MUSICIAN

THE YEAR IN MUSIC 1988

NO 123 JANUARY 1989

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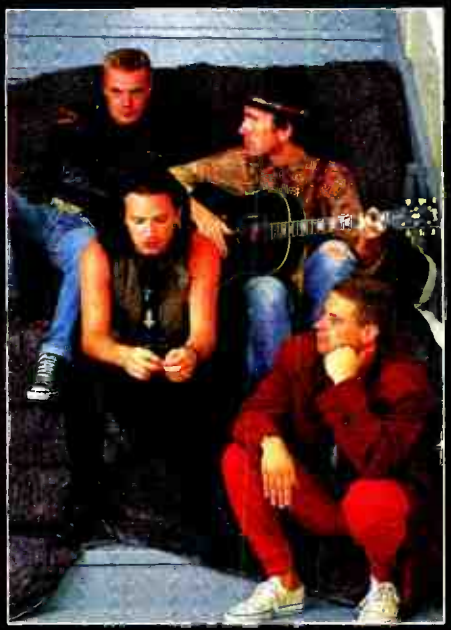

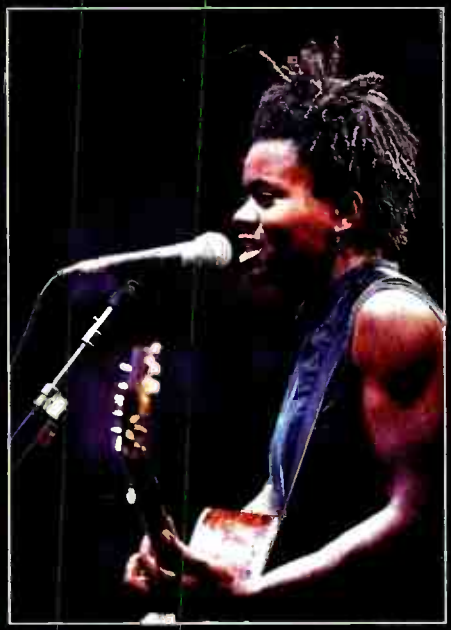

U2, R.E.M, INXS, Def Leppard, Joe Satriani, Metallica, George Harrison, Guns N' Roses, Robert Plant, Keith Richards, Randy Newman and others reflect on what went down.

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Murray Perahia, Piano—Schubert: Sonata, Op Posth., D. 959 Schumann Sonata, Op. 22 (CBS Masterworks) 369207

Prince—Love Sexy (Paisley Park) 369124

Simon & Garfunkel—Greatest Hits (Columbia) 219477

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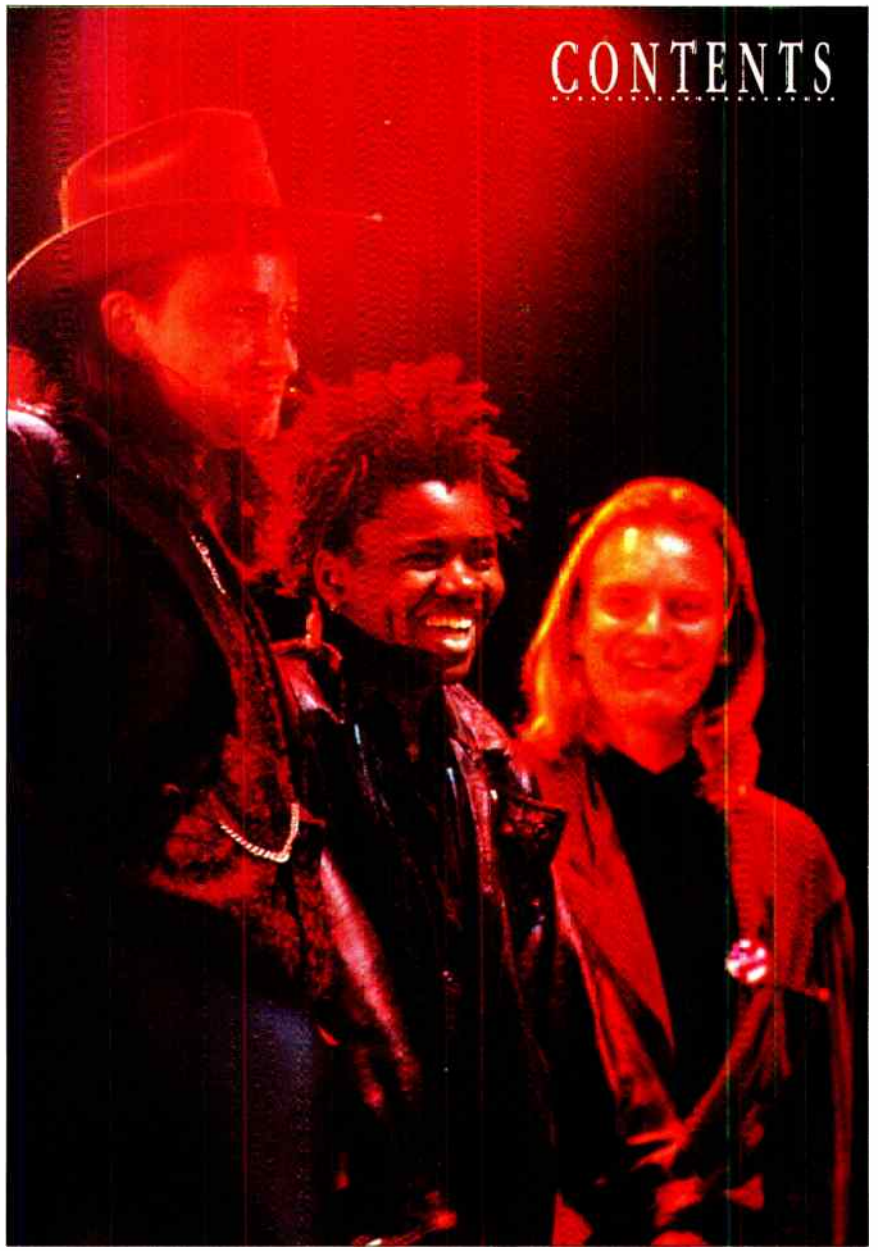

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Letters

KEITH DON'T GO

AFTER READING CHARLES Young's egocentric article about Jimmy Page, it was with some trepidation that I decided to struggle through what may have been a cheap-shot interview with Keith Richards (Oct. '88).

Don't take it too hard, Charles. By staying on his own track, Richards has provided your journalistic redemption this time.

Jeanie Wynn
Southboro, MA

AFTER READING THE INTERVIEW with Keith Richards I immediately scrounged all my loose change and *ran* (literally—my wife was away with the car) down to the local record store to pick up his new album. I figured anyone who could be that intelligent, good-humored, sincere and straightforward just *had* to make good music.

Paul Seaman
Washington, DC

IN A WORLD FULL OF BULLSHIT artists, Keith Richards is a breath of pure oxygen cutting through the sulfur dioxide.

Jeffry Collins
Montreal, Canada

THANK YOU FOR THE BEST INterview with a rock legend I've read. I never heard anyone in the industry with such clear insight into the people, music and the "why" of it—at least that I agree with. Now would Keith be so kind as to do what he said, and quit bashing Mick in the press? It sucks.

Michael Mooney
Berkeley, CA

KEITH RICHARDS' CRASS, INsensitive, callous and mean-spirited remarks about Brian Jones disgusted me. I lost whatever respect I'd had for him. He spoke with no regard for the feelings of Jones' family and friends. Now more than ever, I believe a lifetime of wealth and fame retards some people's growth.

Valentia Taylor
Dallas, TX

GO TO CHURCH

IT WAS WONDERFUL TO SEE the Church get some well-deserved attention (Oct. '88). I'm sure it's nice for them to get press and Top 40 airplay. However, I must caution those who say that the Church has "finally arrived." *They* arrived eight years ago; it's everyone else who is just now boarding *their* ship.

Paula Keehfus
Baltimore, MD

STEVE KILBEY IS SURPRISED at some of the bands his fans listen to? He could stand to learn something from his fans; they are considerably more open-minded than he is.

D. Smyth
Cocoa, FL

WHERE WAS STEVE?

I WAS IMPRESSED TO SEE *Musician* dedicate so much space to Steve Forbert's story (Oct. '88). Bill Flanagan's "get the facts" style was very refreshing. I've been a Forbert fan since 1978. The last time I saw him perform was around 1984. Now I know why!

Amy Eskilson
Stillwater, NJ

THANKS FOR HAVING THE courage to print a story that demystifies and deglamorizes rock 'n' roll. The Steve Forbert story is just one of far too many that illustrates the fact that, as Billy Bragg stated, capitalism is killing music. Now more than ever music is about money, not spirit or heart, and an artist who doesn't make big money for a label soon ceases to make music that reaches the public. Music isn't weighed on its own merits; it is judged by cash register receipts.

Brian Crawford
Dartmouth, N.S., Canada

TINY TIM?

IT WOULD BE NICE IF SOMEBODY acknowledged that Tim Finn has accomplished more than simply being Neil's brother (Oct. '88). Neil may have composed Split Enz's most popular songs, but Tim (with Phil Judd) was writing some of the Enz's early classics while Neil was still in high school. It was Tim's "I See Red" that first brought Split Enz recognition. And obviously if it hadn't been for Split Enz there would be no Crowded House.

Michelle Albert
Harrisonburg, VA

A LA MODE

I'VE BEEN SUBSCRIBING TO your magazine for over two years now. And what's this? An article on Depeche Mode (Oct. '88). Finally *Musician* has found out something I knew a long time ago: that this band is one of pop's best known secrets. Congrats to Ted Drozdowski on a fine article.

Ked Eason
Baltimore, MD

PUZZLE PAGES

I THINK YOU ARE ONE OF THE better music rags currently on the market, in large part because you walk the fine line of pleasing a lot of disparate musical tastes in a semblance of fairness.

But your layout of articles really sucks. I'm sick of finding the continuation of an article that started on page 50 on page 39, as in your October issue. There is no legitimate reason in a magazine of your caliber to frustrate the reader who only wants to read a story, not go through a magazine maze. It detracts from the enjoyment and appreciation of the writers you publish, and detracts from the enjoyment of your magazine.

Dennis Hayden
Rutherford, CA

CAPITOL CRIME

I WAS APPALLED WHEN I READ about Capitol Records issuing an abridged version of *The Band* (*Faces*, Oct. '88). Just months ago I leapt at the chance to buy a reissue of *The Band* for $3.99, hoping to fully appreciate an album that was originally released when I was six years old. Now I learn that Capitol has denied me the opportunity listeners had in 1969.

Quite frankly, even for $3.99, I feel robbed. Thanks for keeping readers informed, even if the news is as bad as this.

David Deal
Wheaton, IL

Anyone wishing to express an opinion directly to Capitol on this matter should write president David Berman at Capitol Records, Inc., 1750 N. Vine, Hollywood, CA 90028.—Ed.

CHRIST!

IS IT SOME SORT OF EMBARrassment to the secular press that three-quarters of U2 are Christians? No matter whether it's *People* or *Musician*, nobody seems to want to accept the fact that most members of one of rock's hottest "acts" read the Bible and think Jesus is everything He said He is.

Perhaps Scott Isler (*Reviews*, Oct. '88) should see the video that went along with the Guthrie/Leadbelly recording. The interview with Bono leaves no doubt that the band's choice of a cover song was anything but "humorous" in intent.

Christopher Fee
Mount Vernon, NY

The photo of Midnight Oil on page 86 of our December issue was taken by Susan Alzner.

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LYNN GOLDSMITH

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Faces

THE FOUR TOPS

Not Just the Same Old Song

The Four Tops' debut album for Arista Records is called *Indestructible*. You'd have to go some to find a more appropriate title. It's not just that they've been here almost 35 years without a single personnel change. The Tops have also had to deal with the fact that, since the late'70s, their entire genre—the stand-up vocal group—has been in critical condition.

But Tops mainstay Abdul "Duke" Fakir says, even given that gloomy assessment, the Tops will keep on plugging. "You just don't go away from your thing" is how he puts it. "You might be the only one doing it, but that's good. That puts you out of competing with any other group. You can only compete with yourself."

Fakir notes with some optimism the fresh blood New Edition has brought to the ranks of the street-corner crooners. He's also encouraged by the recent resurgence of the tight harmonies and unabashed soul singing that put many of the old groups on top in the first place.

He says, "You see it in advertising, you see it in a lot of the movies, you see it in a lot of the songs, how they keep going back and getting [old] songs. My daughter, who's 13, who's never been up on the Four Tops, all of a sudden now she likes 'Reach Out' and stuff like that."

None of this fond remembrance of music past, by the way, is to suggest that the Tops have thrown in the towel as hit-makers. *Indestructible* is an invigorating album wherein the bright pop beats of the late '80s meet the aforementioned soul and harmony of the '60s. It's all the proof you need that the Tops, while honoring the past, remain competitive about the present. These guys still want hits.

As Fakir says, "Once you're a recording artist, and you know you've still got a voice, you still want to get on top of the charts. I don't care who you are. Even Frank Sinatra would like to have a number one record."

—Leonard Pitts, Jr.

EBET ROBERTS

Jazz: Grove's Groove

It's hardly an impulse purchase at $295, but *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* may be the perfect gift for that jazz aficionado on your Christmas list. The two-volume, 1400-page work is the latest entry in the prestigious line of New Grove music dictionaries; it should also silence the critics who felt jazz got short shrift in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* two years ago. The jazz *Grove* includes over 4500 articles—bios, musicological and historical essays—reflecting pretty much up-to-the-minute research. (Too bad about Louis Armstrong's birthdate.) Impressive. *– Scott Isler*

THE ANGRY SAMOANS

L.A. Is Their Lady

Ten years and four pugnacious platters, and the Angry Samoans are still pissing mad. "What first fueled us was the idea that Los Angeles is the worst shit-hole in the world in terms of people selling their souls for five minutes of seeming to be in the spotlight," says Gregg Turner, who yelps and flails guitar. "Their whole raison d'être is fame, as sold by 'Entertainment Tonight.' If anything it's gotten worse since we started, and our reaction has been vitriolic contempt . . . with humor."

So just because the band's new *STP not LSD* bears ballads among the burning, churning guitars; and just because Turner teaches linear algebra by day; and just because he and co-founding singer/guitarist "Metal" Mike Saunders (an accountant) have an acoustic duo on the side; doesn't mean this quartet's lost its hardcore chutzpah, right?

"Actually," Turner says, "we never wanted to be a hardcore band. We grew up listening to the Thirteenth Floor Elevators, the Velvet Underground, the Sonics—raw '60s stuff. But we had to play Whittier and Long Beach, where the only shows were thrash at roller rinks. We liked Black Flag and Redd Kross, but we were wimpy scared kids from the San Fernando Valley. We figured if we were going to not get our asses kicked, we'd have to play faster and faster. Which we did, and strangely we became their band of choice. So when *Back from Samoa* came out in '82, that's what we were doing."

They followed that thrash testament with a four-year break, so *Back from Samoa* seemed like a manifesto. But sure enough, since 1986's *Yesterday Came Today* EP, the Samoans have jangled as often as roared. "I think the common denominator is the anger," Turner offers. "We may not be Samoan, but we're angry, so pledge allegiance to that."

—Ted Drozdowski

SAM BROWN

A Bit Dirtier Than Average

With a big, husky voice and audaciously good debut album (*Stop!*) to her credit, England's Sam Brown has a leg up on fame. But this soulful 24-year-old clearly needs to work on her star attitude.

"I've never felt the need to rush. I can't remember thinking, 'I don't want to be a backing singer; I want to be a lead singer.' In fact, I miss singing backup very much," she says, deadly serious.

Though a newcomer to the spotlight, Brown has a mile-long résumé of supporting roles. The daughter of '60s British pop fave (and Billy Idol prototype) Joe Brown, she scored her first studio credit a decade ago, sharing the mike with mom Vicki at a Small Faces reunion session. A flurry of live and recording gigs ensued with such notables as Adam Ant, Dexy's Midnight Runners, Spandau Ballet ("Such good blokes!" she gushes), and the Firm ("Jimmy Page has such an aura!"). Later encounters have done nothing to dampen Brown's enthusiasm: She calls Mark Knopfler "inspiring," while David Gilmour has "such charisma."

On the other hand, launching her solo career hasn't been all fun and games. Brown first cut tracks with producer Pete Smith, a veteran of Sting's *The Dream of the Blue Turtles*, only to come away disappointed. "It was very smooth and polished, and I'm not that kind of person," she explains. "I wanted a rougher sound, a bit dirtier than the average music."

She found a sympathetic partner in brother Pete, who'd worked with the Mighty Lemon Drops, although the two hadn't been close before. "We never really knew each other," Brown notes, "and I didn't feel he listened to me enough." However, the siblings got along famously, turning out a dense, thrill-packed LP that ranges deftly from old-fashioned soul to Kate Bush-style flights of fancy.

"There's a lot on there. It's quite cluttered, isn't it?" Brown guffaws, typically self-deprecating. Likewise, noting that *Stop!* has sold best in the Netherlands, Belgium and other non-English-speaking countries, she laughs, "Maybe that's because my lyrics are complete shit!"

Meanwhile, Sam Brown enjoys growing respect among her peers. At a recent UK charity concert, she fronted an all-star band to belt out the title track of her LP. "I must admit, taking the stage was a bit nerve-wracking," giggles Brown. "I had Eric Clapton on my left, Phil Collins behind me, and I thought, 'I really cannot fuck up now!' "

And, of course, she didn't.

—Jon Young

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Fishbone

By Steve Perry

The Revolution Will Not Be Sanitized

Something is bugging Fish. "I went to the recent Amnesty International show in Los Angeles," says the Fishbone drummer, "and I'm glad they were doing what they were doing. I got to see how effective they were in raising certain points—in raising the consciousness of the people at the show. But . . ."

What is it, Fish? A problem with the artists on the tour? Or maybe with A.I.'s squeamishness toward genuine revolutionaries like Nelson Mandela?

No. "It just wasn't *loud* enough," he finally says. "I love loud music, man."

"If music's not loud enough," protests singer Angelo Moore, "how can you become a part of it?"

"My complaint about the Amnesty show," says guitarist Kendall Jones in a more earnest vein, "was that if you weren't there, you got no awareness of what it was about. The media coverage was really lame."

Angelo Moore doin' the fish: One more fly in rock's buttermilk.

"What I'd like to see," adds John Norwood Fisher, the bassist and Fish's older brother, "is an Amnesty tour with black acts that would bring in a black audience, because they're the ones who need to understand what these human rights are. This concert was in the middle of the ghetto in Los Angeles, and there wasn't but a handful of black people there. The human rights violations were happening all around the concert, in that neighborhood. I'd like to see 'em address *that*."

As their outlook on the Amnesty show suggests, the musical agenda running under Fishbone's breathless melange of rock, funk, ska and hardcore is pretty straightforward: They're about provocative agitpop and high volume, and not always in that order. This unity of purpose has sustained them through nearly a decade together—a pretty amazing tenure, considering that they're all just a year or two either side of 20.

"We like to play loud," proclaims Jones, "and we like our audience to be loud. I don't care if it's really slow and clean, as long as it's loud. I'm the kind of guy who'll blast Muzak on the car radio just to piss everybody off."

The drum to which Fishbone first marched wasn't just louder than most; it was *different*. Says Fish: "Most bands are garage bands, right? We were a bedroom band. We played in the bedroom of my mother's apartment. I think it helped us develop more creatively—to look inside ourselves and come up with our kind of creativity."

"We were our only audience," Norwood elaborates, "so we never had to deal with, 'Oh, this song really worked. And people kind of liked the funkier stuff better . . .' We had a chance to do what we felt for a long time. We made our own choices, without thinking in terms of what an audience might like best."

Fishbone first came together when most of the principals were in junior high together in the San Fernando Valley, outside L.A. Angelo Moore lived in the Valley, where he remembers thinking of himself as "the fly in the buttermilk"; the rest were bused there from inner-city L.A. The experience opened their eyes in both instructive and painful ways.

"When the underground scene started happening," says Norwood, "those Valley kids hipped us to a lot of stuff that helped form our thing." They repaid the musical debt by introducing the Valley kids to bands like Funkadelic. But as black kids bused to a very white school, they also had less pleasant debts to pay.

"It was frightening," Fish says quietly, "having to travel on the bus and then having people out there picket me and throw rocks at me and call me a nigger. At 12 years old, that's pretty devastating. If I didn't have my head together, I'd probably be a racist. For adults to do that to little kids, man . . . *I* didn't bus myself out there."

"I'd already been experiencing that just living out there," adds Moore. "I could just walk down the street and have people drive by shouting 'Nigger!' I had to deal with the KKK. Got chased home one day, got chased into a Save-On by these four white guys in a Volkswagen dressed in white. It was scary."

From their self-titled 1985 debut EP to this year's *Truth & Soul* (their second long-player), Fishbone's music has always been long on biting humor and pointed social criticism—and, in the truest agitpop tradition, short on subtlety. Like so much of the Fishbone sensibility, this fixation on the harder facts of life was part of the fallout of the Valley experience.

"When I got out of the Valley and started going to school in my own neighborhood again," says Norwood, "it was extremely apparent how education was lacking in a black neighborhood. When you're 15 or 16 years old and you realize that you and your people are being deprived of an education, you feel hostile at first. Then, in order to survive, you put it out of your mind. But it always comes back. And yeah, that whole time had quite a bit to do with [the politics of our music]. My days in the Valley were

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what made me want to arm myself with knowledge."

Fishbone got out of the Valley intact, but they spent a few more years practicing their musical alchemy in mom's bedroom before they finally ventured out in public in about 1984. "At first we did what, two talent shows?" laughs Fish. "We didn't really want to do talent shows, but we wanted to play. We actually thought you could go from just playing talent shows to having a lot of people come see you. And then the next thing you know, you're at someplace as big as the Forum, or the Coliseum."

After the talent shows came the L.A. club circuit, and after that, the major label scouts. Fish thought it was a cruel prank at first. "We weren't looking to get signed when we got signed. David Kahne from CBS just came up to me at a club in Hollywood and went, 'I'm David Kahne and I produce Romeo Void and the Bangles. I'm really into you guys.' I sorta looked at him and just told him to fuck off."

Norwood: "But he brought his boss, Ron Oberman, to the next meeting. Then I believed him."

Fish: "And he took us to dinner on the company credit card. Then *I* believed him."

Kahne, who is still Fishbone's producer, signed the band and got them into a studio in 1985. Their first record was out before they could catch their breath; in a sense, all their records to date have been attempts to define a sound and a perspective. "In the studio back then," says Norwood of the first EP, "we didn't have that much of an idea where we wanted to go. We knew we had a dynamic live show, and David Kahne wanted to try to capture that on vinyl. We picked the songs because they were the ones we played best.

"*In Your Face* (the band's first full-length album, 1986) was us experimenting with the studio and getting a better understanding of it. It was a big experiment. And if anything, I think we experimented too much. On the *It's a Wonderful Life* EP (released at Christmas 1987), we were back to just playing again. It was cut straight to tape, because the company had us do it on such short notice. To me, that felt a lot better than *In Your Face*. So on the new record, we tried to combine *In Your Face* and the second EP. We had more money and time in the studio, but we wanted that live vibe."

And, he emphasizes, "We didn't set out to write preachy songs on this album. Take a song like 'Ghetto Soundwave.' That was a personal statement based on Kendall's seeing the Jamaicans move into the neighborhood and have it worse than everybody else. It's not saying how to get rid of the problem, it's just, 'Here's a problem I've seen.' The only way you can disagree with that is Dukakis and Bush's way, which is to not even acknowledge there's an underclass in America."

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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Greg Osby & Steve Coleman

By Jim Macnie

Sax Strategists Talking 'Bout a Revolution?

Greg Osby and Steve Coleman play a funk-informed, nervy jazz that gets to the butt. High on improvisation, it's surrounded by sophisticated song structures; emphasizing freshness, it moves with the times—dense, powerful, kind of scary. Given the cachet, not to mention market share, of contemporary "retro jazz," Osby and Coleman are also taking definitive steps toward revitalizing that music's once treasured immediacy. More importantly, the playing of both alto saxists—by turns antsy, regal and eloquent—complements the kind of talk which invariably accompanies the birth of any new musical style.

That's fortunate, because Osby and Coleman talk a lot. Smart and hyperaware, they fairly bristle with self-confidence. "I'd rather record with the people in our group than make a record with so-called 'bankable' players," scoffs Coleman. "I don't believe in that 'get Ron Carter on bass' shit. He's not gonna care or respect nothing we do; he'll be reading the paper until they turn the mikes on. I like working with people I can trust."

Antsy & Eloquent build an M-base in Brooklyn: Osby (left) and Coleman.

Coleman and Osby's talk of changing the future of jazz wields clout because they're knowledgeable about its past. Refugees from the Midwest, both picked up lessons from established local leaders (Coleman: Von Freeman; Osby: Bunky Green); currently they help fire the bands of Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette, respectively. But since moving to Brooklyn and becoming integral participants in M-Base (Macro-Basic Array of Structured Experimentation), they've also positioned themselves at the vortex of a growing musical community. With players like pianist Geri Allen, drummer Smitty Smith, bassist Lonnie Plaxico, trombonist Robin Eubanks, trumpeter Graham Haynes and vocalist Cassandra Wilson, Coleman and Osby are finding new languages, and, by extension, new directions.

"The lack of a common musical language is what brought us together initially," Osby explains. "Bird and Diz could play a Tadd Dameron tune and the composer wouldn't have to be there. The vocabulary, the idiomatic stuff, would sound cohesive. But there was little camaraderie, and no shared lingo, between the young cats in town. We couldn't get on each other's bandstand because we didn't know each other's conception; I couldn't play with Wynton, he couldn't play with me. That was the fundamental goal of M-Base, assimilating specifics into some kind of universal pool of ideas from which people could draw their materials."

Several bands operate under the M-Base rubric. Some have recorded (check out the upcoming Strata Institute, a double trio that includes both Osby and Coleman), others have fallen by the wayside (the oft-talked about, seldom-heard 9th Eye). Members record each others' tunes; lessons picked up in one realm are carried over to others.

"It's about exchanging ideas," Coleman declares. "Like Smitty Smith says, 'That secret stuff is nowhere.' A lot of times cats don't want you to know what they're doing, they're afraid to get laughed at. But when we put out the initial call, the response was great; almost everyone had a theory they were working on. That doesn't mean 'Okay, Branford, now you follow my rules,' it just means 'let's trade info.' That's where a language comes from."

Osby and Coleman's music is one dialect. Both play alto (although Osby's a lush, wiry soprano player as well), and each employs deceptive, rigorous variations of funk. Electronics also figure into their approach; their horns are equipped with state-of-the-art tone splitters, harmonizers and other high-tech rigmarole. But neither plays in electric or acoustic contexts exclusively, and their stuff never seems clinical. As hopped up as they can be (Osby's knotty lines virtually define the tough aural personality of DeJohnette's latest Impulse LP, *Audio-Visualscapes*), there's a weathered sense of humanity as well. They've come up with an original meld of the Godfather's goodfoot and Bird's fluid riffing that's all its own.

"I went to hear Tommy Flanagan the other night," Coleman says, "and have yet to hear any young person, in any style, come close to that kind of sophistication. He didn't sound like he was playing swing, he was just playing life. That style worked for him, and he was killin'. But cats today are doing a caricature of that older music, trying to remold it." "That's cool," Osby demurs, "if they want to wave the banner of nostalgia. Everybody acknowledges tradition to their particular end. Swing is like a dialect. While it's not my focus, I give it respect."

Osby, whose records reveal a yen for ballads, retains a more romantic, lyrical side. "That's one thing a few young cats are afraid to express," he contends. "It's a really strong part of my makeup. You

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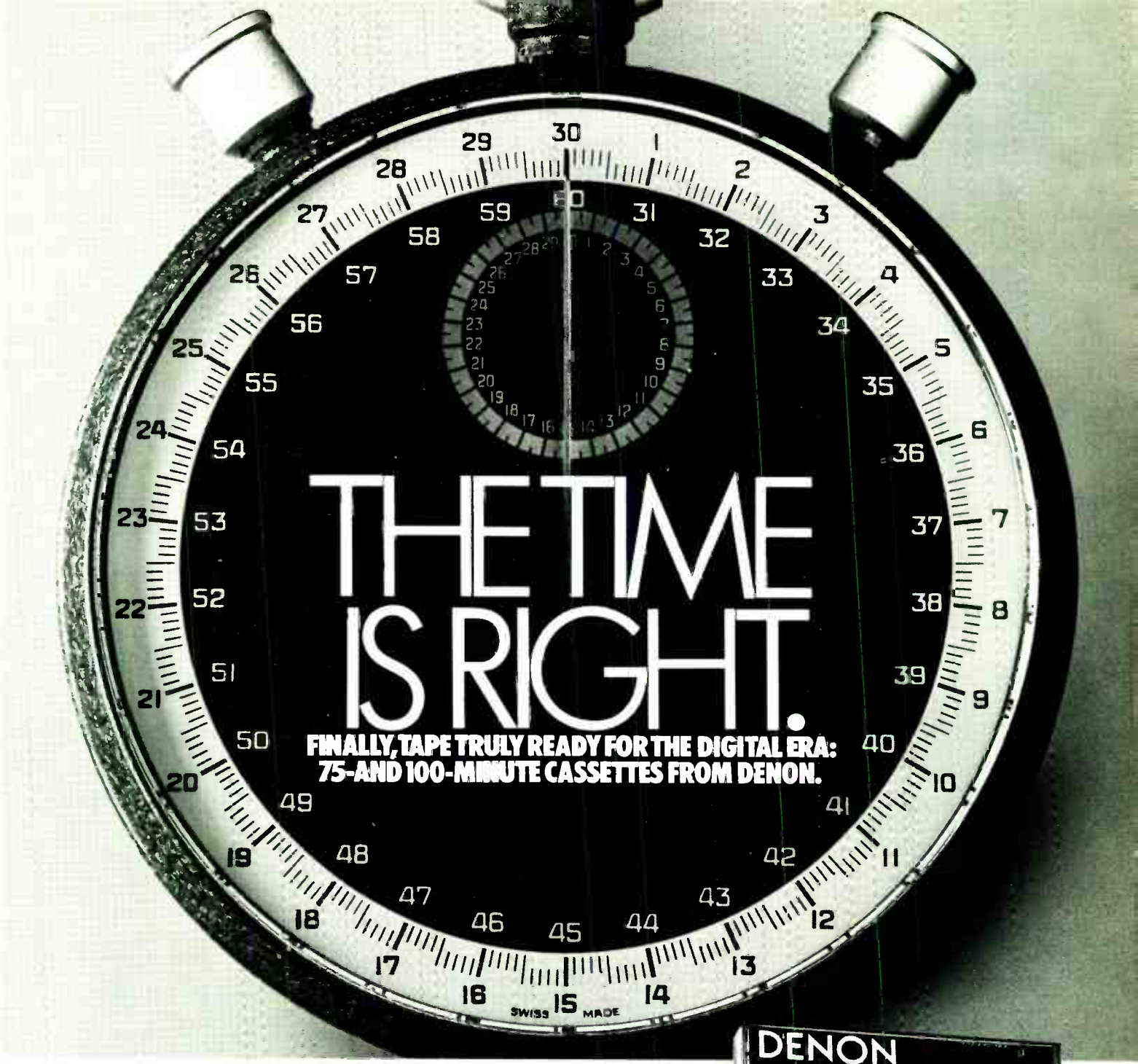

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might hear Ravel and Debussy too, impressionistic styles. . . . I'm trying to get away from being blatant; people shouldn't necessarily know why my music makes them feel the way it does. Lately the drums have been a bit understated in my writing; I'm looking for melodicism and beauty." Osby catches himself veering toward mush, and with mock suavity coos "and the ladies seem to like it that way."

"I don't care if a cat plays on a microchip or a kazoo," deadpans Coleman, "as long as the music is interesting. The Oriental thing's there for me, but there are other fringe influences that I incorporate into what's primarily an Afro-American music. Greg has played things that influence me as well. I'll express myself with whatever tool I want. But it kills me when older guys put you down for using today's equipment onstage and then invite you over their house to show you the VCR, entertainment systems, intercoms. Everything they buy is computerized and they're telling you to use a gut-string bass with the strings 80 miles off the fretboard. It's a contradiction. Same cats are wearing a Japanese watch that'll open their garage doors and do their taxes for 'em."

A healthy dash of contempt permeates these guys' opinions. "When I met Steve," Osby recalls, "he had this I-don't-give-a-fuck attitude, and I respected that. We didn't work much at first, and really we still don't—New York hasn't been as open to creativity as I'd hoped. I could've been working more if I did the mainstream thing, or put on a suit and tie and said we're from New Orleans. But I'm not sufferin' and I don't want to make concessions unless I have to."

"I worked with Slide Hampton when I got to town," chuckles Coleman, "and after he got to know my style he shook his head and said, 'You know, Steve, it's gonna be hard to change the system.' And it's true. People think that because we've been getting a little press that we're happening, but it's still tough to find work. It's the red-tape crowd, the political knuckleheads like George Wein; he's still booking people that his mother grew up on. When you're in your prime, really being creative, you've got no audience, therefore the big wheels have got no use for you. By the time they hire you, you're as old as Dizzy. C'mon."

Dishing the goopy state of jazz radio, Coleman advises his buddy to change his name to "Greggy O." A bit later Osby retorts, calling Coleman "the Moses of Brooklyn."

Not too surprisingly, there's a swaggering edge to Osby and Coleman's sound. They favor a side-to-side motion in the development of solos, attacking the melody in a weaving fashion rather than just riding it up and down. "That's the snake concept," confides Coleman. "It's been around for a long time. Benny Golson, Lucky Thompson, even Hawk used it. I almost became an artist, so I'm attracted to natural shapes. Nature is basically about rhythm. There aren't any chords in nature; you don't hear no major sevenths while you're walking down the street. I hear the drum in everything and melody in everything, but I hear them being one."

Becoming established is probably a goal for every young musician, but Osby and Coleman seem chary of success. Of course they'd like more chances to present their music, but on their terms. Coleman worked in Sting's band for a stretch ("He's cool, but I didn't get anything out of it musically"), and admits that hooking up with veterans like Holland "undoubtedly helps" a player along. (A forthcoming Holland trio date is a stripped-down showcase for Coleman's attack.) Osby has "turned down a couple of things because I've got a new group and don't want to go out prematurely and get squashed by a faulty presentation."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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Olivia Records

By Gina Arnold

Can a Feminist Company Survive a Post-Feminist Era?

There's a joke current among Berkeley natives: Two women go into a restaurant and ask for a table. "Are you together?" the maître d' asks. One of the women, clearly offended, draws herself up and replies indignantly, "I certainly am!"

The joke applies on several levels to Olivia Records, a female-owned, female-run record label based in a warehouse on the border of Berkeley and Oakland. A more together—in the colloquial sense—record label would be hard to find. In its 15 years of operation, Olivia (often referred to by its seven full-time employees as "she") has released 32 records which have collectively sold well over a million copies. It has recorded a series of women artists, helped establish an independent distribution system, and funded an alternative network of concert promoters. It did all this on an initial investment of $11,000 and an incredible outpouring of consumer loyalty.

Dlugacz (inset) and star Williamson: "There are still extraordinary women out there."

But has Olivia Records outlived its usefulness? A current new wave of Serious Women Artists, led by Suzanne Vega, Sinéad O'Connor and Tracy Chapman (who negotiated with Olivia before signing to Elektra Records), are making dents in the pop charts—something Olivia's artists have yet to do.

"I find myself having to defend myself a lot," says Olivia's president and co-founder Judy Dlugacz. "Which I think is a very strange thing. Because nobody would question, let's say, a company that specialized in black artists, asking them whether or not they'd ever put a white artist on their label. There's more of an understanding of the need for the affirmation of black culture. But we get asked why we 'discriminate' against men all the time, and it's like, wait a minute! *We're* not discriminating, we're just trying to create an opportunity for women that are being shut out by a huge industry!"

Dlugacz, sitting behind her cluttered desk in the airy Olivia warehouse one fall day, *is* defensive, and at times even secretive about her business. She bridles immediately at the word "lesbian," an image the label is trying to shake. More surprisingly, the word "feminist" elicits the same reaction.

"The problem isn't the word," she explains, "because it's apt to call us feminist in the sense of believing that women can do everything. The problem is in how the rest of the world deals with terms, and how they choose to view people. So I have to look at the term 'feminist' and say, well, what they're doing (by calling us feminists) is trying to limit what I'm doing."

Olivia is clearly trying to change with the times; one of their more successful recent signings is Nashville-based Dianne Davidson. Davidson's audience has crossed over from almost exclusively female—or feminist—to mainstream (without benefit of radio airplay, of course).

But the company still has an image problem, due to the nature of the music on the label. After all, Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde, Joan Armatrading, Tina Weymouth and Madonna are all, musically speaking, ground-breaking female artists. Cris Williamson—Olivia's biggest name, with a quarter of a million record sales—is not.

"Well, we were never thinking in terms of what would be most innovative musically, because that was never our focus," Dlugacz explains. "Cris Williamson isn't all that different from Judy Collins, but what she said and how she said it were."

Dlugacz is not slow to take at least partial credit for the recent increase in women artists heard on the airwaves. But for Olivia to change its reputation from feminist to something more mainstream may be tough. The label was formed as a collective "in order to make a very loud statement," Dlugacz says. (She took over sole ownership in 1983.) Olivia was conceived as a radical separatist organization which, from stockroom clerk to recording artist, would employ only women.

It was 1973, and both female singer/songwriters and the women's liberation movement were at their peaks of popularity. Olivia's first two albums, Dlugacz says, "sold 75,000 right away, basically on word-of-mouth."

At concerts by Olivia artists, Dlugacz or another employee would get onstage and ask if anyone wanted to become the distribution person for that area. These distributors eventually consolidated into the W.I.L.D. (Women's Independent Label Distributors) network. Sandy Ramsey, former head of distribution for Olivia, explains that "We made a decision that it would be better for everyone concerned if there was one distributor who could make a full-time living covering a larger territory, rather than 16 who couldn't do it full-time, ergo, it wasn't their first priority. At one point, before that, we had six distributors for the state of Michigan alone!"

Consequently, distributors now cover

larger areas and also carry a much wider range of product, including other women's labels like Redwood, Pleaides and Schroeder. The branching out of these distributors is reflected in Olivia's own mail-order catalog, which sells other record labels (including Windham Hill); books on lesbianism, feminism and world politics; and posters, T-shirts and some items of jewelry, a few of which feature crystals, that scourge of the late '80s. This array of products helps explain how Olivia has been able to survive despite a dissipating women's movement and less than cutting-edge music. The company slid through the '80s on the cusp of the New Age tag.

Olivia is now coasting on the ripples of another trend, led by the likes of Tracy Chapman. Dlugacz says she's "thrilled" by Chapman's success, "but I still don't see that much difference between 1973 and now. I just figure I'm going to chug along and do what I do. There are still some extraordinary women out there who should have deals, or whose careers never took off."

Dlugacz's aims are admirable, but the truth is, most of Olivia's artists' careers aren't taking off either. No doubt there are still women who can commune in comfort only at a Tret Fure or Deidre McCalla concert. But for a younger generation of music fans, Olivia must seem like an anachronism. As talented as she is, would Tracy Chapman be where she is today if she had signed with Olivia two years ago? The company will have to do more than add crystals to its mail-order catalog in order to jump comfortably into the 1990s.

COLEMAN from page 20

Ready or not, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) will present a night of M-Base mindboggle in December. "I'm excited because it's the first time in a while all the M-Base people will be together," Osby beams. "Some of our jazz elders tried to organize in the '70s and it didn't work. but maybe recognition will help our psych. I'm happy it's being acknowledged."

However, Coleman, who must sleep with one eye open, points out that "BAM is only interested because a few of us made a name for ourselves. If we were doing the exact same thing and everybody was unknown, they wouldn't care."

"We're trying to reel all these ideas in," Coleman admits later. "You just don't do a couple interviews, name some theories and think you've got it wrapped up. The continuation, the development, that's the thing. If M-Base follows through on what we've got going . . . but people are calling us virtuosos and we've got to look out. Osby, Coleman, David Murray, anybody who gets labeled that way might start believing that shit, and when we do that's when the music suffers.

"It's going to be interesting when everybody starts getting record contracts and money. There'll be jacuzzis in their crib and I'm worried what will happen to the music. I hope I never say, 'Well, we've done it, let's close the book.' When I do that, it *will* be over.

FISHBONE from page 16

But he pulls up short, choosing his words carefully and seeming wary of self-congratulation. "I think we say things that need to be said, but that's about it. We ain't saying nothing new. What can you say? Millions of songs have already been written. You just bring things back to the surface to be reviewed one more time. You can't feel all self-righteous, like this is gonna change the tide. The world has to be ready to save itself. All we can do is document the revolution."

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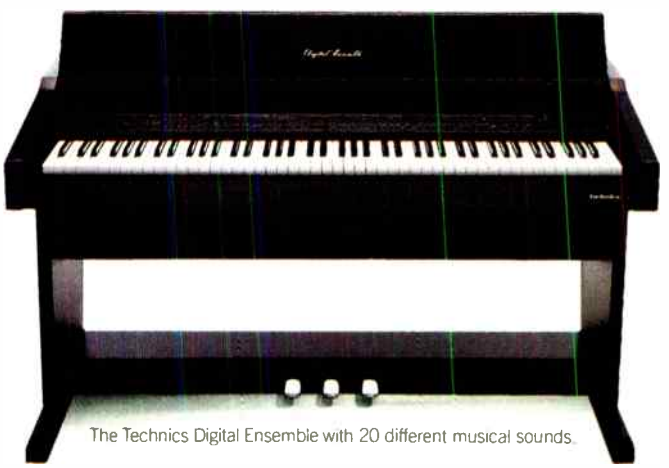

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"HE'S THE KIND OF GUY WHO KNOWS WHEN SOMETHING SOUNDS ABSURD, IT'S BEAUTIFUL."

HAL WILLNER, UNRIVALED KING OF THE "TRIBUTE" ALBUM, TURNS TO DISNEY.

Down in the basement of Electric Lady studios, there is thunder, followed by rain and the soft chirping of birds. The sounds of nature smoothly dovetail into a mating of cello and woodwind, the pluck of a harp and a perfectly enunciated vocal. "Drip, drip, drop, little April Shower, beating a tune as you fall all around . . ."

Producer Hal Willner and engineer Joe Ferla sit behind the studio's mixing console, Willner with his eyes closed and head swaying slightly as he concentrates on the music. About halfway through he takes off his headphones and gives them to a visitor. "It's what I've been hearing for months," he says. "There's so much stuff every time I hear it."

It is a complex arrangement, also featuring marimba, banjo, ocarina, drums and percussion to complement the voices of the Roche sisters, R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe and 10,000 Maniacs singer Natalie Merchant, here sounding a lot like Julie Andrews. It's a safe guess that only Hal Willner would have brought together such a diverse collection of talent to perform a nursery-rhyme song from the movie *Bambi*. Or would now be

BY MARK ROWLAND

JOSH CHEUSE

sweating over it. "Okay," he says, "let's hear it again."

"Drip, drip, drop, little April Shower, what can compare to your beautiful sound? . . ."

"It's a delicate arrangement," Joe Ferla observes as the song repeats its cycle. "You want it to sound not delicate." Willner nods and shuffles off for coffee. With his beard, ambling gait, and T-shirt of the day—Boris Badenov—he brings less to mind the vision of a contemporary record producer than that of an unmade bed. It's a deceptively casual demeanor. "We'll only be a few more moments," he says upon his return; two hours later, he's zeroed in on more problems than he's fixed. With each listen, "Little April Shower" is turning into a paean to Chinese water torture, and Willner's implacable manner into a kind of zen. "Okay," he says, "let's hear it again."

"Drip, drop, drip, drop . . ."

Hal Willner is at once the most innovative of modern producers and a throwback to a different era, an auteur whose style is, as he puts it, "in my taste, rather than my sound."

"What a producer is today, I'm really not," he admits. "I'm sort of in the middle between 'hands-on' involvement and the supervising that John Hammond or Tom Wilson used to do. Those guys are still my favorite producers—you see their influence 'between' the records, their mix of musicians, who they work with. You can always fix the music. You can't always fix the artist."

Willner should know, as the four "tribute" albums upon which his reputation largely rests—interpretations of music by Nino Rota, Thelonious Monk, Kurt Weill and most recently the movies of Walt Disney—combine strange gaggles of popular musicians, from Sinéad O'Connor to Betty Carter, James Taylor to Los Lobos, the Replacements to Sun Ra. The Disney album, *Stay Awake*, features everyone just mentioned, plus

Babes in Toyland: Ringo Starr, Herb Alpert, Harry Nilsson, arranger Lenny Niehaus and Willner.

Tom Waits, NRBQ, Harry Nilsson, Ken Nordine, Ringo Starr, Aaron Neville, Bonnie Raitt, Was(Not Was), Buster Poindexter, Bill Frisell, Syd Straw . . . you get the picture. This decidedly idiosyncratic social register—a kind of Bizarro World parallel to the mainstream bizzers who comprised "We Are the World"—is a good indication of where Willner is coming from. All striking individualists, what the performers share most is Willner's affinity for the sound of surprise.

"Hal is the kind of guy," notes NRBQ's Terry Adams, part of Willner's floating company of "regulars," "who knows that, when something is absurd, it is beautiful."

Willner's sensibility can be discerned in touches as subtle as the tongue-clucks that accent the chorus of the Replacements singing "Cruella de Ville," as broad as the operatic sweep of, well, "Little April Shower." But his forte is clearly casting; once he's enticed them into the studio, Willner encourages artists to discover their own ideas by creating provocative contexts—putting Bonnie Raitt together with Was(Not Was), for example—rather than manipulate recording technology to contrive a particular sound.

"He's very careful about putting the right people together and allowing them to react off each other," says Tom Waits. "It's like he's building a fire; then he roasts the projects on it. People who would normally never be united, are united; that's part of Hal's talent.

"He doesn't damage the music in handling it, which is a credit to him: A lot of producers come in and start to decoupage. But he has ideas for where it should go," Waits adds approvingly. "The things he enjoys are usually very dark and unspeakable."

Such qualities served Willner well on *Stay Awake*, for the legendary Disney movies that album draws from aren't simply innocent confections. Films like *Pinocchio* and *Sleeping Beauty* remain memorable precisely because they do merge fantasy with nightmare, surrealistic humor with gentle mirth. That mix of light and dark gives *Stay Awake* its own thematic unity, though to hear Willner tell it, the result was far from planned.

"I think I was in the mood for a fun project," Willner says. "After Monk and Weill I thought it would be easier to deal with music that's not so 'religious.' I was wrong.

"At the beginning I only had a few ideas in my head—Ringo singing 'When You Wish Upon a Star,' Harry Nilsson doing something, Van Dyke Parks helping me out. I figured I'd put the first sessions together and we'd go from there. And then suddenly, researching the material, I got scared. Because a lot of songs had only one verse, and I'm looking through these books and seeing all these Mouseketeers songs, 'Spin and Marty,' 'Son of Flubber' . . . so that, basically, putting this together turned into the weirdest nightmare of all. But it also made the record work creatively. Because my actual conception was such a question mark, it became a situation of 'let's try this approach until I find my way.'"

Willner recalls some artists being scared off by the songs after voicing initial enthusiasm, while others turned him down flat: "Metallica's manager said, 'This isn't going to do anything for their careers!'" But most of those approached eventually found their way, in the process validating Willner's faith in the power of artistic accident.

Terry Adams, for instance, spent months looking over Disney scores without inspiration. "One day I was at my piano, which is on the second floor of our house. We'd hired this old guy to paint the house, and all of a sudden I see him on this ladder, looking in the window. It was kind of strange. And he was whistling 'Whistle While You Work.' I immediately called Hal," Adams laughs, "and told him, 'I found the song.' Then our session got put off for a while and by the time Hal was ready to record I'd forgotten our arrangement. I had to 're-remember' it, but I think it came out better that way."

Like Willner, Syd Straw subscribes to the view that "Casting is everything." She chose to sing the relatively obscure "Blue Shadows on the Trail"—"I wanted to make people jump on the nearest horse"—and from her own stock of previous collaborators picked guitarist and mandolinist John Jorgenson, steel guitarist Jaydee Maness and Tommy Morgan on harmonica to establish the proper dude ranch feel. She credits Willner with "giving me the reins and letting me run amok. But then, I think he only hires people that he trusts." The recording session was enhanced, Straw adds, when Harry Nilsson dropped by to "enliven" the session. "He was scary but thrilling," she observes. "Kind of like the record."

Betty Carter met Willner through Joe Ferla, who is also her engineer. She was one of the last performers to join the

project, so finding a good song that hadn't already been taken was a problem. She chose "I'm Wishing" in part because "there wasn't much to it; I could make it my own."

Carter recorded with a quintet, arranging the material to suit her distinctive style. She is known for her refusal to make musical compromises, to the extent of going years without recording and forming her own label, Bet-Car (her most recent work, *Look What I Got*, is being distributed by PolyGram). As a consequence, the finest jazz singer of the past 35 years remains comparatively unknown to mainstream audiences. All of which made her association with Willner a fortuitous one: "Hal said, 'Just sing whatever you want,'" Carter reveals, "which was a real pleasure. He was willing to take chances with someone he didn't even know. And because this record has more commercial people on it," Carter points out, "that song will probably have more impact on my career and get more play world-wide than PolyGram can do for my jazz label. It's crossover," she cracks, "without crossing over."

Tom Waits traces his mordant version of "Heigh Ho (The Dwarves Marching Song)" to a trip to Disneyland with his kids. "It was a living hell. They hit you up for 30 bucks to go in there and the whole thing is like a Ralph Steadman drawing. I spent an hour trying to get out of there, and we were jammed in like lemmings. I think my version of 'Heigh-Ho' came from that.

"Part of exploring these songs now," Waits observes, "it's like, what did they represent to you when you were young, and how did it change? For me, that [original] 'Heigh-Ho' with the whistling and all. . . the dwarves are going to work in the mines, they don't know who they're working for, it doesn't matter, they just love working. . . which is like the people who work at Disneyland. 'We don't get much, we wear these little uniforms, but that's okay, we like to work.'

Suzanne Vega sang Willner's little-girl-lost version of "Stay Awake," from *Mary Poppins*.

"This is more of what it really is like, with the jackhammers and piledrivers and machinery. So it seems to me like we got something that could almost be a new ride at the park," Waits muses. "The 'Heigh-Ho' ride: They put you in there and chain you to a machine you don't understand and make you work for eight hours straight. And at the end you're paid absolutely nothing. That's the ride."

No matter which artist he was working with, Willner says he looked for "something in the session that would make it kind of different. Like James Taylor asking if he could work with Branford Marsalis—but he'd swallow John Scofield. For him, that was different. It brought out a changed environment, a certain sparkle. Of course, having Betty Carter or Sun Ra do a song from a Disney film is a stretch anyway," he observes happily. "What am I gonna do after that—tell Betty Carter how to sing?

"So that's my basic production philosophy: The worst thing you can do is be boring. I'd rather be bad. I love taking chances, and if you do that, you usually won't fail."

Hal Willner's New York apartment is a mess, but it's one with a point of view. Highlights include carved statuettes of the 3 Stooges, a Ralph Steadman cartoon of Disney characters molesting each other, a movie poster from Fellini's *The Clowns* and a photograph of Gomer Pyle coincidentally inscribed "to Hal"—a gift from a friend of Willner's who found it in a second-hand store. The only record on the wall is Leon Redbone's *Shine On Harvest Moon*, which Willner engineered for producer Joel Dorn.

It was Dorn, one of the most successful pop producers of the '70s, who gave Willner his key break. Growing up around

"I've tried to get a more outrageous group of artists on each of my records, so as not to repeat a formula."

Philadelphia, Willner had been a big fan of Dylan and the Beatles during the '60s, the next decade shifting to jazz—particularly the Miles Davis *On the Corner* band. "Then jazz got boring and it became classical music," Willner says. "Every few years it was something else. When I was 15 one of my favorite tunes was Billie Holiday singing 'Gloomy Sunday,' which tells you what kind of a kid I was.

"I knew I wanted to be a producer early on. I can read music, can play a little piano and guitar, but I'm definitely more comfortable on the other side of the glass. I'd never let myself get skilled in anything—when I wasn't playing piano like Horowitz in three weeks I said, 'Screw this.' So I'm not a frustrated musician, which probably helps. Not that this has been easy. But having the luck of occasionally being in the right place at the right time has been a big part of it."

Moving to New York in the mid-'70s, Willner spent time hanging out in the city's fertile jazz loft scene. He'd admired Dorn's work from a distance: "I knew him from those great records of Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Yusef Lateef; he was the first to take these jazz artists and make *Sgt. Pepper* albums with them." At the time he met Dorn and began his "apprenticeship," Dorn was working on three projects: Roland Kirk's *Three Sided Dream*, and albums by Don MacLean and Peter Allen. "Joel would use techniques like putting Fathead Newman on a Peter Allen record, or Yusef Lateef with MacLean. I was 18 at the time, an impressionable age. . . ."

In a few years Willner decided he was ready to work on his

MICHAEL JACOBS

own, but by then "disco was very big—not a great time for someone like me to be in the record business. Everyone wants to forget that period, but like, one major label had a rule that every album had to have a disco track on it. I realized I'd have to make my own records."

Willner took to driving a cab by day, putting together sessions with jazz musicians he liked at night, and developing ideas that would eventually congeal into *Amarcord Nino Rota*, a tribute to the composer who scored many of Fellini's classic films. Around this time fortune intervened in the form of a job with "Saturday Night Live." As music coordinator, Willner became the liaison between the show and the guest acts, and scored soundtracks for the show's comic sketches. The job provided not only visibility, but money—"otherwise," he admits, "I probably would have kept driving a cab. It scares me to think how many people there are with great ideas, things we'll never hear about because they didn't have the freedom not to worry about making money."

Through "Saturday Night Live," Willner met Chris Stein and Debbie Harry. He'd almost finished the Nino Rota project, but when he discovered both were fans, asked them to be on the record. "It was the first thought I ever had about approaching a pop artist. It wasn't an attempt to get a bigger audience; I just thought they were great." The appearance of Blondie's lead singer on an album that also featured Carla Bley, Jaki Byard and the heretofore unknown guitarist Bill Frisell at least guaranteed that Willner would get noticed. The producer was in business—or so he thought.

"I was hoping I'd get projects thrown at me. Instead people would ask, 'Well, what ideas do you have?' And I had no ideas," he laughs. "Then Monk died, and there was this big concert at Carnegie Hall, part of the Wein festival. I went, and for the first time in my life Monk's music bored me, which it never had. I mean, Oscar Peterson was there—explain that. Herbie Hancock was there. And I thought, where's NRBQ? They need to be here more than Oscar Peterson, who was not very kind to Monk in some of his statements. Where's Donald Fagen? I realized then that Monk is not a great 'jazz' artist, he's a great musician. And that this wasn't a tribute, it was a burial."

"After Monk and Weill I thought it would be easier to deal with music that's not so religious. I was wrong."

With the help of Monk aficionado Terry Adams, Willner put together a tape that included performances by NRBQ, Fagen, jazz guitarist Steve Khan and an orchestral arrangement and vocal of "'Round Midnight" by Joe Jackson. A&M liked it and "by the end of the record—presto—I had a series. But that was never my intention," Willner protests. "Had I been 'smarter' on a commercial level, I would have imitated the Rota album 15 times and made a Willner Hill label. I've tried to get a more outrageous group of artists on each one, so as not to repeat a formula."

Willner's approach doesn't please everyone. The Monk album, *That's the Way I Feel Now*, was either taken to task or ignored by mainstream jazzcrits to whom "pop" interpretations were sacrilege. His Kurt Weill collection, *Lost in the Stars*, was unfavorably critiqued in the Weill newsletter. Disney, which monitored *Stay Awake* from its inception, ultimately decided not to sanction the album within its corporate umbrella.

ZIP-A-DEE-DO-DADS

Veteran engineer **Joe Ferla** mixed *Stay Awake* and recorded many of its tracks; he also engineered Marianne Faithfull's *Strange Weather* and counts among his professional associations 15 years with Betty Carter. For recording, Ferla prefers Neve boards for their "warmth of sound. They have lots of transformers, which is technically 'wrong', but it works for me. Equipment colors your sound, and I like old tubes, Studer tape recorders."

Conversely, Ferla enjoys mixing on the SSL computer console. "They're easy to use, and it complements the warmth of the Neve. Obviously you want to sound clear, so if you put a warm, rich sound through this 'cold and sterile' soundboard, you can keep the warmth and not use so much EQ."

For his ears, Ferla has his own set of KEF 101 speakers (101s are no longer on the market, but 102s and 103s are part of the same series). "I'm not fond of the NS10 Yamahas," he says of the more popular studio monitors. "It doesn't sound good to me and it hurts my ears after a number of hours. Beyond that, they don't have an accurate low end; it's not even close. That's true of any small monitor, below 150 Hz you don't know what you have. But the KEFs go down to 90 very accurately, and below that I use the large studio monitors." For microphones Ferla again prefers "generally old tubes, Neumanns, Telefunkens, AKGs . . . for color more than anything. You don't use them for a tom or bass drum, obviously, but they're great for vocals and as overheads for orchestral miking. I'll use them to pinpoint certain instruments, cellos, violas, woodwinds, even drums."

Willner does make records with individual artists, notably last year's *Strange Weather* by Marianne Faithfull. But he admits that "I don't like to do that too much. 'Cause you have to get inside them, and it's an emotional roller coaster. To make a real representation of where the artist is at the time—the right material, musicians, the best performance—it takes a certain amount of attention. I can't imagine going from one artist to the next as some producers do."

To choose songs for *Strange Weather*, Willner traveled to Faithfull's house in Boston, where he'd play her dozens of records, silently crossing his fingers when he'd get to one he really wanted her to sing. Along with standards like "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" and "Yesterdays," they settled on tunes by Dylan, Little Willie John and a remake of Faithfull's first hit, "As Tears Go By." Tom Waits wrote a song for Faithfull that became the LP's title track, while Doc Pomus and Dr. John collaborated on another tune. The result, Willner feels, is "a very beautiful small album. I wanted an album of first takes."

With the success of *Strange Weather*, Willner was amused to find himself "getting calls about women over 40 in search of material. The industry has a habit of being like that." It's hard to imagine a producer less likely to let himself be pigeonholed. These days he's simultaneously working on another "tribute" album, devoted to the music of Charles Mingus, and a mixed bag of pop songs from Dylan to Jacques Brel, performed by singer Gavin Friday, formerly of the Virgin Prunes. After that Willner would like to take his crack at Duke Ellington, "or maybe an album of songs from one year, you know, like '1961.' What do you think?"

About the only thing Willner's lacking at this point is any semblance of a personal life—but then, he's never really had one. "I don't know why," he concedes, "but sitting in recording studios night after night has just appealed to me. I would like more of a personal life," he later amends. "But if for some reason I couldn't do any more records after tomorrow, at least we've done some stuff that's really nice. No one can say we just followed trends, we didn't take a chance." M

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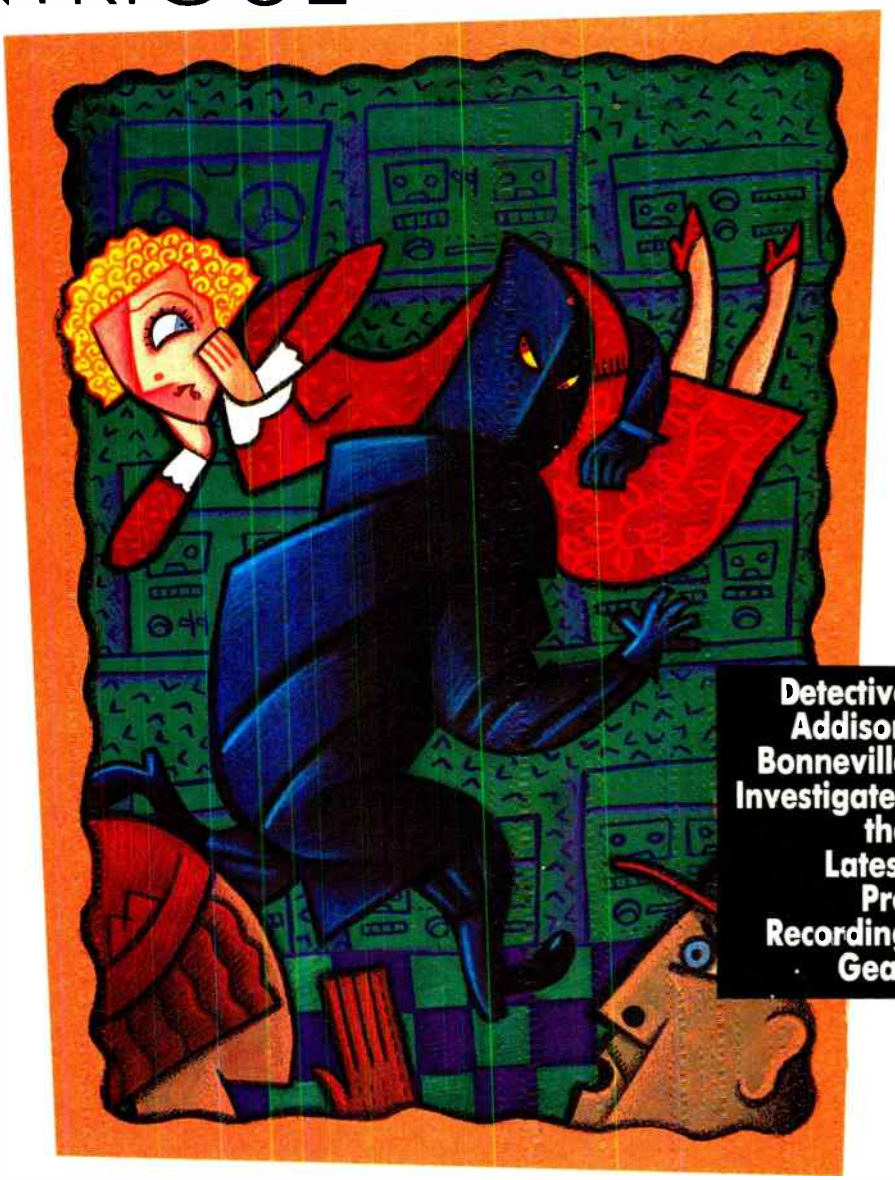
DIGITAL INTRIGUE AT AES

by Alan di Perna



Detective Addison Bonneville Investigates the Latest Pro Recording Gear

Oh come on, Addie. It'll be *fun.*"

Fun. Hmmmph. Who else but Gwendolyn Ravenscroft Waveform would call the 85th Convention of the Audio Engineering Society *fun*? But then that's the Waveforms for you. The Techno Elite. Their forebears came over with Marconi, don't you know; and they're not about to let you forget it. But there was no way you were going to catch *me*—Addison Bonneville: society sleuth—at some insufferable egghead confab.

"Oh, Addison, *please*. Everyone knows your reputation as a world-famous, high-tech connoisseur. I simply must have you as my escort."

In the end, Gwendy managed to talk me into it . . . as usual. Okay, okay, so I've got a soft spot for young girls with terminally wealthy parents.

"Now don't forget, Addie, meet me at noon at the **Sony** booth. I've simply *got* to see that peachy new PCM-3348 48-track digital machine!"

Leave it to Gwendolyn to zero in on a splashy, Rolls-Royce number like the Sony 3348. But there's no denying that it was *the* big news at AES: 48 digital tracks, and full compatibility with Sony's 24-track digital machines, which can play and record on the first 24 tracks of a 3348 master. The 3348's got scads of slick functions, like the ability to copy tracks digitally right from the transport controls (no patching). And you can put 20 seconds of digital audio from any track into a separate buffer, where it can be triggered via external time code or gate signals. Thoroughly sporty. I was seriously considering mortgaging my Westchester hunting lodge in order to meet the $240,000 price tag when a pitiful cry reached my ears.

"Oh Addie help me! Addison . . . Heellllp!"

I whirled around just in time to see poor Gwendolyn being carried off by a strapping ruffian in a black, hooded robe. I set off in hot pursuit, but the blackguard in novelty bed linen had too much of a head start. Gwendolyn kidnapped! I was shocked. Appalled. Her daddy would *kill* me. It was some moments before I discovered the note that had been thrust into the side pocket of my monogrammed blue blazer.

Dear Mr. Smartyass Bonneville,

Your spoiled little girlfriend is now prisoner of T.A.B.—THE ANALOG BACKLASH! She's being held in a booth right here at AES, together with enough explosives to level the entire L.A. Convention Center. If you want to see her—or the entire Audio Industry—alive again, do nothing till you hear from us. DEATH TO DIGITAL! ALL POWER TO T.A.B.!!!!!!

Obviously the work of sick minds. But whose? Anti-Japanese extremists? Disgruntled studio owners tired of expensive digital upgrades? One thing was certain: If these fellows had a grudge against digital, there was plenty to get them mad at this year's AES. Great new digital multi-tracks, R-DATs, digital signal processors, hard disk systems, workstations . . . digital galore, from the bargain basement right up to the pinnacles of high-end audio.

But where to start searching for poor Gwendolyn? (Of course I was going to

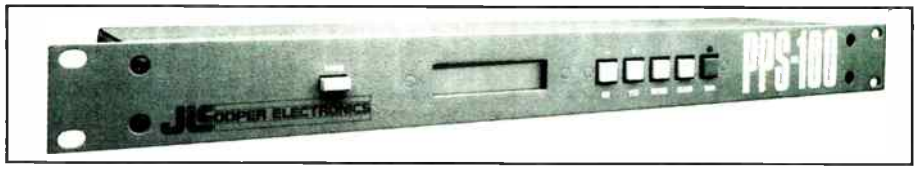
DAVID COWLES

ignore T.A.B.'s puling threats and get right on their trail.) Since they grabbed Gwendolyn at the Sony booth, I reasoned, maybe the whole thing had to do with the old rivalry between Sony's DASH (Digital Audio Stationary Head) format for digital multi-track and Mitsubishi's PD (Pro Digital) format. At last year's AES, Otari had introduced a PD machine of their own, the DTR-900. And at this show, **Tascam** was making its entry into the pro market with a new, DASH 24-track, the DA-800-24.

"Look sharp boys, it's Addison Bonneville!" Tascam's product specialist admonished his subalterns like a nervous headwaiter as I approached. "Mr. Bonneville, good to see you. Come to savor some of our audio delicacies?" I explained the more urgent business I had in hand. No one there had seen any sign of Gwendy, but the DA-800-24 looked great, as did Tascam's D-50 R-DAT machine and new ATR-80 24- and 32-track analog recorders.

As I searched exhibit after exhibit, I noticed that most of the major multi-track manufacturers were showing new, improved versions of their flagship digital machines. Smoother A-to-D conversion and lower power consumption: These are the calling cards of the **Mitsubishi** X-880 (a fully compatible update of their X-850) and Sony PCM-3324A (an updated 3324 digital 24-track). **Otari** announced two new options for their second-generation digital machine, the DTR-900B. One is a plug-in synchronizer module, the EC-104; and the other a DASH/PD converter, the CB-503, which lets the DTR-900 handle transfers to and from any DASH machine.

But in my peregrinations, I realized just how off-base these Analog Backlash terrorists really were. Everywhere I looked I saw new analog machines, proof that the medium's alive and well—especially for home recordists and others without major-studio budgets. Right there at Otari, for example, there was the MX-50 quarter-inch two-track (quite affordable at $2,500). **Studer-Revox** had their new C-270 Series—a quarter-inch two-track, plus four- and eight-track models. **Fostex** introduced a new four-track cassette mixer/recorder, the X26, and a new eight-track machine, the R8, which can sync to MIDI time code. It's ultra-compact and has detachable transport controls. Gwendolyn would no doubt have called it "cute"; a thought which almost made me glad she *had* disappeared.



Poor People get *real* SMPTE: J.L. Cooper PPS-100.

But really, it was time to get cracking. Five hundred booths to investigate and I'd barely scratched the surface! At

Publison's hard-disk option

Fostex, I picked up the scent of a fresh digital controversy that might lead me to T.A.B. It presented itself in the shape of the company's new D-20—the only DAT machine on the market that boasts a separate SMPTE/EBU time-code track. What's so controversial about that? Well, right there at AES, three major Japanese electronics forces—NHK, Sony and Matsushita (Panasonic)—were submitting a proposal for STC (Subcode Time Code), a universal format for implementing SMPTE/EBU on R-DAT. And their format is—you guessed it—incompatible with the Fostex system. "Oh bravo," I chortled. "Now that everyone's starting to take pot shots at R-DAT's quality and reliability, we get a nice format war to jolly up the proceedings."

I carefully scanned the audience as the NHK/Sony/Matsushita paper was read. Not a black robe in sight. My investigation was floundering. It was then that I noticed the shoe lying right outside the entrance of **Yamaha**'s exhibit room. A sensible but elegant little pump from Neiman Marcus. "Gwendolyn's!" Her understated good taste stood out a mile in the spike-heeled world of rock footwear. I hurried inside.

"No sir, we haven't seen the young lady." The man from Yamaha was attentive, deferential. "But please, step this way. Have a look at our new SPX1000 Multi-Effects Processor. We think it will meet even Addison Bonneville's world-renowned high standards." He had a point. The new Yamaha effects box boasts 16-bit/44.1 kHz audio, and 40 preset effects ranging from the usual reverbs and delays to compression/expansion and combination platters (such as chorus + reverb). Each is fully editable, via onboard facilities or MIDI control change commands, and the results can be stored in any of 59 user memory locations. At $1795, it nicely fills the gap between the SPX90II and the REV5.

Elsewhere, everyone seemed to be touting affordable, single-rack-space units with four effects processors inside. It's a development which definitely threatens to tip the balance of musical power in favor of poor, downtrodden home recordists; so maybe *this* was what had aroused the wrath of T.A.B. I started my investigations with **Digitech**'s new DSP-128 Plus, essentially an outgrowth of their DSP-128 multi-effects device. The Plus gives you four separate effects processors that can be run simultaneously, each with a different program drawn from the usual guest list of reverbs, delays, choruses, etc. With 16-bit resolution, 128 user memory slots, every programming parameter accessible via MIDI controllers, it offers quite a bit for just $549.

At $999, **Peavey**'s Multifex is a little more pricey. But it has the advantage of separate stereo inputs and outputs for each of its four effects processors, so that each can be applied to a separate instrument or tape track. Or, you can of course use all four in tandem. Each processor is a full-blown Peavey UltraVerb on a shrunk-down card. The Multifex gives you 128 user program memories. These can be changed via MIDI, and each processor can be assigned a separate MIDI channel. But,

Multi-patchable, four-processor Alesis Quadraverb.

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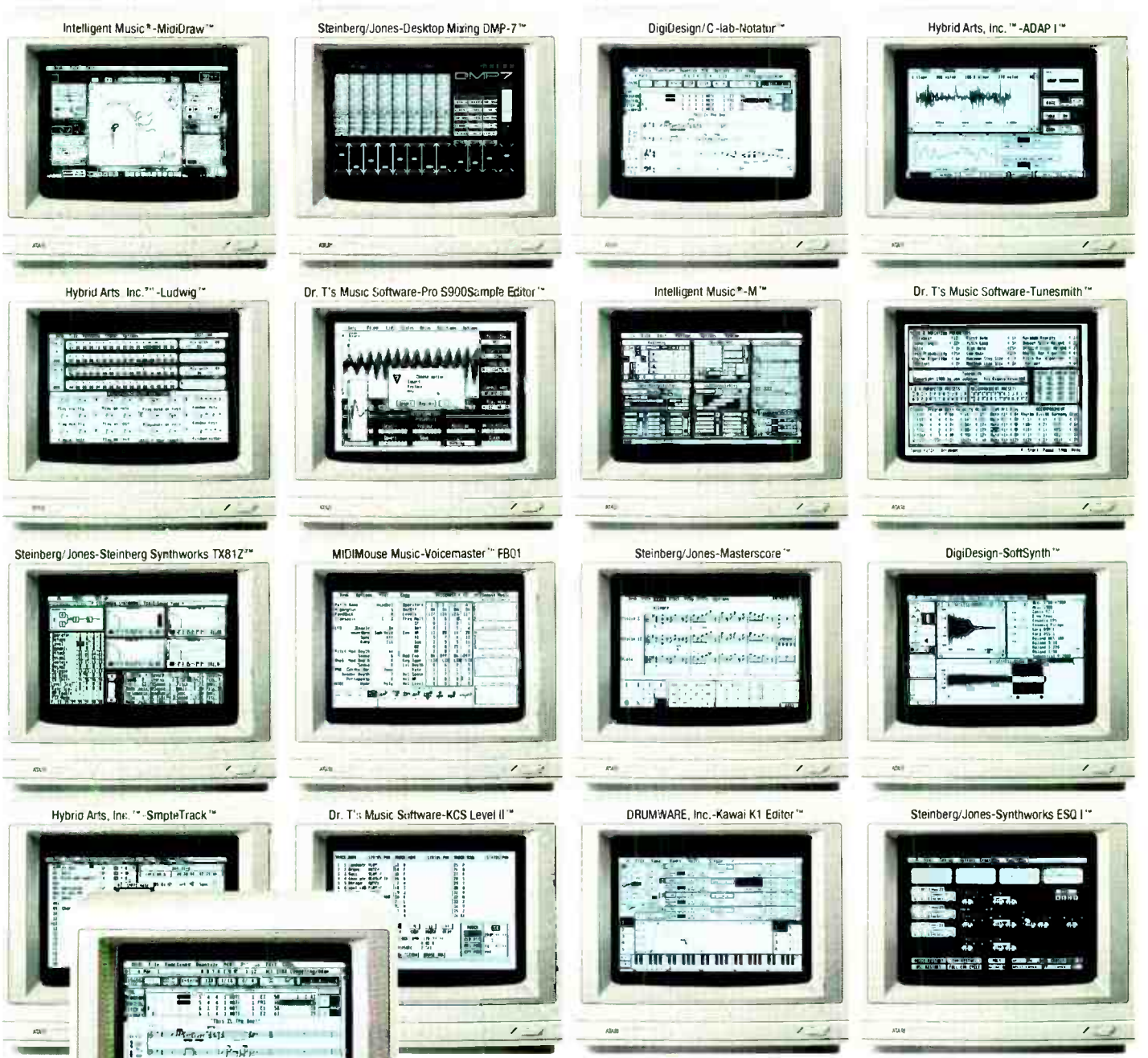

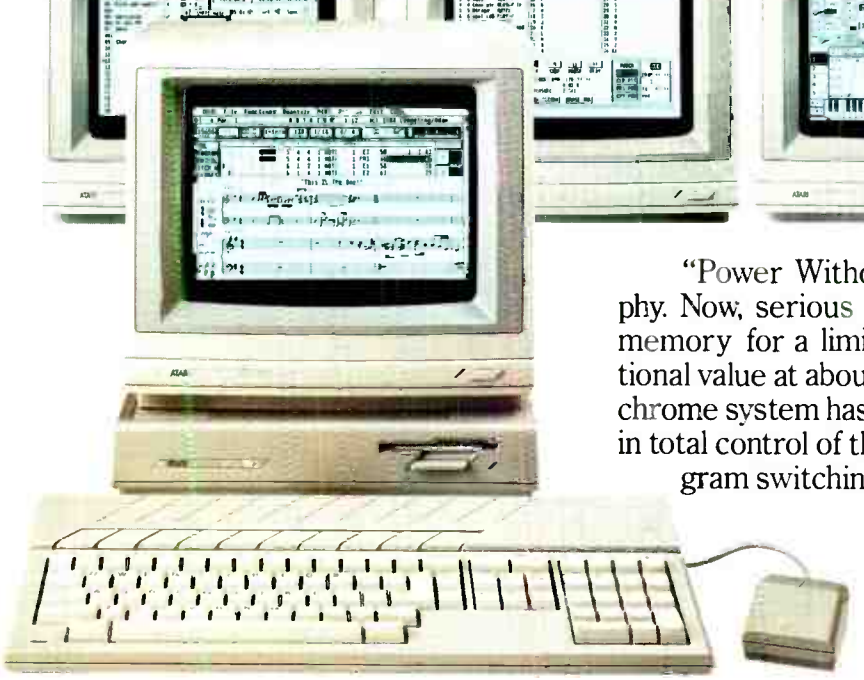

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MIDI COMPUTER

alas, the actual effects parameters cannot be addressed via MIDI. The same product is being released as part of Peavey's AMR line as the QFX 4x4.

Another booth, another four-processor marvel: the **Alesis** Quadraverb, which was being demonstrated in a 98-percent-operational prototype. One great strength of this unit is its matrix-style routing. On other four-in-one multi-effects boxes, the individual effects processors are hard-wired in series. But the Quadraverb's four processors—EQ, pitch shift effects, delay and reverb—can be patched together in every imaginable combination. Each processor can also be used in a stand-alone configuration, in which case, it picks up extra power—longer delay times, more EQ bands, etc. With its top-hole audio quality (16-bit in and out, 24-bit internal processing) and full MIDI implementation, the Quadraverb's a steal at $499.

So there I was: fully enlightened when it came to affordable effects processors, but completely in the dark as to Gwendolyn's whereabouts. Dejected, I repaired to the concession bar for a quick bracer. "Pimm's and Perrier, my good man!" Next to me, two steer-fed PA dealers from Inbred, Texas, were engaged in a little male bonding.

"Got some mighty fine fillies here, eh Luke."

"You shore said it, Hank. And high off the hog, too. Why I saw one wearing enough diamonds to finance a whole goldarn vice-presidential campaign. Kinda stuck-up lookin' though. . . ."

GWENDY!!!!!!!! Another clue at last.

"Whoa there, buddy!" Hank drawled in response to my fevered inquiries. "Looked to me like she had her a beau already—big feller in a black sheet. You should've seen the way he was draggin' that gal into the **Roland** exhibit."

But at Roland, disappointment awaited once again. No, not the gear. That was great. Especially the new R-8 Human Rhythm Composer. It packs 127 16-bit/44.1 kHz percussion samples. Each of these can be edited—with adjustable decay, widely variable tuning, reverse playback, etc.—and the results stored in user memory. The "Human" part of the R-8's name refers to its extensive "feel" facilities. There are artificial intelligence algorithms for pushing the beat or laying back on any instrument in a pattern; and facilities for crossfading between different variations on the same drum sound. All this plus 2700 notes of onboard memory for $999.

Also on hand was Roland's new CD-5 CD ROM player, which provides mass soundfile storage for the Roland S-550 sampler. And I mustn't forget the recently-introduced R-880 digital multi-effects unit and E-660 EQ. Everything but Gwendolyn! The product specialist looked amused when I asked if he'd seen a smartly dressed young debutante with a goon in a Halloween costume. "Oh, you get all kinds of kooks at these conventions. But come to think of it, I did see a couple like that cut through here on their way to the **Akai** booth."

There, I saw the S1000, Akai's $5,999 entry into the fashionable world of 16-bit/44.1 kHz sampling. Mounted right beneath it was the new Akai S950, an updated version of the ever-popular S900 sampler. The 950 is still just 12-bit—as was the 900—but the maximum sample rate has gone up to 44.1 kHz and there are a number of new, improved features like "time stretch," which will let you expand or compress samples without affecting pitch. Despite these improvements though, the 950 will sell for the same as the old machine: $2499.

"Addison Bonneville . . . well this *is* an honor," said the Akai demonstrator. "Let me show you the new MX76 piano-action MIDI controller—just the thing for a techno *bon vivant* such as yourself. And then there's this new, little analog

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synth we have, the VX600." From there we moved on to the ME35T Audio MIDI Trigger, a drum expander which gives you 16 on-board percussion samples (plus an additional 32 via plug-in cards).

But suddenly the man from Akai drew his breath in sharply. Thin trails of blood appeared at the corners of his mouth as he slumped to the floor. His lips worked desperately as I bent over him to catch his dying words. "It's eight-voice . . . goes for $799." Embedded just below his third vertebra was a large, ornamental dagger. A note was attached to it.

"We warned you, Bonneville. No snooping! – T.A.B."

Time was running out. The note proved the dagger wasn't meant for me. Dead men can't read. Obviously T.A.B. wanted me alive. But why? My head reverberating with questions, I headed for **New England Digital** to investigate their new Synclavier 3600, a keyboardless version of the original Synclavier system. "Stripped down," yes; but you still get quite a bit of power, including 16-bit/100 kHz sampling, 32 voices, a 200-track sequencer, numerous interface options for mass data storage, plus plenty of MIDI and SMPTE capabilities. NED also introduced a new, ultra-powerful model, the Synclavier 9600.

By now, I'd deduced that T.A.B. hadn't left Gwendy and the dynamite with any of the major MIDI manufacturers. Too obvious. But there were still plenty more leads to follow up. Like the FDSS Studio additive synthesizer from a Canadian company called **Lyre**. Not inexpensive at around $6,000, the system's basic module is an eight-voice unit which lets you do additive synthesis using 128 harmonics. Additional eight-voice/128-harmonic units can be added, up to a total of 64 voices/1024 harmonics. The system can be used with the company's FDSS Studio software programs for the Mac and PC computers. Beyond this, there's a separate program, FD Soft, that brings additive capabilities to samplers like the Mirage, Emulator, S-50 and others.

The trail next led to MIDI accessories. I'd heard things can get pretty rough out there on the MIDI periphery and I was hoping Gwendy hadn't fallen into anything really nasty. My first stop was the **J.L. Cooper** booth where I had a peek at the new PPS-100, a SMPTE-to-MIDI Sync converter. In addition to its conversion functions, it'll also output all formats of SMPTE, MTC and most any other sync code you can think of. It can also generate MIDI commands—note events, program changes—at any time code address you specify. All for $595.

360 Systems' new Audio Matrix 16 looked pretty handy, too. It's a MIDI-controlled, 16-in/16-out audio patchbay. Inputs are routed to outputs via a matrix-style, source-and-destination setup. Then the whole thing gets saved as a preset selectable via MIDI program changes. The box will do MIDI mapping and output program change commands.

It was all quite fascinating. But *still* no Gwendolyn! As I was puzzling over the particulars of the case, I suddenly felt a looming presence behind me. A powerful hand pushed me into an unused room marked "Private." I was face-to-face with The Analog Backlash.

"Anyone for tennis?" I ventured.

"Don't trifle with desperate men, Bonneville." The hooded figure addressing me was obviously the ringleader. "We've had it! We've watched this digital menace spread like a plague: tape machines, synthesizers, samplers, reverbs, R-DATs. . . . Now, we happen to know that the next big digital coup is going to be direct-to-hard-disk, two-track mastering. We've seen it starting already; and here at AES, there's a regular epidemic of new systems. Not only will they let you record hours of stereo digital audio, they'll also let you

CONTINUED ON PAGE 97

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FULL METAL JUSTICE

Metallica Rises Above the Crowd

As Lars Ulrich, Metallica's drummer, starts for the door of the Dutch cafe where his band's celebrating the end of its European tour, a dark-haired young woman throws her arms around him and begins sobbing full-throttle.

"It's okay. It's okay," Ulrich says softly as he returns her hug. "What's wrong?" She'll miss him, she says, though they've met just moments before, and lapses into another paroxysm. Ulrich's eyes widen and he freezes for a second, then he spends 15 minutes talking her out of her tears.

As he leaves the bar, he stops for a moment to look back at the remaining fans. With genuine confusion, he quietly asks, "Why do people break down on me like that? It's only a band. It's only Metallica."

Well, Lars, it's not that simple anymore. Granted, some things are exactly as they were when Ulrich and James Hetfield drafted guitarist Dave Mustaine and bassist Ron McGovney in 1981 and started shaking the walls of their parents' basements. Mustaine and McGovney are long gone, and so, tragically, is Mc-

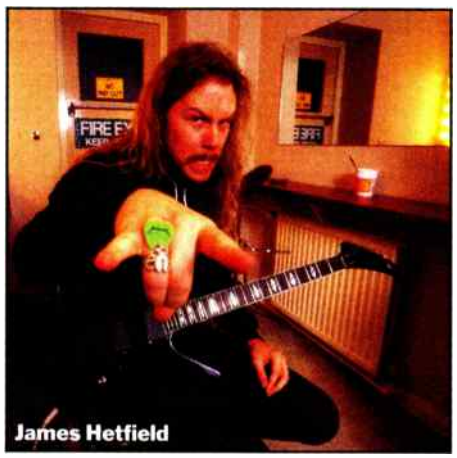
by Ted Drozdowski

CENTRE
ANGEL
THE MISFITS
FIEND CLUB

Govney's replacement, the late Cliff Burton. But Metallica remains four reg'lar guys who like their beers cold, their music loud and don't give a shit about what anyone else has to say about it. "This is not rock 'n' roll for the people," says Ulrich. "This is rock 'n' roll for ourselves. We do what satisfies us, and if you like it, come along. If you don't, stay the fuck away."

But much has changed. Metallica's evolved from a starving troupe of good-natured thrash-louts who wanted to call their first album *Metal Up Your Ass* to a platinum-selling band in the process of bringing heavy metal out of the Dark Ages. Tough and literate, Metallica tackles the big issues—war, capital punishment, drug abuse, intolerance, suppression—without preaching or sacrificing the good buzz of a barking Marshall. Without radio airplay or MTV, without co-opting the "power ballad," without being condescending to its audience, Metallica has wedged an album of songs that average seven minutes each into the top six, right next to Tracy Chapman and U2.

When that happened, Metallica became more than just a band. Metallica became proof that in these cynical times it's still possible to succeed on your own terms, even in the cesspool of the music industry. And Ulrich, Hetfield, guitarist Kirk Hammett and bassist Jason Newsted became certified rock stars, whether they like it or not. And when that happens, some people are satisfied with sinking a few brews and waving their fists in the air while you rock them to Valhalla; others want to hold you and cry.


James Hetfield

For now, though, Metallica seems to be coping with stardom by ignoring it. "I hate that bullshit," says Ulrich, who's slumped on a sofa at his Amsterdam hotel, nursing a slight cold with hot tea and honey while the Cable News Network drones in the background. "There are so many bands with attitudes. We're just ourselves.

"But," the 24-year-old amends, "when we started touring we did have three or four years of every excess known to man: bottles of vodka every day; if it had a pulse, fuck it. It's great, but after a while it becomes less fun. You want to settle down, maybe have a more permanent situation with a girl. But we still have fun on tour and we still get completely faceless. I mean, two days ago I was crawling around naked in the corridor of a hotel somewhere, and puking on a telephone four days ago. It's no big deal."

Indeed, Ulrich's got more important things to think about. After Europe, the band will take a week off before headlining U.S. arenas for the first time. When that tour ends in September 1989 Metallica will have been on the road for 18 months, and Ulrich has recently discovered he has tinnitus.

"I noticed it on the Monsters of Rock tour," he says. "Now I'm playing with earplugs live, 'cause every time I hit the cymbals it just goes 'tsssscccchhh...' It's the high end; it just keeps ringing. I'm sure everyone thinks I'm a wimp, but I don't want to end up like Alex what's-his-face. It's like 10 years later and he can't hear a fuckin' word.

"I also have a very, very loud monitor with just the snare and kick, and James' rhythm guitar blasting away. I don't need any bass or lead guitar, just James."

That's because James Hetfield is Metallica's heartbeat. He sings, he writes the lyrics, and he invents the guitar riffs that are the bones of the band. His rhythm playing is rich with weird cadences and lurching phrases, the strange stops, starts and sideways mid-verse leaps into new time signatures that make Metallica sound like Godzilla weaving through Tokyo on a drunken jag. But he's more than a rhythm player. On Metallica's new *...And Justice for All*, Hetfield also plays all the acoustic guitars, fills, melody and harmony lines, leaving only the solos for Hammett. Not bad for a guy who wanted to give the instrument up seven years ago.

"I'd been in two or three other bands before Metallica, doing cover stuff," says Hetfield, who's 25. "It was fun, but I left each one looking for people who were playing better shit. But it was so hard trying to get into a band playing guitar in L.A., because there were about a million guitar players to every singer. So I figured I'd start singing."

At the same time, Ulrich had decided to focus on drumming. Before moving to Los Angeles with his parents in 1980, he'd wanted to be a tennis pro, just like his Dad. "In Denmark I was someone, competitively speaking, because Denmark is about the size of a suburb in L.A. When my family moved to L.A., I wasn't even ranked in the top 10 on my block." Luckily he had the new wave of British heavy metal to fall back on: bands like Diamondhead, Angel Witch, Motorhead, Tygers of Pan Tang and Trespass.

Hetfield and Ulrich met through a mutual friend, jammed sporadically over a few months and decided to go for it. They grabbed McGovney, a roommate of Hetfield's, and found David Mustaine, who now leads Megadeth, through an ad in *The Recycler*. Then they started looking for a rhythm guitarist. "We auditioned a shitload of people and couldn't find anyone," says Ulrich. "They either wanted to do leads, too—and we already had a lead player," adds Hetfield, "or they weren't riff-oriented, just chords and that cling-clang up-and-down picking shit. I got frustrated and said, 'I'll play guitar. Let's look for a singer.' We didn't get one of those, either.

"I started to play this way," says Hetfield, miming his iron-fisted downstrokes, "because I listened to a lot of Black Sabbath in the early days. Tommy Iommi's down-picking just sounded heavier. I guess it's something where the string stops and starts again.

"When we started doing clubs, we were doing mostly covers of the new wave of British metal bands, and because nobody had heard these records, all the bangers thought we were doing our own songs. We never said they were ours, but we never said they weren't, either. We'd just tell people the names.

"Some of those songs were pretty fast, but that whole fast-tempo thing started with a lot of the songs we had for the first album. When we started writing our own songs, they weren't very fast at all. Then we got a few more gigs, and we got a little more pissed off at the crowd and how people weren't appreciating our stuff. So they gradually got faster and faster as we got more aggressive. Instead of going, 'Please like us,' we were like...'AAAHH! Fuck you!'"

But Metallica, which still follows a dress code of black jeans, black T-shirts and no make-up, made headway in the glam-dominated L.A. metal scene, opening gigs for the unlikely likes of Ratt and Laaz Rockit. Soon they were shuttling between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the West Coast metal underground railway.

The band's best crowds came to a San Francisco club called the Old Waldorf, on Battery Street, where Metallica was a staple of Monday metal nights. Hetfield eventually wrote a

ROSS HALFIN

song about the place for the *Master of Puppets* album. But playing the club also gave Hetfield and Ulrich a chance to check out the local talent. "One night James and I saw this band called Trauma," says Ulrich. "And the bass player was completely outrageous. We just looked at each other and said, 'That's our new bass player.'"

That was Cliff Burton. "We tried to get him to join for four months, and finally we found out the reason he was hesitant was because he didn't want to move to L.A. So in February '83 me, James and Mustaine packed our bags and moved to San Francisco, and we've been up in the East Bay ever since."

Burton brought a trained musician's ear to the band, and a fascination for H.P. Lovecraft's weird tales that's reflected in titles like "The Thing That Should Not Be" and "The Call of Ktulu." "Cliff played piano and knew a lot about theory," says Ulrich. "He was the one who introduced harmonies and working with melodies into the band, and he taught James a lot about the fifth and the third and shit like that."

The new line-up recorded a demo tape and passed it to a few fans. "The cool thing about the metal scene is that you could pass out 10 copies of your tape to people who were really into it and within a week know that 100 people would have it, and another hundred a week later," says Ulrich. One of those tapes made it all the way to Old Bridge, New Jersey, into the hands of metal maverick John Zazula and his wife Marsha. The Zazulas had started selling old rock records at a flea market in 1981. When they added imports to the mix, records by new British metal bands started blasting off their makeshift shelves. Soon they'd built up a $100,000 business selling discs most retailers thought nobody wanted. The Zazulas moved into concert promotion, then started a label, Megaforce. And they wanted Metallica to record for them.

So in March 1983, Metallica went to New York City to make *Kill 'Em All*. "A very important step in a band's career is when you go out on the road together, because that's when you actually live with each other 24 hours a day," says Ulrich. "And we saw pretty quickly that it would be difficult to continue with Dave Mustaine. He was really over the top.

"I think we'd been subconsciously wanting a little more out of the lead guitar player for a while, too," he continues. "Dave was great with all the fast stuff; he played lightning-speed solos and was a good rhythm player, but we wanted somebody who could handle a little more melodic stuff."

Enter Kirk Hammett: "We were really lucky, because we were in New York with no money or anything," says Ulrich. "Our soundman used to work for this San Francisco band called Exodus, and we heard tapes of them that he had. We thought, 'Hey, this guitar player sounds pretty good. Let's get him.'

Rocking out for themselves: Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett, James Hetfield, Jason Newsted.

"Kirk borrowed money from his Mom to fly out, and it had to work because there were no other options. We sent Dave home in the morning, and Kirk flew in in the afternoon. We set up to jam with him and played 'Seek & Destroy.' When he went into his solo, me and James looked at each other and knew that was it."

So Hammett played lead on the first Metallica album, which was recorded on cheap, off-hours studio time over four weeks. "I'm glad I joined Metallica when I did, because the playing on that first album was pretty straight-ahead compared to the stuff we do now," says Hammett, a 26-year-old devotee of Hendrix and Michael Schenker who's studied with Joe Satriani.

"Take 'Frayed Ends of Sanity,' which has some off-tempo key changes that are really difficult. Usually a key change comes in a safe part of a song, like after every eight bars, but

ROSS HALFIN

here it's in the middle of the fifth bar. And then, to add more difficulty, the rhythm background is a flatted fifth with a minor pentatonic, so I had to alter every other note in the solo so it would fit. I had worked out a lot of different things to do in the studio for that song, because it was so tough. But in the end only about 20 percent of what I planned was good enough to use. For one thing, when I got in the studio to record my parts, the tracks were a lot faster than any of the demo tapes I had.

"'Blackened' was also really hard because there were three different tempos to solo over and I had to sound smooth over all of them. On *Justice*, I just ended up getting into the studio and going for it a lot, because I've just realized this is happening: When I'm working out a solo at home, I'm usually playing to a rehearsal tape that we've done in a garage or something. The guitars may be slightly out of tune, the playing is not very tight, the tempo is flying all around, it's a bad recording. And I'm playing with this for three months, then I walk into the studio and everything's perfect. And everything I've already done won't be up to the standard of what's already on the master tape. So I end up going, 'Fuck it, roll the tape.' Considering that, the amount of time I had to do the solos was pretty minimal, too, with the Monsters tour coming up. So I was putting in about 15 or 16 hours a day."

"This band is not like four different instruments. It's one voice coming at you, one strong voice."

Metallica's studio regimen has changed completely since *Kill 'Em All*, when the band stood knuckle-to-knuckle and flogged out each song pretty much live. "We used to do things more spontaneously," says Ulrich. "We'd look at how the songwriting was going and book time on, say, Blank the first. Come fuckin' Blank the first and we'd never be ready. We'd have to write two or three songs in the studio, which is a waste of time. It sucks, because you write a song in the studio and try to record it the next day. You know all the breaks and changes, but it still sounds stiff. And you're stuck with it on a record.

"*Justice* was the first time we went into the studio with everything written since *Kill 'Em All*. Basically, we accumulated the ideas we've had since writing *Master of Puppets*, listened to them and decided, okay, here's the cream of the shit."

Then Ulrich and Hetfield started laying down click tracks. "It may sound funny, but James and me spend as much as two days just putting down the click track for each song. We've found that we need the click track, because if you're playing a seven or eight minute song, your tempo can drift or start to feel stale. Plus we don't just keep the same click through a whole song. The intro might be 102, and the verse 94 and the bridge 90 and the chorus 96. Then me and James will play the riff and some drums over that for a while. Then it'll be like, 'Hmm, maybe that switch to 96 is too abrupt, so we'll take it to 94,' and then maybe it'll sound funny coming out of the bridge, so we keep fine-tuning."

Next it's Hetfield's turn to lay down the lion's share of guitar. Does Hammett ever feel left out? "Nah, since James wrote the songs he's got the best feel for that," says Hammett. "From a rhythm point of view, it's a lot quicker and a lot tighter for James to go in and do all that. It also gives me more time outside the studio to work on my solos."

"One thing that really made a big difference this time," says Ulrich, "is that I asked James to have the vocal melodies done before I recorded my drum parts. On *Ride the Lightning* and *Master of Puppets*, when I laid down the drums the vocal melodies still hadn't been written. So I was doing stuff around guitar riffs that could get in the way of the melodies or vocals later."

And these days, Metallica may be the only metal band in which the vocals are truly indispensable. "The first album's lyrics were really kind of Judas Priest, let's go rock out," Hetfield laughs. "I look back and they're really silly, but at that time, that's how we felt and we don't regret any of the shit that we've written."

Things changed after *Kill 'Em All* when, oddly enough, Hetfield and Ulrich "could finally afford to buy a television." They subverted the tube's usual function, making people stupid, by becoming news fanatics. "We started thinking about some of the real heavy subjects that were on the news, like the death penalty, which gave us the idea for 'Ride the Lightning.' We wanted to write about stuff like that, but not to exploit it, not to make money off the news. Just to put our viewpoint in there without telling people, 'You've gotta believe this way.' We're not preaching to anyone, we're just writing about the stuff that affects us and everyone in general, whether they want to hear about it or not. And it's not just me; everyone in the band's pretty much behind me on the lyrics.

"It's interesting to hear other people's ideas about what we write," Hetfield continues. "Like 'Master of Puppets'—the PMRC had that song on their list, and it's a completely anti-drug song." This year "Dyers Eve," the last cut on ...*And Justice for All*, will probably make the Washington wives' top 20. It's a stinging indictment of how parents, consciously or subconsciously, suppress and smother their children. And it's probably the most personal song Hetfield's written.

"I think some parents don't even give a shit about their kids," says Hetfield. "I just know from my experience, as far as religion and stuff, my family was pretty religious—Christian Science. And that means you can't go to the doctor, and total belief in God and all this crap. In school, during health, I'd have to leave the room and I really felt like I was on my own. Not proud, but that they were hiding me from stuff. Basically that song is about the parents hiding the kid from what's really going on, in private schools or whatever, keeping 'em really reclusive, and then the kid runs away and freaks out on the real shit that goes down."

Despite the reflection that goes into Hetfield's lyrics, they always come last. "You just come up with a riff at soundcheck or whatever, and then go back to the dressing room or the hotel and put it down on tape," he says, outlining the Hetfield method. "So we build up a bunch of riffs. I keep a list of titles, too, that I write down when I hear something that's cool or sounds heavy. Like 'Eye of the Beholder,' which came from reading this interview with Jello Biafra about him and the Dead Kennedys' court cases and all that. And I also keep kind of a list in my head of subjects I might want to write about. Sometimes a title suggests one of those subjects, or a subject suggests a title, or a riff suggests a title, or any one of those. But once I match a riff with a title, I can write the lyrics. They're the last thing I do, but they're never the least important."

Hetfield explains that the title and lyrics of the longest song on ...*And Justice for All*, the 9:48 epic "To Live Is to Die,"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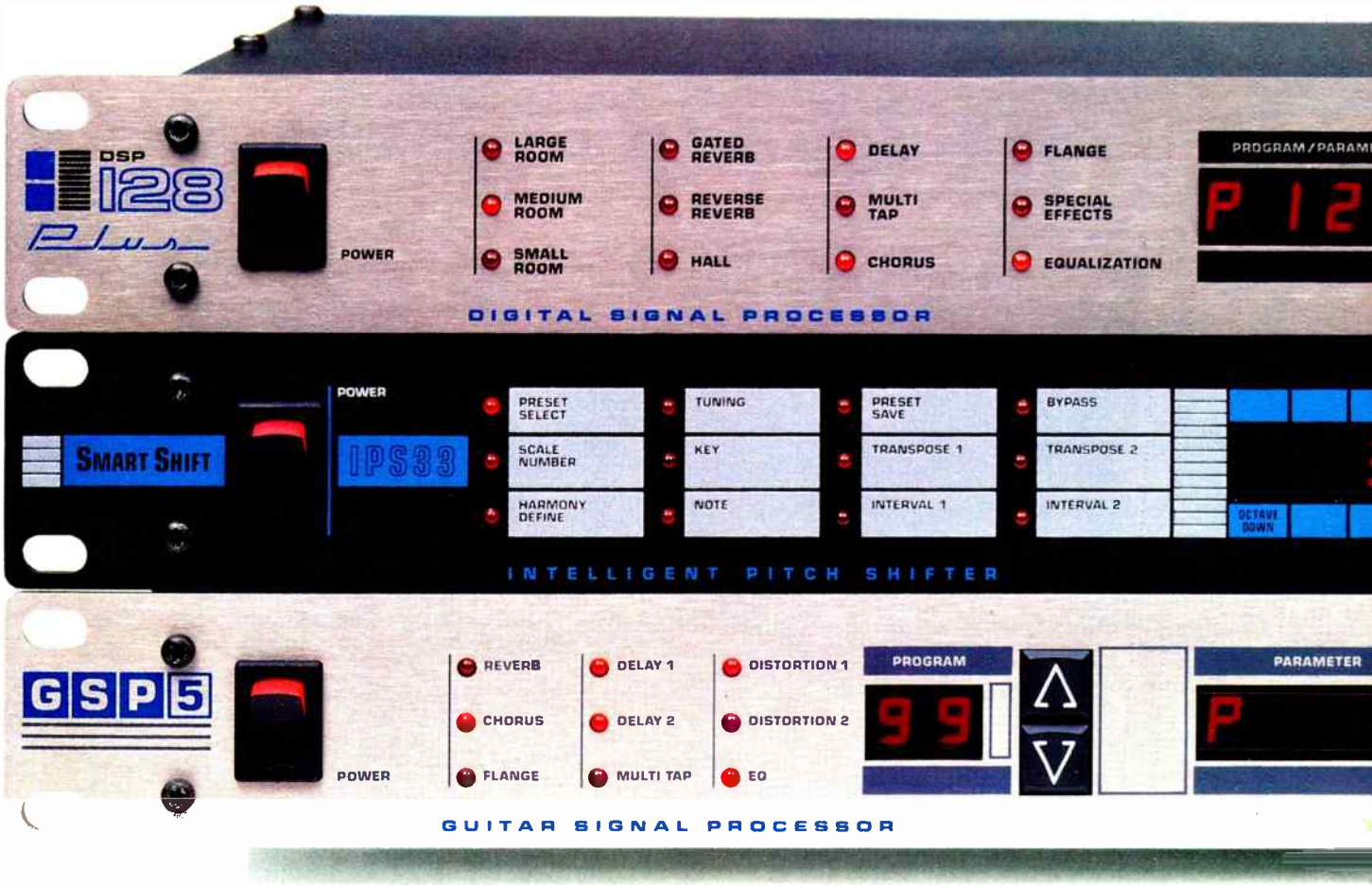

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were inspired by the eulogy at Cliff Burton's funeral. Burton died on September 27, 1986, on an ice-slicked road in Ljungby, Sweden. The band's bus was en route from Stockholm to Copenhagen when it went into a skid. Ulrich broke some toes, and tour manager Bobby Schneider got a dislocated shoulder, but Burton, 24, was thrown out a window and crushed when the bus tipped on its side.

Burton's death shocked and galvanized his bandmates, who'd lost a dear friend and a manic, sophisticated player who'd been on the way to redefining bass as a second lead voice in new metal. "We have had very few meetings," says Ulrich, "but the night before Cliff's funeral we sat down and said, 'Okay, what are we gonna do now?'

"Nobody ever thought about calling it a day," he continues. "We've always had things that we were up against...obviously nothing of this magnitude, but to stop...Cliff would have been the first one to be pissed off. Now we had even more reason to take this as far as we can: to do it for Cliff. We figured the quicker we replaced him, the less the whole thing would screw us up mentally."

Auditions began in two weeks, and out of 40 hopefuls, Jason Newsted made the cut. "When I talked to Lars, I knew it was gonna be me," Newsted, 25, recalls. "I felt some kind of special thing. Metallica had been my favorite band for so long, and I'd spent so many hours learning Cliff's stuff that I felt I could do his work justice."

Newsted had been leading L.A. metalists Flotsam & Jetsam. "I handled everything, so one night I just got out all the books and said, 'Here ya go, fellas. Here's what's been going on for the past few years. See ya.' I think there's still some

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

THE TOOLS OF JUSTICE

James Hetfield plays Gibson Explorers. "I'm kind of tall, and just the way my arm rests on it feels cool," he says. "I've got a Jackson. I found it's not as warm sounding and it breaks easy—the neck broke once. When I have a guitar, it's got to be able to take abuse. For my regular rhythm and crunch sound, I've just got a Boogie. I think it's a Mark II, and I run through a Boogie power amp and an Aphex parametric EQ. For my clean sound, I have a Roland Jazz Chorus. It sounds real good," he smiles, "real good." His 4x12s are Marshalls, wireless by Samson, strings are Ernie Ball .010s, and picks are green tortex.

Kirk Hammett plays Fernandes Flying Vs and Strats onstage, all outfitted with EMG pickups. He also uses a black Jackson, and his strings are Dean Markley .009s: "The best strings to use with a whammy bar." His wireless is a Samson. His MIDI-run pedal board triggers a Yamaha SPX90, Roland DEP-5 and a dbx noisegate, plus he keeps an Ibanez Tube Screamer and Jim Dunlop Crybaby for kicks. His cab, power amps and amps are all Mesa Boogies.

Bassist **Jason Newsted**'s baby is a custom five-string Wal. He also uses two Wal four-strings, and has a complement of ESP basses in reserve. He plays with a pick, "so the five-strings help with chords and I'm able to do a lot of effective things in E, which is where James' vocals are at." His strings are Roto-Sounds and Dean Markleys, and he plays through a Nady wireless, Crown power amps, a Trace-Elliott preamp, Ampeg cabinets (two SVT 10s and two cabs with a 10" and 15" JBL in each), a MIDI-Verb and a 1/3-octave EQ.

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JACK BRUCE
TALES OF BRAVE ULYSSES

David Sanborn is circling the huge rehearsal space at New York's S.I.R. studio, taking in the dialogue that's going down between the musicians on his "Sunday Night" TV show. They're talking through the intricacies of the tune they're about to kick off, getting all the changes straight. The band—Hiram Bullock on guitar, Omar Hakim on drums and Philippe Saisse on keyboards—punch it in gear, but it falls apart immediately. Somebody's amp is having a meltdown, sending out a huge frybuzz.

"Shizz genna bleu enna secoond, ca'pn," deadpans Bullock in imitation of the USS Enterprise's engineer. "I cawn't give 'er enna mooor, sair" chimes in Hakim. There's mayhem for a second, and the room is alive with chatter. Everybody takes a shot at doing a Scottish accent, except for the only guy who, if he wanted to, could do a perfect one. Jack Bruce's head is somewhere else. He says nothing about the abominations of his native dialect, just grins a bit and waits out the hum. It stops and he

By Jim Macnie

boots the band into "White Room."

Though Saisse has concocted the intro's signature tympani booms on his synth, this version doesn't sound as much like the original as the one Bruce's current band whomped through a week earlier at the Bottom Line. Like most of Cream's studio stuff, "White Room" has a formal feel; there's austerity in them there flourishes. That's how Bruce and lyric partner Pete Brown wanted them to sound. Ground-breaking and energized, yet poised and well constructed.

That dichotomy came to mind when Bruce and company—Anton Fier on drums, Pat Thrall on guitar and Dave Bravo on keyboards—strolled onto the Bottom Line's stage and performed a set that went from the classically folkish, rhythmically quixotic "As You Said" (a muscular Bruce/Brown pastoral) to a knock-down, drag-out version of "Spoonful" (the Willie Dixon greed lesson).

You could see it in the diverse personality of the capacity audience as well. Directly behind me at the gig was Kip

> "Tony Williams suffered from the same thing I did: getting caught between two camps and put down by both."

Hanrahan, a smart-guy experimentalist who's been doing a good job of making his Latin-buffered art music come across with pop's sense of easy invitation. Standing right in front were two joes who could've been with Poison: You know, black Aussie cowboy hats with a couple of ooh-la-la naked-lady playing cards fastidiously positioned in the brim for easy viewing of bodacious ta-tas. Tough guys...right.

Bruce, whose Bottom Line set unwound like a mini-history of his career, was appealing to both of them—high and low brow. It was the same kind of attraction that Cream, the patriarchal British trio that has given Bruce most of his visibility over the years, offered its audience. Pundits called the band a power trio, and since Bruce, along with drummer Ginger Baker and guitarist Eric Clapton, took to the stage laden with Marshall stacks, an unmeasurable energy and a yen to burn for a couple hours, the term was pretty much on target. If ceaseless jamming was *de rigueur* in those days, it was partially due to Cream's lead. But smartly, and unlike many of their contemporaries, they sidestepped much of the cosmic debris; because their excursions were based on the blues changes all three were smitten with, there was a macho meatiness that kept them firmly on the ground. By the time extended improvisation became a projection of self-infatuation, Cream had called it quits.

But the bassist, like the band, has long projected more than one persona. He's a classically trained string player (cello, string bass) who reveled in the blistering immediacy of the blues. He's a vocalist who has recorded both dumb-ass cockney drinking songs (Cream's "Mother's Lament") and the ghastly dramatic omens of Samuel Beckett (Michael Mantler's *No Answer*). He was Cream's main songwriter, and after the band cracked apart, he went on to indulge his contextual fantasies. There were folkish records where the songs themselves were paramount (*Songs for a Tailor* and *Harmony Row*), electric discourses with emphasis on chops (a stint with Tony Williams' Lifetime), another walk down the power trio path (West, Bruce and Lang), an alignment with the N.Y.C. jazz community (Carla Bley and Mantler), a fully electronic LP (*Automatic*), tracks with the Golden Palominos, an essential role in Hanrahan's ever-shifting lustscapes (*Desire Develops an Edge* and *Vertical's Currency*), and even a bit of acting on the British stage.

It was the role of lead vocalist on the Hanrahan heart-and-groin opuses that recast the sumptuous bravado of Bruce's voice; his hipness quotient quadrupled from those projects alone. People who had forgotten remembered. People who didn't realize woke up. It was a new feather in the cap.

"The music we did required a multi-dimensional talent, and that's what has been luminous in Jack's own work over the years," says Hanrahan. "He brought a lot of knowledge to the session. I'm trying to shuffle words so they don't seem hyperbolic, but if I say he's an explosively passionate musician...well, maybe we should talk around him, because talking about him directly is too much like having seven shots of the best cognac."

In the last year, Bruce's early solo albums have been reissued on Polydor. And with *Will Power*, a double LP retrospective of his '68-'88 work due from the company in January, Bruce is eager to get back in action. He's been touring large arenas ("I rather enjoy projecting in those kind of places") in front of the Moody Blues, and small clubs as well. Clapton sat in on one of the Bottom Line gigs—something that hadn't happened since Cream disbanded—for a romp through "Spoonful." A few nights later Bruce and ex-Stone Mick Taylor commandeered the Dickie Betts Band at the Lone Star Roadhouse. He's done Letterman and "Sunday Night" ("I was supposed to appear on that one with Albert King, it would've been fun to trade verses on 'Born Under a Bad Sign'"). The teaser for the compilation is that Bruce has recorded two new tracks with old pal Clapton (who celebrated his own Polydor retrospective by getting a Michelobotomy) helping out.

Yet the brouhaha that goes with celebrity seems to bounce off Bruce. On the way to the "Sunday Night" rehearsal, we get trapped in a late-afternoon, Madison Avenue traffic jam. "I remember when we would land on that in a helicopter," he muses, glancing up at the Pan Am building. "That was back in my rock star days. When I was with the Creams."

MUSICIAN: *It seems the wrong way to start an interview, but are you surprised...*

BRUCE: To still be alive?

MUSICIAN: *No, to have the Bottom Line packed the other night.*

BRUCE: Yeah, of course. But I'm very lucky. In the past, I haven't followed up on what I've done; there've been large gaps. So it's nice to realize people are still there.

MUSICIAN: *It seems like the gaps have been by design; you operate in so many different arenas.*

BRUCE: Well, it would be nice to think so, but it's not always by design at all. There are other concerns: personal, family and so on. There hasn't been any big master plan, but things do seem to be falling into place this time around.

MUSICIAN: *Are you a musician who doesn't need to be in the spotlight all the time? The marketplace doesn't seem to be in the front of your mind all that much.*

BRUCE: True, but I try my best. I guess I haven't been as ambitious as some. I haven't been ambitious to be a "star," put it that way. When I started I just wanted to be a musician; that was my goal. And when the stardom thing came with that little

PREVIOUS PAGE PHOTO BY LAURA LEVINE FOR MUSICIAN NOV 88

trio, it was a bit of a surprise. I never expected it, and wasn't that comfortable with it. I've grown more used to it as the years have gone by.

MUSICIAN: *You guys were shocked when Cream became so big?*

BRUCE: Us, our manager and record company, sure, because nothing had been like that before. We weren't pop stars like the Beatles.

MUSICIAN: *When you were growing up in Glasgow in the '50s, how did you hear jazz?*

BRUCE: People don't seem to realize that jazz in Europe has been very popular, maybe even more popular than it was in the States. My father was an avid jazz fan all his life. He played piano and drums, semi-professional. He was a working man, but he loved his music. At home we'd hear Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong. My brother who is eight years older than me was a bebopper, so Parker was around as well. My mother was a Scottish folk singer. There were many different kinds of music in the house. Don't let me give you the impression that it was commonplace, but the music definitely was there if you wanted it. My father took me to see my first jazz show, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and the thing that really knocked me out was Percy Heath's sound, this warm, round kind of sound, so I was hooked on the bass. Amazing coincidence: Two years ago I was playing in Nice, and Percy couldn't make the gig with the New York All Stars, so they asked me to sit in. We played some bop; it was quite amazing.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think that if your family had been into a different kind of music, you would have gone a different way?*

BRUCE: Like an accordion band? No, I don't think so. We were one of the first generation of kids to hear rock 'n' roll. I mean little kids; I used to chase after my older brother, who was a teddy boy. Fifty-three, '54, whenever Bill Haley first hit. So there was all these influences going on. Classical was one I really found for myself, through school. They didn't have jazz or rock lessons at school, so I took up cello.

MUSICIAN: *You played cello before bass?*

BRUCE: Yeah, that's a funny story because we were poor and the bass was free. There was a double bass in the corner of school and no one wanted to touch it. I tried it but I was too small. So I gave it a shot and the teacher said you better come back in a year or two; in the meantime I tried the cello.

"Reason behind it": The supreme bass-head, Bruce stays balanced.

MUSICIAN: *When you left the academy was it because you wanted to try a different kind of music, or just part of the growing-up process?*

BRUCE: A mixture of reasons really. First was financial: It was difficult to exist going to college there; they wouldn't let me play music to support myself—very old-fashioned about many things. I was playing in a dance band to make my way through. They found out and said, 'You either stop, or leave college.' So I left college. Which I didn't mind, because I wanted to play some stuff that was happening rather than stuff that had happened. They seemed to think that music ended when Richard Strauss died. And I thought, well... there are a few other cats. So I left Glasgow and joined an R&B band. But what that was like in those days was ah... Louis Prima or something. That's what they called R&B. I played string bass, we all went to Italy and the whole band was wearing kilts.

MUSICIAN: *That sounds like it might go over today.*

BRUCE: Doesn't it? It was a variety show; they'd show a movie—John Wayne in Italian—and then we'd play. I was around 17 years old and it was fun.

MUSICIAN: *By that time you'd decided to stick with the bass?*

BRUCE: Yeah, I wanted to be as good a jazz player as I could, and kept getting fired from bands for being just that. The first dance band I was in was 16 pieces, we'd do Maynard Ferguson and Dizzy Gillespie arrangements, "One Bass Hit." My reading was good, so I got the gig. Apart from that there were what I guess you'd call "cocktail jazz" groups, little quintets.

MUSICIAN: *Were you always thinking more modern in the back of your mind?*

BRUCE: Exactly. They'd be doing typical ballroom dancing and complain to me because I'd be going "boom da boom boom" during a waltz; I was trying to swing. I kept getting fired and

LAURA LEVINE

was growing insecure.

MUSICIAN: *I always wondered whether the British R&B scene was a full-blown movement or just 30 people.*

BRUCE: Oh no, no. It was a very big movement. I went to London and fell in with a trad jazz band—well, they called it jazz, but it still wasn't my thing—but we played at Cambridge and I heard these amazing sounds coming from a basement. I went down and it was Ginger Baker on drums, Dick Heckstall-Smith on saxes and others, all playing a modern sound. I was very impressed by Ginger; he was the loudest drummer I'd ever heard. We played something at a ridiculous tempo and then a ballad, "Willow Weep for Me" or something, and I left. Then Dick tracked me down, got me in the Alexis Korner Blues Inc., which really was the first R&B band, a very hot band actually. They did a mixture of country blues and Mingus jazz. It was a very early example of fusion as well, because there was a harp player and a tenor player. I checked it out first 'cause I was a bit of a purist. But when I heard it I thought, "Wait a minute, this is like rock 'n' roll."

MUSICIAN: *The stuff I've heard from them almost had a jump feel.*

BRUCE: Yeah, and it was unique because it had Charlie Watts on drums, and he made it swing a bit. I joined and that was my introduction to Delta blues. Cyril Davies was a fantastic harp player. In fact when Muddy Waters came over he asked Cyril to go back to Chicago with him. That's how good he was.

When I finally met Eric he kind of completed the process by introducing me to many other blues things I hadn't heard, Skip James and others that I'm still grateful to him for. When Graham Bond joined, Cyril left and it became more of a jazz-type unit as opposed to a strict blues thing.

MUSICIAN: *How did Cream pare themselves out of the circle?*

BRUCE: Graham said to Alexis, "Jack, Ginger and I are leaving to form our own trio." I didn't even know he'd given our resignation until later. So it was Graham on alto and me on string bass and Ginger on his homemade drums and then we got John McLaughlin to make it a quartet. We toured all the time. I've got a diary with about 324 dates penned in it. That was my university if you like.

In '65 I switched from acoustic to electric bass for a session with a West Indian guitarist named Ernest Rangling; I borrowed an electric and I liked it. With Graham I started to write songs and started to sing a couple as well.

MUSICIAN: *Had you composed before that?*

BRUCE: Not songs. I'd written a lot of classical stuff and jazz pieces. A string quartet when I was 11. But that's where I started writing songs. We backed up Marvin Gaye on a TV show and he liked my playing, came by my flat and talked all night, and asked me if I wanted to go with his group. That was encouraging.

My biggest dream was to play Ronnie Scott's in London. That would've been it. I just wanted to be the best player I could. With Cream we had so much respect for American music, we put ourselves into it and brought it over here.

MUSICIAN: *Cream recontextualized the blues, kept it basic but gave it a different face.*

BRUCE: Right. Sure. We were growing up when those things became possible. The blues to me is not an old thing. It's a living thing. All the people I like to play with have it in their playing somewhere. For me, you've got to have it, whether you use a straight 12-bar or not, the feeling has to be there. It makes the whole thing valid. I'd met Eric right before he left Mayall's band; he said he was going to drive around the world or something. Of course I loved his playing. I was with Manfred Mann and it was Ginger's idea to play with Eric—Clapton was a big figure on the London scene in those days. Ginger and I had become a rhythm section together, we played around a lot. But we'd had a kind of falling out, both personally and over musical ideas; he thought my bass playing was getting too busy. But that was the direction I was going in. Like James Jamerson, trying to play a melodic bass rather than just comping all night. Instruments are self-expression first, and I was trying to make the bass stand up there with the other instruments. Ginger didn't agree with that. But when he went to Eric and said, "Let's form a band," Eric said, "Yeah, but you've got to have Jack in it; he's the singer." So we went by Ginger's little suburban pad and set up in his living room. And it was obvious from the start that there was a magical thing happening.

"Hendrix died from lack of care. Cream might have died from overwork. If it had been done a little more imaginatively or sympathetically it could've lasted."

MUSICIAN: *With just three instruments, your playing had to be a bit overactive out of necessity.*

BRUCE: Well, the trio setting is difficult when you're trying to do what we were. I tried to cover a lot of ground, an active player as you say. The same thing applied to Eric; he couldn't just play lead lines, it was lead and rhythm both. A lot of people don't, but I think of Cream as a jazz band. Although I'm very careful about the word "jazz" because I think real jazz has only been played by a relatively small amount of people. But we were playing improvised music. It didn't start off that way, but it became that. In the beginning we were doing normal versions of songs. I developed a style which I'm still developing which is singing and playing bass, the top and bottom of the band.

MUSICIAN: *Is that a lot of pressure?*

BRUCE: It's actually a great opportunity to be a catalyst, you can make the others sound good. That's the function of a bass player, to turn the other players on.

MUSICIAN: *You did the writing when Cream started?*

BRUCE: We didn't have any tunes. Rehearsals were filled with standard blues. I had written before, so I came up with a few things. The first was "N.S.U." We still do it in my band. These days it sounds like a silly punk song for some reason.

MUSICIAN: *What does N.S.U. mean?*

BRUCE: Non-Specific Urethritis, a kind of venereal disease which Eric was suffering from at the time. A lot of people thought it was a little German motorbike, but it was actually something close to clap.

MUSICIAN: *What about the name Cream?*

BRUCE: That was Eric's. He was a trendsetter in those days in terms of fashion. A lot of the musical ideas came from him, in the sense that he introduced me to them, and then I would write songs about them. There was tremendous interaction between he and I. Next I wrote "Wrapping Paper," a weird kind of blues. It was an attempt to do something slightly different with the 12-bar blues.

MUSICIAN: *When you brought slightly askew material to the band, would they raise their eyebrows?*

BRUCE: It varied. In the beginning I was going through a real

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES

good period with "White Room" and "Sunshine of Your Love." I wrote the "Sunshine" riff on a string bass one night; I remember thinking, "That's kind of neat." Many of the things I write turn out to be different bar lengths, you know, bars of five and four and 11; different things all at once that aren't very apparent at first. They feel kind of natural, but when you see them on paper, they look weird as hell. Seventeen-bar verses and 11-bar choruses. I've still got the original arrangement for "I Feel Free" with all the parts written out. Because of the very limited time to record, you had to have it all down. We did that one on a four-track, so we had to know exactly what we were doing.

MUSICIAN: *Did Cream sound like you thought it was going to?*

BRUCE: We just thought it was the sound of the three of us playing together. At the beginning we considered having a fourth member, Steve Winwood. But we enjoyed the challenge of a trio and also the bareness of the sound.

MUSICIAN: *How did you view yourselves, say, compared to the Who; were you a blues band and they a pop band?*

BRUCE: We didn't think in those terms, it was similar turf. We were just players.

The thing that made the band stretch out was our gig at the original Fillmore: 1967 in San Francisco. We were on the bill with the Electric Flag, Gary Burton with Larry Coryell and Steve Swallow. In fact Steve tells me that I was the reason he took up the electric bass; he was playing stand-up and when he saw what I was doing, he switched. That's when Cream got into the more improvised thing. It reflected the time, people were pretty loose. The audience began shouting, "Just play!" We were getting a bit bored just doing the tunes actually, and were quite happy to open up. It seemed like an organic thing to do at the time.

Eric was opening up, developing his style. The nice thing about him sitting in the other night was the fact that there wasn't much difference from the past. People think that he doesn't play that way anymore, but that situation, with me playing with him, made a difference.

MUSICIAN: *Was it easy to climb back into it the other night?*

BRUCE: There was a certain magic there; I've got a tape of it. Eric was definitely digging in. He just borrowed a guitar; it wasn't his kind of strings or anything. But it felt like the old days, beautiful.

Backstage at the Bottom Line, slipping back into the White Room.

MUSICIAN: *Do you keep in touch with him?*

BRUCE: From time to time we run into each other, and Ginger, too. We're all doing separate things, there are big gaps of time. You don't see them for years and then you pick up again. That's the first time Eric's come to one of my gigs and the first time we've played in public since the '60s. I played at his wedding, although I doubt many can recall that night, and there was a TV show as well. Eric came into the dressing room, opened the toilet door and said, "I hope that knarled red person isn't in there, otherwise we're all in trouble."

MUSICIAN: *"As You Said" sounded contemporary that night.*

BRUCE: Isn't it amazing? I've always played with form. I'm interested in a kind of musical development that happens constantly, in other words, no sections that repeat, but something that organically develops right through the piece. The first guy who did that was Debussy, whose composing was a constant as opposed to a theme development; the structure would develop right through the piece. "As You Said" doesn't repeat. It goes back, but each thing goes a step further, each takes another step. For that reason a lot of the things I've written sound pretty good, because I've been interested in sketching a form rather than writing a song.

MUSICIAN: *That tells of Cream's two different personalities; the studio stuff was drastically different from the live.*

BRUCE: It was very much two bands and Eric was quite concerned with that. He said we could always make it in the studio, but it's tough for us as a live band.

MUSICIAN: *I would think it was the inverse.*

BRUCE: Well, that was the way he saw it. But I know what you mean. Yet it is difficult for a three-piece band onstage. Especially in those days of poor sound systems. We did baseball parks with 200-watt PAs. So I know what he meant. By the time of *Disraeli Gears* we were recording here at Atlantic and using an eight-track machine. It was a trip to have eight tracks.

MUSICIAN: *I was surprised by how many Cream tunes are in your set.*

BRUCE: See, people call them Cream tunes, but we don't do anything that I didn't write, with the exception of "Born Under a Bad Sign." Those were songs I wrote that were played by that band. And I think I would have written those songs anyway. I feel like Bob Dylan or somebody, I have the right to do songs I wrote; I've written over 200 songs.

But we didn't do all Cream songs at the show, maybe four out of 12. With the exception of "White Room," we didn't do any of the anthems; "White Room" has to be done. I like to play it, and I wrote it. I'm trying to do things that have never been done live before, "As You Said," "Rope Ladder to the Moon." Those things I can do now because of sampling: my cello parts for example. There were newer things, too: one called "Obsession" and one called "Cold Island." I'm trying to have a little potted history of what I've written. Since Eric does "White Room" in his act, a lot of people might think that it's his song. But it's a Bruce/Brown song.

MUSICIAN: *Do you wish people had a better knowledge of your middle-period stuff, the solo albums?*

BRUCE: They do! You'd be surprised how many people all over

JOSH CHEUSE

the world are aware of those things . . . which is nice. Many of them are just coming out on CD. The first one, *Songs for a Tailor,* was a hit record. After that, for various reasons, they didn't chart very high. But I mean, you don't really expect Miles Davis to sell immediately. I'm not comparing myself with Miles, but what I'm saying is that a lot of people have been influenced by those records over the years. Wherever I go, Africa, the Soviet Union, Japan, Hungary, Israel, people are familiar with those records.

MUSICIAN: *Was it refreshing to change styles after Cream?*

BRUCE: Well, yes, I was able to bring out different influences that I have, working with horn sections for instance. After playing with just the trio, it was nice. It also helped develop a different side of my songwriting.

MUSICIAN: *You've done a good job of utilizing different musics, yet keeping the Jack Bruce stamp on all of it.*

BRUCE: That's because of the early influences, the diversity. I can be in different situations and still feel like myself. Like when I started working with Tony Williams in Lifetime, which was one of the greatest experiences of my musical life—that was a very natural thing. But I didn't consciously say I'm going to play a certain way; I just reacted to the situation and the personalities. The people I love to play with are the people who have got something to say in the way they play. Personalities react and interact. I've worked with Kip Hanrahan for example, where we did a lot of Latin-based things. I didn't try to come off like Rubén Blades or something. I'm just me.

MUSICIAN: *A good example of your versatility is the way Hanrahan updated your old "Smiles and Grins."*

BRUCE: That's funny because we did a live tour and had a fantastic drummer, Giovanni Hidalgo, a fantastic Puerto Rican player. I was showing him one of the tunes, which has a 7/4 rhythm to it, and those guys had never played a 7/4. So they were puzzled at first. When I came back six months later to play with them again, they had a whole series of things in 7/4, and a name for it as well.

MUSICIAN: *How did you get together with Kip?*

BRUCE: He worked for JCOA [Jazz Composers' Orchestra Association] for some time and he's one of the people, like Anton Fier, my current drummer, who's been influenced by my solo records. He had a project in mind with me as the vocalist. So he sent me a tape of backing tracks, and asked if I would do it. They sounded great, so I said, "Sure."

MUSICIAN: *Did he send lyrics as well?*

BRUCE: We did them in the studio; most of them were written by Kip in conjunction with myself and the crazy guitar player, Arto Lindsay. We'd listen to the backing track and come up with various things. It was a nice way to work.

MUSICIAN: *Were you surprised when he called you to be primarily a vocalist?*

BRUCE: Yeah, it was the first time I'd been asked specifically to be the vocalist. It's happened since then, too. The May before last I did a concert in Germany with Sting and an Italian vocalist. Then I did a Kurt Weill program with a symphony orchestra. It felt beautiful to sing with a symphony.

MUSICIAN: *Your voice has the capability of being dramatic without going into overkill. That worked out well for the mood of Kip's records.*

BRUCE: That was nice because usually people expect this high-powered kind of loud rock singing from me. Kip saw an intimate version of me, where I would be singing lower register and lower volume. He produced a side of me that I hadn't really known before. Since then I have definitely changed my approach to some of my own things, and have been singing a bit differently.

MUSICIAN: *Does it seem daunting at all to be doing some civic center dates with the Moody Blues?*

BRUCE: No, that's something I never stopped liking. The last couple of years I haven't played that much because of personal reasons, but every year before that I was working in Europe and Japan, different places. I did a huge thing in Scotland, at Saint Andrews, in front of 30- or 40,000 people. We played huge places in Israel. At the moment I'm in love with these big gigs, because I can project my voice, and I love that feeling.

MUSICIAN: *That part of your singing has never been questioned.*

BRUCE: Well, I think singers, if they keep their chops up, get to a peak in their 40s. I don't know how long it lasts, it certainly can't go on forever.

MUSICIAN: *What was the hardest part of singing an aggressive piece like Mantler's "No Answer"?*

BRUCE: It's tough to sing many of Mike's projects. But I've always liked a challenge. The first real challenge was learning to sing "Politician" and play the bass part, which are completely unrelated in time. It's an independence you've got to get down. The same thing happened in some Lifetime pieces: The melody line was in C major and the bass part in E major. Technical challenges.

MUSICIAN: *Did the guys in Lifetime ever mention being influenced by Cream's extended improvs?*

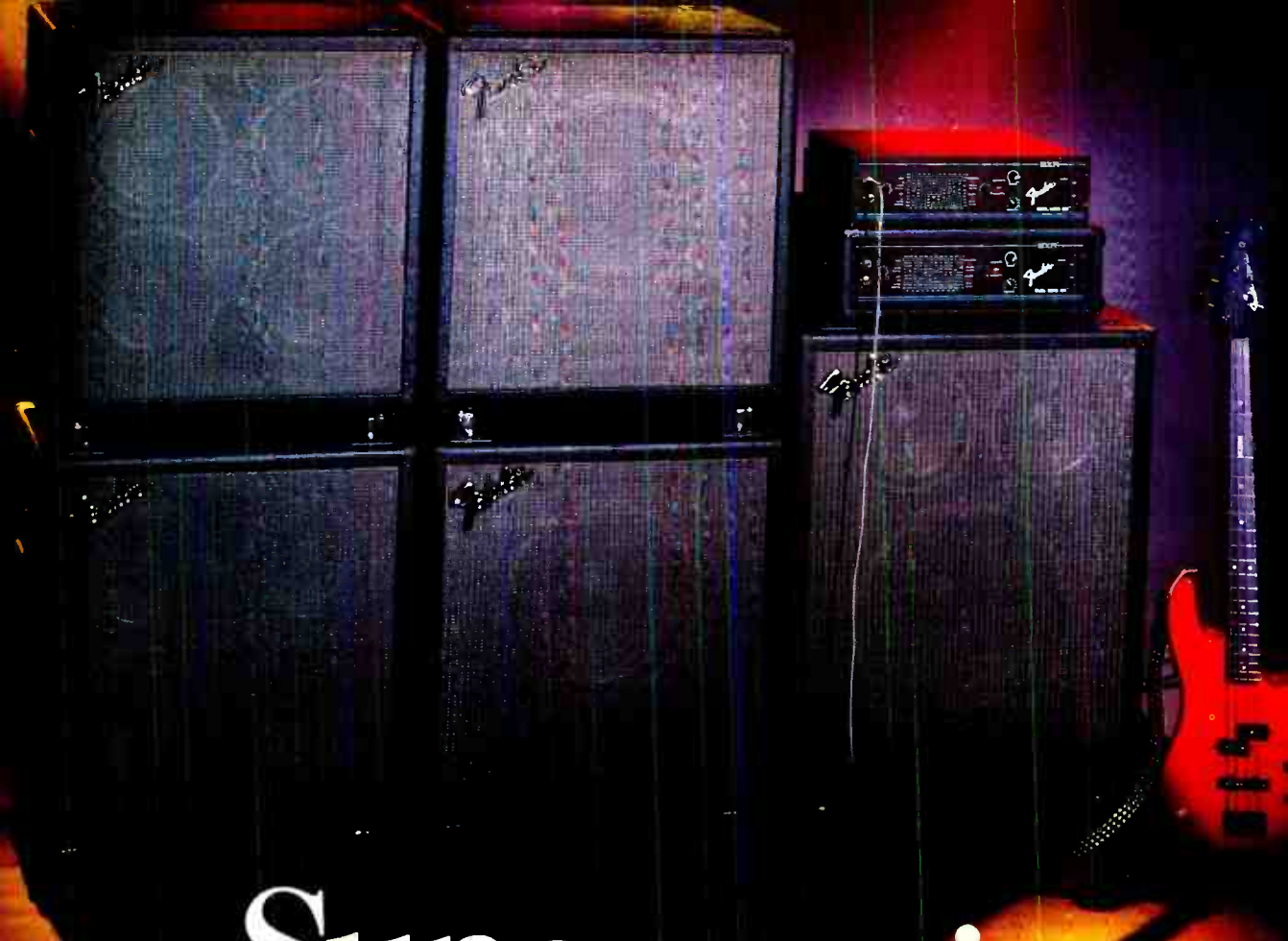
BRUCE: Tony was turned on by the fact that musicians could improvise and still get across to large amounts of people, instead of being relegated to small clubs. And it's a very important point. You've got to get the music across. Tony has been a big influence on me musically; I listened to him a lot before I got a chance to play with him. Dolphy's *Out to Lunch* is one of my seminal records, an all-time favorite. But Tony suffered from the same thing I did: getting caught between two camps and getting put down by both. When we started to play together, a lot of people told him he'd sold out because he was playing electric music. And I was misunderstood by the rock people; they thought I was trying to be clever. But it was just a band, that's all. I know the people who got to see that band live understood. Maybe on record it doesn't come across, because

THINGS HE LIKES

I started with a six-string bass the first time I started playing bass. I played a four-string semi-acoustic bass for a jazz record on Island in 1965 by a guitar player called Ernest Rangling from Jamaica. Then I got a six-string bass because the band I was working in was an R&B band, and they didn't have a guitar player. So I tried to play some guitar solos on the six-string. I played that right up until Cream, and then I changed to the Gibson EB-3. I played that because all of the bass players in those days were playing Fender; it was basically *the* instrument—and a wonderful instrument it is, too—but I wanted to find something that was different. And also I wanted to find a bass *guitar* sound. Something I could play more like a guitar.

"I switched to the fretless in 1976. The first one I had was a Dan Armstrong, that he made for me, one of those plexiglass ones. I used that in a band with Simon Phillips. After that I played fretless all the time. It was like me going back to my roots. Instead of playing bass guitar, I thought I'd go back and play some bass. Certainly my playing has gotten a lot simpler since then, a lot less frenetic. My roots have no frets."

These days Bruce plays a slab of wood with strings attached: Bruce's Spector fretless bass looks like a piece of furniture. It's got EMG pickups and he puts Superwound strings on it. A Charles Mingus disciple, he likes the fretless because "you can get the kind of freedom that the blues always leans toward." Bruce wanders as he plays, but he always hears his own wide sound coming from an Ampeg SVT amplifier.



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it was ahead of the technology. But the live thing was hot.

MUSICIAN: *More intense than Cream?*

BRUCE: I probably did think so, because I always had a high regard for jazz, and I might have romanticized it. Looking back now and having just played with Eric, I think that Cream was a very good band; there was nothing to be ashamed of.

MUSICIAN: *It sounds like you've just come to realize that.*

BRUCE: Yeah, and the nice thing is that Eric has, too. I think both of us went through a period of putting down that time. But now we've come to realize that it did influence a lot of people.

MUSICIAN: *It challenged what pop/rock could include.*

BRUCE: Challenged the record industry, actually. A pop song starting with a 5/4 intro; they probably thought people would turn off their radios. But they didn't; they bought "White Room" by the millions.

MUSICIAN: *Do you get a kick out of confounding the audience?*

BRUCE: No, no, no. I think experimentation is great but you should do it at home. When you get onstage you should have your shit together . . . if at all possible. When I was a kid I did a lot of free jazz improv and such in London. But I think you owe it to people to present a together program.

MUSICIAN: *The* Things We Like *band was killer; it was both open and structured.*

BRUCE: That sounds great on the CD that just came out, much better than the original record, because they had to limit it so much back then. And it was recorded very hot; there were five mikes on my double bass. Two days, mostly first takes.

MUSICIAN: *McLaughlin was starting to peak then.*

BRUCE: I agree. To me, that's some of his finest playing. It started out as a trio record, Dick Heckstall-Smith on tenor, Jon Hiseman on drums and myself. It's called *Things We Like* because I wrote all the pieces when I was a child, 10 or 11. It was a British kiddies reading book, a learning book, you know things we like—a ball, a cat. So I called it that because it's a beginner's jazz record. We had recorded about a third of it as a trio and I saw McLaughlin walking down the road on his way home, looking disconsolate, carrying his guitar back from a jingle session. He was finding it tough in those days. So I invited him along and rewrote the tunes for a quartet. He played like a demon. It was right before he joined Miles.

MUSICIAN: *Did you always feel that there was a good form to Cream's stretching-out process?*

BRUCE: No, I didn't! One of the problems with the band was that we played so much, sometimes the improv would get silly. We'd do the head of "Spoonful" and go into the meat of it. Ten minutes down the road everything would've changed, the key, the tempo, everything. I'd think, "What fucking tune are we doing?" And I'd have to search my mind. I had some problems and I guess Eric did, too, at the same time as me, about just jumping off and wondering, "Where am I? Who am I? How do I get back? Where is one?" So I don't think it's valid to play something and then jump off and start jamming. I hate jamming; improvisation is something else. The improvising I do now has reason behind it.

MUSICIAN: *Was Cream a musical democracy?*

BRUCE: In a way, we all had our functions. I remember Eric saying to me that he wasn't convinced that we could be a good live band. "No ohrgan!" they used to shout at us in these West Indian clubs. "Hey mon, where's your ohrgan?" The roles shift around; as long as they're all functional, it doesn't matter who does what. The bass player can play the tom-toms, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

Prestige Custom

Prestige Custom 8500 MLX Component Kit, illustrated in #113 Sheer Blue featuring Pearl's DR-1 rack, maple piccolo and aluminum shell free floating snare drums and free CH-14A suit [illegible]

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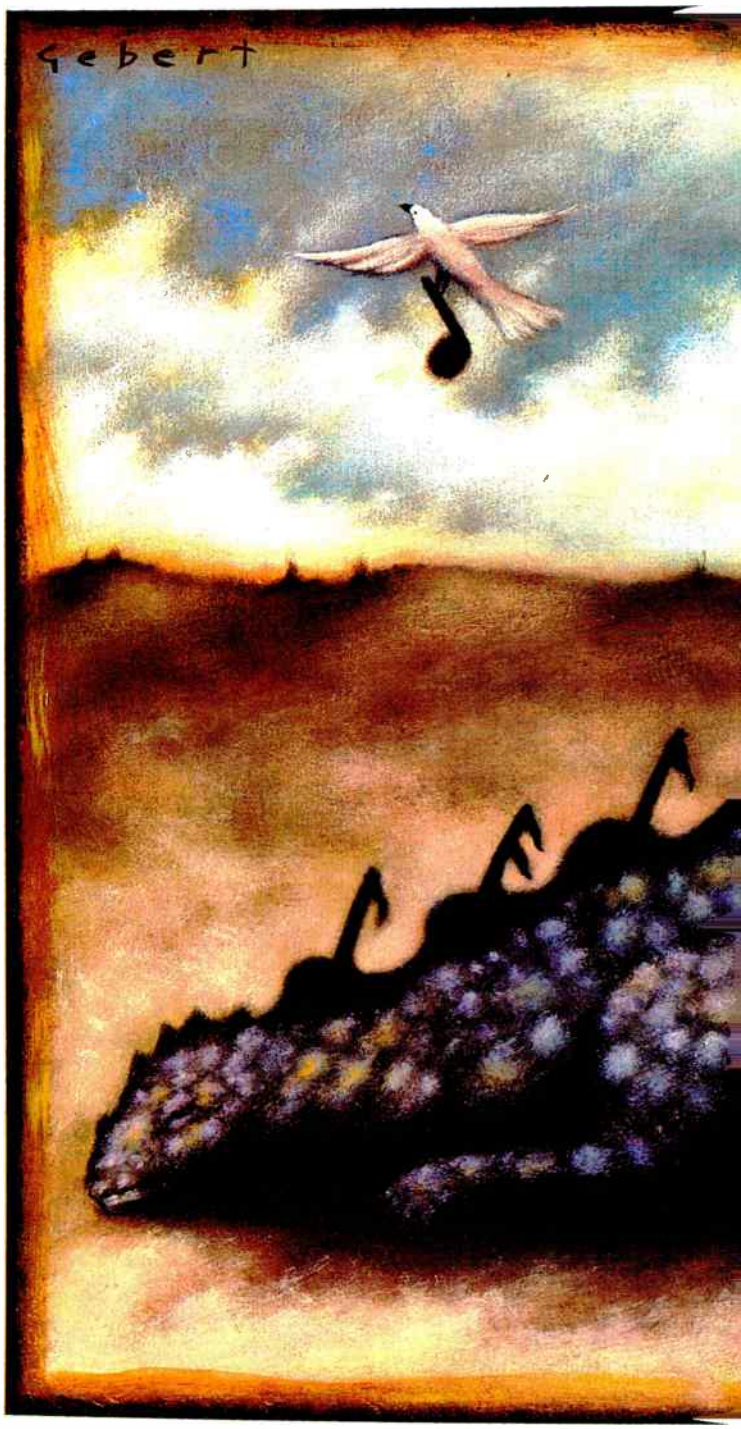
STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

The Year in Rock 1988



Sure, 1988 was the year heavy metal dominated the top of the charts, and the year serious women songwriters got major label attention. But it was also a year when lots of different styles of pop music were enjoying heydays: a good year for hip-hop and for new age, for singer/songwriters, hard rock and country. It was a good year for music. In the real world, that had something to do with the record labels adopting diverse means of promotion: CDs sold grown-up rock and gave new life to catalog sales; TV video shows turned into hard-rock marathons; "wave" radio formats pushed wallpaper music to yuppies. Songs were transmitted by everything from film soundtracks to TV commercials to the boom box blasting under your apartment window.

So it was a good year for Def Leppard, Randy Travis and D.J. Jazzy Jeff. But that isn't necessarily the whole story. The last two years of a decade usually hold the seed of the decade ahead. Ten years from now we might look back on 1988 and say, "Wow, that was the year the first album by *(a) Spookie, (b) Circus of Power, (c) Toni Childs* came out!"

Rock's history is short, and attempts to impose cycles on it almost always flop, but most of the major players of the '70s (Led Zeppelin, Sly & the Family Stone, Creedence, the Band, James Taylor, John McLaughlin, David Bowie, Joni Mitchell, Funkadelic, Elton John, Rod Stewart, Crosby, Stills and Nash, the Jackson 5) appeared in '68/'69, and most of the important rock musicians of the '80s (Prince, the Pretenders, Van Halen, the Clash, Dire Straits, the Police, the adult post-Motown Michael Jackson, and—in the import bins anyway—U2) appeared in American record racks in '78/'79. A few of those important debuts went right to the top of the charts, but most appealed—initially—only to cultists and critics. It sometimes takes a while to figure out what's really important.

So while 1988 was certainly the year of Tracy Chapman and Guns N' Roses, it may also be remembered as the year of Lyle Lovett's brilliant *Pontiac*, of Edie Brickell's bright debut, and of Michelle Shocked's subversively pretty *Short Sharp Shocked*. To bang home our point we have appended to this section a list of some of the great music of 1988. No doubt there's lots we forgot, and lots more we never heard. In 1998 we'll still be catching up.

60s/88

In the spring the Kinks were on another of their countless tours, this time to promote a mostly live album called *The Road*. Since "You Really Got Me" and "All Day and All of the Night" launched them almost 25 years ago, the Kinks have had endless—though not extreme—ups and downs. In a good year they get a hit and play arenas, in a bad year their album stiffs and they play small halls. The New York stop at the Beacon Theatre started a little slowly and built into a raging, sloppy, exuberant rock show. Of the great bands of the British Invasion, the Kinks alone have stayed out on the road year after year. Their body of work ranks with anyone's, but they never retreated to the plodding, self-important schedule of the Who and Stones and Led Zeppelin, making albums more and more slowly, touring less and less frequently, burying their dead and breaking up and, well, okay, maybe a little reunion tour next year...The Kinks just go on, slipping beautiful songs onto the second sides of annual LPs that may not even get reviewed, and delighting the endless generations of teenagers coming out to see them for the first time. So it was sad when, at the end of this particular concert, after the last wild encore and above the screaming crowd, Ray Davies smiled and said to

WARREN GEŞERT

the audience, "You don't know it, but you've just seen the end of the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band. Goodbye." No one in the hall seemed to notice, and it wasn't reported in the press. MCA Records said they weren't sure, maybe next year Ray would change his mind. Or maybe the Kinks ended the same way they always lived, with irony, self-deprecation and the melancholy bit lost among the power chords.

Such modesty was not for everyone. Nineteen-eighty-eight was the best year Led Zeppelin ever had—and they only played once. Robert Plant decided to forget about being a sensitive *artiste* and rake in some dough. He unashamedly sampled Zep oldies into his new single and turned his "Tall Cool One" video into a Coke commercial. It would be easy to call him a sell-out (don't let us stop you), but his hucksterism was partially redeemed by the sheer fun of the enterprise he launched; his concert tour, complete with Led Zeppelin oldies, was a roaring success and more fun than any of his previous precious solo tiptoes-through-the-tintinnabulation. Let's face it, Zep's music was always dumb, even if its architects were bright, and they always stole anything that wasn't nailed down. So we're not talking about a moral or intellectual plunge here; we're just talking about a smart guy with a great voice who gave the people what they wanted. Jimmy Page had a tougher time. His *Outrider* album was marred by his choice of singers, and sold disappointingly. Ticket sales on his tour were erratic, with one scheduled date in Florida selling fewer than a thousand tickets before it was cancelled. By November, though, Page had picked himself up, dusted off and headed

back to the bars, where his charisma shone and his guitar work was reborn. Too bad the warm-up dates were in stadiums.

"You don't know it, but you've just seen the end of the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band. Goodbye."

STEVE JENNINGS

Page's commercial disappointments were par for the course in 1988. The '60s superstars who had been able to cash checks on their legends for so long had finally run out of steam. Sure, Plant and George Harrison had hits, but both had gone through flops already and adapted their styles accordingly. Even the three '60s kings of longevity—Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder and the Rolling Stones—could no longer command huge numbers at retail or radio. Chart positions aside, though, one of the very best of 1988's new solo artists was a good-looking Caruso named Keith Richards.

Okay, you old dogs, Valhalla is yours.

PAUL ROBICHEAU

70s/88

Which left the world in the hands of—at last!—the Post-'60s Generations. Let's say there are two of those, the older being Springsteen to U2, and the younger being R.E.M. through whatever happens next. The older bunch, the new father figures, were at their best on the Amnesty International tour, the around-the-world marathon that put Springsteen, Sting and Peter Gabriel—figureheads all—with '80s heroes Youssou N'Dour and Tracy Chapman. That tour must have been carrying a gigbag of emotional loose ends. Springsteen and Gabriel were going through marital breakups, Chapman was newly drafted from obscurity to the world stage. And on top of that, they were all being forced to deal on a daily basis with something rock stars on tour never usually have to confront: equals.

Sting had been on the road for a solid year by the time Amnesty hit the States, having launched a tour in the wake of recording his album *Nothing Like the Sun* and filming a movie, *Stormy Monday*, in the early fall of '87. He had also lost both his parents, an emotional shock for any human psyche. It's possible that these tragedies, and the kicking-when-he's-down he received in the press (yeah, we know, including *Musician*) made him want to throw himself into his music and not come out. His concerts in the early part of the year felt emotionally disconnected, which further fired the circle of nastiness between Sting and the critics. But by the time of the Amnesty tour, he seemed to be willing to bend over backwards to help the audience connect, to bring the music to them rather than insist they come to the music.

Complimented on Sting's exceptionally outgoing, generous performance, one of his band members joked, "That's 'cause he's scared shitless of playing with Springsteen! Everbody on the tour is!" Whatever the motivation, it was inspiring to see Gabriel, Bruce and Sting giving their hearts to the cause—and the competition. It was also a kick to watch how much emphasis each of the three put on dancing. Gabriel was a twenty-first century Afro-tech tribesman, playing context-manipulator with tribal choreography. Sting, always graceful and athletic in his reggae-stepping days, had the fun-loving moves of a Gene Kelly with sex, leading all unanchored players across the lip of the stage while Kenny Kirkland soloed. Bruce reawakened some of the pinball romeo/would-be Latin lover moves of his club days.

NEAL PRESTON

These three musicians are men in the prime of their fame and with full command of their creative resources. Each can pull a crowd's strings at will. In going from young upstart to rock icon, each has traded spontaneity for professionalism and experience. But part of the charm of the dancing, of the frenzy to display youthful energy, was that Gabriel, Sting and Springsteen are all starting to take on the lines of middle age. Their eyes are sinking deeper, and cannot shut off their thoughtfulness even when the moment demands abandon. Gabriel swayed like a Bantu with his African tutors, but the movie screens alongside the stage showed closeups of a haggard face. He wore a microphone across his mouth fixed to a headset like an old aviator, and his voice wheezed a little when he sang while running. Finally, the audience was applauding not just his performance, but his stamina.

Sting, who still looks fit and youthful, was transformed into a physical cut-up. He danced the twist and quoted from the bossa nova and the boogaloo. Sure, this was all contrived, crowd-pleasing stuff. But it was charming in its contrivance. Sting was like a somber uncle who surprises the family at Christmas dinner by telling a rude joke. Even if it was carefully planned, you appreciate his wanting to loosen up and join the party.

At the end of Springsteen's set his eyes turned wild, his face contorted and he raced down the stage, off the stage, along the photographer's platform, over the crowd barrier, across the front row of the audience, back up onto the platform with a rolling leap, scampered on all fours back up onto the stage, hurled himself into the right rear corner and then, with a second-grader's sloppy bravado, executed four silly, uncoordinated somersaults, rose to his feet and (here he looked flushed; if he gasped for breath, as any normal 38-year-old man or teenage gymnast would, the illusion would be broken and the effort not worth the disappointment) snapped to attention in an overblown parody of a '60s soul man. Not

NEAL PRESTON

Guitar Effects For The Unaffected Guitarist.

Photo shot on location at Kiva Recording Studios, Memphis, Tennessee

"I've used all kinds of effects and I throw most of them away because they don't make sense for the guitar. What you get for the effect isn't worth putting in your signal path.

"The GEP50 is really guitarist-friendly. It offers the widest variety of *usable* guitar effects that I've come across, and you don't have to go back to college to learn how to use it.

"I can run through all the programs, change the parameters easily, and get a varied and wide assortment of really *appropriate* sounds.

"The GEP50 even gives me things I wasn't initially going for. But I always end up with a great guitar sound. It never lets me down."

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a bit winded and anxious to rock some more.

In their dances was the refusal to age gracefully or trade in boldness for dignity. In their dances Springsteen, Sting and Gabriel did their generation of rockers proud. They are on top of the heap now, they have succeeded to the stage that the Wonders and McCartneys finally moved past. They won't be on top forever either, but the next generation hasn't buried them yet.

80s/88

The next generation has, though, put on a definite shape. The year began with R.E.M. enjoying the biggest album of its career, with 10,000 Maniacs going gold, with Sinéad O'Connor hitting these shores for her first US tour, Hüsker Dü disbanding, and the Church scoring a hit. Terence Trent

D'Arby was, in January, faltering, his late-'87 assault on the Jackson/Prince throne seemingly over before it began. But D'Arby (and CBS Records) rallied and fought back up the chart until *Introducing the Hard Line...* was gilded in platinum. D'Arby was not the fully formed musical giant his supporters maintained, but neither was he the hype-of-the-month his detractors claimed. It's tempting to say that D'Arby ascended the charts through ego, money and force of will—tempting but wrong. Because every other aspect aside, this is a man who can write a song like "Sign Your Name," which means that this is a man we have to listen to.

D'Arby got the cover of *Rolling Stone* (which he said in the accompanying article was terribly important to him) when another act refused it. INXS frontman Michael Hutchence declined to be on the cover of the magazine if it meant appearing without his bandmates. It was a straightforward, no-hard-feelings gesture typical of the Australian sextet who, in spite of a slick image, valued hard work and loyalty above glamour. INXS had worked 10 years for their moment of glory, and when that moment came it lasted all year long. *Kick* was their most American album, direct and simple where their past LPs had been full of left turns. The band had been touring the world for years, working the US on every level and scoring hits on MTV, in new wave clubs and in discos. The trendies had ignored them after *Shabooh Shoobah* had its moment of underground glory in 1982. But INXS stayed out there, building a following the hard way. *Kick* demonstrated they had learned all their lessons and the pay-off was due. Their '88 American tour was the best of their career, finding a balance between the workingman's dance rock of their '83 shows, the sweaty funk of '84 and the somewhat overreaching campiness of '85. Those who had never paid attention to the band suddenly woke up to find INXS selling millions of records. Those who judge a musician by press-clips and lyric sheets complained that INXS were superficial. Well, so was "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours."

U2 walked into a storm of criticism with the release of *Rattle and Hum*, their movie/double-album/book. People who had been standing on the sidelines scratching their heads as U2 went from cult group to stars to phenomenon finally got a chance to vent their pent-up resentment. The album was not their best, and the media blitz gave those who had never liked the band a perfect target (see this issue's record review for an example). Their new songs were, objectively, pretty good—on a par with, say, a John Mellencamp record. But coming from U2, from whom so much is expected, they were greeted with a derision disproportionate to their shortcomings. *This* was the followup to *The Joshua Tree*? Well, yes and no. This was the fallout from *The Joshua Tree*. Like Springsteen's post-*Born in the USA* live album, it may simply clear away all the hype and expectations so that the band can get back to being musicians.

Like U2, it's always been hard to know if R.E.M. at their silliest are being pretentious or ironic (R.E.M.'s "Pop Song '89" suggests they aren't taking themselves too seriously). Like U2, R.E.M. wrestled with the debris of mainstream success. Like U2, they spent some of their studio time fretting that the critics and culties who had built them up would be waiting with their knives out now that they'd made it big. There were rumors that the new album would be R.E.M.'s big pop radio record. There were conflicting stories that it would be a return to arty obscurity. Released on Election Day '88 (Michael Stipe contributed time and money to the Dukakis campaign, a gesture of decency in an industry full of liberals too holy to support anyone who could ever be elected), *Green* did what no one expected: It stripped R.E.M. of their cultivated mystique and spoke directly. *Green*'s pop numbers were send-ups of rock convention, but at its heart were fragile songs like "Hairshirt" and "You Are the Everything," in which a lovely string band arrangement framed Stipe's clear(!) voice, conjuring images of lying in the back of a moving car, watching the stars through the rear window. Such unaffected romance might have been too corny (or revealing) for R.E.M. a few years ago, but by 1988 Buck, Mills, Stipe and Berry had the confidence to be modest. Hey, maybe they could take over for the Kinks.

In the midst of our annual giant-killing, let's keep perspective. If we are living in a year when R.E.M., U2, Chapman, D'Arby and INXS (as well as Sting, Gabriel, Springsteen and Prince) represent the *mainstream*, the mainstream is doing pretty damn well. There was a moment in the late '60s when the biggest rock stars—the Beatles, the Stones, Dylan and Hendrix—were also the best. But in the 20 years since that moment passed we have had a two-tiered, AM/FM split. We have passed through years when, regardless of how much good stuff was in the underground, the biggest stars were Chicago, Grand Funk, Barry Manilow, the Captain & Tennille, the Bee Gees, Kiss or Boston. Remember that awful patch a decade ago when the Clash, Costello, Prince and the Police were being held back by the tired old formula pop of Linda Ronstadt, Steve Miller, Fleetwood Mac and a dozen other warhorses? *Things have gotten a lot better.* It's possible to get sick of anything if radio plays it to death, but better to live in a world where U2 and R.E.M. are pushing their luck and occasionally falling on their faces, than to ever go back to that mediocrity. The biggest stars of 1978 played it safe and stuck to lukewarm formulas. Acts like U2 and R.E.M. are brave enough to plunge ahead without safety nets, risking occasional pratfalls. The biggest lesson of John Lennon's public career was that if you are truthful, and you deliver the goods often enough, your real fans will stick with you even when you act like a dope. In that way, real fans are a lot like real friends.

And it's getting better all the time. – **Bill Flanagan**

NEAL PRESTON

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THE YEAR IN MUSIC 8 NINETEEN 8

THE YEAR OF THE BIG DEAL

1988 in the Record Business

It was hard for anyone in the record industry to see how 1988 could've been any better than 1987, the year the compact disc helped rake in a record five-and-a-half billion dollars in sales. But, by gum, it was. And though much of these profits resulted from labels getting more for a CD than an LP, the numbers of units sold in '88 were higher than ever, higher even than the hallowed year of 1978. But to financier Lawrence Tisch, chairman of CBS, all this cyclical profit stuff was annoying, and not at all the sort of thing his stockholders approved of. And so it was that in October 1986 he let it be known the CBS Records group could be driven off the lot for a cool $1.25 billion.

CBS Records chief Walter Yetnikoff was definitely interested but was unable to put together a management buy-out of his own, so he turned to Michael Schulhof, vice chairman of Sony's U.S. operations, and asked if Sony wanted in. Abandoning their usual caution, the Japanese firm, led by Akio Morita, seized the moment, found financing and made an offer, only to discover Tisch was unable to convince the CBS board and founder William Paley to sell. A year later, in September of '87, Tisch jacked the price to $2 billion and the Japanese again immediately accepted, only to be rebuffed a second and third time by the CBS board. Sony execs became completely exasperated and backed off.

Meanwhile, the larger-than-life Yetnikoff had been running a vigorous campaign of backstairs harassment against Tisch, whom he came to call "the evil dwarf." Yetnikoff made every effort to appear indispensable to CBS, implying CBS' major artists were beholden only to him. He later said he felt he was "very instrumental in making Tisch crazy so he had to sell the company." But the kicker was the October 19, 1987 stock tumble. Tisch, firmly fixed on the six-month prospectus, saw it as the end of business as he knew it, and if Sony would still pay $2 billion, he would convince the board to sell. Sony would and did. The deal (complete with generous rewards to most of the record company management team for staying on) was consummated on January 5, 1988, and the year of the Big Deal began with a bang.

CBS execs Tommy Mottola (left) and Walter "the guru" Yetnikoff weighing their assets.

MCA's record arm, run by Yetnikoff's arch-rival Irving Azoff, was not going to leave all the deal-making to CBS. His target was Motown, clearly the sick man of the major labels. Berry Gordy, Jr.'s company had been laying off staffers in a steady trickle for the first half of the year, and extending a dismal late-'80s track record on the black and pop charts. MCA first made its offer in the fall of '86, around the same time Sony first bid on CBS, and like William Paley, Gordy was reluctant to part with his baby. But by June of '88 MCA's offer of $61 million for the record company (but not the valuable Jobete publishing catalog) was too good to pass up. MCA financed the deal with Boston Ventures (a venture-capital firm that once owned *Billboard* and *Musician*), and stipulated that at least 20 percent of Motown's new stock would stay in black hands. Fortunately for MCA, Stevie Wonder and Lionel Richie stayed in Motown's hands. Azoff promptly installed as president Jheryl Busby, who had built MCA's black division into a dynamo.

Meanwhile, back at CBS, Walter Yetnikoff fired long-time president Al Teller in April, effectively ridding himself of his only possible successor. Teller's replacement was Tommy Mottola, an old pal of Yetnikoff's and manager of John Cougar Mellencamp and Hall & Oates. This got Irving Azoff at MCA thinking about why his pop division hadn't done as well as his black and country arms, and he decided to fire Myron Roth as MCA Records president and hire Al Teller. Roth took a job with—naturally—CBS.

Not all the deal-making was as successful. Enigma set out to acquire Marty Scott's Passport label, but got cold feet when they looked at the books, especially when they saw the distribution arm of the company, JEM, was some $5.5 million in the red. Enigma backed out of the deal, but was unable to get back its $800,000 loan. Passport's Marty Scott not only claimed the back-out was "illegal," but brought a personal lawsuit against Enigma. When Enigma applied some legal pressure, Passport/JEM went Chapter 11; a new reorganization under John Matarazzo promised new Passport product in the late fall, but it'll be an uphill fight.

Much of the big deal activity in 1988 was not in the boardroom, though, but the courtroom. Two closely watched cases in the spring dealt with the involvement of organized crime in the record business, and MCA and Azoff figured in both. The first was directed at a reputed Gambino mob family soldier named Sal Pisello who had ties to MCA. In attempting to prove Pisello hadn't paid income taxes, the government detailed a range of questionable activities Pisello had undertaken in cooperation with MCA. The most dramatic moment at the Pisello trial came when the defense tried to impeach a prosecution witness, charging the witness had asked a cut-out buyer to include as part of his payment $50,000 in a brown

CONTINUED ON PAGE 80

The Easiest Way To Get A Hard Sound

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THE YEAR IN MUSIC 8 NINETEEN 8

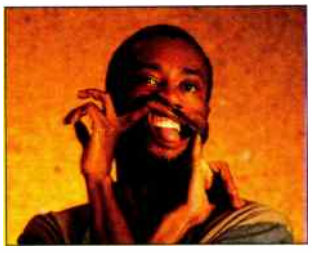
AWARDS + HONORARIA

THE ERNIE KOVACS BRONZED CIGAR IN RECOGNITION OF MOST CREATIVE USE OF A NEW MEDIUM to Prince, for the compact-disc version of *Lovesexy*. Prince insisted that on the CD, unlike the LP, all the songs be run together in one long track—making it a real pain in the ass to find individual cuts.

AN OSCAR to David Byrne (really!).

BOX OF C-60S FOR MOST BOOTLEGGED ALBUM to Prince (again, lucky stiff) for *The Black Album*.

A TIN-PLATED CRAB FOR TOP CRITICAL RANT OF THE YEAR to Glenn Kenny for his attack on Bobby McFerrin's hit "Don't Worry, Be Happy" in the *Village Voice*, bastion of academic populists and Stalinist crybabies. Kenny accused McFerrin of blam-

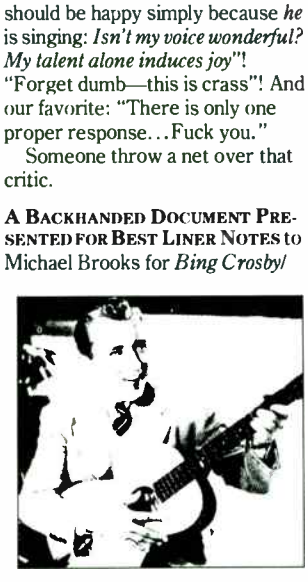


MICHELE CLEMENT

ing the homeless for their suffering because the song says, "Ain't got no place to lay your head/Somebody came and took your bed/Don't worry, be happy." Excerpts: "The most offensive single of the year"! "Self-love gushes from 'Don't Worry'"! "An insipid sentiment at best"! "This song's very presence—coming out of speakers everywhere—scrapes against reality"! "Here is a man saying we should be happy simply because *he* is singing: *Isn't my voice wonderful? My talent alone induces joy*"! "Forget dumb—this is crass"! And our favorite: "There is only one proper response...Fuck you."

Someone throw a net over that critic.

A BACKHANDED DOCUMENT PRESENTED FOR BEST LINER NOTES to Michael Brooks for *Bing Crosby/The Crooner/The Columbia Years 1928-1934*. Brooks was hilariously honest, assessing tracks with comments like "this really is a dreadful song," "grows on one like a skin fungus," and "just what the hell did [Crosby producer] Jack Kapp think he was doing, letting his number one artist record stuff like this?"



THE LAST TIME I SAW RICHARD MERIT BADGE FOR HONESTY to 'Til Tuesday, for "'J' for Jules."

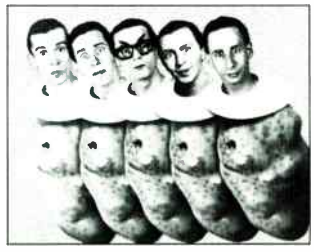
EBET ROBERTS

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS MEDALLIONS FOR MUSICAL PIONEERING

- Huey Lewis discovered the third world
- Steve Miller discovered jazz
- U2 discovered America

COMEBACKS THAT SIZZLED
Aerosmith, Beach Boys, Eric Carmen, Cheap Trick, George Harrison, Rick James, indie radio promoters

COMEBACKS THAT FIZZLED



Eric Burdon, Devo, Thomas Dolby, Savoy Brown, Boz Scaggs, ex-Go Go's Jane Wiedlin and Gina Schock

MOST SURPRISING COMEBACK
Louis Armstrong

EBET ROBERTS

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR
Cowboy Junkies, Living Colour, the Pixies, Spookie, New Bohemians

R.E.M.

JAY BLAKESBERG

PETER BUCK

I must admit there are times we'll be sitting together when we'll look at each other and laugh and go, 'Right, we're the new pop heroes.' It's just stupid. The whole position of being in a rock band is stupid. It's really one of the most embarrassing ways to make a living that you could possibly imagine. We all make fun of Michael because he's the guy on the cover of all the magazines. He makes fun of me because I'm *Mister Rock 'n' Roll* and Mike 'cause he's *Mister Musician*. We're friends. We do this stuff. Articles come out, we look at 'em and we just laugh. It doesn't mean anything. A week after we finish a record, I know its worth, the worth of the songs, how well we did them, what they mean. And that's my opinion. I could rate them like Robert Christgau, A-B-C-D, and it has nothing to do with what anyone else does. Same with the other guys.

"We've worked really hard to sell this band with something other than the way we look or act. Of course, we're working with what we have! The way we look, none of us are going to be teen heroes. We make a very strong point of not being on the covers of the records. The songs we write, the way the record covers look, the videos, are our world. And you're invited to enter. We're not going to give you a world that's easy, but this is it: walk in." – *Bill Flanagan*

TWELVE ACTION-PACKED MONTHS

ONLY IF HE GETS A DECENT ADVANCE
An Austrian novelty firm wants to market Mick Jagger's ashes in hourglasses selling for a million dollars each. "This is a chance for him to become a symbol for motion after his death," said Trend Connection co-owner Guenter Roth.

DON'T WORRY, BE STUPID
Michael Dukakis' campaign people asked Bobby McFerrin for permission to use his song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" in a commercial attacking George Bush's know-nothingism. McFerrin, a Duke supporter, declined. Then Bush himself started using it, without permission. This prompted a letter of protest from McFerrin's manager, Linda Goldstein. "While we are amused that the Bush campaign would find its political philosophy reflected in the song," Goldstein wrote, "we do not wish to have the composition associated with any presidential candidate." Goldstein later said she'd heard that Bush plays the song "in a limo all the time," and that Bush wanted to invite McFerrin along for a few days on the campaign trail. McFerrin, she said, would "rather eat castor oil."

WHAT BECOMES A LEGEND MOST?
Billy Vera was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Seven months later—in a pathetic attempt at catching up—so was John Lennon. A Walk of Fame star isn't what it used to be.

NOT FADE AWAY
Scare story of the year: "Compact Discs Fade Out After Eight Years' Use." That was the headline of a British newspaper story that quoted Michael Lee, commercial

director of CD manufacturer Nimbus Records. Lee also stated that some inks used in printing on CDs were eating into and destroying the discs. The story generated a lot of heat, rebuttals and retractions. Two months later, Michael Lee was dead.

DIRTY TRICKS GIFT DEPT.
Last Christmas MCA Records sent out chart wheels listing hotels, restaurants, etc., for various American cities. Under "venues" for New York was one guaranteed eyebrow-raiser: the Fillmore East, which closed in 1971. Anyone curious enough to call the accompanying phone number got another surprise: the office of CBS Records head, Walter Yetnikoff.

IT COULD DRIVE A BAND TO DRINK
Poor UB40. Their reggae version of Neil Diamond's "Red Red Wine" was a monster hit in Europe in 1983, and an alternative/college hit in the U.S.A. in 1984. This year they released a new album—but all American radio wanted to play was that damn "Red Red Wine." Again. The band's U.S. label got it to number one, and UB40 got mad.

MARK FAGUNDES

TIME FOR A REUNION
After 11 years, *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* reached gold-album status.

A LITTLE R-E-S-P-E-C-T
Her contract up with Arista Records, Aretha Franklin was said to be asking a seven-figure minimum per album for her next go-round.

BUT SHE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT "SISTER"
Prince's half-sister Lorna Nelson filed suit against Prince for allegedly taking the lyrics for his song "U Got the Look" from her song "What's Cooking in This Book." Suit dismissed.

ALL IN THE FAMILY
Former Beach Boys manager Stephen Love, brother of right-wing Republican toady Mike Love, pleaded no contest to one count of grand theft for embezzling $900,000 from the band.

SAY IT LOUD, I'M HOOKED AND I'M PROUD
James Brown was arrested for possession of the drug PCP.

3 USES FOR 3-INCH CDs
1) hoop earrings
2) water conservation filter in three-inch pipes
3) starting a fire in dry brush

A TRUE ORIGINAL
Mick Jagger was found not guilty of copyright infringement for "Just Another Night."

DECLINE OF THE GREAT POWERS
Atlantic Records celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a grueling 13-hour benefit concert that showcased the label's cavalcade of talent. Representing the 1950s were the Coasters, Ruth Brown and LaVern Baker; representing the '60s were Wilson Pickett, the

U2


DAVE HOGAN

B O N O

Rattle & Hum, even just the sound of the words, gives off a certain vibe. We wanted to give our fans and ourselves a bit of a surprise. So we put out a low-priced double record, but it wasn't just an ordinary live record. We did irreverent cover versions of Bob Dylan songs and the Beatles, and sort of had a laugh at ourselves. It's a record made by four *fans* of rock 'n' roll." – *Timothy White*

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Tracy Chapman


NEAL PRESTON

First, she has a great voice. There were an impressive number of talented singer/songwriters following their wandering boot heels down the blue highways in 1988, but not many of them could sing as well as Tracy Chapman. Like Van Morrison she has the sort of resonant vocal gift—strong yet quirky—that can bounce against an acoustic guitar rhythm, stirring up richer tonal colors than the usual folkie strum and drone. That made it possible for Chapman to give solo concerts that had a full musical, as well as lyrical, range.

Of course, most of the attention lavished on this 24-year-old newcomer was fixed on her songs, and at their best ("Fast Car," "For You," "Baby Can I Hold You," "Talkin' 'Bout a Revolution") her songwriting is indeed extraordinary. But on her first album her voice was so sure, and David Kershenbaum's production so subtly supportive, that even the immature songs—the strident leftovers from the Massachusetts folk circuit—went down like honey. The inverse of the old joke about Wagner's music being better than it sounds.

Nineteen-eighty-eight was a remarkable year for Tracy Chapman. Her first album—acoustic protest music by an unknown black woman—appeared in late March. At first "Fast Car," her single, was only heard on tiny folk and women's radio stations. But by the time the first single completed its run in October, it had made Chapman an international sensation—her album had gone to number one in countries all over the world, including the U.S.A., and sold millions. Before "Fast Car" was done Chapman was sharing the world's stages with Springsteen, Sting and Gabriel, playing to stadiums full of people who knew her words and sang along. Has anyone ever gone so far so fast on a first song?

Ironically, the spectacular rise of this modern protest singer was achieved through the smooth efficiency of practiced capitalism. Chapman was initially championed by one of the country's most powerful music publishers, and blessed with the personal attention of the president of a major record company. That sort of support would be the envy of many established artists, but the wheels of the Chapman machine were further greased by a squad of independent promo men

CONTINUED ON PAGE 94

LED ZEPPELIN

SUE PLUMMER

ROBERT PLANT

On Singing "Stairway to Heaven" Again

It was a combination of elation and, um, I guess I was eating my words furiously. I never, ever felt that I'd told so many untruths in my life. I'd said I would never sing that confounded song again. And there I was singing that confounded song again. And not very well because I was hoarse from my solo tour. I was astounded that I'd fallen so easily back into playing with Jimmy and Jonesy again, with two drummers flailing away and neither doing half as well as one drummer. But halfway through the set I wished I hadn't done it because I knew that although it was a damn good reason to be back together again, I was letting myself down, my individuality, my persona, everything I've worked for. Robert Plant was being superseded by the return of the monster."

– Charles M. Young

Rascals, Ben E. King and Sam Moore; representing the '70s were Led Zeppelin, the Bee Gees, Roberta Flack, Genesis, Yes and Foreigner; representing himself was Dan Aykroyd; and representing the present were Stacey Q, Nu Shooz and Debbie Gibson.

And Speaking of the Led Zep Reunion...

What the heck was Henry Kissinger doing there, in tux and cummerbund, shaking hands and signing autographs? As he sat back in his expensive stageside seat we imagined Super-K drifting into

HOPKINS

reverie: "Ach, 'Whole Lotta Love' reminds me of the invasion of Cambodia! Ahh—mein fave! Everytime I hear 'Stairway to Himmel' it takes me back to the Christmas bombing of '72!"

Those Who Repeat History Should Be Condemned To Remember It

On the double album *Rattle and Hum*, U2 manages to invoke the heaviest of '60s musicians: the Beatles ("Helter Skelter," "God Part II"); Bob Dylan ("Love Rescue Me," "Watchtower"); Jimi Hendrix ("All Along the Watchtower," "Star Spangled Banner"); and John Coltrane ("Angel of Harlem," "Bullet the Blue Sky"). Then Bono sings, "I don't believe in the '60s in the golden age of pop/You glorify the past when the future dries up."

Rock Revisionism: Vanishing Girl

The CD of the Cure's first album lacks two songs from the original release. According to manager Chris Parry, Cure leader Robert Smith now considers one of the proscribed tunes "sexist."

Official Disco Revival!

Oldies label Rhino Records issued *Village People Greatest Hits*.

The Teflon Artist

We don't know what Elton John did this year, but apparently it was popular.

Back in the Miller High Life: Future Endorsements for Steve Winwood

"Can't Find My Way Home":
Eveready flashlight batteries
"Gimme Some Muffin":
McDonald's
"Sparkplugs of High Heel Boys":
Champion
"Shanghai Noodle Factory":
La Choy
"Dear Mr. Whipple":
Charmin

Quotes You Might Have Missed

"It's difficult for me to imagine a more pretentious occupation than that of professional critic, a task commonly inherited by the failed actor, the failed musician and...the failed writer." – *Sting*

"I'm trying to get the other guys in the band to realize that we're in a business and that it has nothing to do with whether we like each other as human beings." – *Felix Cavaliere* on the reunited Rascals

"She wants no sexist promotion whatsoever, which means that 90 percent of the rock albums must go." – *Ron Prilliman*, record store manager, on Media Watch founder Ann Simonton's protesting artwork used in Guns N' Roses' album

"Younger kids have no qualms about [musicians shilling for beer, etc., on radio and TV] because they've lived with it all their life." – *Barbara Lippert*, advertising critic, *Adweek*

"AOR [album-oriented radio] is not the first place to look for new artists." – *Al Teller*, former president of CBS Records

"MTV, you spineless twerps. You refuse to play 'This Note's For You' because you're afraid to offend your sponsors. What does the M in MTV stand for? Music or money?" – *Neil Young*

"I thought the first half of the [Prince *Lovesexy*] show was just one long tune with a variety of prurient dancing. Actually, I learned later that there were probably eight or nine different tunes involved but only the cognoscenti can tell where one stops and the other starts." – *Robert L. Steed, The Atlanta Constitution*

"I can assure you I didn't plan that!"
– Yoko Ono
referring to Albert Goldman's *The Lives of John Lennon*

"At the risk of sounding pompous, I've got a feeling that the '90s might be better in terms of radio. The '80s tended to breed a sort of defeatist attitude among writers and radio people. They say, 'Oh, a record's great but how on Earth can it work its way through the "I-need-all-your-love-tonight" stuff?' But I think things are changing for the better."

– Mark Knopfler

HOPKINS

"[Mick Jagger's] always been chickenshit to get on a stage with the Beach Boys." – Beach Boy *Mike Love* at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Dinner

I Wanna Be Black (On Camera)

- Steve Winwood's "Roll with It" video shows him leading a mostly black band in some sweaty, backroads juke joint filled with lasciviously undulating black couples.
- Glenn Frey's "True Love" video follows a trio of white suburban teens to a dingy bar in a tough black neighborhood where soulman Frey is fronting the local R&B outfit.
- Michael Jackson's "Bad" video centers on Jackson's having to prove that he's "bad" to his ghetto buddies by redoing a sequence from "West Side Story" while wearing 20 pounds of chrome buckles on his leather jacket.

A Dream Deferred

ERI TROPEATS

After years of legal hassles, the deafness of A&R people and plain bad luck, NRBQ finally got a record deal. Months of negotiations preceded the band's signing to Virgin Records in September. Unfortunately, when Terry, Joey, Tommy and Big Al showed up for the official signing ceremony, nobody had the contracts. So they had their pictures taken shaking hands with label execs over blank pieces of paper.

SIZE IS EVERYTHING
The Musicland chain of record stores advised managers to keep Prince's *Lovesexy* LP hidden behind the counter. The tape and CD versions could be displayed openly.

IS THIS THE BIZARRO WORLD?
In a complete reversal of the usual order of the universe, Neil Young did a bad tour, made a rotten album—but redeemed it all with a terrific video.

WHAT THE BEATLES DID THIS YEAR
• Sued various parties involved in the manufacture and distribution of compact discs of early pre-EMI Beatles recordings.
• Sued Charly Records in England to prevent the release of their 1962 demo tape for Decca Records.

MEANWHILE, THE ROLLING STONES...
Sued to prevent the auction of a 1962 demo recording. Will this rivalry never stop?

THROWING *STONE* AT GLASS HOUSES
The press got into an uproar investigating rumors of ballot-stuffing in *Rolling Stone*'s survey of the hundred best singles of the last 25 years. The widely-believed charge (hell, we believe it) was that the unlikely appearance of Billy Joel's "Uptown Girl" and Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is" among the classics was ordered by big boss/social maven Jann Wenner as a favor to his pals Billy Joel and Mick Jones. And *Stone* got stuffed themselves when it was revealed Cleveland's WMMS had won "best large-market station" in the readers' poll several years running by buying up a thousand extra copies and mailing in the ballots.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Beatles: Recording Sessions, Mark Lewisohn
The Death of Rhythm and Blues, Nelson George
Elvis Closeup, Jay Leviton and Ger Rijff
Kicks, No. 6

VITAL VIEWING
Bird
Tom Waits, *Big Time*
Candy Mountain
The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years
U2, Rattle & Hum

JOE SATRIANI

NEIL ZLOZOWER

I really thought I was making a record for ourselves and a handful of guitar players. It makes me laugh. [Producer] John Cuniberti and I went out of our way to make a record nobody else would let us make. Any unorthodox thing we thought anyone else would say no to, we wanted to do. We never thought about being commercial, because we figured nobody would know the record existed. And instead it opened up a little door in time that happens every 12 to 15 years, when people decide they'll listen to rock instrumentals. It's funny that it would be a door-opener for other artists, because it was really just supposed to be this wild, cathartic, experimental experience for ourselves."

– *Ted Drozdowski*

CHANGES COME SLOW

The Year in Jazz

Big talents making little dents, little talents making big dents—the state of jazz and other improvised musics in the last 365 days of Reagan wasn't drastically different from that of the past few years. If that sounds like creaky pessimism, it shouldn't. Even after a stylistic revolution, it takes time for the dust to settle. Social activists and horn players will tell you straight: Changes come slow.

That *can* be a plus. The resurgence of the can-do little big band, like the one Charles Mingus utilized so well, has turned into one of the more reliable forums for jazz intrigue. Six-, seven- and eight-piece units have been revitalized ever since David Murray's Octet and Henry Threadgill's Sextett reopened those Mingusian doors several years back, and some of this year's better LPs bear that fruit. Clarinetist/composer John Carter's *Fields* (Gramavision) kept an eye on detail while eliciting a huge sound. Threadgill's Sextett put out another historically rich and evocative album, *Easily Slip into Another World* (RCA). Tim Berne followed up his electric debut on CBS with an even better acoustic record, *Sanctified Dreams*, wherein the altoist/composer utilized his five players to the utmost, crafting a quixotic sprawl (ditto for bassist Mark Helias' LP *The Current Set*). Most unexpected, and the best of the bunch, was *8 Bold Souls* (Sessoms/N.M.D.S.), released early this year. The band, led by Chicago saxist/composer Ed Wilkerson, recently blew some East Coast minds with their poise and oomph.

These records, of course, didn't get very much print or airplay. Typically they're relegated to the avant-garde ghetto. No head-solo-head patterns? Avant-garde. Constantly shifting around? Avant-garde. Music that makes more than one statement? Avant-garde. Some listeners hear them as accurate, perceptive reflections of today's culture, urban and otherwise. Others find them daunting, perhaps because they've been listening to "jazz" radio shows (Sanborn, Fattburger, Van Morrison) where the person spinning the discs doesn't know who wrote "Well You Needn't." They read in *Time* or *People* that Wynton is a master (which he might be), and they know that jazz is "back."

That's part of the problem: Old is in. Obviously, there is much to be learned from investigating tradition, but simply

CONTINUED ON PAGE 94

THE BITCH IS BACK
We love Graham Parker, we really do, but did he have to spend *every* interview complaining about record companies and that he still wasn't a big star? How about GP once acknowledging that he has subjected his fans to more than a couple of mediocre albums, that he tours less often than the Dalai Lama, and that in spite of his poor track record *five* major American labels have signed him?

COVER VERSIONS
Copy Cats, Johnny Thunders & Patti Palladin
"Dark Star," Henry Kaiser
"Love Will Tear Us Apart," Swans
"Tales of Brave Ulysses," Nova Express
"Train Kept A Rollin'," Eighth Route Army
"Freddie's Dead," Fishbone

CHEUSE

Unsung Heroes

JAY BLAKESBERG

Paul Kelly and the Messengers: Further proof that Australia's backbreaking pub scene forces players to get into top shape or get out of the biz. Kelly is an understated, uncommonly talented rock songwriter who plays muscular music without a wrong move. He is also completely unglamorous and has not yet caught the attention of the media machine. Check out his latest album, *Under the Sun*, and see him when he plays your town.

The Divinyls: Speaking of Australia....Christina Amphlett and Mark McEntee play stadium rock better than anybody else—so where's the stadium? We can blame them for limiting their 1988 tour to one wild week (from New England to New York to Washington to California) because Christina had to get back down under for an acting job. But we also have to wonder how an album as radio-ready as *Temperamental* couldn't even reach the top 200.

JOHN SOARES

EBET ROBERTS

Taj Mahal: Maybe it was Pangaea's re-release of *Conjure*, or Columbia's *Best Of* CD. It might have been one of his dependably joyous live shows, or the witty, knowing version of "Bourgeois Blues" on the Guthrie/Leadbelly tribute album. We're not sure what it was, but somewhere in there it dawned on us that Taj was great when he started, he was great in the middle, and he's great today. Sometimes when a musician keeps his quality high and his profile low, we take him for granted. We've been taking Taj Mahal for granted too long.

DEF LEPPARD

TIM RONEY/RETNA

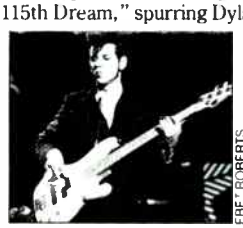
PHIL COLLEN

This year has been two total extremes. When we started to tour it was really slow. The album stopped selling around three million copies, which is still really good but kinda disappointing for us. We hadn't even broke even by then, in recording costs. We had to sell about five million [to break even]...really scary. We actually thought it was over. We said, 'Oh well, it's done okay, but it didn't do great. The tour didn't do that great; it's okay, though.' And all of a sudden the album went back up, went to number one, the single came out, went to number one—very weird. At the beginning of the year we were doin' three-quarter-sold-out arenas. We'd actually come back and do the same building three nights in a row and sell it all out. It's a real relief. You shouldn't spend four years recording; the studio bills were horrendous. There was nothing we could do about it. We had to make a good album." – *Scott Isler*

RETNA LTD

EBET ROBERTS

Most Valuable Players: Bob Dylan's touring backup trio of G. E. Smith, Kenny Aaronson and Christopher Parker rocked like a burning engine on material like "Memphis Blues Again" and "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream," spurring Dylan on to his most consistently exciting performances in years. Bandleader Smith was brilliant on the acoustic numbers (mimicking mandolin parts; keeping a slide perched on his fourth finger while picking with the other three), and on the electric songs adapted an antique Robbie Robertson Fender tone to his own studio-sharp chops. The musicians obviously enjoyed riding on Dylan's bumper down whatever wild curves he navigated. After so many tours where the backup band looked scared to death of what Bob was going to do next, it was a joy to see players keeping up with—and getting a kick out of—Dylan's eccentricities.



EBET ROBERTS

EBET ROBERTS

GEORGE HARRISON

P. FIGEN

I think over the years I've been improving vocally. The singing's improved for I don't know what reason; I think maybe because now I don't *worry* about it so much! I've learned that with guitar-playing, songwriting *or* singing, it's just a matter of how to get the best out of my abilities. Because we all have limitations in some ways, you know. The main thing to be overcome is just the *fear* about how good or bad you are. I think the moment you don't worry about it you tend to sing better.

"In the old Beatles records, I mean, there's a lot of records we made—songs of mine—where, if there was one thing I could do again in my life it would be just to get them back, and I know in *one take* I could sing some of these songs so much better than I did at that time when I was so paranoid!"

– *Timothy White*

HEY, DO YOU HAVE GEORGE MICHAEL IN A CAN?

JIM HOPKINS

I've never really been interested in big-name session guys," George Michael says. "When I've come across them I've found them extremely non-creative. Also, I have a fair sense of loyalty to the people I started out working with." Big talk for a guy whose zillion-selling *Faith* album contained no musician credits. This was the year Michael became a superstar, but the industry was flooded with rumors that George's live shows were prerecorded.

Now take this in context: In 1988 lots of touring bands were secretly using backing tracks. The spread of the Synclavier—the studio in a keyboard—had blurred the line between what was fair use of recorded samples and what was plain old lip-synching. Depeche Mode's rhythm tracks were canned. Toni Childs obviously used tapes for her background vocals (the singers weren't there), and Rod Stewart's drummer had the sense of humor to get up while his drum solo was still going on and walk to the edge of the stage. But the George Michael rumor was the one that was heard over and over. Here's what Rob Kahane, Michael's manager, had to say about it:

"What we use—as does Madonna, Michael Jackson and a lot of other people—is a Synclavier, on the things George didn't believe the band could duplicate exactly. But it's only pieces of things intercut with the band playing.

"Are there guitars playing without any people playing guitars? No. Are there guitars playing, maybe, with additional guitars on tape? Yes. I'd say it's 80 percent the band, 20 percent Synclav, and of the 20 percent Synclavier, I'd say you're talking about 60 percent of the songs. Forty percent are just live." And how about the story, sworn to by a big-time manager, that Michael's vocals were on tape? "Oh, please!" Kahane groans. "That guy's smoking something! On my daughter's life, that's the farthest thing from the truth. There's definitely a Synclavier used and we're not embarrassed about it. In fact, I think Michael Jackson has two."

THE ALBATROSS LANDS

The Year in Hip-Hop

Nineteen-eighty-eight might best be remembered as the year the hip-hop Albatross landed. Like the man-powered airplane that made its way over the English Channel a few years back, hip-hop, in the 12 months preceding, has again clearly demonstrated that powered flight does not necessarily require a turbofan.

Assuming there were any left after Run-D.M.C.'s or the Beastie Boys' respective triple- and quadruple-platinum album assaults, people still talkin' all that "rap-is-just-a-fad-it's-not-creative-it'll-go-away" jazz were quickly shut up by Stetsasonic on *In Full Gear*, or shot up by Public Enemy's *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, two of the best albums of '88. Most honorable mentions to Big Daddy Kane for *Long Live the Kane* and Jungle Brothers for *Straight Out the Jungle*.

Hip-hop was marked with greater diversity, activity, originality, visibility and commercial success this year than any year previous, if the activities of the major labels were any indication. "Duh. This shit makes money," they said as distribution deals got signed left and right. I mean, even Mantronik got loose (of indie Sleeping Bag Records), courtesy of Capitol Records.

Here, in no particular order of importance, are some of the year's top stories: In '88, the Zero-to-2.3 Million in Seven Seconds or Less Award goes to D.J. Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince for *He's the D.J., I'm the Rapper*, an easily read double album as instructive as its title, from which comes ultra-hit "Parents Just Don't Understand." Rob Base & D.J. E-Z Rock retrofitted Lyn Collins' "Think" and Strafe's "Set If Off" to come up with an infinite loop of call and response, "It Takes Two." Salt-N-Pepa's "Push It" and J.J. Fad's "Supersonic" are records which some purists see as being directly related to each other, though not necessarily to hip-hop. The former sold a million (the first hip-hop single to go gold since Doug E. Fresh & the Get Fresh Crew's "The Show"), the Fad is definitely not one, and Salt-N-Pepa's sophomore release, *A Salt with a Deadly Pepa*, reportedly shipped gold.

Melle-Mel cold-vicked (i.e., "took by force") the championship belt at the New Music Seminar's M.C./D.J. battle. Fab 5 Freddy Brathwaite directed two of hip-hop's most elegant

CONTINUED ON PAGE 94

ROLLING STONES

LYNN GOLOSMITH

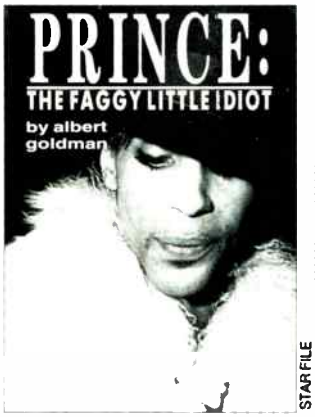
KEITH RICHARDS

Ronnie's dad eventually kicked the bucket a year ago, but it was hardly a strain. They kept chopping bits off him, and he just wouldn't die. They had to chop his legs off. Ronnie comes from this incredible family—gypsy bargemen in the early part of this century. Whole different kind of existence. His dad was a boozer, and an incredibly talented guy. Could remember folksongs that go back hundreds of years. I saw him at Ronnie's wedding in his wheelchair with this little cap on, the spotlight on him, and he was singing these amazing old songs. Everyone was riveted. It was like watching Segovia. Or Roy Orbison. A true master. Some little bloke goes onstage and grows 10 feet. He suddenly has stature. It's indefinable. To me, what's interesting is the indefinable. It's like recording. You meter everything that's going down on tape, and the lights are flashing, and you've got all these readings, but what you're looking to get on the record, there ain't a meter for. It's that feeling, that groove, that extra exhilaration, that lift, that air. And there's no meter in the world that can measure that. And that's what I look for, what I try to put in a record." – *Charles M. Young*

THE GOOD STUFF

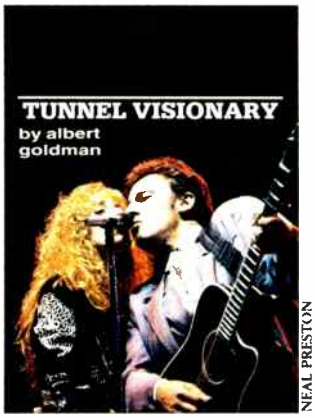
Pontiac, Lyle Lovett
"Better Be Home Soon," Crowded House
"Beds Are Burning," Midnight Oil
Shooting Rubberbands at the Stars, Edie Brickell & New Bohemians
"Love and Mercy," Brian Wilson
"Colors," Ice-T
Short Sharp Shocked, Michelle Shocked
"Feels Like Rain," John Hiatt
"Coupe De Ville," Neil Young
At My Window, Townes Van Zandt
"Death Is Not the End," Bob Dylan
"Applecart," B.A.D.
Dream of Life, Patti Smith
"Zimbabwe," Toni Childs
Tracy Chapman
"Under the Milky Way," the Church
Kick, INXS
"My Secret Place," Joni Mitchell
"Mexico," Steve Forbert
Permanent Record, Joe Strummer
"Yé Ké Yé Ké," Mory Kante
"Bass (How Low Can You Go)," Simon Harris
The Trinity Session, Cowboy Junkies
"Why?" 7A3
The Walking, Jane Siberry
Daydream Nation, Sonic Youth
The Tenement Year, Pere Ubu
"Crash," the Primitives
"No More Rock N' Roll," Schoolly-D
"Sidewalking," Jesus and Mary Chain
No Friction, Fool Proof
"Jump in the River," Sinéad O'Connor
Conscience, Womack & Womack
Life's Too Good, Sugarcubes
"Chain Gang-Rap," Shinehead
"Never Never," Hugh Cornwell
"Zikar Hai Apha Mehfil Mehfil," Najma
Salty Tears, Semi-Twang
"Stardust," Rob Wasserman with Aaron Neville
"I Think She Likes Me," Treat Her Right
"Just Got Paid," Johnny Kemp
The Christians
Toots in Memphis, Toots Hibbert
Bonk, Big Pig
The Frenz Experiment, the Fall
Take 6, Take 6
A Fierce Pancake, Stump
I'm Your Man, Leonard Cohen
Any Other Way to Go?, Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers
Edge of the City, the Kinsey Report
Machismo, Cameo
Virgin Beauty, Ornette Coleman
The Ritual, Kahil El'Zabar
Audio Visualscapes, Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition
"Tomorrow People," Ziggy Marley
"Don't Turn Around," Aswad
"Da Butt," E.U.
"My Backyard," House of Freaks
"Limbo," Bryan Ferry

UPCOMING ALBERT GOLDMAN BOOKS



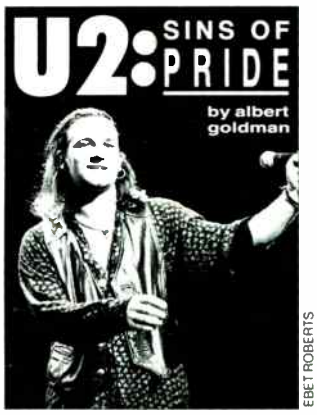
STAR FILE

Although he began his research for this volume as the Purple One's greatest fan, fat Al's unbiased digging forced him to concede reluctantly that, far from being a musical genius, the Minneapolis Maverick is in fact "a perverted, cheek-sucking paranoid shaking his homely octaroon buttocks to the barbaric jungle rhythms of his uneducated lackeys in order to undermine the integrity of America's self-image at a time when the U.S. is involved in crucial arms-limitation negotiations with a canny enemy anxious to take advantage of any moral weakness." Interviews with Tipper Gore and Allan Bloom support Goldman's thesis.



NEAL PRESTON

Red-hot innuendos about the love affair between Bruce and Clarence (Goldman recreates the Boss's dirty thoughts during that "Thunder Road" kiss) kick off the *People* magazine excerpts from this scorching exposé. Suggestions that Little Steven's head is tattooed with the mark of the beast are supported by Al's inability to produce a photo of Sugar Miami without his do-rag, and *USA Today* leaps on Goldman's revelation that Springsteen once admitted that he knows "what it means to steal, to cheat, to lie." Several chapters are devoted to the Boss's neurotic denial of his Jewishness, which the author sees as proof of Springsteen's self-loathing. In-depth research includes insights by Mike Appel, Lynn Goldsmith, Bruce's old parochial-school teachers, 1200 anonymous sources and the roadies who lost his canoe.



EBET ROBERTS

Goldman suggests that U2 are vainglorious Nuremberg-level egomaniacs with designs on founding their own religion who wish to exploit the tensions in Ireland in order to elevate Bono to a position from which he can loot the Vatican treasury, while Adam Clayton has a Guinness brewery attached to an IV unit in his neck. Drummer Larry Mullen, Jr. is described as "an inarticulate, ape-browed imbecile who plays to a click track," and the Edge is repeatedly referred to as "behatted." *Newsweek*'s balanced review notes: "Goldman paints U2 as willing dupes of Ian Paisley, leading simpleminded Irish youth into the arms of Protestant monarchy. Their defenders say they are just a good rock 'n' roll band. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between."

"Start a Fire," Graham Parker
"Unchained Melody," Power Tools
"Say Say," Baron
"Loosey's Rap," Rick James featuring Roxanne Shanté
Winter Was Hard, Kronos Quartet
"I Just Wanted to See You So Bad," Lucinda Williams
"We're Not Over Yet," Clive Gregson and Christine Collister
"First of May," James Taylor
"I'm Jealous Dear," Helen Watson
Come Home to Stay, Ricky Skaggs
"The Democratic Circus," Talking Heads
Talk Is Cheap, Keith Richards
"The Shouting Stage," Joan Armatrading
"Out of Town," the Silos
Folkways: A Vision Shared
"What in the World," Velvet Elvis
"Jungle Swing," Willie Dixon
Land of Dreams, Randy Newman
"Crawl in Bed," the Del-Lords
"Killing Time," John Cafferty & the Beaver Brown Band
Iron Path, Last Exit
The Talking Animals, T-Bone Burnett
"Balloon Man," Robyn Hitchcock & the Egyptians
"Nothing Like a Hundred Miles," Ray Charles
Traveling Wilburys Vol. One
"The Only One," Billy Bragg
"Whatever You Please," Dream Syndicate
Shadowland, k.d. lang
"Century's End," Donald Fagen
Amnesia, Richard Thompson
"Hairshirt," R.E.M.
"You Cage," Throwing Muses
Everything's Different Now, 'Til Tuesday
Seize the Rainbow, Sonny Sharrock Band
"Cult of Personality," Living Colour
Blue Skies, Cassandra Wilson
Stay Awake

IT WAS THAT KIND OF PUBLICITY TOUR

"Joan Armatrading knows the question is coming. Everywhere she goes people ask her about Tracy Chapman...'I couldn't actually tell you,' apologizes Armatrading. 'I've never heard a complete song of hers.'"

– *Newsweek*, Sept. 12,'88

"I've heard snippets," she says, "but I've never heard a whole song, and I've never heard the album, so I don't feel I'm in a position to comment on comparisons. I suppose I should be curious, but I haven't got 'round to it yet." *She hasn't heard the album?* "Well, I don't listen to the radio and I don't find myself sort of purposefully going in search of a Tracy Chapman album." – *Rolling Stone*, Oct. 6,'88

"Would you like to meet Tracy Chapman? You have, after all, patently based your entire 14-year career on a note-perfect carbon-copy of her singing and playing style? 'Yeah, that's it, I just haven't got a sound of my own!'"

– *Q Magazine*, Sept. '88

INXS

NORMAN SEEFF

ANDREW FARRIS

It's very dangerous what people do with machines in music. I disagree with the idea in principle. It puts people out of work. Machines are useful for club performers or in your home, to make music more fun for you, but it's a whole different thing when people rely on it in concert. It's awful. It's a sign of the times to hear the drums louder than the melody now. If I had kids the first thing I'd teach them would be acoustic instruments. Electronic instruments are the dumbest things you've ever met. They're dumb animals."

MICHAEL HUTCHENCE

I don't like scenes when they become insular. The underground scene in music is just as conservative as the major ones. Neither will admit the other's important; neither will cross over, which is the great problem of popular music. Pop music is so undermined these days, and when it gets undermined you end up with crap, and that's terrible. And it's a lot of people's faults, not just MTV or CBS. I mean it's underground bands' fault as well. Because if you made them popular they'd hate it. We started out as an underground band—we started out all in the same place, which is nowhere. No one just becomes an overnight sensation. Independent bands think that just because they're independent they're quality. There's a lot of crap on independent labels, too. It's a total quagmire. I don't think you should shun things just because they're corporate." – *Gina Arnold*

AMERICA'S AFRICAN YEAR

1988 in Afro-pop

The past year has been a watershed which has witnessed the full flowering of America's love affair with black South African music. More importantly, with the explosion of interest in "world music," Americans could be exposed to a wide spectrum of African pop. Zulu jive bumped up against high-octane *soukous* from Zairean expatriates; the Sahelian soul of Salif Keita and Youssou N'Dour mingled with *juju*; Ladysmith Black Mambazo's *mbube* stood out starkly from Afro-reggae and Zimbabwean *jit*. The amazing variety of African popular music that's become accessible to Americans explodes forever the notion that "African music" denotes anything in particular; after all, what is "American music"?

Thanks to the impressive reception of *The Indestructible Beat of Soweto* Zulu jive collection and Ladysmith Black Mambazo's acapella harmonies, more black South African recordings were released in America during 1988 than any other style; it'll be interesting to watch just how much of this music America will absorb. Ladysmith's two releases, the over-lush *Journey of Dreams* (Warner Bros.) and the too-subtle *Umthombo Wamanzi* (Shanachie), broke no new ground but made for great listening anyway; Miriam Makeba's stunning tour-de-force, *Sangoma* (Warner Bros.), topped them both with artful multi-tracking of her magnificent voice. Killer collections such as *Thunder Before Dawn* (Virgin/Earthworks) and *The Heartbeat of Soweto* (Shanachie) picked up where *The Indestructible Beat* left off; *Mbube Roots* (Rounder) traced the history of black South African harmony singing back to the '30s (including the original "Lion Sleeps Tonight"!) with some cuts sublime, others mundane. Raw, rollicking township jive was solidly represented by solo artists such as Mzikayifani Buthelezi (Rounder), Obed Ngobeni (Shanachie), and groups such as the Boyoyo Boys (two Rounder LPs) and the Soul Brothers (Earthworks), the two bands sounding like African versions of Booker T. & the MG's. The sweet, high-octane harmonies of the Mahotella Queens, especially in conjunction with gravel-voiced groaner Mahlathini (an African Howlin' Wolf?) consistently outshone the competition.

Aside from South African sounds, Americans are beginning to get a taste of new-wave *soukous* emanating from Paris, the crossbreeding mecca for African and Caribbean musicians. Here the intricate, interlocking guitar patterns of Zairean musics get a highly-synthesized, streamlined production cut with Caribbean rhythms (especially *zouk*, the hot new Guadeloupian beat). At its best, *soukous* is giddy, ecstasy-inducing dance music, the staple of African parties everywhere. *Heartbeat Soukous* (Earthworks) gathers the cream of recent *soukous* and so makes a perfect introduction. Meanwhile, Kanda Bongo Man's *Amour Fou* (Carthage) romps at breakneck speed through *zouk/soukous* fusions guided by deadly lead guitar from the redoubtable Diblo. Expect to see a lot more of this music in 1989 as America overcomes its "sweet music" prejudice bit by bit.

The worlds of South African jive and Zairean *soukous* are bridged, thanks to injections of reggae and local rhythms, by Zimbabwe's emerging pop styles—*jit*, *chirumenga* and others.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

MORE ON THE YEAR IN MUSIC ON PAGE 98

BIG DEAL from page 70

paper bag for Azoff. No evidence was ever presented suggesting that Azoff requested or received the brown bag, and Pisello went on to be convicted of two out of three tax evasion counts, getting four years. He subsequently sued MCA, claiming he was owed seller's fees when MCA acquired Sugar Hill Records.

Immediately following the Pisello case came the trial of Roulette Records' Morris Levy for conspiracy to extort a Pennsylvania distributor named John Lamonte in a cut-out deal gone bad. Levy, Lamonte and Sal Pisello were among the principals in a 1984 sale of 4.7 million MCA records. The right records were not delivered, in one account because Pisello skimmed off the better ones. Lamonte said the remaining titles weren't sellable and wanted to return the shipment, while MCA wanted its money. Levy, in the middle, then set about to collect what he felt was owed him by Lamonte. He met with a number of alleged mob figures and when it was suggested that two of them go to Lamonte's warehouse and seize his merchandise in compensation, Levy told them, "You make him pay. You go take the goods, you do what you gotta do."

Unfortunately for him, he was being tape-recorded by the government while he said this, and it became the basis of his prosecution. After a singularly rancorous trial, Levy and an associate were convicted. During sentencing hearings, the government charged Levy's operations were designed to funnel money to Genovese crime family boss Vincent "the Chin" Gigante, which Levy hotly denied. Even as he was preparing an appeal with a former prosecutor as his new attorney, Levy was given a stiff 10-year sentence in October.

An even bigger deal may turn out to be the grand jury indictment on February 25 of four people for payola, including Ralph Tashjian and William Craig, two indie promoters who had both worked with Joe Isgro, the controversial indie named in NBC News' 1986 expose. Tashjian's wife and an L.A. radio v.p. were also indicted. The government unveiled an impressively detailed dirty laundry list of cash and drug hand-outs to 10 radio stations. Isgro himself was not named, but was busy enough: In 1987 he'd launched a $25 million antitrust suit against nearly all the major labels for simultaneously dispensing with his services after the NBC broadcast; many labels settled out of court in 1987, but two who didn't, Warners and MCA, came back in '88 with lawsuits of their own, alleging Isgro didn't do the promo work for which he accepted payment. On August 22 Isgro's suit was unceremoniously dismissed, though Isgro vowed an appeal. The MCA and Warners suits went on hold.

Despite federal probes and word that the FCC was eyeing payola, many less controversial indie promoters were again working for the major labels, although only Chrysalis' Mike Bone would say so on the record. Their clout was said to be much diminished, especially the near-monopolistic hold certain indies had in certain markets. And though the airwaves are still for sale, the prices are down: Where getting a song added to a major-market station used to cost $3000, it's now around $750. Is that progress?

The Moral Majority's rush to censorship entered a dangerous new stage on Capitol Hill as Congress considered a draconian bill drafted in the wake of the controversial 1986 Meese Commission report on pornography. Designed to fight child pornography, the bill's broad language specified that a business' entire assets could be seized if they had distributed one piece of obscene material. Under the original wording, all of Warner Communications could conceivably be confiscated if a Prince record were declared obscene in some small town. Was the Reagan administration playing hardball with this one? When Sen. Howard Metzenbaum privately drafted a compromise version of the bill with less capricious penalties, the Justice Department leaked it to his opponent in his reelection bid, who branded Metzenbaum a supporter of child porn.

While Congress debated the theoretical effects of the bill, real-world examples of rock censorship were everywhere. A retailer in a backwater Alabama town was arrested for selling a rap album by Luke Skyywalker/2 Live Crew. Warnings to toe the local line were given record stores by authorities in Baltimore and Minnesota. Prince's *Lovesexy* was booted out of many stores for its naughty cover, as was Jane's Addiction's debut LP. Guns N' Roses changed the cover of their *Appetite for Destruction* LP last fall, but used it on the inner sleeve; a Santa Cruz record store owner who'd never even looked inside the album suddenly found himself the target of demonstrations by a local activist group called Media Watch. Ironically, this "obscene" Robert Williams painting had been found by the band on a postcard in a Chicago art museum, and was said to depict the rape of the public by the media.

With these kinds of stakes, there was genuine nervousness as Congress wound down in October, especially since the so-called kiddie-porn bill was attached to a popular drug bill. But at the eleventh hour the Title II section on penalties was severely modified to apply mainly to X-rated vid shops, and the forfeiture stipulations were made proportional to the offense. Congress also was able to pass a bill changing U.S. copyright law to the world-wide Berne convention after first declining to expand the "moral rights" of copyright owners; songwriters will find somewhat more protection under the new law. And Congress also thankfully restored the ability of musicians and songwriters to deduct their expenses for tax purposes in the year in which they were incurred, an ability they'd accidentally lost in the tax reform bill of '86.

"Configuration confusion" was the operative phrase this year. We saw the five-inch CD single come and go; we saw the three-inch CD single come and stay, at least for a while. We also saw the cassette single survive, heard CD+Graphics described as both "brilliant" and "stupid" and saw Sony and Philips introduce CD Video, a kind of Son-of-Laser-Disk. The conversion of LP catalogs to CDs accelerated, CD prices dropped, and it became a legitimate question whether anybody would be selling vinyl LPs by 1990.

But the biggest configuration conflagration story, Digital Audio Tape, a.k.a. DAT, was a no-show. RIAA brandished a million-dollar legal fund and vowed to sue any electronics firm who introduced consumer DAT players in America; Casio and Marantz took that threat seriously enough to halt product releases. Most labels also refused to release DAT product, though smaller firms like GRP, Rykodisc and Enigma did. The anti-DAT forces seemed to be waiting for a summit meeting with the electronics companies, but none ever came; in the meantime they insisted on either an internal anti-copying device or a levy on blank tape. On March 2, though, the National Bureau of Standards rejected the dubious "Copy-code" anti-recording device advanced by CBS, and later in the year the British government gonged a tax on regular tape cassettes. Meanwhile, consumer and pro DAT decks became easily available on the gray market.

There were other, less earth-shaking developments in 1988. Holly Johnson of Frankie Goes to Hollywood was released from a contract with Trevor Horn's ZTT label; MCA signed him and paid his legal bills. Brenda Lee sued MCA for $20-million in royalties. Tom Waits sued Frito-Lay for a sound-alike TV commercial. John Fogerty was found innocent of plagiarizing himself. The vaunted Monsters of Rock tour turned out to be the "monsters of loss" and a glut of other tours made

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concert promoters gun-shy. Casey Kasem left "American Top 40" after 18 years. The musicians' union was ordered by the Department of Labor to hold new elections for president. And in what could turn out to be the biggest deal of all, the Soviet Union seemed to demonstrate an almost insatiable appetite for western rock. Now that's what we call a new market. It's enough to make one genuinely optimistic about what's in store for 1989.

– Jock Baird

BRUCE from page 62

drummer can play the melody. It doesn't have to be too rigid, as long as the areas are covered.

We got together a few years back for fun, not to play or anything, just to hang, and we all adopted these natural roles that we had through the band. Ginger was the businessman, I was this, Eric was this. It was very funny.

MUSICIAN: *What was your role?*

BRUCE: I guess I was the leader of the band in the studio and basically the songwriter. Eric was the leader of the band in the live situation. But it's more than that. I'm talking about the roles you adopted in the car on the way to the gig. Sometimes with that band, we used to have so much fun that by the time we got to the gig we would have all lost our voices, laughing! And in fact, my band played the Worcester Centrum last week and we all had so much fun on our way to the gig, the same thing happened. We were completely exhausted and we couldn't play. By the time we'd go onstage we were all finished. But I like that.

MUSICIAN: *Did Cream become limiting to you?*

BRUCE: Well, I think we all thought we'd possibly done... actually I think what happened was that a lot of problems were due to neglect, and lack of care, and lack of love. I mean people died. Hendrix died, from lack of care. He died of neglect, I think. And the same thing happened with Cream; I think we might have died from overwork. If it had been done a little bit more imaginatively or sympathetically, it could've lasted. But we all felt that we could do other things. In retrospect we should have done them without giving up Cream.

MUSICIAN: *Does your role in Cream still overshadow your other work as far as the public is concerned?*

BRUCE: Well, that's what I'm trying to avoid these days, and on the TV show I finally managed to talk them into letting me do "Bird Alone," a tune from one of my post-Cream bands. I was glad to do it; I don't want to come off as a nostalgia trip, like "that old guy used to be one of the Creams." I'm happy to have that behind me, but I'm happier being a working musician.

MUSICIAN: *Do you hear your influence in bassists today?*

BRUCE: I do, yeah. I mean, just the fact that the bass is more acceptable as a melodic instrument is partly due to that. I'm not saying that I'd ever want the bass to be *the* lead instrument in the band. But as I may have said, I think of the bass as a tool for self-expression. Music, first of all, has to be self-expression. You start there. It doesn't matter what instrument you play, you're playing yourself. M

METALLICA from page 52

animosity there.

"But what I do in Metallica, right from the first rehearsal, is different than anything I've ever experienced before. James' guitar is pretty much what the whole band is based around, and Lars' drums are accented very weirdly. He tries to play more musically than rhythmically. So that kills the traditional bass and drums thing. And the rhythm guitar covers so much of a spectrum in the low end that the role of the bass is to accent that. So my playing is more riff-oriented and I try to be percussive, to have a sound that's a cross between a piano and a real distorted guitar.

"The thing about this band is that it's not like four different instruments. It's one voice coming at you, one strong voice."

A few hours later on a chilly November night, that voice is onstage, grinding its metal-edged message into the collective face of 11,000 Dutch fans. The sold-out Leiden Groenoordhal is a cattle market by day, but there's no room for bullshit now. This is the last time that "one strong voice" will speak in Europe for at least a year. And it speaks loudly and long—two-and-one-half hours—in the shadow of Doris, a towering replica of blind lady justice. The fans, some of whom will be invited to the party after the show, are rapt and rowdy. And the voice rails on, warning of nuclear darkness; lashing out at fear, deceit, greed and corruption; decrying ostracism; laying plain the horrors of insanity and isolation; and, ultimately, hosting one hell of a beer bash on the doorstep of the apocalypse.

"So Lars," Ulrich is asked after the show, "do you worry much about armageddon?"

"Personally," he shrugs, "I have enough other shit to worry about at the moment. Don't you?" M

YEAR IN AFRO-POP from page 79

The Bhundu Boys, pleasing but lightweight on record with the gritty *Shabini* LP (Carthage) and the overly homogenized *True Jit* (Mango) took *jit* directly to American audiences with a tight, relentlessly dynamic five-man show (not all African groups are huge, y'see). They made an impact by putting their music in club audiences' faces, like a rock 'n' roll band.

Maybe the biggest revelation of the year came from several stunning Sahelian records. The Sahel, a semi-desert bridging North Africa and West Africa, marries African polyrhythms with Arabic quarter-tone melodies, mixing in Cuban rhythms, Zairean guitar styles and dashes of good ol' funk. Senegalese Youssou N'Dour's work with Peter Gabriel, and galvanic performances with his own crack band on the Amnesty International tour brought his music to a wide audience. The release in America of his greatest studio recording, *Immigrés* (Earthworks), was a blessing. Meanwhile, Salif Keita's *Soro* (Mango) took Europe by storm. Keita, an albino master-singer from Mali, possesses one of the world's great voices, as evidenced by his soaring, keening wails amid rhythmically sophisticated, high-tech permutations of Sahelian soul. *Zani Diabate & the Super Djata Band* (Mango) worked Malian fusion into subtler, equally provocative directions with skittering electric guitar lines and quirky rhythms, while master kora player Mory Kante actually topped European pop charts with slick Euro-pop spiced by Sahelian accents on *Akwaba Beach*.

The oddest aspect of the past year in African music was the relative silence of such past major-domos as Fela, Franco, Rochereau (all without '88 releases), Ebenezer Obey and Sunny Adé. Obey and Adé kept the *juju* flame burning with solid Nigerian releases (Adé's CD-only live release on Rykodisc in America is a fair document of his concert magic) but these made little impact in America. Alpha Blondy pushed Afro-reggae into the limelight with a Marley-esque sound on *Jerusalem* (Shanachie). *Rai*, North Africa's synthesized Arabic blues, looms on the horizon; *Rai Rebels* (Earthworks) is the first shot fired by the *rai* invaders, who will be egged on by ally and fan David Byrne. For other American listeners, ignorance is no longer an acceptable excuse: The myriad worlds of Afropop offer a mind-boggling smorgasbord of rhythms, textures and melodies at the cutting edge of international pop.

– Randall F. Grass

33
The Clash
Ronald Shannon Jackson

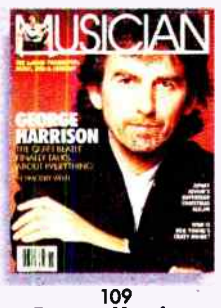
36
Grateful Dead
Hard Pop, Miles Davis

99
Boston
Kinks, Year in Rock '86

84
John Cougar Mellencamp
Bryan Ferry, Maurice White

105
John Coltrane
Springsteen, Replacements

104
Springsteen
Progressive Percussion



109
George Harrison
Mick Jagger, Crazy Horse

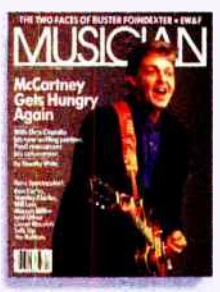
71
Heavy Metal
Dream Syndicate, George Duke

110
Sting
Jaco Pastorius, Peter Tosh

BACK ISSUES

21... **Brian Eno,** Reggae Festival, Weather Report
23... **Pete Townshend,** Sonny Rollins, Nick Lowe
24... **Bob Marley,** Sun Ra, Free Jazz/Punk
32... **Talking Heads,** Brian Eno, John Fogerty
33... **The Clash,** Ronald Shannon Jackson
34... **Tom Petty,** Carlos Santana, Dave Edmonds
36... **Grateful Dead,** Hard Pop, Miles Davis
37... **Reggae,** The Rolling Stones, Rickie Lee Jones
42... **Hall & Oates,** Zappa, Jaki Byard
44... **Nick Lowe,** Graham Parker, Lester Bowie
45... **Willie Nelson,** John McLaughlin, the Motels
52... **Joe Jackson,** Men at Work, English Beat
58... **The Kinks,** R.E.M., Marvin Gaye
61... **Jackson Browne,** Eurythmics, Keith Jarrett
64... **Stevie Wonder,** Reggae 1984, Ornette Coleman
67... **Thomas Dolby,** Chet Baker, Alarm, Marcus Miller
70... **Peter Wolf,** King Crimson, Bass/Drum Special
71... **Heavy Metal,** Dream Syndicate, George Duke
77... **John Fogerty,** Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
80... **Phil Collins,** Joan Armatrading, Josef Zawinul
84... **John Cougar,** Bryan Ferry, Maurice White
86... **Joni Mitchell,** Simple Minds, Hall & Oates
90... **James Brown,** Tom Petty, Brian Setzer
94... **Jimi Hendrix,** Prince, 38 Special
96... **Tina Turner,** Paul McCartney, Frank Zappa
98... **The Pretenders,** the Clash, Mick Jones
99... **Boston,** Kinks, Year in Rock '86
101... **Psychedelic Furs,** Elton John, Miles Davis
102... **Robert Cray,** Los Lobos, Simply Red
104... **Springsteen,** Progressive Percussion
105... **Coltrane,** Springsteen, George Martin
106... **David Bowie,** Peter Wolf, Hüsker Dü
107... **Robbie Robertson,** Tom Petty, Big Guitar Special
108... **U2,** Tom Waits, Squeeze
109... **George Harrison,** Mick Jagger, Crazy Horse
111... **R.E.M.,** Year in Rock, 10,000 Maniacs
112... **McCartney,** Bass Special, Buster Poindexter
114... **John Lennon,** James Taylor, Robyn Hitchcock
115... **Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash**
116... **Sinéad O'Connor,** Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
117... **Jimmy Page,** Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole
118... **Pink Floyd,** New Order, Smithereens
119... **Billy Gibbons,** Santana/Shorter, Vernon Reid
120... **Keith Richards,** Steve Forbert, Crowded House
121... **Prince,** Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
122... **Guns N' Roses,** Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns

94
Jimi Hendrix
Prince, Let's Active



112
McCartney
Bass Special, Buster Poindexter

86
Joni Mitchell
Simple Minds, Hall & Oates

114
John Lennon
James Taylor, Robyn Hitchcock

116
Sinéad O'Connor
Neil Young, Rhythm Special

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61 64 67 70
71 77 80 84
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98 99 101 102
104 105 106 107
108 109 111 112
113 114 115 116
117 118 119 120
121 122

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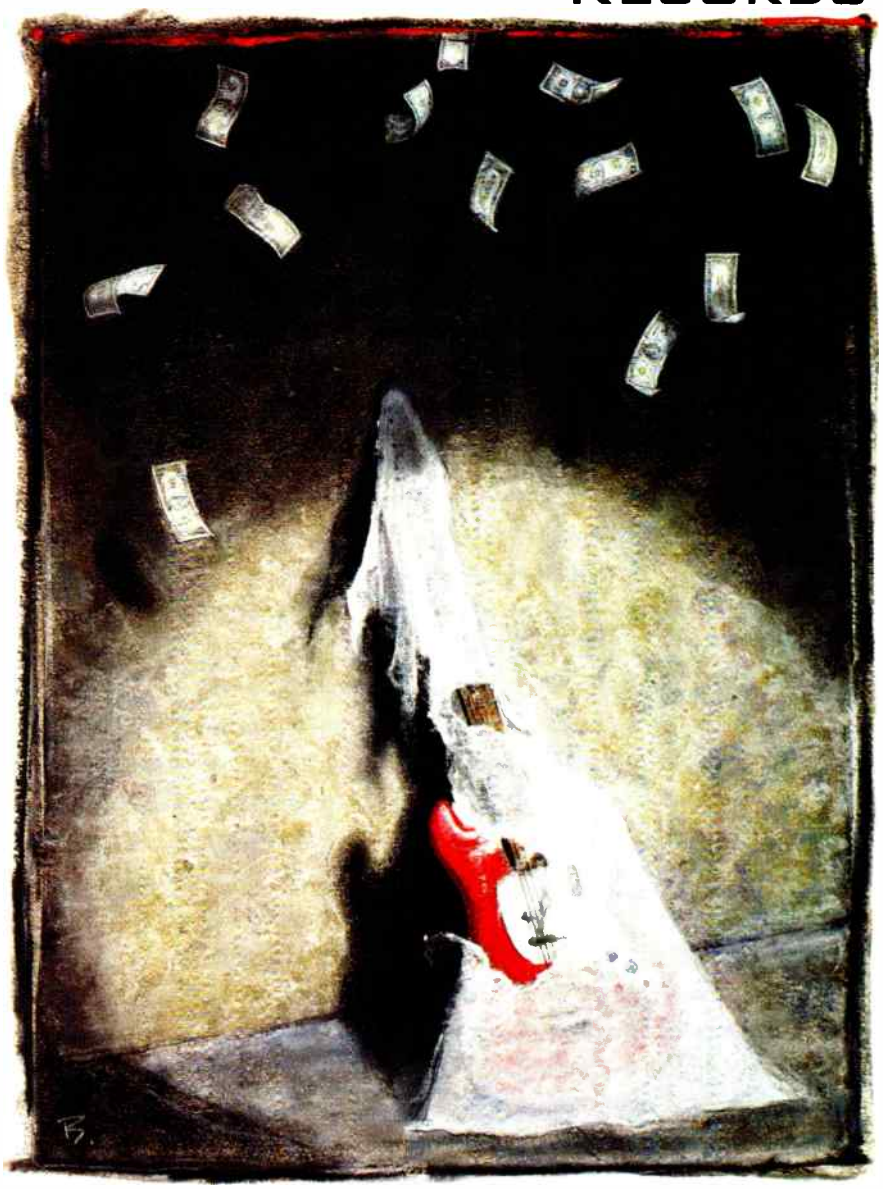

Elsewhere in this issue, the discerning reader will notice a large section devoted to the year in rock. Some material therein is lifted from previous interviews* and thus entailed little new work. Filling up space in a magazine when you haven't interviewed anyone new is roughly the equivalent of putting out an album when you haven't written any new songs. Mark Knopfler calls this process *Money for Nothing* (Warner Bros.), the title of Dire Straits' greatest hits collection and best-known single about a deliveryman who resents rock stars getting money for nothing. Besides being the all-time best-titled best-of collection, *Money for Nothing* also has the distinction of being the only anthology album where the title song sounds more in context than on the original album.

So I have a lot in common with Mark Knopfler. When Warner Bros. repackages his songs, he gets several million dollars for nothing. When *Musician* repackages my articles, I get $30 for nothing. I've thought a lot about how I'm going to spend that $30. I may winter in Antigua. I may buy a Porsche 901 so I can motor to my high school reunion in style. I may buy a complete collection of porcelain forest animals from the Franklin Mint. I may buy an integrated home entertainment center so I can hear every dripping nuance of "Money for Nothing." I'll tip the deliveryman, just to spread the largesse.

And then I'll listen to *Who's Better, Who's Best* (MCA). The Who have repackaged themselves so much that they've had to repackage the repackages. Covering their career into the '80s, this one is a classic of the MFN genre, proof in plastic that they haven't made anything great except mortgage payments since 1971. If you don't want to be reminded of that, or don't want to pay money for more nothing than usual, stick with the first American greatest hits package, *Meaty, Beaty, Big and Bouncy.*

And then I'll listen to *Gems* (CBS) by Aerosmith. I used to think these guys were stupid, gross and derivative. With the wisdom of age, I now think they are smart, gross and derivative. This isn't even a greatest hits collection. It's a bunch of better-than-filler-but-less-than-AOR-smash songs. Only a great band can put out a first-rate collection of its second-rate material. Money for nothing, but it beats *Odds and Sods.*

And then I'll listen to Earth, Wind & Fire's oddly titled *The Best of Volume II* (CBS). It has been charged that white rock critics are racist for their low regard of black pop. As someone who has occasionally been horrified to discover latent racism in his own unconscious, I've thought hard about this and I don't think it's racist to expect a serious artist to express vision deeper than a Colt .45 Malt Liquor commercial. EWF are a great band when they play funk, and they're boring when they play pop. When I pay money for nothing, I want more funk.

And then I'll listen to *Negotiations and Love Songs 1971–1986* (Warner Bros.) by Paul Simon. Over these 15 years, Simon's mood has ranged from melancholic rumination to ruminative melancholy. This makes me feel righteous because it proves that money for nothing doesn't buy happiness.

And then I'll listen to *¡Viva Santana!* (CBS), which is the most useful collection in the whole bunch. It eliminates all the pop Muzak and puts all the rock 'n' roll with massive percussion in one place. Money for two hours of exquisitely sustained adrenaline.

And then I'll listen to *Imagine* (Capitol), the John Lennon musical biography. If his enemies can make money for nothing, why not his heirs?

And finally, I won't spend any time listening to *Greatest Hits* (CBS) by Journey on my state-of-the-art home entertainment center. I haven't heard anyone bombinate with this much self-pity since Nixon resigned. If there's anything all us artists who make money for nothing can't stand, it's self-pity.

– Charles M. Young

AL BRANDTNER

*If Charles reads this issue he'll see that we used no recycled quotes at all. He will, however, only get $30 for this review. – Editor

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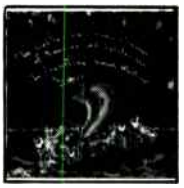

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CHARLIE HADEN/ PAUL MOTIAN

Etudes
(Soul Note)

It has been years since I've been able to sit through a piano solo without getting fidgety. Don't get me wrong; the musicianship of today's pianists is awesome—they're just not very good editors. And as one disc of time-honored clichés rolls by another, a young man's fancy turns to librium and law school.

Today's pianists have been overwhelmed by the harmonic stylings of Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett (much as Bud Powell astounded beboppers in the '50s). During their long association with Jarrett, bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Paul Motian developed a unique rhythm section style, at once propulsive and purely impressionistic, as if time were endlessly malleable. The breakup of that group coincided with Jarrett's prolonged interest in the solo form, and to these ears marked the end of his most formative, passionate period. *Etudes* is an absolutely splendid trio session that reunites these innovative section mates in the company of Detroit pianist Gerri Allen, who is one of the most original stylists to emerge on the instrument in the past 25 years. And that ain't easy.

Allen is certainly conscious of the tradition, and the influence of all the aforementioned keyboardists is implicit in her work. So are the designs of such mavericks as Thelonious Monk, Elmo Hope, Herbie Nichols and Cecil Taylor. But Allen is not overcome by the harmonic clutter and treadmill techniques that make most of today's virtuosos blur together like so many exercise books; on Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" and her own elliptical "Dolphy Dance," her freely inflected melodic elisions unwind with the grace of a good reed player. She captivates the listener by virtue of her cool dynamics, translucent lyricism and her unique ability to transcend the pianist's cadence (thus freeing up the rhythm section to become collaborators instead of timekeepers).

The music this axis creates on *Etudes* has an understated power all its own. Allen often becomes invisible, disappearing inside the bass and drums as if she were the rhythm section; like Duke Ellington, she sees the piano as an orchestrator's paint brush, and sometimes by saying nothing, she speaks volumes. Haden and Motian pull her into their maelstrom of motion, never letting the music become purely linear or vertical, and on Motian's fulminating "Fiasco" the sparks really fly. Motian and Haden are both distinctive composers in ballad and swing modes, and the bassist's boppish "Blues in Motion" and the drummer's ruminative title tune are standouts. But for me, when Allen turns to lost piano master Herbie Nichols for fresh ideas ("Shuffle Montgomery") she really delivers, bringing a personal blend of swing and lyricism to Nichols' theme-and-variation steeplechase—and do Motian and Haden ever groove this one. These brilliant improvisers sound as if they've been together for years, and in their evocation of modernists like Nichols, they offer new hope for the lost art of the piano trio. – **Chip Stern**

U 2

Rattle and Hum
(Island)

Have you ever seen a picture of U2 where they didn't look like they were about to deliver the Gettysburg Address? I don't know who appointed these four lads from Ireland the spokesmen for all that is right and good on planet Earth, but they embrace the role as though born to it. Working on the same massive canvas that the Who filled so eloquently in its heyday, U2 tackle all the major issues of the moment with a piety and humorlessness that would make Pete Townshend wince.

The follow-up to last year's Grammy grand slam *The Joshua Tree*, this double LP is purported to be the soundtrack from the group's feature-length concert movie *Rattle and Hum*; however, only six of the 16 tracks were recorded live. Nine songs are new (one written with Bob Dylan), and three tracks were recorded at legendary Sun Studios. There's a song dedicated to John Lennon, a song for Billie Holiday, and a duet with the ultimate supper-club bluesman B.B. King. There's a cover of Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower," a version of "Helter Skelter" (a very hip choice) and a snatch of Jimi Hendrix playing "The Star Spangled Banner." Lending weight to U2's musical mash note to its heroes is a generous helping of political rhetoric, mostly delivered in a voice trembling with righteous indignation by the man in the crown of thorns, Bono.

Larding their songs with emotionally charged buzzwords and phrases, U2 couch their sermons in a grab bag of stylistic clichés; musically, this album offers nothing we haven't heard before by any number of anonymous arena-rock bands. The guitar work by the highly touted Edge is serviceable at best, while Bono chews up the scenery as a vocalist. He outdoes himself on a live version of "Bullet the Blue Sky" that's so overwrought it's embarrassing.

Despite their carefully manipulated non-image, the megalomania churning at the heart of this band is beginning to show. They claim to be embarrassed at seeing themselves on a movie screen, yet they put up the $5 million budget for their concert film. Seen as heroically committed by legions of adoring fans, U2 is not afraid to make such risky pronouncements as drugs are bad, apartheid must end, and TV evangelists are wicked, but even Lloyd Bentsen has the guts to spout the basic liberal line. The least savory aspect of U2, however, is the way they carry themselves as reluctant messiahs—as though they are making the supreme sacrifice of enduring a career in music so that others may live.

– **Kristine McKenna**

BANGLES

Everything
(Columbia)

It must be a drag to rack up monster hits, only to have people sneer that you don't even write 'em. And since the Bangles do indeed want every-

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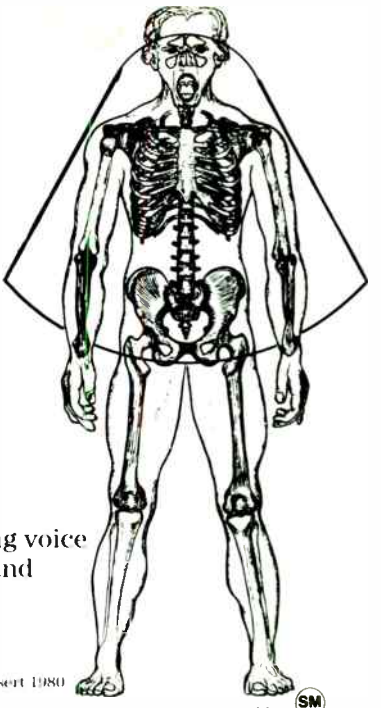

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RECORDS

thing—meaning respect *and* sales—they had a hand in composing every track on this album. Add renewed pride of authorship to an already sharp band, top off with canny new producer Davitt Sigerson, and get set for the ultimate in rockin' pop, right?

I wish. For all its appealing sheen *Everything* is calculated to the point of lifelessness. This is not a case of post-platinum jitters: *Au contraire*, confidence abounds in the lovely voices, in the keen guitars, in Debbi Peterson's

crisp, underrated drumming. "In Your Room" and "Crash and Burn" offer no-sweat boogie, while "Eternal Flame" may be the sweetest shot of romantic bubblegum since Barry Manilow's heyday. The beautifully mournful "Make a Play for Her Now" could be a smash for anyone with a hotter arrangement. Throughout, every well-behaved note occupies its proper space. Too bad.

This may not be the record the Bangles set out to make. They imported David Lindley to do his thing on saz and bouzouki, and if you strain you can hear squealing guitars, stray noises and other maverick effects at the bottom of the mix. But who decided to render the vocal harmonies smooth as silk? It's a heck of a lot more exciting to hear some friction when singers mesh; see classic bluegrass or early Beatles (or early Bangles) for proof.

A little excitement sneaks through anyway. Powered by a psychedelic buzz, the eerie "Bell Jar" constantly verges on shifting into high gear, though it never does; "Watching the Sky" is a delightful act of unabashed Zeppelin worship, shaped by a lumbering tempo, pseudo-Arabic drone, and Vicki's muscular thrashing. The high point, "Glitter Years," interrupts the endless parade of distant lovers, complicated girls and faithless boys for a wistful look back at the L.A. teen scene 15 years ago, when Ziggy/Bowie was king. There's nothing special about this chunky rocker per se, except that it seems more heartfelt than all the other songs put together.

Can *Everything* scale the multi-platinum heights of *Different Light*? Perhaps, although commercial disappointment might be a better artistic fate. The formal perfection of *Everything* feels an awful lot like running smack into a dead end. – **Jon Young**

ETTA JAMES

Seven Year Itch
(Island)

RUTH BROWN

Have a Good Time
(Fantasy)

On the brink of the '90s, it's refreshing that two of the '50s' best R&B vocalists are still singing their hearts out. Etta James emerged with "Roll with Me Henry" and went on to cut such soulful gems as "I'd Rather Go Blind." Ruth Brown, "the girl with the tear in her voice," is best known for classics like "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean." Both singers are enjoying a deserved career resurgence. Unfortunately, the albums at hand, while brilliant at times, are both marred by weak material.

James' voice has improved with time, acquiring a rich tone while losing none of its upper range. Her screams, snarls, ominous phrasing and generally soulful dynamics are intact. Many of the songs here are worthy of such skills; the set starts out on a very strong note with Otis Redding's "I Got the Will," keeps pushing hard with the not-so-subtle "Jump Into My Fire" and the passionate ballad "Damn Your Eyes." There are other high points, but fluff rears its head with

"Come to Mama"—a lame reprise of James' smash hit "Tell Mama"—and "How Strong Is a Woman," with its truly stupid anti-feminist lyrics. Subsequent tunes follow suit. Barry Beckett's production is crisp, gutsy and effective, so it's especially surprising that a Muscle Shoals veteran of his renown would blunt an album's impact with substandard

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songs.

Ruth Brown's once-incandescent voice has subsided somewhat, but she's still a formidable singer. *Have a Good Time* is a live set, with all the strong grooves that implies. A first-rate soul-jazz combo backs Brown, dominated by saxophonists Red Holloway and Charles "C.I." Williams, and organist/leader Bobby Forrester. For the most part it's a winning combination, as Brown leads this inspired crew through swinging uptempo blues, torch ballads and a closing blow-out on "Mama, He Treats . . ." But the momentum is seriously marred by lengthy renditions of "Always on My Mind" and "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby." Perhaps Brown felt obligated to demonstrate her mastery of pop tunes, but these are poor choices and it shows.

Even these flaws aren't enough to dampen the exhiliration of hearing two great singers who are still flourishing. Here's hoping they can belt it out for years to come. – **Ben Sandmel**

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

American Dream
(Atlantic)

Give Neil Young some credit. When his old friends and colleagues David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash showed up at his northern California ranch to record with him for the first time in more than a decade, he didn't laugh or turn away these desperate has-beens. He let them come in, probably fed them, let them use his expensive equipment, gave them direction, and contributed a handful of songs just as vacuous and boring as those they'd arrived with.

Young's contributions to *American Dream* are its only embarrassments because he's the only member of the quartet we expect anything from anymore. Stills has gone soft in body and mind; we're so thankful that Crosby is alive we don't mind that his contributions

are slight and charmless; and I've been afraid of Nash ever since he babbled on about mutant sponges during the *No Nukes* film. We don't expect Crosby's post-drug lament, "Compass," to have any insight; we don't expect Nash's "Clear Blue Skies" to come down from the ivory tower of smug liberal environmentalism. But Neil? His songs, especially the rambling semi-political title track and "Name of Love," are flops he'd never dream of putting on his own records. Here, of course, they're highlights.

If there's anything good to write about *American Dream*, it's that the foursome's legendary harmonies remain relatively intact. In a welcome surprise, Crosby's voice is particularly clear and unencumbered. But across 14 deadened songs that seem to go on for weeks, it sounds like time has wasted Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young on the way. Now that Neil has done his duty for his friends, maybe he can get back to what he normally does for a living: making records. – **Jimmy Guterman**

ROCK CITY ANGELS

Young Man's Blues
(Geffen)

Just when you think nothing can be done to give the kiss of life to rock 'n' roll's corpse, along come the Rock City Angels, a Memphis-via-L.A. quintet that tears into the entrails of blues-based rock and gets it to dance some punkish new capers. Energy is the key on this exciting band's 15-song, two-record debut. The licks and the grooves are familiar to anyone conversant with the ZZ Top or Rolling Stones catalog, but the style isn't simply purist. This is a group that can convincingly doff its collective cap to rock 'n' roll progenitors and punk revisionists in the same bow—how many new groups memorialize Gene Vincent *and* Sid Vicious in their liner dedications?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 97

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 97

Rock SHORTS

by J.D. Considine

SHINEHEAD
Unity (Elektra)

RAP AND REGGAE HAVE BEEN KISSING COUSins for a long time, but no one has ever bridged the gap better than Shinehead. Having grown up with both, he's as adept at busting B-boy rhymes as toasting ragamuffin-stylee; better still, he knows enough about mainstream pop to quote everything from the Beatles' "Come Together" to the Singing Nun's "Dominique." It's that overwhelming musicality that makes *Unity* so compelling, from the subway swagger of "Chain Gang-Rap" to the inspired Public-Enemy-meets-Yellowman wordplay of "Gimme No Crack." Brutal.

JAMES BROWN
Motherlode (Polydor)
James Brown's Funky People (Part Two) (Polydor)

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE BETTER THAN another batch of classic James Brown? Previously unreleased classic James Brown! On *Motherlode*, that means gems like the live "Say It Loud" mixed in with forgotten treasures that may have seemed too funky at the time ("There It Is," "Untitled Instrumental"), but which sound just fine now. As for *Funky People (Part Two)*, it focuses on lesser-known side ventures, delivering Bobby Byrd's "I Know You Got Soul" in all its glory while proving through the likes of Lyn Collins, Vicki Anderson and Hank Ballard that Brown wasn't the only great singer the JBs ever backed.

THE JEFF HEALEY BAND
See the Light (Arista)

HEALEY MAY WELL TURN OUT TO BE THE next Stevie Ray Vaughan, but you wouldn't know it from this. His tone may be vibrant and cutting, his execution flawlessly expressive, his technique astonishingly innovative. But not even his most hair-raising solos can hide the fact that this material is just plain flat, from soppily excessive ballads like "Angel Eyes" to by-the-book tributes like Freddie King's "Hideaway." Cross your fingers, and hope for a live album.

DURAN DURAN
Big Thing (Capitol)

EVEN THOUGH THE KISS-MY-PLAYLIST TITLE tune finds these glamour boys still trying to get by on sheer attitude, the reason the rest of this daring, driven album works so well is purely musical. Whether leavening industrial-strength dance beats with gorgeously distorted guitar noise, or cushioning low-key balladry with exquisitely detailed synth burbles, the playing and production is never less than ingenious, while the writing is consistently adult and intelligent.

OFRA HAZA
Shaday (Sire)

THANKS TO THE OFT-SAMPLED "IM NIN' ALU" (you can hear it in both "Pump Up the Volume" and "Paid in Full"), Ofra Haza has become everybody's favorite dancefloor exoticism. So how come *Shaday*, despite delivering the club mixes of "Im Nin' Alu" and "Galbi," makes Haza sound like an Israeli Gloria Estefan?

VOICE OF THE BEEHIVE
Let It Bee (London)

BECAUSE BEEHIVE SISTERS TRACY BRYN and Melissa Brooke Belland write witty, often wacky nonsongs about being young, female and more than a little nuts, it's tempting to think of them as We've Got a Fuzzbox with instrumental competence. Except that beneath all the goofiness, the songs here are disarmingly wise (particularly the lilting "Sorrow Floats") and melodic. Which, in the end, puts the band a lot closer to Bangles territory—big hits and all—than the jokey lyrics would suggest.

JOHN BAYLESS
Greetings from John Bayless (Megaforte/Atantic)

BAYLESS' IDEA OF A SPRINGSTEEN CONcerto may seem sound in theory; the result is "Corn in the U.S.A."

TOOTS HIBBERT
Toots in Memphis (Mango)

OVER THE YEARS, A NUMBER OF SINGERS have presented themselves as pretenders to Otis Redding's throne, but few have managed to match his tone or intensity as consistently as reggae singer Toots Hibbert. *Toots in Memphis* is his first *stylistic* tribute to the music he so obviously draws upon, and the fact that it comes as an act of maturity says as much about Toots as it does about the music. Impressive as his Otis-isms are, what really stands out about this set is how the distance between soul and reggae has diminished over the years. Say, Toots, have you met Shinehead?

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares, Vol. Two (Nonesuch)

OTHERWORLDLY AS THE MUSIC MIGHT seem, there's nothing mysterious about the appeal of these Bulgarian folksongs. Apart from being some of the most intoxicatingly melodic music on earth, the idiosyncratic use of harmony, modality and timbre makes these recordings haunting in a way world music almost never is. If you already own *Volume One*, then you know how wonderful this music is; if you don't, here's your second chance to find out.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
Love Junk (Chrysalis)

BECAUSE FRONTMAN MOE BERG IS AS LIKEly to complain "I'm an Adult Now" as he is to sing about "Looking for Girls," it seems safe to assume that he appreciates the responsibilities of maturity even as he realizes that we'll always be jerks beneath it all. That the Pursuit of Happiness is able to match that realization with a sound that's as raucous as it is refined, falling back on semi-metal as often as well-shaped melody, suggests that they've got a better handle on the realities of growing up than most rockers.

MOTORHEAD
No Sleep At All (Enigma/GRW)

THE BACK COVER FLAUNTS WHAT MUST BE the Motorhead motto: "Everything louder than everything else." Exaggeration? Maybe. But if getting hit by a truck had a tune, this'd be it.

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YEAR IN JAZZ from page 75

echoing what has come before makes for stasis, despite the fluency or excitement that a solo therein might contain. Since the rise of Wyntonmania, there have been schools of players, in decidedly younger age brackets, mirroring the motions of jazz's past. I would rather hear a just-okay player attack a problem in a new way than hear a smart solo on the changes of "St. Thomas."

Donald Harrison and Terrence Blanchard, whose '60s sources always leaned more toward Booker Little and Eric Dolphy than they did Miles and Trane, are good examples of sharp players whose sound reflects a bygone era; *Black Pearl* might be their best album to date, but you don't run to hear it, because you know what it's probably going to sound like already. *News for Lulu*, John Zorn, Bill Frisell and George Lewis' romp through the so-called blowing vehicles of the Blue Note era, is just as clear and swinging, but the context—alto, guitar, trombone—shakes at the skeletons of the pieces, dusting off the initial logic that went into their writing, instead of circling their original sound.

No, everybody can't come up with a new contextual wrinkle. But while virtuosos can thrill for a minute, contextual innovators have a shot at infamy. The young suitcoat-and-tie school will have to come to terms with that. Their finesse is essential, and indicative of an intense desire to make one's mark, but being current, even futuristic, is what really keeps hope alive.

The young'uns of the M-Base camp in Brooklyn have that lay-it-on-the-line demeanor that's vital to giving complacency a good, swift kick out the back door. They respect Bird (some of 'em more than Eastwood himself): They just don't want to be him. They use the tradition, but it doesn't sound like it. Outside of hip-hop, that's where I found most of the action this year; not just "good" music, but adventure and shock treatment. We're talking about records released by Cassandra Wilson, Greg Osby, Smitty Smith, Steve Coleman, Terri Lyne Carrington, Geri Allen, Robin Eubanks, many of which were on foreign labels and brought back home by PolyGram. We're talking about electric and acoustic approaches, about male and female participation, about swing and funk, art and dance. No ghettos.

With major domestic labels finally beginning to perform triage on some of the talented geniuses over 40 years old (I recommend Charlie Haden's *In Angel City* on Verve; Betty Carter's *Look What I've Got* on Bet-Car/PolyGram and Steve Lacy's *Momentum* for RCA), maybe the time is right to let these adrenalized kiddos in the door, too. More than a few need domestic contracts. A couple of festival gigs would look good, too, Mr. Wein.

One pleasant thing about '88 was that we finally resolved the confusion between jazz and new age—they've got their own somnambulant section of the record/CD bins. Now, with only a few days left until we all go Bush, it's time to get behind some music that will chip away at the way we think. Here's to '89.

– Jim Macnie

YEAR IN HIP-HOP from page 77

music videos to date: Boogie Down Productions' "My Philosophy" and Stetsasonic's "Talkin' All That Jazz." Ice-T's *Power* had the music's best-ever album cover, front and back. Rakim Allah wrote an album's worth of dense lyrical subterfuge on *Follow the Leader*, but word on the street is that he and Eric B. should've taken more time to write. Same for whoever wrote Run-D.M.C.'s movie, *Tougher Than Leather*.

Apparently convinced that enough Caucasians were paying attention to warrant the expense, N.A.R.A.S. minted up another Grammy category, just for us. Black radio played days'-worth of George Michael while turning a token ear to its own young music, and white radio turned a token ear to black radio. (For more info, look under "Rick Astley.") MTV finally decided that African-Americans *did* fit their format, in the name of a buck. (See "Yo! MTV Raps!" Then again, don't.)

New York's Nassau Coliseum, possibly criminally negligent in the stabbing death of a young man at a hip-hop concert, tried to divert attention from their lax security and toward Eric B. (In related news, two fans died at a Guns N' Roses gig as the band confessed to being drug dealers and junkies. *Rolling Stone* and *Musician* put them on the cover.)

Kool Moe Dee and producer Jazzy Jay, both hip-hop originators, remained viable in '88, proving you can teach an "old school" dog new tricks. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious 5 went their separate ways for good, and Kurtis Blow, the first hip-hop artist on a major label, got dropped by Mercury Records. An era has passed.

Alf. Reebok. Mike Tyson. The names of '88 superstars ... and the names of new dances. Hyped by the music and led by professional dance crews (such as movers and shakers I.O.U. and BAD), hip-hop's core audience became even more synchronous with the musical text (e.g., Kid 'n' Play's video for "Gittin' Funky"). Guy, Keith Sweat and Vanessa Williams got the hip-hop treatment on their debut R&B singles "Groove Me," "I Want Her" and "The Right Stuff," respectively, as did Ziggy Marley on "Tumblin' Down." All (except Vanessa) achieved a coalescence of form that M/A/R/R/S, despite the hype, missed.

What's ahead? More crews, more hype (don't believe it), more innovation, more money, the unexpected and, ultimately, somnambulism of the form via creative bankruptcy of the form. Oh well. George Bush is in the White House, racism is alive, well and feisty, and I'm outta here. **– Harry Allen**

ARTIST OF THE YEAR from page 73

charged with getting her music on radio, and by her signing a management contract with Elliot Roberts, who represents Bob Dylan and Neil Young, and who has in his distinguished career guided the highest angels of the singer/songwriter pantheon. Roberts counseled Chapman to cultivate a mysterious image, to stop giving interviews, to not speak to her audience from the stage.

The ideological purists in the old folk clubs might have objected to how cleverly Chapman and her handlers maneuvered the industry's shoals, but realists have to get a kick out of it. If the same sort of showbiz machinery that routinely sells America Whitney Houston and Coca Cola can be used in the service of a talent this substantial, we must assume the artist herself will not allow the means to corrupt her music. In a year dominated by a particularly cynical presidential campaign, it's easy to appreciate the need for progressives like Chapman to grab hold of the gears and levers usually pulled by the men behind the curtain.

Why is Tracy Chapman any better than Whitney Houston—who, after all, is also blessed with a great voice and sudden success? Because she's Tracy Chapman, because all over the world this year pop fans listened to the radio and had the feeling they could be someone. In Chapman's songs the greatest love of all was not learning to love yourself; it was learning to care about others. Tracy Chapman has enormous talent, and in 1988 she won the world.

Now what's she going to do with it? **– Bill Flanagan**

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Paid Circulation (dealers, carriers, vendors, counters)	56,597	61,770
Mail Subscription	47,016	44,973
Total Paid Circulation	103,613	106,743
Free Distribution (samples, comps, etc.)	4,198	3,180
Total Distribution	107,811	109,923
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Total	163,100	171,585

I certify that the statements made by me are correct and complete.
Paul Curran, Senior Vice President

AES from page 42

edit program material, and play back different chunks of it at specific SMPTE addresses. It just ain't natural! But we have a list of the offenders. Here, take it! We're gonna stop this, Bonneville; and you're going to help us—*if* you want to get the Poor Little Rich Girl back in one piece. You negotiate for us. Either these direct-to-disk deviants close up shop or we set off our bomb. We'd rather destroy everything than see decent, wholesome, Analog Purity fade from this land of ours."

Crikey, what a bunch of sick puppies! But I knew I had to play along. They'd certainly done their homework. Every hard-disk-based digital recording system at AES was on their hit list. They knew about the **Sonic Solution** system and they'd even got wind of Steinberg's Topaz system, even though it was just being shown in prototype form in a room at the nearby Hilton. I guess they were pretty scared by the Topaz's 360-megabyte capacity (for an hour and a half of 16-bit stereo recording) and extensive Mac II-based editing facilities, even though the price is expected to be up around the $24,000 mark.

The blackguards also knew about **Digidesign**'s AD IN 16-bit analog-to-digital converter ($955). Together with Digidesign's Sound Accelerator digital audio card for the Mac II or SE and their Sound Designer II editing software, it makes for a complete direct-to-disk recording system. But that wasn't all. The hooded ones were even hip to the new hard-disk option that makes **Publison**'s Infernal Machine 90 a complete direct-to-hard-disk recording/editing demon with up to 15 hours' capacity. And they were on to all the recent upgrades to the **AMS** Audiofile, **DAR** Soundstation II and **WaveFrame**'s Audioframe system, which now has Roger Powell's Texture sequencer implemented right in the software. But it was at WaveFrame that the case finally broke. A product specialist was playing back a sample he'd made earlier. In the foreground, a conventioneer was waxing witty at the mike. "Garruuhuh....Hullo Maw...." But in the background I heard an unmistakable voice.

"Helllp. . . . Let go of me, you creepy terrorist you! Watch out! You almost caught my new cashmere sweater on that mixing console there. . . . No. Nnnoooo! My daddy's a very important man, and when he . . . . mppfffff."

Eureka! Gwendolyn at last! Or at least her voice preserved as flawless digital data. And also a valuable clue. So they had her somewhere near a mixing console. . . . *Of course!* How like the twisted logic of T.A.B., to base their dastardly operations in one product area that still—with some notable exceptions—is mainly analog. Finding her would be simple now. Maybe I could *still* outflank T.A.B. while they thought I was out negotiating for them (the dim bulbs). Now, I knew there were a lot of great high-end consoles being unveiled at AES, like **Studer**'s 900 Series, the **Trident** Series 24, and **Soundtracs** IL4832/3642. But something told me to start my search on the more affordable end of the spectrum—things that oh . . . say . . . *Musician* magazine's readers might be interested in.

Allen & Heath's Scepter—a 12-channel rack-mount mixer with four Aux sends—seemed the perfect place to begin. And sure enough, as I was fiddling with the three-band EQ, I heard strange sounds emanating from a large Anvil case nearby.

"Mpfff. Mmpppppphhhhfffffff!"

I had Gwendolyn free in a trice.

"Oh Addison, it was so horrible! Locked in there for hours deprived of air . . . light . . . Godiva chocolates!"

As for T.A.B.'s big bad bomb, it turned out to be a pitifully crude incendiary device—easier to defuse than a firecracker. But this was no time for self-congratulation. Suddenly a shot rang out. Everyone hit the deck. Those T.A.B. bounders were wise to my subterfuge and were closing in all around—armed and dangerous. Gwendy and I took cover behind Allen & Heath's new Saber console. It's available in 16- to 40-channel configurations; luckily, we had a nice, sturdy 40 to shelter us from T.A.B.'s hail of bullets. We steadied our nerves contemplating the Saber's built-in MIDI mute system and four-band EQ. Then we made a desperate dash for the Yamaha exhibit, our hooded malefactors in howling pursuit.

We holed up in Yamaha's console room as a product specialist took us through the finer points of the new PM2800M live monitor mixer, available in 32- and 40-channel configurations. As death-dealing projectiles whizzed around us, he fearlessly moved on to the new MR Series affordable PA mixers and EMX Series powered mixers. Wonderful stuff, but now it was time to dash. We slipped out a back window. My Maserati was waiting nearby.

"Oh Addie, you were wonderful!"

"Thank you, Gwendolyn. But if you really want to show your gratitude, there's one thing you can do. . . . Don't *ever* call me Addie again!" M

RECORDS from page 91

The album, produced by ZZ Top engineer Joe Hardy, is full to the brim with raunchola bashers. It's hard to fault rockers like "Deep Inside My Heart," "Damned Don't Cry," "Rumblefish" or the dance-grooved "Beyond Babylon," the hoarse delivery of singer Bobby Durango, or the blustery twin-guitar mash-ups of Mike Barnes and Doug Banx. But *Young Man's Blues* isn't just for people whose brains are in their feet. More reflective material like "Mary," "Liza Jo" or the propulsive "Hush Child" shows how roots-rockers can still admit some thoughtful emotion.

Young Man's Blues isn't just another one-night stand at the rock motel. Though the Rock City Angels make plenty of well-gnarly noise at their coming-out party, their primal, blues-punk style eventually admits to more than that genre's standard cheap thrills.

—**Chris Morris**

R.I.P.
Joe Albany, Chet Baker, Brook Benton, Roy Buchanan, Al Cohn, Jesse Ed Davis, Pete Drake, Gil Evans, Cliff Gallup, Andy C., Leon McAuliffe, "Spanky" McFarland, Jimmy Maelen, Memphis Slim, Tiny Moore, Nico, Dave Prater, Sr., Danny Richmond, Hillel Slovak, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Roman Kozak

PARTIAL ECLIPSE
In April, Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* fell off *Billboard*'s pop album chart for the first time in 12 years. Not to worry; it was back the following week.

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GUNS N' ROSES

MICHELE MATZORTNA

S L A S H

This is what Donnington was like: You've got 120,000 kids on a huge lawn with only security in the front row and johns way in the back. You've got six or seven of the biggest bands happening at the time onstage with a huge PA system and all that. And all these people get there two days before to camp out. This isn't a stadium with bleachers, it's just kids, for miles. And they are some of the most repressed kids; the economy there is fucked up and their biggest escape is to go to a rock show. And they're one of the best crowds.

"But we got fingered for the two kids dying during that show. Which really hurt me. They died during our set, they were crushed by a huge stage-rush. The kids would fall down in like 10 inches of mud and everybody would walk or stand on them. And it was like Guns N' Roses' fault because 'they generate that kind of activity.'

"I know we generate a certain energy in a crowd, we're that kind of band. But at the same time, we've never promoted total inconsideration for other people. We stopped that show three times to let the crowd mellow out! David Lee Roth didn't stop his show at all, and he told security to get the fuck off the stage. But they accused us. And I took that very personally. Broken windows, smashed hotel rooms, this and the other is no big deal. The death of some kid who's going to a concert to have a great time and probably waited for months, saved his money, took the train, and then to get pushed down from behind by 120,000 people and no one had the decency to help you up, that was your last day on earth—that's heavy." – *Mark Rowland*

RANDY NEWMAN

CARL STUDNA

Certain songs I would never sell for commercials. Certain products I would never do—beer, wine, anything I thought was definitely bad for you. But I don't have much ethical compunction about it otherwise. I wouldn't sell 'Sail Away' or 'God's Song'—a lot of them really. But once I'm done with something, except to protect people who love the songs, I don't care if they chop it up and package it any way they want. And I don't think that pop music is that much more exalted than the making of commercials. Not really. Yeah, there's a line, but there isn't that many songs I wouldn't allow for any amount of money. And if its 'I'll Be Home' I couldn't care less. I may be wrong, but it's never bothered me.

"I like the idea of that song, 'It's Money That Matters'—that in this system the best people, that go to bookstores and listen to public radio, don't always succeed. And not only that: They're not always happy about it." – *Mark Rowland*

DECLAN LIVES
In late summer an L.A. radio station staged an "Elvis is dead" weekend as a spoof of the "Elvis Presley is alive" rumors in the loon press. Pretty soon Columbia and Warner Bros. Records were getting calls from all over, asking if it was true that Elvis Costello had died. When NBC News called, our pals at Warners—Costello's new label—got worried enough to need some reassurance. We called Costello's London music publisher: no answer. We called manager Jake Riviera: no answer. Then we called Elvis's home. We woke up Cait. She didn't sound grief-stricken, but she didn't sound happy to hear from us either. Finally she said, "Do you want to talk to Dec?" We all let out a big sigh of relief. Elvis had not heard the rumors, but said he might stay dead a week to sell some records. We told him he'd been spending too much time with Paul McCartney. What next? Barefoot on Abbey Road?

THIS YEAR'S MANDATORY TEENAGE GUITAR LICK
The opening riff from "Sweet Child o' Mine" by Guns N' Roses

KISS-OFF OF THE YEAR
R.E.M. moved from I.R.S. Records to Warner Bros.

AND NOW FOR '89...
- Tiffany will record the Beatles classic "He Wants to Hold My Hand."
- During a slow week in August, *Time* magazine will devote a cover to the 20th anniversary of the Woodstock festival.
- The Rolling Stones announce plans to get back together. Nothing happens.
- *Kingdom Come II* released.
- Still no Phil Spector box from Rhino Records or Beach Boys *Pet Sounds* CD.
- Ted Turner buys and colorizes *U2, Rattle and Hum.*
- Monsters of New Age tour will play the nation's water bars, atriums and hospitals, then go international with wildlife preserves and tropical rainforests. The last-named concert sites will inspire the question: If nobody shows up, does a new age concert make any sound?
- The Alarm will release a concert film and accompanying double-album set called *Prattle and Dumb.*
- Next year's trend: Music by men.

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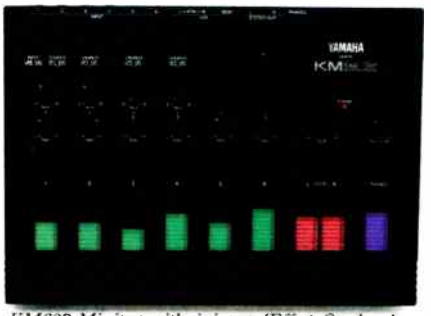

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