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MUSICIAN

APRIL 1990

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ISSUE NO. 138

World Radio History

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A Billboard Publication · No. 138 · April 1990

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Cover photo: E.J. Camp/Outline; this page (clockwise from top): Joe Dilworth/S.I.N.; Ebet Roberts; David Fisher/LFI

World Radio History

SAKAMOTO

BEAUTY

THE NEW ALBUM. FEATURING "YOU DO ME," "CALLING FROM TOKYO" AND "WE LOVE YOU."

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Virgin

World Radio History

You seem to be getting a kick from your musicians as you prepare for the Sound + Vision *tour. I know they've been taking a free-form attitude, arrangements-wise, toward your back-catalog of work.*

It would have been pretty precious to duplicate the original single or album sounds. "John, I'm Only Dancing" is one we're rehearsing today, and I think the last time I did it onstage was probably around 1972. In reviving it with Adrian, it sounds as aggressive as it used to, but also has a vibrant new feeling.

Adrian Belew has got his own particular kind of band sound, as he's attested to over the last year with his *Mr. Music Head* album. It's a great band, and so it seemed discourteous to have him and them ape everything that had already been done. To me it made sense if Adrian did things Adrian's way. So we're pretty much treating the songs with *his* perception of how they should be played these days. [*Smiling*] Which is kind of nice, because I wouldn't really know what to do with them!

Instrumentally I'm just throwing myself in on rhythm guitar and saxophone. Since Adrian's band is a three-piece of drums [Mike Hodges], keyboards [Rick Fox] and Adrian on guitar, I've had Erdal Kizilcay come in on bass. He's a Swiss-Turkish guy I've been working with in the studio over the last number of years; he was also with me on the Glass Spider Tour.

David Bowie

Sound + Vision for 1990 • By Timothy White

Is it true you're going for a very stripped-down live sound: just bare rock 'n' roll from the boards upward?

Yes, true. But, well, I've begun to wonder if I *am* a rock 'n' roll person. [*Laughter*] At least in terms of what the term means now. These days, I hear less and less rock 'n' roll, and in fact I also hear less actual hard rock. It's segmenting, isn't it, into ethnic musics, metal and pop.

I think that pop music is back with a passion. A lot of the stuff that I wrote in the past—things like "Changes," "Life on Mars"—listening back to them now, they're very pop-oriented. I should also say I have the Rykodisc people to thank for helping reassemble all this material for us to learn it again! [*Laughter*] As you know, each of the albums they're rereleasing contains rare and unissued tracks. I'd been looking around for a while to see who should handle all the old records and surplus material, and Rykodisc have showed themselves to be terrific. They take so much care.

Besides the unusual feature of the public being able to 'vote,' via phone request lines, for the vintage songs they want to hear, can you reveal anything else about the stage show itself?

It will be very clean in style, yet there will be some things like interactive video. Do you know La La La Human Steps? They're an absolutely extraordinary dance company from Montreal, Canada. They're not on the show, but their choreographer, Edouard Lock, is working with me on the conceptualization for this particular tour, and I am doing one piece with them for film footage that is going to be included on an interactive basis. We're filming it in 10-second pieces, and it's all this hot body language, with great detail.

I don't think I've ever worked in a better atmosphere, it's extraordinary. And one of the reasons is that it's on such a small, intimate scale, with a few creative assistants and just us five musicians.

It always seemed that your music was an inter-creative structure of disciplines. It didn't acknowledge any barriers between painting, graphics, theater, pop music and the music that's now called world beat.

I wasn't actually convinced that I ever had one territory. That never really sunk home to me. It felt that *all* music was fun to me. I guess that's why I have in some ways never developed a musical style. The polite word for what it's been is "eclectic," I guess. It's gone from classical inspirations—or pretensions—into popular music, then into rock, theatrics, ethnic things, and then beyond. I've just woven each of those elements together to produce something that I like.

You recently did a self-portrait that became a poster to benefit the Save the Children Foundation. As a painting musician, what do you think of the contemporary art scene?

Well, Julian Schnabel is my pet hate, but Eric Fischl I like. Thing is, Schnabel's so good at analyzing and conceptualizing his own work that he's talked himself up as a social lion and goes to every party. It adds up to him getting $80,000 a painting from these socialites. But how much more of Schnabel's broken dinner plates stuck on canvas do you or I really want to look at!?

I find that the return to some sort of figurative format in modern art is very appealing. In England, you know, there's a whole revival of the Renaissance. It's called the Scottish School, and they're starting to paint in the style of Tintoretto and Caravaggio, using all those illuminated human forms against dramatic shadows and darkness—and it's *unbelievable* stuff. It's a whole return to the academic approach to art. Not using the old subject matter, however, but treating modern-day things in that same accomplished style.

The Scottish School paintings sound like they achieve the same effect you're aiming for in the Sound + Vision *concerts.*

[*Grinning*] Well, I believe that art is an integral part of life, and this tour is the most exciting thing going on in mine! Ⓜ

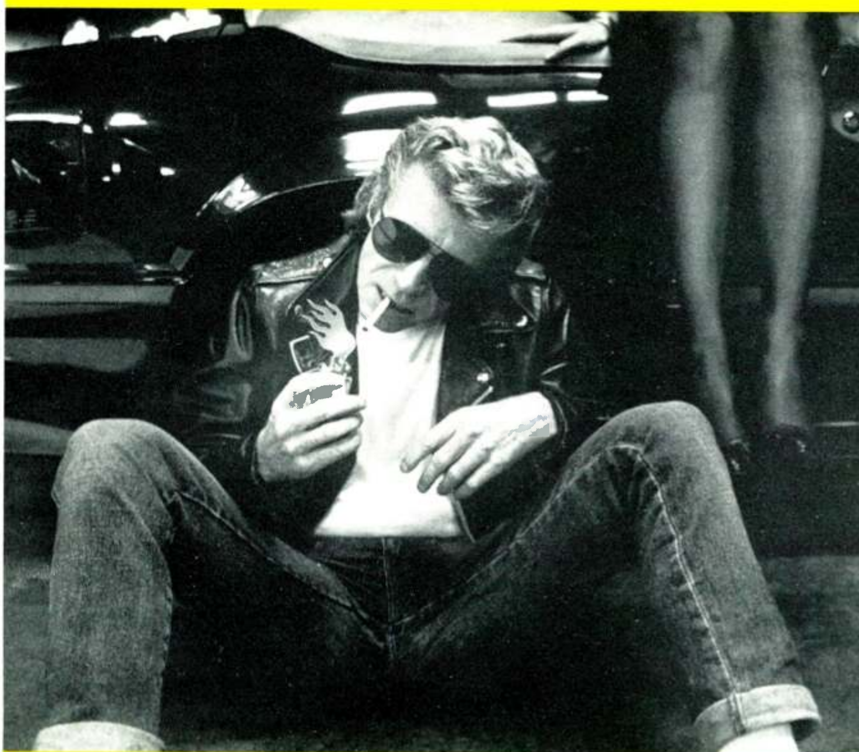
Photograph: David Fisher/LFI

World Radio History

LIFE IS ABOUT TO BECOME A WHOLE LOT HOTTER

DAVE EDMUNDS

CLOSER TO THE FLAME



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MUSICIAN

AN OPEN LETTER FROM *MUSICIAN* MAGAZINE

The Pennsylvania state legislature is considering passing a law (S.B. 938, the "Gamble Amendment") that requires any record, cassette or compact disc that contains any *reference* to "suicide, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, rape or involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, or which advocate(s) or encourage(s) murder, ethnic intimidation, the use of illegal drugs or the excessive or illegal use of alcohol" to be affixed with a warning sticker that says: "WARNING: May contain explicit lyrics descriptive of or advocating one or more of the following: suicide, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, sexual activity in a violent context, murder, morbid violence, illegal use of drugs or alcohol. PARENTAL ADVISORY."

The sticker must be affixed to the cardboard of the record jacket or plastic of the cassette—not to the shrink wrap. Any merchant who sells an unlabeled record ("Down by the River," perhaps, or "Mack the Knife," *West Side Story* or a Wagner opera) could be arrested, fined and jailed.

This legislation is not only bad law, it is genuinely un-American.

People of good conscience can sincerely disagree about the need for legislation to protect children from entertainment meant for adults, and people of good conscience can certainly debate how best to control pornography. But this legislation goes so far beyond the parameters of legitimate concern that it should be opposed by all honest citizens.

Under this law a merchant could be jailed for selling a copy of Frank Sinatra singing "I Get a Kick Out of You," or virtually any Beatles or Rolling Stones album, or a recording of Laurence Olivier performing *Hamlet.*

If the same law were applied to books, one could be arrested for selling almost any of the great novels of the twentieth century. If the same law were applied to movies and videos, many Disney cartoons could be indicted. If it were applied to plays, Broadway would go dark. Popular music has frequently been a magnet for attacks by forces too cowardly to attack literature, film or theater. There is in some quarters a sense that as popular music and the recording industry have less academic and political protection than other art forms, the recording industry is a safe target for opportunists and demagogues.

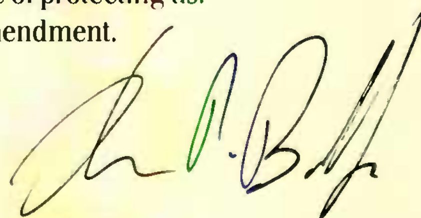
But certification by universities is not a prerequisite for freedom. And art should not depend on political contributions to ensure its protection. All Americans, but especially the makers and buyers of sound recordings, should make clear to their elected representatives that they find laws such as the Gamble Amendment to be repugnant.

Musician magazine calls on the record companies to withhold all product from states passing such repressive laws until those laws are repealed. This is a drastic and expensive step, but it is the only way to protect the manufacturers and the merchants from endless and arbitrary prosecutions, and to alert the general public in those states to how badly their freedoms are being abused by their politicians.

Such a boycott would be a terrible burden on record store merchants—but in the long run not so severe a burden as being arrested and jailed for selling a Beatles album.

All of us who are parents know how hard it is to instill strong moral values in our children. But we will not transfer our parental responsibilities to the state. Nor will we allow ourselves to be unfairly regulated by those who would take away our freedoms under the pretense of protecting us.

All decent Americans should oppose the Gamble Amendment.

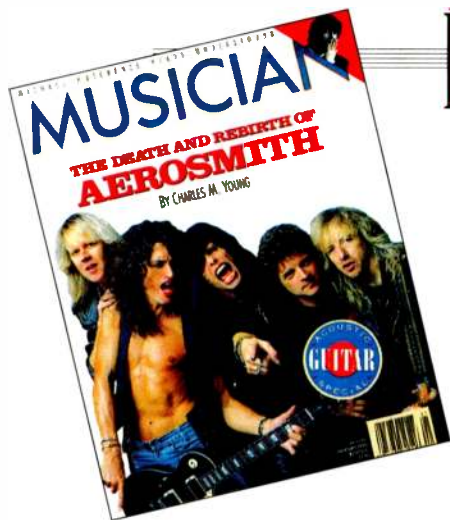


Bill Flanagan, Editor

Gordon Baird, Publisher

World Radio History

LETTERS



'Smith: No Joneses

THANK YOU for a wonderful article on the amazing comeback of Aerosmith (Jan. '90). Many magazines have run the drug-rehab stories into the ground, but Charles M. Young also showed me how Aerosmith can make a simple melody into magic.

Jeffrey Boggis
Birmingham, AL

COULDN'T YOU have left the offensive word "niggerlips" out of your Aerosmith article? Or are you trying to drive blacks away from your magazine?

Merrick Anton
New York, NY

Picking a Winner

THANK YOU for the short but insightful piece on Nanci Griffith (Jan. '90). It was long overdue. That *Musician* chose to highlight her in the series "The New Acoustic Revival" brings home the fact that not only is she one of the most talented new country & western singer/songwriters to appear in the past few years, but she's a damn fine picker too.

Tim Hickey
West Haven, CT

NANCI GRIFFITH did *not* invent the combination thumbpick/flatpicks she uses onstage. Any Texas music fan can tell you she got them from Texas singer/songwriter Guy Clark. Nanci's an excellent songwriter, but she's no original picker.

Mary Brooks
Austin, TX

Q Tips

I'M IMPRESSED. Bill Flanagan's article on Max Q (Jan. '90) was, to say the least, refreshing. The only qualm, or even quasi-qualm, I have with the piece was the minor oversight of one female presence on Max Q. Did everyone but me forget about Marie Hoy? She's been in the Australian music scene for years.

Susie Modjallal
Encino, CA

'Q Ball

YOUR FINE ARTICLE on NRBQ (Jan. '90) was both exhilarating and a little saddening. Those guys deserve every bit of praise they get. Yet, as one who's seen them over the years in the intimacy of small clubs, I got a little sad thinking they might be moving on to larger venues. But boy, will I have memories!

Chris Knowles
West Chester, PA

IT HAS BEEN very frustrating to watch those of lesser talent but of greater hair ascend to pop stardom while the 'Q keeps grinding out quality music that the critics adore but the masses ignore.

All of that seems to be changing now, and not a minute too soon. Thanks to Mark Rowland and *Musician* for an excellent article. Thanks to NRBQ for years of excellent music.

Andrew Berman
Branford, CT

Satellite of Hate

I HAVE NEVER in my life been so appalled by a review as the one of the Georgia Satellites album *In the Land of Salvation and Sin* (Jan. '90). I am dumbfounded that Dave DiMartino thinks that sincerity is a "problem." Would he prefer the latest New Kids on the Block record? What is wrong with being "well-intentioned rock 'n' rollers with heart"?

This album more than just recalls Little Feat and Faces and the Rolling Stones. It invokes and reignites the spirit that made those groups great—a feat (no pun unintended) that happens all too infrequently in today's corporate rock world.

Alan Starr
Hillsboro, NH

I THOUGHT reviews were supposed to "review" an album, not take potshots at a band Dave DiMartino obviously dislikes so much. "Reviews" like this make DiMartino—and those of his profession—look like no-talents with nothing better to do than drive an axe into someone's back, as well as career. If he disliked the Satellites so much, why try to review them at all?

Daryl Curtis
Westwood, NJ

Equal Time

WE ARE REPEATEDLY reminded with each new release from Billy Joel that he is a master. He is a superb lyricist and storyteller, is consistently great with a groove and melody, and is a damn good singer whose voice gets better and better with time. The man is a natural genius. Let's not wait until he dies to appreciate a legend.

Peg Eves
Brattleboro, VT

RIAAD

THE AMERICAN record moguls' crackdown against foreign-made records, cassettes and compact discs while American records, cassettes and compact discs can be sold legally in those foreign countries is simply censorship.

Anti-importing laws are supposedly protecting the record collector. But in the RIAA's excessive zeal to eliminate "bootleg" recordings, small-quantity record and CD shipments destined for individual collectors are now being seized under combined FBI/RIAA raids. One collector in Washington, D.C. was confronted by customs officials who gave him a choice between signing a form and forfeiting the CDs or simply being arrested. Another collector in Chicago was followed home by RIAA and customs officials and threatened with either arrest or the loss of the 25 discs.

RIAA has become totally drunk with power. While there are now enough CD factories to put every Top 100 album onto CD simultaneous with the LP and cassette release, the draconian anti-importing laws remain on the books. Record collectors don't have a multi-million dollar lobbying group like the labels do.

The moguls may think that if we're denied the music we want, we'll develop a taste for the disco and rap they sell. I say "no way." A Beatles' ultra-rare tracks bootleg is more relevant to me than Debbie Gibson's *Electric Youth*. The RIAA can't legislatively change our tastes.

Phil Cohen
Bay Harbor, FL

Heavy Workload

I JUST HEARD a Jules Shear song on the Muzak in my office. Is there something going on that I don't know about?

Alan Petsche
Arlington, TX

Mystery Writer

Due to an editing error, Stan Soocher unfairly shared a byline with the mysterious Bob Bilboa (Poco Reunion, Jan. '90).

Farm Aid IV will be held April 7th at the Indianapolis Convention Center and Hoosier Dome. Among the performers confirmed are Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Willie Nelson, Lou Reed, Don Henley, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Carl Perkins, L.L. Cool J, Richard Marx, Nanci Griffith, James McMurtry, John Hiatt and many more. You couldn't find a better cause with a dowsing rod.

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ERNIE ISLEY

HIGH ▪ WIRE

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"Ernie Isley is a brilliant guitarist.... High Wire's fusion of funk, rock and even a bit of country blues is unique, accessible and should finally give Ernie the recognition he deserves."
—VERNON REID

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Produced by Davitt Sigerson

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"Man, what a night. I think it's the best we've ever played. The show was great, the sound was great, and everybody was talking about the new kit. I mean everybody. Even Matt, and nothing impresses Matt. I knew they sounded great when I bought 'em, but I never expected this. Ya' know, that slogan is starting to make a lot of sense. The best reason to play drums huh...I guess that's what I'm feeling right now, and feeling like this makes it all worth it."

Pearl®
The best reason to play drums.

World Radio History

FACES

Biz Markie

American rap-sody

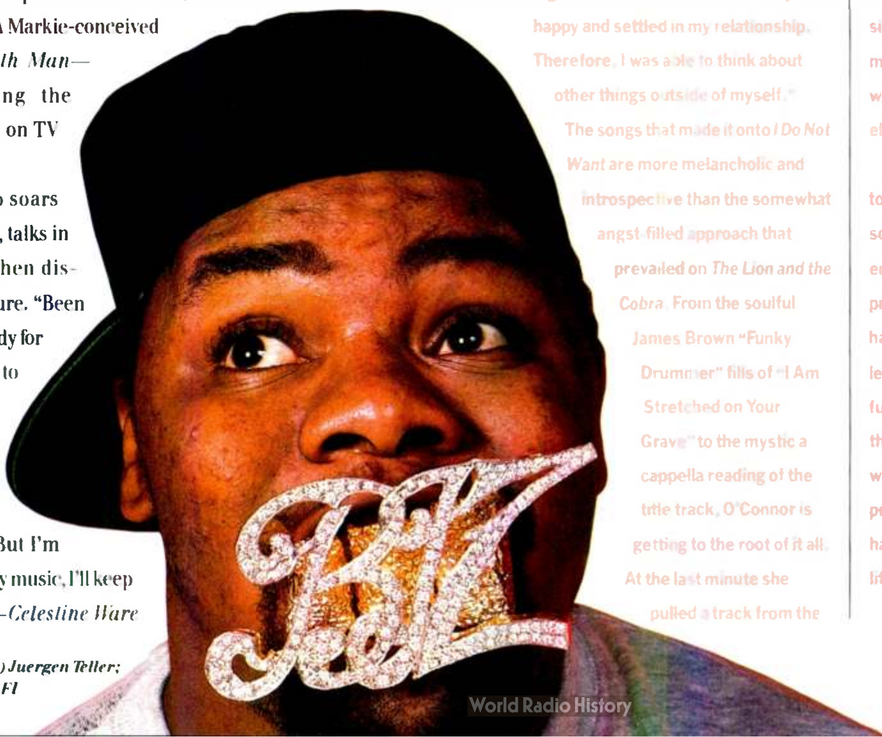
THERE ARE certain people Americans look at and don't see color—like Bill Cosby, Michael Jackson, Eddie Murphy—and Biz is another one who's going to appeal to everybody," says the manager of Biz Markie, whose latest album is *The Biz Never Sleeps.*

Markie brings an all-American boy exuberance to the ritualized profanity of rap. He delights in mixing rap with singing, pop with funk, harmony with atonality. He also likes unexpected juxtapositions of ideas ("I want to be a household word—like sugar") and sounds (the piano on "Just a Friend").

Markie's work is characterized by a musicality still unusual in rap. He plays piano and drums and learned flute and sax. He wants to explore steel drums and xylophones.

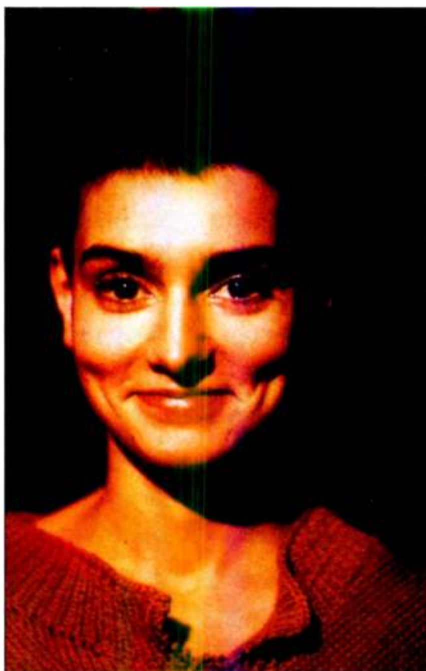
Ice-T and Melle Mel may be nonpareils at fitting words to rhythms, but Markie's colorful details give his characters a life separate from his performances. A Markie-conceived cartoon, *Mouth Man*—with Biz doing the voices—is due on TV this year.

Markie, who soars in performance, talks in sound bites when discussing the future. "Been doing this already for six years. I want to have my own soft drink and be partners with Cold Chillin'. But I'm not changing my music, I'll keep on rapping."—*Celestine Ware*



Sinéad O'Connor

Feels so different



THE BERLIN WALL is down peace talks worldwide are rampant and Sinead O Connor s not angry any ore Two years ago the shaven headed lass from L don and before that Ireland burst upon the scene wi h her striking En sign Chrysalis ebut *The Lion and the Cobra* Now at 23 O Connor s looking at life with a new perspective apparent in her second album *I Do Not Want What I Haven t Got*

At the onset f writing and recording "I sat down and had a look at myself and figured out which bits I liked and which s I t O Connor concedes "I didn t hold onto things that made e gre s and bitter"

Since the release of *The Lion and the Cobra* O Connor s married the father of her two and a half-year old son Jake toured North America and Europe was o nated and per formed at last year s Grammy ceremonies and has made her acting deb t

Being married has a lot to do with it People are always look ng for some thin when they're go n out w th boys or girls Whether , e it or not you re always ook g and not actually settled and ppy b se you re think ng about yourself I the t me and reall insular about i

When I got married I stopped think ing about that becaus I was really happy and settled in my relationship. Therefore, I was able to think about other things outside of myself."

The songs that made it onto *I Do Not Want* are more melancholic and introspective than the somewhat angst-filled approach that prevailed on *The Lion and the Cobra*. From the soulful James Brown "Funky Drummer" fills of "I Am Stretched on Your Grave" to the mystic a cappella reading of the title track, O'Connor is getting to the root of it all. At the last minute she pulled a track from the album called "The Value of Ignorance" because it didn't fit into her present train of thought "I wrote it when I felt very bitter and hateful about things and now I don't feel that way I wanted to make an album that reflects how I feel now"

All of the songs were written or co-written by O'Connor except the first single and video "Nothing Compares 2 U" Why an obscure Prince tune as the first single? O'Connor states quite matter-of-factly, "Because it's brilliant.

The emotional videoclip for "Nothing" shows O'Connor's decidedly more feminine appearance. From the faint locks of hair growing in to the subtle use of cosmetics, O'Connor looks as different as she says she feels O'Connor makes no apologies "I was 20 when that first album came out I m still growing up and going through various phases as a woman.

"It has nothing to do with my music or anything else. At times I feel like dressing up and wearing makeup and it makes me happy to do so. I wouldn t want anyone to perceive it as anything else

O Connor s planning a late spring tour having learned a number of lessons from her exhaustive debut "I enjoyed it of course but I didn't appreciate what was going on I shouldn't have taken it so seriously and have just let my hair down—so to speak—and had fun I was too worried about whether things sounded perfect onstage, whether I was too tired or if I could sing properly and things like that. I shouldn t have given a shit and had the time of my life which I intend to do this time."

—*Bill Coleman*

Photographs: (top) Juergen Teller; George Dubose/LFI

World Radio History

JOHN LURIE

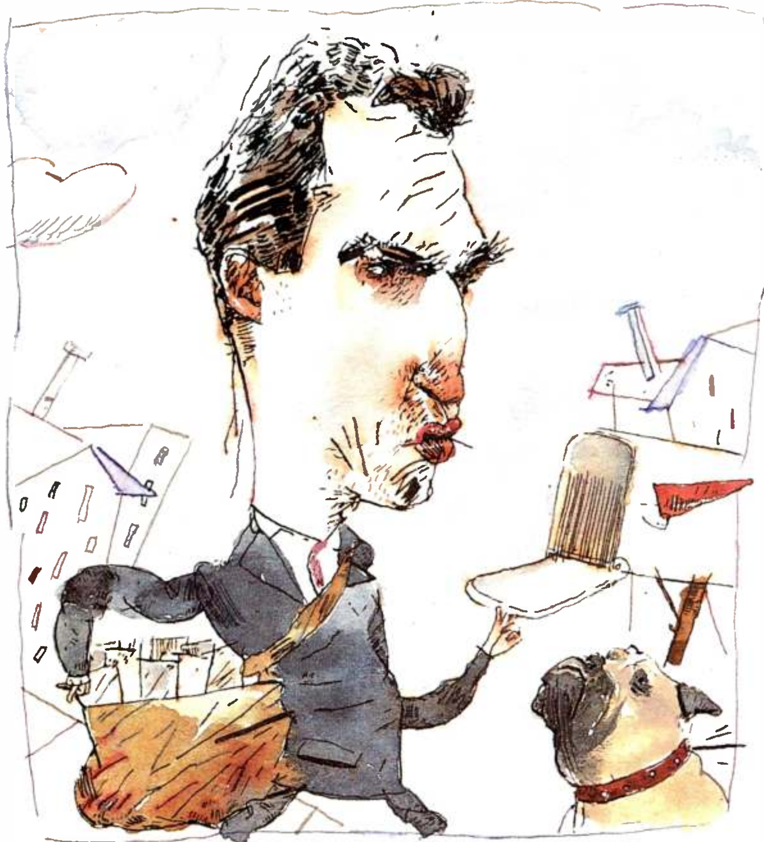
His own masters' *Voice*

SAXOPHONIST, actor, composer, band leader—and now John Lurie can add another occupation to his Renaissance-man's list of accomplishments: record company magnate. "I can't believe my tenacity!" the magnate sighs, explaining why *Voice of Chunk*, the new album by Lurie's Lounge Lizards, is available via mail order only.

The last Lounge Lizards release, over two years ago, was on Island Records. Lurie wasn't satisfied with its distribution and decided to take his idiosyncratic music elsewhere. He found eager labels in Japan, Europe and other continents—but not in his native land. "In America we didn't get a response," he says, and pauses. "It was clear that nobody was gonna have the courage to get excited about it."

In the resourceful tradition that used to make this country great, Lurie himself issued the CD and cassette. (Sorry, turntable owners.) To avoid slow or nonexistent payment by distributors—the perennial boondoggle of independent labels—he's avoiding them altogether. Lurie's set up a toll-free phone line to handle orders, and ships the albums directly to customers. He's spreading the word about *Voice of Chunk* with print ads and two self-produced 30-second television spots running on "Night Music," VH-1, "Hill Street Blues" reruns and "Late Night with David Letterman" (but only in Los Angeles: "It's expensive and I don't like him that much").

"It's like having a lemonade stand. Every time I get a bad review, at least it will still be an ad. And no matter what, I'll say it sold a million and award myself a gold record at the end of the year."—*Scott Isler*



KATIE WEBSTER

Louisiana queen

"I THANK GOD that my time has finally come," Katie Webster says, "so that people can really hear me. Not just as an accompanist or supporting act, but as someone who wants to sing and play beautiful music." And "beautiful music" is as good a term as any for Webster's rich, rocking repertoire of blues, soul, country, gospel, boogie, jazz and Gulf Coast swamp-pop.

Born in Houston in 1939, by age 14 Webster was the leading session keyboardist on South Louisiana's "Crawfish Circuit." She played on 500 records, all styles ("I even did a session with Tammy Wynette"), while leading the house band at the Bamboo Club, where she talked the owner into booking her favorite singer, Otis Redding. "Otis told me, 'I need someone who will make me work hard onstage. Would you join my band?'"

Webster toured and recorded with Redding for two years (that's her on *Live at the Whiskey a Go Go*) and was almost along for his fatal plane crash. "After that, I was a recluse for two years. Otis and I were very close, though not romantically like people thought; it was a spiritual thing. Both our fathers were ministers, and we would read the Bible together. Plus, he was going to record and produce my first solo album. Up till then I could never even have my name in his credits, 'cause I was tied up in another contract."

Webster spent most of the '70s caring for her aging parents, performing only sporadically. During the past decade, though, European blues fans brought her over for a debut tour. "They were surprised to meet me, too," she says. "I was young and vibrant; they expected someone with gray hair and no teeth."

Webster's stateside career is also flourishing, thanks to two albums on Chicago's Alligator label: *The Swamp Boogie Queen* and her latest, *Two-Fisted Mama!* As Robert Cray put it, "I can't understand how someone like me can be famous when Katie Webster isn't."

—*Ben Sandmel*

Photograph: Brian Barnaud
Illustration: Barry Blitt

World Radio History

HOT GUITARS: JACK CASADY'S MOST WANTED LIST

THE NEW YORK HOME of Jefferson Airplane bassist Jack Casady was robbed on the night of January 16. Keep an eye out for these instruments. If you see them, call Jonathan Schafrann at 212-687-6625.

1. New red MONOCOCK headless electric bass, all-graphite body, two black Bartolini pickups, abnormally small hard black case. ONE OF A KIND specially made bass for Jack.

2. New purple MODULUS PRECISION electric bass. Also ONE OF A KIND. Single P-bass black pickup, maple wood, very heavy in weight, chips in the finish surrounding the input jack. Rectangular hard black case.

3. New black MODULUS fretless electric bass. Two black EMG pickups, rectangular hard black case.

4. New purple MODULUS electric bass, two black Bartolini pickups, rectangular hard black case.

5. 1966 FENDER MUSTANG electric bass, three-quarter neck, yellow mustard color with racing stripe, single original pickup, soft black case.

6. 1972 white FENDER TELECASTER six-string electric guitar, original two pickups, rectangular black case (not original).

1990 ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

An excess of ex's

THE THEME OF the fifth annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Dinner—held January 17 at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel—seemed to be the reuniting of partners who are happy to stay apart. At least songwriting inductees Gerry Goffin and Carole King got a formal divorce. Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel demonstrated *their* love/hate relationship: Simon needled Garfunkel. Garfunkel corrected Simon's accounts of memorable Simon and Garfunkel fights. "Don't fuck up," Ray Davies gently warned his guitarist brother Dave, who read the first of the Kinks' four acceptance speeches.

"If they need any help building the Hall of Fame in Cleveland," Ray quipped, referring to the band's ex-drummer, "Mick Avory's not doing anything. He's quite good with the bricks."

Ray elicited bewildered laughter and gasps from the black-tie crowd by reading a record-company memo recommending "'that if this new Kinks record is not a success that we drop the Kinks from our label and not renew our option.'" Then he revealed that the memo was 25 years old and written before the band's first hit, "You Really Got Me."

Representing the Who's gone-but-not-forgotten drummer Keith Moon was his 23-year-old daughter Mandy, who noted, "My father was banned from this hotel and that's one reason he couldn't be here to accept the award."

See ya next year.—*Scott Isler*

THE VINYL DAYS

THE SEVEN-INCH vinyl single is headed for the critical list, as some record labels refuse to accept returns of unsold 45s from retailers. More than a year ago A&M decided on a no-returns policy. Right after Christmas of '89 the WEA distributions arm followed suit. Now CBS Records has announced the same thing. CBS plans to keep selling 45s to a small core of committed customers such as jukebox operators and one-stops, but some labels are breaking singles with no vinyl release whatsoever, including Roxette's "Listen to Your Heart" and Aerosmith's "Janie's Got a Gun," both top five singles.

The LP front is equally bleak. Chrysalis and PolyGram announced that six of the two labels' spring releases will be CD and cassette only (a precedent recently set by Warners, MCA and Enigma). Chrysalis reported that some albums had as little as 2% of their sales on vinyl, especially in the rock area. PolyGram assured LP lovers it would keep pumping out records of new black, jazz and country releases, but some pop releases will be available on vinyl for only the first 60 days.

Some major labels are considering licensing their music to small vinyl-only specialty labels in a mirror image of the rise of the CD. PolyGram admits it's had a lot of inquiries, especially for reissues and—gee—45s.

Photographs: Ebet Roberts

World Radio History

THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second last month.

1 • — **Paula Abdul** *Forever Your Girl*/Virgin
2 • — **Phil Collins** *... But Seriously*/Atlantic
3 • — **Milli Vanilli** *Girl You Know It's True*/Arista
4 • — **Janet Jackson** *Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation* A&M
5 • — **Billy Joel** *Storm Front*/Columbia
6 • — **The B-52's** *Cosmic Thing*/Reprise
7 • — **Aerosmith** *Pump*/Geffen
8 • — **Tom Petty** *Full Moon Fever*/MCA
9 • — **Young M.C.** *Stone Cold Rhymin'*/Delicious
10 • — **Bobby Brown** *Dance!... Ya Know It!*/MCA
11 • — **New Kids on the Block** *Hangin' Tough*/Columbia
12 • — **Quincy Jones** *Back on the Block*/Qwest
13 • — **Linda Ronstadt (Fea. A. Neville)** *Cry Like a Rainstorm, Howl Like the Wind*/Elektra
14 • — **Mötley Crüe** *Dr. Feelgood*/Elektra
15 • — **Skid Row** *Skid Row*/Atlantic
16 • — **Eric Clapton** *Journeyman*/Duck
17 • — **Michael Bolton** *Soul Provider*/Columbia
18 • — **Richard Marx** *Repeat Offender*/EMI
19 • — **Rolling Stones** *Steel Wheels*/Columbia
20 • — **Soul II Soul** *Keep On Movin'*/Virgin
21 • — **Babyface** *Tender Lover*/Solar
22 • — **Whitesnake** *Slip of the Tongue*/Geffen
23 • — **Cher** *Heart of Stone*/Geffen
24 • — **Kenny G** *Live*/Arista
25 • — **Technotronic** *Pump Up the Jam—the Album* SBK
26 • — **Luther Vandross** *The Best of Luther: The Best of Love*/Epic
27 • — **Don Henley** *The End of the Innocence* Geffen
28 • — **Rush** *Presto*/Atlantic
29 • — **The 2 Live Crew** *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* Skywalker
30 • — **Bad English** *Bad English*/Epic
31 • — **Jive Bunny & the Mastermixers** *Jive Bunny—The Album* Music Factory
32 • — **Roxette** *Look Sharp!*/EMI
33 • — **New Kids on the Block** *New Kids on the Block* Columbia
34 • — **Gloria Estefan** *Cuts Both Ways*/Epic
35 • — **Joe Satriani** *Flying in a Blue Dream* Relativity
36 • — **Alice Cooper** *Trash*/Epic
37 • — **Tracy Chapman** *Crossroads*/Elektra
38 • — **Tears for Fears** *The Seeds of Love*/Fontana
39 • — **Tesla** *The Great Radio Controversy* Geffen
40 • — **Chicago** *Greatest Hits 1982–1989* Reprise
41 • — **Taylor Dayne** *Can't Fight Fate*/Arista
42 • — **Soundtrack** *The Little Mermaid* Walt Disney
43 • — **Scorpions** *Greatest Hits—Best of Rockers n' Ballads*/Mercury
44 • — **Bonham** *The Disregard of Timekeeping* WTG
45 • — **Madonna** *Like a Prayer*/Sire
46 • — **Neil Young** *Freedom*/Reprise
47 • — **Seduction** *Nothing Matters Without Love* Vendetta
48 • — **Warrant** *Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich*/Columbia
49 • — **Kate Bush** *The Sensual World*/Columbia
50 • — **Rob Base** *The Incredible Base*/Profile
51 • — **Heavy D. & the Boyz** *Big Tyme*/MCA
52 • — **Eurythmics** *We Too Are One*/Arista
53 • — **Barbra Streisand** *A Collection: Greatest Hits... and More*/Columbia
54 • — **Joe Cocker** *One Night of Sin*/Capitol
55 • — **Eddie Money** *Greatest Hits... Sound of Money*/Columbia
56 • — **Melissa Etheridge** *Brave and Crazy*/Island
57 • — **The Smithereens** *Smithereens 11*/Enigma
58 • — **Fine Young Cannibals** *The Raw & the Cooked*/I.R.S.
59 • — **Poco** *Legacy*/RCA
60 • — **D.J. Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince** *And in This Corner*/Jive
61 • — **Red Hot Chili Peppers** *Mother's Milk*/EMI
62 • — **Harry Connick, Jr.** *Music from "When Harry Met Sally"*/Columbia
63 • — **3rd Bass** *The Cactus Album*/Columbia
64 • — **Rod Stewart** *Storyteller/Complete Anthology*/Warner Bros.
65 • — **Lenny Kravitz** *Let Love Rule*/Virgin
66 • — **Bobby Brown** *Don't Be Cruel*/MCA
67 • — **Belinda Carlisle** *Runaway Horses*/MCA
68 • — **Elton John** *Sleeping with the Past*/MCA
69 • — **Rickie Lee Jones** *Flying Cowboys*/Geffen
70 • — **Alannah Myles** *Alannah Myles*/Atlantic
71 • — **Bonnie Raitt** *Nick of Time*/Capitol
72 • — **Duran Duran** *Decade*/Capitol
73 • — **Michael Penn** *March*/RCA
74 • — **Kix** *Blow My Fuse*/Atlantic
75 • — **The Kentucky Headhunters** *Pickin' On Nashville*/Mercury
76 • — **The Cure** *Disintegration*/Elektra
77 • — **Randy Travis** *No Holdin' Back*/Warner Bros.
78 • — **Bon Jovi** *New Jersey*/Mercury
79 • — **Kiss** *Hot in the Shade*/Mercury
80 • — **UB40** *Labour of Love II*/Virgin
81 • — **Clint Black** *Killin' Time*/RCA
82 • — **Chunky A** *Large and In Charge*/MCA
83 • — **Expose** *What You Don't Know*/Arista
84 • — **Sir Mix-A-Lot** *Seminar*/Nasty Mix
85 • — **The Charlie Daniels Band** *Simple Man*/Epic
86 • — **Robert Palmer** *Addictions Vol. I*/Island
87 • — **Michel'le** *Michel'le*/Ruthless
88 • — **Various Artists** *Happy Anniversary, Charlie Brown*/GRP
89 • — **Pat Benatar** *Best Shots*/Chrysalis
90 • — **Soundtrack** *Born on the Fourth of July*/MCA
91 • — **Regina Belle** *Stay with Me*/Columbia
92 • — **Tina Turner** *Foreign Affair*/Capitol
93 • — **Soundtrack** *Beaches*/Atlantic
94 • — **Various Artists** *Make a Difference Foundation* Mercury
95 • — **Joan Jett** *The Hit List*/Blackheart
96 • — **Paul McCartney** *Flowers in the Dirt*/Capitol
97 • — **Great White** *Twice Shy*/Capitol
98 • — **Britny Fox** *Boys in Heat*/Columbia
99 • — **Terence Trent D'Arby** *Neither Fish Nor Flesh* Columbia
100 • — **Erasure** *Wild!*/Sire

The Musician *album chart is produced by the* Billboard *chart department for* Musician, *and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the* Billboard *computers in the month of January. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on* Amusement Business *Box Score reports for January 1990. All charts are copyright 1990 by BPI Incorporated.*

Top Concert Grosses

1	**Billy Joel** *Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, CT/Jan. 2, 4-5, 8*	$1,445,674
2	**Billy Joel** *Capital Centre, Landover, MD/Jan. 10-11*	$821,092
3	**Aerosmith, Skid Row** *The Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA/Jan. 19 & 21*	$747,168
4	**Aerosmith, Skid Row** *SkyDome, Toronto/Jan. 6*	$684,195
5	**New Kids on the Block, Dino, Cover Girls** *Capital Centre, Landover, MD/Jan. 7-8*	$649,116
6	**Frank Sinatra, Tom Dreesen** *Sunrise Musical Theatre, Sunrise, FL/Jan. 17-21*	$598,969
7	**New Kids on the Block, Dino, Cover Girls** *Charlotte Coliseum, Charlotte, NC/Jan. 5*	$413,975
8	**New Kids on the Block, Dino, Cover Girls** *Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI/Jan. 11*	$373,645
9	**Aerosmith, Skid Row** *Springfield Civic Center, Springfield, MA/Dec. 27, Jan. 9*	$366,345
10	**Aerosmith, Skid Row** *Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, NY/Jan. 15*	$360,970

Top Labels

1 Columbia
2 MCA
3 Epic
4 Geffen
5 Atlantic
6 Arista
7 Mercury
8 Capitol
9 Elektra
10 Virgin
11 RCA
12 Reprise
13 Sire
14 Warner Bros.
15 Ruthless
16 EMI
17 A&M

World Radio History

Sinéad
O'Connor

THE NEW ALBUM
I DO NOT WANT WHAT I HAVEN'T GOT
THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE GOLD LP "THE LION AND THE COBRA"

FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE AND VIDEO
NOTHING COMPARES 2 U

PRODUCED BY SINEAD

World Radio History

NOISEMAKERS

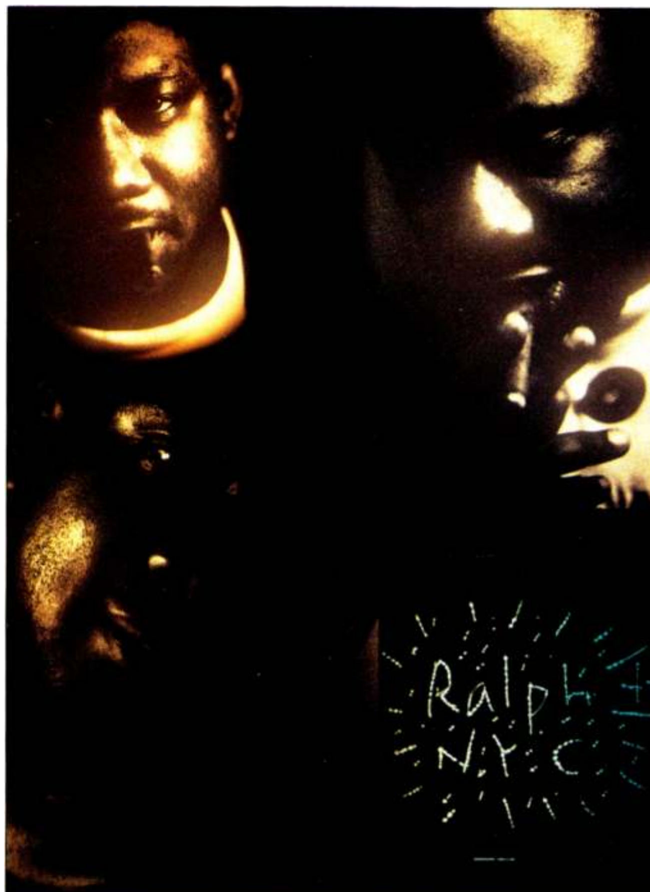
V Is for Volcano

Drummer Ralph Peterson plays more than one roll

BY

Jim Macnie

WHEN THE David Murray Quartet blew through Boston a few years ago, the tenor saxophonist's thick, pointed phrases sounded like bales of hay being shot from a cannon. But when the blitzkrieg ended, there was one big question coming out of everybody's mouth: Who's that drummer?



"Yeah, that was high-energy stuff," recalls the percussionist in question, Ralph Peterson. "Whatever you got—fresh, strong, new—David says bring it on. It's really physical music. I felt like I had been in a bar fight."

His two records as a leader, *V* and *Triangular* (both on Blue Note), are equally physical, but Peterson doesn't seem the least bit fatigued. On paper, his music fits right into late-'80s acoustimainstream—variations on time-tested hard bop. But while Peterson deals in overt tradition, he's got plenty of fresh, strong and new to dispense. This stuff bristles with rugged action, rife with tiny jabs that wind up having the power of a roundhouse right.

"I've been described as aggressive on more than one occasion," concedes the muscular 27-year-old, currently rocking in a chair at the Blue Note office in New York, "but I try to keep a certain amount of logic to my aggression. To play with conviction is what I'm after. Sometimes you hear musicians playing well, but there's a tentative quality, a hesitancy to their spirit. In the last couple of years, I've gotten my focus down; you can pretty much make any note work if you play it with enough conviction.

"We're trying to steer away from the expected Marsalian sound that people are set up for when they hear the word 'quintet' these days," he goes on. "Wynton and those guys did that—did it well, too. Why get close to what they do?" So Peterson distills hard bop to one of its essential elements: tension and release. He's a dynamics addict, a quick-change artist. "I want people to think they know what's coming around the corner, then completely blow them off their feet."

Peterson's trap work—a mix of rambunctiousness and finesse—has earned him work with inners and outers: Jon Faddis, Henry Threadgill, Craig Harris and Walter Bishop, Jr. Splashy like Elvin, thunderous like Max, he makes individual licks stand on their own; you can hear all the raindrops fall. The point seems simple enough, but he wants to remind you: The cymbals are made of metal, the drums of skin and wood.

> "I try to keep a certain logic to my aggression."

"If you confine yourself to rhythm as a drummer, you're really missing out on much of the music," he observes. "There are so many pitches, tones and timbres the set makes available, and you have got to go looking for them. When I was at school at Rutgers, Philly Joe Jones taught me that there were six or seven sounds you could get out of one cymbal. That stuff messed my mind—fascinating."

Most of *V*'s tunes were written back then, as Peterson, who also plays trumpet and piano, relies upon a compositional sense inspired by the soulful knottiness of mid-'50s jazz. *Volition*, an upcoming record by his Quintet, investigates much the same area. But it's *Triangular*, a trio date [cont'd on page 30]

Photograph: The Douglas Brothers/Onyx

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Zevon's Traditional Bent

When Igor Stravinsky met the excitable boy

BY

Lorrie Pannullo

ONE OF ROCK'S great historical oddities is the fact of the friendship between a very old Igor Stravinsky and a very young Warren Zevon. "I became acquainted through a junior high school teacher," Zevon says, "who moonlighted as a classical session man. I met Robert Craft, who was Stravinsky's associate, who worked with him for many years. Craft is a conductor and writer. So I used to go to Stravinsky's house to visit with Craft, and Craft would give career advice to a 13-year-old, fledgling serial composer. He and Stravinsky and I would listen to music, that was about it. I certainly didn't study with Stravinsky, or Craft for that matter."

A strange enough tidbit to lead us to seek out Robert Craft, who remembers receiving "a remarkably intelligent, informed and discriminating letter from Warren Zevon, then aged 13. He seemed to have been familiar with my recordings of contemporary music and wanted to consult with me for advice about his musical future. Could I recommend teachers? Should he go abroad, perhaps study with Stockhausen? In any case, he would like to discuss the present state of affairs with me."

Craft says Zevon was much younger than he had anticipated, "self-possessed and articulate far beyond his years. After some conversation I played recordings of some contemporary pieces not available commercially and unknown to him. He was keenly attentive and his responses were unambiguous; very young people are always judgmental, of course, but he supported his judgments with acute arguments. We followed scores of Stockhausen's 'Gruppen' and 'Carrée' as we listened to air-checks of German radio performances.

"After an hour or so, Stravinsky came into the room—his living room—and I made the introductions. As always, Stravinsky was warm and hospitable, and Mr. Zevon, whatever he felt and thought, was in perfect control. Part of Stravinsky's late-afternoon post-work ritual was to drink Scotch and eat a piece of Gruyère and some smoked salmon on small squares of black bread. I might be conflating this first of Zevon's visits with a later one, but I think that Stravinsky invited his young guest to join him in the nourishment. Mr. Zevon betrayed no effects from the liquid and we chose a time to meet the following week. Our 'lessons,' repeated several times, were confined to analyzing scores; I think at that time Mr. Zevon was not interested in much music before, or of a lesser quality than, Webern.

"Stravinsky was always interested in the opinions and reactions of the young, and I believe that was his interest in me when I first met him. Mr. Zevon on that first visit reminded me of my own first meeting with Stravinsky, though I was 10 years older and much less intelligent."

When Craft's quote is read to him, Zevon is silent for a long time. Then he says, "People have told me about meeting their heroes and what a disappointment it is. It has always filled me with a sense of wonder and pleasure in the generosity of other people, of artists, that never goes away. It confirmed what I had hoped, which was that a life in fine art was exciting and adventurous and rewarding. Those first visits to Stravinsky's house where there were books in every imaginable language on every wall, and he had paintings and drawings by his friends like Picasso and Cocteau on the walls that were incredibly exciting."

So why did he trade in that world for popular music? "At some point I fell in love with that too," Zevon says. "With folk music and

Illustration: David Cowles

World Radio History

with the guitar. And I guess I felt that it was a world that was wonderful for this man in his 80s, and wonderful to partake of, but I still felt a need to communicate with people in *my* world. It was partly that, partly my perception of something that was out of the past. Although I'm not sure that today that's true, because I think that modern classical music is getting more and more attention, but it's nothing like . . . real attention. It's nothing like the right kind of attention.

"The best way of putting it is this: I went to an Elliott Carter concert, his eightieth birthday concert, with the New York Philharmonic last year. And here was the greatest living composer, in my opinion. Zubin Mehta brought him out onstage to take an eightieth birthday bow. I was standing on my feet all thrilled and excited, and I looked around and these people in their furs were just kind of patting their palms, and I thought, 'Jesus, this is the amount of appreciation the greatest living composer gets from people, who I guess have subscription tickets and are waiting for Ravel's *Bolero*.'

"And fairly, I mean a few of the things I learned when I was younger, like Stravinsky saying that things always stayed in the key that they first came to him, don't always turn out to be real good practice for your voice when you're writing songs."

There have been occasional reports, though, that Zevon has worked on a symphony of his own. "It was never specifically a symphony," he says. "You know, some days you call it a symphony, some days you think it's going to be something else. It just amounts to a lot of abstract music. I never really had a form to pour it into. I guess if the Kronos Quartet said, 'Give us a short piece,' then one would. I think what happened to it is I started doing film music. I did the music for 'Drug Wars,' the mini-series that was just on last week. When I got that job, I was working on what seemed like it was a string quartet. And every night I would set up the computer and the keyboard and work on that for hours. And when I got this job, I found I was being paid and encouraged to do exactly the same thing I had been doing for years to amuse myself."

Zevon's dedication to a traditional notion of art is one of the reasons he's refused to take part in benefits for social and environmental concerns. "I have a number of reasons for not doing things like that," he says. "My background is in the tradition of art. I mean Picasso painted 'Guernica,' that's about the Spanish Civil War, granted. But I don't think it ever occurred to anybody that they were the voice of a political movement. Art for art's sake is pretty important to civilization, in my opinion. And that's the kind of tradition that I think of myself as coming from. For another thing, I don't think that musicians, entertainers as a general class of people in society, are so well-informed that because they have the ears of the public they should be telling them who to vote for. I think that concept is a little insane.

"And finally, given my [*cont'd on page 113*]

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LIVING LEGENDS

The Importance of Being Incredible

Organist Jimmy Smith still does it his way

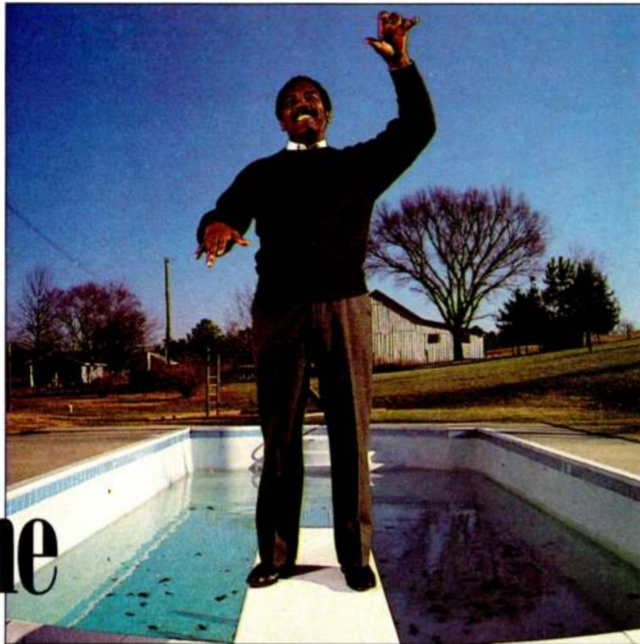
BY

Jefferson Graham

"Drummers are scared of me. Guitar players too."

MY MIND is too fast for most people," Jimmy Smith explains. "I got all this stuff in my head—chord changes, harmonic changes, polytone chords—but I don't read. I don't know what I'm doing. I'm just a born genius."

Jimmy Smith may not be the most egotistical person in the world, though it's a good bet



he's in the top six. He's also funny, short-tempered, charming and always testing you. He's a character, in other words—with one catch. He really is a legend. Maybe even a genius. For Smith is a jazz original on the order of Art Tatum, Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong. All developed unique musical styles on their instrument that in turn became models to be emulated by subsequent playing generations. Smith's instrument is of course the Hammond B-3 organ, and his appearance in the mid-'50s, displaying extraordinarily fleet chops and an advanced bebop sensibility on an instrument that had rarely been featured at all in jazz, broke new ground that was soon cultivated into an entire sub-genre.

Nearly 40 years later, Smith is still on the road, playing up a storm, and live is where Smith really shines. To hear him tell it, young musicians fear the prospect of appearing onstage alongside the "Public Organ Grinder Number One."

"Drummers are scared of me. Guitar players are more scared. They're frightened. You know why? It's because of this," Smith explains, holding up the four fingers and thumb of his dreaded right hand. "It's what I do to them on the keyboards."

Naturally Smith sees no reason to alter his trademark approach in the slightest. How would he respond, for instance, to someone who says, "Jimmy, this is the '90s—how about doing something a little more contemporary?"

"Kiss my ass!" he responds with a trademark growl. "Let *him* do something contemporary. They're gonna pay me a lot of money before I cross over. I'll retire on it 15 times. Got it? Fifteen fucking times."

In an era when young musicians are learning how to play one-handed synth riffs while spending most of their time learning to program the internal computers, Jimmy Smith still moves both hands up and down the double keyboards of his beloved B-3, while his feet cruise the pedals for the walking bass line. His specialty is the blues: the gritty, down-home, soulful, wailful sound of the organ keys up front, usually backed with a drum and guitar and maybe a sax, accompanied by an orgasmic expression, rolling eyes and an on-mike growl from the organmeister himself. Smith likes to hold one note down on a solo as the other hand improvises around it, a sound that was first established on classic albums like *Back at the Chicken Shack*, *Organ Grinder Swing*, *The Sermon* and *The Cat* (all recently reissued on CD).

But we haven't heard much from Smith in recent years, due in part to a fruitless five-year production deal with Quincy Jones, who never found the time to get Smith into the studio. The day the Jones deal ended, Fantasy Records signed Smith to a multi-record contract. *Prime Time*, his first effort for the label, has just been released, and the tunes are, well, prime time Jimmy Smith.

"I wanted to show the audience that he was still the guy," says producer Eric Miller. "He's just too good not to have recorded for so long." Smith was so eager to get back into the recording studio that he recorded *Prime Time* with just one hand. He had fallen off a ladder at home and broken his left wrist, which was set in a cast for eight weeks. "Jimmy didn't want to wait," says producer Miller, "and if that was good enough for him, it was good enough for me. Besides, Jimmy can play more with one hand than everyone else with three."

JAMES OSCAR SMITH was born December 8, 1925 in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Self-

Photograph: Patrick Harbron

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taught on piano and string bass, he was playing the *William Tell Overture* at age seven and two years later won the "Major Bowes Amateur Hour" playing boogie-woogie. He performed with his piano-playing father in a song-and-dance act around Philly, later joined the Navy, plastered homes and worked on the railroad, while playing jazz on weekends.

It was the sound of those pianos—perpetually out of tune—that prompted Smith, at 24, to look around for something else to play. Hearing Wild Bill Davis on the organ in Atlantic City showed him the way to go. He paid $3,600 for a B-3, rented a warehouse and started to practice. Davis told Smith it would take him years to master the instrument. Smith had another scenario in mind.

"I got the organ from a loan shark," he remembers. "So I had to get a job immediately. The guy who came for the payments every Saturday was 'heeled.' [He carried a gun.] If you don't pay off, they take you on out of there. I was very motivated."

Smith hung a chart on the wall showing where the bass notes were on the pedals, so he wouldn't have to look down, and practiced for three weeks. "I was fast. I was determined." Smith got his first trio date in Philly with drummer Charlie Persip and a young saxophonist named John Coltrane. Soon after that, playing a club date in Harlem, he was "discovered" and signed to Blue Note. The title of his first LP—*Jimmy Smith at the Organ: A New Sound, a New Star*—said it all. The record was a hit, introducing a Golden Age of Jazz Organ with players like Richard "Groove" Holmes, Shirley Scott, Jimmy McGriff, Charles Earland and "Brother" Jack McDuff. Many of them, like Smith, would pack a B-3 into their hearse and drive to the local lounges for weekend gigs.

Few disputed Smith's primacy, however. "They used to call me the Octopus," he points out. "They thought I was overdubbing because so much playing was going on. They said no one could play that fast and keep the bass line going at the same time. They thought it was two organ players at first."

Besides bringing a new vocabulary to the organ, Smith also showed a generation that had grown up with primarily acoustic instruments what a little electricity could do. "Suddenly I had power. You play a note on the piano and it goes like, dink. Play it on the organ, and it's like . . . look out!"

For all that, Smith decries the electronic power of today's contemporary jazz. "I played the synthesizer on one album, because I wanted to have some fun," he says. "It's a Mickey Mouse instrument. The kids are too lazy to learn how to play the [organ bass] pedals. All they want to do is stand up and push the buttons. I did it the hard way."

Ironically, the man who says he disdains crossover music did commit said crimes in the 1960s, after he switched labels from Blue Note to Verve. There Smith enjoyed chart success, recording glossy big-band movie themes ("Walk on the Wild Side," "Goldfinger," "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?") and placing several LPs in the Top 20.

"It was commercial crap," he flatly admits. "I wanted to do stuff with big bands, straight-ahead jazz. I did one theme, and then they asked me to do another, and then I did another. I almost got sour on my organ because I didn't get to play any jazz."

But out of that misfortune came a classic pairing with another Verve legend—the late guitarist Wes Montgomery. They recorded four albums together (only *James and Wes: The Dynamic Duo* is currently in print), big

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band and small combo settings where the laid-back sounds of each meshed perfectly.

"Wes had a nice mellow sound, like I do on my organ. It's not shrill. Wes was a stylist, a creative stylist. Anyone can play scales and shit. The man had something to say."

That's a big compliment coming from Smith, who usually reserves such praise for himself. Asked who else he likes on the organ, he responds that other players merely emulate the man whose letterhead reads "The World's Greatest Jazz Organist." Even label-mate and frequent club partner Jimmy McGriff? "He's an echo. I taught him. Why should I like somebody I taught? I'm not conceited, I'm good. Why should I sit there and listen to somebody who isn't as good as I am?"

CD re-releases have brought thousands of dollars in newfound royalties to many veteran jazzmen during the 1980s, but Smith, who has made 86 albums to date, got zip. In a deal all too typical of the music business, he signed away all his Blue Note and Verve royalties to his ex-wife in the early 1970s. Smith's other heartbreak has been dealing with Hammond's decision to stop production of the B-3. They replaced it with the B-3000, an instrument Smith won't touch.

"New Hammonds? There are no new Hammonds," he scoffs. "Not as far as I'm concerned. I don't know what the B-3000 is. It's got a Mickey Mouse sound and a lot of dumb gimmicks. They did it to cater to the young people with all these pretty green lights and red lights. My organ got no lights on it. It's an organ. Period. It doesn't have drums or a bass machine. They say it's [the B-3000] got lots of goodies. They ain't goodies—they jokies."

Jimmy is equally riled about the time Michael Jackson called him personally to ask him to play an organ solo on "Bad." Smith came to the studio and played a 20-minute solo, which was edited to 10 seconds. Worse, from his point of view, it was programmed into a MIDI bank of keyboards, and the solo ends with a sea of bent Jimmy Smith notes, something no ordinary B-3 could—or would—do.

"You don't MIDI Jimmy Smith," grumbles the master. "I think Michael just wanted a private concert. He just wanted to hear me grunt and groan."

Jimmy and his wife Lola Smith had lived in Los Angeles for decades, but decided in 1986 to leave the rat race for country life, purchasing a 12-acre ranch near Nashville. Like Eva Gabor in "Green Acres," however, the Organ Grinder found life on a Tennessee farm too foreign. He ended up jamming with country guitar pickers, though after a few sessions with Smith, according to Lola, the twangs were gone and instead "you started hearing the low-down, dirty, git-tar blues"

A Man and His Organ

If you are wondering what organ Smith plays, then you must be a "day person" [Smith speak for a musical ignoramus]. Since Hammond stopped production of the B-3s in the beginning of the 1980s, Smith has stockpiled 'em, keeping two stored in Los Angeles, one in Philadelphia and several in Nashville. They get plugged into his rebuilt Leslie 122s, with 60-watt drivers, a 150-watt booster and 15-inch JBL speakers. He has six units scattered around the country as well, and he generally plays live with two Leslies, for a sort of stereo effect. "It's enough power to blow your ass away," says Smith. "To B-L-O-W your ass away."

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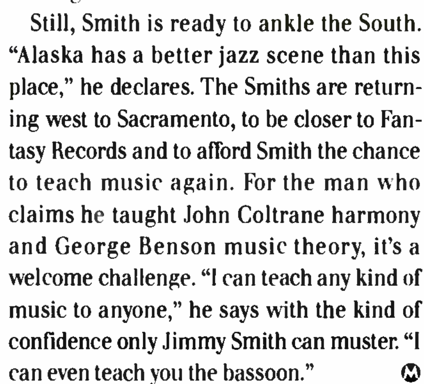


coming out of their boxes.

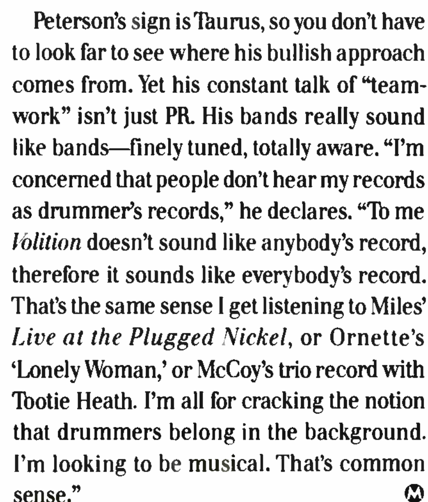
Still, Smith is ready to ankle the South. "Alaska has a better jazz scene than this place," he declares. The Smiths are returning west to Sacramento, to be closer to Fantasy Records and to afford Smith the chance to teach music again. For the man who claims he taught John Coltrane harmony and George Benson music theory, it's a welcome challenge. "I can teach any kind of music to anyone," he says with the kind of confidence only Jimmy Smith can muster. "I can even teach you the bassoon."

PETERSON

[cont'd from page 20] with pianist Geri Allen and bassist Essiet Okon Essiet, that demonstrates just how rollicking Peterson can make tradition.

Piano trios are often seen as a "nice" way of getting into jazz by part-time listeners. "That's the word, you used the word!" blurts Peterson. "*Nice.* I wanted this trio to have a not-so-nice quality, so it would make listeners squirm." Not to mention accompanists. "I push them because I'm always pushing myself," Peterson says. "That's where the creativity lies, out on the edge of control." Perhaps as a result, Allen has never sounded so thrillingly visceral, while newcomer Essiet provides an escalator ride through the melodies. "They looked at me in disbelief when we were recording," Peterson remembers. "Kind of like 'Do you know what you're doing with this thing?' But in hindsight they realize I wasn't being reckless. I was just trying to be true to the concept."

Peterson is recording a band that promises to take his music toward "a hard left." Further, his current trio is now a vibes/bass/drums group. "Mix up your formats and you will eliminate the tendency to recapture what you did before," he reasons. "Change the context and you force yourself out of the realm of cliché. It's just like the playing itself: more than one climax, a series of ups and downs. It's teamwork."



Peterson's sign is Taurus, so you don't have to look far to see where his bullish approach comes from. Yet his constant talk of "teamwork" isn't just PR. His bands really sound like bands—finely tuned, totally aware. "I'm concerned that people don't hear my records as drummer's records," he declares. "To me *Volition* doesn't sound like anybody's record, therefore it sounds like everybody's record. That's the same sense I get listening to Miles' *Live at the Plugged Nickel*, or Ornette's 'Lonely Woman,' or McCoy's trio record with Tootie Heath. I'm all for cracking the notion that drummers belong in the background. I'm looking to be musical. That's common sense."

PETERKIT

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Bass drum is a Rogers floor tom rock shell, 18x16, that "I converted into the bass drum. It's my cannon; I refinished that and the rest of my drums. Now for the floor I have a Ludwig power tom, 12½x15. Right now I'm using a metal snare, but on the record I use a Gretsch 6½" wooden one; I'm fiddling around all the time. I got a real slick bass pedal, a Sonor, with detachable heads on the beater: wood, hard felt, hard rubber. You can change for the date, the room." In his hands he holds Vic Firths, usually 5A woodtips: "They have been very nice to me."

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Photograph by Bob Sebree

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The Heartbreakers Highway

Four Seasons of Full Moon Fever

By Bill Flanagan

GILDA RADNER died today. The mood around "Saturday Night Live" is somber. Those who knew Gilda, the old-timers, are working along quietly. "SNL" bandleader G.E. Smith, her ex-husband, wears a black armband as he leads the house musicians through their charts. The new generation of actors and comedians who did not work with Radner run through their skits, maybe watching to see what they can read on the faces of producer Lorne Michaels and guest host Steve Martin. It's the last show of the 1988/89 season, so the atmosphere of subdued mourning is competing with a last-day-of-school giddiness. When they go on the air at 11:30 Steve Martin is close to tears. The dressing rooms, though, are filling up with celebrity guests for the big post-show end-of-season party. There's Paulina and Ric Ocasek, Bruce Willis, Anjelica Huston. And off by themselves, preparing for their first public performance in two-and-a-half years, are Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers.

There's a little tension with them, too. The Heartbreakers took a break at the end of their 1987 summer tour. They had been out for months, on their own and with Bob Dylan, and

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they'd run themselves ragged. Still, they had not counted on their vacation stretching quite this long. While drummer Stan Lynch, keyboard player Benmont Tench, bassist Howie Epstein and guitarist Mike Campbell were otherwise engaged, Tom Petty made *The Traveling Wilburys Volume One* with a loose collection of rock star buddies and watched it become a huge hit. Petty also recorded a solo album in the home studio of Heartbreaker Campbell. Originally titled *Songs from the Garage*, TP's weekend project was supposed to have been wrapped up almost a year ago, but Petty kept fiddling with it, using Mike, Benmont and Howie here and there but determinedly keeping it a *Tom Petty* album—no *& the Heartbreakers* this time. Now, in May of 1989, Petty's solo album is finally being released. It has been given a more dignified name—*Full Moon Fever*—reflecting that it's more than the filler project it started out to be.

HOWIE, BENMONT, STAN AND MIKE CONSPIRE ON THEIR BUS TOUR.

"Tom is the leader of the group but there's some friction. We're all pretty stubborn and don't like being told what to do."

Tonight on "Saturday Night Live" Petty and his band are scheduled to play songs from the solo album, and the Heartbreakers are going to prove they are a lot more than a backup group. The first single, "I Won't Back Down," has just been shipped to radio, and MCA Records expects Petty to use this national exposure to push that song. But when the TV lights come on the band plays two album tracks: "Running Down a Dream"—the Heartbreakers kicking out a tougher version than the record—and a majestic new ballad called "Free Fallin'." Two songs, two great performances. Whatever butterflies the Heartbreakers felt have been blown away by the ease with which they matched the studio versions of Tom's solo songs.

As "SNL" cuts to a commercial, the band cuts to their dressing room, where Katie Valk, MCA's legendary PR wildwoman, is waiting to compliment their performance and warn them that there'll be hell to pay when the MCA bosses on the West Coast find out they didn't play the single. "Ah," Petty mumbles, more in sorrow than anger, "we tried it at soundcheck and it just didn't feel right. The band was more comfortable playing the other songs."

"I know, I know," Katie agrees. "But in three hours the phones are gonna light up."

Petty shrugs, the Heartbreakers towel off, and Katie thinks hard about what to tell the bosses. "I got it!" she says. "We'll say you planned to do 'I Won't Back Down' but you had to do 'Free Fallin'' at the last minute—*'cause it was Gilda's favorite song!*"

The Heartbreakers look at each other, between shock and laughter. They exchange crooked little half smiles that you can read any way you want. They have their own way of talking.

Petty says later that part of the reason he's throwing himself into a Heartbreakers tour is to make sure the band does not feel threatened by his outside projects. "I wanted to remain *bonded with the boys*, you know," he says with the same crooked smile. "I wanted them to know I'm not leaving. But I don't want to suffocate myself either. I've been in this band 13 or 14 years and I'd like to be interested in it when I'm doing it. So just from time to time I'd like to do something else. They all have that privilege. They play with tons of people all the time, hang out with different bands. I never got to do that. I think we're all fairly at ease about it. I hope."

Petty started to make a solo album once before. 1985's *Southern Accents*, co-produced with Eurythmic Dave Stewart at Tom's home studio, began as a break from the Heartbreakers, but one by one Tom called each of them in to play this part or that part until it turned into a band project. *Full Moon Fever* started the same way—this time the British rock star producer was Jeff Lynne and this time the home studio was Mike Campbell's—and again Tom found himself using Mike. Then Ben came over to play piano on one track, then Howie did some background vocals.... Then Tom yelled *stop*.

"I had to go, 'Wait now,'" he says. "The first sessions were done out of convenience; we had Phil Jones play the drums because Stan wasn't there. I just wanted to do something different. Then I was enjoying it too much to have it turn back into routine life. And we needed a break. So I wasn't real popular for a few weeks. I think they were sort of aggravated until they started doing other things and then they were okay about it. And I can dig that. Everybody wants to be busy."

The Heartbreakers got busy. Howie began producing an album for Carlene Carter. Benmont played on U2's *Rattle and Hum* and Elvis Costello's *Spike*. Mike, along with working on *Full Moon Fever*, produced and wrote a chunk of Roy Orbison's *Mystery Girl*, and contributed to Don Henley's *The End of the Innocence*. But Henley's album was most important to the Heartbreakers as where Stan Lynch went—Stan played drums and percussion with Henley, co-produced a bit and co-wrote "How Bad Do You Want It," "Gimme What You Got" and "The Last Worthless Evening."

"The secret of keeping the Heartbreakers happy is to keep Stan occupied," Tom says. "We want to thank Don Henley for keeping Stan busy all these years and keeping our band together. Thank you."

"Well, *he's* not using them," Don Henley laughs when asked about it. "All you've gotta do with Stan is have him around. Because the stuff that comes out of his mouth is priceless. He is a bottomless pit of one-liners. Stuff like the first line of 'How Bad Do You Want It?' ['You're

All photographs Ebet Roberts except center right Linda Burcher

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leavin' tongue marks on the carpet . . .'] just fell out of Stan's mouth. He's hysterical. Some nights we'd be so depressed and tired of recording we'd ask Stan to come down just to have him around. But he and I did sit down a couple of times and bang heads with legal pads and the tape recorder. Stan's coming into his own, he just needs a little encouragement to be a real good songwriter."

Whatever feathers were ruffled, Tom has no doubts that *Full Moon Fever* was worth it. "I lived with that album for a year before I put it out and I was just crazy about it!" Petty laughs at his immodesty. "It was *embarrassing* how excited I was! If it failed I think I wouldn't want to do it anymore. I was so sure about 'Free Fallin',' I never got tired of hearing it."

AXL ROSE loves that song, too. A couple of months after "Saturday Night Live" the Guns N' Roses singer calls Petty and asks if he can sing "Free Fallin'" with them on another live broadcast, the MTV awards. Tom explains, "Axl said, 'I know this girl, man, and that is her song, that's her story. And I'd really like to sing the song.' I thought, 'Yeah, there's a concept—to have him sing it's gotta go right to the heart of the matter.'

"Axl called me the other day and asked me, 'Where did you get that line in "Free Fallin'" about the vampires in the valley?' When I'm driving I sometimes see these shadowy-looking people just off the sidewalks, around the post office. I always thought of them as vampires for some reason. I wrote it real fast. I started it off on a keyboard. Bugs, who's a roadie who's been with us since the day we started, bought me this Yamaha keyboard. I said, 'Man, why'd you buy that? It's expensive!' He said, 'If you write one song on it it'll pay for itself.' So he charged it to me and left it there. Jeff Lynne was over one night and I started playing with it. I played," Petty hums the opening chords of "Free Fallin'"—plus five others, a busy pattern. "Jeff goes, 'Wait! What was that? Just play the first part over and over.' Okay. I did and Jeff's just sitting there smiling and he says, 'Go on, sing something.' So just to make Jeff smile I sang, 'She's a good girl, loves her mama.' And from there I wrote the first and second verse completely spontaneously. We were smart enough to have a cassette on. So I sang the first couple of verses and Jeff says, 'Go up on the chorus, take your voice up a whole octave—what'll that sound like?' I sang, 'I'm *freeee . . .*' He said, 'Wo! There's power in that, that's good!' I wrote the third verse after he left and brought it in and showed it to him the next day. It all fit together and we were really excited." Tom laughs. "We went running over to Mike's with the song. Mike hardly knew Jeff, we just showed up and said, 'Hey! We gotta do a record right now! We gotta get this song down!' Mike said sure, and we did it."

Told that it was generous to give Lynne co-writing credit for the song, Tom shrugs and says, "But if Jeff hadn't been there the song wouldn't have been written."

The Heartbreakers cancel several tour dates to go home to L.A. for the TV show. Axl and bandmate Izzy Stradlin join them on the MTV set to rehearse "Free Fallin'" and to work up a version of "Heartbreak Hotel." Their run-through keeps a fuming Cher waiting in the wings. When the show is broadcast, some viewers think Tom looks angry with Axl for taking over the song; others think he just looks bemused. The truth is, Petty gets a kick out of Axl's scene-stealing, though the other Heartbreakers don't.

BELOW: TP AT ELVIS' DOOR. RIGHT: BEN HEADS TO THE STAGE.

As the TV credits roll and the Guns N' Heartbreakers come offstage, Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil charges out of the dark and punches Izzy—then runs for his car. It's revenge for an alleged slight by the Gunners to Neil's wife.

"Well, you know us," Petty sighs. "We manage to get into shit somehow. I don't dig blindsiding somebody, if that's what happened. I didn't see it. I just saw Vince Neil go storming by and a guy running behind him with a walkie talkie going, 'Vince? Vince!' I heard a commotion but I didn't know what it was. I just kept going. I said, 'Is that any of our guys?' And they said, 'No, it's on the stage.' Stan was there, [Heartbreakers lighting designer] Jim Lenahan threw a couple of punches at Vince Neil. Lenahan's great. He's like, 'He's with us—at least for right now.'"

IN SEPTEMBER the Heartbreakers land in Hampton Beach, Virginia. The tour is almost over. When they arrive at their hotel they are told that their rooms are not ready. One of the crew plants himself in the middle of the lobby with his boom box blasting George Clinton at full volume. The hotel management suddenly finds empty rooms.

Full Moon Fever has turned into Petty's biggest album in years. It will probably eventually pass 1979's *Damn the Torpedoes* to become

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his biggest ever. The Heartbreakers want to stay on the road, strike while the iron is hot, but Petty has decided not to extend the tour. Tom wants to take a break to write. The original plan was for the band to record a new album from late '89 to early '90, leaving Tom the spring of '90 to work on a second Wilburys project. But no one expected *Full Moon Fever* to be such a smash. Now the Heartbreakers want to keep working, but Tom sees no reason to push it. Things are great—why get nervous? The underlying fear among the Heartbreakers is that if they quit touring now, Tom will get caught up with the Wilburys again, which will lead God-knows-where for God-knows-how-long, and another year will be lost.

MIKE & TP: AFTER 20 YEARS THEY'RE NATURALLY IN TUNE.

"I lived with Full Moon Fever a year before I put it out. If it had failed, I wouldn't have wanted to do it anymore."

It's a couple of hours before showtime at the local civic center and the band is lolling around the concrete dressing room, sleepy-eyed. A buffet of fruit and lunch meat sits untouched. A roadie comes in and shouts, "Hey, guys! Wake up!"

Petty says sleepily, "Inside I'm a coiled spring."

Stan Lynch, sprawled on a couch, mumbles, "The rattlesnake knows just how much poison is required."

Mike Campbell saunters in from the tuning room and pops a tape into a boom box. Boogie-woogie piano fills the room. Mike walks away and Petty raises his eyes. "Is that Benmont?" he asks. He gets no answer. Everyone listens. "Sounds like Benmont, don't it?" Someone goes over and checks. "No, it's Pete Johnson."

Just then Ben Tench enters the room. "Hey, Benmont," Petty says, "Mike's playing a Pete Johnson tape and we thought it was you."

"Yeah! Right!" Ben snaps. "I sound *nothing* like Pete Johnson!" and he continues through the room and out the other door. Petty makes an amused *well, I never* face. Linda Burcher, the wardrobe woman, says, "We could take that two ways...."

The door opens again and Benmont returns with an announcement: "Pete Johnson was only the greatest piano player I ever heard!" He stops and listens to the music. "God, that depresses me." He listens some more and then says, "Why did he have to die?"

Petty says softly, "Great football player, too."

Linda drifts off and comes back with some local news. That big ugly bolted metal door down by the tuning room isn't just a door. It's *Elvis'* door. It seems that the King of Rock 'n' Roll played this very same facility once, and refused to enter through the general backstage area. So the arena had a special door cut from the dressing room into the parking lot, so that Elvis could step right in from his bus. Tom gets Linda to snap some photos of him in front of the Elvis Door. He sneers like young Elvis. He sticks his belly out like old Elvis. One of the Heartbreakers suggests they demand a door only knee high, "The Irving Azoff Door."

TOM PETTY NO LONGER takes life so seriously. Tom's house caught fire in 1987. He and his wife and children got out, but most of their belongings were lost. It's led to a long period of temporary quarters for the family while their new home's being built. To make it worse, the fire may have been arson. While that experience would shake anyone, Tom is fairly philosophical about it. All the more remarkable because he was once known for his combustibility—he made news by engaging in a long legal battle to get out of an unfair record deal before *Damn the Torpedoes*. Then he refused to release his next album, *Hard Promises*, if MCA raised its price a dollar above standard. Then, during the making of *Southern Accents*, he punched a wall, broke his hand, and for a while it looked like his guitar playing days were over. So anyone might have expected that losing his home and possessions would have sent Tom completely around the bend, but instead he devoted himself to keeping his family's spirits up, and made—with the Wilburys and *Full Moon Fever*—the loosest, happiest music of his career.

"It's very unusual," Tom says of his new optimism. "The fire was such a vast thing that it scares me when I start thinking about it. But your life is not like what comes out in the press. They only get the really tragic or really great things. They don't get all the middle stuff. But I'll tell ya," he laughs, "it's been pretty wild.

"I know 'Free Fallin'' was influenced by driving up and down Mulholland Drive, where I was living for a while. I did a lot of driving, and a lot of the album came to me on those drives. We were moving all around town, going from house to house, staying in hotels. It was a funny lifestyle, but in the end it was good creatively. I think that was a way of working out all that stuff with the fire so I wouldn't build up a lot of aggression and anger about it. I think looking back—this could be total bullshit—I completely adopted another stance for the album: 'Look, let's just be happy and try to get something over with a positive vibe *and* some credibility.' Most of the things out there that are positive don't have much credibility; it's easy to go over the line.

"It was just my mood at the time, and also not having to shoulder the Heartbreakers responsibility. Jeff Lynne really worked wonders with me and Michael. He had us doing stuff we'd never do. We would write a song and record it and write another one the next day."

Tom now thinks taking the creation of rock 'n' roll too seriously is a big mistake. "It's not good, y'know. Not that you can't write about a serious subject—everything can't be a goof—but I think you just get

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it a little easier if you don't get all puffed up. Especially when you've written a hundred songs. It's better to go at it casually, and you'll find the best stuff and remember it. I believe that."

Tonight's show continues the loosening of the Heartbreakers sets that began during their tenure with Dylan. In the late '70s and early '80s their shows were so tight that at times they felt a bit constricted. No one could complain about hearing note-for-note recreations of records as great as "Breakdown," "Refugee" and "Don't Do Me Like That," but if you went to see Tom Petty concerts two nights in a row, you might be disappointed at how regimented it all was. When Stan Lynch was told this at the time he said, 'When we're playing 'Refugee,' that's no time for fooling around—it's fast balls, right over the plate."

Ten years later, the Heartbreakers are throwing sliders, curves and spitballs. The songs have been broken down and rebuilt, new instrumental passages have been added to some, others have been stripped of their Top 40 sheen and made acoustic. ("I wouldn't be even slightly interested in playing 'Listen to Her Heart' in the normal setup," Tom says. "But to play it acoustic gets at a whole different side of the song.") Benmont has a boogie piano number, and Mike Campbell, rock's most self-effacing guitar great, gets to play a long, Hendrix-like instrumental that evolves into "Don't Come Around Here No More." It's a better show than the old Heartbreakers concerts because things aren't so structured. And also because Petty is one of the few songwriters who has maintained a steady string of hits *and* a consistent standard of quality over more than a decade of activity. U2 and R.E.M. crowds get restless during the old songs and come alive for the newer ones. Stones and Who audiences go out for popcorn during the new numbers and go wild during the oldies. But the Heartbreakers' fans are equally excited by "American Girl" (1976) and "I Won't Back Down" (1989). Like Neil Young before him, Petty is an artist whose importance has become apparent not in a burst, but over a long haul. In the fifteenth year of his public career, it's starting to dawn on the rock audience that Tom Petty never lets them down.

"We're doing a runner tonight," the tour manager says. "Make sure you're at the side of the stage during 'Jammin' Me'—the band are going to come right off, onto the buses, and be gone before the lights come on." Sure enough, the crowd's still cheering as the musicians dive onto their tour buses. The garage doors fly up and we're on the road. For most of the summer there have been three buses—one for Tom and his family, one for Mike Campbell and his family, and one for Benmont, Stan and Howie. Summer and the tour are ending now, and the families have gone home to start school. So tonight Mike's riding with the other Heartbreakers. Tom is following on his own bus. Like all rock stars since time began, the first thing the Heartbreakers think about as they peel off their stage clothes and settle in for the long ride to the next state is—what's for dinner. They are aghast to open the cupboards and find that some dirty rat on the other bus has replaced their wheat bread and high-fiber cereal with Chocolate Pinwheels, Little Debbie cakes, Malomars and Oreos—horrible junk food that is bad for them, that is repulsive to them, and that they know they will not be able to resist eating before the night is over.

BUSINESSMAN HOWIE SELLS STAN TICKETS TO THE MAIN EVENT.

As the bus rolls through Virginia toward North Carolina, Stan starts talking with excitement about his hero—Sammy Davis, Jr. How Sammy is the epitome of real show biz, how Sammy . . . "Oh no," Benmont mumbles, "he's onto Sammy again." Howie, Mike and Ben get up and move toward the rear cabin to play tapes while Stan waves his arms and goes on: "I'm not bullshittin', man! I've read *Yes I Can*, I own a first printing edition of *Hollywood in a Suitcase*. In about '83 I heard he was playing, so I raced to Vegas, got a suite, brought all my Sammy memorabilia. I call and leave some champagne for him at his hotel. And he shines me! So I go to two shows, I pay the 50 dollars, I get in the front row and I'm screamin', 'Candyman!' at the top of my lungs. I'm goin' crazy. And he looks down at me and says, 'Hey, man, here's one that's about as modern as I'm going to get.' And he did 'Ghostbusters' for me. That was a peak moment for me. When he said, 'I told you before, I ain't afraid of no ghost,' he pointed right at me. And I kind of went wild. If you can imagine Sammy doing 'Ghostbusters' right after 'Mister Bojangles.' I thought I was gonna blow a headgasket. I was so deluded, I was in my prime as a *rock dude* and I was hoping that maybe he'll want to know me and I can even, like, get next to the guy. I stalked him. I ran after him to the limo saying, 'Sammy! Tremendous show! Tremendous show!' And he looked at me in all seriousness and said, 'I know where you're coming from, man.' And he walked off. I think he thought I was a Mark Chapman or something. But I think the man is the consummate entertainer. Have you seen Sammy hoof, man? Okay, you've got your Madonnas and your Princes and your Bobby Browns, but let's get real."

At 34 Stan is the youngest Heartbreaker, four years shy of Tom, Ben and Mike. He grew up in the band. Tom, Ben and Mike had already played together in a Florida band called Mudcrutch when Stan

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hooked up with them. In the early days, when Stan and Petty were both wilder, their fights were legendary. Stan's expulsion from the band was once officially announced. But that was a long time ago. Now the same extravagant qualities that used to get Stan in hot water with the band have become a source of amusement to them. All of the Heartbreakers are smart guys, but the others have a Southern reserve—they are kind of tight-lipped. Even Howie Epstein, a non-Southerner who joined the band in 1982, is laconic. Not Stan. Stan is enthusiastic and he likes to talk. He is articulate and quick-witted. He's well over six feet tall, an avid sportsman, the son of a college professor, and a good-looking rock star. Stan Lynch knows he has it made.

"I took Dylan to see Sammy and Frank at the Greek Theatre," Stan announces. "My dream date with Bob. That's a true story. The first week of rehearsals for the Dylan tour, Dylan hadn't spoken to us all week. We were all playing and I said, 'Look, I gotta bug out early tonight.' And they go, 'Lynch, what's your crisis?' I go, 'I got tickets for Sammy and Frank at the Greek.' The whole band covers their eyes going, 'Oh geez, I can't believe he really said that.' And Dylan looked up at me in all seriousness and said, 'Sammy and Frank? I love those guys.' So Dylan and I went to the Greek. I really didn't know who to look at! I don't mind saying I was a little starstruck by the whole concept that I came from Gainesville to L.A., and now I'm sitting with Bob Dylan watching Sammy Davis and Frank Sinatra."

When the subject of Tom's solo album comes up, Stan declares that Tom's line about having used drummer Phil Jones because Stan was out of town is not true. "I wasn't asked to play on it," he announces with a wave. "I've heard I wasn't asked because I wasn't there, but that's bullshit. I flew back to L.A. to start the album! I think they were already working and they didn't want to hurt my feelings. I had a fight with Michael the year before and..."

Across the dark highway, Tom Petty looks out his window and sees that Stan's exposition is taking a serious turn. "Look at Stanley," Tom tells his driver. "He's doing his rap. He's taking this way too seriously." Stan is still talking when suddenly the boss' bus swings toward his window—with Tom Petty pressing the seat of his pants against the window, shouting something at Stan. Stan immediately leaps to his feet, unbuckles his belt and presses his own butt against his own glass, adopting a cracker accent to scream at Petty, "You don't have the balls! I mean that literally! You want some more? I'll give you some more, goddammit! Speed up, Chester, they're comin' by again! I'll give you some more!" The two buses play tag for a minute, the two musicians howling across the highway at one another. In the rear cabin of the band bus Mike, Ben and Howie look out, astonished to see Tom Petty engaging in such Stan-like behavior. Then the two buses swing apart again and Stan falls back into his seat roaring with laugher. His gripe with Tom is forgotten, at least for publication. Back on his own bus, Tom Petty has taken care of business again.

"When it really comes down to it," Stan says, "I have nothing to beef about with Tom's solo record. I have to be confident that he'll see the value of what we are and bring something else to the trip. I did sessions, hell, I even toured with other people. Ben's done it, Mike's done a lot of things. Tom was the one who was incredibly loyal for over a decade. He didn't sleep around at all. I feel this is really positive *if* it stays together. If you use that as your excuse to break up, I think you're a fool. I don't think anybody wants to be remembered as the one who broke up Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers. 'Cause it's a cool band."

SMOKIN' IN THE BOYS' ROOM: EPSTEIN, TENCH, LYNCH, CAMPBELL, TP

Mike and Ben return from the back of the bus and seat themselves across from Stan. "It's very hard in this band to get a word in edgewise," Stan says. "The drummer is like the center on a football team. Nobody gives a shit whether you can run. It's, 'Hey, hike the fuckin' ball!' I could sit there all day long and go, 'Well, you know, I'm not a half bad lyricist and I know how to arrange and, hell, I could do a couple of other tricks, too.' They're like, 'Hey! We need a center! You get down on all four and hike!'"

Benmont says, "Say you've got a family. The little brother goes off and makes a million dollars. When they come back for Thanksgiving dinner he's still the little brother. Our roles have developed, and no matter what we do with other people, when we all get together it's, 'Okay, Tom, sing one. We're here.'"

"And he's a good leader," Mike adds. "Most of the time. It's a good question, though. Tom is the leader of the group and there's a lot of friction. Because we all have a lot of ideas and we are pretty stubborn and we don't like being told what to do. So a lot of the time there's a lot of tension in the air. But I think that creates some of the excitement in the playing. We've been together a long time, and we can't just be buddy-buddy friends all the time."

"Some of the best music," Ben concludes, "is made by people when they're mad at each other."

THE NEXT AFTERNOON in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the band bus

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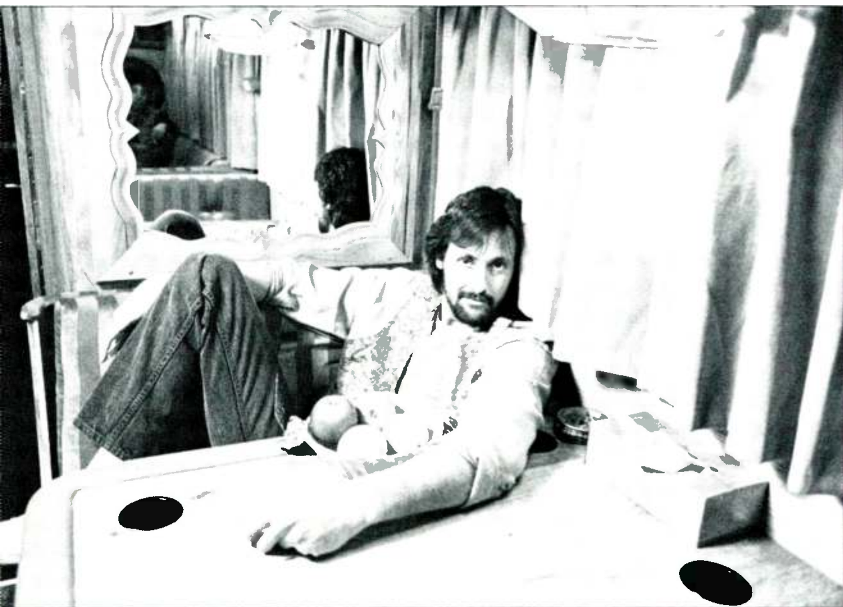
pulls up to the backstage of the Dean Smith Center where they will play that night. A pot-bellied security guard waves for the bus to halt, saunters over to the driver's window like Barney Fife and shouts, "Are you the band?" Before the driver can answer Stan's voice bellows from the back, "No, ya jerk! We're just out toolin' around in a 60-foot tour bus!" The guard waves them through.



COME NEAR STAN WITH AN OREO; HE'LL HIT YOU WITH AN APPLE.

An hour later, Mike Campbell addresses Stan's complaint about being excluded from *Full Moon Fever*. Mike, dressed in rock star black, is sitting by the gym's indoor pool while collegiate swimmers walk past him dripping. "Stan probably won't believe this but it's true," Mike says. "A real good friend of ours named Phil Jones, who's been on a couple of tours with us as a percussionist, was over at my house fooling around in the studio. I played the tapes for Tom and he said, 'That's a great drummer, who is that?' That same week Jeff Lynne and Tom had this song they wanted to record. I said, 'Should I call the band?' Tom said, 'No, it's not that serious. Just get that drummer, he sounded pretty good.' He came over that day, then the next and the next. Pretty soon there were four songs done with Phil. Phil just happened to be there. And actually I do think Stan *was* in Florida. Just for the record. Then, at the point it became a solo record, there was a conscious attempt not to have too much band input. It's kind of weird, but it was either a band record or it wasn't. Nothing against anybody's ability. So there, Stan." Mike speaks so softly you have to lean forward to hear him. He is the Keith Richards of the Heartbreakers, the soul of the band. He co-produces the albums, he often co-writes the songs with Petty. He turns down most offers to compose with other people and rejects almost all of the production offers that come his way. His loyalty is to his band.

"Music should be made by human beings—my heart doesn't beat in perfect rhythms. I don't want a jack-hammer."

Mike's most famous non-Petty songwriting collaboration is probably Don Henley's "Boys of Summer." "I'd never met him," Mike says. "He was sitting at this big table like a judge, with a cassette player. I brought him three tracks and that was the first one. About halfway through it he said, 'Yeah, I could write something to that. I'll take that one.' He called me up the next day and said, 'I've written the best song I've written in two years.' When I heard it I didn't know if it was going to be a hit, but I knew it was good. Sometimes you write something you think is not so great and that will be the one. Like 'Jammin' Me.'"

"Jammin' Me" was a Mike Campbell/Tom Petty/Bob Dylan collaboration. Mike says that Dylan once came over to his house to try writing with Mike alone. "I'm trying to be cool," Mike laughs, "and he wanted me to show him this drum machine. He said, 'You use this drum machine on "Boys of Summer"?' 'Yeah.' 'That's a really good song.' Then he said, 'You got any words?' I knew I was in trouble. I felt like saying, 'I was kinda counting on you for some words!'"

Notorious for changing arrangements in mid-song (and changing song in mid-arrangement), Dylan is known to mess with the minds of his musicians onstage. Mike remembers, "He started pulling stuff like, he'd work out elaborate endings and want it just like that, and then you'd get up there and he'd sabotage you. There was one night when he just left me hanging and I knew he'd done it on purpose. And I left the stage. 'I'm going home, I don't care who this guy is.' But I realized, our band is used to the professional ethic of going out there and trying to lift the audience up and keep lifting them. His thing is anarchy. Once I accepted that, that it wouldn't be like we rehearsed it, I got into the groove of it and I dug it. But by the last tour we'd toured so much it was getting a little stale. It didn't seem like he was really into it. In Europe he'd just show up with some sort of towel on his head and go through the motions. If the crowd was great and we'd get on a roll, our band would get into it, but he would say, like, 'Fuck it, you people sit down,' and play something really bad and out of tune. He likes anarchy, he hates it when it's pat show biz. I kind of respect him for that. We learned a lot about spontaneity and loosening up. I love the guy, I'd work with him in a second."

Mike has known Tom Petty for 20 years. Back then—back in Gainesville, Florida—bass player Petty and his guitarist pal Tom Leadon (younger brother of Flying Burrito and later Eagle Bernie Leadon) were looking for a drummer to start a band they would call Mudcrutch. One drummer who answered their ad invited the two Toms out to his hippie house in the woods so they could jam. The trio sounded good, but Petty said he wished they had someone to play rhythm guitar. The drummer said that one of his housemates played guitar. Petty said go get him, and Mike Campbell appeared, carrying an ugly old Japanese guitar. Petty asked Mike if he could play "Johnny B. Goode." Mike said he thought he could handle it. At the end of the song Petty and Leadon looked at each other and said to Mike, "You're in our band!" Petty spent the night talking Mike out of going to college. They've been together ever since.

Mudcrutch played the music of Gram Parsons and the Flying Burrito Brothers, pretty obscure stuff in Florida in 1970, but—hey—the guitar player's brother was a Burrito! Benmont Tench, another local musician, was a regular at their gigs. Once Mudcrutch played a great song Ben had never heard and he asked what record it was from. "Petty wrote that," he was told. Ben couldn't believe it. "*Petty* wrote that song?" Not long after that Tom had to go to Benmont's

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house to explain to Ben's father—Judge Tench—why it would be better for Ben to go on the road with Mudcrutch than to finish college. It is to the eternal credit of both Tom Petty and Benmont's father that the Judge allowed Ben to leave school for the band.

Tom Leadon was eventually fired for costing the band their gig at a topless bar when he mouthed off to the owner. For a while Mudcrutch had a lead singer named Jim Lenahan, who left the group to go to college to study scenic design. He is now the Heartbreakers' lighting designer (and the one who took a swing at Vince Neil at the MTV awards). Mudcrutch made it to Los Angeles, made one album that no one ever heard, and then the group fell apart amid arguments over who should be the main singer and songwriter. Petty worked on demos with Mike and Ben, as well as with big names like Jim Keltner and Leon Russell. "It never sounded right, it sounded really '70s—it was wimpy." Tom got a deal with Shelter Records at the same time the Heartbreakers was forming. Since he had the contract, he got his name up front.

"Anytime I work with the Heartbreakers I try to leave it as a democracy," Tom says. "But if it gets down to 'Are we gonna tour for a year?' No." He laughs. "I have to suffer that in a way. It's not comfortable always being the one. Everyone seems to feel insecure, shaky about it, but I don't think it's just *my* band."

Tom, Ben and Mike all say that from the day it was decided Tom's name went up front, Tom's been the boss. Stan disagrees. Stan says that it was only with the third album, *Damn the Torpedoes*, and the coming of super-manager Elliot Roberts, that democracy went out the window. "Ohhh yeah," Tom sighs. "I know what he's referring to. Elliot came in and said, 'Look, you'll do better if you just focus in on somebody instead of five people. Maybe on this album you should just put Tom on the cover.' Nobody liked that very much, but Elliot was right, I guess."

THE BACKSTAGE AREA in North Carolina is full of bikers—pals of Howie Epstein. They take over the hospitality room and spill out into the corridor, where tables have been set up to feed the band and crew. A teenager comes up to Petty and asks for an autograph saying, "My sister took me to see you when I was 10 years old!" Petty deadpans, "My, how you've grown."

This is the last night of the tour, so everyone is claiming different souvenirs. Tom has staked claim to the most coveted: the 15-foot-tall Indian totem pole that looms above the stage. TP plans to have it installed at the top of a hill in the woods behind his new home. If his new home is ever finished. Stan Lynch is eating dinner and telling Georgia Satellite Dan Baird about Petty's new house when Tom comes over and plops down next to them. Stan starts kidding Tom that as soon as the tour's over he's going to go stand in front of the house and catch some of that money Tom's throwing at it. "I figure I'll just stick out my hand and grab a bunch of hundreds as they fly by." Petty shudders and smiles.

Baird says he used to work construction and can estimate how much Tom will end up spending by a breakdown of the details of the materials. Tom smiles and says nothing, but Stan makes Baird's eyes

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pop by telling him that the house is being made of poured concrete—with six foundation holes, each big enough to lose a Greyhound bus in. Stan goes on about the steel frame and Baird says, "*Steel?* You're building your house out of steel?"

Tom mutters and nods. Stan enthuses, "It's a love palace! It's Petty Park! It's 60 feet high!"

Baird's eyes pop again. "*Sixty feet of steel!?!*"

"At the highest point," Tom says.

Baird computes this and holds up three fingers. "I'm saying, *three big ones!*" Tom mumbles, "Nahh."

"With the land!" Stan yelps. "Land in L.A.!"

"Well remember, I bought the land in '81."

"Eleven thousand square feet!" Stan adds. "I walked halfway through it and said, 'Where's my golf cart?' The floors are cherry wood!"

Petty smiles and says, "I had to hire somebody just to spend money on it while I was gone."

Stan delivers the trump: "There's no corners."

Baird: "No corners?"

Tom: "There are no corners anywhere in the house. It's all—" Tom makes a cantilevered gesture with his palm.

Baird hits the table: "We may have underestimated! I say four! Four million!"

Stan says, "By the time you've hung the curtains."

Baird says, "By the time you take your first comfortable bowel movement in that house you will have spent four million. Wait—let me be more exact." He computes in his head and announces, "Three point eight five million!" They all crack up laughing. Whatever the price, Tom's making sure this house is fireproof.

Howie's motorcycle club pals are roaming the backstage; one has a video camera and is filming. Howie, the late Heartbreaker, is a biker himself. He is also a record producer with a home studio that is the envy of his bandmates (except Ben, who says he would never want a *studio* in his house. He sounds like he's talking about an outhouse).

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Howie's dad was a musician and ran a Midwestern studio. Howie came to California to join John Hiatt's *Slug Line*-era band. He was playing bass with Del Shannon when Tom produced an album for him. Later, when bassist Ron Blair left the Heartbreakers, Tom swiped Howie from Del. Del, in the middle of a tour, wasn't happy about it. "I'd always wanted a guy like Graham Nash or Phil Everly who could hit those super high notes," Tom says. "Howie could make the best solo album of any of the Heartbreakers 'cause he's the best singer."

"All I have in my stage monitor is the lead vocal," Howie says. "I like to fit right in with that. I mean, you're supporting the vocalist. It drives me crazy when somebody plays all over the vocal." This egolessness is a useful trait for a musician who came in late to a band who had grown up together, and for a bassist who not only had to fit into another bass player's parts, but who faced in Petty a bandleader who began as a bass player. Mike Campbell often plays bass in the studio, too. Howie was surrounded. "If somebody else comes up with a better part, great," Howie says. "I don't get bothered by that at all. I know some people do. '*I'm* the bass player!' I think that's kind of silly. If Ben or whoever come up with a better bass part we'd be fools not to use it.

"I was definitely happy when I joined the band. I really think it was stranger for them. I don't think the guys had been in many other bands. They were so closeknit, where I was used to playing with lots of bands. I think it was a little weird for them to have this new guy in there."

Sitting at the dinner table, studying an empty plate, Benmont is moping. "I hate the end of a tour," he says. "Now I have to get a life. Hey, Tony!" He yells to Tony Dimitriades, the Heartbreakers' manager, "Is it okay if we call this a *break* so I don't have to go look for a session?"

"Take a *vacation*, Ben," Tony answers.

"I'm not going to play any more sessions I don't *love*," Ben resolves.

Unlike most keyboard players on the arena circuit, Ben rarely strays beyond the B-3 and the grand piano. "Hey," he says, "I've been playing piano since I was six and I'm just barely brushing the surface of what you can do with it. It's very, very personal. It's a real human instrument. If you hit it harder, it's louder. It's not louder on account of some kind of velocity light sensor. It's louder on account of there's a hammer hitting the string harder. It's wood and wires. And B-3s have just been around forever. I didn't like it when I first heard them in Gainesville, 'cause it was guys trying to be Felix Cavaliere and failing. When I heard something on the radio like 'Whiter Shade of Pale' I didn't even know it was the same instrument, that it could make that beautiful a noise. I'm ornery about it. I'm old-fashioned. I've got a sample keyboard, I like it. I used it on [Orbison's] 'She's a Mystery to Me' and I used somebody else's on [U2's] 'All I Want Is You.' But I keep going back to the piano and the organ and some kind of analog synth that can make a string noise. And a Wurlitzer if you want to get extravagant.

"Music to me . . . oh good, I'm preaching. Music to me is human beings communicating ideas and emotions as a sound. Music that I like is made by human beings for human beings to listen to. My heart doesn't beat in perfect rhythms. God knows my emotions don't beat in

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perfect rhythms. I don't want a jackhammer. The best rock 'n' roll songs have three or four chords, five at most if you count the bridge. But there's a lot you can do with those chords. Some nights I go for the *Blonde on Blonde* approach, where there's so much going on; it's a delicate thing to make that work. And some nights I just back off and play to the vocal as simply as I can.

"I like it when Tom's dark. I like it when Tom goes haywire and goes crazy and writes 'Straight into Darkness,' 'Wasted Life,' 'Make That Connection,' 'Let Me Up, I've Had Enough.' I love that." It's not surprising, then, that Ben is the Heartbreaker who most enjoyed the wild rides the band experienced when they toured with ol' chord-switching, key-changing, tempo-shifting Bob Dylan. "God bless him, man," Ben enthuses. "That's living music! The worst thing to me, the preaching purist, is this trend where everybody's got things sequenced. You hit one key and in comes the horn arrangement. That ain't music! At least it isn't a performance—it's a playback. That's valid if you like it, but I don't like it at all. It makes me leave the room. Music is a *living* thing."

The last show is a ragged but righteous gem, the Heartbreakers' repertoire supplemented by versions of "Let's Stick Together," "Should I Stay or Should I Go" (which Tom points out is really "Little Latin Lupe Lu") and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," which evolves into "Knockin' on Axl's Door." "Sorry about that," Petty shouts after the final chorus, "*it's our last night!*" After the encore it's another runner; before the fans are out of their seats, Tom is rolling down the highway, bouncing around his bus.

His ears still ringing from the show, he enthuses about how great Howie Epstein was: "You gotta love him, I don't know if I ever tell him how good he is. Tonight, there was a line early in the show I could just barely sing. I was having to work harder than I normally do to make it, I was getting really close on the mike. I was thinking, 'Oh, gotta shake it off!' Howie saw it. I hadn't said anything to any of them about it, but this real hard section was coming up and I'm thinking, 'Oh boy, I hope I can do this . . .' I got to it and I heard Howie singing it with me over his mike. It sounded great, it sounded like a double track. I just looked at him, he caught my eye like 'Yeah!' It made me feel great, 'cause I know he was thinking the same thing, 'I know he's tired, I'll cover him—wham! Got it!' That's what a great band's all about. That's what it's all about."

A bell on the microwave announces a seafood dinner. As Tom digs in, the onstage adrenalin starts wearing off. It's a two-hour drive tonight, so that the Heartbreakers can wake up at the airport from which they'll fly home in the morning.

"They're all my neighbors now except Howie," Tom says. "Every one of them now lives really near me. Having Stan move into the neighborhood was real weird 'cause now he comes over and stuff. But I kind of like it. It's funny, we've all drifted to that same little area. It's a nice happy band most of the time." Petty laughs, then turns serious. "But it's intense, too. It's real intense. I don't think we should stay on the road for long periods. Some people think the tour should be longer, we've been offered a lot of other dates, but I don't want to live that life exactly. I like touring, I've enjoyed this one, but when it's

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endless there's something wrong with it to me. I feel a little confined by it. 'Cause all you can do is try to get there physically, get up and do it, and leave. You can't really write."

Tom says he's come to enjoy spending the afternoon at the venue, doing soundcheck, hanging out with the crew, eating dinner—and then beating it out of there instead of gladhanding for hours backstage. But he worries that people get their feelings hurt if they come back and he's gone. When the Heartbreakers played Florida recently, Tom spent two hours after the concert greeting small groups of friends for five minutes each. "We had a whole bunch of relatives when we played Florida," he smiles. "God, it was an ugly thing. I love Florida, it ain't like anywhere else in the world. It should be its own country. People are different, people are crazy in Florida. They just never told us not to try things."

Still, Tom's been in Los Angeles for 15 years, and on *Full Moon Fever* he's sketched a vivid portrait of L.A. today—something between a new-age dreamland and a teenage wasteland. He's circled around the subject before, with songs like "My Life, Your World," but with "Free Fallin'" and "Zombie Zoo," Tom finally nailed the post-groovy Los Angeles that is the face of America in the 1990s.

"I finally got it honed down," he says. "You could put the record on and get a feel of it, anyway. I like Los Angeles a lot. It's very chic not to like it. They always say it's shallow. It probably is, but it's a good place for me because there's so many musicians and so much music going on. I'm not interested in show business really, but I love making records. That's all I want to do.

"I feel cynical about it at times, but we've got so many friends there and I've been there such a long time. To me Los Angeles always represented the land of opportunity. You just wouldn't get paid for doing this in Gainesville. You couldn't make a living at it. You just go to another town and you can make a living. It's so weird." Petty leans forward conspiratorially: "The truth is, everybody goes through Los Angeles. There's nobody who doesn't. Even the smart guys."

He stares out the bus window and then adds, "Right now everybody's asking me what I'm going to do. I don't really want to do anything! I just want to stop for a little bit so I can get my brain back and write some songs. Nothing more elaborate than that."

WINTER

IT'S THE END OF JANUARY, 1990, and the Heartbreakers are back on tour. Sitting on an unmade bed at a fancy Manhattan hotel, Ben Tench is still bleary-eyed from sleep at two in the afternoon. "I was sitting at home and the phone rang," Ben says. "It was Tony sounding like he had bad news. He said, 'We're going to tour again.' I said, 'What are you so depressed about? This is great!' We started out in Tampa and then we played Gainesville, our hometown. It was wonderful. My mom and dad, my sister, niece and nephew came." Judge Tench feels better about letting Ben quit college? "Dad feels okay about it now," he laughs. "He's been real supportive for the last 10 years. He was just a little nervous about it at first. I never told my folks this, they can read

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it: I only went to college hoping I'd find a band. I was just killing time. Tom called me up at three in the morning when I was cramming for an economics final and said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'You're right.'

"At the show in Gainesville it was a band. Five people, one thing. I love that. I love that. I'm never happier than when that works. "This band is a very precious thing to me. On a good night it's without effort, because of the length of time we've played together. Which doesn't mean that you're on autopilot. It means you're watching the show and you're in the show and you're *playing music*. You're not doing a recital, you're not doing a pop show, you're not playing a performance—it's *music*. It's above and beyond all other concerns.

"I just need it. I need to play. I get frightened before we go onstage, a feeling of impending doom, but once the first song starts there's nothing you can do but hold on. It makes the bus rides and hotel rooms worthwhile. Although I like the bus rides and hotel rooms, too. Look at this! I'm making my living seeing the world and playing music!"

On a less inspirational level, *Full Moon Fever* is still raking in the bucks. When "Free Fallin'" was finally released as a single it was a smash, bringing the album back into the Top 10 for the winter. Grammy nominations rained down on Petty, Campbell and company. In a year when Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers made no album, three of the five album-of-the-year nominations went to albums on which various members of the band were instrumental: *The Traveling Wilburys* (Tom), *Full Moon Fever* (Tom and Mike with Ben and Howie), and Henley's *End of the Innocence* (Stan and Mike).

"I'm staying out of that!" Ben laughs. "I want everybody to win! God bless whoever wins the Grammys. But it's an award ceremony. It's nice, I'm sure it feels really good to win, but you can't take 'em too seriously. This isn't a competition. Music is a competition with yourself to get better. It's not about awards. But if they ever nominate *me* for an award, ask me again and you'll get a different answer!"

The next afternoon, before a show on Long Island, Petty chuckles about having his solo album up against the Wilburys. "I'm rooting for both! I'd love to win it, but I'd be happy with either one winning. You know how they always say I'm happy just to be nominated?" Tom laughs at how show-bizzy that sounds. "I really am pleased. We're in some pretty good company. It's not A Taste of Honey."

About the unstoppable sales of *Full Moon Fever*, Tom says, "I'm so pleased it's hard not to act like an idiot! It's really nice, all the room service guys like it. The next single's 'Face in the Crowd.' We just did a video with Jesse Dylan, Bob's son. He's really talented. I made a deal with him that if I got as far as 'Face in the Crowd' he could do it."

During the recent break Petty moved into his new home, worked on Jeff Lynne's album, helped with a Susanna Hoffs record Mike's producing (Mike's also working on Patti Scialfa's debut) and tried writing some new tunes. "I got about half a song done," he smiles. "When I get back I'm gonna have to put on the blinders and get our album done. People keep saying the Wilburys are going to record. I'm not really sure we will right away. I've talked to all of them recently and they all want to do it, but Jeff's in the thick of [cont'd on page 113]

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JAMMIN' MEANS

TOM PETTY says, "On this tour I've got a Telecaster, well, it's not even a Fender, made by Norm's Rare Guitars in the Valley. It's become my main road guitar. I've got a red Rickenbacker six-string and a yellow 12-string. The acoustic is a Yamaha; they're really nice small-bodied guitars made for Bob Dylan. They have a real nice tight sound. It's tough to get an acoustic sound live. I sometimes use an orange Gretsch Round-up. I brought my Gibson 335 but I never got it out the whole tour. Sometimes I played Mike's black Rickenbacker solid-body. Amps? Vox AC30s, the same ones we've always had. The Replacements asked me if I really had Vox amps in there. They said, 'You must do something special to your amps.' I said, 'No, we don't, they're just straight.' Some sound better than others. I have a wire to the Vox amps that I run through a Roland Chorus for just a tiny bit of chorus, just to make a little bit wider sound than the AC30. 'Cause Campbell plays out of two, and I only play out of one. So one's super clean with a little chorus and other's a real Vox sound. With the 12-string you've got to have one that's really clean."

HOWIE EPSTEIN plays a Fender Precision bass with Rotosound strings into a Gallien-Krueger head. His home studio is based around a Studer 24-track and a Soundcraft 2400 board. He uses Neumann and Telefunken microphones.

On this tour MIKE CAMPBELL's left all his Fender guitars at home, so that his sound contrasts with Petty's. His current favorite is a Gibson Les Paul Junior. He's using a couple of Rickenbacker 12-strings, too, and a pair of Gretsches. Mike's also hot on a guitar he picked up in Japan, a Gibson copy called a Kusuga. He uses Ernie Ball strings.

Let's ask Mike about his famous garage studio, where *Full Moon Fever* and parts of Roy Orbison's and Randy Newman's latest albums were recorded. "It's just a bedroom with a 24-track Soundtracs board. If you get three guys in there you're bumping elbows. It's real funky, all the wires are everywhere. The main thing is, I try to keep all the wires real short. A lot of studios are designed cosmetically—they run the wires through the walls so you can't see them, but then there's miles of wires between the microphone and the board. I think one reason my studio sounds good is because it's so direct. I have a couple of Roland things, nothing really extensive. I have a real good limiter, a Urei 1176. I'm building up a collection of pretty good microphones. The main one is a Neumann U-47, I've got a bunch of Shures, and one Sennheiser stereo mike that's got two microphones built into one head so you can split the signal, bounce it off a wall. We use that for ambience off the snare drum and on the acoustic guitars."

BENMONT TENCH plays a Hammond C-3 that's been cleaned up by Keyboard Products, through a Leslie. On the road he carries a Yamaha DX7 "with a pretty good Wurlitzer patch in it—because Wurlitzers pick up so many extraneous radio frequencies." Ben rented a Yamaha grand when his piano tuner told him one more road trip would do in his beloved Steinway. "I've got a Roland MIDI controller going through some Roland gear that makes a good string noise if you set it to one thing; I really am that primitive. I've got an Akai S900 at home that I like for a 'Walk Away, Renee' kind of string sound."

STAN LYNCH has "been using Tama drums for 12 years and they've been really great. I'm using their ArtStar Professional series." Stan hits Zildjian cymbals with Promark sticks. Drum Workshop made his bass drum and chain-drive bass pedal. "Real feather-light," Stan says, "real quick touch."

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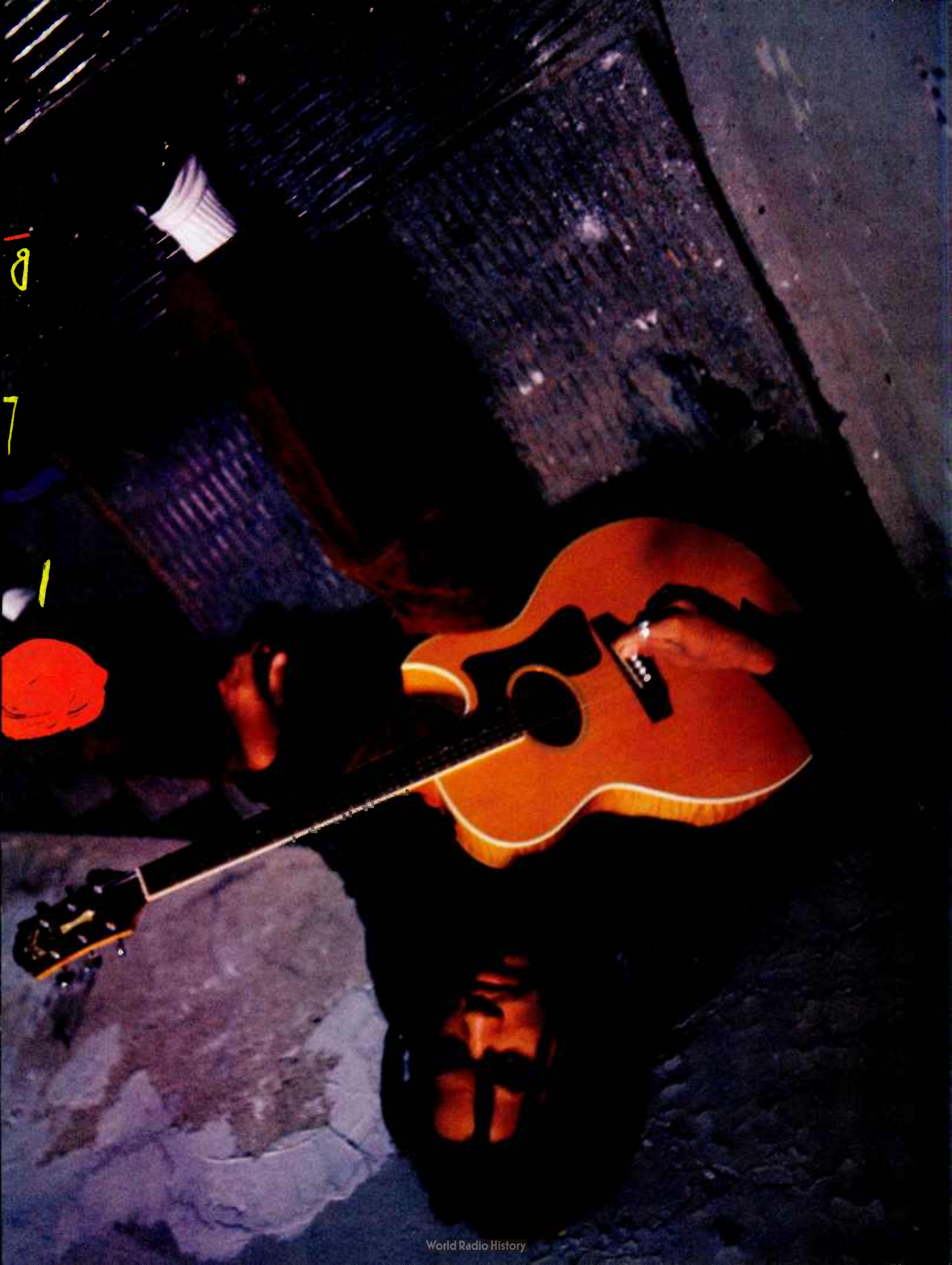

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If 9 Was 6

"Forget all that bullshit about the '60s," LENNY KRAVITZ YELLS AT A CHEERING ARENA FULL OF TOM Petty fans. At the end of a mere 30-minute opening set, he's got 'em calling for the single and title track of his debut album, *Let Love Rule*—not bad for a rookie performer on his first tour. The young, white, clean-cut crowd here in Charlotte, North Carolina came to see the headliner, no question about it, but Kravitz and his five-man band have made a powerful impression. Lenny wants to make a point, too, before he launches into the last number. "You've got to accept yourself!" he tells the kids. "This isn't the '60s, it's the fucking '90s!"

BY MARK COLEMAN

"Let Love Rule" is a real creeper, catchy and a bit spaced-out at the same time, and it neatly caps Kravitz's choppy-but-energetic performance tonight. But all that heated commentary about the '60s sounds defensive, coming from the same man who opened the show with a pounding Velvets-heavy drone called "Flower Child." *Dressed in purple velvets with a flower in her hair/Feel her gentle spirits/As the champas fill the air/. . . She's a psychedelic princess on a magic carpet ride.* Before the show, Lenny himself was sporting a pair of purple "flood-length" bell-bottoms that would've been the envy of my seventh-grade class back in 1971. When he did a vaguely funky cover version of "If 6 Was 9" halfway through the concert here in 1990, the head-smacking irony of Hendrix's lines, "I've got my own world to look through/And I ain't gonna copy you," wasn't lost—it simply did not exist.

Lenny Kravitz would dig it at home.

"I'm definitely living for today," the 25-year-old Kravitz says, when pressed about his '60s trip. "I'm talking about today, I'm not singing about the '60s in my songs. I'm not saying shit about the '60s in my songs."

To be sure, the best songs on *Let Love Rule* deal with timeless concerns: "Mr. Cab Driver" (his next single) nails everyday racism with a Princely kick. "I hear they're gonna start playing 'Cab Driver' on WBLS-FM in New York when people go to work in the mornings," Kravitz says, "and that's great, because it's such a non-black radio song. I'm into black radio but they're not into me; the programmers may like my album personally, but it doesn't fit the norm of what a black radio station plays."

PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN KUEHN

In fact, *Let Love Rule* doesn't really fit in any format, falling through the cracks somewhere in between Classic Rock and College Radio. When the record was released late last summer, a stream of critical accolades

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and comparisons began to flow: Some were reminded of Elvis Costello's sound (but not his words), while others heard late-period Beatles references and swore that Kravitz's voice echoed John Lennon's. Both can be heard, along with snatches of Lou Reed, Curtis Mayfield, Prince and a dozen more names. People were impressed by the fact that Lenny produced, arranged, played most of the instruments and sang most of the parts—and rightfully so. Lisa Bonet's husband has turned out to be something more than a poseur, after all. *Let Love Rule* may be a wildly uneven and overly derivative album at times, but it's always engaging, and a good deal of talent is palpable. Of course, that's not enough; like all of his idols, Lenny Kravitz wants to be seen as a world, no, make that *planet*-saving visionary.

"This album is the first time I found myself, musically," declares Kravitz. "It just *happened* to me. I'd always been looking for it but it never . . . I've been through so many phases of music: I did my droney English phase where I used to wear all black and had straightened hair. And synths, I've been through the whole synth thing. I had a couple of bands but mostly I was just doing my own thing, recording, writing. I thought I was going to be a studio musician, I thought I was going to be a songwriter for a publishing company. I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. Then it just hit me, two years ago."

Lenny's background is every bit as broad and eclectic as his musical ambitions. He grew up in New York, and then attended high school in Los Angeles; as the child of a Jewish father and black mother, he was exposed to both cultures. "I've been serious about music since I was about five," he insists, "but the first 'serious' thing I did with music was when I was in the California Boys Choir, from the age of, like 12 to 15. I ended up being in the Metropolitan Opera Company for two seasons and did recordings with, like, Zubin Mehta. It was Mahler's . . . third symphony . . . with Zubin Mehta . . . we performed with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics and did symphonies with all the great conductors from Erich Leinsdorf to Zubin Mehta and Carman Dragon and Michael Tilson Thomas . . . we did, like, 12 operas . . . all the classic operas.

"After my voice changed, I really started getting into rock 'n' roll. I've never admitted this, but it was Kiss, man. Kiss fucking made me wanna be a fucking rock musician. They were so much larger than life and the music and concepts were so unreal. I still play those records sometimes, and Lisa freaks out when I put 'em on."

That confession out of the way, Lenny reels off a list of more expected influences from the late '60s and early '70s, insisting all the while that "you don't hear all those people I've mentioned in my music as influences." Nevertheless, his memories of that period seem indelibly etched.

"Yeah, even when I was four or five years old, I was aware of the '60s," he admits. "I was aware of the vibe, and the feeling of living in New York in the '60s, living near Central Park and going to hear my mom and her friends read poetry to music. My mom was in the theater," he explains. Kravitz's mother is the actress Roxie Roker, best known to television viewers as George's combative neighbor on "The Jeffersons." "She had cool friends, Afro people, you know what I mean? They dressed real hip in dashikis and afros and big cool beards . . . it was cool, man. And not just black, but all different kinds of people.

"See, I'm one of these people who enjoyed their childhood," Kravitz continues. "I had a great childhood; I was like some Little Lord Fauntleroy. My memory of that time is really great, so it probably shows up in my music. It's not just a memory; I have that vibe within me."

He's not alone: A large number of Lenny's peers have found an inspiration—and solace—in the music of the past that seems sorely lacking in today's pop. When Lenny Kravitz lets his freak flag fly, declaring that "love can end all wars" and shaking his dreadlocks, he strikes a tender collective nerve among would-be hippies of all ages. What is it, exactly, that keeps pulling us back to this era? "I guess that's because it seems so much more free and experimental," offers Kravitz. "And loose: The music was fucking wild, man. You had Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Cream and Janis, this one and that one . . . now you've got fucking Milli Vanilli and Debbie Gibson. Who do we *have* now?"

"I'M INTO BLACK RADIO, BUT THEY'RE NOT INTO ME."

At this point, I feel obligated—both as a student of pop history and a Debbie Gibson fan—to remind Kravitz that there was plenty of silly, contrived fluff in the good old days, too. What about the Monkees, the Partridge Family and the Osmonds?

"But even *they* were better," says Lenny, more serious than not. "The Partridge Family had some hip tunes. I used to watch that shit on TV; I'd watch it now if it were still on. The Osmond [cont'd on page 113]

Hand-lettering: Lilla Rogers
Photograph: Joe Dilworth/S.I.N.

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REBUILDING THE RULES OF RECORDING

BY

BILL FLANAGAN

The Silos Homegrown Record Making

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHIP SIMONS

WALTER SALAS-HUMARA IS SITTING in an all-night diner in northern Florida, explaining why his band is recording its major-label debut in a small town and without a recording studio. "This is something that has been in the air for a while," he says. "Everybody's burned on the super canned-sounding records, the Whitesnake sound. A lot of bands are trying to get more live sounds, real sounds, room sounds. The idea was to get out of the studio and to do it in the South, work in a defunct downtown area where there's all sorts of empty buildings—department stores, movie theaters. We figured we'd find a big building that had a lot of rooms in it that we could use for different reverb sounds, so we wouldn't have to use tons of signal processing later. I think there are some old studios, like Capitol in L.A., that are real popular now 'cause they have tons of echo chambers. I'm sure there must be studios in New York like that, where they used to

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THE SILOS:
SALAS-HUMARA (L) & RUPE

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record orchestras. But they'd be prohibitively expensive for a band like us.

"The other thing was to get everybody away from their normal lives, take everybody some other place, and go through a whole adventure together." He laughs. "Which may be a little more idealistic than how it turns out."

Bob Rupe and Walter Salas-Humara are the Silos. They grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, are based in New York City and have taken a mighty offbeat approach to recording their first RCA album. They've set up their sessions in an old theater in Gainesville, the northern Florida town where Walter went to college. The theater's stage looks like the back of the brown *Band* album; there are folding chairs, stand-up parlor lamps, antique amps sitting on stools, a Hammond organ, a rickety, century-old upright piano and a big old standup bass, lying on its side. Most of the album's being recorded on this stage, using the hall for natural reverb.

Follow the wires and cords running off the stage out into the alley in back of the theater, and they lead to a soundtruck, owned and operated by Peter Yianilos, an old south Florida pal of Bob Rupe. Yianilos is engineer on the album and his truck, Artisan Recorders Mobile, is the studio. Sitting next to Yianilos in the truck is Peter Moore, the producer. Moore is a Canadian who made waves last year with an album he recorded with one microphone in a Toronto church—the Cowboy Junkies' *Trinity Session*. You might figure this project is Moore's attempt to make himself king of alternative rock field recordings. But that's not true. The Silos came up with the idea of cutting the album at the movie theater, and then RCA Records president Bob Buziak suggested Moore as the one producer who would not faint at such a concept.

"His whole thing is to record everything with one mike," Walter says of Moore. "Instead of mixing later, if you want one guitar louder than the other you put that amp closer to the mike. You arrange everybody around that one mike. Which is what we're doing basically, but we're also close-miking for detail."

"Because I'm recording everything live in a room, I'm not adding individual reverb to individual mikes," Moore explains. "I have a stereo [Cal Rec] Sound Field mike in the center. Normally on a console you'd have reverb on every single item and independently be adjusting reverbs. I don't have to. I have two channels that have coincidental reverb. It minimizes your mix time incredibly because you have reverb channels as if you had panned it and punched in the right number for your reverb on every single track. What you can't do with individual reverb is get everything in phase and coherent. That's the real difference. The brain picks up on things being in phase and coherent. It's like your eyes pick up on things that are out of focus really fast. Your eye can look at any color you want—that's subjective. But focus is not subjective, that's objective. Same thing with your ears. The colorization and equalization is subjective, I think. But in phase or out of phase is totally objective.

"I would add reverb to save a performance. If I sat back and thought, 'Well, that sucks, I blew it,' then I would. But to me it's to repair something, not to create something. I almost puke when I hear so many modern records. You hear the automated mixing console. You hear it! 'Guitar up, vocals down.' Now that we have the capability, we don't try and make the vocals and guitar ride together so that you can hear each one stand on its own. My ultimate goal is to have a ruler mix—ruler mix means that you could lay a big yardstick flat across the faders."

The album has evolved into a system of tag teams. Team #1 is Walter and Bob, the stars. They write and sing the songs and play the guitars. Team #2 is the two Peters in the soundtruck, one from the far South and one from the far North, who three weeks after being forced together are meshing like Bonnie and Clyde.

Newly relocated to the basement kitchen is Team #3, the rhythm section of drummer Brian Doherty and bassist J.D. Foster. Brian's been playing with the Silos all year, but J.D., a Texas hotshot who has been making a name for himself as a producer (David Halley) as well as bass player (Lucinda Williams), was recruited just for this album. Which seems to create a practical obstacle to all this live recording/natural reverb/single mike philosophy; while it's great to capture a real band all playing together, the musicians making this album are not a real band. Sure, Bob and Walter have been together for years—but how can Brian and J.D. play like a working rhythm section when they've just met? And under the Peter Moore production method, if this rhythm section isn't locked together, there's no way to fix it later. The bassist and drummer are down in that tiny kitchen facing each other with one double-faced, x-shaped microphone halfway between them, listening with headphones to guitars upstairs. What's amazing is, they *are* locked together, they are kicking like one heart. What is the producer's secret?

"The whole first week I made J.D. play bass with his foot on Brian's

KEYBOARD PLAYER KENNY MARGOLIS WAS IMPORTED FOR BASIC TRACKS. WITH SALAS-HUMARA, RUPE, FOSTER AND DOHERTY.

Photograph: Jim Feeley

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kickdrum," Moore says. That's it? "That's it." Worth a year of bar gigs. "Forcing everyone to record live gets the adrenalin up," Moore says. "So it becomes a *performance* as opposed to a *take*. You only do punch-ins to save something, as opposed to create something."

BOB RUPE IS sick as a dog. He's got the flu, he's feverish, he's up on the stage playing "Rocky Mountain Way" to keep his bug at bay. Walter picks up his guitar and plugs it in. In the cellar Brian and J.D. adjust their headphones. In the truck in the alley, Peter Y. adjusts the levels and Peter M. is on the talk-back mike, trying to convince Walter to use a Gemini amp for this track instead of the combo to which he's attached. "This song's a conversation between the two guitars," the producer explains. Walter says, "What do you think, Bob?" Bob shrugs. Walter's not buying it. Bob laughs and tells his microphone, "Walter's going, 'What is he talking about now?'"

They keep the amps as they were and record a dozen takes of the rhythm track to "Anyway You Choose Me." Everyone's called to the truck for playbacks, and Bob says he's going to go find a doctor to shoot him full of antibiotics. "What about your guitar solo?" he's asked. "I'll do it tonight—I'm seeing spots." Walter goes out to do his vocal, which he records with the sound of Bob closing his guitar case and walking around the stage behind him.

That night, when Bob returns from the doctor, the two Peters are pulling their hair out because Walter has decided "Anyway You Choose Me" needs maracas and he's just the man to play them. The engineer calls Bob into the truck—which is filled with the sounds of Walter's shaking—and says, "See what happens when you leave?" Peter Moore leans into the talk-back mike and says, "Walter! I hate it! Hit a tambourine with a drumstick if you have to, but not maracas!"

Now that Bob's back, it's time for him to overdub a solo. Walter will add fills, too. Peter Moore goes inside to sit in the theater and watch the guitarists play. At the end of one take the producer calls out, "You blew the last chord." Walter and Bob stare into the darkness, looking for the accusing voice. "You came in late," Moore tells Walter. "Bob came in early." Bob, who looks a lot more Native American than the fraction he admits to, stares fiercely and then says, "Bull-*shit*." His illness is making him edgy. He adds, "It's easy to sit *there* and make comments."

The producer suggests that Bob switch amps. Bob sneers. The producer's voice comes back: "You're boring, Bob."

There is a long pause and then Bob, without looking away from his guitar, says, "No . . . I'm not." There is an even longer pause and then he adds, "I'm consistent."

"It took me a couple of weeks to suss out exactly what was going on here," Moore says later. "Bob and Walter have been together for 16 years. They have cerebral communication. These guys talk back and forth by eyebrows. It took me a while to read the eyebrows. Once I caught on, I realized I couldn't tell these guys anything. There's no way I could manipulate them in any way, shape or form. So I decided to let them make the decisions but also, when we're recording, listen back a couple of times and, if it doesn't work, let them come to their own realization. It's been frustrating as hell sometimes, but it's a co-production and the way I look at it is: I'm responsible 100 percent for the sound and 33⅓ for the music. I'm not *telling* them anything, I'm just providing the opportunity for them to see. I'd say 80 percent of the time if it's stupid, if it's not right, we all hear it.

"This was taking on a real crazy bear. I was prepared that this would not work. But there's been time here. A lot of modern recording isn't the equipment, it's the economics of the equipment. It makes you go in and do things quickly. Here the economics are a lot lower—but we have time."

Time almost ran out before the project began. When Moore crossed the border from Canada to begin the album he was grabbed by customs agents who said that he could not enter the U.S. because

Photograph: Chip Simons

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of an old Canadian hashish conviction. While the Silos, waiting in Florida, watched the first of their five weeks of recording time tick away, Moore spent a frantic week and $5,000 on a top lawyer who got him into the country on a "parole"—technically Peter is still being held at the border. All this for a crime that was shrugged off in Canada with a light fine. Peter deadpans, "Well, I'm a producer—I'm *supposed* to have a record."

It's a bit surprising that the Silos, who made their two acclaimed independent albums themselves, wanted an outside producer. "We could have done it," Walter says. "There was no pressure from RCA. But we'd never had a producer. Originally we thought, 'Let's get one of our heroes, somebody like Willie Mitchell or Tom Dowd.' But RCA said forget it. They said, 'We're hip to the theater idea, but we're not hip to using an older producer. We want you to work with somebody from your peer group.' Bob Buziak said that. I respected his opinion."

WALTER SALAS-HUMARA and Bob Rupe met growing up in Fort Lauderdale. At first you'd think they were a couple of typical '70s Southern kids, playing Lynyrd Skynyrd and Led Zeppelin in high school bands. But there's more to it than that; Walter was actually born in New York, and Bob in Detroit. And there's more to it than that; Walter's parents were upper-class Cubans on vacation in New York when Castro took over. They could never go home. Bob is a Detroit drag-racer who moved to Florida in junior high.

The first Silos album, 1986's *About Her Steps*, was a homemade acoustic job begun years earlier in Walter's bedroom at his parents' house, when he'd come home from college and hook up with old pal Bob. But they didn't see each other often. Walter was studying art at the University of Florida at Gainesville, and had a group there called the Vulgar Boatmen. Bob played in bands, worked in a studio and was driving a cab when he got a call from some old friends in a band called Psi Force. They said they were up in New York, had been signed to PolyGram, and were headed to England to record an album. They'd lost their bassist: Did Bob want the gig? He drove a delivery car to New York—his first trip there—and was soon in a studio in London making an album. Unfortunately, Psi Force's manager, producer and record label all had different ideas about what the group should be. "The record didn't go well at all," Bob says. "The A&R guy came up to me one afternoon while we were recording and started telling me what I was going to wear onstage. I said, 'Fuck this.' When we got back to New York I quit."

Of such stubbornness were the Silos born. Bob landed in an apartment in Brooklyn—and was startled to run into Walter on the street. Walter had arrived in New York to study at the Pratt Institute. The two old friends were living on the same block. They resumed work on their endless tapes, and one day Walter announced he was going to release the quiet, emotionally direct music as an album. He came up with the name "Silos," which would sit behind "Salas" in an alphabetical record rack. Walter released *About Her Steps* on his own label, Record Collect, and mailed it out to critics, who went wild. Inspired by the positive reception (and actually turning a profit), Walter and Bob started assembling a real Silos, eventually recruiting Florida buddies John Ross to play bass and John Galway on drums. For a while they also had a violinist, Mary Rowell. The second Silos album, *Cuba*, had some lovely ballads, but shifted the emphasis to Neil Young–like electric guitar rock 'n' roll.

With *Cuba*, and their frequent live shows around New York City, the Silos got hot. *Rolling Stone* proclaimed them the best unsigned band in America. But the Silos still didn't get signed. Some A&R men resisted what they saw as an uncommercial band of long-haired roots rockers in jeans and work shirts. Other record executives understood their appeal, but came up against another impediment—the forceful (some might say bullheaded) personality of Walter Salas-Humara. A top A&R man from the West Coast landed in New York with the stated intention of signing the Silos. He met with Walter and asked if he thought he could make a nice album for 25 grand. Walter replied that he knew this fellow had just spent a million on a certain star album that had failed to recoup; why should he expect the Silos to record for a pittance? This is not how most hungry singers talk to most record company bigwigs, and some A&R men began saying that Walter had an attitude problem.

PRODUCER PETER MOORE, SURROUNDED BY WALTER, BRIAN AND BOB AT THE FLORIDA THEATRE IN GAINESVILLE. OCTOBER '89.

There's no question that Walter had an attitude. Whether it was a problem is open to debate. The Silos felt that with their own little label cooking they didn't need a major to keep doing what they did. Walter licensed the rights to the two Silos albums to a British company for $4,500, which he used to buy a van so that the Silos could embark on a cross-country tour. The quartet spent the first four months of 1988 on the road, playing to show-biz types in L.A. and a loyal cult in the East and plenty of small crowds in the Midwest. They also got on each other's nerves as the van got funkier. They closed the tour in May with a wildly raucous show at CBGB, which ended with Walter on the drums and the drummer fronting the band through a song called "Butt-Fucking." The boys had been on the bus too long.

Bob and Walter thought so, too. They fired the rhythm section and began a long period of public inactivity. It began to look as if the A&R men were right about Walter's anti-star attitude being his undoing. In what seemed like an act of remarkable hubris, Walter released a *solo* album, *Lagartija*, half-filled with songs written by his friends. He spent the next few months playing acoustic shows. Discouraged by their failure to snag a major-label deal on their own terms, Walter and Bob began recording a third Silos album by themselves, with Walter

Photograph: Jim Feeley

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overdubbing drums and Bob overdubbing bass. The tapes, though, were a step back from the focused power of *Cuba*, and when they ran out of money they shelved the project.

INTERCHANGEABLE VULGAR BOATMEN DALE LAWRENCE AND ROBERT RAY

That was in the fall of 1988. In early 1989, the new Silos appeared at New York's Cat Club with a new drummer, Brian Doherty, and Rick Ford, a bassist from Joe Jackson's band. This version of the Silos was stronger, a little slicker and far less reluctant to seize the spotlight. They unveiled a number of new songs that combined the lyricism of their acoustic numbers with the kick of *Cuba*'s rockers. This was the Silos that convinced RCA to sign Walter and Bob. Walter denies that he made any mistake by folding the Silos for a year. "At the end of that tour it was obvious to me that we weren't going to get signed," he says. "That was one of the reasons we decided to restructure the band.

"After *Cuba* came out I could feel we were getting pigeonholed as sensitive singer/songwriter guys with a violin player. That's snoozeville. I would read these things and think, 'If I read this I would never buy this record; these guys sound like the most boring band on earth!' I figured we had to rock it up like mad, get out there and burn down the house. But after doing that for 30 nights I realized that was the only thing the band could really do well. We were losing the whole other side. Which I think is what the labels felt; I think that's why we didn't get signed.

"We'd lost our versatility. We were never able to pull off live the varied kind of things that made the records so cool. The closest we got to being good live was by being a good trashy bar band, just like every other touring independent band. There wasn't that much difference between us and the Young Fresh Fellows, although they're probably a lot funnier. I think most of the labels probably thought, 'Here's this really cool band on record,' and then they saw us play and said to themselves, 'This is just like every other band touring around the country in a van.'"

RCA Records had never been to see the old Silos, so the label came to the new Silos fresh. The home of Cowboy Junkies, Graham Parker and Lucinda Williams, RCA seems a natural place for the Silos to have landed. "RCA's really making an attempt to make good records," Walter says. "Their whole label is alternative bands, they don't have any Whitesnakes. Buziak thinks that's the future, so that's great."

Walter speaks as a record executive himself. His independent label is Record Collect. "Walter's really into the administrative end," Bob Rupe chuckles. "I'm not really interested in that so much as I am in production. I was never really good at the paperwork end of things. That's why it's good being in a band with Walt." The short version of the way Record Collect operates is that the artist pays to record his own album, and then Jim Reynolds, the songwriter/businessman who runs a distribution setup called the Independent Label Alliance, pays to have the records pressed and distributed. The Silos are the brightest jewel in Record Collect's crown, but they are not the only jewel. In 1989 Record Collect released an album called *You and Your Sister* by the Vulgar Boatmen, an LP of melodic folk-rock that was infectious without being dumb and rootsy without being self-conscious. The Vulgar Boatmen album was produced by band leader Robert Ray and Walter Salas-Humara. The title song had long been a feature in Silos sets.

Now this part is easy to follow: Walter had started the Vulgar Boatmen when he was at college in Gainesville, with Robert Ray and another singer, Dale Lawrence. Ray was a professor at the university, father of two, and not prepared to give up his job to pursue rock stardom. Walter was younger and more ambitious, so he packed up and headed to New York City.

Here's where it gets confusing: The remaining Vulgar Boatmen split into two bands with the same name. Or one band with two franchises. Like 7-Eleven. Ray and Lawrence get together to write and record. Then Lawrence goes home to Indiana, and tours the country with his Vulgar Boatmen. Robert Ray stays in Gainesville, where he occasionally performs locally with *his* Vulgar Boatmen. Both bands do the same songs, and the two frontmen—both good-looking, fair-haired all-American types—have similar voices. Ray gets a kick out of the idea that the Vulgar Boatmen are operating in the great rock 'n' roll tradition of bands like the Drifters, who often had several incarnations on the road at once.

Standing outside the college bookstore, Ray looks barely old enough to be an instructor—one supposes that he's a graduate student/teaching assistant. One is way off. Ray is 46 years old and a real professor. He's also a remarkably sharp rock 'n' roll fan. A Memphis native, he talks about seeing Elvis play locally, growing up going to wild parties where the dance band would be the Five Royals or Hank Ballard & the Midnighters, and the similar glow he felt when he first saw the Sex Pistols and R.E.M. (a fine musician, an English professor, a handsome and articulate student of rock 'n' roll; he is, advertisers, the typical *Musician* reader). Right now Ray's on a supper break before his film class convenes for an evening screening.

"Walter was in my 'Ideology in Film' class. That's how I met him. He sat in the very first row, smiled a lot and never spoke. But he wrote really good papers. One day I showed *Memories of Underdevelopment*, and then we had this long discussion about Cuba and Castro. Walter came up after and said it was a really great movie. I said I was glad he was interested. He said, 'By the way, I'm Cuban.' I had no idea he was. And it was interesting, because the movie was about a man in very much the position I think Walter found himself in. It's about an intellectual in Havana who is a pretty rich property owner, but who is sympathetic to the need for a revolution. But he recognizes as he stays that he's not really part of this. He'll have all his property taken, be accused of crimes against the state. Walter was really interested, and that was the first serious conversation I had with him."

As they became friends and then bandmates, Ray and his former student connected musically. Ray's daughter was the inspiration for "Margaret," one of the Silos' best songs. They found differences, too. Ray, who has a sweet voice, writes vocal melodies first and then finds

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simple chords to accompany them. Walter, whose voice is less versatile, writes from the guitar up, and uses lots more chord changes to move around his simpler vocal lines and denser lyrics. All melodists are victims of their own voices.

There were age-related differences, too. "Really important bands for Walter were Led Zeppelin and Little Feat," Ray says, "who mean nothing to me. What runs in my head are Sam Cooke, Otis Redding and rockabilly, because I heard all that stuff growing up. Where we meet is we both love the Rolling Stones. When the Silos were touring with their old rhythm section they would do a lot of improvisation and covers at the end of the night, and get heavier and more metallic until they were playing AC/DC songs. I think when you're on the road and you're traveling, at the end of the night when you're tired you fall back on your childhood roots. I would probably go back to a two-chord gospel vamp, and he would go back to AC/DC."

Ray says that a good part of the Silos' lost year was lost because Walter was in Florida producing the Boatmen album. "He's incredibly generous with his friends. He came down here at his own expense, I didn't pay him anything. I gave him a guitar as payment, but he wasn't expecting anything. One of Walter's best skills—other than being a really good singer and songwriter—is as an arranger. He can really take the parts of a song and make the song better. He suggested ways to shorten a song, what parts to emphasize.

"I was driving him to the airport and I played Buddy Holly's 'Not Fade Away.' He said, 'This was recorded in '57 or '58? Production values have been going downhill since then.' What's so good about Walter's stuff is that he avoids all the smoothing out. He's always trying to get his bass player and drummer to play less perfectly, reintroduce kinks into the machine. There's a new drum machine that has 'human feel'—it makes mistakes! Gee, now we have technology to do that for us, too. Walter and I were talking about that Tears for Fears single, 'Seeds of Love.' What's really scary is that somewhere some people were sitting in a studio mixing this thing and they said, 'Doesn't this sound great!'

"Each of the three main breakthroughs in pop—Elvis, the British Invasion and the Sex Pistols—was a return to a primitive sound. Even if in the second two cases it was highly self-conscious. And then the music will gradually spiral upward in technical and production complexity—and then crash. Something will come in and bring it down to earth again."

WHEN THE SILOS' recording is finished the principals go their separate ways. A month later Bob and Walter join Peter Moore in Toronto to mix. The finished album, called just *The Silos*, has a richness that belies its ramshackle construction. It also has a quality crucial to great albums and rare—a sense of mystery in the voices and the material. While Walter is designing the album cover and both Silos are spending lots of time in meetings with RCA, Bob and his wife (another Southerner) keep a promise to themselves and move out of town, to Virginia. The separation does not faze the Silos; it just means that Bob has a long commute up to New York every week or two.

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A few weeks before the Silos' album is to be released, Bob puts aside his Saturday afternoon project—making home-brewed beer in his kitchen—to talk about his new life. "I love New York. I just can't do what I want to do in New York," he says matter-of-factly while hops perfume the air. "Like fishing. I'm in the final stages of building a bracket racer, and there's a dragway around here. I can get a warehouse for $50 a month down here, park the car and the tools, and work there. It's the kind of thing I just can't do in the city. I've run bracket years ago. I had a '67 GTX, big blocks. I used to run on the weekends. I'm gonna put this one on the nitrous bottle and try to get under 10 seconds."

That's pretty rock 'n' roll, Bob. If you hit a wall Walter will be able to make a teary-eyed acceptance speech at next year's Grammys. "Walt can hold up a water pump and say, 'That's all that's left of him,'" Bob laughs. "No, I have no intention of killing myself in a race car. I'm putting a full roll cage in."

There's the yin and yang of the Silos. Walter the art student, the intellectual, the exiled noble. Bob the Motor City electric guitar player and drag racer. The combination of sensibilities—and their common self-confidence and stubbornness—gives the Silos their range. The beauty of their blending is heard in their vocal harmonies. Walter's voice is reedy and gruff, with scratchy high end, raspy bottom and not much mid-range. Bob's voice—full and resonant—is all mid-range. Individually they both have great character, but when they sing together the two voices mix in a completely unexpected way, wrapping around each other to produce a tone that sounds less like a harmony than like a third singer.

"Yeah," Bob smiles. "We were sort of stunned when people started telling us that, 'cause we thought we sounded like road kill. We don't consciously determine where the harmony interval's going to [*cont'd on page 105*]

TWO VOICES

DURING THE SILOS' album sessions WALTER SALAS-HUMARA played a 1961 Telecaster through a modified 1958 Ampeg Gemini amp. BOB RUPE played a '63 Gibson SG Special with PG pickups through two '56 Ampeg Reverbrocket II amps. He occasionally pulled out his Les Paul gold-top, too. They brought in a Hammond B-2 organ, and an 1890s Hamilton upright piano.

The sound onstage came through a Wheatstone, with a Lexicon MRC MIDI remote controller perched on top, and the close microphones were all Sony. Sitting in the middle was Peter Moore's beloved Cal Rec Sound Field mike. In the basement, propped between the bass amp and drums, was a jerry-rigged version of that Sound Field—two AKG 414s taped together and crisscrossing each other to create two sonic figure-eight fields. The AKG set-up—called the Blumlein Configuration (sounds like a spy novel, huh?)—creates a surround-sound.

J.D. FOSTER played his 1958 Fender Precision bass and borrowed a late-'70s Ampeg SVT. He had a little Fender 1953 Bassman amp, too, which he used when he played upright on the soft numbers. He played his Gretsch "Peter Tork model" through the Bassman on one song, and carried a fretless Jazz Bass. Foster puts Rotosound strings on all his basses, except his P-bass, on which he uses Ernie Ball flatwounds. His tuner is a Sabine, made in Gainesville.

BRIAN DOHERTY spent a lot of time before recording talking to Walter and Bob about which drums to use on which songs. Walter is a drummer himself (he did the duties on the first Silos album) so he has a lot of ideas. "He can be very specific," Brian says. "Like he'll say, 'Play these eighth notes on that drum.' Which is good." Brian says he brought all sorts of drums to Florida, a whole Yamaha kit and two Gretsch kits.

"Guys like Jim Keltner pick the right drum for each song. Guitarists change guitars—why shouldn't a drummer?" Brian is especially delighted with an old military field drum he picked up for a snare. Today he's using a 1965 Ludwig Radio King snare. He also has a Pearl free-floating snare ("No hardware touches the shell; it sounds so good") and a Rogers Dynasonic. Brian has a Yamaha bass drum, three Gretsch tom-toms, a 20" Sizzle cymbal, an 18" Sabian crash cymbal and a Paiste 20" ride cymbal.

In the soundtruck, engineer Peter Yianilos is listening to all this funky tech on Westlake BBSM6 speakers and Urei 811As. The tape machines in the truck are linked through a lap-sized synchronizer—an Adams Smith Zeta 3 Remote. Stacked on the shelves are Aphex and Eventide outboard gear, Urei compressors and equalizers and—the final test of a recording—a Brooke-Siren Systems stereo. Peter's had his truck in Fort Lauderdale for 13 years. Jaco Pastorius used it for some of his last recordings. Bob Rupe used it for some of his first. Peter was a design engineer for MCI years ago and he fixes the gear himself.

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RUSH

Screwing Up Pop—On Purpose By J.D. Considine

RUSH MAY BE THE ONLY BAND ON EARTH TO HAVE MADE "FEAR OF BOREDOM" A primary musical motivation. Needless to say, they don't put it that way themselves. Neil Peart speaks philosophically about a "level of satisfaction" and the music's "repeatability factor," while Alex Lifeson uses terms like "intricate" and "complex" to describe the band's instrumental interplay.

But as Geddy Lee, sitting in his manager's office in downtown Toronto, finally admits, Rush's taste for tricky time signatures and harmonic complications has little to do with musical ideals or technical prowess: "We try to do those kinds of things just to screw it up. Just to throw a little spanner in the works, there.

"For a while we got really hung up on making something feel conventional that wasn't. We thought that was clever. Of course, people in jazz have been doing it for years, so it really wasn't *that* clever, but it was fun.

"We still like to do that. On this album, there's one song in 7/4 ['Superconductor']. Neil plays across the seven so it doesn't really feel like an odd time signature, and I think that's a great accomplishment in rock, when you can sneak those kinds of things in without anyone realizing. I've always felt it would be a personal victory to get a song on pop radio that was in another time signature." He laughs, and adds half-ironically, "A great moral victory."

Rush: The Band That Made the World Safe for 7/4.

Okay, so it's a fairly silly ambition. Then again, Rush isn't quite as determinedly serious as fans might imagine. "People have always accused us of being deadly serious, but we all can look back at our albums and see the jokes," says Lee. "I guess they're so inside that it's hard to find the jokes without a road map."

He's not kidding, either. "Some of the titles are street corners in town," he explains. "Kind of esoteric references. But a song like 'La Villa Strangiata,' to me, is enormously funny. Because the song is just one joke riff after another, some of them inspired by cartoons that we've seen. It really is glued together without any rhyme or reason."

And more than anything else, he credits this lightheartedness to the fact that Rush, after some 20 years of playing together, has gained more than a little perspective on things. "It's funny," he reflects, "when you're younger you seem to have this intentional furrowed brow when you're writing your music. It's like, 'This is serious music!' God knows what serious music is," he adds with a laugh, "but when you're a little bit older, you seem to have a lighter hand."

As most fans are aware, the members of Rush used to furrow their brows considerably in the late '70s, when the band unleashed such conceptually ambitious albums as *2112* and *Hemispheres*. In the very beginning, however, Rush was just another Toronto garage band—or, as Lifeson puts it, "a basement band. We played parties, and we knew a half dozen, 10 songs, and we'd play those songs over and over. We were terrible, but it was a lot of fun. We had a couple of outdoor concerts in our backyards. All the neighbors would go mental on the weekends."

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Photograph by Deborah Samuel

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This proto-Rush was essentially Lifeson's band, a natural progression from the young guitar-maniac's desire to capture the magic he felt when listening to the Beatles or Beach Boys. "I remember hearing 'I Feel Fine' with the ringing first note. It was a pretty cool sound back then. Little things like that were inspiring."

Lifeson's first basement bands "were mostly influenced by bands like the Yardbirds. Then the first Who album came out, followed by *Are You Experienced?*, and that changed everything. I never listened to that other music again."

As Lifeson grew more proficient at imitating his idols in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Cream, Rush was slowly taking shape. Still, there was one thing holding the young guitarist back: Tools.

"I had very, very basic equipment," he admits. His first guitar was a $10 Kent Classic "with steel strings about this high off the fretboard," he says, indicating a space large enough for a mouse to crawl under. And though he was continually upgrading his stock of guitars, he admits that "most of my equipment I would borrow. I borrowed amps from Ged. That's how he got in the band."

Lifeson & Lee, 1989 & '83:

"He was a great mooch, Alex," laughs Lee. "He had quite a reputation. You knew when the phone rang and it was Alex that something was going to be borrowed, usually my amplifier."

Lee, of course, was a bass player, so what Lifeson wound up borrowing was a bass amp. "But in those days, an amp was an amp," says Lee. "You weren't picky. As long as it had volume controls and plugs and speakers, it was good enough."

"The vocal line used to be our last consideration."

One day, however, Lifeson threw him a curve: "I called him up and instead of saying, 'Can I borrow your amp?' I said, 'Can I borrow *you*?' Our bass player at the time had conflicting gigs. So Ged came out, and basically that's where it started from."

With Lee in the band, it didn't take long for Rush to start writing its own songs. "Within the first year," says Lifeson, "I think probably half of our material was original material. It was always a problem. We never heard the end of it from our manager, that it was impossible to get us bookings at high school dances and those sort of things. People just weren't familiar with our material. They wanted to hear Creedence Clearwater, that kind of stuff. By the time we got to the point of playing almost all original material, we were playing once or twice a month at best, and mostly drop-in centers rather than the high school dances. The drinking age was 21 at the time. It was impossible to get into clubs."

Fortunately for Rush, the Canadian Parliament—for reasons wholly unrelated to the woes of up-and-coming Toronto rock bands—lowered the drinking age for beer and wine to 18. "The whole world changed," says Lifeson. "We went from playing at best two gigs a week to playing six gigs a week and in some cases a Saturday matinee as well."

Rush still had a few covers in its repertoire, though Lifeson says, "We'd change them around quite a bit. But it didn't matter in a bar. People weren't dancing. They just wanted a band, they wanted live music. We played and they drank beer, basically.

"After a while we developed a following. The same people would show up at the clubs we played at. Within a couple of years, we were one of the more popular bar bands in the Toronto area and within maybe 100 miles of the city."

Outside of Toronto, however, the band was little more than a rumor, so Rush decided to do what any ambitious Canadian band would have done back then: go to America. "You could go and play two shows in Lansing, Michigan, and come back, and suddenly you're an international act," laughs Lifeson. "Or you're perceived that way in Canada."

Rush wound up getting its record deal in America. "We couldn't get a deal here," Lifeson complains. "We tried everybody and they said, 'There's no potential for Rush, they're not going to get anywhere. The singer's horrible, the band's too loud.'

"So we figured if we want to have a record, we're going to have to pay for it. We went into the studio after hours when the rates were cheaper, spent a couple of days recording the whole album."

A couple of thousand copies were pressed locally, and one of them made its way to WMMS in Cleveland. "They played it and got a really great phone response. Within a couple of days we had an offer to sign with Mercury. It was done within a couple of weeks, we had a tour, and bang, we were leaving. We were on our way."

Suddenly, they were stars. "Back then, to go to Cleveland and Pittsburgh was a big deal," Lifeson says. "After the first run of three or four weeks, we came back and suddenly we were perceived as an entirely different act in Canada. 'Oh, they went to America, they made it!' Meanwhile, we're playing on a three-act show, playing for 20 minutes and the lights are still on."

There was one other change in the band by the time *Rush* saw release in America; original drummer John Rutsey had left the band, and was replaced by Neil Peart.

Adding Peart to the line-up was significant for two reasons. First of all, Peart, though he still had a day job "in the farm equipment business," actually had more experience in the band business than Lifeson or Lee. "Both of them really have only been in this band. I've been in quite a lot of other bands—small-time bands, granted, but still, quite a lot of other experiences. And I'd just come back from having been in England for a couple of years."

More importantly, though, Peart brought an elevated sense of musicianship to the band, a sense that appreciated the gut-level power of rock 'n' roll but also sought to make the most of every musical opportunity. Peart credits his first drum teacher with starting him down that road. "The first drum lesson, he played me the drum battle between Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa," Peart recalls. "To me, that was where I had to go. That was the goal. And when Michael Giles came along, who had all that technique but played it in a rock format, that really opened my eyes to what could be done with it, and gave me a sense of direction.

Photographs: Paul Robicheau

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"The kind of music we play allows everything, so every style of music I like to play I get to do," Peart continues. "It sounds simplistic, but it's so important. I feel like 100 percent of what I want to do, Rush allows me to do, and 100 percent of what I'm capable of doing, Rush will accept. It is an important thing. It's probably one of the two biggest factors that's kept us together this long—that and the fact that we don't hate each other."

Pursuing creative freedom was not without costs, and one of the band's biggest problems in the early days was figuring out how to cram all its nifty instrumental flourishes into something with pop accessibility. That's not to say the band was aiming for the Top 40, necessarily, but somehow all the ingenuity and expertise that went into those early Rush showpieces seemed to leave a lot of listeners scratching their heads in bewilderment.

What were they doing wrong? It was, says Lee, a problem of inverted priorities; most pop fans listened to the vocal line first, whereas with Rush, "the vocal line was the last consideration. It was really an afterthought."

Instead, what the band started with "was always a collection of rock moods," says Lee. "They weren't always riffs; they were sometimes chord progressions used as a line. We threw those together and we'd go through all kinds of different rhythms. And if it would work, serve the song, it didn't matter if it counted out in any particular fashion, any logical way.

"Then you'd throw in the vocal and make it work on top of it—which is what I think gave me such a strange vocal style," he laughs.

Neil Peart: "I feel 100% of what I want to do, Rush allows me to do."

"I was listening to 'Red Barchetta,' a song from the *Moving Pictures* album," he continues. "We're thinking of doing it on the tour. I hadn't listened to it in ages, and I was playing along with it to relearn it—it's such a weird arrangement!

"It's all these little pieces. We used a lot of links to bridge two pieces that are of indeterminate length. There was no real reason, except maybe there were only three beats in the vocal line to go on top of it, so that's what we got. 'Oh, we only need three beats here, so let's write something that has three beats.' Boom, in it goes, and you're into the next part.

"I guess we did all that stuff second nature. Listening to it now, I can understand why it was such an unusual style. But at the time, it didn't *feel* unusual. It didn't feel like we were making something really unusual. That's the only way we knew how to work. Now it's completely different. I guess it's a lot more conventional. We work on the vocal/lyrical smoothness, in view of that idea first, and then orchestrate in a kind of traditional sense."

"Show Don't Tell," from the new album, *Presto*, makes an excellent example. Although the song's verse/chorus melodic structure seems simple enough on the surface, the band is able to convey a surprising range of mood and emotion both by carefully modulating the arrangement's dynamics, and by punctuating the relatively spacey verse and chorus with an energizing power riff. As Lifeson explains, "The chorus and the verse are quite dark, but that riff comes in with a real punch and dynamically lifts the track. It really has a lot *more*

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impact."

Part of that change for Lifeson is strictly timbral. "It's going from a more direct sound in the verses to a heavier sound for the bridge," he says. "I get an idea of what the mood is of that particular piece and then adjust the sound accordingly. For instance, that verse is quite a dark, almost bluesy kind of feel to it, except for the accented parts, the quick strumming. Immediately I would go to a more direct sound, maybe slightly chorused, some repeats on it just to make it rich and full-sounding, and then get the power at the chorus where you want the lift. I keep in mind the dynamics and the changes."

"That's an ensemble piece where all that matters is that the three of us are knitted together," agrees Peart, "and that there be above that an umbrella of unity. That was the hardest thing to obtain. It was easy for us to play a complicated riff like that in a unison sense, but it was very hard to get something above that, from a listening point of view—get a sense of continuity and a sense of flow to it."

As a result, he says, "that was one of the drum parts on the album that was hardest to come up with. Not the hardest to play, by far, but the hardest to refine down to the right elements, the right amount of empathy with what the other guys were playing, plus the right amount of departure to keep something else going in the groove."

Unlike some drummers who first try to find the ideal groove for a song and then build their part from there, Peart takes a far more structural approach. "For instance, with all the songs from *Presto*, I had a rough demo made to the drum machine," he says. "I had the opportunity to sit down by those demos by myself and work out the parts and refine them all.

"But I tend to work backwards. I put everything in and then subtract what doesn't work; that's why it's better to me to work by myself. I'm not driving everybody else nuts. I basically like to start with a clean sheet of paper and play the song through, jotting down everything I can think of that will fit in that tempo or that rhythmic structure. Then I see what feels good to play, go back and listen to it and see what sounds right, and then just start eliminating stuff.

"Sometimes I *am* forced to play things that are simple to the point of moronic," he admits, "but if that's what works, I have to accept that reality. But I find ways to balance it out. The song 'War Paint' on *Presto*, for instance, the intro and the bridge sections are moronic, just so simple that they drive me nuts. But the chorus sections allow me to stretch out and play some really satisfying stuff, where I was able to find ways to play something complex but make it sound simple, make it fall right into the flow of the song. As I'm thrashing my way through the moronic part, I know there's a really cool part coming that I'm going to love playing.

Presto-Digitators

I WAS MAKING a list yesterday of what I'd have to carry equipment-wise if we didn't have sampling," says NEIL PEART. "Actually, I'd love to do a composite picture of what my drum kit would look like if I had all the instruments for real: marimbas, thousands of African drums, Count Basie's big band and a symphony orchestra."

Instead, what Peart has are eight 3½" floppy disks, which he feeds into Akai samplers, using either d-drums (fed into a Yamaha MIDI inter-

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"If it's a simple part rhythmically where all it requires is a beat, then I'll play the beat and find some cool little inflections that I can do with an opposite hand, or something to make it hard to do, something to make it interesting or difficult.

"It's not just the record I'm thinking about in a context like this," he adds. With touring on the horizon, "I have to play that song again and again and again. That does become a part of the thinking, rightly or wrongly."

Time was, in fact, that Rush would work out its new material strictly with performance considerations in mind. "In the earlier records," says Lifeson, "we never recorded anything that we weren't going to play live, unless it was just a production tune we wouldn't play live. If we came to a guitar solo, the rhythm guitar always disappeared; if we came to a keyboard part the bass always disappeared and the bass pedals would take over." But when making *Hold Your Fire*, he adds, "we just went for it and decided to worry about it later, when we came around to rehearsing."

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face) or a marimba-based Kat MIDI controller. These electronic drums comprise just part of his wrap-around kit; he also is loaded with Tama acoustics, including "two 24" bass drums; 6", 8" and 10" closed concert toms; 12", 13", 15" and 16" closed tom-toms; 6" and 8" open concert toms on the rear kit—because the rear is kind of a satellite with all the electronics."

To facilitate the acoustic/electric set-up, Peart's kit rotates during the show; consequently, Peart has a snare and high-hats set on each side, with an 18" bass drum anchoring the d-drums. "The little concert toms go with that," he adds. Like all the other cymbals (except for a couple Wu Hen genuine China cymbals), the high-hats are by Zildjian. His snare selection is a little more eclectic, with more than a half-dozen sitting on the floor of the band's rehearsal studio. His favorites, however, are a 20-year-old 5¼" Slingerland and a Solid Percussion piccolo.

Peart pounds all this with Promark 747s, played butt-end out, and his heads are mostly Remo, though he hates getting too specific. "I change on whim, basically," he explains. "All of those things I don't think are that important, and I think a lot of young drummers put too much importance on it, so a lot of times I try to downplay it." He likes Shark foot pedals, and his hardware is a mélange of Pearl, Tama, Ludwig and Premier equipment, "just whatever happens to have the right series of angles and positionings."

ALEX LIFESON is a man of many guitars, but the ones he's most likely to pick up are Strat-style models made by Signature. "The guitars are built in Canada and they're assembled here in Toronto," he says with native pride. "I still use the first guitar that they made, that I got from them as a test guitar; it's my number one guitar." It has neck-through construction and contour tops; the pickups are by Evans, a Vancouver-based company. Lifeson prefers the active single-coil models, though he's "fooling around with an active humbucker in the back position just to get a little more fatness and depth."

He also uses a Fender Telecaster, a Stratocaster and something called a Hentor, "which is basically a Strat that I've modified, put a Bill Lawrence L-500 humbucking pickup in the back position, changed the neck." His strings are Dean Markleys—.009, .011, .014, .028, .038, .048—and most of his guitars are outfitted with Floyd Rose tremolos. For acoustic live work, he relies on an Ovation Adamas, from the 1985 limited series, and in the studio chooses between a Gibson Dove, a Washburn and a Gibson J-55 with Nashville tuning.

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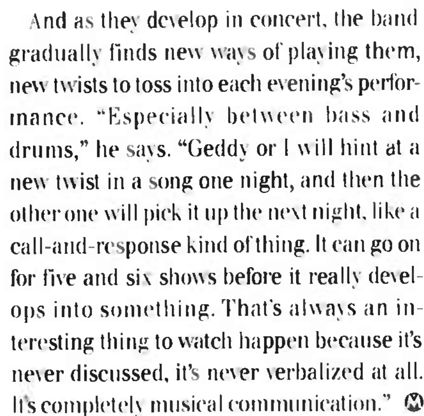
Rush was able to take those extra bits and call them up as needed. "It was just another step in the concentration level, getting all those things triggered and happening," Lifeson says. "We had, I would say, 85 or 90 percent of the things we had on record in the live show, and we knew that we could get around it no matter what."

Still, that sort of accuracy is only part of what Rush hopes to pull from any performance. "Songs change," says Peart, "and they sometimes need to grow and become interesting again or challenging again."



And as they develop in concert, the band gradually finds new ways of playing them, new twists to toss into each evening's performance. "Especially between bass and drums," he says. "Geddy or I will hint at a new twist in a song one night, and then the other one will pick it up the next night, like a call-and-response kind of thing. It can go on for five and six shows before it really develops into something. That's always an interesting thing to watch happen because it's never discussed, it's never verbalized at all. It's completely musical communication." Ⓜ

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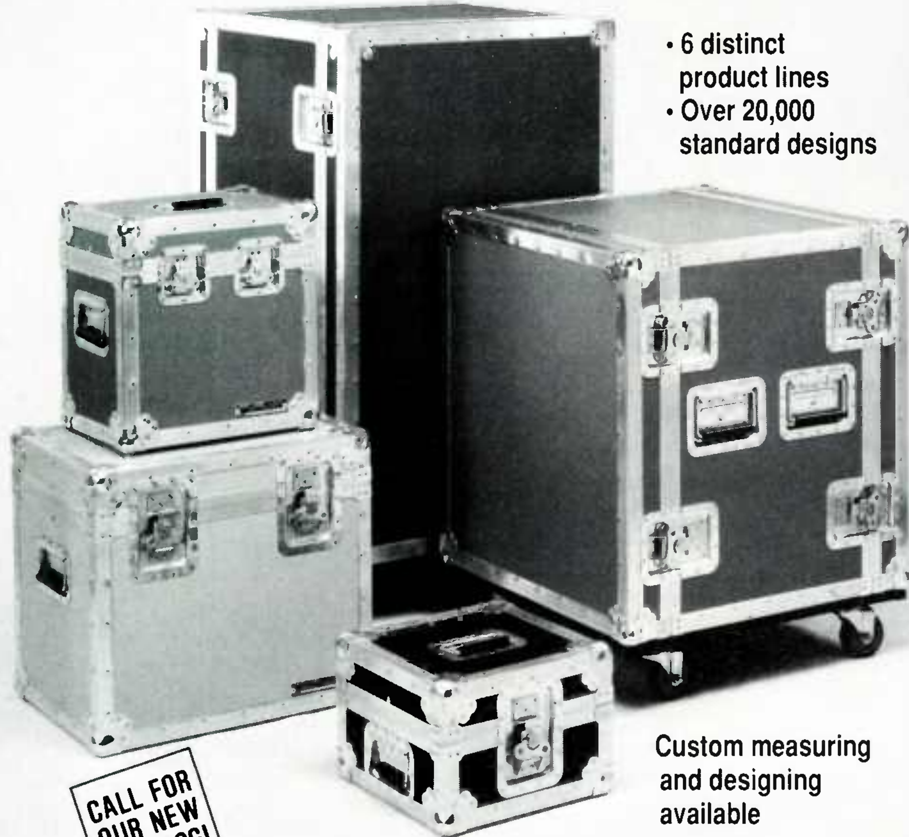

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Because he can't double-track in concert, Lifeson compensates by running his guitars through three separate amp systems. System number one feeds a Guy Cooper CPL 2000 preamp into a Series 400 Mesa-Boogie II power amp driving two Twin 12 Celestion GK cabinets. His second system runs a Bryston 2V into two other Twin 12 cabinets. He runs this system out of a Roland GP-16 multi-effect processor. "What I do is I switch that in in certain songs where I want to beef up the song, or want to get more of a doubled effect." System number three "runs a tap off the main system of mono effects and straight sound, plus taking a direct output from a second CPL2000 preamp for a clean sound."

Effects? Lifeson has two t.c. electronics 2290s, a t.c. electronics 1210 chorus and a Roland DEP-5 "primarily for reverb settings and effects." His effects are all digital, controlled by a Yamaha MIDI controller and a Bradshaw switching system. He's also considering a new DOD multiprocessor, but "I'm trying to keep it down to within the five-processor range; I've found that going over five is asking for problems."

GEDDY LEE's taste in basses has gone through several cycles, including a Rickenbacker, a Fender Jazz and a Steinberger before arriving at his current instrument of choice, a Wal. "They're amazing-sounding basses. They're very well made, made with a lot of love." And though he confesses, "I'm not a funky guy," his strings are Rotosound Funkmasters.

Most of what we hear on record or in concert comes directly off Lee's bass, but for his own comfort he carries a stage rig including BGW power amps, Ashly preamp and cabinets loaded with 15" speakers of indeterminate origin. "I've used the same amp gear for so long," he moans. "I had to do my equipment list for the tour and I just couldn't bear repeating all that gear for like the tenth year in a row. It's all the same, just some big amps, you know?" Apart from a power-boost, he pretty much leaves the business of sound processing to the soundman.

On the keyboard front, Lee says, "On this coming tour, I'm depending quite heavily on brand-new Roland S-770 samplers. They're not out yet; they're a prototype we've been testing out here, and they're really quite amazing. I'll also use a Korg M1, a Sequential Circuits Prophet VS and Roland D-50s, and I use Korg MIDI foot pedals quite a lot."

Finally, Lee sings through an AKG C-414 mike in the studio, while for live work he simply uses what is put in front of him. "Whatever the sound guy thinks is his favorite of the month."

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The Players' Choice

Terence Trent D'Arby, The Beacon, New York City, March 1988

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NAMM '90: The Future Looks Classic

Some of the latest tech ideas are the oldest

By Alan di Perna

AH, A FRESH DECADE at last. Time to reassess the past and pick out what was *really* good about it. And to map out some new directions for the future. Musical instrument manufacturers have been doing a bit of both lately, if this year's winter NAMM show was any indication. The vibe was that of an industry that has gotten the last decade's tech boom in perspective. We saw the return of many instruments and technologies that never should have gone away in the first place—all taking their place alongside some great new innovations. A winning combination, apparently. This year's Anaheim show was the biggest NAMM ever and one of the most exciting in a long, long while.

MIDI Maturity

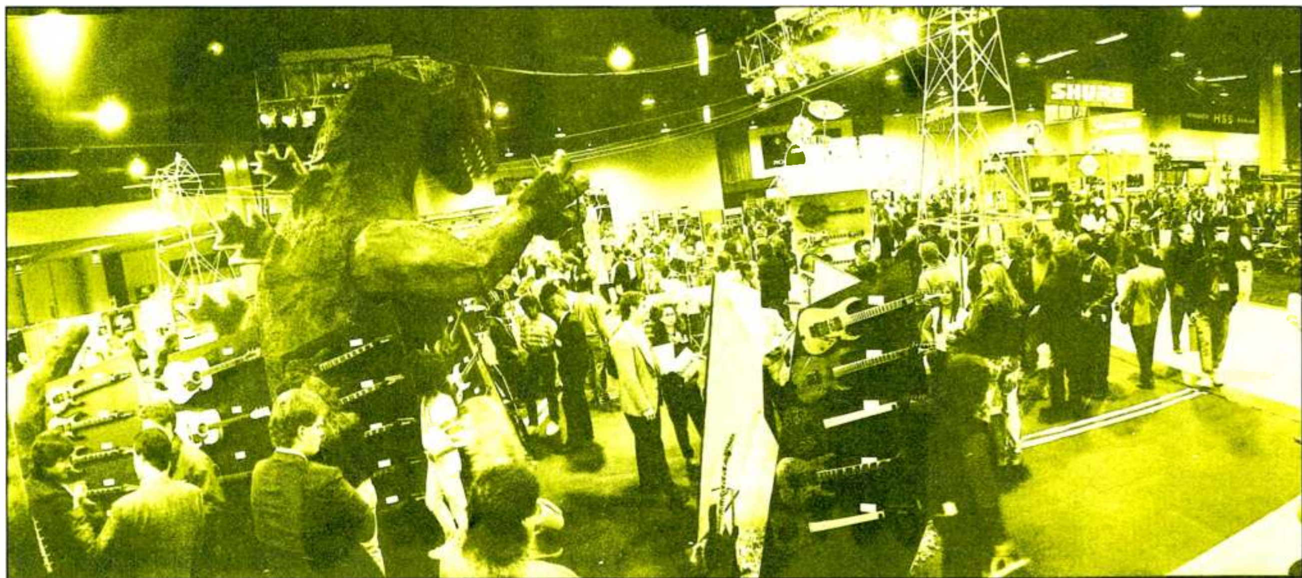
Remember those great synths of the mid- and early '80s? Like the old **Sequential Circuits** Prophet VS, for instance. It was a sleeper when it first appeared—thanks, in part, to Sequential's financial woes at the time. But the VS' vector synthesis system has become a treasured resource for tons of noted keyboardists, making the VS something of a collector's item. And now vector is back, in the form of **Korg's** new WS Wavestation synthesizer. It's the first fruit of Korg's newly formed R&D group, which is headed up by Sequential's founder Dave Smith. Essentially, the 32-voice WS lets you perform vector synthesis on 16-bit digital wavesamples and multisamples. Up to 357 of these PCM sound components can be chained together in what's called a wavesequence. (There are 32 user-programmable wavesequences in all.) Then you can vector among several different wavesequences. Sound like fun? I'll say.

Maybe it's just a coincidence, but **Yamaha** also introduced a prototype 32-voice, vector-based synth at their NAMM dealer meeting. It's called the SY22 and should sell for around $1,095. Could this be the start of Vector Wars? Meanwhile, Yamaha also introduced the SY55, a stripped-down, FM-less, affordable version of their SY77 that we profiled in depth in the February issue.

But while we're playing Blasts from the Past, remember the old **PPG** Wave? It was another mid-'80s sleeper, a German synth that never made it big in the States, once again for business more than musical reasons. Players still swear by its unique "tubular Euro" sound. So it's nice to have the PPG back again in the form of the new **Waldorf** sound module, distributed in the U.S. by **Russ Jones Marketing**. The original PPG design team had a role in devising Waldorf's sound chip, which contains all of the original PPG wavetables plus some additional ones. The idea is to provide everything you loved about the old PPG in a modern eight-voice, rack-mount MIDI module for under two Gs.

Yes, there *was* a strong revivalist mood everywhere among NAMM's synth community. **E-mu's** room featured a museum-style exhibit of their historical synths. (Not to mention their new Proteus/2, an eight-meg version of the original Proteus, with a slew of new Emulator III sounds and some new digital waveforms.) And **Gibson** were touting their recent purchase of **Oberheim** by prominently displaying such classic Oberheim synths as the Matrix 12 and Xpander in their booth.

A more recent classic, the **Roland** D-50, has spawned Super D-50, a.k.a. the D-70. It



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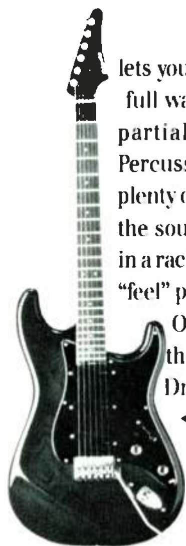


• Blade Guitar •

lets you do L.A. (Linear Arithmetic) with full wavesamples, rather than sampled partials as on earlier L.A. machines. Percussively speaking, Roland also had plenty on the ball, including the R-8M (all the sounds from the R-8 drum machine in a rack module, with MIDI-addressable "feel" patches), the SPD-8 (essentially an Octopad with built-in sounds) and the most incredible-sounding little Dr. Rhythm drum box ever, the BOSS DR-550.

It was a good NAMM for drum machines all around. The ability to customize drum sounds looks like the hot new capability this year. That's certainly the case with Korg's new S3 Rhythm Workstation. It's got separate attack and sustain partials that can be individually tuned and processed. (No more sacrificing that good clicky attack when you need to tune a drum timbre down.) There's also a hefty built-in sequencer that can be used to drive external MIDI instruments, and SMPTE read/write capabilities. Meanwhile, **Akai** introduced a new 16-bit drum machine, the XR10, with lots of sound-editing facilities, and the S1000KB, a $6700 keyboard version of the S1000. And **Kawai** got rhythmic with their XD-5 rack-mount percussion synthesizer, which lets you build drum sounds using 16-bit samples and synthesis. Also new from Kawai is an affordable, 14-voice, 16-bit synth, the KL-1, available in keyboard and rack-mount configurations, and a weighted-action, 88-note model of the K4 called the K4000.

The Guitar Beat

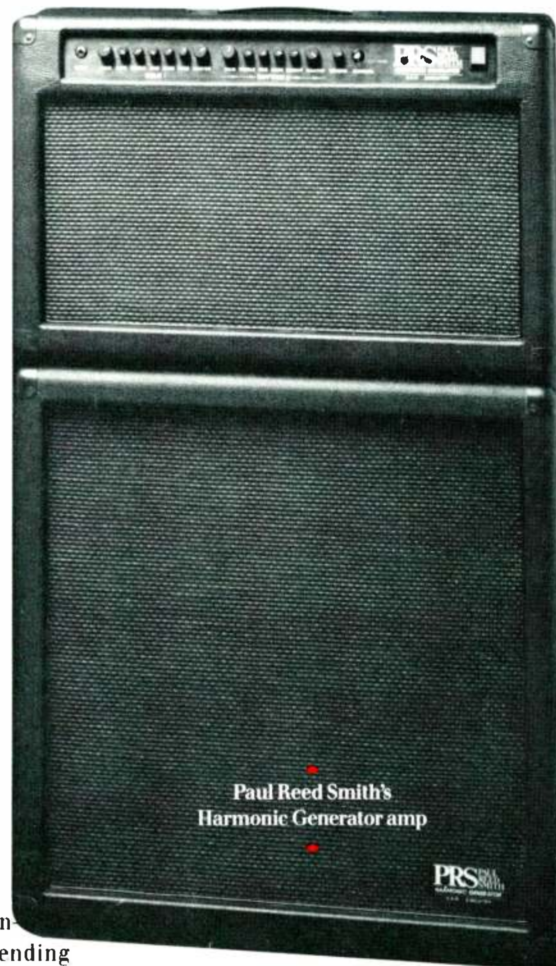
But back to what we were saying about revivalism. If you think the synth guys had it bad, you should have seen guitars! It seemed like every cool guitar from my boyhood was back: the Coral Electric Sitar, **Rickenbacker's** John Lennon model and nearly all of Gretsch's pre-1967 classics, including the Tennesseean (now called the Tennessee Rose), the old Duo Jet and Silver Jet and, best of all, the White Falcon: the reigning Guitar Most Likely to Appear in a Rock Video. Some of the details on these re-issues are truer to the spirit than to the letter of the original instrument. But it's still nice to have these guitars back.

And what better amp could there be for any of these revived axes than Fender's reissue of their 1959 Bassman: that 4x10 marvel that always seemed better for guitar than bass. Here too, the manufacturer has made some concessions to modernity, like printed circuit boards instead of Leo Fender's old hand-wired circuit boards, and a solid-state rectifier (although purists can plug a tube rectifier right in). In every other detail, though, this Bassman reissue is uncannily authentic.

Of course, there was plenty of brand-new guitar gear at NAMM too. Right there at the Fender booth, they also had the new US Strat Ultra, an update of last year's Deluxe Strat that includes a new Fender Red Lace Sensor and a flexible switching system that allows some 15 possible pickup combinations. There was also the James Burton model Telecaster. (Okay, that's a little retro too; but it *is* Fender's first three-pickup Tele.) On the bass front, Fender introduced a five-string Jazz Bass, the Jazz Bass Plus V as well as a four-string Jazz Bass Plus, both with Silver Lace Sensors, active electronics and a pan control, rather than a switch, for blending pickups.

As five-string mania continues to grip bassdom, more and more traditional players are looking for a way to get those earthquake-inducing low notes from a regular, four-string bass. **Steinberger** has come up with a unique answer in the form of their DB Bridge System. It comes as an option on the new Q4 bass, a gorgeous $1560 excursion into more conventional guitar shapes. Visualize, if you will, a two-position switch on the bridge's low E tuner. In one position, the string is tuned to a conventional E. Flip to the other position and the string drops down to D or B or any other interval you pre-tune to. Clever, these New York guys.

You want more guitar innovations? How about the **Ibanez** Universe—the seven-string guitar that Steve Vai designed. The seventh string is meant to be a low B, but you can also string the guitar with a high A up on top, if you use an .007 and promise not to touch the twang bar. Right near the Universe was the guitar that Vai's pal Joe Satriani developed for Ibanez. It includes the new Fred pickup that Satch cooked with Steve Blucher of **DiMarzio**. The Ibanez Joe Satriani guitar will be available in a variety of finishes, but the chrome-body version is the real killer.



Paul Reed Smith's Harmonic Generator amp

Next up are three guitars we'll examine in more detail in an upcoming issue: the **Blade** Guitar, designed by detail-oriented luthier Gary Levinson, and Yamaha's Strat-style Pacifica and Paul-style Weddington. The Yamaha instruments are the first offerings from the company's recently-established guitar shop in Los Angeles, now run by Rich Lasner (a former Ibanez bigwig). Great axes all. And Yamaha also showed the final production version of their Billy Sheehan bass. Meanwhile, on the pickup front, there was the new EMG-89 Dual Mode Pickup: a single coil and a dual coil, all inside the same

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THE BIG LINK-UP

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED at Anaheim NAMM. A lot of those visionary techno-idealists who predicted desktop recording would change the world seemed to be partly vindicated. Dimly, through the sprawling forest of digital formats, a new musical standard may be taking shape. It's ultra-fast, can be sent long distances via optical fiber cable and, perhaps most importantly, will consist of MIDI, SMPTE *and* digital audio, all sharing the same wire. Not that one standard seems close to winning, but we can at least say with certainty that the seminal '90s technology will definitely be based around this all-in-one format.

Here's bachelor number one, named MediaLink and the brainchild of one Mark Lacas. Lacas says the protocol is simple, based on only six commands governing which information gives way to which when push comes to shove, and claims he's not going to charge big proprietary bucks to use it. He hopes to make his money selling his innovative Lone Wolf MIDITap interface box, which runs musical LANs, or Local Area Networks. A 2000-foot optical fiber cable ran from the Lone Wolf booth (in its NAMM-floor debut) way over to the Opcode booth, where another MIDITap box took all the incoming or outgoing MIDI, audio and SMPTE data and sent it to a nearby Mac. Yes, a Lone Wolf MIDITap box is expensive ($2500, with discounts for more than one unit), but for situations like multi-room studios, jingle houses or music colleges, this is an important development.

Funny that wire should be running to the Opcode booth, because it was Opcode and Digitech that made another massive stride toward the Big Link-Up. The two MIDI mavens shook hands on a pact that would integrate Opcode's Vision MIDI sequencer and Digidesign's Sound Tools two-track digital audio/editing system for Macintosh. This is big, folks, very big. One Mac with a hard disk can now have completely synchronized audio running side-by-side with MIDI data. Which essentially means a desk-top studio can now add—gasp!—vocals. Or even a guitar. And what if they throw in simultaneous MIDI and audio editing? And give you automated mixing to boot? Well, actually to boot you'll need a new $700 version of Vision, due out in April. And keep in mind Sound Tools has just come out on Atari ST. Big big big.

What, did you think all those direct-to-disk recording systems in post-production wouldn't find their way to the MI arena? Guess again,

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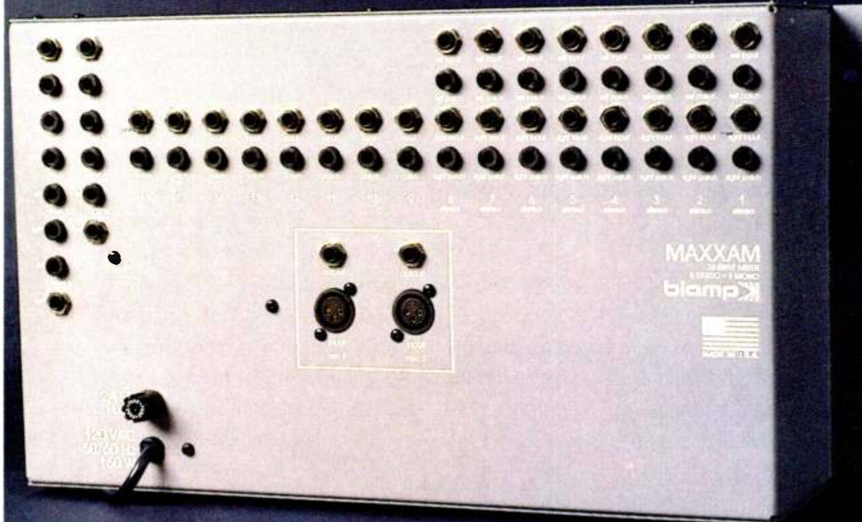

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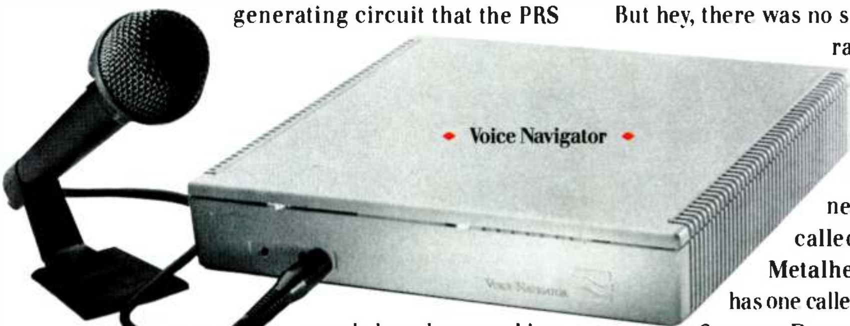
pickup and with two separate outputs. One more way of bridging the Strat/Les Paul gap. And **Seymour Duncan** has expanded his Trembucker pickup into a whole line called the Parallel Axis System. There are three new models: a neck-position Trembucker, a distortion-style Trembucker and a stack. Like the original Trembucker, they're all designed with the locking tremolo player in mind.

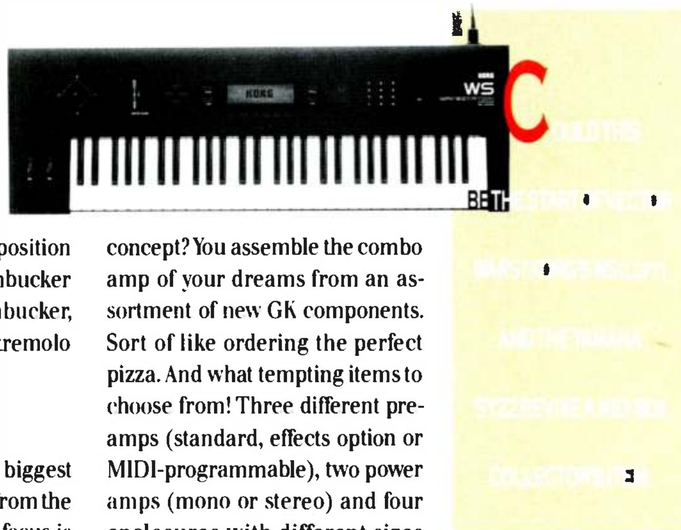
Amp Camp

The '59 Bassman was a blast, but the biggest buzz in guitar amps was emanating from the **Paul Reed Smith** booth. Again, the focus is on vintage amp tones: the clean American and the gritty British, to be specific. But the method of achieving them is all new. Instead of tubes, there's a solid-state harmonic-generating circuit that the PRS people have been working on for about three years now. The amp has two separate preamps: clean and crunch, each with separate gain and EQ controls. There's even a built-in noise gate on the crunch channel. You get a built-in spring reverb, effects loop and 70 watts of program power. Smart design throughout; primo sound.


Voice Navigator

Marshall, for their part, have updated their classic Master Volume Mk II tube amp. Basically, they've done what amp modification guys have been doing for years. They've cranked a pile of extra gain onto the old Mk II and created the Master Volume Mk III. It's a one-channel amp with two output master volumes, so you can hook up a footswitch and go from Loud to Excruciating, and back again. Also new is the Marshall High Gain Dual Reverb amp. It's got two completely independent channels, with a separate output master and reverb return for each. Both the PRS and Marshall amps come in both combo and head-only configurations.

Combo or preamp rack? Or a head and stack? Decisions, decisions, decisions. **Gallien-Krueger** has opened up still more options with the new Micro Series. The concept? You assemble the combo amp of your dreams from an assortment of new GK components. Sort of like ordering the perfect pizza. And what tempting items to choose from! Three different preamps (standard, effects option or MIDI-programmable), two power amps (mono or stereo) and four enclosures with different sizes and makes of speakers. Each of these compact components can be bought separately and served up alongside other people's gear as well.



But hey, there was no shortage of new, rack-mount preamps at NAMM. **Gibson** has a new three-channel tube model, called the XFL3. **Metalhead Electronics** has one called the Elan Mk II. Seymour Duncan is offering the front end of their great 84-40 combo as the KTG-1 tube preamp. It can be mated with their new 75W stereo power amp, the KTG-2075. **ADA** brought out a MIDI-switchable, tube bass preamp, the MB-1. And **Peavey** debuted their Pro-Fex preamp. It's got its own effects processor, with MIDI-addressable parameters.

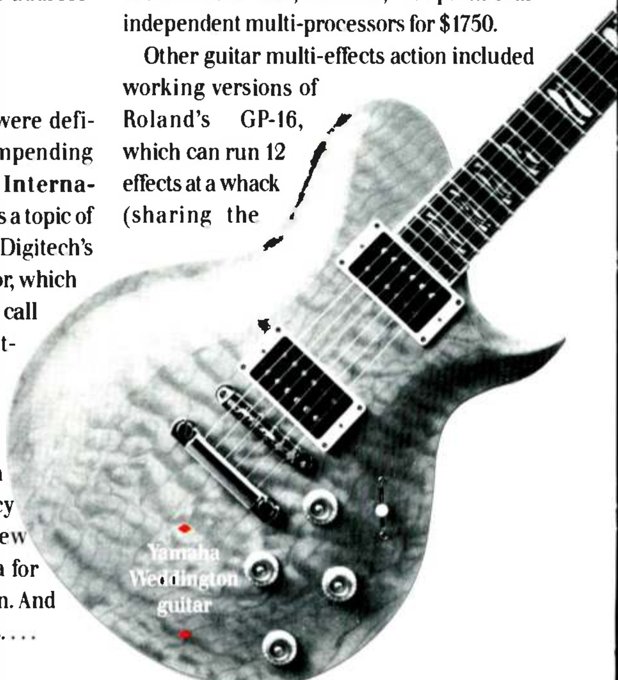
Did Someone Say Effects?

Yeah, digital signal processors were definitely big news at NAMM. The impending purchase of **DOD** by **Harman International** (JBL's parent company) was a topic of much conversation. So was DOD/Digitech's new GSP-21 multi-effects processor, which lets you chain up to 10 effects and call them up via a friendly little footswitch. There's also a new update of the company's intelligent harmonizer. It's called the IPS-33B Super Smart Shift and it boasts a much higher sampling frequency than its predecessor, and new facilities for using MIDI note data for real-time control of harmonization. And then there were these little mixers....

ART has updated their SGE multi-effects device and called it the SGE Mach II. Now you can string 12 effects instead of nine. You get better audio quality, longer delay time and sampling capability, all for $749. And ART also has been packing effects into a studio box, the $629 DR-X. This will do ten audio chores simultaneously, including sampling "on the fly," pitch change, direct MIDI data monitoring and the ability to recreate an exact listening position in a room. But if your studio is on an even tighter budget, ART has a non-programmable 16-bit processor, the MultiVerb LT, that breaks the $300 barrier.

And the NAMM Rookie of the Show was clearly **Zoom**, who managed to keep their booth continually jammed even though it was over in the "Dead Zone" Marriott section of the expo. Zoom is a Japanese design group that spun off from one of the Big 3 and did high-tech digital subcontracting work on some of MI's best known gear. Now in the game on its own, Zoom has begun with two products based around its own LSI chip called the ZFx-1. One is a Walkman-sized guitar effect, the 9002, that can chain six effects in a row for its $479 price tag. You can wear it on your strap, but it's not a gimmick; it's tough—the housing is metal—and the LCD is big. Zoom also displayed a four-channel rack unit, the 9010, that packs four independent multi-processors for $1750.

Other guitar multi-effects action included working versions of Roland's GP-16, which can run 12 effects at a whack (sharing the


Yamaha Weddington guitar

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scuzzy-brain. Roland leaked it out at a dealer meeting that they were preparing a four-track digital hard disk recorder. No less a traditionalist than Hartley Peavey observed that tape—both analog and digital—may be gone faster than anyone dreams, and that DAT has missed its launch window. Next stop? A hard-disk Portastudio. And soon.

For many MIDI systems, of course, a LAN is overkill. But running dozens of boxes and keyboards still needs some of that systemizing power and intelligence, and several new boxes appeared at NAMM to meet this need. Mark of the Unicorn also ran a long cable, theirs strung 1000 feet to the E-mu booth and carrying MIDI and SMPTE. It was hitched up to their new $500 MIDI Time Piece, a combination Mac interface, 8x8 switcher with 128 MIDI channels, SMPTE sync box, merger, networker and otherwise smarty-pants. The MIDI Time Piece comes with a desk accessory and is designed to work with Performer. Then there was J.L. Cooper's powerful Synapse box, which manages an 8x16 MIDI network. And Acme's MIDI Buddy, which is a direct-to-disk MIDI hardware sequencer, also has shown a lot of systemizing capability; Acme's studying both the MediaLink and Sony's fledgling MADI digital format for future networking uses.

But every bit as innovative as the Big Audio-MIDI Optical Link Up was the Voice Navigator system (shown at a Hilton suite). This is a Macintosh hardware/software package that allows you to customize voice commands to individual Mac software products like Passport's Mastertracks Pro or Coda's Finale. It essentially takes eight-bit samples of one individual's voice and then matches it to a live vocal input. The demo guy had a headset mike and a hand-held button; when the button was pushed, the Voice Navigator would listen for a memorized command and then do what was asked—not just easy operations like start and rewind, but a series of fairly tough edits and entries (including numbers). If the Navigator doesn't understand, it just beeps. This is life on the last high-tech frontier: making computers transparent and curing techno-phobia in our lifetime. Sure, it's an idealistic view, but it's the first NAMM of the '90s and complications still haven't set in. We can afford to be a little naive.

—JOCK BAIRD

lead with ART's SGE Mach II). The GP-16 is especially deep in the nuclear fission crunch department and has three pairs of stereo outputs, including balanced XLRs.

Lest We Forget...

But all this is just part of a much bigger picture. There were great new products in every category. Like wireless, for example. Samson has smashed a new price barrier with the VLP system. It's non-diversity, but what do you want for $189? John Nady was seen at the Samson booth, and a Nady staffer later reported that he'd said that if Samson wanted a price war, Nady would give them one. Whoa. At the other end of the spectrum, Samson also introduced a really nice $1150 wireless system, the Super TD, that uses Star-Wars-style powered FM antennas. No strangers to the wireless field, Peavey introduced two new systems: the Wavelink guitar setup and Performer lavalier mike rig. And on the wireless MIDI front, there was Nady's new MIDI Link system. The $500 system

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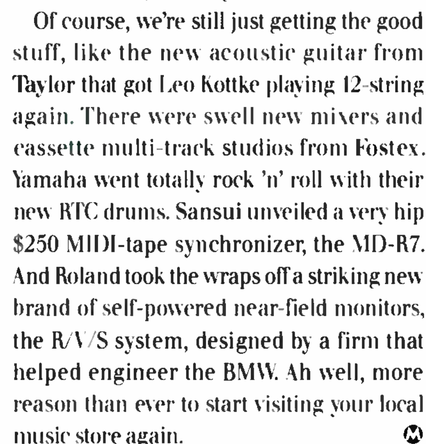
consists of two small translator boxes that add on to an existing instrument wireless rig of any price or make. Considering this is $3000 less than a Gambatte unit, jump on it. Nady also showed a cute little $99 programmable metronome called the SongStarter, that holds 32 song tempos of your choice and gives you the exact count-off time via a blinking light. How many count-offs have *you* botched this week?

It's not sexy, but the biggest boom in the MI sector right now is PA and reinforcement. Maybe that's why the power amps keep on coming. JBL brought out three new models as the SR series (numbered 6615, 6630 and 6650). They're fan-cooled, but the exhaust comes out the front instead of the back, where it only heats up the rest of the rack. QSC added the beefy MX4000 to its hit MX line if you need a quick 1200 watts into 4 ohms. Peavey added the one-rack-space DECA/750 to its digital DECA series, about the smallest 350-watt package in town. And Crown showed a computer-based monitoring system for its Macro-Tech power amps called the IQ System 2000. Added to an IBM-PC, the package allows you to monitor any speaker system for meltdowns and other terrors. Usually only specially matched active speaker-amp systems get this kind of overload protection.

Elsewhere in PA land, Electro-Voice took their breakthrough Manifold Technology and put it in a club-scale 2-way speaker system called the MTS-1. The idea is to combine two drivers into one "manifold," so four drivers in all can deliver more sound pressure from a smaller enclosure. E-V also added a nice new high-end mike to their neodymium N/DYN series, the supercardioid N/D857, and were so pleased by its suspension system and a material called DynaDamp they went back and redesigned the whole line, dubbing it N/D Series II.



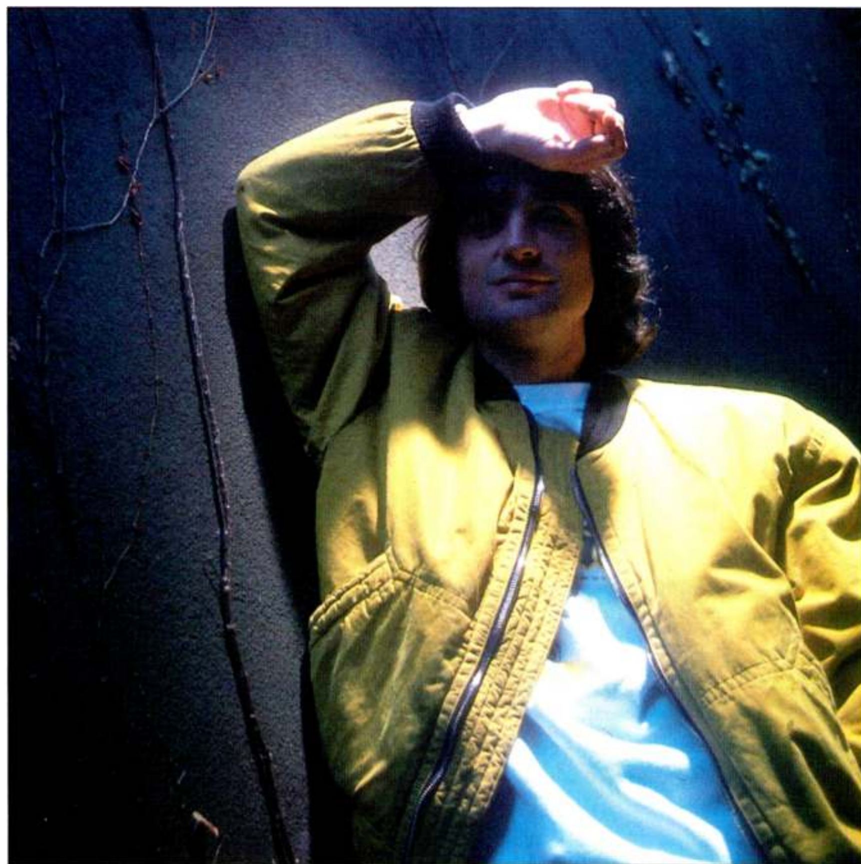
Of course, we're still just getting the good stuff, like the new acoustic guitar from Taylor that got Leo Kottke playing 12-string again. There were swell new mixers and cassette multi-track studios from Fostex. Yamaha went totally rock 'n' roll with their new RTC drums. Sansui unveiled a very hip $250 MIDI-tape synchronizer, the MD-R7. And Roland took the wraps off a striking new brand of self-powered near-field monitors, the R/V/S system, designed by a firm that helped engineer the BMW. Ah well, more reason than ever to start visiting your local music store again. Ⓜ

THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUT

A&M's A&R chief Steve Ralbovsky rebuilds an artist's label

By Ira Robbins

As 1987 drew to a close, the management of A&M Records, founded a quarter-century earlier by trumpeter Herb Alpert and promotion man Jerry Moss, could reflect with satisfaction on a prosperous silver anniversary. Thanks to hit records by Janet Jackson, Bryan Adams, Suzanne Vega, Sting, Chris De Burgh and Alpert himself, one of the few entrepreneurial record companies still outside the acquisitive clutches of multinational entertainment conglomerates had placed eighth in *Billboard*'s annual ranking of top pop labels. But a shortage of reliably massive artists had set A&M on a collision course with the future. In 1988 A&M sank to twelfth (buoyed by soundtracks and an unexpected second life for UB40's 1983 *Labour of Love*) and in 1989 to fifteenth on the *Billboard* scorecard. The label lost its corporate independence and became a part of PolyGram. For a company like A&M that has traditionally shied away from the high-



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priced pursuit of established money-makers, a healthy financial future lies in growing tomorrow's superstars today.

To the company's credit, the rebuilding process got under way even before the slump set in. The first step was to recharge the A&R department. The person they chose to head the effort was Steve Ralbovsky, then at Columbia Records. With such profitable feathers in his cap as the Outfield and Def Jam Records (encompassing L.L. Cool J, the Beastie Boys, Public Enemy and others), and high-credibility signings like Easterhouse and the Woodentops to boot, he had become, after less than four years in the A&R game, one of the industry's most wanted men.

An enthusiastic and sincere music lover whose interests and expertise range from western swing to avant jazz to hip-hop to punk to pop ("I've always wanted to like everything," he says with conviction), Ralbovsky, boyish at 32, is that rare major-label A&R person who actually has faith in his own taste. His impact on the label has been profound, eliminating lost causes, articulating new goals and diversifying the roster to embrace hard rock, dance music, rap, rootsy domestic ethnicity, jazz and credible independent label refugees. On strictly musical terms, the poles of saleable garbage and uncommon talent are now very well represented.

In weighing who to drop, Ralbovsky didn't look at numbers at all. "I went from my gut and thought, is this going to make any kind of mark or is it going to sell a lot of records? And the ones that are going to sell a lot of records, can I live with those from an artistic/creative point of view? Do they have a legitimate place in the roster? What can I get rid of without offending too many people on the label or being too hasty to allow something's future potential to develop?"

The artists he nixed "had been around a long, long time and hadn't performed well, or had one record out that didn't catch on and I didn't feel they had a lot to offer down the line." Among the first to go were Ta Mara & the Seen, Maria Vidal, Feargal Sharkey and It's Immaterial. The ongoing process of weeding out later resulted in contractual releases for Chris Stamey, Royal Court of China, Iggy Pop, Sergio Mendes, Marti Jones and Jason & the Scorchers.

While refashioning the talent lineup, Ralbovsky rebuilt his A&R staff into a close-knit team with complementary strengths: seven individuals with different (but overlapping) musical interests engaged in what he terms "the most positive competitive spirit imaginable. Everybody [in the department] has ears for all kinds of music. That's a stipulation of mine: My A&R people must be able to listen, with few exceptions, to strength in whatever genre."

Under Ralbovsky, who has offices on both coasts, the senior member of the New York contingent is Patrick Clifford, who joined A&M from Epic in 1987. The department's two newest arrivals are Julie Panebianco, a onetime rock journalist [and *Musician* employee] who left Warner Bros. Records' alternative marketing department to become one of the industry's very few A&R women, and Alonzo Brown, A&M's urban (industry code for the majority of black artists and audiences) A&R manager. An erstwhile rapper (he was half of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, who had an early-'80s hit, "Genius Rap"), Brown previously worked at Cold Chillin' Records and Warner Bros.

Brown's presence reflects A&M's desire to improve its standing in the black community. The label has always had a few mainstream

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R&B acts (LTD, Jeffrey Osborne, James Ingram, Atlantic Starr), but generally shied away from rap, hip-hop and other unruly musical genres. While Brown, 28, acknowledges A&M would likely shun something as strong as Public Enemy, his signing of honest-to-goodness rappers—The Intelligent Hoodlum from Long Island and Groove B Chill, a trio from Queens, New York, are already in the pipeline—signals a new direction and a real commitment to keeping pace with contemporary sounds.

In Los Angeles, where Ralbovsky reckons he spends 60 percent of his time, the main A&R man is Aaron Jacoves, 26, who began at A&M as an intern eight years ago; among his signings are David & David (now reduced to one active David), Toni Childs and the Sandmen. Bryan Huttenhower, 29, also began as an unpaid intern but got his break during an understaffed era when Jacoves asked for his help in listening to a mountain of demo tapes. After playing a role in three important hard-rock signings—Soundgarden, Tora Tora and Extreme—Huttenhower got his full-fledged A&R wings.

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David Anderle, who served as the interim head of A&R prior to Ralbovsky's arrival, is also based in the California office. The producer (probably the only person to work in the studio with both Judy Collins and the Circle Jerks) and A&M veteran now devotes himself mostly to soundtracks—his *Good Morning, Vietnam* LP sold in excess of a million copies. Mark Mazzetti, a former radio promotion man, serves as a bridge between the two departments, looking after 12-inches, remixes and the like. And the company has just hired Chris Boyd as Alonzo Brown's urban ears in California.

A&M acquires new artists through other avenues. Vendetta, an in-house dance-music label run by Larry Yasgar, is responsible for finding Seduction, the female vocal trio whose album is nearing gold. Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, the writing/production/playing team behind hit records by Janet Jackson and many other top artists, have a deal under which they will bring A&M three or four acts a year. The company has an option arrangement with Minneapolis' Twin/Tone Records (through whom A&M signed Soul Asylum and the Mekons); Steve Fallon, founder of the now-inactive Coyote Records, which introduced A&M to the Feelies, Chris Stamey and Joe Henry, is on retainer as a scout.

There are at least three occupational hazards for A&R people: excessive traveling, musical burnout and the never-ending onslaught of overbearing people with demo tapes. While commuting between New York and Los Angeles, Ralbovsky reads trade publications and music magazines, catches up on paper work and listens to music. The only telephone calls he makes from the friendly skies are "the ones that people will jump out a window if they don't hear from me. Fortunately," he notes with relief, "people can't call into planes yet."

Having introduced A&M to the profitable worlds of dance music and hard rock, Ralbovsky has also undertaken several estimable pet projects of less certain sales potential. The A&Mericana line (Tish Hinojosa and David Wilcox were in the first group of releases) is, in his words, for "new artists influenced by traditional American music forms, the idea being that artists like Suzanne Vega, Los Lobos and Robert Cray started from an ethnic base and crossed over into the mainstream." Another ongoing series, the Modern Masters, embraces "living legends of jazz—such as Sun Ra and Don

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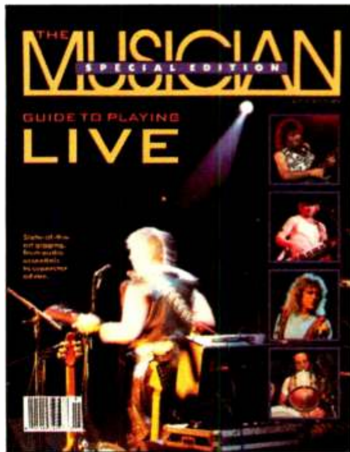

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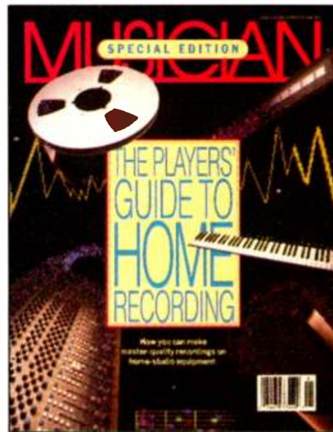

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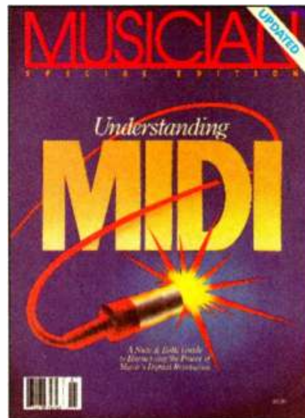

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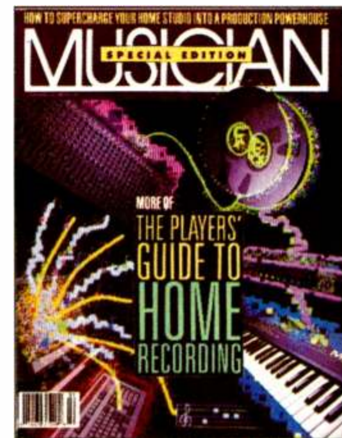

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Cherry—from the modern period, making records in the musical spirit of their old records that made them influential." Out on the further fringes, A&M has released two volumes of music recorded live at New York's Knitting Factory.

Ralbovsky, who retains final say over all A&M signings, has definite ideas about the A&R process, from his staff's detailed involvement in every aspect of an artist's career to the label's open-door policy towards unsolicited tapes. At A&M, it is explicit policy that every demo that comes in will be heard and responded to in some fashion within a month or two by an A&R person. "Things come in all sorts of cumbersome packages, with letters and pictures and this and that. I usually ask the assistants to take the cassettes out, keep the letters in a pile and just give me the tapes. I don't want a letter to influence [me] negatively or positively," Ralbovsky says.

For an unknown band, a demo should have three to five songs, he notes. "If you connect with a couple of impact songs on the first tape, that's enough for somebody to see a show or finance its development or propose a signing. If there are 14 songs, you just keep hitting the fast-forward button."

Once a band has gained the interest of an A&R person, the signing process—consisting of showcase gigs, private auditions, songwriting demos, meetings, negotiations, etc.—can take anywhere from months to more than a year. At Columbia, "We did a six-month development deal with Matthew Sweet. I wasn't sure until the fifth month if we were going to do the record." On the other hand, "The Outfield was pretty quick. A friend of a friend gave me a tape and within a couple of months we were ready to go into the studio.

"I don't know if anybody goes backstage with a contract in their pocket. Maybe some people do that. I call the next morning, or during the week, and ask the band to come in and see me. It'll all go through that lawyer/manager decision-making process anyway."

Before an A&R person initiates what is likely to be a protracted, complex and detailed tango of lawyers, business people and musicians, there has to have been a musical epiphany, some convincing reason to believe. "When I saw Soul Asylum at CBGB," Ralbovsky recalls, "I did everything else but [offer them a contract on the spot]. I knew that night, seeing them that first time. I knew within five minutes that I wanted to do Trip Shakespeare [another Minneapolis band now on A&M]. It was just some magical, impossibly incredible combination of elements that overcomes me. The first time I saw Jason & the Scorchers, it was within the first two songs."

Strategic forbearance is a Ralbovsky hallmark, whether it amounts to keeping the overexposed Sting off the market for a few years, or letting young bands rehearse and stockpile original material before going into the studio. Recent A&M signings Indio and the Innocence Mission percolated for nearly a year before recording. "You see the initial spark but they're not ready to make a record," he says. "You know that after another six months it's going to get that much better. Innocence Mission had a wonderfully naive, delicate spirit about them. You couldn't just throw that into the machine and expect it to thrive. [Patrick Clifford, their A&R man] got them to keep working on songs in their home studio and send up tapes every few months."

Guiding newcomers is an intriguing challenge for an A&R person, but one quite unlike dealing with established artists, a high-stakes task fraught with egos and

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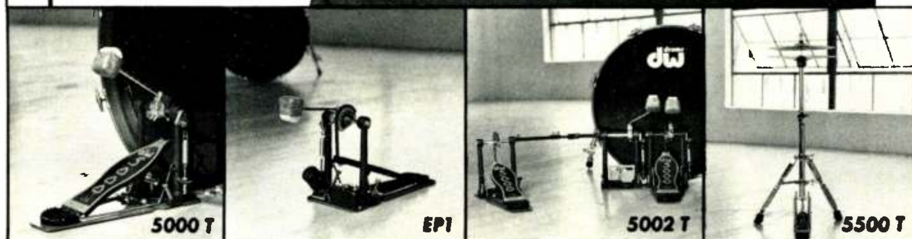

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anxieties. "You provide a fresh point of view," replies Ralbovsky. "Sometimes the hardest thing is to say, 'I don't think you're there yet.' You have to make sure they've got two or three striking songs—and that doesn't mean three-minute hooks-pop-song-radio, it means two or three things on an album that are really going to connect with people.

"It can be fairly tough," he allows. "I've seen a lot of people sent back in when they've finished their record." For John Hiatt, that meant canning an entire LP. After the critically acclaimed *Bring the Family* (cut in four days without embellishments), Hiatt planned to make his next album in the same quick and casual working style, again using Nick Lowe, Jim Keltner and Ry Cooder as sidemen. "Right before we were ready to get started, there was a big business problem with [their] representatives; [cont'd on page 113]

AMBIDEXTROUS AXE

Switching rather than fighting, Ernie Isley learned more from Hendrix than feedback

By Matt Resnicoff

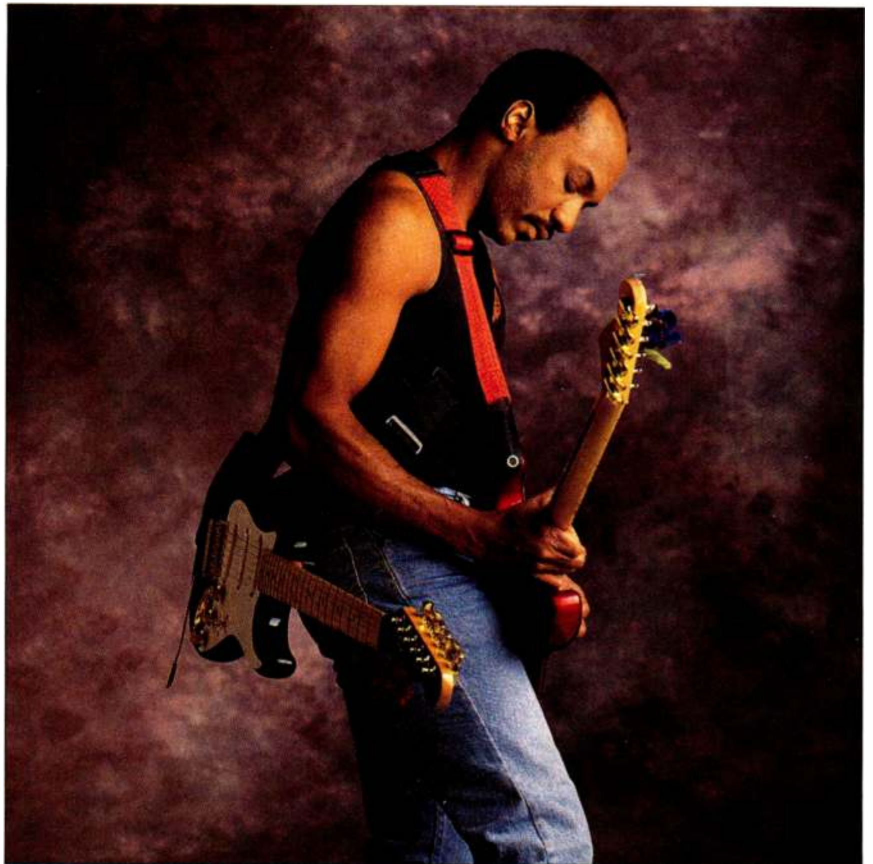
HENDRIX HAD IT easy. In his day, guitarists plucked at their strings with the hand they favored since birth—just as they bowled, took dictation or hailed a cab. Jimi stumbled onto a solution so simple it probably never even occurred to Otis Rush or Albert King: re-string-and-flip. Simple, effective and gives righties a clearer view for stealing licks.

Ernie Isley knew Hendrix and was deeply moved, which may explain the curious presence that's been dogging Isley since he started work on rhythm tracks for *High Wire*, the debut solo album capping his near-three-decade career as the youngest Isley Brother. Isley, who usually plays right-handed, sometimes flips his guitar over and plays left, which makes him play like a different guitarist. Ernie, who refers to his alter ego in the third person, let him play on a soulful stormer called "Rising from the Ashes." "I wanted to put him on record so every time I hear that tune," he confides, "I know the rhythm guitar is left-hand. Sometimes my playing gets a little tired, a little bored: 'Yeah, I know I can do this, it's a piece of cake!' But that left-handed guy, everything he does is like a miracle. It's a matter of just building up his resumé. I could play 'High Wire,' 'That Lady,' one by one, song to song, and then all of a sudden, he'll be there with me."

While the Isleys laid the bedrock for party rock 'n' funk with '60s hits like "Shout," "Twist and Shout" and "Testify (Pt. I & II)" (often with Hendrix behind them on stage and record), Ernie was still too young to play with his big brothers. He spent his time around the house tinkering with drums and soaking up the sounds of visiting musicians like Curtis Mayfield. Mayfield's influence crops up in Ernie's supple comping behind the *High Wire* ballad "Love Situation." Jimi's legacy probably cut a bit deeper, forever upsetting Ernie's neural balance.

"When the band would come over to rehearse," Ernie recalls, "I'd be torn between going outside to play and listening to the band in the basement, where all this *air* would be moving around. They would rehearse eight hours with one break. Jimi played that, and then played another 10 by himself, as good as he was. So when it was time to play, or if he was challenged to a 'My dog's bigger than yours' kind of situation—I mean, he was Mike Tyson! He's gonna *stand* there and decapitate you. Or maybe he's gonna decapitate you visually, because he's left-handed in a right-handed world. I always thought left-handed people were really *cool*.

"Most of all, I remember the sound of his guitar without an amp. Not so much the notes, but that feeling, like if a guy whispers, 'To be or not to be, that is the question . . .' 'Maybe if I stand by this chair, and I don't breathe too hard, I'll be able to *hear* him.' It



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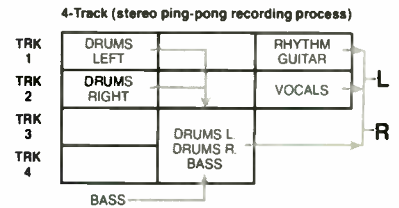

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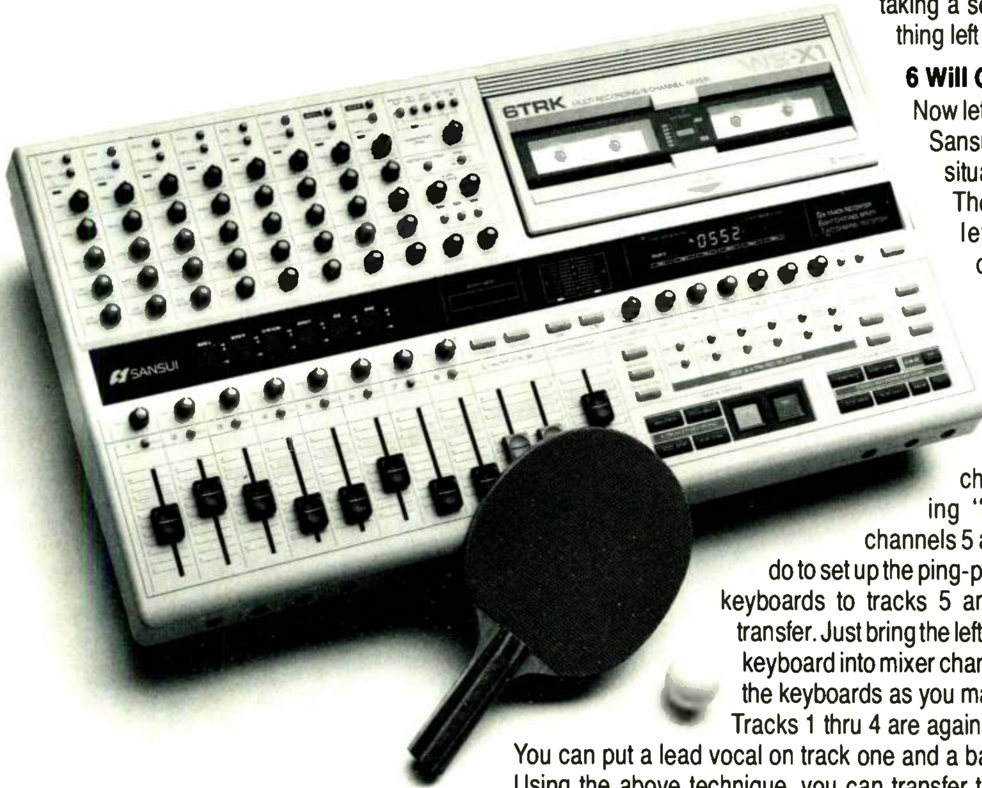
Here's a real-world example of six versus four tracks. The four track story is pretty short. Use tracks 1 and 2 to record a stereo drum mix, then ping-pong those over to 3 and 4 adding bass as you go. Now you can record rhythm guitar on 1 and a vocal on 2. Without taking a second bounce, the only thing left to do is the final mix.



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Tracks 1 thru 4 are again available for recording. You can put a lead vocal on track one and a backing vocal on track 2. Using the above technique, you can transfer these tracks to 3 and 4 adding another backing vocal on the way.

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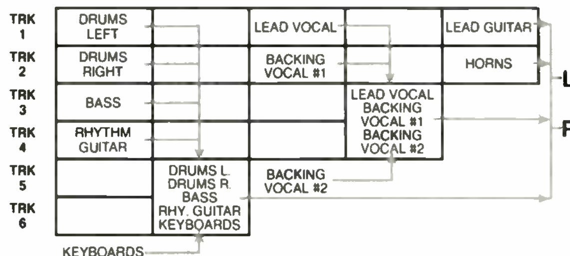

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was tremendous, like a whisper descending from heaven."

That fascination with Hendrix's often unheralded subtlety may perplex listeners hip to Ernie's own wild and wailing Strat contributions to the funkadelicized Isleys, who he joined professionally in the mid-'60s. But careful attention to *High Wire* gives a clear picture of how the guitarist has consolidated his ideas since last performing with the Brothers in February of '84. Funk-driven and fiery, the cuts work around intricate arrangements highlighted by sparring crosstalk between rhythm instruments, and by wicked (usually one-take) soloing by Isley. Bringing the two worlds together, he maintains, was crucial to the task at hand. "Without the element of dance, rock 'n' roll would be opera. It wouldn't be what it *is*, which is party music. Nobody's sitting there turning their programs to see about the next movement. So if the dance idea is there as a good foundation, then the guitar just enhances it. So you have 'That Lady' or 'High Wire' which you can dance to, but it also has this heavy guitar on it. There's a voice, a feeling in the instrument, some sort of guitar spirit I was going for that really made it happen."

Isley's approach to *High Wire* was decidedly high-tech; although he did things like double a synth-bass with live bass, and put rifle samples against electric guitar and talk box to create infectious undulations ("when the sample stops, the talk box hits—part of the drummer effect"), he never once let the machines diffuse the expression. Two song fragments, the unaccompanied acoustic "Song for the Muses" and a Delta blues breeze called "In Deep," suggest the most organic extremes of his musical personality. "If you don't hit the strings just right . . . you know, the way I play my C chord will have an inflection; another player doing the same chord will sound different: Maybe it's the guitar he's using, or the way he wants his amp to sound. But with technology today, people can just use a sound they sampled from a hit record. I really didn't want that.

"As I was playing acoustic guitar on 'The Muses,' I could imagine the nine sisters and the three Graces standing in a garden eating grapes and talking with each other. It talks about changing the sound of the world, which is what music does every day. And rock 'n' roll is the only music that embraces all of 'em. It never says 'no.' It refuses nothing."

Except perhaps inspiration. Surprisingly, the most difficult challenge [cont'd on page 94]

Performance of the Month

Love at First Sight

Last Exit at Johnny D's Uptown Lounge

By Ted Drozdowski

THE IMPROVISING supergroup Last Exit—Bill Laswell on bass, drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson, West German reedman Peter Brötzmann and guitarist Sonny Sharrock—remains largely unheard in this country. Though established in Europe, a February 2 show at Johnny D's Uptown Lounge—a hip, laidback room in Somerville, Massachusetts—was merely the third U.S. gig in the band's four years, and in keeping with its no-rehearsals, no-rules policy, it was also the first time they had played together since October 1989.

"Usually we never see each other unless it's onstage," says Sharrock. "That's literally where the band first got together. And when we are together, we never even talk about the music. We just have a ball. We have the damnedest time. And when it's time to play, we play."

That Last Exit has some popular appeal was proven by the full house and the reference points its turbulent music kindled: early, blowing rock eccentrics like King Crimson and Pink Floyd and the classic '60s ensembles of Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane. The four took turns leading their own spontaneous tunes. Laswell, cranking his Wal bass through a juggernaut of low-end sounds and clipped harmonics through distortion pedals, an envelope filter, a Marshall head and three Hartke bass cabinets, often relied on two-to-four-note patterns or sliding chords to set the momentum. Sharrock and Brötzmann opened variously with low, soft, resonant melodies or blasting sheets of assaultive dissonance. And Jackson repeatedly unleashed the African village he keeps in his Sonor kit, starting from a bass-drum pulse, constructing a second beat on his toms, setting a third on the snare, then stretching for a fourth by intermingling rhythms—all that before he reached for his cymbals.

The band was relentlessly, inventively on. Sharrock and Brötzmann often spoke in the same saxophonic voice, regardless that Sonny smacks a Les Paul through a Marshall and Peter repeatedly grabbed his 150-year-old Tárogató. They stood, back-to-back or eyeball-to-eyeball, flailing out squalls of rapidly slurred notes, each racing through his instrument's range, then stopping mid-note to poke at a sweet melody or roll in unison to a new key or tempo. In a fit of sound-soaked delirium, Brötzmann started a high melody on clarinet, took it higher by removing its bell, higher still by twisting off more of its body, then more, until he blew a reed and mouthpiece, making it scream as he leapt like a gleeful, bearded, bellied toddler. "That," Laswell says later, "is how this band should sound—almost."

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ISLEY

[cont'd from page 92] Isley encountered in producing the record—perhaps as difficult as any in his career—was simply getting to it at all. Shortly after the guitarist issued the 1985 hit "Caravan of Love" with brother Marvin and Chris Jasper, a heart attack claimed O'Kelly Isley, laying to rest any hopes of a full-fledged Isleys reunion. ("It turned out that he was the hub of the wheel," says Ernie, "and spokes just started going everywhere.") He realized that any further claims he had in the business would be staked on his own. "I knew what this represented," he recalls. "A separation from the people I grew up with. Nobody can hold your hand and walk you through that. It was a real chore at the beginning: 'Do you *really* wanna tune your guitar? Do you *really* wanna carry it up the elevator?' But as the ideas started to develop, it was like, 'Hey, I'm genuinely liking this.' Of course, I had the resumé to refer to. If I was doing something that wasn't working, I knew that if one of the brothers *were* there, they would say, 'Well, leave that alone and go on.' 'That's a piece of crap. Do that solo over.' If it works you look like a genius, and if it doesn't work, well, everybody knew you was a bozo anyway, so you can't lose."

And then, of course, there's that unrelenting southpaw stranger.

"I'm challenging this guy to play now," Ernie says heatedly. "We're looking for ideas, and if I can't find them right-handed, maybe *he* can find them left-handed. The note itself doesn't change, and the position of the note on the neck of the guitar doesn't change, but the *perspective* of the note changes. He'll be able to come out onstage for the first song, feel it and play it. All of that figures into the whole thing about being on the high wire: It's all right while you're up there, it's just getting comfortable with the change.

"I'm looking forward to doing the live thing, in your face, right now, right here, left hand. Muhammad Ali's left jab—*boom!* Larry Bird from half-court—*swish!* That *other* left-handed guitar player—*decapitation!* You have to do it in somebody's face. The left-handed thing, like anything else, is feeling, not touch, and it's heavy. If you *feel* it, you can play it." Ⓜ

TightWires

SO ERNIE, you still a Strat man? "Of course," he laughs. "Stratocaster—it's a funky guitar, it has a history. Fender guitars and basses were lying around our house before they really caught on." Ernie's main instrument for *High Wire* was a black maple-neck '83, with gold hardware and a striking white pickguard. He played a Les Paul for the first time on the solo for a song called "She Takes Me Up," some Japanese Strat copies for the solos over "Song for the Muses" and "Diamond in the Rough," and pulled out his old, ornery Martin acoustic for "Fare Thee Well, Fair-Weather Friend" and "The Muses." But he's still stuck on that original Fender design—pickup noise, sticky bridge and all—preferably through a ProCo Rat distortion pedal and a Marshall. "Each one behaves a little differently, and I've always liked that: 'So what if it goes out of tune after every song?! It's still a Strat.'"

Into the Mystic

ONE HOUR INTO HIS ENCORE AT NEW YORK'S BEACON THEATRE LAST DECEMBER, VAN MORRISON STARTED CHANT/SINGING, "JOHNLEEHOOKERJOHNLEEHOOKERJOHNLEEHOOKER." AS VAN ENTERED THE RAPTURE, THE HOBBLED OLD FIGURE OF HOOKER APPEARED FROM THE WINGS, CARRYING HIS GUITAR. IN THE AUDIENCE, A WAG WAS HEARD EXCLAIMING, "IMAGINE IF HE'D SAID 'JOHN F. KENNEDY!'"

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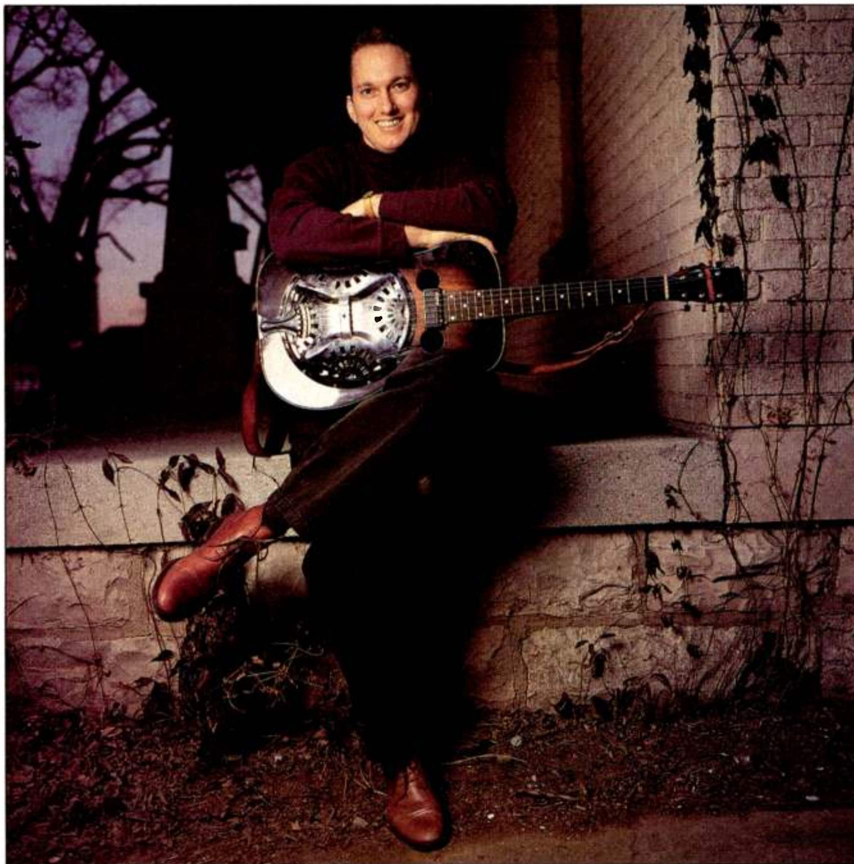
Dobro Only More So

Jerry Douglas smashes preconceived notions to test the limits of bluegrass and country

By Peter Cronin

"I GET IT in airports," says Jerry Douglas with a sigh. "'Hey mister, you got a guitar in there?' 'Well, no, it's a dobro.' 'A what?' 'A dobro.' 'A *what?*'... 'Yeah, it's a guitar.'" Douglas laughs. "I guess I'll be successful when that doesn't happen anymore." In fact, Douglas has done more than anybody on the planet to rescue the instrument from obscurity, raising the dobro-consciousness of all who encounter his music.

Jerry Douglas is out to smash preconceived notions about the dobro into little pieces. "I'm interested in trying to emulate the sounds of other instruments," he explains, "and getting the dobro into different places outside of the country market, away from that whiney hound dog thing that it's had on its back for so many years." As might be expected, Douglas' explorations have met with some resistance from the hardcore bluegrass community. "The whole argument has been 'Oh God, please don't play anything but pure bluegrass 'cause it's gonna be a lost art,' but that's bullshit. Besides, if somebody tells me that it can't be done, I'm gonna try that much harder."



In the 1920s, long before the advent of the electric guitar, San Diego's Dopera brothers inserted a steel plate into the body of their guitars to increase volume and resonance, and the dobro was born. With a raised nut at the peghead, the dobro sits on the lap and is played with a slide, not unlike a conventional lap steel guitar. Douglas, however, is quick to point out the difference. "It's in the sustain and the texture of the sound. That's what drew me to the instrument in the first place. Then when I saw it I was really hooked—it's *such* a cool-lookin' thing!"

That first encounter came at the tender age of eight when Douglas' guitar-picking father took him to a Flatt & Scruggs gig. "Josh Graves was their dobro player. He was my main influence. I'd been playing guitar and mandolin since I was five, so when I saw Josh, even from a distance, I could tell he was using fingerpicks and playing in open G tuning." That was the beginning and the end of Douglas' formal training.

"I was raised in the Steel Valley in northeastern Ohio," says Douglas, "and it was all heavy metal and R&B. There was no one to show me anything. When I went to buy a dobro the guy in the music store looked at me like I'd called him some name or something." With his dad's bluegrass band practicing in the living room Douglas learned fast and was offered a job with the Country Gentlemen right out of high school. "Those guys traveled all year long doing bluegrass festivals. That was my college education."

His fluid playing and seemingly impossible facility on the instrument soon earned him the nickname Flux, and Douglas, along with David Grisman, Russ Barenberg and J.D. Crowe, began to soak up the jazz influences that would eventually turn their music into what became known as "newgrass." "A lot of it happened through Grisman turning us on to this jazz," Douglas explains. "Django, Grappelli and Venuti initially, and later Coltrane, Chick Corea and Miles. That music always had something to do with bluegrass, we'd just never *heard* it."

Straight bluegrass had become something of a bore for a lot of these younger musicians. "Most of the songs are in three keys," Douglas explains, "and a lot of them are just I-IV-V. Bill Monroe had a real high singing voice so he did everything in the key of B, and banjos sound good in B or B flat. It's

Photograph: Patrick Harbron

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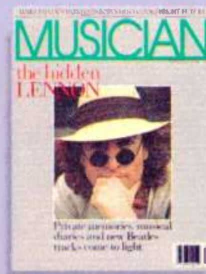

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robin trower

IN THE LINE OF FIRE

Ever since his Procol Harum days, guitar virtuoso Robin Trower has been recognized as one of the most innovative and expressive guitar players around. Blending awesome power with subtle nuance, Trower really knows how to play and he never plays it safe.

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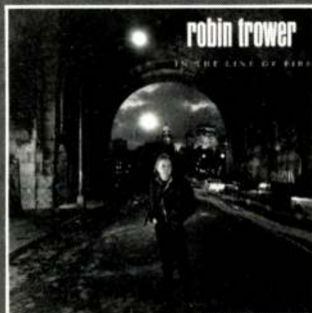

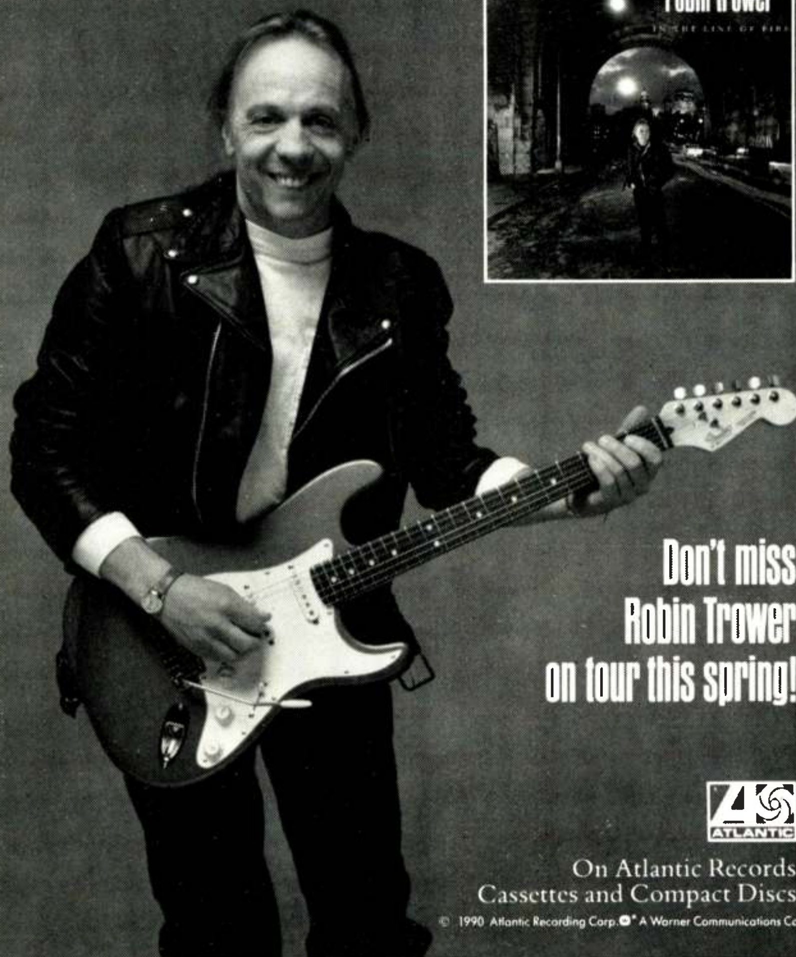

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a strange key for me, so I devised this capo that floats over the fingerboard suspended by the strings. These days I'm using one made by the Leno Dobro Capo Company."

Jerry Douglas has done much more for the dobro than just change keys. He combines technique and technology to overcome the limitations of the instrument. "I play with a certain pressure on the bar, combining my left and right hands to try to get the sound I hear in my mind," he explains. "It's like a guitar. You know where the sweet spots are, so you go for 'em." The old method of simply dropping a microphone over the top of the instrument is also a thing of the past for Douglas. "There's a new tone that I'm working on that's a combination of a pickup, a microphone and the normal sound of the dobro. It's something that the instrument itself doesn't have." Helping him achieve that tone is a nifty little box developed by a guy named Richard Battalia that allows him much greater control over his sound. "My main instrument is a dobro built by R.Q. Jones. It's got a Countryman microphone and a Lawrence pickup built right into it, and I run them straight into the Battalia box. It works. It separates the two and I have EQ control over both the pickup and the mike. I then run through the board and through my old Fender Vibrolux tweed amp onstage for a monitor." Douglas also uses GHS strings and employs a Yamaha SPX90 for subtle effects.

But Douglas' most important innovation is his dobro playing. "The single-noting and faster playing, along with some of the pull-offs and slide techniques, are more or less my contributions."

To put it another way, the guy plays like a wildman. His trademark tumbling licks and keen sense of melody have made him one of Nashville's most in-demand session players. Douglas' signature graces the work of country artists from Randy Travis to Reba McEntire to Maura O'Connell. On *Plant Early*, his latest solo venture, his melodic phrasing bears more than a passing resemblance to O'Connell's. "I wanted this new album to be more like a vocal record without words," Douglas says. "I've been playing with Maura for three years, so I'm sure she's an influence. I react to whatever is going on and take a piece of it with me."

Although lucrative, being a studio star can have its drawbacks. "In a real busy time I like maybe one out of 20 songs I play on," Douglas confesses. "The stuff I like is just a little left of country." Ⓜ

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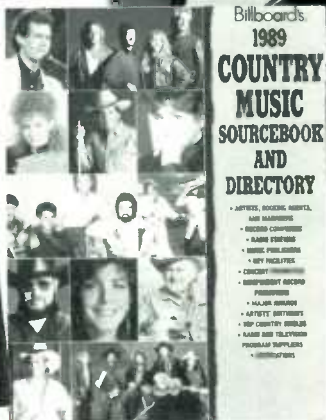

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RECORDINGS

Arrogance and Humility

Sinéad O'Connor Finds What She's Looking For

I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got
(Chrysalis)

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SINÉAD O'CONNOR

MILES DAVIS
AURA

MAX ROACH/
DIZZY GILLESPIE
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GARY BURTON
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ARABIAN PRINCE
BROTHER ARAB
3RD BASS
THE CACTUS ALBUM
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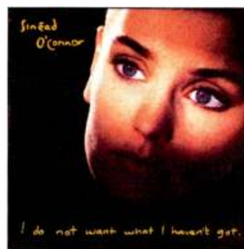
HANK WILLIAMS, JR.
LONE WOLF
Honkytonk man

"YOU ASKED FOR the truth and I told you," sings Ireland's Sinéad O'Connor casually, as if candor were an everyday thing in pop music. Actually, there's nothing routine about her remarkable second LP, which dodges the sophomore jinx and confounds audience expectations in one swoop. Combining equal measures of arrogance and humility, self-indulgence and restraint, *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* seems certain to delight some admirers and infuriate others. Boring it ain't.



The Lion and the Cobra had more pure charisma than any other debut in recent times, thanks to baroque, dramatic tunes and O'Connor's imposing delivery. Here, she radically redefines her approach, scrapping the elaborate arrangements and production in favor of simple pieces employing myriad styles. *I Do Not Want...* could almost pass for a various-artists compilation, ranging from high-strung ballads ("The Last Day of Our Acquaintance") to thumping rockers ("Jump in the River") to "I Am Stretched on Your Grave," an audacious pairing of a rap-inspired drum loop and old-fashioned melody. Not to mention the polar extremes of slick, albeit soulful product (Prince's sexy "Nothing Compares 2 U") and the insistent a cappella drone of the title track.

O'Connor's blunt, unsparing lyrics hold this grand show together. Whatever the underlying realities, *I Do Not Want...* has the feel of autobiography, of a young woman turned upside down by motherhood and sudden fame. Leading off with the brooding "Feel So Different," she goes on to address the strangeness of celebrity in "The Emperor's New

Illustration: Philip Burke

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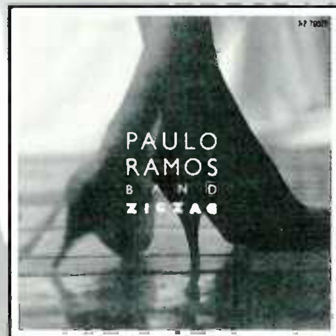

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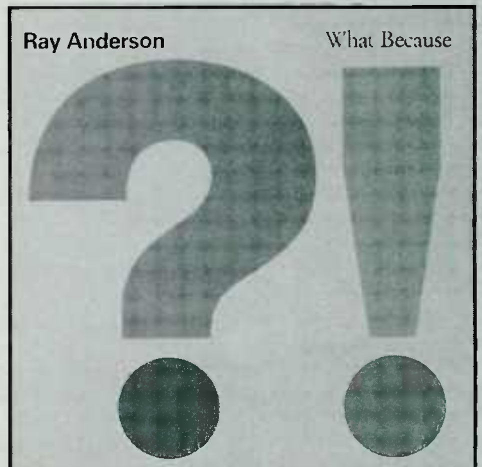

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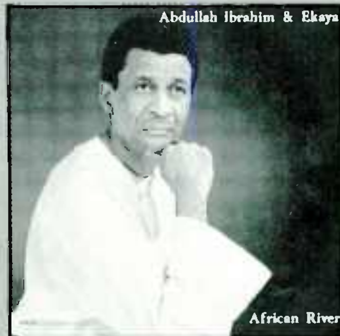

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GRAMAVISION

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Clothes." O'Connor asks, "How could I possibly know what I want/When I was only twenty-one?," but also reasserts her independence, declaring, "I will have my own policies/I will sleep in peace."

This unapologetic sensibility permeates the album. In "You Cause as Much Sorrow," O'Connor admits condemning a dead person may appear unkind and speaks her mind anyway. A fonder moment prompts memories of "The times we did it so hard/ There was blood on the wall." (Anybody blushing?) It's not all anger and passion: The ethereal "Three Babies" could be a heavenly hymn, although the assertion elsewhere that she's really "soft and tender and sweet" proves tough to swallow. In short, O'Connor's nasty and nice, cruel and gentle—just like us ordinary folks, only more vivid.

The 3-D persona makes it easy to underestimate her musical talents. O'Connor's no-nonsense vocals have an unpretentious grace that wouldn't be out of place at a roadside honky-tonk. Along with her spare, deceptively subtle production, she contributes a good number of the instruments and elicits solid support from such notables as Andy Rourke (ex-Smiths), Jah Wobble (ex-Public Image) and hubby John Reynolds. While Prince provides the catchiest tune, some of hers don't trail by much.

Fascinating and unsettling, *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* plays like a diary, without the self-aggrandizement or facile conclusions of standard pop confessionals. As a measure of Sinéad O'Connor's artistic growth, note how it makes *The Lion and the Cobra* seem phony and overwrought. If this is her version of the second-album slump, the next one could be pretty amazing.

—Jon Young

Miles Davis

Aura
(Columbia)

Max Roach Dizzy Gillespie

Max & Dizzy: Paris 1989
(A&M Modern Masters)

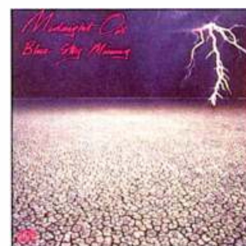
RECENTLY I HAD the opportunity to study some videotapes of those pugilistic artists Sugar Ray Robinson and Muhammad Ali, and was fascinated to see how as older men these champions came to rely more on guile than bravura. So when I hear Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie go toe to toe with time, I can't help but root them on. Sure, we can all remember their past mastery—so can they—and yes, nowadays Miles and Dizzy sometimes come up short in the con-

sistency department. But make no mistake about it: Based upon the resplendent work they turn in on *Aura* and *Max & Dizzy: Paris 1989* respectively, it's hard to put much stock in the chitterchatter about their precipitous decline. Because it's apparent that their most enduring technical weapons remain imagination and soul.

The nine distinct sections that comprise *Aura* were premiered December 14, 1984 in Copenhagen, Denmark and completed in early 1985. It's a concerto-styled tribute to Miles the jazz soloist, whose playing is by turns childlike, elegant, swinging and heartbreakingly lyrical. Writing for a Danish radio orchestra, trumpeter/composer Palle Mikkelborg's portrait traverses the length and breadth of Davis' style, illuminating the painterly sensitivity of Davis' work. There's the unaffected delicacy of Miles' muted horn on (of all colors) "White"; the warm familiarity of a Milesian motif over the vamp and release of "Orange" (featuring some ferocious choruses by John McLaughlin); the folkish quality of his conversations with Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen on "Green"; the lighthearted reggae of "Blue" and the Moorish melancholy of "Electric Red." Mikkelborg's writing parallels the impressionistic chords and idiosyncratic voicing Gil Evans favored (his use of synthesizers and brass is particularly sweet), and Miles returns the favor with his most deeply felt performances of the decade. *Aura* is a historic event.

As is this concert vision of Max Roach and Dizzy Gillespie reminiscing in rhythm, a magnificent bookend to the careers of two innovators whose paths have intermingled for almost 50 years. Here the orchestrations are spontaneous and personal, a testament not only to their own distinctive sound signatures, but to the enduring creative power of that most challenging and intellectual of American musical styles, bebop.

The ruminative splendor of Gillespie's muted and open horn has grown richer with each passing year, even as his laser-like intensity has receded. Here he manipulates timbre for optimum melodic and emotional effect, picking his spots to supercharge the rhythm, then generally letting Max handle the release as they echo each other's phrases. They shuffle through a variety of moods, from bop, backbeat blues and ballads to bumptious Latin and African grooves. While this collaboration doesn't reflect the intensity of Roach's earlier duets, it's probably the most engaging of the lot. That warmth, that sense of sharing, is what American music is all about.—**Chip Stern**



Midnight Oil

Blue Sky Mining
(CBS)

WITH ITS FOURTH U.S. album, Midnight Oil is either celebrating the joys of harmony and melodies or has wimped out. Certainly the lyrics are still erudite and politically correct; the expected plaints about environmental destruction and human exploitation are present in songs like "Blue Sky Mine" and "River Runs Red." But the surprise of *Blue Sky Mining* is that it holds no surprises, save that a band as historically tough-minded and tough-sounding as Midnight Oil would release a record that smells of the fishwrap of enterprise. Ten radio-ready ballads that occasionally reach a brisk medium-tempo, it's the kind of tame music that, in the days when Midnight Oil played pubs, would have driven Aussie punters to rip the meat from its members' bones.

Much has changed in the 12 years since records like *Midnight Oil* and *Head Injuries* set a standard for aggressive, thinking-fan's rock. Guitars that were once blunt instruments (remember "Best of Both Worlds" and "Only the Strong"?) now chime arpeggios and chop out basic chords. Keyboards that

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to-be-so scratchiness in their music. That means vocally the ugly notes stay, which sounds great. It also gives the minimalistic but not scrawny "Turkey in the Straw" some kind of newfound resonance. Although there's not a speck of crossover yen here, when the phone calls go out for the next Farm Aid, it would be nice to see the Fire Squad on the contact sheet.—*Jim Macnie*

IBRAHIM

[*cont'd from page 42*] African bird, and people came from all around to see it, and of course all the other birds. One day the man decided to go to Africa, so he said to this bird, "I'm going to Africa, maybe I can see your people." The bird said, "The best thing you can do is let me out of this cage." The man said, "I can't, I'm sorry." So the bird said, "You go see my people."

When he got there, the relatives came, and said, "Hey, here's somebody who's seen our relative, how is he?" And the keeper said, "He's fine." They asked, "What's he doing?" The man said, "I've got him locked in the cage." At that moment, one of the birds fell out of the tree to the ground, dead. The man was taken aback, it shocked him. So he went back home, and the bird said, "Listen, did you see my people?" And the man said, "Yeah, but you know, it's a very strange thing. When I told them you were locked in a cage, one of them dropped to the ground, dead." And at that moment that bird also fell dead, in the cage. And the man, it turned him around, he was shocked, so he opened the door to check on the bird and [*Abdullah slaps his hand*] the bird gets up and flies off! [*laughter*] And the bird says, "Thank you, thank you for the message." [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *If that were an Italian folk tale, when the bird fell out of the tree dead, the bird at home in the cage would also die. There would be no happy ending!*

IBRAHIM: But this is precisely what the idea is. These stories that have been handed down, they're formulas to unlock. You have 20 people sitting there, right? And you tell a story, and you would know exactly what story to tell. Now this story, you couldn't tell to another group of students, because they would just sit there and there would be no reaction. Others it would take like . . . *aaahh*, that's what happened. Because the teacher would not say, "The bird said, 'Thank you for the message.'" The story would end where the bird flew off, and the teacher would sit and look and wait for the reaction. Now the reaction of each individual to the story, not just this particular story but any story the teacher would tell, would show what was their development. That's your examination. That's why we have story-telling. It's testing, testing your reaction, and of course, how the Italian person would react to that is part of the global village. The story, in some form or another, is told all over the world.

MUSICIAN: *Do you still have family in Capetown?*

IBRAHIM: Yes, all our families are there, we are the only ones here, just Sathima and myself, and the two children. We've been in exile for 14 years. There are invitations now from the Mass Democratic Movement in the country for us to come home. In fact, they are busy organizing now for us to go. And hopefully . . . this is a lesson, you see, a lesson. The African National Congress liberated the whole of Africa. All of Africa's been liberated now, we are last. And this music they say has international, political overtones; it's not even a political overtone, it's not even an overtone! It's the sound of the heart. This is what the tone is: the sound of the heart and the sound of aspiration.

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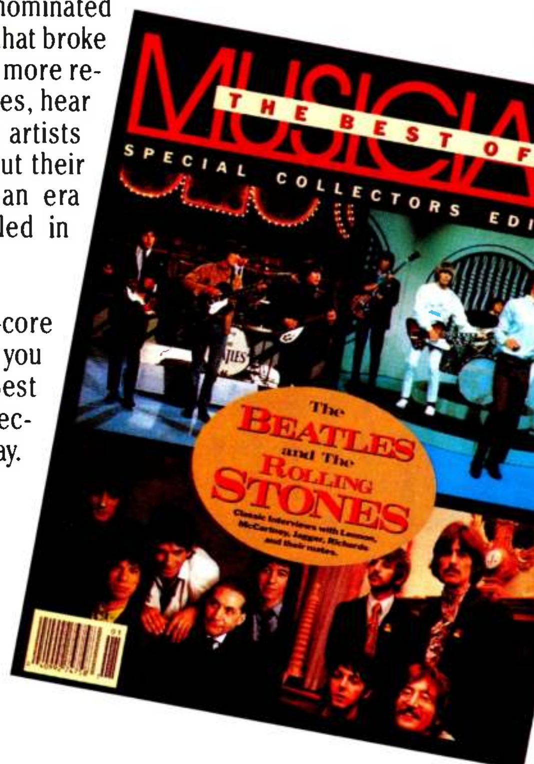

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HB&B

[cont'd from page 78] recent AT&T commercial based on the whales trapped under the ice in Alaska. Hey, it works. "That's exactly the point," Buskin nods. "I mean, I watched that film and I was fairly inured to it, because I'd worked so much on it. But when you see the whales coming through the ice and you hear Michael Bolton singing, 'We broke through the ice, we heard the call,' call it what you will, it creates that tingle. That's what our job is. That's what any artist does.

"I know when I'm writing a song—not a jingle—and there's a moment when I'm overcome with emotion because of what I'm writing about or what I'm thinking about, I know I'm on the right track. Conversely, if I write the whole song and never have that feeling, I always feel like something must be missing. I must have missed it somehow."

"Whereas when you write a jingle," Batteau concludes, "if after finishing the jingle you feel like you have to go to the bathroom, you've got it!"

Buskin frowns. "I think it should feel like you've *gone* to the bathroom."

But isn't it true that the goal of a commercial is not to create great music, but to create a hunger that only the product can fill? Especially sexual hunger. "Buy this car, get this girl," Batteau nods. "Act now, get two."

"We balance our careers with jingles on one hand and more personal things on the other," Buskin replies. "Whatever we may do for whatever corporation entities, we do a lot of other stuff, too. There's a lot wrong with the message in a lot of ads—from my personal point of view. My job as a professional is to do the best music I can for whoever wants to pay me, but that doesn't mean that as consumer I might find a lot I don't like about it, even if it's an ad I did the music to. I may not like the product or the way they choose to sell it. But I'm also an adult. I don't have to believe it. I don't even have to watch or listen to it. That's the thing about the on/off button on televisions. Turn it off! Don't buy the product! All these goddamn censors. . . ."

In fact, Buskin & Batteau, the record biz version, is not slacking off. The duo is working up a new album and gigged last month at the Bottom Line. They've also been heavily involved in benefit work, including a ton of shows for Harry Chapin's World Hunger Year project. And one of their big projects is lobbying for an unusual bill in Congress that would allow taxpayers to give some of their tax refund directly to hunger and homeless charities (the H.E.A.R.T. Bill). "The idea is that it's well known that as high as 70 or 80 cents on the dollar that's collected by a charity goes to the collection of the money," explains Buskin, "so the available money from each dollar is low. The beauty and simplicity in this idea is that the government has already collected this money, even if it isn't theirs. So the available money for the purpose it's supposed to be put toward is much greater."

What a campaign they could write for that. Does belief in the product you're selling help you write better? "No," says Buskin flatly. "Remember that movie, *The Gig*, where a high school band tries to have a reunion show? There's a very poignant moment where they're going to have to hire professionals for this singer coming in. And Cleavon Little is the one professional in this band, because the original bass player is sick. And one of the other old musicians wants very much to be in the band with the pros. He wants and wants and wants to do it, but he's just not good enough. And the guy's furious. Finally Cleavon Little just turns to him and says, 'Hey man, it's not a religion. Devotion is not enough.' [cont'd on next page]

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HB&B

[cont'd from previous page] "A great line. And it really sums it up. The fairness principle doesn't operate when it comes to music. There are people who want more than anything else to be singers or songwriters or even, God forbid, be jingle writers! We've got *enough* competition. But, you know, it just ain't in the genes. Just like we want things, maybe. For years I wanted to be some sort of rock 'n' roll singer, and I just didn't have the voice for it. Nor the hair. I can get the hair."

HOLMES

[cont'd from page 66] for. Your own parameters are very different from somebody else's." Constantly soaking up influences, Holmes says he's been drawing inspiration from all sorts of third-world music, including rai and South African, as well as (believe it or not) rap. "I love Ice-T. He's got the best rhymes. And Robbie Robertson opened my eyes to something more Faulkneresque when he did 'Crazy River,' almost a folk rap or a country rap. That's what I'm trying to find now as a writer."

Expanding extracurricular activities doesn't mean goodbye to jingles, however. Noting the need to stay one step ahead of the pack, Holmes says he's incorporating third-world strains into his commercials, including a new song for Pepsi.

"If you go into the jingle business, think of it as just one part of the musical whole. Get the widest range of education you can. Jingle writers have to be very adaptable. Billy Joel would be a great jingle writer because he can do anything. Paul McCartney would be a major jingle writer, and so would Elton John and Bernie Taupin."

He grins: "But I wouldn't want to compete with those guys, that's for sure."

Chances are they wouldn't want to compete with Jake Holmes, either.

LEVINE

[cont'd from page 68] be thinking about three projects, but with a record it's one thing for quite a while."

Levine laughs at how often outsiders underestimate the ad business. "It seems so easy to a lot of musicians that they oversimplify. But once they start to write they find it's not so easy. I remember I was once out on the West Coast with a giant movie-score guy. And he said, 'Gee, I can't imagine a guy as big as you has to compete to do this stuff. It's ridiculous!' Later that night, just as we were going home, I got a call to do a Ford spot, so I said to the guy, 'Why don't you take a shot at writing this spot? It'll be fun.' He says, 'Nah, I don't think so.'

"Next day I get a call from his wife, and she says, 'Joey, you gotta tell him the job's been canceled. He's going absolutely insane! He's written all night, he's written 40 and is screaming, "How do I know I've written the right one? Which one's too simple or too complex?" Tell him the job's been called off!' So I called him and told him it fell through and sure enough he says, 'Ah, I'm glad you called, but I never even took a shot at it.'"

—**Jock Baird**

HARRISON

[cont'd from page 36] "We'd been close and distant. The fact that he was living in New York meant I never saw him for a long time. The autumn of '78 I went up to the Dakota, I think that was the last time. But he'd send postcards—like the Rutles," George chuckles. "So when I'm in England, I can still think of John in New York. I never saw him anyway, he could still be there for all I know. You know what I mean? They can kill the man, but they can't kill the spirit. They can't kill what he meant to you."

LINK WRAY

[cont'd from page 86] ("King Creole," "Anyway You Want Me," etc.). The album's one original Wray vocal, "It's Only Words," has a Ramones-like riff, and the Steppenwolf title tune flies off a cliff—and somehow gets back on—during an extended chaotic guitar solo. (Again, the valiant bassist and drummer go unlisted.)

What's really stunning about this German release, however, is its recording quality. You won't believe that a compact disc could sound this miserable—exactly like a cheap cassette recording from the middle of the audience, in fact. When Wray's wife (who co-produced *Born to Be Wild* with her husband) handed in the tapes, the anonymous liner notes declare, "we were sort of shocked"—a rare example of both honesty and understatement in that medium.

There's something fitting, though, about Link Wray bending the sound marvel of the '80s to his own grungy purpose. He's no more intimidated by technology than he is by musical trends, which is what makes Wray an American original. Jeez, he's even older than Elvis. Or is he?—Scott Isler

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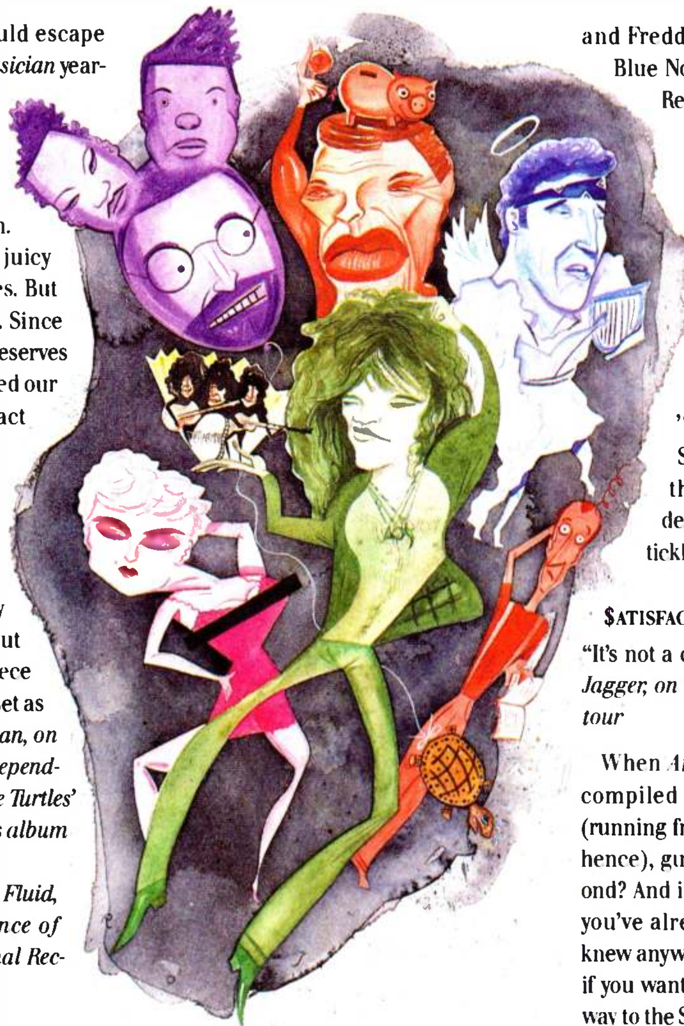
World Radio History

BACKSIDE

SO YOU THOUGHT you could escape 1989 without seeing a *Musician* year-end review, eh? You thought our decade wrap-up in the November issue was punishment enough? Well, guess again. We weren't about to let such a juicy year as 1989 escape our clutches. But even we have a sense of mercy. Since anyone who survived last year deserves some compassion, we've narrowed our year-end survey to one compact page of notable quotes, written and oral, that might have escaped your attention during the last twelvemonth.



"The first thing that came into my mind wasn't the legal aspect, but the destruction of a wonderful piece of music we had made. I was upset as an artist."—*Ex-Turtle Mark Volman, on the use of 12 seconds (or three, depending whose lawyer you ask) of the Turtles' "You Showed Me" on De La Soul's album*

• • •

"Can you hear us, assholes?"—*P. Fluid, singer, 24-7 Spyz, to an audience of record store managers at National Record Mart's annual convention*

• • •

"Judged objectively, a good many of my columns over the past six months have sucked."—*Ed Ward,* The Austin Chronicle

• • •

"When Robert [Fripp] decided he was tired of [King Crimson], he broke it up, but he didn't tell us. I heard about it through an article in *Musician* magazine."—*Adrian Belew*

• • •

"I saw [the Replacements] on the cover of *Musician* magazine with the headline 'The Last Great Band of the '80s'.... Yeah, right. I never heard of these guys, but I guess you're an artist if you're on the cover of *Musician* magazine."—*Jon Bon Jovi*

• • •

"Madonna has adopted a level of controversy as her art. So viewed in that context, it's acceptable."—*Abbey Konowitch, senior VP of music and talent at MTV, on the channel's decision to program Madonna's "Express Yourself" video clip*

1989
The Year in Rock

• • •

CRITICAL CONSENSUS SUBDIVISION

"... the celebrated hard-boppers from the Blue Note label of the '50s: Freddie Redd, Hank Mobley, Sonny Clark, and Kenny Dorham."—*Jeff Levenson,* Billboard

• • •

"... four obscure jazzmen of the Fifties—Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley, Sonny Clark, and Freddie Redd—who all recorded for Blue Note."—*Parke Puterbaugh,* Stereo Review

• • •

TREND-SPOTTING

In 1989 crowds gasped when Jackson Browne took off his guitar and went over to the piano. Through the '80s all the singer/songwriters who had made the piano number a standard part of their sets in the '70s—Browne, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young—stuck to their guitars all night. Now the decade is over, and sensitive ivory-tickling is back!

• • •

$ATISFACTION

"It's not a charity. This is business."—*Mick Jagger, on the Rolling Stones' "Steel Wheels" tour*

When *Amusement Business* magazine compiled the year's top concert grosses (running from late November 1988 to a year hence), guess who came in first? And second? And in eight of the top 10 slots? Okay, you've already looked at the list, but you knew anyway. Call 'em rock 'n' roll dinosaurs if you want; the Stones are smirking all the way to the Swiss banks.—Scott Isler

• • •

TOP 10 CONCERTS OF 1989

1. The Rolling Stones $9,166,937
   Los Angeles, Oct. 18, 19, 21, 22
2. The Rolling Stones $7,871,842
   New York, Oct. 25, 26, 28, 29
3. The Who $5,243,672
   East Rutherford, NJ, June 29, 30; July 2, 3
4. The Rolling Stones $4,648,338
   Foxboro, MA, Sept. 29; Oct. 1, 3
5. The Rolling Stones $3,735,610
   New York, Oct. 10, 11
6. Neil Diamond $3,498,000
   Inglewood, CA, June 28-30; July 2, 5-10
7. The Rolling Stones $3,410,886
   Dallas, TX, Nov. 10, 11
8. The Rolling Stones .... (US) $3,368,752
   Toronto, Canada, Sept. 3, 4
9. The Rolling Stones $3,347,518
   Oakland, CA, Nov. 4, 5
10. The Rolling Stones $3,181,143
    Philadelphia, Aug. 31; Sept. 1

Illustration: Russell O. Jones

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