tone's Paul Stark tries to give individuals the chance to grow to stardom. Important's Barry Kobrin wanted to own every rock record ever put out on both sides of the Atlantic.

"I'd like to have a second group at least as big as Run-DMC, and a third and a fourth...." enthuses Robbins about his plans now that Profile's broken through.

The real secret is that everyone thinks they know what's going to be a hit. After all is said and done, after the last piece of filthy lucre is exchanged or chart position attained, most would-be moguls believe the truth is in the grooves. If your song is good enough, if, in Bob Biggs' words, it's that "quintessential synthesis," then the public will somehow hear it, seek it out and buy it.

"We could never have started this label if we didn't know we could make good records," boasts Robbins. "That's why most companies go out of business...they don't make good records." Meanwhile, his cherubic, balding partner, Steve Plotnicki, knows the real key to making it big lies in the history of the business itself, likening the current rappers to a past generation of blues artists.

"I always thought that, within the next ten to fifteen years, you'll have white rock 'n' roll bands covering these rap songs the same way you had Cream covering Elmore James and Sonny Boy Williamson. Which is why we're trying to get our hands on as much rap publishing as possible!" M

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You can see how it was supposed to work. Take *The Brilliant Young Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis,* who has taken some time out from his precocious and dramatic ascent to denounce the commercial moves of certain of his elders, and sit him down with *The Great And Distinguished Pianist Herbie Hancock,* who among Marsalis' significant elders has made the most undilutedly commercial moves, ask them a handful of questions and wait for either an interesting discussion or sparks. The two musicians have played together—in fact Hancock gave Marsalis a portentous boost early in his development—respect each other's abilities even if they disagree mightily about matters of aesthetic choice, and both record for Columbia the gem of the ocean. So pass me a Thracian sword and a Scythian axe, honey, and meet me at the Black Rock.

We met twelve stories up a black obelisk in a republic that was about to re-elect Ronald Reagan as its president. Despite these omens, we began by assuring each other of our degree of mutual culture: the critics told the musicians that the last thing they wanted to provoke was an argument, and the musicians told the critics that an argument between them could not possibly be provoked. Then we all proceeded to behave unpredictably. Herbie Hancock laid out, much as he had during the horn solos in his middle years with the Miles Davis quintet, and Wynton Marsalis, whose early phrasing suggested an altogether charming if equally deceptive shyness, was off on a long and continuously impressive solo.

His fulmination against the concept of "soul" stands most in need of introduction. A couple of days after the interview, however, Marsalis filled in some of the blanks at the Bottom Line after his band's last set.

What bothered him about the notion of soul as conventionally applied is the racist subtext: black musicians are expected to be "soulful" and inarticulate, to perpetuate the myth of the gifted primitive whose sources of inspiration are racial and mysterious and therefore *not his own,* which is to say he is not a conscious artist in the deific Western sense of the term, and even if a genius

Photograph by Deborah Feingold

Wynton vs Herbie

The Purist And The Crossbreeder Duke It Out

by Rafi Zabor & Vic Garbarini

one of automatically the second rank. What's worse, he went on, is that some black people, writers among them, internalize the discrimination and identify rootsiness with lack of knowledge. Young musicians tell him they want to learn their music from the street, which of course is to stay precisely where the wheel of history has put you and say that you've begun to like it. Marsalis' personal reversal of the stereotype is deliberate and organic and, if you consider his conquest of the classical music world, quite graphic. Likewise the way he deals with, ahem, critics. Not content to issue contemptuous one-liners in the Davis tradition, Marsalis actually *remembers* what his critics write about him—probably the first time anyone anywhere has actually bothered to do this—and is willing to confront them, in person or in print, with the concrete evidence of their musical illiteracy. Since (as is widely known), critics know even less about music than they do about writing and since Marsalis' conceptual and verbal apparatuses are in excellent trim, the job is easily done. On the other hand, his habitual distaste for the press can lead to aggressive and unintentionally provocative interviews, as occasionally here.

A backstage visit to the Bottom Line illustrated another side of the media coin. As I came in, Marsalis was handing round the last of many glasses of champagne to a large group of friends, when someone called him a star. Wynton ducked and said, "*Don't call me that*. Call me that and I'll never get a good review again." Which brings us to the subject of Marsalis-mania and its attendant backlash.

I remember walking up and down a ticket line for an Art Ensemble concert a couple of months back and, honest, it seemed that Wynton Marsalis was the only topic of conversation. "Cold." "No feeling." "A technician." "A light-skinned Negro who plays classical music." "Wears suits." "Behaves." Other voices, probably a musician's: "I hope he's puttin' some money away while this is happening because, man, this can't last." Of course some of the hostility he's picking up is actually directed at Columbia Records, whose faithless and hubristic way of proclaiming and then discarding jazz stars is widely disliked. For Wynton Marsalis is not only the finest straight-ahead trumpeter to turn up in the last couple of decades, he is, in a culture that usually doesn't care whether its jazz musicians live or die, a genuine phee-nomenon. Maybe it's the classical connection, or maybe it's the suits, but *Think Of One* reportedly sold 200,000 copies, the string album has a

"Pop music is geared to a whole base type of sexual thing. I listen to the radio, I've seen the videos, women playing with themselves. It's a low-level realization of sex."

chance of selling half a million and going gold, and cousins of mine who never bought a jazz record in their lives have begun to ask me if he's the real thing. And this drives the hipsters mad, insofar as that jazz audience defines itself by listening to music that no one else wants to hear.

I like Marsalis' two new albums better than most of my friends and neighbors. I'm not wild about the string charts on *Hot House Flowers*, although they are more imaginative than they have to be to satisfy the demands of genre—and I appreciate Wynton's tact in not taking all the solos for himself. But what thrills me on the record are three or four of the trumpet solos. Those old fashioned chord changes take off some of the chill that the recording process seems to impart to Marsalis' work. One thing I've always admired in his work is the instinctive flex of note against note in his phrasing, the uncoiling of his solos in compelling patterns of tension and release that get your attention and hold it for the distance even if the solo is short on organization after its first couple of choruses. But on the new album, most spectacularly on "When You Wish Upon A Star" but even more convincingly on "I'm Confessin'," there is something more, the kind of form that can only evolve organically, and at a significant spiritual depth. It's true that

"Music is manifest in many forms. As long as they all have purpose, they shouldn't be pitted against each other. That's stupid. It's like apples and oranges."

his work on this album still leans on late-50s Miles Davis—but no more, say, than Clifford Brown does on Fats Navarro. So there. As for the classical album, I know that people have expressed their disappointment at the too-miscellaneous nature of the repertoire, but why has no one pointed out how incredibly Marsalis plays on the date? It's way beyond his work on the, yes, more substantial album with the Haydn concerto. At the Village Vanguard I overheard him telling Terence Blanchard about an orchestral player in London who gave him a lesson that cleaned up his attack, and maybe the record was cut after the lesson. In any event, Wynton Marsalis has managed to transform himself from a precociously gifted interpreter into what sounds to me suspiciously like a great one.

Live, at the Bottom Line and two nights later at the Vanguard, he was thrilling but inconsistent. The most impressive statement, really, was his band. With Branford Marsalis, who occasionally plays better than his brother, and Kenny Kirkland, who occasionally plays better than either of them, it has three superlative soloists; while the seventeen-year-old bassist Charnett Moffett tends to overplay he is growing into the part, and Jeff Watts is an inspiring drummer. Together they are damn near impeccable, and although it's not hard for an experienced listener to play a game of trace-the-influence, their idiom seems freshly reinvented.

Conservatism is a dead duck, but neoclassicism is a genuine and powerful redeployment of the resources of a tradition, at times as necessary to that tradition's life as any other of its possible gestures, as bracing and central to its organic life as the boldest experimentation. There are riper bands in the music, but the Marsalis quintet might turn out to be an enormous inspiration to young musicians coming up who might want to play jazz but are puzzled and finally put off by both the commercializers and an only semi-comprehensible avant-garde. If so, it could be one of the best things to have happened to the music in years.

I met with Marsalis again after the Vanguard date, to touch base and chat off the record. I found him working through some new tunes for the band, teaching himself drums, eating stew for breakfast and studying the score of Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*. We discussed a wide range of music—somewhere in the course of which Bartok was referred to as "a long skinny cat with a big head on top and enough dick on him for ten miles of Johnson," probably the first time the composer has been called this outside of his native Hungary—and one of the things I discovered was the range and retentiveness of his memory. I mentioned Shostakovich and he began singing the trumpet part of the piano and trumpet con-

certo; I recalled a favorite Ornette Coleman solo (on "Peace") and he proceeded to sing *that,* with all its asymmetrical phrasing and bent pitches intact. Maybe this facility provides a clue to his intolerance of the deficiencies of his neighbor musicians—he sees so little reason to have any. Mozart had a similar incomprehension, and cruelty, possibly for the same reason.

Marsalis relented somewhat from his position in the interview on technique, conceding that concept was more important, though of course it was best to have both. In everything he said about music, however, there was the overwhelming urge to quantify, to substantiate every statement technically, and I saw in this the action of a powerful young mind extending its range and confirming its grasp of its subject. Brilliant young men often build their model of the universe by absolutizing their opinions and excluding everything that might contradict them. It's a way of constructing a necessary basis for creative work, and it works, but it tends to exclude the inconvenient and unquantifiable, at least until later, which is to say that the edifice, however impressive, is seldom itself absolute. Marsalis, as Dostoevsky remarked of someone who played another ax, is young, abstract, and therefore cruel. But when not talking about musicians whose work he dislikes, he's a different guy—funny, modest, sensitive, perceptive. I mentioned in passing that he was playing less and less like other people. "Yeah, I'm just beginning to pick the stuff out, you know?" he answered, in the mode that's natural to him when he's not defending himself from aliens. His gift is so large there's no telling what it'll look like when he finishes unwrapping it.

ANDY FREEBERG/RETNA

Wynton Marsalis, rising star: "Don't call me that. I'll never get a good review again!"

Because of a consuming lack of interest in his funk records, I went to sleep on Herbie Hancock for a number of years, but then in 1981 I caught him live with VSOP II—and was suddenly reminded what an incredibly brilliant pianist he was. Y'see, in my part of the forest the local mythology runs that when you make compromises the size of Hancock's, your music goes all to hell, and this guy onstage was a damn genius.

With McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock dominated mainstream jazz piano in the 60s, and if you think his influence has abated in the interim, go listen to Kenny Kirkland. Hancock's fleetness of touch and harmonic imagination are still unsurpassed in the idiom, and his accompaniments—sudden, two-handed commentaries that frame a horn soloist's statements like an instantaneous orchestration—are so unusual no one has picked up on them. And unlike most of the others who were brushed by Miles' dark wing Hancock did not, after *Bitches Brew*, go on to some sort of hyphenated amalgam along the lines of jazz-rock, but, after the break-up of an intriguing sextet, to a personal version of straight funk. Shocking, *non*?

Once Hancock got out of straight jazz rhythms, he evinced an at least partly unexpected rhythmic genius. The asymmetrical riffs for Rhodes that turn up on Freddie Hubbard's *Straight Life* and in the even more unusual "Ostinato" on the *Mwandishi* album—Hancock's sextet seemed on the verge of conflating jazz-rock and the avant-garde in a way that even Miles never managed—fell by the wayside when the funk was engaged. But the density of interlocking rhythmic patterns that showed up on *Headhunter*'s "Sly" and even more definitively on *Thrust*'s "Actual Proof" and "Spank-a-Lee," on which the interaction between Hancock, bassist Paul Jackson and drummer Mike Clark seems almost unplayably complex, certainly defused the charge that Hancock had sold out to a technically undemanding medium. Yet Hancock has been least inconvenienced by the backbeats and brick-wall barlines of funk and rock rhythms: his two-handed riffing could hardly be more polyrhythmic, and as a soloist he seems able to phrase as freely and imaginatively as he chooses, his rhythmic imagination liberating him from the two and four bar clichés into long and unpredictable paragraphs of improvisation, and his harmonic invention likewise unimpaired by the relentless insistence of basic blues.

The black tie crowd at the Grammies leapt to their feet and cheered, so did the mob I joined at the Ritz, everybody on the street digs it, it's both hi-tech and low-Bronx and even my jazz-snob friends allow that when they first heard it on the radio, "Rockit" was an obviously great novelty hit, but I dunno, dehumanization just doesn't make me wanna dance. Maybe if I were limber enough to break I'd worry less, since break dancing seems to me an invention of wit and genius, and a demonstration, in the time-honored tradition of black music (cf. *Stompin' The Blues*), that a world that flips you upside down, hits you upside the head, throws you to the ground and spins you, and does its damnedest to drain every atom of life and feeling out of you and turn you into pure machine, a robot, so constricted and compressed by everything the city represents that you can only move in severely circumscribed and inhumanly straight lines, that a world like this can be dealt with by artmagic, can be laughed at and dominated by the superior powers of grace and invention inside you, that you

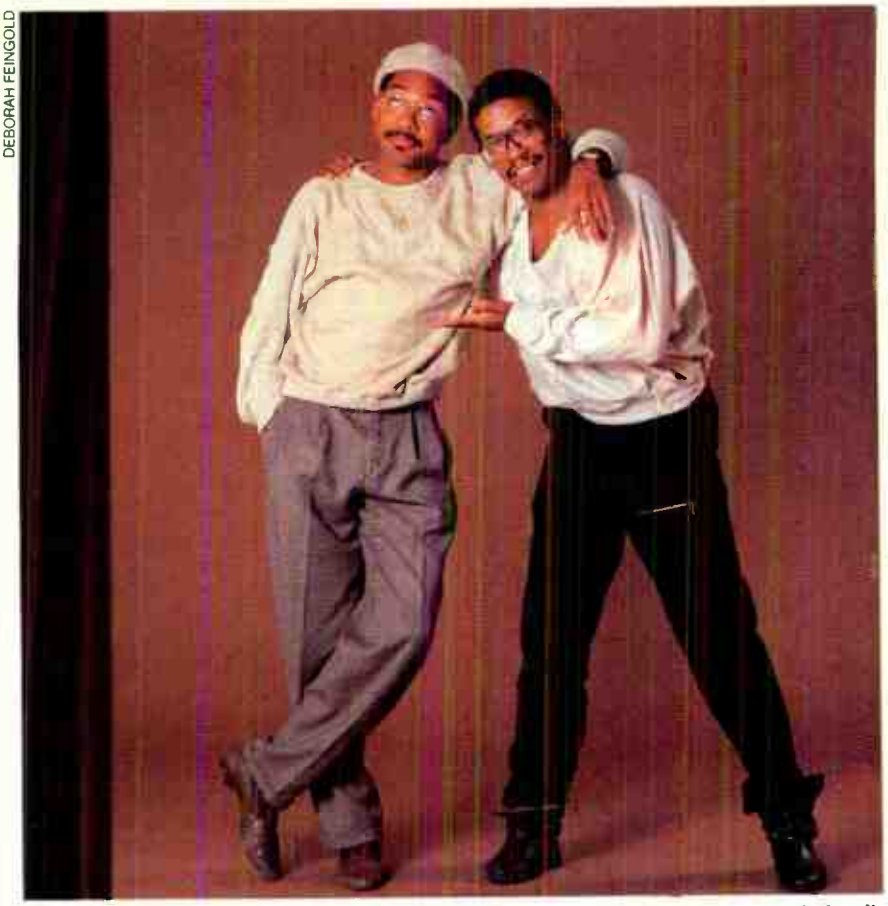
can deal its poison back to it as joy-juice. But the machine beat to which it is most often danced seems to me to represent pure Enemy, and the virtuoso mixes that D. St. and others come up with at the boards sound like a portrait of a shoddily mechanized hell.

I don't know what I expected from Herbie Hancock at the interview, perhaps an obligatory, pro forma defense of music he didn't really believe in, but that's not what the man is about. His disagreement with Marsalis is the one about the water in the bottle: Marsalis keeps maintaining that the water in the bottle is conditioned by the bottle, that it is tall or squat, green or blue, and Hancock keeps on saying that water is always water, music always music, essence always essence. It can be a facile point of view or a profound one. My first positive take on recent Herbie Hancock, after listening to him talk, seeing what he's like, was that for some reason—his inextricable musicianship, or Piscean flexibility, or maybe all that *nam yoho renge kyo*—he's artistically immune to the potentially negative aspects of his choices. Marsalis couldn't function that way, ninety-nine out of a hundred musicians couldn't function that way (though hundreds have tried), but Herbie Hancock can and does. When I saw the band live I left with my head full of unwanted chugachugachugachug, the memory of an imaginative solo on "Karabali" and of Hancock playing to the audience, shadowboxing in the spotlight, stage-grinning and indulging in other antics that can get you excommunicated from the sacred body of jazz, yet he hasn't been and won't be. The new album, *Sound System*, extends the language of *Future Shock*, and probably its success, and draws some obviously fascinating parallels between boombox hiphop and its African ancestors, and most of it's still not for me. Meeting up with Herbie Hancock has been a privilege that has not altered my tastes—but it has changed my mind.

"When I was at Juilliard and saw a cat who could play, I'd say, 'Yeah, they have technique, but no soul.' But I came to understand that soul and emotion are part of technique."

MUSICIAN: *We don't want to get you guys into an argument.*
HERBIE: Oh we won't, we never argue.
WYNTON: I would never argue with Herbie.
MUSICIAN: *I'll tell what we want to start with. Is there a necessity for any young player, no matter how brilliant he is, to work his way through a tradition?*
WYNTON: That's a hard question to answer. When we deal with anything that's European, the definitions are clear cut. But with our stuff it all comes from blues so "it's all the same." So that'll imply that if I write an arrangement then my arrangement is on the same level as Duke Ellington. But to me it's *not* the same. So what I'm trying to determine is this terminology. What is rock 'n' roll? What does jazz mean, or R&B? Used to be R&B was just somebody who was black, in pop music they were white. Now we know the whole development of American music is so steeped in racist tradition that it defines what we're talking about.
MUSICIAN: *Well, there's the Berklee School of Music approach, where you learn technique. And some people would say well, as long as it's coming from the heart, it doesn't matter about technique.*
WYNTON: That is the biggest crock of bullshit in the history of music, that stuff about coming from the heart. If you are trying to create art the *first thing* is to look around and find out what's meaningful to you. Art tries to make life meaningful, so automatically that implies a certain amount of emotion. Anybody can say "I have emotion." I mean, a thousand trumpet players had soul and emotion when they picked up trumpets. But they weren't all Louis Armstrong. Why?
HERBIE: He was a better human being.
WYNTON: Because Louis Armstrong's technique was better.
MUSICIAN: *Is that the only thing though?*
WYNTON: Who's to say that his soul was greater than anybody else's? How can you measure soul? Have any women left him, did he eat some chicken on Saturday night? That's a whole social viewpoint of what payin' dues is. So Duke Ellington shouldn't have been great because by definition of dues he didn't really go through as much as Louis Armstrong, so naturally his piano playing didn't have the same level of soul. Or Herbie wasn't soulful either. Because when he was coming up, black people didn't have to eat out of frying pans on Friday nights.
MUSICIAN: *Well, one of the ways of judging soulfulness, as you say, is suffering. But it's not the only way.*
WYNTON: I read a book where a cat [James Lincoln Collier] said that "In 1920-something we notice that Louis Armstrong's playing took on a deeper depth of emotion. Maybe that's because his mother died." What brings about soulfulness is realization. That's all. You can realize it and be the richest man in the world. You can be someone living in the heart of Harlem in the most deprived situation with no soul at all. But the social scientists...oh, soul. That's all they can hear, you know. Soul is part of technique. Emotion is part of technique. Music is a craft, man.
HERBIE: External environment brings fortune or misfortune. Both of them are means to grow. And that's what soul is about; the growth or, as Wynton said, realization. To realize how to take that experience and to find the depth of that experience in your life. If you're able to do that then everything becomes fortune.
WYNTON: The thing that makes me most disgusted is that a lot of guys who write about the music don't understand the musicians. People have the feeling that jazz is an expression of depression. What about Louis Armstrong? To me, his thing is an expression of joy. A celebration of the human condition.
HERBIE: Or the other concept is somebody who, out of his ignorance and stupidity, dances and slaps his sides. No concept of intelligence, focus, concentration...and the study, the concern. Even the self doubt and conflict that goes into the art of playing jazz.

Look, I didn't start off playing jazz. I hated jazz when I first heard it.It sounded like noise to me. I was studying classical music, and at the same time, going to an all-black grammar school. I heard groups like the Ravens. But I really didn't have many R&B records. I was like a little nerd in school.
WYNTON: Well, I don't know about *that*.
HERBIE: Jazz finally made an impression on me when I saw a guy who was my age improvising. I thought that would be impossible for somebody my age, thirteen or fourteen, to be able to create some music out of his head. I was a classical player, so I had to learn jazz the way any classical player would. When it came to learning what one feels and hears as soulful nuances in the music, I actually had to learn that technically.
WYNTON: That's interesting, because I did it the opposite way. When you put out *Headhunters* and *Thrust*, Branford and I listened to those albums, but we didn't think it was jazz. My daddy would play jazz, but I was like, hey man, I don't want to hear this shit. I grew up in New Orleans, Kenner, Louisiana, actually, a country town. All I ever did was play "When The Saints" and stuff. I couldn't really play, I had no technique. So when I came to high school everybody else could play the



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Herbie: "You taught me a lot, made me play. Plus you made me get some new clothes."

trumpet and I was the saddest one. The first record I heard was *Giant Steps*. My daddy had all those records, but I never would listen to them. Why listen to jazz, man?

HERBIE: None of your friends were playing it?

WYNTON: None of the people I knew. You couldn't get no women playing jazz! Nobody had a philosophy about what life was supposed to be about. We didn't have a continuum. I never listened to Miles or Herbie. I didn't even know you played with Miles, until I was sixteen. Then when I started listening to jazz, I would only listen to a certain type. Only bebop. So I can relate to starting from a fan type aporoach. But when you play music, you're going to play the way you are.

MUSICIAN: *What about your statement at the Grammies?*

WYNTON: It was very obvious what I was saying.

HERBIE: I have to congratulate you on that. You implied that there was good music and music that was in bad taste. Everybody wondered, "What music is he referring to?"

WYNTON: Listen, the only statement I made was that we're trying to elevate pop music to the level of art. Not just in music. Pop culture. Pop anything. I have nothing against pop music. I listen to the radio. I'm not saying people should listen to jazz or buy jazz records, or even know the music. Just *understand* what the music was about, because the purpose and the function of pop music is totally different from jazz.

HERBIE: A few people that have interviewed me have asked me if the statement that he made was directed against what I was doing. That never dawned on me.

WYNTON: I wasn't even thinking about that.

MUSICIAN: *A lot of people do think that.*

WYNTON: People think I'm trying to say jazz is greater than pop music. I don't have to say that, that's *obvious*. But I don't even think about it that way. The two musics say totally different things. Jazz is *not* pop music, that's all. Not that it's greater.... I didn't mean it was obvious.

HERBIE: That's your opinion, which is fine. Now you're making a statement of fact.

MUSICIAN: *So is classical music "greater" than jazz?*

WYNTON: Hell no, classical music is a European idiom. America has a new cultural identity. And the ultimate achievement for any culture is the creation of an art form. Now the basic element of our art form is the blues, because an art form makes life meaningful. Incidentally, I would like to say—and I hope you will print this—classical music is *not* white music. When Beethoven was writing music he wasn't thinking white or black. Those terms became necessary in America when they had to take white artists and make them number one because they couldn't accept black artists. We constantly have historical redefinitions to take the artistic contributions out of the hands of people who were designated black. The root of the colloquial stuff throughout the whole world now comes out of the U.S. Negro's lifestyle.

MUSICIAN: *Is there something in some of the root forms of this music which has a certain inner strength?*

WYNTON: People don't know what I'm doing basically, because they don't understand music. All they're doing is reacting to what they think it remotely sounds like.

We don't have to go *back* to the 60s. Beethoven didn't have to go *back* to Haydn. We never hear that. What they say is well, Beethoven is an extension of Haydn. Everybody has to do that—Stravinsky, Bartok. But in European music people have a cultural continuum. And our music is just, "Well, what is the next new Negro gonna think up out of the blue sky that's gonna be innovative." Ornette Coleman sounds like Bird, he was playing rhythm changes on "The Shape Of Jazz To Come." Have I ever read that by anybody reviewing those albums? No. Why? Because they don't know what rhythm changes sound like. So they're gonna write a review on what I'm doing and I'm supposed to say "that's cool."

HERBIE: When you first asked the question I heard it as sensitively as he heard it. 'Cause I said to myself, he's saying Wynton is going back to play the 60s-style of music in 1984.

MUSICIAN: *We all agreed apparently at one point that jazz was more meaningful, in some sense, than pop music. Since you work in the two idioms, what do you feel is different?*

HERBIE: Wait a minute. I *don't* agree. Let me address myself to that. When we have life, we have music. Music can be manifest in many different forms, and as long as they all have purpose they shouldn't be pitted against each other as one being more important than the other. That's stupid. That's like apples and oranges.

MUSICIAN: *All right, you're doing both. What's the difference in the quality of the experience with each kind of music?*

HERBIE: Let me tell you how I started getting my feet wet with pop music. When I got into high school and started getting into jazz, I didn't want to hear anything else but classical music and jazz. No R&B, nothing, until I heard James Brown's "Poppa's Got A Brand New Bag." Later on, I heard "Thank You Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin," it just went to my core. I didn't know *what* he was doing, I mean, I heard the chorus

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Herbie laying out during Wynton's extended verbal solo.

but, how could he *think* of that. I was afraid that that was something I couldn't do. And here I am, I call myself a musician. It bothered me. Then at a certain point I decided to try my hand at funk, when I did *Headhunters*. I was not trying to make a jazz record. And it came out sounding different from anything I could think of at the time. But I still wasn't satisfied because in the back of my head I wanted to make a funk record.

I had gotten to the point where I was so directed toward always playing something different that I was ignoring the validity of playing something that was familiar. Visually I symbolize it as: There's the space from the earth up to somewhere in the sky, then I was going from the sky up to somewhere further up in the sky. And this other thing from the earth up to the sky I was kind of ignoring. And so one thing about pop music that I've discovered is that playing something that's familiar or playing the same solo you played before has no negative connotations whatsoever. What's negative is if it doesn't sound, each time, like it's the first time you played it. Now that's really difficult for me to do. Take Wah Wah Watson, for example. He's not a solo player, he's a rhythm player. But he used to play a little solo on one tune and it would be the same solo every night. And every night he would get a bigger hand than I would. And every night it was the same notes but it sounded fresh. So my lesson was to try to learn to play something without change, and have it sound fresh and meaningful.

WYNTON: I look at music different from Herbie. I played in a funk band. I played the same horn parts every night all through high school. We played real funk tunes like "Parliament Funkadelic," authentic funk. It wasn't this junk they're trying to do now to get their music played on white radio stations. Now, to play the Haydn Trumpet Concerto is a lot different from playing "Give Up The Funk," or "Mothership Connection." I dig "Mothership Connection," but to me what pop music is trying to do is totally different. It's really geared to a whole base type of sexual thing. I listen to the radio. I know tunes that they have out now: here's people squirming on the ground, fingering themselves. It's low-level realizations of sex. Now to me, music to stimulate you is the music that has all the root in the world in it, but is trying to elevate that, to ele-

ne people to a certain level rather than go down.

IE: It's not like that Wynton. If it were, it would just stay me. Why would the music change?

WYNTON: Because they get new computers. You tell me, what's the newest thing out that you've heard?

HERBIE: Okay Prince, let's take that.

WYNTON: What is the tune "Purple Rain"? Part of it is like a little blues. I've got the record, I listen to it all the time. The guitar solo is a rehash of some white rock.

MUSICIAN: *It's a rehash of Hendrix too.*

WYNTON: Well, I'm not gonna put that on his head because he can do stuff Hendrix never thought of doing which a lot of people want to overlook just to cut him down and say he sounds like Hendrix. You can print that if you talk about him. But there's no way you can get new in that type of music because the message will always be the same.

HERBIE: There are songs that have a lot of musical episodes. I saw Rick Springfield's video. I don't care if he's got a bad reputation. I heard some harmonic things that were really nice.

WYNTON: You can get the newest synthesizers, but that music'll only go to a certain level. I'm not saying that's negative.

MUSICIAN: *In a sense you're describing what Herbie's doing.*

WYNTON: He knows what he's doing, right? (laughs)

HERBIE: It's *not* true because I know. You mention drum machines. There are examples of pop music today using drum machines specifically in a very automated way. Automation doesn't imply sex to me at all. It's the opposite of sex.

WYNTON: But that's not what we're talking about.

HERBIE: You said the music is about one thing, and it's about sex. And I'm saying it's not just about that.

WYNTON: We don't even want to waste our time discussing that because we *know* that that's what it's about.

HERBIE: If you name specific things I would certainly agree with you. If you say dancing is about sex I would agree with you too. But I think you're using some false ammunition.

MUSICIAN: *In most of the world's traditions sex is both connected with the highest creative aspects and then can be taken to the lowest basic...*

WYNTON: That's what I'm saying. What direction you want to go with it and which level it's marketed on. When I see stuff like videos with women looking like tigers roaming through the jungle, you know, women playing with themselves, which is cool man, but to me that's the high school point of view. The problem I have is when people look at that and start using terms like "new video art with such daring concepts."

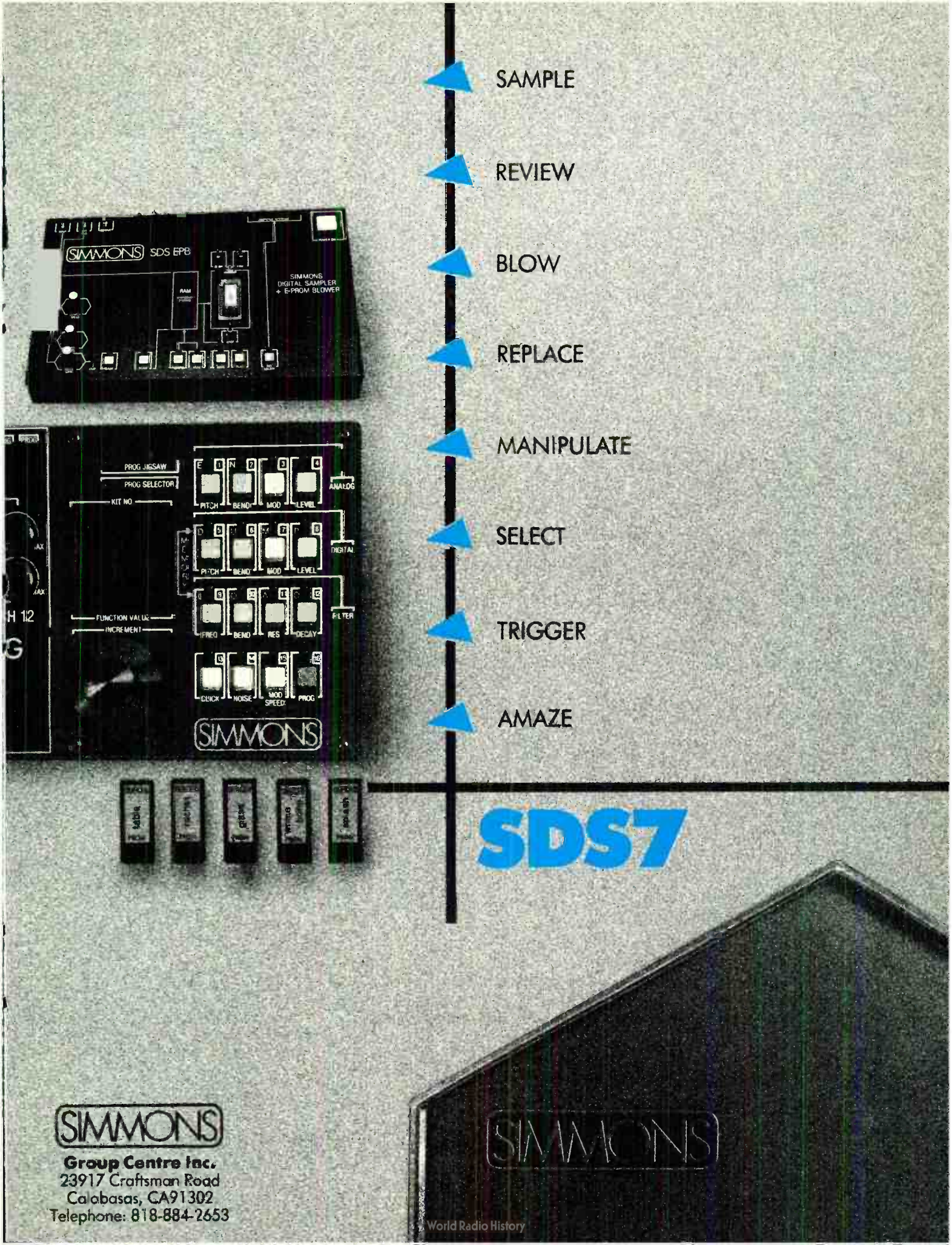
A lot of stuff in our society is racially oriented, too. I read a quote from Herbie. He said, "I heard that people from MTV were racist oriented and I didn't want to take any chances, so when I did my video I made sure they didn't focus on me and that some of the robots' faces were white." That somebody like him would have to make a statement like that...

MUSICIAN: *That is a heavy statement.*

WYNTON: ...But what he's saying is true. Maybe they wouldn't have played his video. And what pisses me off is the arrogance of people whose whole thing is just a blatant imitation of the negroidal tradition. Blatant. And even the major exponents of this type of music have said that themselves. And they'll have the arrogance and the audacity to say well, we just gonna play white people's videos. How am I supposed to relate to that?

MUSICIAN: *On the other hand, "Rockit" won five video awards. It partly broke open MTV; there are now more black acts on. And now, kids in the heartland who have never heard black music are beginning to hear it. It's probably because of what you did.*

WYNTON: They're still not hearing it. Black music is being broken down. It's no longer black music. This is not a discussion or argument. You get the Parliament records and the EW&F and the James Brown, the Marvin Gaye, and you listen. What I hear now is just obvious rock 'n' roll elements like Led Zeppelin. If people want to do that, fine. If they want to sell more records, great. What I'm saying is, that's reaffirmation of pre-



judice to me. If bending over is what's happening I'm going to bend over.

MUSICIAN: *Is there another side? What do you think, Herb?*

HERBIE: Well, Wynton is not an exponent of the idea that blending of musical cultures is a good thing.

WYNTON: ...Because it's an *imitation* of the root. It loses roots because it's *not* a blending. It's like having sex with your daughter.

HERBIE: Okay, let me say this because this is something that *I* know. Up until recently a black artist, even if he felt rock 'n' roll like Mick Jagger, couldn't make a rock 'n' roll record. Because the media actually has set up these compartments that the racists fit things into. You can hear *elements* of rock from black artists....

WYNTON: You don't just hear elements. What I hear in them is blatant, to the point of cynicism....

> "The only thing that disgusts me is that I've seen Herbie's thing called 'new electronic jazz.' I mean, it's a *pop* tune. Our music is going to continue to be misunderstood."

HERBIE: Okay, okay. I'm not disagreeing. I know that there have been black artists that have wanted to do different kinds of music than what the R&B stations would play.That to me is more important, the fact that we can't do what we want to.

WYNTON: I'm agreeing with you, everybody should do what they want to do. But what's happening is, our vibe is being lost. I see that in movies. I see it on television. What you have now is white guys standing up imitating black guys, and black guys sitting back and looking at an imitation of us saying,"Ohhh"...with awe in their faces. You have black children growing up now with jerry curls trying to wear dresses, thinking about playing music that doesn't sound like our culture.

MUSICIAN: *Does Herbie "hear" what he's doing?*

WYNTON: Herbie hears what Herbie plays. But a lot of that music Herbie is not writing. And when Herbie is playing he's gonna make the stuff sound like Herbie playin' it.

HERBIE: Let me explain something about "Rockit." If you're a black artist doing some forms of pop music, which "Rockit" is, you have to get on black radio and become a hit. And if you get in the top twenty in black radio, or urban contemporary they call it now (laughter) anyway, if it's considered crossover material then at that point the record company will try to get the rock stations to play it. And so I said to myself, "How can I get this record exposed as quickly to the white kids as to the black kids?" So the video was a means to an end.

MUSICIAN: *Did it bother you, having to make that decision.*

HERBIE: I didn't care about being in the video. I don't care about being on the album cover of my record. It's not important to me. Why should I have to be in my own video? (Wynton winces)

MUSICIAN: *But why* shouldn't *you? I mean, it's your video.*

HERBIE: That was not an issue with me. I'm not on the cover of most of my records. What I care about is whether the cover looks good or not. I wanted the video to be good. That's the first thing. The second thing I said, now how am I gonna get on there, because I want to get my record heard by these kids.

MUSICIAN: *Can't you see this strategy is a way of breaking something in?*

WYNTON: If you cheese enough they'll make you president.

HERBIE: I wasn't cheesing. I was trying to get heard.

MUSICIAN: *He broke open the medium, partially.*

WYNTON: Michael Jackson broke the medium open. Let's get that straight. What's amazing to me is that [Herbie's] thing was used by all the cats that were doing break dancing.

HERBIE: There were three things against it. First of all, no vocals. Secondly, that kind of music wasn't even getting any airplay at that time. Third thing is my name.

WYNTON: Right. But the only thing that I hate, the only thing that disgusts me about that is I've seen Herbie's thing on *Solid Gold* as "New Electronic" type of jazz or something. I mean, it's a *pop* tune, man. Our whole music is just going to continue to be misunderstood. You have to understand that people who hear about me, they don't listen to the music I play. If I have girlfriends, they don't listen to what I'm playing. They don't care. They only know Wynton as an image. Or Wynton, he's on the Grammies, he has a suit on. So their whole thing is media oriented. I'm not around a lot of people who listen to jazz or classical music, forget that! I did a concert and people gave me a standing ovation before I walked onto the stage. But in the middle of the first piece they were like (nods off)...so that lets you know right there what's happening.

MUSICIAN: *Is this a black audience?*

WYNTON: Black people. Yeah, this is a media thing, you understand. I'm talking to people who are in the street.

HERBIE: I understand what you're talking about, about black artists with jerry curls and now with the long hair. And I don't mean the Rastas, either...

WYNTON: Well, check it out. Even deeper than that, Herbie, is when I see brothers and sisters on the TV. I see black athletes, straining to conform to a type of personality that will allow them to get some more endorsements. What disturbs me is it's the best people. When somebody is good, they don't have to do that. I was so happy when Stevie's album came out. I said damn, finally we got a groove and not somebody just trying to crossover into some rock 'n' roll.

HERBIE: I understand what you mean about a certain type of groove, like this is the real R&B, and so forth. But I can't agree that there's only one way we're supposed to be playing. I have faith in the strength of the black contribution to music, and that strength is always going back to the groove anyway. After a while certain things get weeded out. And the music begins to evolve again.

WYNTON: Now check out what I'm saying....

HERBIE: No, 'cause you've talked a lot....

WYNTON: Okay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry man.

HERBIE: (laughter) Give me a break! I've never been on an interview with you, so I didn't know how it was. Wowww! I understand what you're saying, but I have faith that whatever's happening now is not a waste of time. It's a part of growth. It may be a transition, but transition is part of growth too. And it doesn't bother me one bit that you hear more rock 'n' roll in black players, unless it's just not good. The idea of doing rock 'n' roll that comes out of Led Zeppelin doesn't bother me. I understand it's third hand information that came from black people to begin with, but if a guy likes it, play it. When Tony Williams and I first left Miles we did two different things. My orientation was from a funk thing. What Tony responded to was rock 'n' roll. That's why his sound had more of a rock influence than *Headhunters*. I can't say that's negative.

WYNTON: I agree with what Herb has said. If somebody wants to go out with a dress on, a skirt, panties...that's their business. But what happens is not that one or two people do that. Everybody has to do that. It doesn't bother me that (black) comedians can be in film, I think that's great. And the films are funny. What bothers me is that *only* comedians can be in films.

I think since the 60s with people on TV always cursing white people but not presenting any intellectual viewpoint, that any black person who tries to exhibit any kind of intellect is considered as trying not to be black. We have allowed social scien-

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tists to redefine what type of people we are. I play some European to pay respect to a great, great music which had nothing to do with racial situations. Beethoven wasn't thinking about the social conditions in America when he wrote something, he was thinking about why did he have to get off the street for the princes. So his music has the same type of freedom and struggle for abolition of the class system, as Louis Armstrong's music is a celebration of that abolition. See, Beethoven's music has that struggle in it. Louis Armstrong is the resolution of that. This gigantic cultural achievement is just going to be redefined, unless I take an active part in saying what I think is correct.

HERBIE: Now that you've voiced all...not all, but *many* of your objections, what do you do about it? How do we make it better. If all we do is complain....

WYNTON: We're not complaining. We're providing people with information.

HERBIE: Well, there's two ways to provide people with information. One way is to point your finger at them or intimidate them by pulling at their collars. But many times what that does is it makes the person feel uncomfortable, and then if he starts to get on the defensive you've lost more ground than you've gained. So I've found from my own life that I can get more accomplished by getting a person inspired to do something. Inspiration, not intimidation.

WYNTON: 'Cept intimidation is good, too.

HERBIE: This is where you and I differ. I haven't said much before because I'm not like that.

MUSICIAN: *You've really defined your point of view in terms of this interview, and Herbie hasn't yet.*

WYNTON: I was talking too much. Sorry. I was being uncool.

HERBIE: No, no, no. It was cool. It's all right. I'll come back another day when you're not here...(general laughter)

WYNTON: The problem is in the educational system. I've had conversations with people about you. Musicians have no idea who you are. They have no understanding or respect for being able to play. It's just like they think they're you or something. The first question I go everywhere is, "How do you get over? How did you get your break with Herbie? I said, when I was with Herbie and them I was just fortunate to be on the bandstand. Just to be learning from Herbie...no seriously man, I'm not saying it to kiss your ass. You know it's true.

> "I was ignoring the validity of the familiar. I was going from the sky to somewhere further up in the sky. And this other thing, from the earth to the sky, I was ignoring."

HERBIE: That's what I feel about him. He came in with one trumpet, nineteen years old playing with me, Ron and Tony.

WYNTON: I was scared.

HERBIE: When I heard him play, then I had to call up Ron and Tony and say...

WYNTON: Hey, this mother is sad (laughter).

HERBIE: Look, it's gonna work. What he did was so phenomenal. You remember that tour. That tour was bad.

WYNTON: I learned so much on that tour, man.

HERBIE: So did I man. You taught me a lot. You made me play. Plus you made me get some new clothes (laughter).

WYNTON: I can get publicity until I'm a hundred. That's not gonna make me be on the level with cats like Miles or Clifford, or know the stuff that you know. Even "Rockit" has elements that I can relate to. But in general you made funk cats musicians. And that has been overlooked.

MUSICIAN: *In the end, were the compromises involved in doing the video worth it?*

HERBIE: I had a choice. And I'm proud of the choice that I made. But as a result what happened? Between Michael Jackson's video and my video, the impact opened the thing up. Now I'm sure Michael can take more credit for that. Anyway, if it was true that MTV was racist....

WYNTON: It was true. You don't have to say "if."

HERBIE: I have never claimed that to be true.

WYNTON: I'll say it.

HERBIE: I've only claimed that this is what I observe. But now you see plenty of videos with black artists. It doesn't even look like there's any difference anymore. Even though I wasn't even looking for that as a solution, if this additional thing was accomplished, I feel really good about that. And I feel good about getting five awards on MTV. They were trying to copy something before. Now they realize they have something that's more powerful than what they were trying to copy.

WYNTON: The sound of Michael Jackson's music, the sound of Prince's music, the sound of "Rockit"—that sound is *not* black. People are consciously trying to be crossovers. I've read interviews where people say, "We take this type of music and we try to get this type of sound to appeal to this type of market to sell these many records."

MUSICIAN: *Do you think Michael did that?*

WYNTON: Of course he did. But the thing that separates Michael Jackson from all other pop artists is the level of sincerity in his music.

MUSICIAN: *You're saying he's got sincerity, and yet at the same time he contoured his sound?*

WYNTON: He's a special person. He's not contrived. What I don't understand is why he did that cut with Mick Jagger.

HERBIE: I'll tell ya, I just did a record with Mick Jagger and man, Mick Jagger's *bad*.

WYNTON: Yeah, well....

HERBIE: I didn't know that. And you don't know that either.

WYNTON: I'm not doubting that he's bad....

HERBIE: Wynton, you *don't* know that.

WYNTON: I'm not doubting that he's bad, Herbie. Check it out. But a lot of pop music is geared towards children. It's not something that I can really have a serious discussion about.

HERBIE: You're right. It's geared toward teens and the preteens. So what it's doing is stimulating my own youth and allowing me to express my own youth. Because it's not like I'm doing my daughter's music. This is *my* music. And we both happen to like it because we both feel that youthful element. People tell me I look younger now than I did five years ago. And I do...except in the morning (laughs). I would venture to say that a lot of it has to do with the music I'm playing now. Electric music, you know. I'm finding a door that hasn't been opened. That's exciting me, and I'm given the opportunity to use some elements from the "farthest out" jazz stuff in this music, and have it be unique.

MUSICIAN: *How do you get human feeling in automated, computerized music like that?*

HERBIE: First we create the music. Afterwards I sit back and listen, and sometimes I discover things that I wasn't really thinking about when I was doing them. I hear the elements that have warmth. Sometimes it's a particular synthesizer sound. But it could be how it's played.

WYNTON: I'm coming off negative and that's not what I'm intending...The purpose of pop music is to sell records that appeal to people on a level that they want to accept it on. If you put out a record and it doesn't sell, then your next response is why didn't the record sell? Let's try to do this or that to make the record sell.

MUSICIAN: *That's terribly condescending towards pop....*

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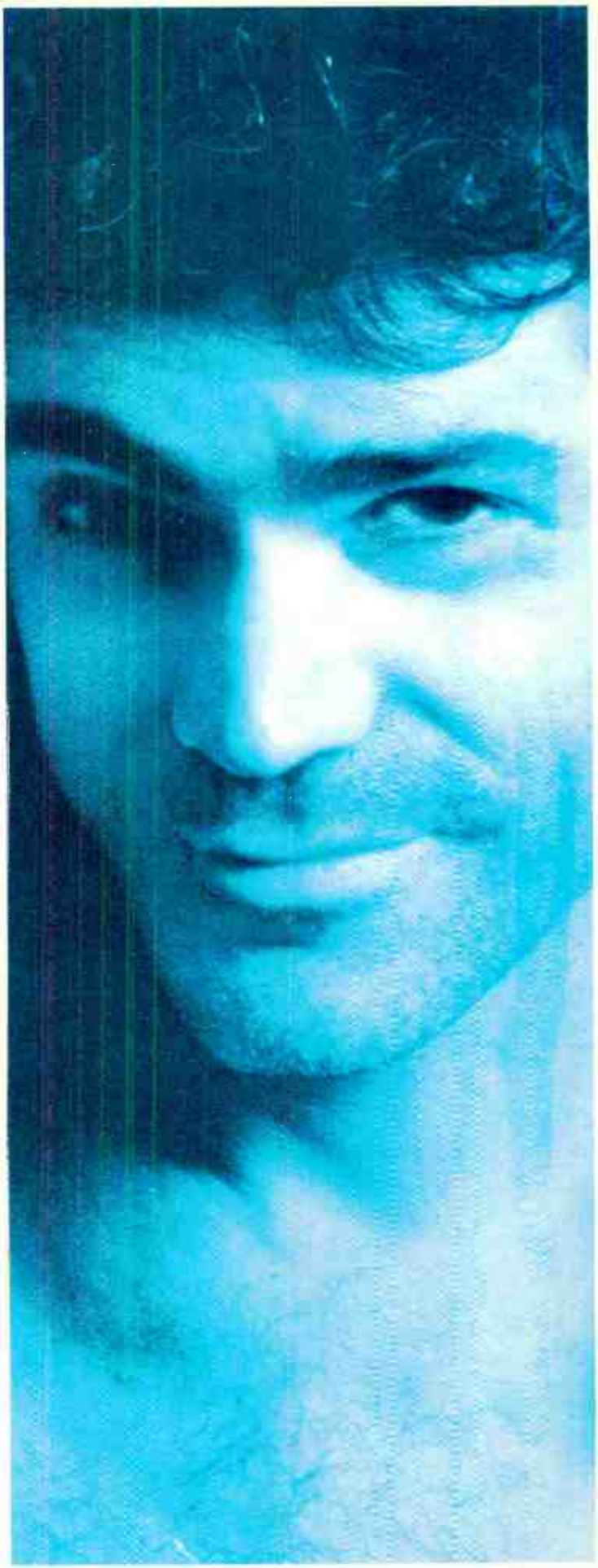

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HERBIE: Why are we asking him about pop music. What does *he* know about pop music?
WYNTON: I know a lot about pop music.
HERBIE: No, you don't.
WYNTON: I played in pop...
HERBIE: Wynton, you don't. You *think* you know.
WYNTON: I don't want to mess with you.
HERBIE: The very statement that you just made makes it obvious that you don't know.
WYNTON: That's cool. I'm not going to get into it. I've had conversations with you, where you told me, man we're trying to get this kind of market. It's not like I don't know pop musicians. It's not like I don't listen to music.
HERBIE: Then there's some things you misunderstand about it. Because I *never* use the word sell.
WYNTON: I don't know. Remember what you told me before? "Yeah man, my record just went gold man. I need to get me some more records like that. We had long conversations about that. We shouldn't be arguing about this in the press, man. We have to be cool. We've talked about this already.
HERBIE: Do you think I'd object if my records sold millions?
WYNTON: Don't say you don't think about that.
HERBIE: Of course I would.
WYNTON: Because you do. You *do* think about that.
MUSICIAN: *To think about it and have it as your aim are two different things.*
HERBIE: Thank you.
WYNTON: I'm getting tired now. You said the opposite of what I wanted to hear.
HERBIE: Look, I'd like to have a Rolls Royce, too. But I'm not purposefully trying to set myself up to get a Rolls Royce.
WYNTON: Pop music is something that you don't really have to know too much to know about.
HERBIE: (long silence)...Okay, next!
MUSICIAN: *When you play pop music do you feel as musically fulfilled as when you're playing jazz?*
WYNTON: Don't lie, Herbie.
HERBIE: Okay. I only feel musically fulfilled when I can do both. If I don't play any jazz this year or half of next year I'm gonna still be doing fine. But at a certain point I'm gonna want to play some. Now what I wanted to say was when I did "Rockit," when I did *Light Me Up*. I'm not sitting down and saying, "What can I put in this music to make it sell?" That's what I *don't* do. When I'm sitting and actually making the music I know my frame of mind. And you can't tell me....
WYNTON: I can't tell you anything....
HERBIE: No, I'm being honest. Let's say you want to do cartoons, or make a comic book, and you're Gauguin. If Gauguin were to do a comic book I would respect him if he had the same kind of attitude of trying to make something happen with the cartoon, and learn from dealing with a medium that's more popular than the one he's accustomed to.
MUSICIAN: *What he's also saying is there's this evolutionary sweep that takes all these things in its stride...*
HERBIE: I'm not looking at these things that you're objecting to as the end. I look at them more as an interim.
WYNTON: It's just ignorance being celebrated to the highest level. If somebody wants to say anything that has any kernel of intellect, immediately the word "elitist" is brought out and brandished across the page to whip them back down into ignorance. Especially black artists and athletes. We are constantly called upon to have nothing to say. I'm just trying to stimulate...some kind of intellectual realization. I'm just trying to raise questions about why we as musicians have to constantly take into account some bullshit to produce what we want to produce as music, what Herbie is saying about evolution. Frankly I never thought about it that way. But he brought out something interesting. All I can say is, I hope he's right.

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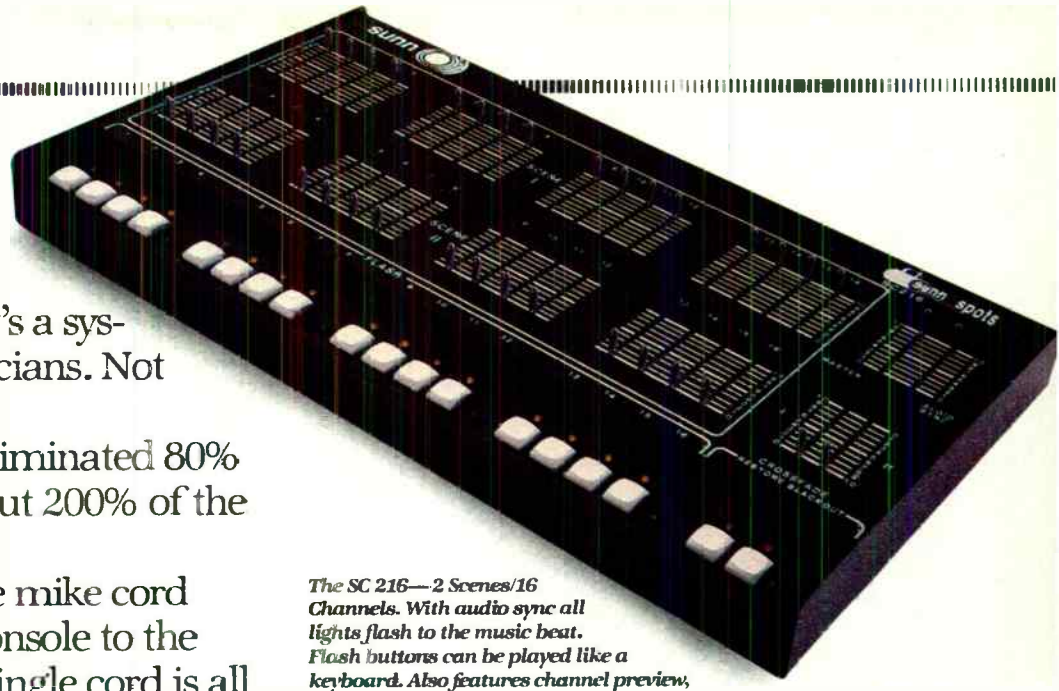

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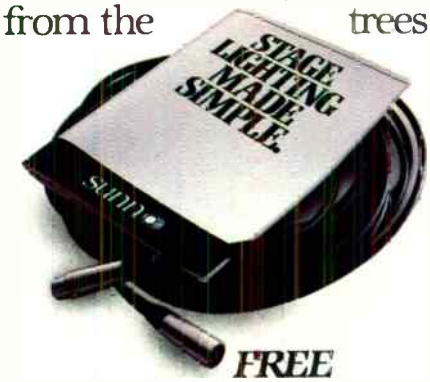

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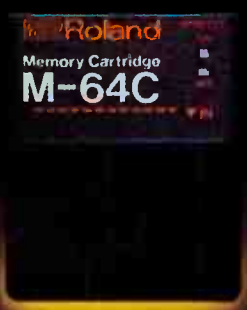

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A throaty, twang-tinged voice leaps out of the darkness, exploding the tranquility of the Los Angeles night. "Good God, it's dark out here!" exhorts a slim, wiry-haired Texan with a tape cassette in each fist as he hurries across the shadow-cloaked courtyard of a secluded ranch compound high in the Hollywood Hills. "Straight ahead, out to the car! It's not locked! That's it! Everybody pile in!" Just overhead, low-hanging stars blink furiously as if startled by the sudden appearance of the boisterous trailblazer and the indistinct forms strung out behind him.

Don Henley is a man with a mission—the completion of his second solo album—and on this April night in 1984 he dearly needs a sympathetic ear for the mounting urgency of that objective. See, it's now the end of the very month he had assured his new record label (Geffen) that he'd deliver the finished product. Yet at this juncture he's got only a half-dozen tracks he's semi-happy with, and they exist largely as rough mixes. But that's not what's making him crazy this cool, hushed Los Angeles evening.

Minutes before, he had driven some guests up to his rambling, handsome home following a sumptuous Italian dinner on the Sunset Strip, eager to get their opinions of his works-in-progress. But he couldn't locate any machine on the premises to play them on. Stalking from the kitchen to the den in the custom-built stucco and stone hideaway, searching in vain in each spacious, beamed room for a working portable tapedeck or suitable stereo unit, he rejected each scattered piece of hardware with crisp finality. Least desirable of all, he allowed, was his old Macintosh stereo system, better suited for classical music than the pealing peaks and serrated edges of state-of-the-art rock declamations.

"Kootch," he sighed, pleading with soulmate writing collaborator Danny Kortchmar for counsel, "we can't play 'Building The Perfect Beast' and 'Sunset Grill' on this two-bit stuff! Man, I want them to hear 'em before my mood changes and I chicken out again!"

"Okay now, okay...," said the broad-shouldered, ever-amiable Kootch, soothing his chum and smoothing his sleek Elliot Ness haircut while he bought time for a brainstorm. Which presently arrived with a thunderclap—"the Jimmy! Let's go out to the Nakamichi in the jeep!" he said, referring to the chunky new GM off-road vehicle with the dynamite sound system that Henley has parked out back. Don's furrowed brow tightened into a fleshy grillwork as he wrestled with the proposed solution. Yes, the Jimmy it is!

There is something distinctly eerie about the hushed wait in the pitch-black cab of the jeep while the first cassette is advanced to what will prove to be the album's title track, Instinctively, the chaotic electric landscape of Los Angeles flickering far below. Then the music steals into the car with hobgoblin haste and a simmering hiss. Low kettledrum-like thumps and the ominous tolling of a bell give way to the predatory plunk of a quartet of sinister guitar notes. There is the rising gnash of a metallic industrial clangor, and the keening bleat of Henley's unmistakeable vocals cut in; stark, anguished, strained, they have none of the sonorous hum of old, and much more impact.

"The power of reason/the top of the heap," he intones, "We're the ones who can kill/the things we don't eat!"

It's the score to a cinematic nightmare of epic proportions, a vision of Mephistophelian mayhem that would make a nice soundtrack for a *Road Warrior* sequel set in the rubble of an Armageddon-razed L.A. Two more cuts, "All She Wants To Do Is Dance" and "Sunset Grill" escalate the near-tangible atmosphere of fantastic desolation. Maybe it's the lateness of the hour and the dust and smog-strewn L.A. air that give the local light such a queer, ominous cast, but the music is so vivid it makes one wonder if we're stuck in a bunker while the

By Timothy White

scenario is coming true in the urban basin below.

Stepping out of the car after the impromptu premiere of his chilling new material, Henley and Kortchmar accept stunned praise for the tracks, but one listener speaks for the whole when he quips, "The music almost makes you want to check to make sure the city is still down there."

Ever since he co-wrote the appropriately spooky "Witchy Woman" for the 1972 debut LP by the Eagles, Don Henley, thirty-seven, has been responsible for some of the more atmospheric, exhilarating and disquieting rock to pour from an American car radio. "Desperado," "Tequila Sunrise," "James Dean," "Best Of My Love," "Lyin' Eyes" (for which he shared a 1975 Grammy with Eagles collaborator Glenn Frey), "Life In The Fast Lane," "Victim Of Hotel" and the title track from the Grammy 1977 Album of the Year, *Hotel California*, all reveal the Henley flair for communicating the wrenching rigors of conscience in a world ravaged by mass alienation and folly. Many of his best songs were co-authored by Glenn Frey, and when the two parted ways following the disbanding of the Eagles in 1980, it remained unclear—as so often occurs in a seamless commercial supergroup—who possessed what strength as individual talents.

Danny Kortchmar and Henley "on the case."

HOWARD ROSENBERG

With the appearance of the acclaimed *I Can't Stand Still* solo debut in August 1982 and its smash single, "Dirty Laundry," it was plain that Henley was not a facile pop tunesmith but rather a tough-minded, singular talent who took his communicating seriously. The brawny, bristling new *Building The Perfect Beast* confirms that estimation, and with a new support crew consisting of guitarist/composer Danny Kortchmar and deft engineer-producer Greg Ladanyi (whose work on *Toto IV* ensured its slew of Grammies), Henley is helping to write a new chapter in the sprawling history of Los Angeles rock. Indeed, one of the few local practitioners comparable to Henley and company in marketplace stature and commercial clout is Lindsey Buckingham, whose own solo efforts outside of Fleetwood Mac have been superb, one-of-a-kind records with a bold, wonderfully eccentric integrity.

Even as these artists strive to renew themselves and chart a new course for their music, they have been increasingly drawn into each other's camps. Small wonder then, that Henley, Buckingham, Kortchmar and several other established but still-evolving figures on the L.A. scene are seriously discussing the formation of a new group.

"I always give a record the 'car test,'" Henley offers with a wide grin as he recounts the marathon creation of the LP during a Christmastime visit to New York City. "I don't usually use a car the way I used the Jimmy last spring but that was a special case; I wanted a burst of feedback to make certain I was on course." He laughs, a bit red-faced, and settles into the overstuffed couch in his comfortable hotel suite overlooking Central Park.

"Thing is, when I finish an album I try to go and do something else like go skiing in Colorado or visit old friends back where I was born [in the small east Texas town of Linden]. I don't live and breathe rock 'n' roll, so if I've stopped recording for six months or more, as I did after *I Can't Stand Still*, it makes it more difficult to get back into the mode. On top of that, I was negotiating to leave my old label [Elektra] and move to Geffen. As it was, when the record finally did take shape, I still left a lot of things until the last possible moment, to literally the last day in some cases. I don't know how other people are making their records these days, but as Kootch and "Levels" [their wry name for Ladanyi] can tell you, mine was quite a saga."

And it was carried out with three overlapping areas of expertise, Kortchmar focusing on the development of demos and basic work tracks, Henley immersed in lyrics, vocal interpretation and mood, and Ladanyi polishing and enhancing the integrated whole.

"I'm a little embarrassed to admit we write like this," says Henley, "but it is almost like a series of errands, stages and little missions, beginning with when Kootch, the Mad Strangler, shows up at my house with the tracks he's cooked up at the Actress, his home studio. I used to write like this with (Don) Felder, who used to make these complete, virtually finished tracks at home—which is the way 'Hotel California' was written."

"So with that as the *modus operandi*," says Kortchmar a few days later, "I created the bare bones of the first song that wound up on the record, 'You Can't Make Love,' as far back as January 1982. Don heard my demo and said, 'Awright! I want to write a song based on the colors of this music.' I always try to give him a lot of textures, moods, edges and shadings because he keys off that kind of stimulation in an amazing way. The album has a lot of aural coloration that's meant to be felt rather than heard. But he won't let me or Greg get too fancy; it's not right if it's not tight."

"And so what I'm charged with doing," adds Ladanyi, "is to make a record out of the finest tapes Don and Kootch can grow at home—I play a game called 'Beat the Demo!' It's a mutual dialogue—our motto at the Actress studio is 'Our career comes first!' Eventually we'd end up in a commercial studio, in this case Bill Schnee's studio in Universal City and the Villa in North Hollywood. But I do all my mixing in Record One in Sherman Oaks, which is where I've done so much of my work with Toto."

While the title track and "Sunset Grill" became the *tours de force* of *Beast*, "You Can't Make Love" became one of the many unsentimental, unusually affecting songs of love and regret leading towards the ultimate explosion—and a conciliatory coda.

"Regardless of when the songs were created, I came to realize that pacing and sequencing would be very crucial on the record," says Henley. "I saw that I had love statements and political themes, and they had to be placed right to show a good interrelation and give off an overall feeling of forward movement. I've always liked records you could put on and leave on, playing the sides in order, and I wanted the listener to feel as if a lot had occurred, ebbed and flowed, in the ten songs.

"The first track, 'The Boys Of Summer,' I wrote with Mike Campbell of Tom Petty's band, who brought me a tape just as Kootch always does. We changed the structure of his track,

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shortened it, changed the ending and the bridge and threw out one section completely. It was just the beginning of autumn, and with my melancholy Irish nature, I've always been a sucker for the metaphor of change in the fall. I put the tape in my car, drove up the Pacific Coast Highway towards Zuma Beach and the words came to me like gangbusters. At one point, I just sat there overlooking the cliffs with the car doors open and wrote all but the last verse.

"A couple of days later, I got in the car again, hit the freeway, and I saw this brand new Cadillac Seville and it had a big, green Deadhead sticker on it. The Cadillac is a symbol of the middle class American businessman, and I thought, 'Either this guy is a great eclectic or this is a sign unto me!' So I reworked the song with it."

Like the track that follows, "You Can't Make Love," Henley says that all the record's rather flinty ballads are about the perils of letting yourself get stuck, losing the thread of personal growth, getting in dangerous patterns that turn into sadness or...monsters. A trap is a trap, and trappings are just trappings.

"In the 1960s, love was confused with a lot of trappings—the flowers, the flowing clothes, peace sign, word phrases. The 1980s versions would be fur coats, diamond rings. The first thing (Bob) Seger said when he heard the lyric to 'Can't Make Love' was, 'Boy, that really makes me feel old and impotent.' I said, 'Seger, lighten up, it's an honest song about semantics, divorcee, arrogance.

"Love is something that takes a long time," the recently-engaged Henley offers intently. "That's part of what growing up has been for me. I'm starting to figure out what love is. I was about thirteen when my paternal grandmother died. My grandfather died eight or nine months later, and there wasn't anything previously physically wrong with him. I was flabbergasted. I said, 'What's wrong with grandpa?' And I was told that, after he and grandma being together for fifty years, he just pined away, died of a broken heart.

"The divorce rate alone says that people don't really know what love is They think they can conjure it up once they get married. You can't make love the way you can make a record, going around saying, 'We'll fix it in the mix.'"

"We're open to good accidents and serendipity when we're on the case," says Danny Kortchmar, "but what we're really trying to do is tinker and test until we have it knocked, and bringing in support to make that happen. We asked Pino Palladino, the bassist with Paul Young, to come into the studio after we heard Young's *No Parlez* LP, saw him live, and were floored by how much we dug his stuff."

Another impulse was the decision to contact Sam Moore of the immortal Sam & Dave to do the harmony vocals on Korchmer's "You're Not Drinking Enough." "I cut me teeth on Stax-Volt," says Kortchmar, "I lived and breathed that stuff as a kid in New York City, and when I felt myself easing into that kind of R&B ballad groove I talked with Don about it and we knew we had to try to get Sam involved. I mean, he was a hero to both of us; Don played his stuff in honky-tonks for years. And he turned out to be a phone call away.

"When he came into the studio to sing his part, he was singing so intense and powerfully from Jump Street, from the first note of the first take. We all leaped about a foot! I was so blown out, I talked to him over the studio P.A. and said, kiddingly, 'Sam, you're looking *lonely* out there. You want Don for company?' To my surprise, he nodded, and then I realized that he was awesome on his own, but always used to the physical presence of dueting with somebody like Dave Prater. So when he and Don tried it together, their mikes facing each other—forget it! As Don says, 'Sam began to sweat.' It was inspired."

The presence of Lindsey Buckingham's harmonies on "Can't Make Love" came about in a slightly more sheepish fashion, however.

"We've always been a little bit standoffish," says Henley. "Our groups had been a little bit competitive; he used to go with Stevie and then I went with Stevie for a while. But it was great fun hanging out with him, and I look forward to the prospect of us touring and being in a band together. If I say that enough times maybe he'll get so embarrassed he won't dare change his mind."

One of the last additions to the often last-minute orchestration of the project was Patty Smyth, who was pulled in after Henley and Kootch caught Scandal's "Goodbye To You" video on MTV for the umpteenth time. "It was late one night, and we were just sitting around," Henley recalls. "I said, 'This girl is cute,' and then I said, 'Hey, this girl can *sing*!' Next thing, we call her up, get her a first-class plane ticket, put her up in a hotel and we all became great friends. Me and Kootch are like her big brothers now. She's doing well with rock but she also really likes R&B, and during one session at about three o'clock one morning, we did a duet thing, that old hit 'Break Up Or Make Up.' We changed the tempo and it came out neat. I'd still like to put it out.

"She meshed with me so beautifully, especially on 'Sunset Grill,'" says Henley, beaming. "She gave the song a softening effect, a touch of lonesomeness and longing. It's meant to be a story about a last outpost in an age of the inability of anybody to take responsibility. You can't find the cat who's responsible for anything that's hurting you or making you crazy, certainly not in government—although I should add that there really is a Sunset Grill. It's run by a guy from Vienna, Austria named Joe Frolich, down on the corner of Sunset and Gardner, it seats about fifteen people and the cheeseburgers, which get eaten by hookers, drifters and rock singers, are wonderful.

"The melody of 'Sunset Grill' came from a jazz piece Kootch had lying around from his days with the Section. The riffs that sound like trombones or trumpets, they're actually Kootch's new

continued on page 106

> "It was great working with Lindsey Buckingham, and I look forward to us being in a band together and touring."

BEAST BUILDERS

For *Building The Perfect Beast*, **Danny Korchmar** drove with his eyes wide open behind a '55 Les Paul goldtop, '52 stock Telecaster, Valley Arts component Stratocaster, Danelectro six-string bass, and a Roland GR-707 guitar synth. On keyboards, he steered a Casio MT-40, a Yamaha DX7, a Prophet 600 and an LM-1 LinnDrum machine. His horsepower came from a Seymour Duncan convertible amp, an old Fender tweed Deluxe, and a Marshall stack with a 50-watt head.

Greg Ladanyi made love to a studio outfitted with the myriad echo effects—his settings are "trade secrets!"—that give him his astonishingly clean sound. Among them, the EMT-250 Digital echo, 2 AMS reverb units, 2 AMS harmonizers, a new Yamaha RE-5 delay, a Yamaha digital echo, an old Fairchild limiter for compression on guitars and vocals. Plus a Urei 1176 peak limiter for guitars and a Pultec tube equalizer to boot, because "unlike the equalizers on my favorite board at Record One, the Pultec passes things just a tiny bit bigger and warmer. Trust me."

Don Henley completed his mission with various LinnDrum units, as well as his trusty Yamaha five-piece kit and Paiste cymbals.

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JIMI STRATTON

A Missing Person Designs a State-of-the-Art Drum Kit

By Jock Baird

For years drummers have been buried behind racks of toms and cymbals," says Terry Bozzio, superdrummer, producer, writer and field commander of Missing Persons. "Nobody sees the most physically active performer onstage. The whole concept behind this drum kit I've designed is to downplay the instrument so it heightens the performer."

Shades of Scholz! Another major-league musician designing and building his own potentially revolutionary instrument. Of course, if you played drums like Terry Bozzio, you'd also be thinking about making yourself easier to see. Few drummers around can equal the extraordinary intensity of Bozzio's live performances, blistering bouts of agility and brute strength. Using the band's arrangements as his basic text, Bozzio maintains a steady firestorm of comment, emphasis, capriciousness and sheer savagery. Drummers are often seen leaving Missing Persons concerts in a daze, their vocabularies shrunk to a single word: "monster." Bozzio's nightly aggression is the more remarkable because it seldom overwhelms or upstages the band's music—not altogether surprising since Bozzio himself writes much of it, including lyrics.

Sadly, however, the best drummer in rock today is best heard live: his vinylized performances, while good for mere mortal drummers, are not the stuff of Bozzio untamed! Those aren't exactly fighting words to Terry: "I *hate* playing in the studio!" he admits. "I like dealing with sound, but I don't like dealing with performing in a sterile studio environment. On this last record (*Rhyme And Reason*), we tried several different approaches: we tried playing as a band. I tried playing just by myself, I tried playing with the LinnDrum, and finally I just said 'Screw this,' 'cause it was no fun. I really didn't know what was going on, trying to produce and play at the same time." Thus did Terry Bozzio decide to "put down a LinnDrum track and then went home one weekend and programmed all my parts."

Programmed? Sacrilege!

"I mean, why mess with it? I know what I want," he shrugs. "I know I can *play* it, there's no question about that, but why waste time going for a perfect performance in the studio at those rates when you can do the more important thing, which is get a good sound? Machines are made to help man. To me that's what the whole idea is."

This confidence in high technology has led Terry Bozzio on a relentless quest for the state-of-the-art electronic drum kit, and it seems as if he's there at last. "It's been years, years in the making. I burned out ten people working on this!" he beams, indicating a striking Bauhaus-influenced curved metal sculpture that carries his newest contribution to the art of drumming. We are standing on the darkened stage of Boston's Orpheum Theater, with sound-

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check—and the evening's concert—felled by a downtown power outage. Yes, in one of life's wonderful little ironies. Terry Bozzio is showing me the nuts and bolts of his radically new electronic kit with nary a volt of electricity for city blocks around.

He exudes a quiet authority, his once long curly hair now trimmed short and dyed red. He exhibits noticeable powers of concentration: for the entire hour of our conversation he stands completely still in one position behind the kit, no trace of nervous, wasted energy. Bozzio is an unusual specimen of a musician in that he's consistently seen what he wanted and made it happen, often in rampant disregard of conventional music industry wisdom. Missing Persons has not always had the last laugh—*Rhyme And Reason*, their subtle, ambitious second album fueled by Bozzio's growing interest in funk, was probably too mature for the audience captivated by their spunky EP and superb *Spring Session M* LP of two years ago; it had mixed sales success. The brouhaha that began when they fired manager/producer Ken Scott is still unsettled, and the appointment of lead singer Dale Bozzio, Terry's wife, as new manager has raised eyebrows once again. Still, Terry Bozzio controls his own destiny, which is more than most of us can say. As we discussed first his ultra-high-tech drums and later Missing Persons' music, common threads of simplicity in conception and sophistication in execution emerged.

Bozzio began his search for electronic excellence at the top with Simmons Drums. He became a convert almost two years ago, but soon began to feel restless again: "I broke the Simmons pads all the time. And I was really unhappy with the sensitivity, because you had this huge pad and one little transducer. Hit six inches away from it and you got too much. I was just so disappointed having this one pad do this one sound. You couldn't get a rim shot or a stick across...."

Bozzio finally came up with his own pad design, which he soon plans to license to a major manufacturer. It's rectangular-shaped, considerably smaller than the Simmons pad, with rim-like metal bars extending up on either side. The two bars triple the number of available sounds per pad. At first Terry arranged his samples so that the side bars were variations of the sound on the main pad, a rim shot and "a clicky, stick on the rim sound, like hitting a table top. Then I set some up like cymbals, with the crash on the middle, the bell on one side and the ping on the other. It mimics exactly the way one would use one's hand on a real cymbal or tom. But it can all be personalized." Terry has also built and uses several variations: his snare has *five* bars while some of his cymbals are just pads with no bars.

The surface of his pads is bulletproof Lexan, but that hasn't completely stopped the breakage. "I even break the new ones. I don't think there's a surface that can't be broken. This stuff will stop bullets, but it won't last under a drummer's sticks," Bozzio smiles proudly.

Pulling the plastic surface off the pad (the attachment system is Velcro), Bozzio reveals the transducer. "It's pretty much isolated in there in foam so it can withstand the shock. If the pad goes down, you can change it in less than a minute. The foam mounting is cool because you get a hard surface to play on, which gives you a lot of finesse and sensitivity and accuracy, but when you do really whack it, it's going to give, it isn't such a shock to your wrist, which most drummers are concerned about." Bozzio hastens to add, "I personally am not so concerned because I had a really great teacher who taught me how to hold the sticks and to pull back and release upon impact, so it doesn't hurt.

"The whole concept was just to condense," he continues, "to take my typical drumset format and condense it down to a smaller, simpler level. Everything is laid out very logically, and very easy to play. You no longer have to

continued on page 90

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HOME RECORDING: LOW-TECH GLORY, CONTINUED

Reverse Sherlock Holmes & Other Cheap Tricks

By Freff

This low-budget rat's nest can still work sonic wonders.

Welcome back! This whole section of our home recording series is devoted to doing things the cheap way (and getting away with it). Last time around we took a look at some of the bottom-line basics of recording, things you had to understand to pull off low-tech tricks. This time we'll talk about how to get started for yourself, including making the right decisions about what gear to use. And next time, for a grand finale, we'll....

...No, let's save that for the last paragraph. First, a true confession.

Not long ago my engineer/co-producer, Mario Salvati, and I were hot in pursuit of the penultimate Roar, one of the many unusual effects required for our *Elfquest* soundtrack project. In order to be accurate to the text, the monstrous howl in question had to sound like it was coming from something half-cat, half-snake, huge as a house, and fiendishly mean. What to do?

Well, there's a logic to the pursuit and capture of these things, a little game of "reverse-Sherlock Holmes," in which you try and deduce in advance what Cause will result in what Effect. Synths were out: too regular, too inorganic. Sampling was out: available bandwidth too small, available sample length too short. Going to the zoo to tape real roars and hisses was out: even if we'd had portable gear of sufficient quality, that crazy I'm not—the only snakes allowed in my life are ones made of audio cables. So our last option appeared to be falling back on the original human instrument, the voice, and processing the hell out of it. This we proceeded to do. I roared into a Beyer M60 a few times, Mario got it down clean on the tape, and we started running the signal through the wringer. We eq'ed it in extravagant ways. We ran it through pitch transposers, flangers, modulators, digital reverbs, parametric equalizers, noise gates, envelope gates, chorus units, and more. We split the signal in half-a-dozen paths, treated each one separately, and brought them back together. We used up virtually every patch cord in the studio (I've got a *lot* of patch cords) and in the end, even with the help of a ton of high-tech goodies, it sounded...awful. It didn't sound anything like a monster. In fact, it more or less sounded like exactly what it was, a human being roaring into a microphone, only recorded badly.

Needless to say, this was frustrating. But also very educational. Because when we finally cleared our heads of patchbay madness, and squared off to face the problem from scratch, *we figured out how to do it*. We got a friend whose voice was nice and gravelly to begin with (mine isn't) to come by, had *him* roar into the microphone a few times, and then played the recording back at half-speed (with a slight added touch of backward reverb).

That simple.

Bloodcurdling as all hell, too.

The moral of the story, which you should keep firmly in mind as you work on your own recordings: no matter what kind of gear you've got—from top of the line to bottom of the barrel—starting with the right sound is 95 percent of the game.

That said, let's get scruffy.

HOW (AND WHY) TO GET STARTED

The first thing you have to do is examine your motives. Why are you here? What do you want to accomplish?

If you aren't temperamentally suited to the do-it-yourself approach, if you aren't ready to fail more times than you succeed, at least in the beginning, then bug out now. Don't even start. Buy a Portastudio and play strictly within someone else's rules. But if you're interested in learning the real guts of engineering and recording technique in the same way the field evolved that technique, i.e., from sheer necessity, if you're interested in doing the most with the least, in gaining studio confidence, in becoming a better player and singer thanks to increased feedback—then read on.

Right off you'll need gear and somewhere to put it. Pick a place you can leave equipment set up for a long time; having to pack and unpack things regularly is bad when trying to get your mind around some thorny problem. Part of the learning process ahead of you will be stretches where you just *stare* at the gear, trying to figure out why it isn't

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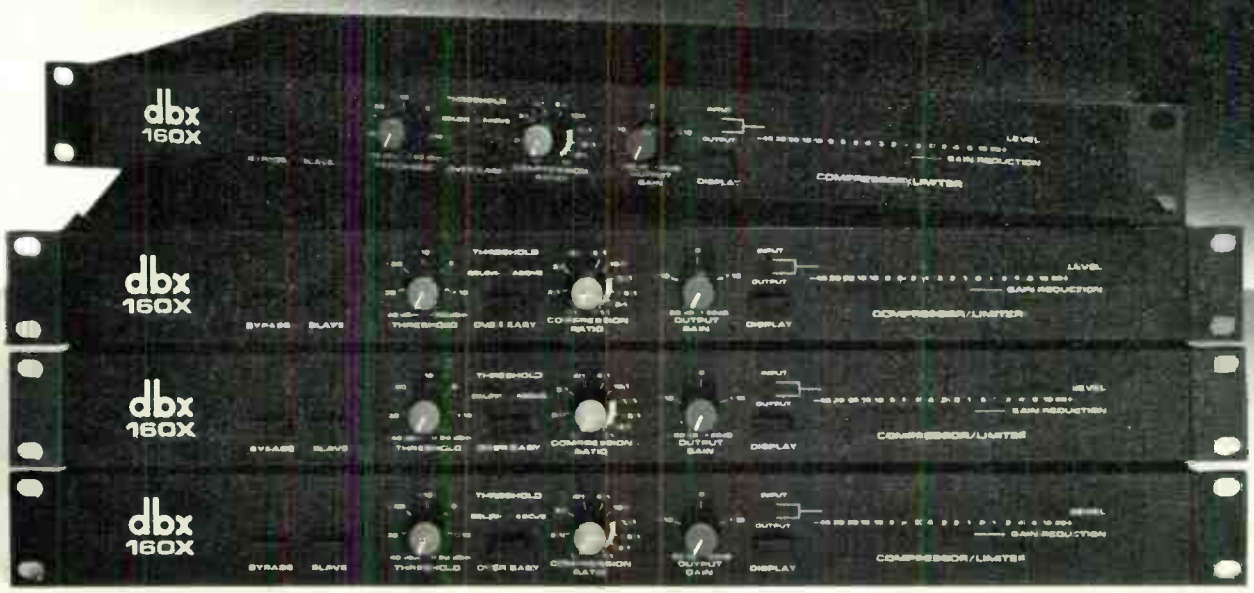

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doing what you want it to do. A further tip: leave yourself plenty of room to get in, around, behind, and under the stuff. You'll need it.

The question then becomes *what stuff*? And the answer is *whatever you can afford*. For right now, we're going to make the following assumption: the absolute max you can afford is a couple of used 2-track machines, a cassette deck for mixdown, a cheap line mixer, a mike or two, some recording tape, cables, and a felt-tip pen to take notes with. Those are enough to illustrate all the techniques we'll be discussing in this section of the series, and in later articles we'll expand our scope to cover more tracks and better gear.

Just how you split your budget among these items is up to you and what you can find. Don't hesitate to buy used, unless the gear obviously belongs in the garbage can—part of the pride here is learning to maintain and repair this stuff for yourself. Pick the right recorder by matching your musical needs to your budget and finding a compromise you can live with. (Cassette deck or reel-to-reel? Two heads or three? -10dB or +4dB? What tape speed? Partial answers for all of these questions can be found later in this article.) If you need to use microphones, buy the best you can afford, period; pick your tape likewise. Your recorder can't put your music on tape if it isn't getting through the microphone in the first place, or if the tape isn't capable of handling it when it arrives. In addition, cheap tape will be prone to dropouts, increased print-through, flaking, crinkling, stretching, and making you crazy.

THE INCREDIBLY CHEAP MULTI-TRACK STUDIO

Take two cassette machines—any two, even the little ones with the built-in condenser microphones—and record something into one of them. Then set the second cassette machine to record and the first one to playback. Perform your second track along with the playback of the first. The second cassette machine will record both. Then reverse the settings and record a third track, reverse them again and record a fourth, reverse them again for a fifth...and so on and so on, building up as many tracks as you want.

Mind you, we are *not* talking high-quality here. We're talking about getting by on nothing, on not even using cables to hook the cassette machines together. Your mixer is the air. You adjust levels mostly by changing how far you and/or the playback machine are from the currently recording machine. Once you've gone on to the recording of the next track, you can never go back and alter an earlier balance. And as for noise—what's some hiss between friends?

There are things you can do to improve the scenario. Keep the machines really clean. Do all your playbacks over a good home stereo, so you get a full speaker sound instead of a tinny little one. Use plug-in microphones instead of the built-in kind. If your cassette machines have both LINE IN and MIC IN recording jacks, and can use them at the same time (some stereo decks are built that way) cheat on the air a little bit and run the playback machine's signal directly into one of the recording machine's LINE IN jacks while you record the new track through the MIC IN. You'll end up always having your latest track on one channel and your collection of old tracks on the other, but that hardly matters. Ultimately you'll play this stuff back in mono anyway, to blend it.

I recommend trying the above even if you've got better gear to work with. Why? Because there is no better way to *force* yourself to learn the most important concept underlying all low-tech recording: premixing.

PREMIXING

If you're playing in the big leagues, you can get away with murder, twenty-four tracks, maybe even forty-eight, noise reduction (or 30 ips—inches per second—tape speed without noise reduc-

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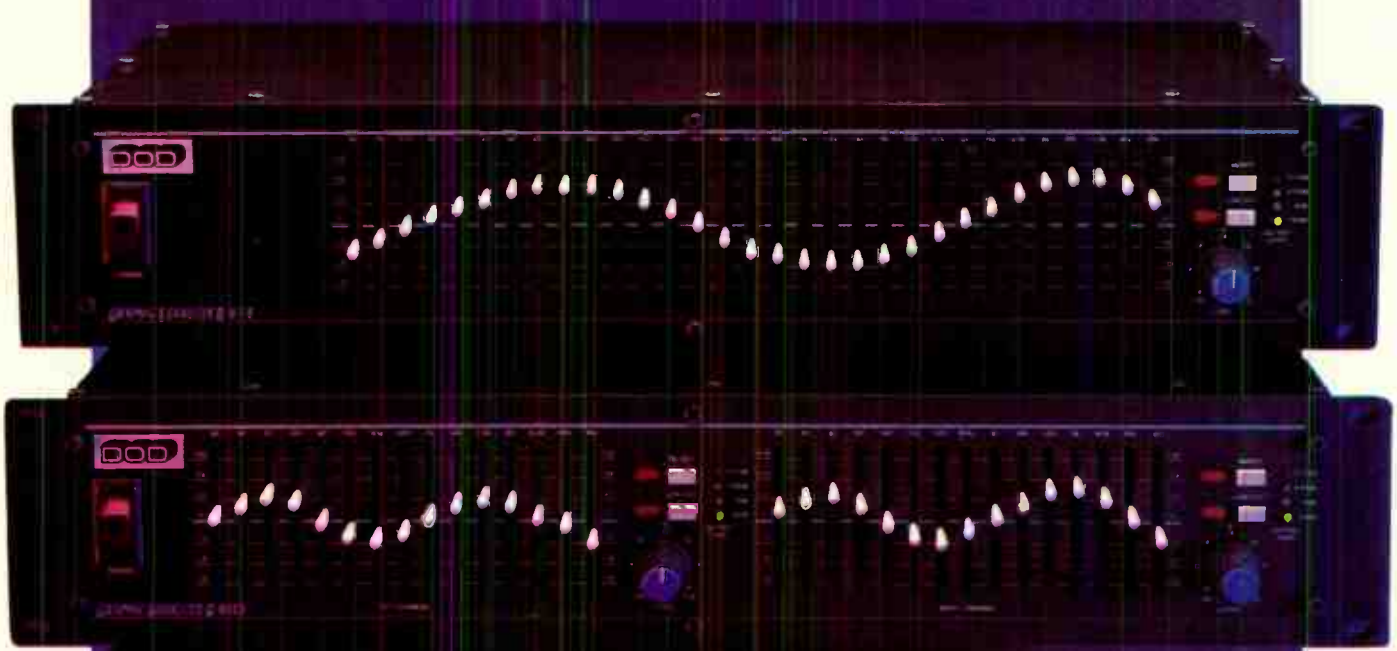
TRUE EQUALITY



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D I G I T A L

SOFTWARE CITY

By John Amaral

How good is **MIDI**, really? The other day I was over at one of those burgeoning music software companies, and asked chief engineer/guru Robert Rees if he could demonstrate MIDI's **speed limit.** Robert whipped up a Macintosh program to spit out sixteen "simultaneous" note events to a DX7 patched for a click sound. His comment before the experiment was, "There's only a **one millisecond delay** between the notes, we might not hear a distinction. On the other hand, the first note will be separated from the last by a fifteen millisecond delay because MIDI is serial; each note in MIDI is sent sequentially, even if it's part of a chord."

How did it sound? Like a card sharp **riffling a deck** very fast. Definitely noticeable, but quick. There is little doubt that a sensitive player can feel such a difference when playing 8-note chords on a keyboard with a fast mechanical response. Where it will really show up is when we ask one computer or keyboard to control multi-instrument setups for thick orchestrations, or if we try playing on top of such an orchestration with one of the keyboards in use. *C'est la vie.*

I was delighted to receive some demo tapes from MusicData which are showcases for the patches that they market, one cassette for each synthesizer. This is the **missing link** that I mentioned between software programs and their creative uses. If you're thinking about buying a popular synthesizer, I strongly suggest getting ahold of the MusicData patch demo cassette for the synth that interests you. The synth manufacturers should jump on these cassettes, and include them with their products. Well done, Ron Wilkerson!

Some highlights from the Symposium on Small Computers in the Arts: Steve Levine, late of Moog, presented on "Computer Music and the Human Interface," and hinted at his new work in **digital signal processing synthesis** (DSP), which is likely to follow Sampling Synthesis in our hearts and minds.

The biggest news was the product announcement of the MIRAGE from Ensoniq, a $1,700 keyboard synthesizer with an internal 3½-inch disc drive (like Apple's Macintosh computer), that plays factory sampled sounds like the Kurzweil, and allows the player to sample his own sounds in the field. One truly clever thing about the MIRAGE is that the operating system for the internal computer is loaded via the disc. This means that Ensoniq can completely change the keyboard's operation by writing new software programs, thus effectively extending the useful life of the instrument by furnishing software upgrades along with new sampled sounds.

Here's a quick **music software roundup** for professional musicians as a pre-N.A.M.M., pre-C.E.S. (Consumer Electronics Show) epistle: the **best all around** music program released to date is **MusicWorks** from Hayden Software, and it runs on the Apple Macintosh computer. MusicWorks combines piano keyboard, standard music notation, piano roll notation, four voices with orchestral timbres with the powerful **Macintosh graphics**. The icon metaphor for the program is a **ghetto blaster** and the tunes are **cassettes** that you play in it! Cute! At $79 MusicWorks is a **killer product**. I wish that I had stock in the company.

The most useful MI products for the **Apple II** computer are the **DX-PRO** from Yamaha and **DX-HEAVEN** (617) 731-1948. These are voice data management utilities for the popular Yamaha DX7 synthesizer. The user interface metaphor for DX-PRO is that of **file cards** which you thumb through, while DX-HEAVEN is **menu driven**. Another Apple II program which appears to be good is **Connections** from Cherry Lane Technologies. The metaphor is a 16-track MIDI tape recorder. **Polywriter** from Passport will allow you to do adequate music printing with the Apple II, but without standardization among manufacturers, you can't print out music which you've created using other applications.

For those on more frugal budgets, the **Commodore C-64** computer is widely available and inexpensive. The best musician's software for the C-64 comes from **Sequential Circuits** (the originator of MIDI regardless of who claims what) and **Dr. T** (Emile Tobenfeld). Sequential's **MIDI recording software** and their hardware interface have been around long enough to have the bugs worked out and are **successfully being used** by musicians. Dr. T's **Keyboard Controlled Sequencer**, on the other hand, is oriented more for creative interaction and real time performance. Dr. T also has a DX7 patch librarian. For information, call (617) 926-3564.

The most elaborate and powerful professional music software available, **Personal Composer**, is now independently distributed by **Ameregan BullyCode**

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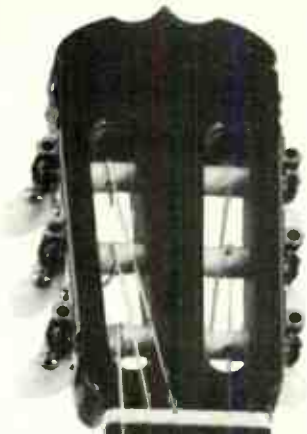
At Last! Brilliant Tone in a Smoothwound Classic String!



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DEVELOPMENTS

By Jock Baird

Music computer software has come on with a vengeance, and most likely you're more than ready to MIDI up to your own Apple, Commodore, IBM PC, Yamaha...**Yamaha**??!! Yes, the major music manufacturer has decided to build and market an under-$500 computer, the CX5M, two inexpensive keyboard controllers and a library of software. Their secret weapon? The same digital FM voice generation that's been making such a big noise on their vaunted DX series

Yamaha CX5M

synths. When hooked up with their full scale remote keyboard, the YK-10 (all of $200) or the smaller YK-01 ($100), the basic system gives you forty-six pre-programmed eight-note polyphonic FM voices (yes, you can split the keyboard), a real-time sequencer, and an automatic bass and rhythm pattern accompaniment system.

The CX5M picks up potency when you load one of the first four $50 (more coming) software cassette programs. The Voicing program gives you precise control in editing and creating your own sound library. The DX7 Voicing program lets you program DX7 synths with your parameters shown right on the video monitor, simplifying complex setups. The Music Composer program gives you eight monophonic voices written on an on-screen music staff. There's full control over time signatures, dynamics, phrasing—even exotic commands like sforzando, legato and fermata. The Music Composer system also drives other MIDI connected keyboards and drum machines. Compositions and patches can be off-loaded into data cassettes.

The CX5M is a real Z-80 based computer, despite its musical prime directives. It's got Microsoft's MSX BASIC built right in—the Music Macro program lets you write your own BASIC programs, even incorporating games and audio-visual effects using FM synthesis. And it does computer nuts & bolts work like word processing, filing, business applications, games, even graphics.

Yamaha's groundbreaking move into computer manufacturing may have been speeded by their growing frustration with the Personal Composer system (mentioned in this month's "Software City"). A Yamaha spokesman admitted the Jim Miller system, which has knocked out N.A.M.M. reviewers for two shows now, was plagued by operational glitches that finally forced Yamaha to drop the project. The new CX5M system, which allows a musician into the computer universe for under $700, may prove to be a far more revolutionary replacement.

Another significant innovation coming at N.A.M.M. is Ned Steinberger's new transposing tremolo arm. It's a fabulously high-tech improvement on the old wammy bar: the change rate of bending is controlled individually on each string, so that the pitch relationships remain the same. This means you can use the bar as a kind of new-age capo, rotating the tremolo arm to lock the tuning into new positions from a fourth below to a minor third above. The TransTrem, as its called, incorporates the reverse-tuning Double Ball String System standard on Steinberger guitars and basses. Best of all, they'll be making retrofit units so you don't have to buy a Steinberger guitar to get it. You may have to wait a while, though. Ned's only making a hundred prototypes for now, preferring to wait until spring or summer to go to full production. And you can bet it'll cost more than a conventional wammy. (From Steinberger Sound, 475 Oakland Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310, 718-447-7500.)

Steinberger TransTrem

Soundcraft is showing a number of new wrinkles, including four pro studio amplifiers that combine mosfet and bipolar designs, giving a dynamic response typical of far more powerful units. These are being hawked under the slogan, "Appropriate Technology," described by a Soundcraft spokesman as "Scandinavian leading edge

Soundcraft power amplifiers

technology combined with American know-how in brute force packaging and filtered through British concepts of reliability and value." Kinda makes you want to hum the Olympic theme song, don't it. The impressively-speced amps start at $750 for a 130-watter (at 4 ohms) and go to two grand for 750 watts. Another big Soundcraft move involves computer automation for their boards. Three options are being plotted: the first is Soundcraft's own automation system, available for their TS24 in-line console. The second is a version of **Audio Kinetics**' Mastermix system, also for the TS24. The third is the most ambitious, involving L.A. studio giant **George Massenberg**, he's developing a version of his highly touted hard-disc GML automation system for present and future Soundcraft consoles. Contact Soundcraft, 1517 20th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, 213-453-4591 for more details.

Yamaha's recent $500 drum machine bombshell has not gone unanswered: witness **Roland**'s new $600 TR-707. There are thirteen digitally sampled sounds aboard, with accents and flam and shuffle controls. There's memory for 64 patterns and/or 998 measures—you can off-load to a Roland M-64C memory cartridge or an audio tape recorder to double the immediately available patterns. Toss in MIDI, sync 24, programmable trigger out and a sophisticated liquid crystal display and you've got a full-service rhythm bank.

There's been a lot of microphone action recently. **Electro-Voice** debuted a new under-$200 condenser mike, the PL78, in cardioid and omnidirectional versions. The PL78 places the transducer closer to the front of the mike, significantly improving the gain-before-feedback—electronic tailoring reduces the expected bass increase. We were fortunate enough to get our hands on one for some in-house recording and its smoothness and high-end resolution made our mouths water. **Sony** is redoing the shock mounting for their Sony Musician Series microphones: the new air zone mounting system has significant noise reduction paybacks at a moderate price. Another new air-suspension shock mount system with integrated capsule is incorporated into a new

continued on page 90

If you don't hear the subtle differences implicit in the M 600's performance, don't buy it.

When an audio product achieves the highest levels of technological sophistication, the subtle differences that set it apart from high-priced competitors are only apparent to a very few. Many can't readily appreciate those differences while others are hampered by inferior sound reinforcement and recording equipment that can't capitalize on the superior performance of a mic like the Beyer M 600. Still, there are individuals who demand something special from their equipment and are willing to investigate the finite criteria that distinguish it from the rest.

A comparative analysis of high-technology mics often involves minute differences in sound based on transient characteristics, a tailored frequency response or specific features intended to satisfy particular applications.

The M 600's unique Hostaphan® diaphragm produces the kind of fast transient response that faithfully captures all of the energy, impact and nuances of a live performance. The M 600's frequency response has been shaped to enhance vocals with extra crispness, detail and presence. Its classic hypercardioid pattern effectively eliminates feedback and its rejection characteristic dramatically reduces off-axis coloration of the sound.

Combined with sound reinforcement or recording equipment of equal competence and integrity, the M 600's distinguishing characteristics become apparent both to the vocalist and the audience. At Beyer, we feel those differences are the reasons why the M 600 is unquestionably our top-line vocal dynamic microphone.

The Beyer M 600's level of excellence is also exemplified by its unusually low handling noise and its proven ruggedness and reliability. We've included a three-position equalizer switch for the flexibility to tailor the mic's low frequency contour to changing acoustical environments. For those applications requiring an on/off switch, we provide one (optional*) that is truly both silent and lockable.

When a vocal microphone represents a substantial investment, you have the right to expect the highest levels of performance. The Beyer M 600 was created for those performers who demand total excellence from themselves and their equipment. If you are one of those people, the logical alternative is to investigate the potential of the Beyer M 600.

The Dynamic Decision

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Model M 600S

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Great and Cheaper Times Ahead!

For years now, Casio has been making keyboards that were the musical equivalent of packing Lowrey "home entertainment centers" into shoeboxes: cute, fun, small, convenient, and no competition for the "real" synthesizers. And for years now I, at least, have wondered what would happen when they finally stopped kidding around and got serious.

End of wait. They've done it.

Meet the CZ-101. At first glance it's just another Casio tossoff, but don't let its size and its little tiny keys throw you. I said this was serious: it is. *It has no built-in speaker* (heresy by prior Casio standards). It's got room for 32 programmed sounds in its memory, with 16 more available on-line if you plug in a RAM cartridge (and while the Japanese presets are typically cheesy, the ones being developed now by American consultants sound great). It is 8-note polyphonic while playing one preset and 4-note polyphonic when playing two presets at the same time. It has six independent eight-stage envelope generators (for controlling pitch, timbre and volume in two presets at once), 33 digital waveforms to choose from, timbral scaling on the keyboard, two LFOs, precision detuning for harmonic emphasis and control, ring modulation, noise modulation, and an extremely well-realized MIDI with IN and OUT connectors.

Ah, MIDI. That's the ticket. Who cares about tiny keys? A lot of you will never even play them, because at a suggested *list* price of $495.95, the CZ-101's real future is as everybody's favorite MIDI module. I'm drooling right now: a MIDI THRU box and five CZ-101s, bought at street value, will be less than I spent on my DX7...and playing them with the DX7, MIDIed together, will be a hell of a lot more powerful than two DX7s together would be.

Easier to program, too. Not just because a CZ-101 is simpler than the DX7; it's also...well...*friendlier*. Casio has arranged the controls so that you can work on several parameters in the LCD at once, instead of just one. And while the instrument is all digital, the arrangement of the sound chain owes a lot more to familiar analog thinking than it does to operators and FM. This is possible because the CZ-101 doesn't use FM synthesis to create complex waveforms—it

Casio CZ-101

uses PD, Phase Distortion. Inside the instrument there is a batch of numbers which represent a digital picture of a nice, boring sine wave. And when the instrument spits those numbers out at a steady rate, as an audio signal, a nice, boring sine wave is what you get. But vary the rate of conversion so it isn't steady anymore—sometimes fast, sometimes slow—and you don't get a sine wave. Instead you can get sawtooth waves, square waves, pulse waves, resonance waves...and pretty much any combination of two of them that you might want. It's rich raw material.

$495.95 list—for something that gives even $2000 digital instruments competition! Mmmmmm. And since the "real synth" companies are hardly going to stand still and let Casio eat up all your MIDI money, I predict Great And Cheaper Times Ahead.

Hallelujah! – **Freff**

A few words about why this isn't our big flashy ad for the new Emulator II digital sampling keyboard

Lately we've noticed a rather frustrating tendency for new high tech instruments to be advertised long before anyone has a reasonable chance of actually seeing one at their local music store.

We've been guilty of this a few times ourselves.

So when we introduced the new Emulator II digital sampling keyboard, we decided to wait on our big flashy ad until the supply had a chance to catch up to the initial demand.

That was seven months ago.

We're *still* waiting.

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So if you're having a little trouble finding an Emulator II, please keep trying.

In the meantime, if you feel you absolutely must have some flash, send us $2.00. We'll send you a nice big flashy brochure and a small, not very flashy, but extremely impressive Emulator II demo record.

The Emulator II. Proof that a great instrument is all the advertising you need.

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(408) 476-4424

Software from page 84

(you'll either forget that name immediately, or remember it forever). This is a **complete system** for the IBM PC/XT which includes **32-track recorder**, high quality **music printing, metronome** and sync, and synthesizer **voice librarian**. It will control up to **64 channels** of MIDI information via the use of four Roland MPU-401 interface boxes! IBM XT's are not very cheap or portable but you might find the combination of this software and an IBM clone portable useful. For further information, call (206) 364-0386.

Developments from page 86

mike, the $179 UD-200 from **Audix**, a small high-quality San Carlos, California mike, cable and transformer company. **Audio Media Research**, the **Peavey** arm which just brought out the fine new inexpensive DCR-421 4-track cassette recorder, is fielding a pair of classy condenser mikes, the ERO-10 and ERC-12, both for $200.

Some substantial steel-string acoustic/electric activity has been picked up on our radar. There are two new arrivals to the **Martin Shenandoah** series, both with spruce tops, scalloped bracing, adjustable truss rods and Thinline 332 acoustic pickups; each lists in the high $800 range. **Takamine** is debuting its $950 EF-591 Silhouette, a skinny-body employing Takamine's standard Palathetic pickup system, a double-coil humbucker imbedded right in the fingerboard, and a 3-position mini-toggle switch. You can travel from folk to jazz without even touching an amp.

Bozzio from page 78

reach way the hell over to hit a tom-tom." Terry got Jim Cooper of J.L. Cooper Electronics to help design the massive rack that serves as sample library, mixer, amp, outboard effects and effects switching, patch bay, digital drums and Lord knows what else. (He's not selling this part.) Bozzio simultaneously mixes samples from his own drums with sounds from a Simmons SDS 5 brain (old allegiances die slowly) and is also using a LinnDrum kick sound ("it's hard to beat"). He reduced the horrendous number of separate signals coming from the kit by using an idea his roadie came up with: "A combining amplifier that sums groups of instruments. The summing amplifier combines the forty-eight different sounds on my kit into fourteen."

Hasn't having the scale of his drum kit cut nearly in half affected Bozzio's playing style? "Patrick (O'Hearn, Persons bassist) put it most appropriately: he said it was like a Zen exercise in restraint. It did take me awhile to get used to. I got it completed only four days before we started this tour, so for the first few weeks I was still learning how to play it. It's pretty much been trial by fire out here, as with most prototypes. You get out and start playing it and then you discover the limitations. The effects switcher has worked only one night so far." Wasn't that awfully ballsy, going out with only four days to test it? "Either that, or stupid," laughs Terry. "I've always done things like that.

"There's something about us: we've always done everything all by ourselves, always done everything against what everybody said, and that's just the way we are. We're lucky to be as successful as we've been and to be in a position to do whatever the hell we want to do. People have said, 'Omigod, you can't form a band like that with your wife,' what with me being asked by Jethro Tull and (former boss) Frank Zappa to join or rejoin their bands. Yes I can, and yes I did. Dale never sang a note before Missing Persons—how many people with a hit record can say that?"

Bozzio's onstage leadership is reflected in the band's composing habits. "I'd say I take a dominant role in writing most of the music and lyrics and writing most of the arrangements, but it's really an inter-modified kind of self-expres-

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Bozzio from previous page

sion. It's really a group effort. We sit down and work things out and whatever happens to work gets used. A lot of times it's just my ideas that get used.

"I went to school for about two and a half years—I majored in music and theory at the College of Marin—but it's funny, after I learned to read and did all that stuff, I began working with Frank and saw how you could develop your ear to the point where all that becomes unnecessary. He would just sit back and play the band like an instrument. He'll just say, 'You play this, you play that....' and you just learn to play back at him these *horrific* parts, you know, dealing with every kind of fractional subdivision of a beat." Bozzio chuckles at the memory. "And since almost everyone in Missing Persons has played with Frank, we all just adapted that system. You just go, 'Okay, I want this, I want that, let's try this...' every song has come together in almost every configuration."

Bozzio's virtuosity and training didn't prepare him for the difficult and inefficient touring schedule that "poisoned the relationship" with manager/producer Ken Scott. "It's hard when you first start out," says Terry carefully, "with someone dangling a carrot in front of you and giving you the hard sell on the way it should be. It's hard to say no. We ended up doing some ridiculous things, like booking six days in a row. We immediately got sick and exhausted. I remember we did a hellacious press tour of Europe, had serious jet-lag, came back and two days later we were playing in Phoenix. A week later we were all in the hospital. And for what? We came off the road and our album was number seventeen. That's when we should've been going *out* on the road, to get the most out of the tour."

The rift with Scott cost Missing Persons a producer, but Bozzio never once shrank from taking the job on himself, with the assistance of long-time Quincy Jones engineer/sidekick Bruce Swedien and the other band members. "Producing ourselves was great," Terry enthuses, "because you take full responsibility. But obviously, working with Bruce, we listened and took his advice almost all the time, 'cause he's such a pro. He's fantastic! It really worked out great, because the new music was so complex. The way we write is modular and architectural, little pieces designed to fit in with other pieces. And unless you have an engineer who can record it with pristine quality, it turns into a big jumble of soup. Sometimes that's desirable, but with *Rhyme And Reason* it wasn't. You can hear each high-hat beat, each little synth part.

"Bruce was always saying wonderful things that Quincy had said, like 'overdubbing synthesizers is like painting a 747 with a toothbrush.' Sometimes it gets that way. You tweak a knob and listen, tweak and listen...you can talk about it all you want, but it's really what it sounds like in the long run."

Bozzio is philosophical about the failure of *Rhyme And Reason* to go higher than the forties on the LP charts. "This album probably should have done better," he muses. "The music *was* quite a bit different from what we've done in the past. If I had the answer, we would've corrected it already, but it's hard to say." Bozzio does feel the change of president at Capitol Records last spring affected promotion. He notes ruefully that the outgoing prez called "Give" "the best song he'd ever heard in his life."

The group's subtle change in image may have also affected their mass appeal: Dale substantially toned down her squeaky sex kitten persona, abandoning her tittilating clear plastic wardrobe for less blatant costuming. Still, she remains a convenient scapegoat for Missing Persons among rock critics. At the time of our interview, one major mag had just done a major article dismissing the band as "Bimbo Rock." Terry groans quietly at the mention: "Everybody's got their opinion. We're not for everybody, and we don't try to be. A lot of rock writers don't like us—personally I feel a little bit slighted, because I think they look at us and judge us superficially. All humans are guilty of that: you walk down the street and say, 'That guy looks like

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Bozzio's Boxes

Terry's electronic drum sounds are taken off his acoustic kit, which consists of Tama drums, including a gong bass drum (used as one of his five toms), timbales and snare. His bass drum is an old 26-inch Ludwig that was a gift from Jethro Tull's immortal Barry Barlow. His cymbals are Paiste, including crash, bell and china cymbals, a 24-inch Rude, a 6-inch cop chime, a "Sound Plate" and non-Paiste oddities such as an ancient Chinese gong and temple bells, tambourine, cowbell and handclaps.

The rack, about the size of two coffins, is a gearmonger's wet dream. It uses a Simmons SDS 5 and two J.L. Cooper Soundchests for samples (the kick sample is from a LinnDrum), a Ramsa Audio WR8118 mixer and a J.L. Copper effects switcher. Bozzio's huge collection of outboard effects has an MXR pitch transposer/delay, a Castle Instruments dual phaser 3, Symmetrix compressor/limiter and signal gate, a ring modulator of unknown origin, an Ursa Major 323 digital reverberator, a Korg SDD-3000 digital delay and a Beigel Sound Lab envelope-controlled filter. Bozzio doesn't overuse his effects, though: I've found that using them on the snare and high-hat and bass gets real tedious. You need those just to keep the basic thing happening. So I just use effects on the toms and the cymbals."

Low-Tech from page 82

tion, which is just as good), digital decks with phenomenal fidelity, racks and racks of signal-processing gear...all the room in the world to lay things down and worry about how they fit together later.

Sounds like heaven? Well, it's got a big drawback. It makes you lazy. Don't forget the little parable about the roar that this article began with—if you know what you want to achieve, and how you want to achieve it, you can go light years beyond any undisciplined mind that happens to have a big budget.

That's what premixing is all about. It's the art of Getting It Right every step of the way...because the only alternative is erasing the track and starting again. So *think*. Will this guitar part need reverb? Preverb? An echo? A special eq? Then get it down now. But how much will it need to sound good when the song is finished, six or seven overdubs down the line, as opposed to sounding good right now? Figure it out. Take chances. Make mistakes. Do things over again. After a while you'll start to be a true architect of sound, working to an overall plan you'll carry in your head.

TAPE RECORDER JUJU

There are some little things—and not so little—you'll need to know about tape recorders, if you're going to pull this approach off.

On cassette versus reel-to-reel: cassette specs have gone through the roof in the last ten years, to the point where they are just as good, if not better, than some reel-to-reel machines. But if your budget can stand it, find reel-to-reel decks for your main recorders. The higher tape speed and wider tape will make for better fidelity (other things being equal), and you'll be able to try your hand at splicing—an invaluable and necessary engineering skill.

On two tape heads versus three: no contest. Get decks with three heads if you possibly can. In a deck with two heads you've got one head that erases the tape, and one that serves for both recording and playback (astute readers will immediately guess, correctly, that this requires compromises that lower fidelity). It also means that you can't record and play back with that head *at the same time*, so the only way to do overdubs is to play fairly elaborate games with two separate machines and a multiple-input line mixer. The three-head deck separates record and playback functions into separate heads, improving sound quality and making it possible to overdub within the machine.

On -10dB versus +4dB: be aware of the differences, but don't lose any sleep over them (no matter what some salesmen may tell you). The world is full of sometimes useful, and sometimes arbitrary standards, and that goes for output levels on recording gear as well. The two prevailing standards are the "semi-pro" -10 and the "pro" +4. Most of the gear you'll be working with will be -10, thanks to the price range you'll be restricted to; but you can run signals from -10 to +4 gear, and vice-versa, all day long. It won't hurt a thing. You'll simply have to be careful in adjusting your output and input levels to account for the fourteen decibel differences in output strength.

On tape speed: the rules of thumb to operate by are:

1) The faster the better, because it will reduce noise, increase fidelity, and spread the sounds out on the tape so that editing is easier (get 15 ips if you can find it);

2) If you can get a recorder with more than one speed, great, because you'll be able to play all manner of interesting games with altering pitch and varying tape and echo times;

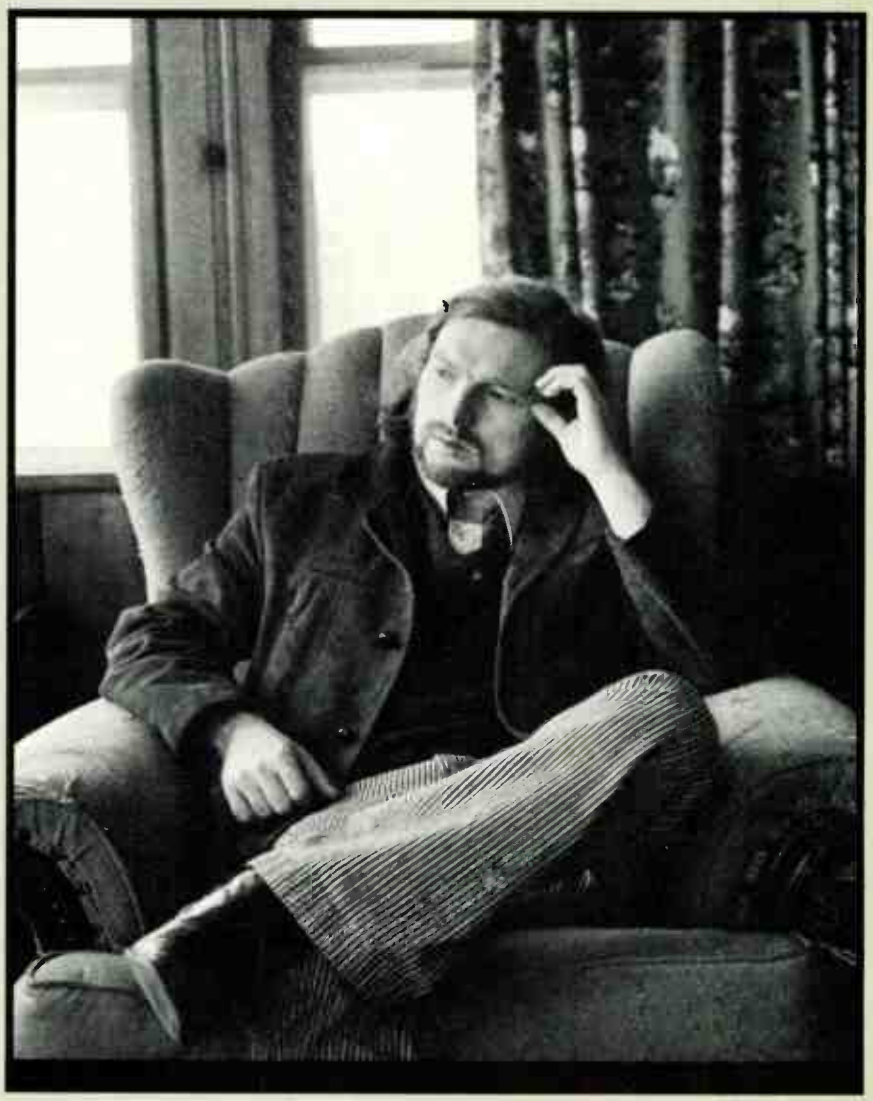
3) The best of all possible worlds is a deck with variable speed, which will give you the most precise control of all.

Well, the clock on the clubhouse wall says we're out of time and space for this issue. Between now and the next installment, start putting your own gear together, because we're going to give you *101 LOW-TECH TIPS AND TRICKS*; you're going to feel like trying every one.

RECORD REVIEWS

Van's somber new soul musings explore hard-won experience and divine knowledge.

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE



DAVID GAHR

VAN MORRISON

Sense Of Wonder
(PolyGram)

Like Blake's cherished tyger, Van Morrison burns bright on his first studio LP in two years. *Sense Of Wonder* marks a return to the prophetic poise that has made Morrison the most revered of pop visionaries.

Unlike his last two Warner Bros. outings, *Beautiful Vision* and the ethereal *Inarticulate Speech Of The Heart,* the new LP exploits the more electric, gutsy, R&B sound that Morrison mined so well in the period roughly bracketed by *Moondance* (1970) and *St. Dominic's Preview* (1972). The new songs—somber soul musings dotted by mournful horns and an omnipresent female backup trio—explore the bardic themes of hard-won experience and divine knowledge with awesome emotional impact.

Sense Of Wonder, like *Astral Weeks* long before it, is a mature song cycle. It presents the listener with Van Morrison, Cosmic Seeker, at his most introspective, and charts a passage from supplicant to (in Van's own words) "a new kind of man" with a ferocious humility. The first side begins with Morrison at the gates of Glory, grappling with the difficulty of vision (in the aptly titled "Tore Down A La Rimbaud") and follows him through the religious experience (in "Ancient Of Days," the quasi-instrumental "Evening Meditation," and "Master's Eyes") to a state of enlightened grace (in a humble hymn of universal love, "What Would I Do?"). Side two presents Morrison the newly-forged prophet: "Didn't I come to bring you a sense of wonder?/ Didn't I come to lift your fiery vision?" he sings on the title cut. The road to self-awareness is a knotty one, as Morrison notes in "The Price Of Experience" but, at the road's end, one may find a new man, inspired from Heaven. "There's an angel watching right over you/ And your trials have not been in vain," Morrison concludes in "A New Kind Of Man."

In the hands of a lesser singer, all of this ecstatic rhapsodizing might become weighty and even a little silly. But Morrison, whose finest work has always been informed by an understanding of such literary precursors as Blake and Yeats, attacks his themes with a commitment that is as balanced as it is intense. By Morrisonian standards ("Listen To The Lion"), the singing on *Sense Of Wonder* is restrained; as a result, there isn't an uncertain or overblown moment. (The LP's sole incongruity, a jarringly jazzed-up "If Only You Knew," was tacked on at the last moment after a musical version of a Yeats poem was removed at the request of Yeats' estate.)

In a way, *Sense* summarizes Van Morrison's career-long meditation on the

nature of funky godhead. And while the religious aspects of his work certainly come to the fore, you don't have to have a prepossessing interest in matters spiritual to be swept away by Van's fervent Celtic soul. *Sense Of Wonder* is a testament of faith sculpted in the purest rock 'n' roll terms; its scope and depth of feeling will move anyone who has ever been shaken by Morrison's Gaelic yowl. It's the definitive capper of a musical life viewed through mystic eyes. – **Chris Morris**

THE CARLA BLEY BAND

I Hate To Sing
(Watt)

Deeming these works antithetical to the "ECM image" and generally "unfit for release," Carla Bley "put them in a big box with a skull and crossbones painted on it, and stored them in a dark corner" of her studio. Where the box "vibrated hideously." Finally surrendering to her Pandorian tendencies, she let the demons out.

Sooo, you thought you could hide this music behind those last two *sensible* albums you did. It's not going to work, Carla. Here at *Musician* we've long suspected there's an obscenely skewed sense of humor lurking behind all that talent. We haven't forgotten *Escalator Over The Hill,* you know. And now *this!* Carla, face it, you're just not normal. And speaking for the entire known universe, that's why we love ya. Even my mother told me this record was more interesting than most of the jazz I force her to hear.

As always, Mom was right. *I Hate To Sing* is sarcastic, silly, sly, endearing and about as much fun as I've had with any album in years. The jokes are hilarious—like drummer D. Sharp's perfectly insecure vocals on the title tune, or the band's horsing around on "The Lone Arranger." And no one who's ever taken a music lesson could resist the witty charm of "The Piano Lesson," which masterfully juggles the band's bungled attempts at playing major scales.

It's hard enough to write humorous music without sounding forced, let alone music that's also highly intelligent, sharply focused, and technically sophisticated. Yet that's what Carla does best. The band obviously loved playing this (half the LP is recorded live), and, in much the same high-spirited tradition of the best big bands of the 20s and 30s, they mix superb musicianship—horn players Slagle, Degradi and Valente deliver outstanding solos—with jocular celebration. Carla, we know you are one of our most important American composer/arrangers, but you just aren't normal...and the weirder you become, the better your music. (Available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012.) – **Cliff Tinder**

THE BLASTERS

Hardline
(Slash/Warner Bros.)

On their third album, America's best dance band serves notice that they can also compete with Bruce, Seger and Cougar in the Dark Heartland Vision Sweepstakes. Up till now the Blasters were "merely" the most authentic entry in a bumper crop of R&B revitalists (a club date backing up Big Joe Turner is still about the hottest live show I've ever seen) and tended to ram home their own tunes with such sonic overdrive that you missed the plaintive undercurrent of Phil Alvin's hiccuping vocals or Brother Dave's grim vignettes.

Hardline is less amphetamine-oriented; tastefully textured tunes include a Mexgrass ballad featuring violinist David Greene, and David Hidalgo of Los Lobos on accordion; a methodically crunching arrangement of that Bible Belt fave "Samson And Delilah"; and a loping ditty called "Help You Dream" that recalls the rustic suave Elvis from the "Teddy Bear" years (the Jordanaires provide appropriate backdrop). Even on gritty rockers like "Trouble Bound" and "Just Another Sunday," wherein Dave's guitar figure coils around the verse like a rattlesnake, the Blasters' sound remains considerably more stark than before, which is well in keeping with the ominous character of their material. After all, only a moron would insist on dancing to songs in which a lover is, for instance, murdered in front of his girlfriend ("Dark Night"), self-exiled to a motel in the middle of nowhere ("Just Another Sunday"), endlessly defeated in attempts at bar romance ("Help You Dream"), too defeated to even attempt bar romance (John Cougar's "Colored Lights") or faithlessly betrayed by an equally despairing partner ("Little Honey").

You *could* listen though. Dave Alvin's images are sharply focused and frequently arresting, Phil's singing has become as emotionally nuanced as the best country crooner's, and the band—from Bill Bateman's backbeat to Gene Taylor's ivory flourishes—still rolls and tumbles like a Saturday night roadhouse shebang. Like the Blasters themselves, *Hardline* epitomizes tough, taut and extremely durable rock 'n' roll—music to save your spirit even as it chills your heart. – **Mark Rowland**

RICHARD THOMPSON

Across A Crowded Room
(PolyGram)

LINDA THOMPSON

One Clear Moment
(Warner Bros.)

This on-again, off-again man-and-wife are the Sonny & Cher of Highlands folk-rock. He's the founding member of England's pastoral popsters Fairport Convention; she's a singer and one-time child actress from Glasgow who joined him for a series of critically praised duet albums. Like fellow Anglo folk-rockers Fleetwood Mac, Richard and Linda Thompson have paraded their marital dirty laundry in public with a number of neurotic love/hate songs on albums like *First Light* and *Shoot Out The Lights*.

The couple's been separated long enough for Richard to follow up his 1972 solo debut, *Henry The Human Fly* with two more albums before his current one, while Linda's new LP is the first on her own. If the two new records mark the duo's final musical divorce, there's still a great many raw emotional ties that

bind the Thompsons together.

Richard's *Across A Crowded Room* continues the bitter healing process that began on his *Hand Of Kindness*. "Fire In The Engine Room" is an accordion-driven, horn-laden rock 'n' reel that promises spiritual renewal, as "She Twists The Knife Again" and "You Don't Say," the latter with its staccato plucking and teasing female chorus, open up and examine the wounds once more. "Ghosts In The Wind" is a mournful, Knopfleresque set-piece, too, but "Little Blue Number," sporting a snake-charming fife crossed with a twangin' rockabilly guitar, and "Walking Through A Wasted Land," featuring churning axes and a firm Warren Zevon-like rant, revive that jaunty Celtic pride. The album ends with Richard still hurtin', though, and sadly recalling "that's the way we made love" in the wistful, yet redemptive "Love In A Faithless Country."

Of course, Richard's not the only Thompson with regrets. While his ex starts off with conviction on the swirling, chilly ABBA strains of "Can't Stop The Girl," her moods quickly darken into the husky Stevie Nicks croon of the title track and the Carole King plaints of "Telling Me Lies" and "Best Of Friends." The Gregorian chants and church organ of "Take Me To The Subway" set off Linda's finely tuned, pure vocals, while a crisp guitar line underlines her own "Hell, Highwater And Heartache."

There's sorrow here, and a sense of anger, too. Richard and Linda Thompson are trying to start over, but the past won't quite let go. This is rock for adults, with the acknowledged sadness of lost love and betrayal. Perhaps this former husband-and-wife team will find the success apart that eluded them when they were together. That would be the crowning irony for two of pop music's most overlooked performers. – **Roy Trakin**

JOHN FOGERTY

Centerfield
(Warner Bros.)

The best thing about John Fogerty is that his songs are at once timeless and timely. By tapping into musical rock verities, he manages to connect to some deeper truth, some unspoken understanding that's as familiar to the listener as a backbeat or a blue note. That was how a song like "Proud Mary" could seem like a standard in less than three years, why a song like "Who'll Stop The Rain" made for devastating political commentary, even though it didn't mention a single issue. And, I'm gratified to report, that's what makes *Centerfield* an album worth cheering over.

"Put me in, coach," sings Fogerty on the title song, "I'm ready to play," and there's an eagerness to the music you can feel. Part of it stems from the chance to re-invent his own sound, for while Fogerty hews close to the Creedence outline, the texture of the music—clean, crisp, lean and uncluttered—is far more 80s than 70s. As much as "Rock And Roll Girls" owes to the Rebels' "Wild Weekend," for example, it also suggests a link to the Cars' "Let's Go." On the other side of the coin, "Zanz Kant Danz," a disco-based number that plays every trick Rod Stewart knows, is a forthright putdown of techno-pop.

But Fogerty's greatest talent is an ability to construct songs that are such perfect metaphors he never has to state his point. Certainly, that's the case with "Big Train (From Memphis)," perhaps the most eloquent Elvis tribute yet recorded. Fogerty makes the most of this ploy in "The Old Man Down The Road," a song which, on the surface, isn't about anything but mystery and fear. But as you're pulled into Fogerty's swamp rock groove, it slowly sinks in that, surely as "Who'll Stop The Rain" was about Nixon's Vietnam, this "Old Man" is our own Ronald Reagan, he of the "voices speaking riddles." It isn't anything in the words so much as in the way Fogerty's delivery makes the fear palpable, and that's ultimately what makes it stick.

Of course, there are plenty of other reasons to love *Centerfield*, from the satisfying anger of "I hope you choke!" in "Mr. Greed," to the way his voice breaks into a yodel on the middle syllable of "rodeo" in "Rock And Roll Girls," and it will doubtless take only a few plays through for your list to be as long as mine. Here's hoping it won't be another ten years for our next chance to get this excited. – **J.D. Considine**

HERBERT HENCK

Gurdjieff/de Hartmann
(Wergo/Celestial Harmonies)

Keith Jarrett's recording of Gurdjieff's *Sacred Hymns* is, I've found, best listened to on a Walkman while traveling on a bus between Denizli and Konya on the Anatolian plateau, past mountains whose valleys manufacture additional mountains of cloud and whose rude stone villages stand about four feet tall; the Turkish landscape restores to the music its ancientness and specificity. On a Japanese turntable in America, Jarrett's sense of romantic exaggeration can be jarring despite his undoubted sensitivity and commitment.

The music composed in the 1920s by the spiritual teacher George Ivanovich Gurdjieff and his gifted disciple, the composer Thomas de Hartmann, is quietly liberating music, nothing to do with the tarted-up space music they're manufacturing in West Germany and L.A. these days. It's deeper, nobler, more solemn, spiritually intimate without being confessional, and it speaks plainly without rhetoric, sugar-coating,

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bombast or have-a-nice-day. Henck, a German pianist, plays the music straight on this double set. He's still not up to the dazzling standard set by de Hartmann himself, whose scratchy recordings are still available through P.O. Box 5961, Grand Central Station, N.Y. 10017—check out his great violin concerto while you're at it—and he is less visionary than Jarrett, but he does let the music come through, particularly on "Journeys To Inaccessible Places," perhaps the most melodic and diversified collection of pieces in the Gurdjieff canon. He's less successful on "Hymns From A Great Temple," an even more difficult and recessive set than Jarrett's *Sacred Hymns*, and "Seekers Of Truth," but on balance the performance standards are high. I have some quibbles. Despite the vaunted direct metal mastering of these discs, the piano sound seems unnecessarily softened by reverb, and although Henck has written a set of comprehensive liner notes, the programmatic titles of the individual short pieces in the three collections have been omitted. Not to know you're listening to "The Bokharian Dervish" or "The Initiation Of A Priestess"? For shame!

Does your reviewer have a vested interest in the stuff? I am not now, nor have I ever been, a Gurdjieffian. I do think the music's worth hearing. It is available through Celestial Harmonies, Wilton, CT 06897. – **Rafi Zabor**

LLOYD COLE & THE COMMOTIONS

Rattlesnakes
(Geffen)

It's been years since anyone demanded the hackneyed "new Dylan" tag, yet here's Lloyd Cole singing—in a pleasant voice that recalls maybe Tim Buckley—"Read Norman Mailer/ Or get a new tailor." Now, who does that sound like to you?

Cole and his four Commotions are the welcome new face of Scottish pop, offering a far more rewarding musical experience than the bleak pose that was chic there not so long ago. Their debut album follows a year of gushing praise in the British press, and indeed showcases an exciting, talented band that has songs, a sound (or three), and the right blend of tradition and currency to be popular.

It's weird to hear a genuinely 80s record with roots in 60s folk-rock that sounds neither nostalgic nor phony. Evidently, the same forces that coughed up a groundswell of American bands in the wake of R.E.M. are at work in Glasgow as well. Starting with full-bodied, memorable songs, the Commotions rely on Byrdsish guitar work (Cole and the subtle, skilled Neil Clarke) to build deceptively simple-sounding melodic structures. Bass, drums and keyboards (mostly organ and piano) provide solid if understated support.

"Perfect Skin" runs jangly and insistent, with Cole speak/singing the lyrics in a tentative but invariably pleasant voice. "Speedboat" is understated and ominous like some old Booker T. vamp waiting to explode; Cole's near-whisper is a bit melodramatic but effective. "Forest Fire," which starts out with just simple organ chords and sparse drums, builds to an awesome overdrive guitar raveup—sheets of evocative noise—worthy of U2. "Four Flights Up" bangs several old Dylan songs together into one woolly but charming mess that churns along merrily. "Are You Ready To Be Heartbroken?" which closes the LP, is a beautiful, largely acoustic number that drifts slowly, punctuated by a fetching refrain.

Lloyd Cole & the Commotions are definitely a band to watch in 1985. Thanks to the current revaluation of the rock song, the emergence of a band with tunes and an idea how to play 'em is our just reward. Thanks, Lloyd. – **Ira Robbins**

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

V.U.
(Mercury)

What we have here is, if not a revelation, at least one of the most pleasant musical surprises of the year: the Velvet Underground's "lost" album, recorded over fifteen years ago and shelved when the band switched labels. (Many of the cuts, though, have surfaced on wretched-sounding bootlegs.) The Un-

derground's main claim to fame is guiding light Lou Reed, who clearly abhorred waste; half of *V.U.*'s ten tracks turned up on his first few solo LPs. But this record is more than a prototype.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of *V.U.*, especially for those unfamiliar with the band, is its timelessness. The group's unaffected ensemble work stands in stark relief to contemporary art-damaged rock. Reed's guitar solos ("Can't Stand It Anymore," "Foggy Notion") are comparably gripping without descending to flash. Even the more pretentious material—"I'm Sticking With You" sung by drummer Maureen Tucker, for example—has a self-deflating charm alien to that cataclysmic era.

There's plenty here to entertain Reed fans, of course. "Lisa Says" has different lyrics than on his solo debut. "Stephanie Says" evolved into "Caroline Says" on *Berlin*. "Inside Your Heart" features edgy (but not impromptu) bantering between Reed and hecklers John Cale and Sterling Morrison. Reed's adenoidal inflections will fascinate students of Brooklyn dialect; "I can't stand it any *maw*," he whines.

Not to slight the rest of the band: Morrison's stinging rhythm guitar peppers Reed's six-string work. Tucker's drumming is Apollonian. An angelic vocal chorus caps "Ocean" sublimely. These touches are what endear the Velvet Underground to the faithful.

The band's carefree sound is the perfect complement to *auteur* Reed's violent imagery and complex lyrical associations. No one, partisans argue, plays Reed like the Velvets. *V.U.* finds them rebounding from the mellow *Velvet Underground* album, toward the even more rocking *Loaded*. But by then the end was in sight. On *V.U.* we hear people enjoying music on the edge. – **Scott Isler**

ELLIOT EASTON

Change/No Change
(Elektra)

Elliot Easton's first solo spin is nothing you would expect from one of the late-model Cars. Delightfully frivolous, packed with 60s and early-70s pop guitar quotations, it is almost aggressive in its retro charms, which include the bittersweet groan of ELO cellos in the sumptuous ballad "Wide Awake" and shameless Badfinger Britpop in "Shayla." Considering the firm way Ric Ocasek steers the Cars, *Change/No Change* also gratefully lacks the self-righteous "Look Ma, no band" ego stomp of many supergroup solo diversions. Easton is not above dropping a few broad hints about what he considers his additive to the Cars' chart formulae—the punky guitar crunch, his periodic Duane Eddy twangs. But to his credit they never eclipse the playful turns of his songs (all co-written with ex-Polar Bear Jules Shear), whether it's "I Want You"'s rascal funk or the outright Booker T. snap of "Fight My Way To Love."

The familiarity of Easton's references works both ways. He seems to veer too close to mimicry in "Wide Awake"'s dreamboat Costello vocal and the Tom Petty guitar swagger of "Tools Of Your Labor." Still it's hard to deny the rush of hearing old Hollies-style flower-pop buffed up with an 80s shine ("Help Me") or getting mowed down by the charging Yardbirds guitars ("Change"). "Like A Wheel" rips it up with Cheap Trick hyper-boogie, but its engaging jazzy chorus and percolating rhythm insist Easton's talent is not all imitative. – **David Fricke**

ROCK

S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S

Laurie Anderson — *United States Live* (Warner Bros.). Say hello to rock's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Although Anderson's crazy-quilt of homemade theater, curious stories, engaging song-fragments and technological one-liners doesn't attempt the myth-making majesty of Wagner's operatic cycle, it does capture a certain amount of American *zeitgeist*, particularly among the media-aware, artistically inclined, technologically savvy elite. Granted, that may put the average listener off as much or more than the nearly five hours of intensive listening required to glean the kernels of Anderson's wit and wisdom, but then, nobody ever said art was supposed to be *easy*.

Shalamar — *Heart Break* (Solar). The facility with which Howard Hewett replaced two-thirds of Shalamar doesn't say much for group integrity, but then, the strength of this album makes that a moot point. Using "Dancin' In The Sheets" (recapped here from *Footloose*) as a model, the new Shalamar manages such a convincing blend of new wave smarts and dancefloor authority that pop formulas almost begin to seem like blessings. Well, the hit-producing ones, anyway.

Triumph — *Thunder Seven* (MCA). Basically, what Triumph has done here is scale down the techno-bluster of Rush to something more closely resembling rock 'n' roll. It's not that their playing doesn't get fancy on occasion, but on the whole, Triumph is guided by a gut instinct that leads to such rootsy touches as the nifty bottleneck solo slipped under the pseudo-Zep of "Cool Down." True, the band still falls prey to the sort of cosmic twaddle endemic to bad progressive rock, but if you can ignore the lyrics, you may never notice.

True West — *Drifters* (PVC). Dozens of bands have gone after the chiming guitar and shimmering melodies of the mid-60s Byrds, but True West is one of the few capable of songs to match. "Look Around," which opens the album with an irresistible circular melody and an anthemic pulse, is typical of the rockers, while "Ain't No Hangman" demonstrates a country sensibility Gram Parsons would envy. Add in another eight equally appealing tunes, and you've got the kind of album that instantly converts listeners to fans. (3619 Kennedy Road, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080)

Foreigner — *Agent Provocateur* (Atlantic). In case you'd thought that "Urgent" and the other techno-poppers on *4* meant that Foreigner was finally moving into the present, guess again. True, they crunch and rumble with admirable authority, even putting over a Led Zeppelin cop ("Stranger In My Own House") that doubtless lives up to Def Leppard's wildest ambitions. Curiously, though, it's the ballads that show the most care and craft, which leaves me wondering if the rest isn't just Mick Jones' idea of over-compensation.

Gary "U.S." Bonds — *The Best Of Gary "U.S." Bonds* (MCA). To a fan who has greedily protected an assortment of battered singles from the ravages of time, having all the hits—"Quarter To Three," "New Orleans," "School Is Out"—in one package is a blessing from heaven. To find that Steve Hoffman has gone to the additional trouble of listing the personnel and cleaning up the sound restores my faith in justice. And that you can get the whole thing for six dollars or less is almost miraculous.

Malcolm McLaren — *Fans* (Island). As is so often the case with concept mongers, once you know the idea behind a McLaren album, you really don't need to hear the music. In fact, you're frequently better off that way. This one is about patching opera arias (mostly Puccini) into chatty pseudo-funk dance tracks. See? Knowing that, you've just saved seven bucks.

Bryan Adams — *Reckless* (A&M). Given the predictability of Adams' MTV-ed sound, *Feckless* would be closer.

Midnight Star — *Planetary Invasion* (Solar). Okay, so "Freak-A-Zoid" was the single that put them on the map, and now half the songs on the follow-up seem cloned from the same groove. That's not really a problem, because at least Midnight Star shows enough imagination to *re-invent* that groove with each reiteration. Actually, the real trouble lies with the other half of the album, especially the ballads that could double as prescription soporifics.

Guadalcanal Diary — *Walking In The Shadow Of The Big Man* (DB). Yet another Southern band with folkie overtones and a vibrant melodic sense. Guadalcanal Diary's approach is closer to the driving pop of the Brains than the hypnotic rambles of R.E.M., though some of the same dreaminess turns up in these songs; they play well enough to manage impressive shifts in dynamics and genuinely thrilling harmony singing. A band to watch. (450 14th Street, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30318)

Thelma Houston — *Qualifying Heat* (MCA). The title pun has it backwards, because it's the material that qualifies Houston's vocal heat, not the other way around. But that's no problem when she's dealing with songs as pleasantly mechanical as the Jimmy Jam/Terry Lewis and Monte Moir numbers on side one, which purr smoothly enough to make Houston's bursts of passion seem positively incendiary.

Eurythmics — *1984 (For The Love Of Big Brother)* (RCA). The latest shipment from the Ministry of Hits?

4-3-1 — *Which Way Is Up?* (Recovery). 4-3-1 seems to exist as a means to display the voice of Maggie Ryder, which is fair enough, because with both the gutsy power of Maggie Bell and the understated phrasing of Annie Lennox, she has the sort of pipes that are worth promoting. More impressive is her writing skill, which makes *Which Way Is Up?* sound more like a mainstream hit than most of what's on the radio these days. From an indie LP, that's pretty incredible. (7515 Greenville Avenue, Suite 905, Dallas, TX 75231)

Time Zone — "World Destruction" (Celluloid 12-inch). Pairing Afrika Bambaataa with John Lydon is such an inspired idea, it's a shame this little came of it. Never mind that the mix buries the vocals so that you have to strain to make out Bambaataa's didactic exhortations; the real drag is the leaden, ground-down clanking of Material's rhythm track. Course, nobody said the end of the world was going to be much fun in the first place. (155 West 29th Street, New York City, NY 10001)

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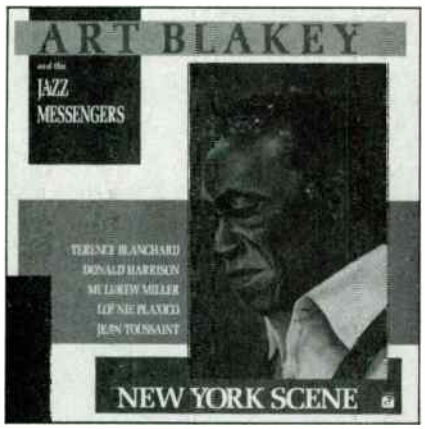


Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers — *New York Scene* (Concord Jazz). The New Orleans pipeline has supplied talented reinforcements in trumpeter Terence Blanchard and alto saxophonist Donald Harrison, both of whom figure to benefit from Blakey's drilling, much as Wynton and Branford Whatszernames did. But it's the tunefulness of Mulgrew Miller (the latest in a line of tuneful Memphis pianists) that best characterizes this newest edition and proves the wisdom of sticking with name brands. Does this really need my recommendation?

Bill Barron — *Variations In Blue* (Muse). The veteran tenor saxophonist and composer deals in your basic hard bop, but with little structural twists so subtle they become apparent only after repeated auditions, and so appropriate they retain their fascination even after they have been successfully decoded. *Variations In Blue*—a quartet date further enlivened by snakey contributions from trumpeter Jimmy Owens and the leader's better-known younger brother, pianist Kenny—is every bit as fine as the airtight LPs Barron made in the mid-60s for Savoy (themselves overdue for reissue, especially now that Muse holds rights to the Savoy catalog).

June Bisantz & Richard Evans — *Mister Spats* (Track, 67 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn, NY). The joint debut of a keyboard player who writes fanciful if occasionally glossy horn arrangements and a singer who coos her own droll if occasionally cryptic lyrics in a quiver too laced with irony to be merely coquettish, this is something of an acquired taste, I suppose. But Evans and Bisantz keep good company (Lew Soloff, Steve Swallow, and Bob Moses are among their sidemen), and their music is worth checking out for a pleasant change of pace.

The 29th Street Saxophone Quartet — *Pointillistic Groove* (Osmosis, from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012). The 29th Streeters (altoists Robert Watson and Ed Jackson, tenorist Rich Rothenberg, and baritonist Jim Hartog) sound like the missing link between the Ellington reed section and the World Saxophone Quartet. Their rhythmic accents are more boppish than the WSQ's, and so are their repertoire and their instrumentation (no doubling, not on their debut album at least). But they blend their voices with something approaching the WSQ's precision, and their most inspired riffing arouses something approaching the WSQ's ecstasy. Don't miss this one.

Urs Blochlinger — *Neurotica* (hat ART/N.M.D.S.). Blochlinger is a versatile Swiss saxophonist who writes daft but exacting (nice combination!) arrangements for a septet that could pass for a big band in anybody's blindfold test, and I can only hope to convey the range of his music by listing its many allusions, musical and otherwise—Mingus, Rodgers and Hart, Adrian Rollini, Austrian sound text, Hans Eisler, and a couple that elude me but intrigue me just the same. Recommended highly.

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm (Rosetta, 115 W. 16th St., New York, NY 10011). Just schoolgirls when they took to the road in the late 30s, the Sweethearts had matured into a crack big band by the time these radio transcriptions were made in 1945 and '46. Powered by Pauline Braddy's drumming and boasting irrepressible soloists in trumpeter Tiny Davis and tenor saxophonist Vi Burnside, the Sweethearts swung harder than any of the many "all-girl" orchestras of the period, and undoubtedly gave some of the male outfits a run for their money, too. Given how little of their music was preserved on disc, this collection is a godsend. And the many vintage photographs only enhance its appeal.

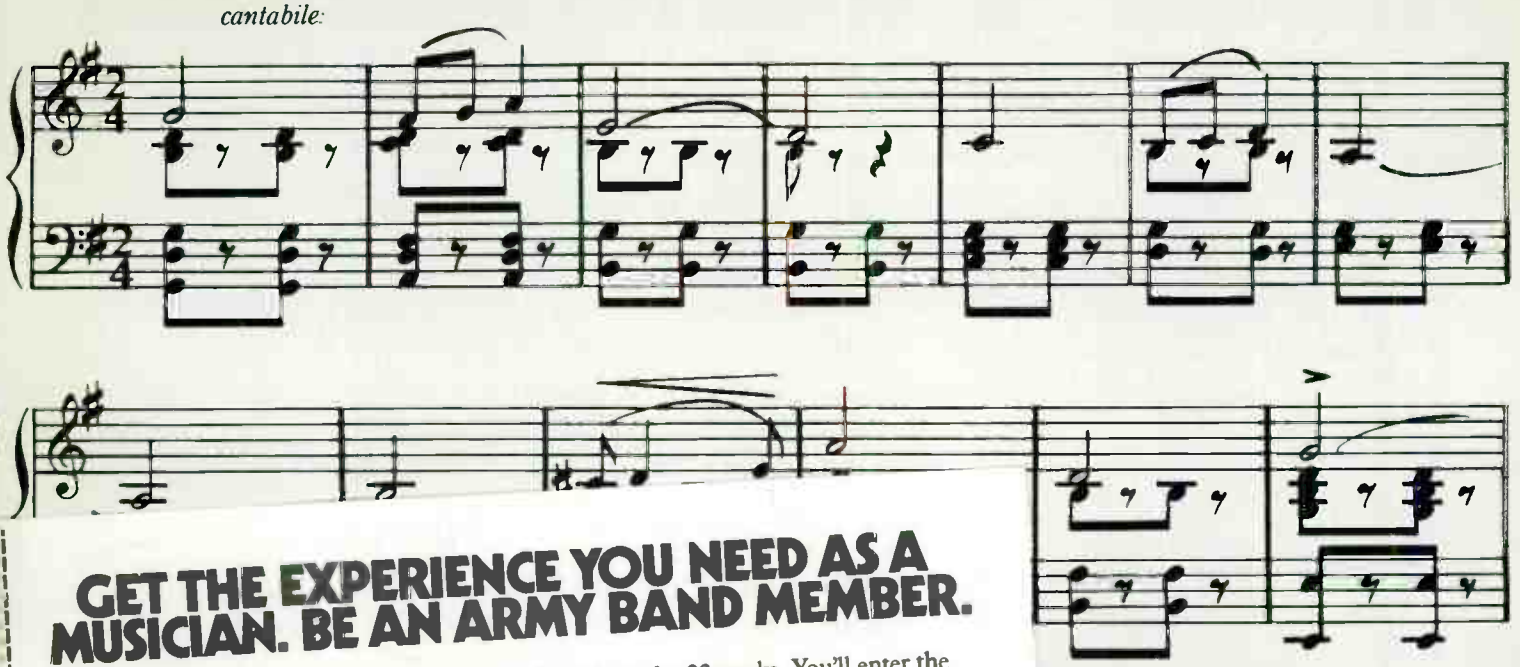
Jimmy Knepper — *I Dream Too Much* (Soul Note/PSI); **Ray Anderson** — *Right Down Your Alley* (Black Saint/PSI). What links these trombonists despite the age difference and the stylistic inclinations that might seem to divide them, is the notion that greater technical facility is worthless unless it also yields greater personal expressiveness, and the realization that there's something inherently mischievous about manipulating a slide. Knepper's first LP in some time is distinguished by its harmonious blend of trombone, trumpet, and French horn; Anderson's by his rapport with bassist Mark Helias and drummer Gerry Hemingway, and a sentiment free ballad that reminds me of a Coleman dirge, though I'd be hard pressed to say which one (which is probably the point).

Connie Crothers — *Concert At Cooper Union* (New Artists/N.M.D.S.). Crothers carries on the Tristano lineage, approaching standards obliquely, and puncturing her meditative soliloquies with rumbling left hand bass clusters. She deserves more recognition than she's gotten—but then so did Tristano.

Charles Mingus — *The Clown* (Atlantic). Although individual tracks have appeared on various Mingus compilations over the years, this marks the first full reissue of a classic from 1957, when Mingus stood poised on the edge of his most daring breakthrough as bandleader and composer. The original versions of "Haitian Fight Swing" and "Reincarnation Of A Lovebird" are here, along with the title track, which suffers radio personality Jean Shepherd's dated narration but otherwise has aged beautifully.

American Popular Song: Six Decades Of Songwriters And Singers (Smithsonian Collection). The sixty-two singers (Sinatra, Holiday, Crosby, Astaire and Mabel Mercer, for starters) were chosen for their fealty to melody rather than their interpretative license. One might quarrel with this strict constructionist view of the words and music of the Gershwins, Berlin, Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Arlen, Kern, Mercer, Wilder, et al (and with a few other points as well, like the arbitrary cut-off date of 1960, which results in the exclusion of Stephen Sondheim), but not with the words and music themselves. The songs are unimpeachable, and so are most of the interpretations. Besides, I'm willing to forgive a collection that introduced me to Jeri Southern's exquisite reading of "Dancing On The Ceiling" any transgression. ($47.96, plus $2.89 postage, from Box 10230, Des Moines, IA 50336)

Francis Davis



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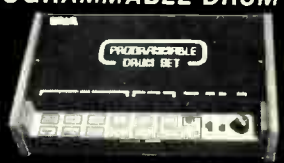

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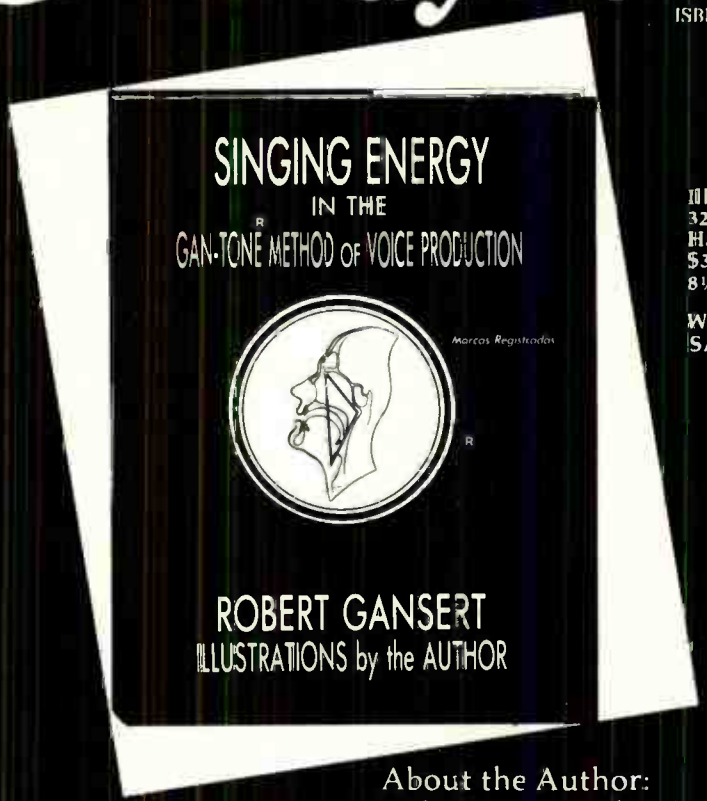

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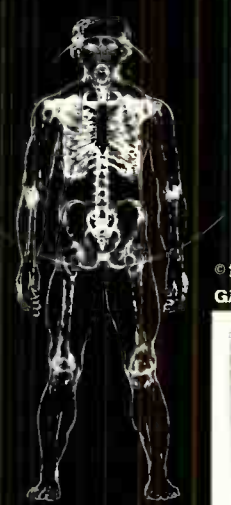

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Bozzio from page 90

Oliver Hardy.' But it hurts when they kind of single you out and superficially *rake you over the coals*," he laughs ruefully. "I can relate to people not understanding where we're at, but when they play God, that I don't like. There are really serious people in this industry who have respect for what we're doing, people like Quincy and Miles Davis, who's come out and publically endorsed the band. The people who *know*, who have been forerunners and pioneers and great artists appreciate us, and that's worth more to me than anything any rock 'n' roll writer could say. But to me, any press is good press, as long as the picture's there."

Henley from page 74

Roland GR-707 guitar synthesizer, and those 'horns' are supposed to be reminiscent of the Nelson Riddle theme from the old TV show, *Route 66*. That highway, which once ran from Santa Monica, is now a wasteland of empty gas stations, closed cafes and desert motels with concrete teepees out front. We wanted to evoke that bleakness."

The wailing 'horns' on "All She Wants To Do Is Dance" were underscored by the unnerving reediness of a Yamaha DX7 manned by Toto's David Paich. He set it on the harmonica stop and it was run through Kootch's Marshall stack into the studio, which Ladanyi had miked through some AMS reverb units so that it sounded like the Phantom of the Opera.

Even more difficult to conjure up was the maniacal cacophony of the harrowing Last Straw—the "Beast."

"It actually was like making a movie out of a song," according to Ladanyi. "We were bouncing tracks back and forth in SMPTE—running two 24-track reels at once to exploit probably seventy-two trackings. In terms of the appropriate effects for the 'building' motif, we got a nice white noise thing from our Simmons drums, picked up an anvil from a Synclavier. Hell, at one point, we even went out and bought some garbage cans to bang; we wound up dropping them, though, in favor of African percussion and talking drum as a nice counterbalance to the evil technological din you were hearing.

"For Don's narrative part in the 'All the way from Malibu/To the landing of the Talking Drum' section of 'Beast'—which Danny wanted to sound like a desperate telephone message—we ran the vocal through headphones. Then we took an old RCA 44 radio mike and set it about six feet away from the phones. By adding to the original signal in that way, we got a blend that was off of phase with itself, scary and sinister.

"With Don's other vocals on 'Beast, he got coached by Steve Jordan (drummer with the David Letterman Show band), who encouraged him to go for an unadorned, dire, James Brown kind of attack. Like so many of the other tracks on the album, it also opened Don up to being more adventurous with his singing than he's ever been, giving a performance instead of thinking technique."

"You know," says Henley, rising from the hotel to get ready for a dinner date in Soho, "I knew that the record had to end on an up note of relief, and that's why I saved the promise and optimism of 'Land Of The Living' for last, but by that time, my voice was so beat up from the previous singing experiences, it sounded like I *had* been through some kind of ordeal. I sounded like Gladys Knight after a bar fight."

Seemingly both drained and exhilarated by reliving the building of his *Beast*, Henley hurries downtown to the nouvelle cuisine of the fashionable Odeon, and then suggests moving on to the Ritz to catch a first-rate set by the rollicking East L.A. band, Los Lobos. As singers David Hidalgo and Cesar Rojas guide the group through a set that mixes Richie Valens, Santo and Johnny and norteño polkas, Henley leaps to his feet and bops around the balcony in glee. "I grew up listening to this kind of Tex-Mex border music as a teenager, man!" he exults. "This was my pre-Eagles education!"

The band launches into "La Bamba." Henley orders another round of beers, and I recall something he'd said, with a wink, as he left the hotel: "Thomas Wolfe was right. You can't go home again. But if you hang in there, it'll come and find you."

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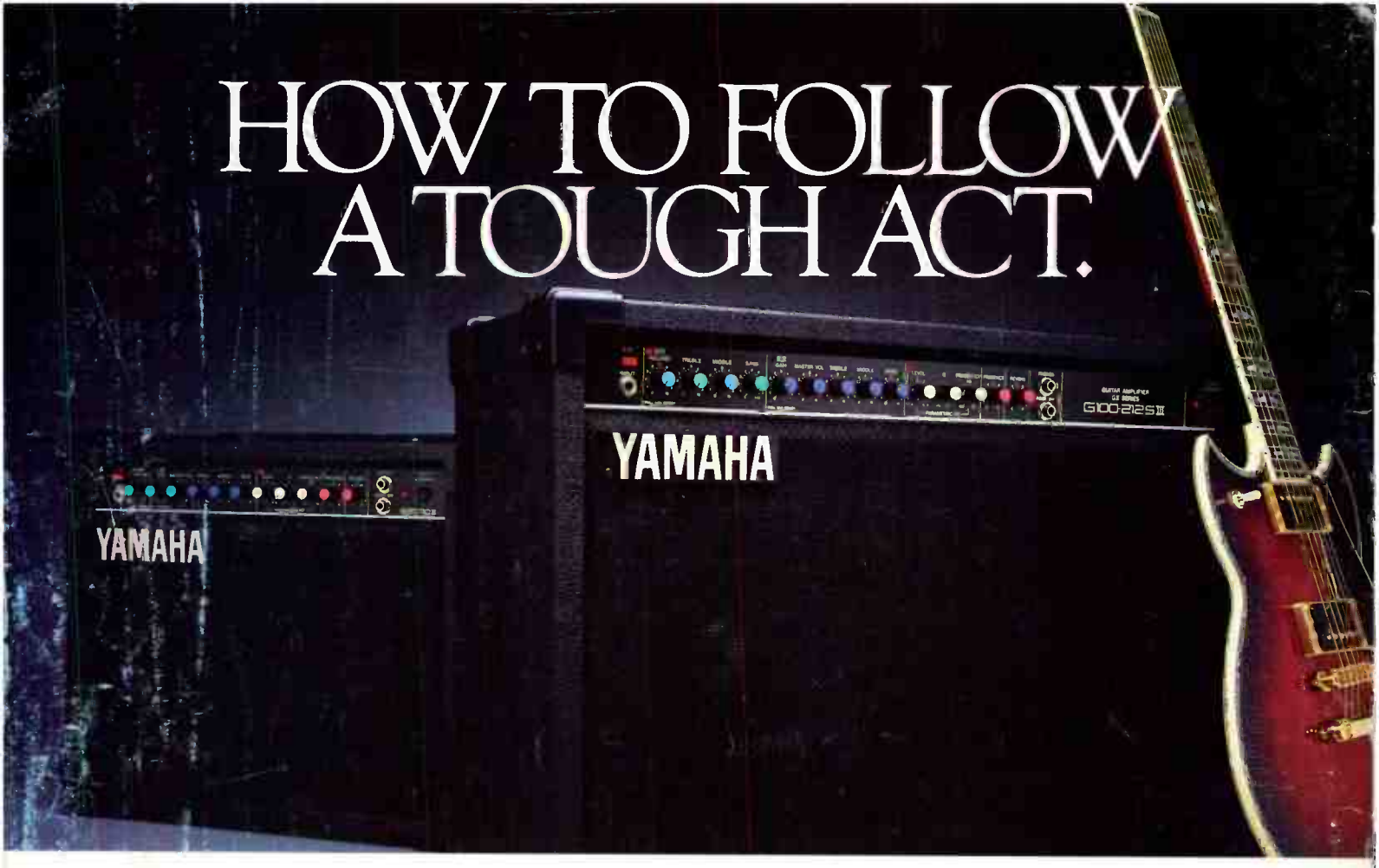

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