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# MUSICIAN

APRIL 1991

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# INSIDE ISSUE 150

# CONTENTS

## WORKING MUSICIAN




## DEPARTMENTS

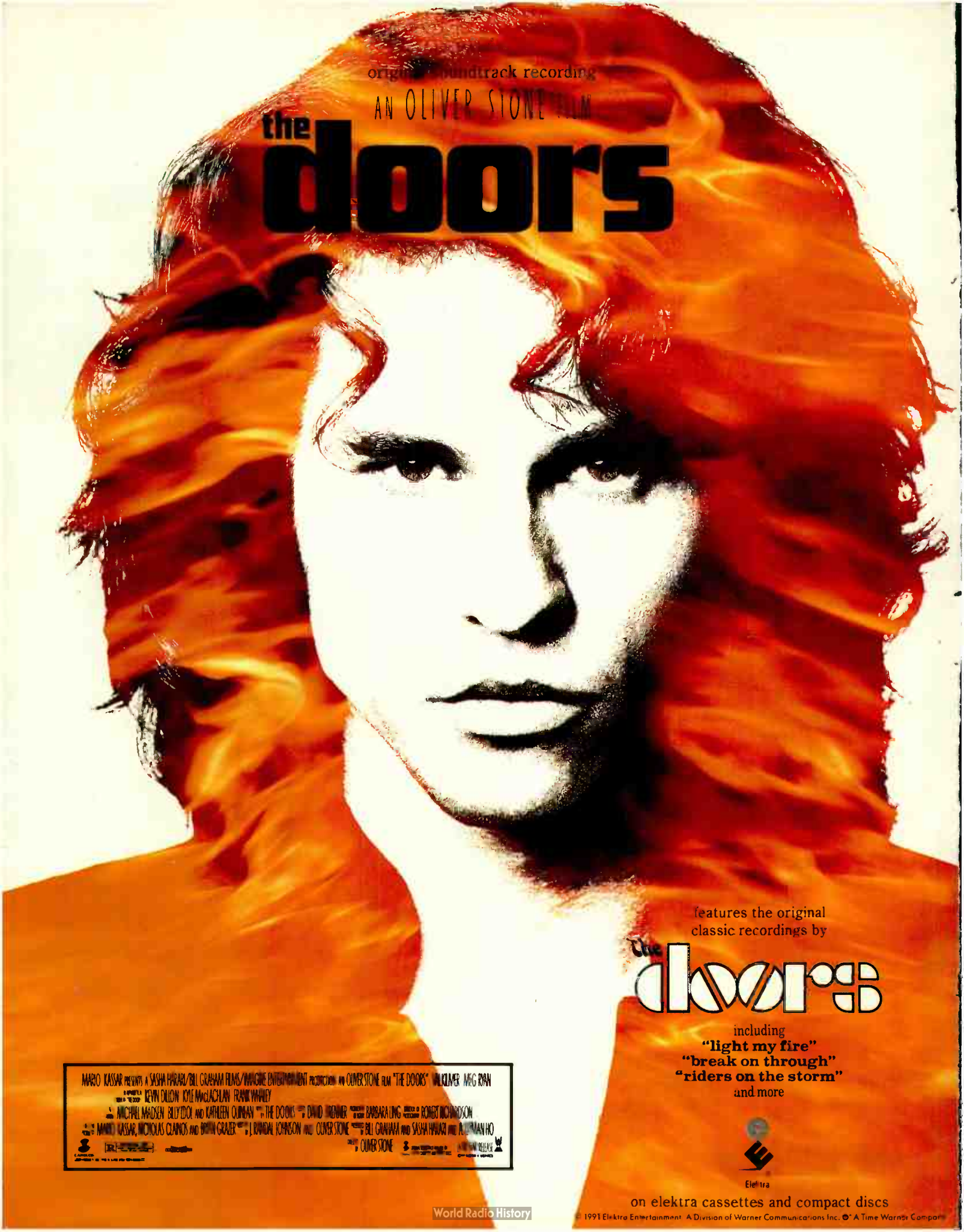


Also: *Masthead p. 8, Reader Service p. 95*

COVER: *R.E.M. photographed at Paisley Park Studios in Chanhassen, Minnesota by Rex Miller. This page: Paul Elledge/Outline; David Peterson(inset).*

AC/DC 28

MUSICIAN • APRIL 1991



# DAVID LEE ROTH

*You're still running that tough line between the head and the crotch. The conflict seems to push you along artistically.*

Well, you just described rock 'n' roll. The inspiration comes from your head, heart and drawers, and not even in that order sometimes. That motivates the world. But you can be easily distracted by the crotch element to the detriment of the others. I mean, if it wasn't for sex, there wouldn't be any little bass players, right? It's primary in most people's minds whether they admit it or not.

*Has that tendency among audiences damaged your reputation?*

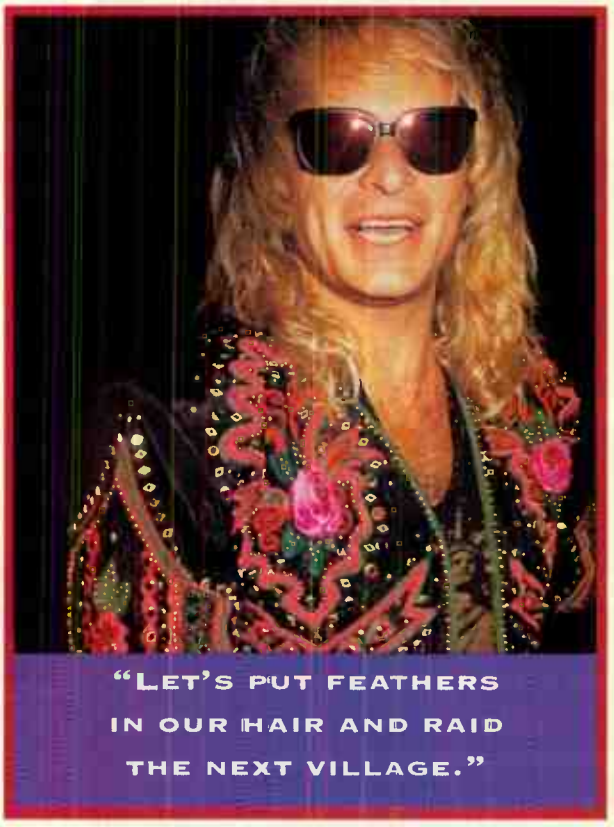
Oh, yeah. People paraphrase you, and little changes make a sentence mean an entirely different thing. It comes off as macho blather. They distill it down into, "So let's go get a beer, boys!" That's what censorship is based on, Matt. But I'm generally happy. I'm never *content*; two out of twelve times I get the blues. You can only exhibit so many sides of the coin, and at least with critics, it often becomes a Jewish mother syndrome: If she gives you a blue sweater and a green sweater and you wear the green one, she goes, "You *hate* the blue one." [*laughter*]

*You sing about the blues, about empty pockets and a silver spoon background. How do you reconcile that? Does the blues come from suffering or from guilt about being privileged?*

Well, you're assuming that blues has to do with economic background. Muddy Waters may have invented electricity, but picking cotton never helped anybody sing the blues any better. The more money you make, the more blues you get. By the time I made money, I had already established in my character what *I* appreciated about the pursuit of happiness, based on very simple things. We had to use our imagination to play in the street.

*Your band keeps undergoing miraculous changes.*

I keep circling back to blues-rock, R&B, whatever you call *A Little Ain't Enough*. It's very close to *Van Halen*, which is close to *Eat 'Em and Smile*. Van Halen played in bars, clubs, strip joints, everything from K.C. & The Sunshine Band to Led Zeppelin, and all that added up to the style that started the chain. We are currently part of that same chain. It's not a case of "Let's try this groove"—you simply write. But it's going to be very different if you write with Carlos Santana than with the guy in Metallica. You don't sit down with the fella in Metallica and go, "Look, we've got a market down south—I mean, *really* south—that you wouldn't believe..." [*laughter*]



"LET'S PUT FEATHERS IN OUR HAIR AND RAID THE NEXT VILLAGE."

You have to pick your grand adventures. To provision up a project like "Just a Gigolo," that's a *whole* different set of hired killers; they don't all currently reside in Dodge. You don't get Edgar Winter by sending up your first smoke signal. [*laughs*] It was a wild vacation in Katmandu: "Here's the T-shirt, take a look at these Polaroids, now let's play some big rock. Let's put feathers in our hair and raid the next village." Spiritually, this was the center of our program! [*laughs*]

*They say foreign audiences know rock songs phonetically, but I often wonder if American audiences do the same thing. You have to really liquefy the core.*

Look, Maserati traditionally sells way less than Pintos. Believe me, I wonder about this. I get questions like, "Mis-ter Roth"—he's reading it—"Do-you-have-any-pets? If-so-what-are-their-names-and-why?" [*laughs*] But the audience is capable of absorbing more than most musicians give them credit for. It doesn't affect me as an artist, but as a fan, it pisses me off! That happens in big rock—I'm using "big rock" to connote more than the hybrid I make. I mean the Def Leppards, Cults, ZZ Tops. There is a link, a certain...fury? If nothing else, the volume levels are approximate. [*laughs*] But it insults my intelligence when somebody creates a cartoon image because they think that's what a kid wants. I don't know a single kid who thinks of himself as a child. I never did.

*But as you get older, do you have to get* more *impulsive to make it congeal in a way that can be presented onstage?*

I have a problem of being way too impulsive, and this is a constant distraction to the boys in the front office! When I have my moments, it's 18 times the life in 30 percent of the time, and it's awesome. [*laughs*] Other times it's spine-tingling, if you're basing the rent on what I do. I mean, I would sell out in a *flat* New York second! What do I care what you think about me making a soda-pop commercial? Man, I'm gonna send you a picture of me with my suntan and a can of that soda-pop in my fist! But could I land a deal? But *nooo*! [*laughs*] 'Cause they're all afraid I'm gonna get caught doing the such-and-such in a Holiday Inn in Wyoming.

*So, if you have a pet, what is its name and why?*

[*Laughs*] Okay, yes, I have two rottweilers. They own the house, I merely work here. I named them after my two great aunts: Noble and Pissed.

**—Matt Resnicoff**

*Photograph: Vinnie Zuffante/Star File*

# LETTERS

## *Steady Rollin' Man*

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR STORY ON Robert Johnson (Jan. '91). One thing is clear—the debt we owe the last generation of English rock musicians can't be underestimated. Their love of American blues helped to sustain that music through the '50s and '60s and brought it back home to us.

*Jim Palana*
Rockland, MA

HEY, I'VE FIGURED OUT THE MYstery behind Robert Johnson's expertise on the guitar: After sitting in with Son House and then being told to scoot, Robert finds a doctor who surgically extends his fingers! Yeah! After they heal 40 days later, he comes back and blows everyone away! Alright! And that's the name of his doctor—Dr. Weedywoe! So what do I win?

*Michael Lojkovic*
San Francisco, CA

ROBERT JOHNSON'S RECOGNITION IS long overdue. Ry Cooder and Eric Clapton mention Charlie Parker and Jimi Hendrix as being similar in their vision and their genius. The first musician I ever heard who sounded as haunted and driven as Robert Johnson was Duane Allman, which is ironic when you consider his incredible talents, his short life and his tragic death. I guess when Robert checked out he left his hell hounds for someone else.

*Ed Fields*
Denver, CO

I'M SURPRISED NO MENTION WAS made of Bob Dylan as a conduit for Robert Johnson's music into the '60s. After all, how many of us first saw the *King of the Delta Blues Singers* perched atop the mantel on the cover of *Bringing It All Back Home*?

*Matthew Martin*
Belfast, Northern Ireland

I FOUND IT ODD THAT WHILE JOHNson played an *acoustic* guitar, all the guitar players you interviewed, with the exception of John Hammond, are solidbody *electric* guitar players. They all talk Robert Johnson, but they play T-Bone Walker.

*Jim Van Horn*
Clinton, AR

I FIND IT REFRESHING THAT MEN like Clapton, Richards and Plant still have heroes. Upon repeated listenings to Robert Johnson, I have to agree that he started it all. In this age of techno-pop and rap, I really hope some young, unknown guitarslinger out there will start listening to Robert Johnson and get a chance to make his own deal.

*Paul Strobel*
San Marino, CA

HERE'S A QUESTION I HAVE YET TO see addressed anywhere: Why did CBS Records use the new CEDAR™ signal-processing system for all of its "Roots n' Blues" discs except *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings*? The sound quality on the latter is generally better than that of my *King of the Delta Blues Singers* albums on vinyl. But it pales in comparison with that of two Robert Johnson cuts on *Legends of the Blues: Volume One* and *The Slide Guitar: Bottles, Knives & Steel*. Those tracks are, respectively, "Stop Breakin' Down Blues" and "Traveling Riverside Blues." Did the engineers on *The Complete Recordings* view using CEDAR as sacrilegious tampering, or were they just in a hurry?

*Jonathan Barkey*
New York, NY

*Good question. As the sidebar in the article said, the metal parts for all the Johnson sides vanished in the late '70s—either stolen or misplaced. The songs on* The Complete Recordings *were transferred from an EQed tape made from the metal parts in 1974. When the producers tried to CEDAR-ize the tapes, they hated the results. But series producer Larry Cohn owned two high-quality Johnson test pressings from the '30s—guess which two?—and these worked fine with CEDAR.—Ed.*

## *Objection*

AS A LONG-TIME FRIEND AND admirer of one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, drummers that ever lived, I must take exception to the joke concerning Buddy Rich's death in your Jan. '91 issue. A man of his talent deserves the respect of every musician and every music magazine. I sincerely think an apology is in order in your next issue.

*Henry Goldrich*
*Manny's Music*
New York, NY

## *Suffice*

I WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE ROBERT Johnson as your cover story for issue 147. I was also shocked, surprised, bewildered, confused, etc. to find Vanilla Ice sneering at me from page seven. I guess I can understand Mr. Ice being called an artist, but what the hell is this guy doing in a magazine called *Musician*?

*Blane Rice*
Lumberton, NC

VANILLA ICE IS THE FIRST OF WHAT appears to me to be the record company's perfect hit package: bubblegum rap.

*Mike Faulkner*
Santa Cruz, CA

WHO CARES ABOUT HIS REAL IDENtity, or if he's been arrested, or what he thinks of rap? Let the teenybop magazines cover this guy.

*Jason Probert*
Durham, NH

THE ONLY "PROJECTS" VANILLA ICE grew up "a block away from" were the science projects conducted in his high school, R.L. Turner. Ice (Robbie Van Winkle) grew up on the mean streets of Carrollton, a middle-class suburb of Dallas. Van Winkle is a multi-platinum non-musician, and *Musician* would better serve its readers by not writing about him at all.

*Casey Monahan*
*Texas Music Office*
Austin, TX

## *Eerraattaa*

I APPRECIATED THE ARTICLE ON Parents for Rock and Rap in the Jan. '91 issue. However, where the story said "she delivered an impassioned defense of a PMRC video..." it should have said *attacked* the video.

*Mary Morello*
Libertyville, IL

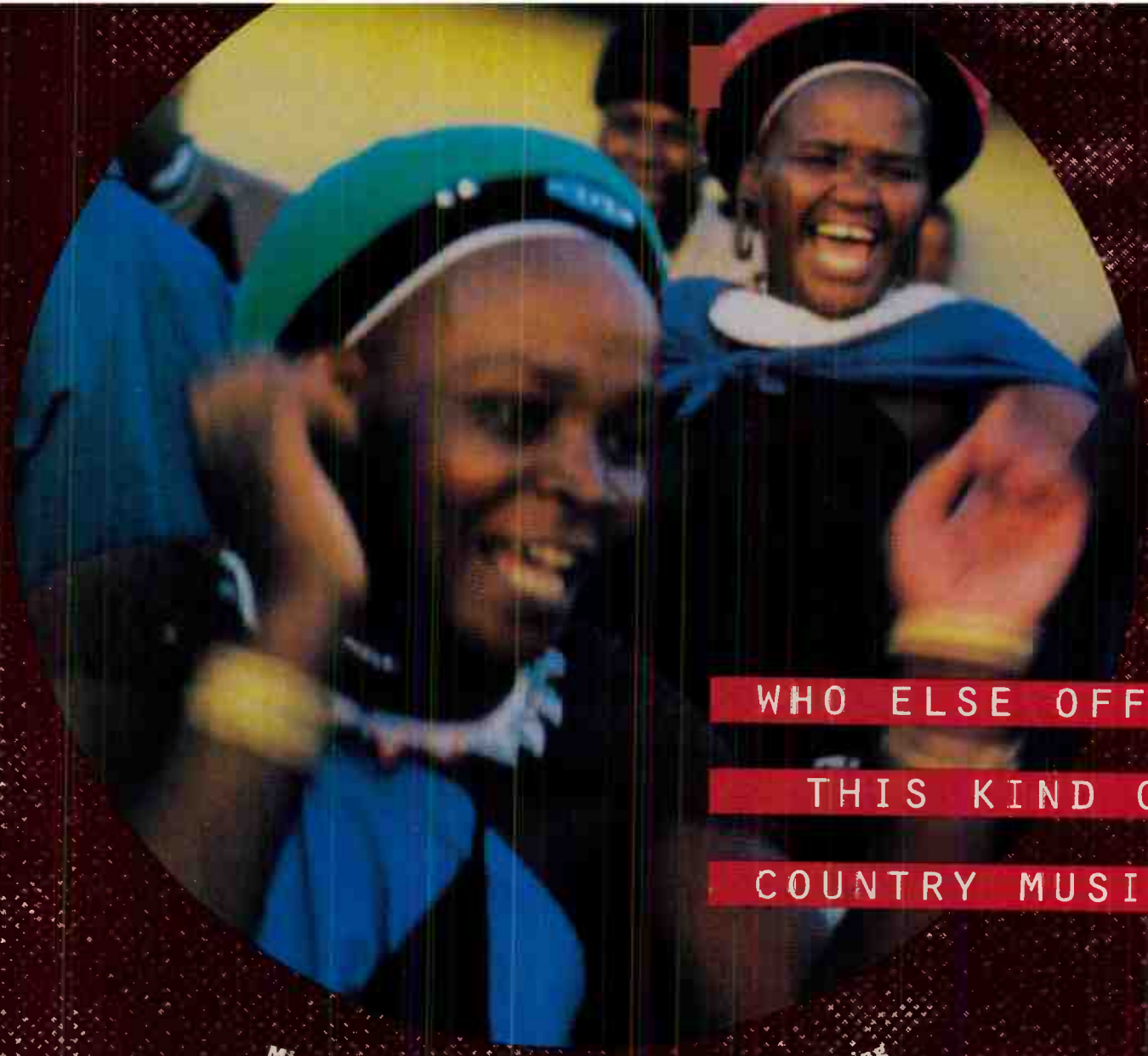
MANY THANKS TO GENE SANTORO for the article on me in the January issue. However a couple of corrections need to be made. Bert *Turetzky*, not Bert Taretaki, is the great American bassist I studied with for many years. Also I use a Schertler pickup made in Switzerland, not a Shirtler.

*Mark Dresser*
Brooklyn, NY

## *Congrats*

LONGTIME *MUSICIAN* CONTRIBUTOR Timothy White has been named editor-in-chief of our sister publication *Billboard*. Bad news: Readers will be seeing less of Tim's work in *Musician* magazine. Good news: We will be seeing more of Tim's face in the *Musician* office, as he sets up shop down the hall. Now if we could just find a home for Chuck Young...

PLEASE SEND LETTERS TO: MUSICIAN, 1515 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10036.



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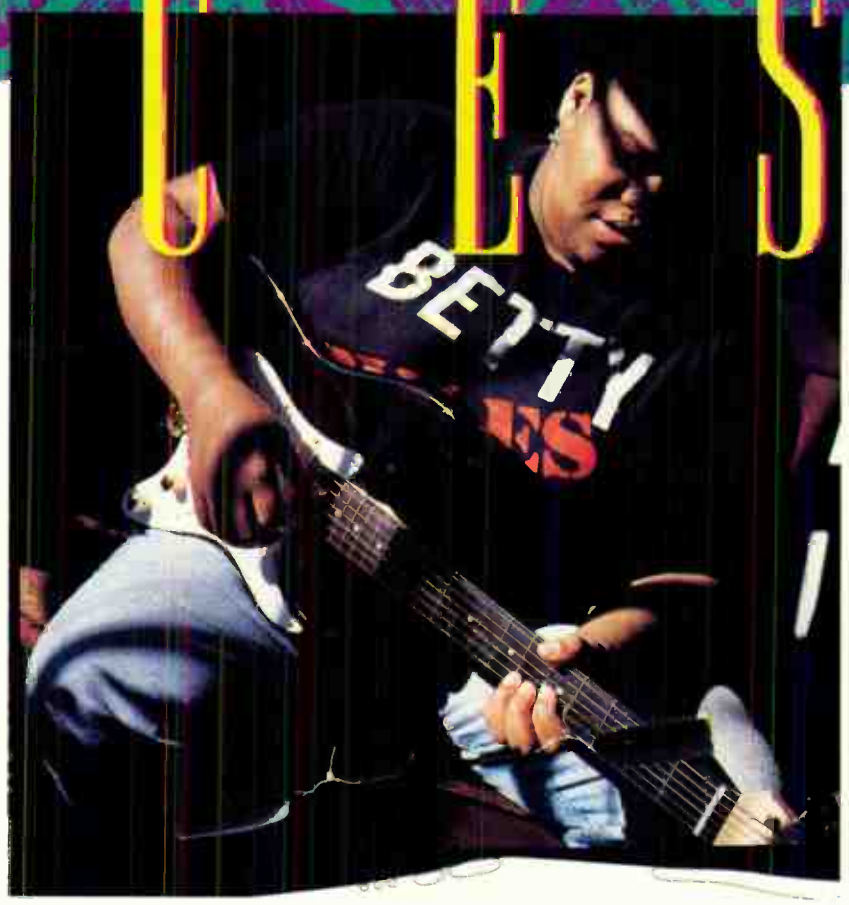



## Damn Yankees
### NUGENT RESURGENT

WHEN WORD FIRST CIRCULATED THAT TED Nugent had formed Damn Yankees with Tommy Shaw and Jack Blades, the jaws of rock fans dropped. What was Terrible Ted, the Motor City Madman, thinking when he cast his lot with guys from Styx and Night Ranger? Both acts, after all, were known more for propagating the power ballad than for Nugent's specialty: pounding audiences into submission. Is Ted getting soft?

Not to worry. As it turns out, both Blades and Shaw had been straining at the bit in their previous bands, and a union with Nugent—whose result, *Damn Yankees*, is nearing double platinum after a slow start—was a dream come true. "Tommy and I have been released from the shackles of the preconceived notions of what we were," Blades says. "All I wanna do is rock. All Tommy wants to do is rock. Who better to do that with than Ted?"

The Nuge himself, never at a loss for words, has this to say: "When I put together Damn Yankees I pursued it with the bulletproof knowledge that it was a genuine vehicle for the expression of my guts, heart and soul, and if it wasn't I'd be elsewhere expressing my guts, heart and soul. Wherever, whenever my guitar may be strapped on, I will always deliver my musical-sonic-spiritual-sex-rhythm vision. There is no turning that shit around."

How's Ted been occupying himself? He hasn't lost his appetite for bow-hunting, and has a few choice words for rock's anti-meat brigade: "When I see k.d. lang, Belinda Carlisle, Chrissie Hynde—those militant vegetarian shitheads—put their foot in their mouths, I think, 'How shallow, how transparent, can one's unlearned opinions be?' Is the cheetah a prick for catching the fawn antelope? No, it's cool—killing is cool. *Murder* is a sin."

You can contact the Nuge at: Ted Nugent's Bowhunter's World, 4008 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson, MI 49202.

SEAN O'NEILL

## Toshi Reagon
### GOD BLESS THE CHILD

You walk into New York's Bitter End in September of 1990 and the place is so crowded you can't see the stage. Toshi Reagon, 26, her first album just out on the Flying Fish label, is up there wailing folk/rock/blues with a band that sounds like a cross between Sly Stone and Highway 61. You get close enough to see and, surprise, the musicians are all black women. They're ripping up the place. The club is full of record company talent scouts. After the set, they move toward the dressing room.

You meet Toshi Reagon in February of 1991 at an Italian restaurant on 4th Street. She's chosen Elektra as her label, she's been interviewing producers. Toshi's named after her godmother, Pete Seeger's wife. Toshi's father was a civil rights activist, her mother is Bernice Johnson Reagon, leader of Sweet Honey in the Rock. As a small child Toshi was scolded by her mom for singing Sly's "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey" without knowing what it meant. Songs, Bernice said, have power. In high school Toshi slugged a boy in the face for singing, "How come you dance so good? Brown Sugar, just like a black girl should." His excuse: "It's only a song."

"I believe in non-violence—to a point," Toshi laughs. "Yeah, it's just a song—until somebody's yelling it at you every time you come to school. Music is powerful." Toshi's music is full of joyful singing, strong melodies and subtly sneaky rhythms. Some of her lyrics are socially alert, but she says that songs with here-comes-a-message folk chords give her the willies. "Black people haven't always had the power to be able to freely express what's happening, so those messages got put in the songs. If you listen to black slave songs or black spirituals, they're talking about what was really going on at the time. But it's jamming, it's slamming music, also. I don't always do it successfully, because I've learned both ways. I know how to do the little folk thing with the acoustic guitar and I know the other way. So I have to work to get to the other way. But it's real interesting." It sure is. And she's just getting started.

BILL FLANAGAN

*Photographs: Jeffrey Kruntz (top); Steven P. Nickerson*

Gary Myrick (l.) & Paul Simonon

# Havana 3 a.m. EL PASO CALLING

PAUL SIMONON AND NIGEL DIXON LEFT LONDON TWO YEARS AGO AND FOUND THEMSELVES TRACKING THROUGH EL PASO ON OLD HARLEYS. IN SMALL BORDER TOWNS THEY RODE AND SPAT AND TOOK IN THE LOCAL RHYTHMS. SIMONON REACTED AS HE DID DURING CLASH TOURS THROUGH THE SOUTH IN THE '70S. "WE DON'T HAVE ANY MEXICANS LIVING IN ENGLAND," HE GRINS. "I SUPPOSE ALL THINGS EXOTIC ARE PRETTY EXCITING."

THEY HOPED TO WORK THEIR WAY UP TO L.A., BUT HADN'T PLANNED ON MEETING GARY MYRICK OR FORMING HAVANA 3 A.M. ONCE THEY GOT THERE, THE YIELD WAS DECIDEDLY SPICY, WITH MYRICK'S NUCLEAR DUANE EDDY GUITAR BLASTING THROUGH A POST-PUNK FOUNDATION TO MAKE COWBOY ROCK TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR THE GARAGE, TOO MEATY FOR TRENDIES. BUT DON'T MAKE MUSICIANSHIP COMPARISONS AROUND A CLASH MEMBER.

"EACH TO HIS OWN STYLE," SIMONON SHRUGS. "GARY'S GOOD AT THE PARTS HE DOES AND SO IS MICK JONES AT WHAT HE DOES, SO I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN SAY ONE IS BETTER." MYRICK IS AN ARTICULATE, AGGRESSIVE PLAYER, AND THIS BAND GIVES EVEN MORE ROOM FOR HIS TEXAS ROOTS THAN PAST SOLO PROJECTS. "THE HAVANA 3 A.M. RECORD IS A JOINT EFFORT," HE SAYS. "NIGEL'S GOT A UNIQUE VOCAL STYLE, AND WE WRITE SOME GOOD THINGS AS A NEW TEAM." PLAYING WITH PAUL WORKS UNEXPECTEDLY WELL, DESPITE MYRICK'S CULTURAL DISTANCE FROM THE CLASH. "I ACTUALLY FELT PART OF THAT TIME PERIOD," HE SAYS. "IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE THEM."

IMPACT NOTWITHSTANDING, SIMONON SAYS OF THE CLASH, "THAT BOOK'S FINISHED. THERE'S A NEW BOOK NOW; IT'S CALLED HAVANA 3 A.M." SPENCER BENEDICT

# YOU WON'T SEE ME...

It's no optical illusion. Business types are seldom able to pass up a marketing opportunity, no matter how absurd, but Eagle Eyewear's introduction of a line of John Lennon designer eyeglasses surely puts a cap on three awkward decades of rock merchandising.

The New Jersey–based company is designing the specs to the Beatle visionary's demanding specifications, and different models let the wearer relive the emotional and political ups-and-downs of the Lennon experience: liberated house-husband bliss (don the "Double Fantasy" rims), Lewis Carroll euphoria (tune in, drop out and slip into "The Walrus"), youthful discontent (you want "The Revolution"). What next? Ringo-Bans, with plastic nose attached?

## NEWS

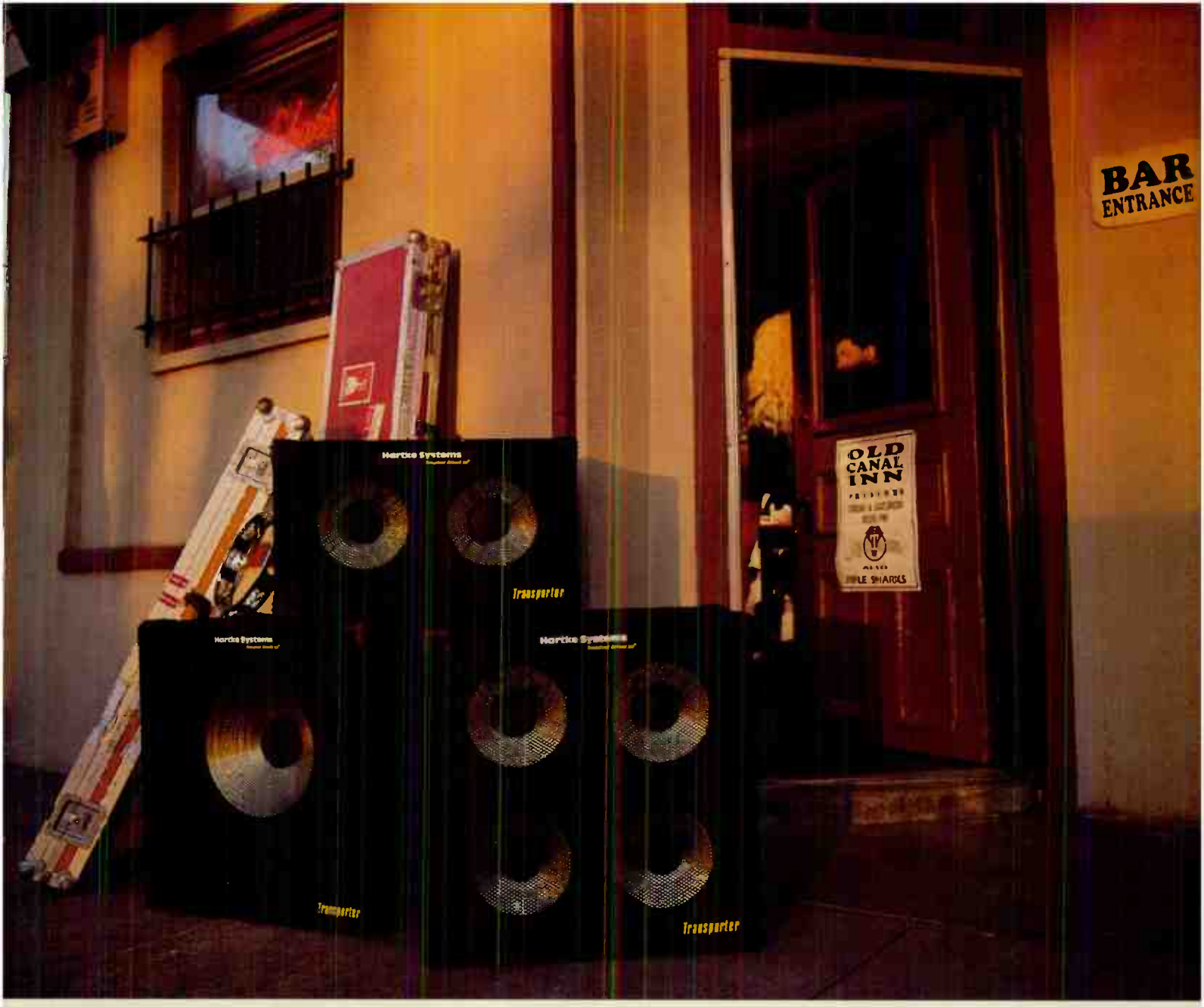
The Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert will take place on April 8th at the Ritz in NYC. It starts at 7:00 p.m. and will feature a wide array of drum greats including Omar Hakim, Peter Erskine, Will Calhoun, Neil Peart and the Buddy Rich Band. This year all the money will go to Larry Wright, the New York street musician in Spike Lee's Levis 501 commercial and Mariah Carey's video.

Wright's mother was shot and killed in the lobby of their apartment building in Harlem recently; this year's proceeds will go toward his college education.





Photograph: Deborah Feingold (top)

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# THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

## Top 100 Albums

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 • 1 | **Vanilla Ice** | *To the Extreme*/SBK |
| 2 • 3 | **Madonna** | *The Immaculate Collection*/Sire |
| 3 • 5 | **Mariah Carey** | *Mariah Carey*/Columbia |
| 4 • 20 | **The Simpsons** | *The Simpsons Sing the Blues* Geffen |
| 5 • 2 | **M.C. Hammer** | *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* Capitol |
| 6 • 4 | **Whitney Houston** | *I'm Your Baby Tonight*/Arista |
| 7 • 8 | **Wilson Phillips** | *Wilson Phillips*/SBK |
| 8 • 9 | **AC/DC** | *The Razors Edge*/Atco |
| 9 • 6 | **Bette Midler** | *Some People's Lives*/Atlantic |
| 10 • 7 | **Paul Simon** | *Rhythm of the Saints* Warner Bros. |
| 11 • 21 | **The Black Crowes** | *Shake Your Money Maker* Def American |
| 12 • 10 | **George Michael** | *Listen without Prejudice Vol. 1* Columbia |
| 13 • 11 | **Phil Collins** | *Serious Hits...Live!*/Atlantic |
| 14 • 18 | **Janet Jackson** | *Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation*/A&M |
| 15 • 34 | **Damn Yankees** | *Damn Yankees*/Warner Bros. |
| 16 • 22 | **Guy** | *The Future*/Uptown |
| 17 • 38 | **Tesla** | *Five Man Acoustical Jam*/Geffen |
| 18 • 24 | **Ralph Tresvant** | *Ralph Tresvant*/MCA |
| 19 • 14 | **ZZ Top** | *Recycler*/Warner Bros. |
| 20 • 16 | **Bell Biv DeVoe** | *Poison*/MCA |
| 21 • 13 | **Poison** | *Flesh and Blood*/Enigma |
| 22 • 35 | **Nelson** | *After the Rain*/DGC |
| 23 • 19 | **Warrant** | *Cherry Pie*/Columbia |
| 24 • 30 | **INXS** | *X*/Atlantic |
| 25 • 15 | **Garth Brooks** | *No Fences*/Capitol |
| 26 • 26 | **Cinderella** | *Heartbreak Station*/Mercury |
| 27 • 17 | **Clint Black** | *Put Yourself in My Shoes*/RCA |
| 28 • 27 | **New Kids on the Block** | *No More Games/Remix Album* Columbia |
| 29 • 28 | **Soundtrack** | *Pretty Woman*/EMI |
| 30 • — | **C&C Music Factory** | *Gonna Make You Sweat*/Columbia |
| 31 • 47 | **L.L. Cool J** | *Mama Said Knock You Out*/Def Jam |
| 32 • 37 | **Deee-Lite** | *World Clique*/Elektra |
| 33 • 29 | **The Cure** | *Mixed Up*/Elektra |
| 34 • 48 | **Harry Connick, Jr.** | *We Are in Love*/Columbia |
| 35 • 50 | **Slaughter** | *Stick It to Ya*/Chrysalis |
| 36 • 12 | **Traveling Wilburys** | *Vol. 3*/Wilbury |
| 37 • — | **Ice Cube** | *Kill at Will*/Priority |
| 38 • 55 | **Trixter** | *Trixter*/Mechanic |
| 39 • 62 | **Jane's Addiction** | *Ritual de lo Habitual* Warner Bros. |
| 40 • — | **Chris Isaak** | *Heart Shaped World*/Reprise |
| 41 • 42 | **Candyman** | *Ain't No Shame in My Game*/Epic |
| 42 • 32 | **Yanni** | *Reflections of Passion* Private Music |
| 43 • 41 | **Scorpions** | *Crazy World*/Mercury |
| 44 • 45 | **Queensryche** | *Empire*/EMI |
| 45 • 31 | **Jon Bon Jovi** | *Blaze of Glory/Young Guns II* Mercury |
| 46 • 25 | **Vaughan Brothers** | *Family Style*/Associated |
| 47 • 40 | **Various Artists** | *Red Hot & Blue*/Chrysalis |
| 48 • 46 | **Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti** | *Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti in Concert*/London |
| 49 • 53 | **Tony! Toni! Tone!** | *The Revival*/Wing |
| 50 • 66 | **Keith Sweat** | *I'll Give All My Love to You* Vintertainment |
| 51 • 33 | **Steve Winwood** | *Refugees of the Heart*/Virgin |
| 52 • 90 | **Peter Gabriel** | *Shaking the Tree—16 Golden Greats*/Geffen |
| 53 • — | **David Lee Roth** | *A Little Ain't Enough* Warner Bros. |
| 54 • 52 | **UB40** | *Labour of Love II*/Virgin |
| 55 • 67 | **Stevie B** | *Love & Emotion*/LMR |
| 56 • 36 | **New Kids on the Block** | *Step by Step*/Columbia |
| 57 • 23 | **Led Zeppelin** | *Led Zeppelin*/Atlantic |
| 58 • 49 | **Michael Bolton** | *Soul Provider*/Columbia |
| 59 • 56 | **Too Short** | *Short Dog's in the House*/Jive |
| 60 • — | **Black Box** | *Dreamland*/RCA |
| 61 • 44 | **Julio Iglesias** | *Starry Night*/Columbia |
| 62 • — | **Sting** | *The Soul Cages*/A&M |
| 63 • 68 | **Pebbles** | *Always*/MCA |
| 64 • 78 | **Johnny Gill** | *Johnny Gill*/Motown |
| 65 • 72 | **Van Morrison** | *Enlightenment*/Mercury |
| 66 • 64 | **Winger** | *In the Heart of the Young* Atlantic |
| 67 • 59 | **Depeche Mode** | *Violator*/Sire |
| 68 • 69 | **Anita Baker** | *Compositions*/Elektra |
| 69 • — | **Soundtrack** | *Mermaids*/Geffen |
| 70 • — | **EPMD** | *Business as Usual*/RAL |
| 71 • 76 | **Garth Brooks** | *Garth Brooks*/Capitol |
| 72 • 73 | **Freddie Jackson** | *Do Me Again*/Capitol |
| 73 • 80 | **Maxi Priest** | *Bonafide*/Charisma |
| 74 • — | **Urban Dance Squad** | *Mental Floss for the Globe*/Arista |
| 75 • 39 | **Paul McCartney** | *Tripping the Live Fantastic* Capitol |
| 76 • 95 | **Mötley Crüe** | *Dr. Feelgood*/Elektra |
| 77 • — | **Digital Underground** | *This Is an EP Release*/Tommy Boy |
| 78 • — | **Father M.C.** | *Father's Day*/Uptown |
| 79 • 87 | **Phil Collins** | *...But Seriously*/Atlantic |
| 80 • — | **Soundtrack** | *Dances with Wolves* Associated |
| 81 • — | **Eric Johnson** | *Ah Via Musicom*/Capitol |
| 82 • — | **Bad Company** | *Holy Water*/Atco |
| 83 • 58 | **Soundtrack** | *Ghost*/Varese Sarabande |
| 84 • — | **Soundtrack** | *The Civil War*/Elektra Nonesuch |
| 85 • 51 | **Edie Brickell & New Bohemians** | *Ghost of a Dog*/Geffen |
| 86 • 54 | **Debbie Gibson** | *Anything Is Possible*/Atlantic |
| 87 • 94 | **Robert Johnson** | *The Complete Recordings*/Columbia |
| 88 • — | **Roger McGuinn** | *Back from Rio*/Arista |
| 89 • 74 | **Daryl Hall John Oates** | *Change of Season*/Arista |
| 90 • 81 | **Megadeth** | *Rust in Peace*/Capitol |
| 91 • — | **Oleta Adams** | *Circle of One*/Fontana |
| 92 • — | **Gary Moore** | *Still Got the Blues*/Charisma |
| 93 • — | **Surface** | *3 Deep*/Columbia |
| 94 • — | **The Charlatans U.K.** | *Some Friendly*/Beggars Banquet |
| 95 • 71 | **Carly Simon** | *Have You Seen Me Lately?*/Arista |
| 96 • 93 | **Don Henley** | *The End of the Innocence*/Geffen |
| 97 • 70 | **Heart** | *Brigade*/Capitol |
| 98 • 82 | **Faith No More** | *The Real Thing*/Slash |
| 99 • 61 | **Al B. Sure!** | *Private Times...And the Whole 9!* Warner Bros. |
| 100 • — | **Steelheart** | *Steelheart*/MCA |

*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 1991. All charts are copyright 1991 by BPI Incorporated.*

## Top Concert Grosses

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **"World's Largest Country Music Show," Alabama, Garth Brooks, K.T. Oslin, the Judds, others**<br>*Florida Suncoast Dome, St. Petersburg, FL*/January 12 | $1,119,390 |
| 2 | **INXS**<br>*Palacio De Los Deportes, Mexico City, Mexico*/January 12–14 | $979,000 |
| 3 | **Bell Biv DeVoe, Keith Sweat, Johnny Gill**<br>*Madison Square Garden, New York, NY*/January 11 & 14 | $855,291 |
| 4 | **Bell Biv DeVoe, Keith Sweat, Johnny Gill**<br>*Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, IL*/January 20 | $657,809 |
| 5 | **ZZ Top, the Black Crowes**<br>*Madison Square Garden, New York, NY*/January 28–29 | $565,515 |
| 6 | **Paul Simon**<br>*Great Western Forum, Inglewood, CA*/January 23–24 | $549,225 |
| 7 | **Frank Sinatra, Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme**<br>*Miami Arena, Miami, FL*/January 25 | $500,360 |
| 8 | **ZZ Top, the Black Crowes**<br>*Worcester Centrum, Worcester, MA*/January 19–20 | $485,573 |
| 9 | **ZZ Top, the Black Crowes**<br>*Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, CT*/January 17–18 | $461,423 |
| 10 | **Bell Biv DeVoe, Keith Sweat, Johnny Gill**<br>*Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI*/January 18 | $434,848 |

## Top Labels

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Columbia |
| 2 | Warner Bros. |
| 3 | Atlantic |
| 4 | Capitol |
| 5 | Geffen |
| 6 | MCA |
| 7 | Arista |
| 8 | SBK |
| 9 | Mercury |
| 10 | Elektra |
| 11 | Sire |
| 12 | EMI |
| 13 | A&M |
| 14 | RCA |
| 15 | Atco |
| 16 | Chrysalis |
| 17 | Uptown |
| 18 | Virgin |
| 19 | Epic |
| 20 | Def American |

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# TANITA TIKARAM'S VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

British singer looks for her soul

By Peter Cronin

"TANITA, CAN YOU LIGHTEN UP A BIT?" THE director of VH-1's "Top Twenty-One Video Countdown" is trying to shake some ad-libs out of his celebrity hostess, British-based singer/songwriter Tanita Tikaram, and she's giving it her best shot. On *Everybody's Angel*, her third album, the diminutive 21-year-old lightens up on the pop hooks and does the tighten-up on her songs with a more R&B feel and a new live approach to recording. "I'd been listening to Van Morrison's *His Band and the Street Choir*," Tikaram says, "and I very much wanted to capture that warmth." Her identification with the Irish bard isn't surprising; Tikaram's associations, both professional and musical, are rife with former Morrison cronies. Still, this VH-1 celebrity hostess stuff may take some getting used to. "That was a new experience for me," she laughs afterward. "I didn't know any of the songs!"

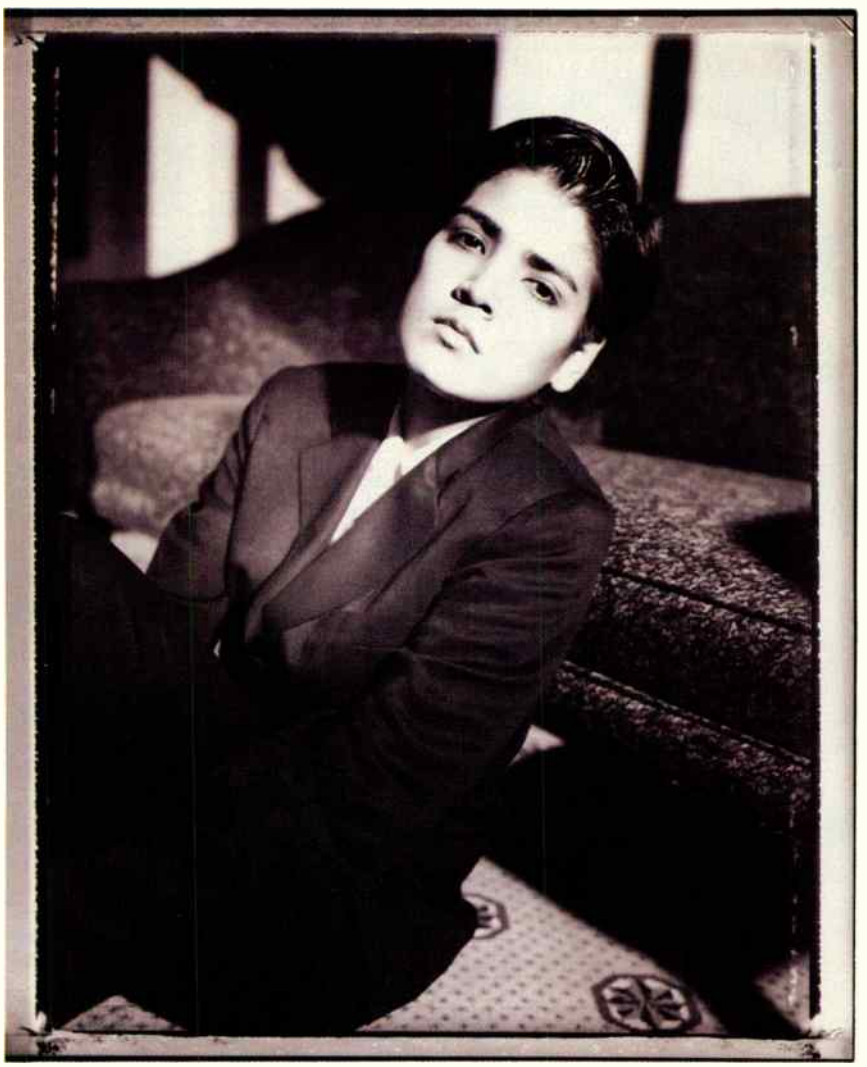
Tikaram's been way too busy in the past few years to keep up with other people's hit records. The well-traveled child of a diplomat (her mother's from Malaya and her father's from Fiji), Tikaram cut her musical teeth on the British Forces radio she heard growing up in Münster, Germany. "Their '50s and '60s oldies shows were an illicit pleasure for my brother and me," Tikaram recalls, "and because it was Forces radio they'd play a lot of heart-tugging, housewifey music: Anne Murray, Crystal Gayle, Don Williams—I'm afraid I still have a weakness for that kind of stuff."

That romantic strain runs deep through "Only the Ones We Love," the drowsy opening cut from *Everybody's Angel*, a record that reflects Tikaram's newfound sense of roots. "It's easy to get preoccupied with the idea that there is this ideal place, especially if you don't feel culturally that you belong somewhere," she says. "I now think that you're much more rooted in the family and friends you have—the people around you rather than any particular place."

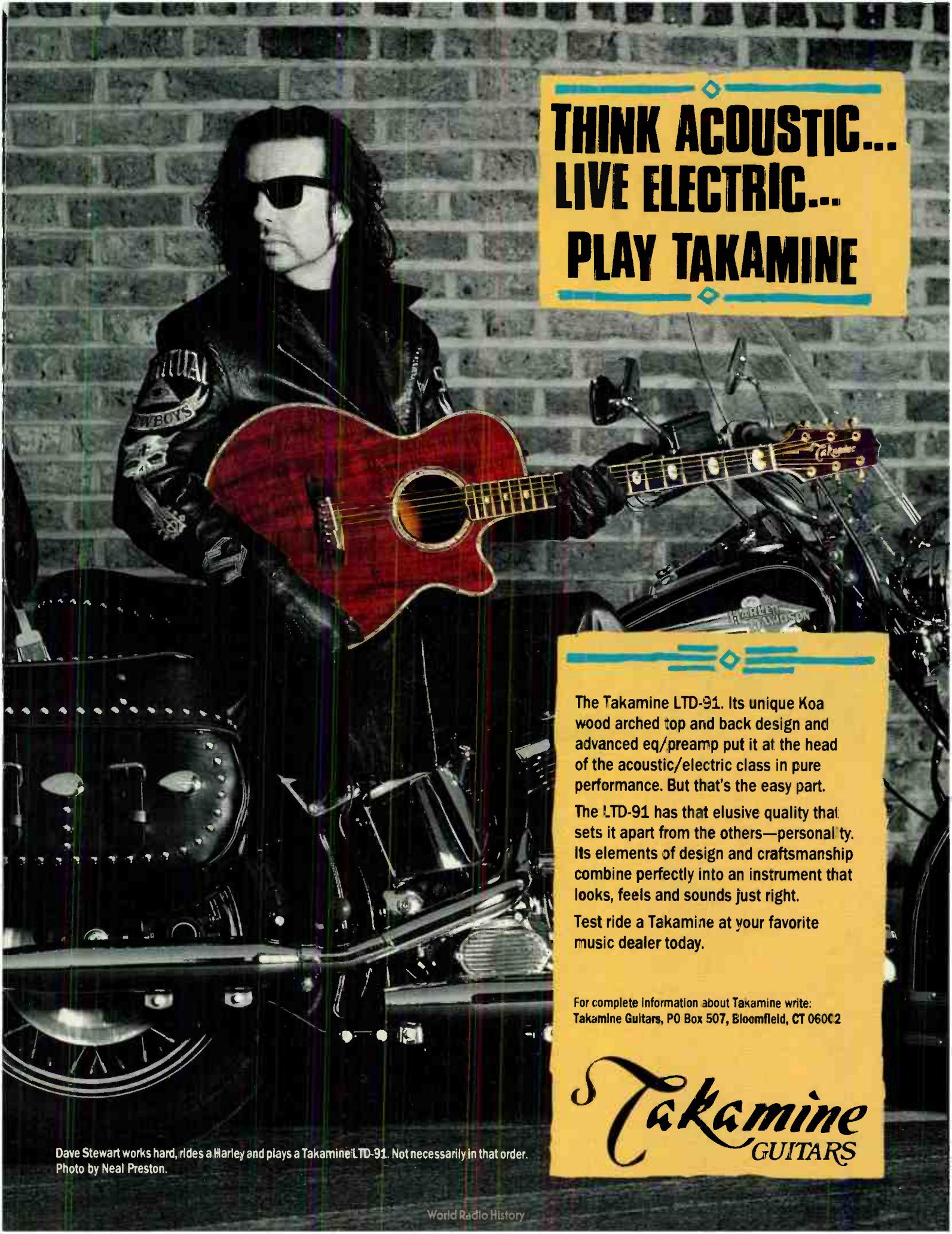
From the start Tikaram has had a knack for surrounding herself with the right people. In 1988 she hooked up with Rod Argent, late of the Zombies, and former Van Morrison drummer Peter Van Hooke. Acting as co-producers, the pair took the inexperienced singer into the studio to record her smash debut *Ancient Heart*, first laying down her voice and guitar to a click track, then creating the record's lush soundscape with layers of synthesizer, bass and drum machine: a recording method Tikaram has been growing away from as she reaches back to the music she heard as a kid for inspiration.

"I'd been listening to a lot of these collections with people like Otis Redding and Sam Cooke, and I realized that most of these '60s soul singers weren't particularly loud, they just knew how to control their voices." Throughout her new record Tikaram puts that lesson to good use, coaxing wide-ranging dynamics out of her extraordinary voice—from the breathy pleading of "This Story in Me" to the lusty crooning of "Hot Pork Sandwiches," a song as much about sex as food.

*Everybody's Angel* was recorded mostly live over a period of two weeks at Bearsville Studios in upstate New York. "I think the new album was a bit scary [*cont'd on page 27*]



Photograph: Ken Shung



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Dave Stewart works hard, rides a Harley and plays a Takamine LTD-91. Not necessarily in that order.
Photo by Neal Preston.

# TALKING WITH THE SPIRITS


## Remembering Rahsaan Roland Kirk

By Hal Willner

WELL, WE'RE AT WAR AGAIN. AS IT HAPPENED, my preparation was listening to the recently issued 10-CD set, *"Rahsaan"—The Complete Mercury Recordings of Roland Kirk*. And it has helped.

I was lucky to have known Rahsaan during the last three years of his life. At the time—1974–77—I was an assistant/gofer to Joel Dorn, Kirk's producer. Being around Rahsaan changed my life and there isn't a day that I don't think about him. I especially miss him during confusing times like these; he would have summed up this whole war perfectly in just a few words.

Rahsaan was the most unpretentious artist I have known. He explored any musical adventure that appealed to him; there were no rules or limitations. Though branded a jazz musician, he had more rock 'n' roll spirit than the rock artists I've encountered. In fact, he was also a classical, folk, R&B and rap artist. And Rahsaan understood show biz. After I first saw him perform, at Philadelphia's Shubert Theatre sometime in the early '70s, it's all that I could think about for weeks. Onstage he could bring his fantasies to life, become whatever band he wanted to be, from the sound of the Ellington orchestra to the feel of the Beatles.

He didn't do it to be clever; blind from birth, he played what he heard. Whether that meant blowing three horns simultaneously, alternating with flute and nose flute or concentrating on "just" one instrument, Rahsaan had music mastered. And in producer Joel Dorn, Kirk also had a studio partner whose surreal fantasies were on par with his own. During the first Kirk recording session I witnessed, at the old Regent Sound Studio, Rahsaan opened by playing a tape of Paul Robeson then segued into a crying harmonica solo that was heartbreaking—it sounded like the lonesome cowboy meets Larry Adler playing "The Godfather" in hell—before breaking into a beautiful James Moody–type ballad on his tenor, all within minutes. I was sitting on the floor a few feet away, and I swear, watching him go through those changes seemed like the most natural thing. Somehow, the world's greatest imagination always found a way to turn that into reality.

Initially, I was scared to death of Rahsaan, but got over that when he picked me up and twirled me around over his head backstage at Carnegie Hall. I saw him perform dozens of times during this period and, as he was a teacher to me, I also studied his past and heard most of these older (1961–65) Mercury recordings. The boxed set brings together everything Rahsaan did for the Mercury, Limelight and Smash labels as a leader and sideman, including nine solo albums in four years. While more conventional in terms of recording and use of the studio, they reveal an exceptionally creative period of Kirk's career.

*We Free Kings*, his first album for Mercury, has for me an interesting calmness about it, as Rahsaan moves from instrument to instrument within the context of a song, including sections of two and three horns playing together. It also features the first recording of "Three for the Festival"—later an incredible live set closer featuring all three horns (stritch, manzello and tenor sax) and an astonishingly hard-edged flute solo that would always end with a whistle siren. On "Domino," recorded in 1962 with Wynton Kelly and Andrew Hill, among others, Rahsaan seemed to be experimenting more; the sessions feel loose. Listen to the celeste/flute duet on "Time," followed (on the original LP) by J.J. Johnson's "Lament," on which Rahsaan somehow works in the nursery rhyme "This Old Man."



Photograph: David Gahr

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During this period Rahsaan also played on sessions led by Tubby Hayes and by Eddie Bachus. Of special note here is Kirk's reedless tenor solo on a medley that has an extremely beautiful fart-horn vibe. Talk about breaking boundaries.

*Kirk in Copenhagen* comprises two discs, an entire Kirk concert from 1963 that's too good to be true. There is a guest performance by Sonny Boy Williamson (originally credited as Big Skol—a mystery to fans for years) on two tracks. It's great to hear how Rahsaan put together sets that took audiences on a journey, warming up with "The Narrow Bolero" and sailing from there. The sequence of "Mood Indigo," "Cabin in the Sky"—which gets unexpectedly wild—and "On the Corner of King and Scott Streets" is just terrific.

*I Talk with the Spirits* features Kirk performing exclusively on the flute. From the title track to classical interludes, from the equally classic "Serenade to a Cuckoo" (with cuckoo clock) to his sensitive renditions of John Lewis' "Django" and Kurt Weill's "My Ship," Kirk's taste and spiritual powers were never more in evidence. All in all, one of the greatest listening experiences I've ever heard. This record was followed by *Rip, Rig, and Panic,* which is regarded by many as Kirk's best work. The band includes Jaki Byard, Richard Davis and Elvin Jones, and the music lives up to those extreme expectations.

Disc 10 features Rahsaan's sessions as a sideman for Quincy Jones. These tracks are most interesting for the personnel employed, as Quincy assembled some amazing bands (in *one* orchestra: Blakey, Bob Cranshaw, Bobby Scott, Milt Jackson, Pepper Adams, Lucky Thompson, Benny Golson, James Moody, Phil Woods, Kai Winding, J.J. Johnson, Freddie Hubbard, Nat Adderley, Dizzy and Rahsaan). In retrospect, though, they were wasted. These tracks are meant for supermarkets; sorry, Le Q. But hey, I liked the "Dreamsville" track; nice piano solo by Bobby Scott.

I have one other caveat about this otherwise beautifully compiled collection: Most of the tracks are ordered according to their recording dates—*not* the way they appeared on Kirk's original LPs. But this was the era of the "album," when songs were arrayed in their order for a reason. (Jack Tracy was credited as producer on most of the original records.) To remove that context and order them as you would a historical set of, say, Enrico Caruso 78s, makes for a different—a harder—listening experience. That is, it *feels* more like history than it should. The *Reeds and Deeds*, *Gifts & Messages* and *Slightly Latin* LPs suffer most because of these changes. But that is a small complaint, I suppose.

It seems like Rahsaan's "revival" has begun, and that, as he's exposed to a younger generation, he will take his deserved place among the greats of music. The time must be right. A few months after he passed away, I went to Rahsaan's house in East Orange, New Jersey to pick up some of his personal tapes, so that Kirk's wife and Joel would know what was on them and to figure out what, if anything, should be released. Some of the tapes were marked with Braille. Listening to these in my apartment was a spooky experience: I heard outtakes from early sessions, rare live recordings, home-recorded experiments like Rahsaan playing the "Hallelujah Chorus" on multi-horns. While listening to one tape, whose sound included Rahsaan's son Rory screaming in the background, the lights in my apartment went out, a strong gust of

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wind swept through the window and my tape machine shut off. After a Three Stooges double-take ("nya-haha?!"), I stopped listening. Someone thought it was too soon.

I would have given anything to have spent more time with Rahsaan. I saw him for the last time at his final studio session, when he was recording "Watergate Blues." He summed up Watergate with a loud, "*Watergate*—ugh!—lock 'um up, lock 'um up, throw away the key!" Somehow, the way he shook my hand goodbye that day was eerie. I think that he knew that it would be awhile.

Bright moments. Ⓜ

## TIKARAM

[*cont'd from page 20*] for Rod and Peter because they hadn't recorded this way in a long time," she explains. Tikaram found the warm sound she was looking for and walked away with her first co-production credit. "I was obsessed with this record; I was writing much more direct, in-and-out songs and I wanted the recording process to reflect that."

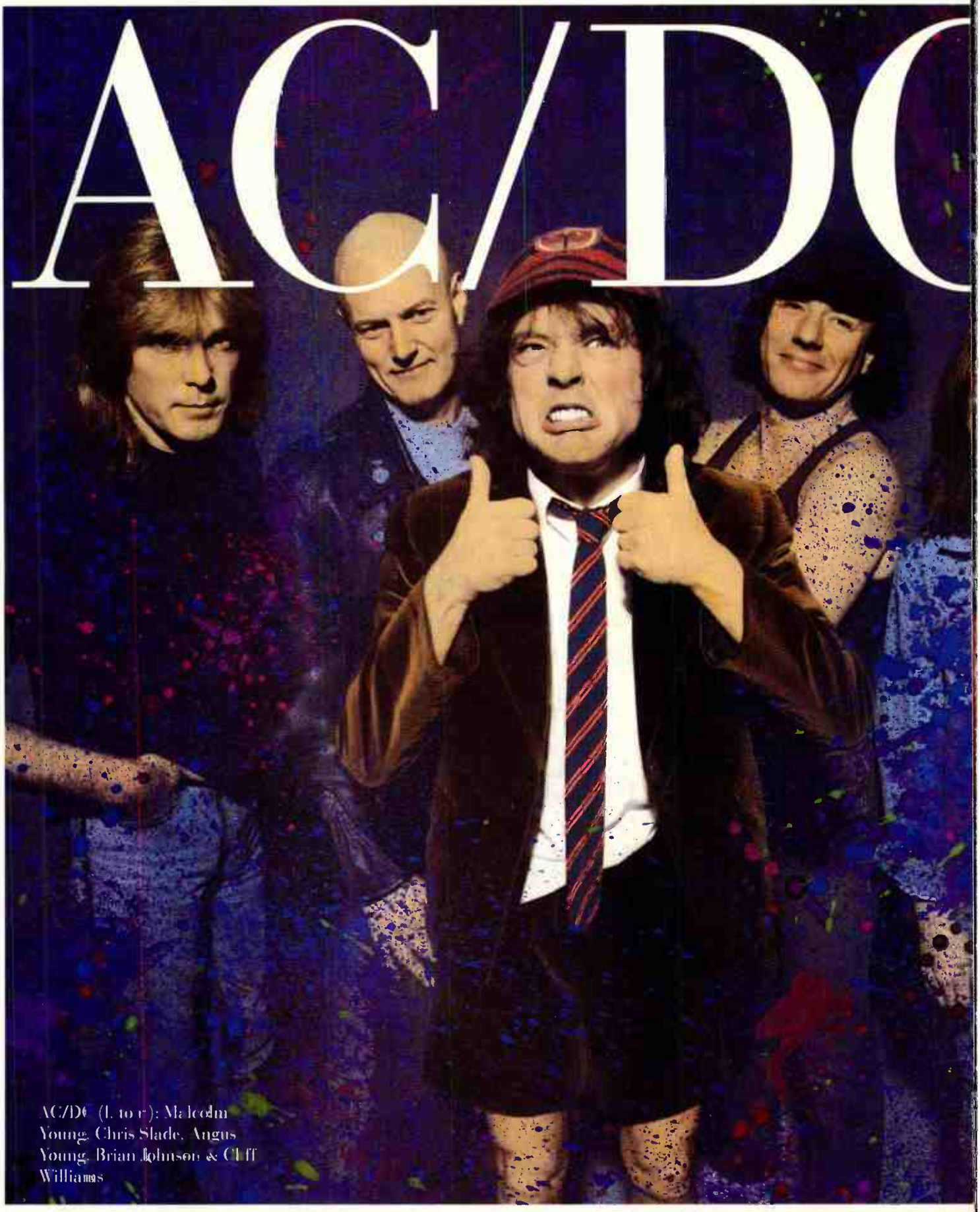
Her first two releases went to the top of the charts and sold millions in places like Germany, Austria, Finland, Norway and Turkey, as well as in England. The question remains whether the more straightforward musical presentation of *Everybody's Angel* will make Tikaram's abstruse lyrics digestible to this country's format-driven, fast-food radio. "I've certainly found that people like to live with my records," she says. "You really need time to have a relationship with an album. I feel very happy that some people over here like what I do, but it's like saying I want. I want, I want. I'm not sure that I haven't got enough already.

"I find that people put their own experience into my songs. There may be one line that sort of taps them on the shoulder and makes them think. That's what this voice is for." Ⓜ

## WHAT MAKES HER TIK

TANITA'S main instrument is a Washburn Woodstock electric/acoustic. She also occasionally picks up her Washburn SBC20 solidbody electric with nylon strings. Her strings are D'Addario and her voice was captured with a Neumann U87.

# AC/DC



AC/DC (l. to r): Malcolm Young, Chris Slade, Angus Young, Brian Johnson & Cliff Williams

# & ME

When I was in college, I worked in a lumberyard for two summers. One day at lunch a truck driver walked into the office and exploded into a long screed of profane language about some screwed-up delivery. Instead of the usual grunts of empathy, he received stares of horror from the other truck drivers. He turned around and discovered, to his utter mortification, somebody's wife in the room. "Those guys

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

Photography by Paul Elledge

think differently than I do," I thought, these guys being working class (you don't swear in front of women), I being middle class (you don't swear in front of anyone) and an aspiring rock 'n' roller (you have to swear in front of everyone).

I am thinking about this particular little epiphany right now because I am talking to Brian Johnson, singer of AC/DC, in his hotel suite at 2 a.m. after a sold-out concert at the Indianapolis Hoosier Dome.

"We're different from any other band," he says. "There's no front man out there all the time hogging the spotlight and swearing. Everybody else does it, though. I think there's a school for it. One of our guys used to work for this band—I won't mention their name—and the singer said 'fuck' 165 times during one show. That was the record. Our guy used to count 'fucks' every night with a clicker.

"I've never said 'fuck' onstage. Well, I said it once. And this woman said, 'I can't believe you swore onstage. I've my daughter here.' And I said, 'Jeez, I'm sorry,' and I've never said it since. In fact, I never say anything onstage. The music's supposed to do the talking."

Maybe you don't say "fuck" but you sing a lot of songs that are forthright about sex.

"Oh, that's a different thing. Now we're talking intellectual."

I remember picking up *Back in Black* the first time and thinking, "They can't be singing a song called 'Given the Dog a Bone.'"

"Listen, don't you break my mother's heart. My mother likes that song, because she thinks nobody cares about dogs anymore. She says, 'Brian, it's so nice for you to sing about that.'"

"Bon had a more subtle character than Brian. We opened for Rainbow in Paris and they hadn't put the lights down; Bon yells into the mike, 'Turn those lights off, you frog bastards!'"

When Johnson and I finish laughing, he coughs a few times, declares a touch of the flu coming on and pours himself a generous portion of whiskey. Unlike most rock stars who wear caps all the time, he isn't completely bald, just mildly receding. A few inches taller than his bandmates Angus and Malcolm Young, he is still on the short side of average, though powerful enough in build that you wouldn't want to tangle with him. "I don't drink the hard stuff anymore," he says. "But for the flu, I deserve a little of the hard stuff."

Have you been following the censorship controversy in the United States?

"No, I didn't want to listen to it. It's all such bullshit, really stupid."

Yeah, it's stupid, but 2 Live Crew has been spending a lot of time in court, and they might still go to jail.

"Ah, but that's a different thing. If you're going to be lewd and crude just to get publicity, then you deserve everything you get. There's a difference between rock 'n' roll, which is a bit of fun, and some heavy metal band that I've never heard of, like Devil's Sperm or something, singing a song like, um, 'Suck Your Marrow.' If they're doing it for a purpose, to get noticed, they deserve to get their arse kicked. There's two sides to every coin, you know."

What's the difference between what you're talking about and an AC/DC song like "Sink the Pink"?

"Ah, but 'Sink the Pink' is double entendre."

So 2 Live Crew should go to jail because they're less clever than you are?

"Exactly! They should! If they can't take the fucking time to sit down and think about it, they fucking deserve to go to prison! If they haven't got the fucking brains! They should get their lawyer to write songs for them!"

There's a song on their latest album that goes "Face down, ass up/That's the way we like to fuck."

"Ah, come on! They're asking for it! I mean, do us a favor! You couldn't expect to get away with that!"

Why should a word make that much difference?

"It's not the word. It's the phrasing. It's not going to get played on the radio, is it?"

No, the government has delegated to itself the right to censor radio and TV. I don't see why they should have the right to censor a record or performance, which people are free to avoid if they're offended.

"You're drawing me into an argument, you bastard," says Johnson, talking directly to the tape recorder. "It's got nothing to do with me, folks. It's this Chuck fella here. Okay, Chuck, I agree with you."

And that's all Brian Johnson is going to say on that issue. So there you have it. Brian Johnson thinks differently than I do. My father was a Presbyterian minister and I was encouraged to have opinions on abstract principles right from the start. Brian Johnson's father Alan was a sergeant major in the British army who had the time of his life chasing Rommel around the desert during World War II. He liberated his bride Esther Deluga in Rome and returned home to Newcastle and a factory job that just didn't stimulate his adrenals like a well-thrown hand grenade. He brought with him a love for strong lines of authority and a distrust of democracy. He was anti-union and impressed on his son that "if a committee designed a horse, it would look like a camel."

That was another thing I noticed about many of the people I worked with in factories and summer jobs: They distrusted abstractions, whether from the left or right, and those who mouthed them. What Brian Johnson and I have in common is being knocked out at an early age by that great homogenizer, rock 'n' roll. Born in 1948, a few years before me, Johnson got it on the night of his ninth birthday from Johnny Duncan and the Blue Grass Boys singing "Last Train to San Fernando" on the BBC. The Johnson home was surrounded by a power station, a gas works, a brick works and a ship dismantling yard, and their garden bordered a railroad track that carried steam locomotives hauling coal. Soot covered everything. Amid the industrial gloom of Newcastle, the last major city in the north of England before you reach Scotland, this pre–rock 'n' roll was a glorious ray of sunshine.

A few years later he tried to pass on that ray of sunshine to others for the first time by singing "Teenager in Love" to his class at school. Everyone clapped wildly, and he thought, "This isn't bad!" The memory stayed with him as the Mersey Beat exploded in a similar environment in Liverpool. Leaving school at 15, as virtually all



*Outline; Hand-tinting: Cheryl Winser*

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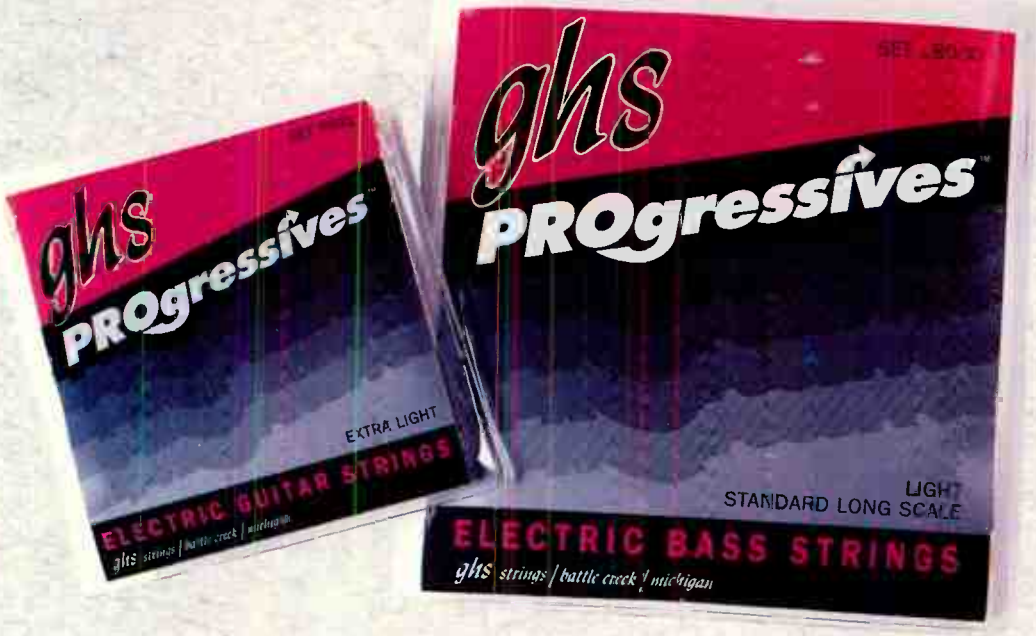


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working class children did (and do) in England, he began an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner. ("If you had two bearing halves, you had to scrape it, clean it, put a marker on it and put it together again perfect.") Out of the 60 apprenticeships that started with him, five bands were formed and all were gigging within two months. Johnson's was called the Gobi Desert Canoe Club and went just about as far as a canoe club in the Gobi Desert.

Johnson continued his apprenticeships in rock 'n' roll by night and at the turbine factory by day until 1972, when he fronted a band called USA. A record company signed them on condition that they change their name to Geordie, the nickname for people from Newcastle. Their Slade-like sound clicked briefly with the public and they had three Top 10 singles in Britain. Their move to London, however, was not a happy one.

"I can't tell you the number of times we got caught stealing milk and eggs off doorsteps just to eat," he recalls. "We used to get up at 5:00 in the morning and follow the milkman around. We used to look in the window at Indian restaurants and wait for people to leave a half-eaten meal just so we could run in and steal it. Jesus, the things we'd do. We never saw a penny from the records."

In 1980, he received a mysterious phone call from a woman asking him to audition in London for a band she wouldn't name. Brian wasn't interested. The woman said, "All right, I will tell you their initials. AC/DC." Johnson figured he was too old at the age of 32, but it turned out he was slightly younger than Bon Scott, AC/DC's original singer, who had choked to death on February 19 while passed out after a binge.

"I'd met Bon once and he seemed like a nice guy," says Johnson. "We opened for them in Hull, and we had a drink together. I think he would have remembered me because I had appendicitis that night and collapsed onstage. They had to carry me off on a stretcher, still singing. I was dying, but I was too embarrassed to stop."

Johnson drove to London, auditioned and drove back to Newcastle for a Geordie gig all in the same day. AC/DC called him back to London a couple of days later for what Johnson assumed was a second audition. He was told he had two weeks to write the lyrics for their next album. "Does that mean I'm in the band?" he asked. The result was *Back in Black*, the album that set the standard for hard rock for the next decade. About sex, death and drinking, Johnson's words scored about 1.1 on the double entendre scale ("Let Me Put My Love into You," for example), but somehow they fit spectacularly well, sort of like two bearing halves back at the turbine factory. Though he sounded not at all like Bon Scott, the two came at rock from a similar place spiritually—working-class outsiders with no desire to sing about anything more abstract than venereal disease. Where the average band would approach lyrics by throwing in a bunch of resonant symbols and letting the listener decide the meaning, AC/DC said exactly what they meant because they had nothing else to say.

"I don't think anybody writing lyrics could miss with those riffs," says Johnson. "You could have written anything and it would have sounded good. 'The cat sat on the mat.'"

I don't know if that's true. People love those lyrics, sing along at shows. Something happened with that record that's almost mystical. How can any rock fan argue with "You Shook Me All Night Long": "She was a fast machine, she kept her motor clean/She was the best damn woman that I ever seen/Taking more than her share, had me fighting for air/She told me to come but I was already there."

"I think it was professionals meeting up with a rank amateur, myself, and it just meshed. Just an accident. Just an amateur who thought, 'Well, I'd better write these quick.' The professionals had the gears oiled and it all just fit perfectly."

And it has continued to fit perfectly for the 10 years and seven albums since. As a career, it is a lot like his father's: storming town after town with an all-male pack characterized by a loyalty and cohesiveness that becomes most obvious when a comrade falls and the organization moves to take up the slack. During the creation of their latest album *The Razors Edge*, for example, Brian took some shrapnel during a brutal divorce battle with his first wife. He just wasn't up to lyric writing, so the Young brothers did it for him.

"I just said, 'Gee guys, this is great. I'm not going to fix what isn't broken.' So I didn't write on this album. It doesn't matter with AC/DC. You're all together and whatever happens, happens."

A tax exile from Britain, Johnson now lives in Florida with his

ON JANUARY 18, AFTER THE REPORTING FOR THIS ARTICLE WAS completed, three fans died at an AC/DC concert in Salt Lake City. Crushed in the surge toward the stage during "Thunderstruck," the first song in the set, were Jimmy Boyd Jr., 14; Curtis Child, 14; and Liz Gausi, 19.

On advice of their lawyer, AC/DC declined repeated invitations to discuss the incident with *Musician*. According to some initial reports, the band kept playing "with callous disregard" for safety despite security guards signaling them to stop. In a press release, AC/DC insisted that they stopped playing as soon as they understood something was wrong. Brian Johnson "made several requests" for the crowd to clear the area and the band resumed the show only after being so advised by the fire marshal. AC/DC has expressed "deep regrets" over the incident.

Speaking for myself, I find it inconceivable that AC/DC, or any other group I've ever met, would want to play music while people were being killed a few feet away. Anyone who has ever stepped onstage knows that the spotlights are blinding and the volume deafening, so it is extremely difficult to know what is happening in an audience.

According to a security guard interviewed by the *New York Times*, people frequently would "go down" in the surge at previous heavy metal concerts at the Salt Palace. Victims would be pulled up and passed overhead to a first-aid station at the rear of the crowd. Having covered the 1979 Who concert in Cincinnati where 11 kids were crushed, I can say that the pattern is similar in both towns. There had been many near-lethal shows leading up to the deaths. The warning signs of bad crowd control were there for anyone inclined to see.

—C.M.Y.



*Photograph: Robert Ellis/Repfoto*

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A short time ago, A.R.T. stunned the recording world with the release of the SGE Mach I. Offering 12 simultaneous effects and a 400% more powerful processing section, the Mach II offered spatial realism that defied description. The all new DRX uses that same processor and is expressly designed for studios and live sound applications. The DRX will do 10 simultaneous audio functions and features an exciter, compressor, limiter, noise gate, expander, envelope filter, 24 different reverb algorithms, 21 different delays, sampling, pitch transposing, panning, equalization, leslies, stereo flange and chorus and more—over 60 effects to choose from with bandwidth to 20 KHz! The creative power is astonishing. The noise gate can gate off microphones so the wash from live drums doesn't trigger your effects buss. The compressor can smooth out wild dynamic swings on vocals. The exciter will increase the edge and clarity of any type of material. The noise gate can "turn-off" noisy guitar amps in between songs or allow you to run higher gain levels without feedback on vocal and drum mics. The limiter can hard limit any source so that clipping can be totally prevented. And you can pick and choose effects and mix and match at random into 200 memories!

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second wife, a newscaster he fell in love with at first viewing. He carries pictures of her in his wallet, along with pictures of his antique guitar collection.

So what does your father think of all this?

"He enjoys it now, I think. All the neighbors come 'round and leave cards to get autographed. It makes him feel important. 'Ah, well, I'll ask him, but I cannot promise anything.' It gives him something to do. The best part of success is that I can look after them, make life a little easier."

Before I can click off the recorder, Johnson stops me. "Now I have a question for you," he says. "What am I doing in a magazine called *Musician*?"

THE AC/DC DRESSING ROOM IS ABOUT AS NON-GLITZ AS A BACKSTAGE can be. Again it's that working-class ethos that if you show any pretension, stick your head out of the crowd in any way, somebody's going to take the piss out of you. When Angus disappears, it is only to have his ankle taped (an old injury sustained during a video shoot). When Brian disappears, it is into the toilet stall where he howls and shrieks like a woman in childbirth. Humor gets no more basic. No one disappears because they want to be alone, and certainly no one gets a separate dressing room. No one dresses up, anyway, except for Angus, who alternates maroon and algae-green schoolboy outfits, his trademark since the band started.

Onstage, true to his word, Brian speaks not a word, but screams many. He claims nodule-free vocal cords, truly a miracle of nature given the shredding he puts them through on every song. Between songs, the lights go down for a minute or so while audience and musician alike gasp for breath. When the lights come up, it is usually Angus out front, a paragon of Dionysian dementia skipping all over the stage while laying down guitar solos marked by maximum ferocity and no innovation. The "hallowed backline" of Chris Slade on drums, Cliff Williams on bass and Malcolm Young on rhythm never moves beyond what is necessary to play their instruments. What distinguishes AC/DC from a million other bands with the same instrumentation is that they employ no special effects whatsoever. Every song relies on some roaring midrange riff that Malcolm hammers into the groove, exactly as he has been hammering since he first picked up a guitar. Slade calls Malcolm "the best rhythm player in the business," and he can't be far wrong. Despite high volume the sound is surprisingly clear, owing as much to the simplicity of the music as to the P.A. system. Aside from basic enhancement, their sound just hasn't changed from "Jailbreak" in 1974 to "Moneytalks" right now.

One area where AC/DC does not opt for simplicity is theatrical effects. The light show is state-of-the-art, they blow up a giant balloon of Angus with devil horns during "Highway to Hell," they drop hundreds of fake dollar bills imprinted with Angus' likeness during "Moneytalks," they simulate playing an ominous black bell during "Hell's Bells," huge cannons emerge from either side of the stage and fire with astounding volume and smoke during "For Those About to Rock We Salute You." Malcolm pumps his right knee like a metronome through each song all the way through. Angus pumps

both knees alternately—two right, two left, sometimes three right and one left. Not to overstate the case, but if that isn't the heart of rock 'n' roll beating in those four knees, I'd like to know what is.

WHETHER POOR, WORKING, MIDDLE OR RULING CLASS IN THEIR ORIgins, artists have a strong proclivity to ingest whatever substances they deem necessary for the production of their art. Sugar, cocaine, grass, alcohol, vitamins, wheatgrass juice—anything to force a little more electricity across those brain synapses. With AC/DC, the addictions of choice are nicotine and caffeine. Hang around Angus Young and the smell of brewing coffee and Benson & Hedges Special Filters always permeates the air.

"I think everyone in my family smokes, except my mother," says Angus, at about 3 a.m. on the tour bus. "My father was the only man I ever saw who could smoke in his sleep. He died a few years ago of lung cancer. He was a spray painter in a factory. In those days, they didn't have masks, so eventually the doctors told him he'd have to stop for the health of his lungs. I wouldn't want for anyone to start smoking. But when I started, it was encouraged. I could buy cigarettes from the age of 14 and nobody questioned it. There was no big fuss as there is now."

Even so, it's hard to imagine a clerk venal enough to sell cigarettes to Angus Young at the age of 14. In a profession populated by short guys who picked up a guitar because they couldn't cut it in sports, Angus is short. Imagine short and then subtract five more inches. And then divide by three. And he has a delicate skeletal structure. He is the only guy I ever met who even approaches Joey Ramone for having no ass whatsoever.

Numbers seven and eight of the eight children produced by William and Margaret Young in Glasgow, Scotland, Malcolm and Angus arrived in 1953 and 1955. It is often written that Angus was born in 1959, a date covered with the fingerprints of corporate publicity. All the Young children played guitar. The four youngest made careers of it: Number six George played with the Easybeats and later produced AC/DC, number five Alex backed Tony Sheridan after the Beatles left and was a member of Grapefruit, the first signing to Apple. The oldest three males followed their father into the factory. Only sister Margaret became a housewife and played an important role in Angus' development.

"When I was six or seven, she took me to see Louis Armstrong," Angus remembers. "I liked the way he smiled, the big teeth. Some people, you get goosebumps when they perform, and he was one. You could tell he was honest, a good man and a happy man."

Just when rock 'n' roll exploded in England in 1963, William Young packed up his family and moved to Sydney, the land of opportunity and spray paint without masks.

A bright boy with a sense of integrity, Angus wasn't fond of school. He demonstrated a talent for art and history but had difficulty sitting still during the interminable roll calls (as a fellow but unrelated Young, I can testify that "Y" children often have this problem). In Australia teachers enforced discipline by "caning," for which the child held out his hands and got rapped three times on each palm.

Angus didn't appreciate the way it interfered with guitar practice.

One day Angus returned from school to find hundreds of girls rioting around his house. The police had set up lines and wouldn't let him near the place. He thought some terrible accident had happened but it was only rock 'n' roll. Older brother George had formed the Easybeats upon arrival in Australia and within months they were generating the local version of Beatlemania. The headmaster at Angus' school took him aside and demanded he cut his hair, told him his older brother had joined "a profession for perverts." Mrs. Young called the headmaster a liar and insisted that if her sons were going to get a haircut, the decision would stay in the family.

"She didn't like us being bullied about by authority," says Angus with a sense of solidarity that Marx would have envied.

Angus left school just as soon as he was legally able at 15 and scraped together the money for a cherry-red Gibson SG. His parents emphasized getting a trade to fall back on if rock 'n' roll didn't work out. But rock 'n' roll started working out rather quickly. Sibling placement theory posits that the youngest is usually the show-off, the one most likely to wear a loud sportcoat so he doesn't get lost in the crowd. Thus when brother Malcolm stood back by the drums on rhythm guitar, it naturally fell to Angus to put on the schoolboy uniform and do whatever had to be done to keep the attention of surfers, American G.I.s and factory workers getting drunk and mean on the high-alcohol content Aussie beer. He was good at it.

In 1974 they opened for Lou Reed in Adelaide and stuck around for a few club dates. The local booking agency hired a young man named Bon Scott to look after them in town. Scott's shoulder was busted up and his jaw wired shut from a recent motorcycle accident, so he wasn't worth much as a roadie or chauffeur. He did show evidence of correct rock 'n' roll spirit, however, when he couldn't stop laughing at their show. Since their present singer was a bit of a hambone popstar, they sacked him and hired Bon. "It's either me or the band," his wife said when Bon went home for the last time. "I'll take the band. I like them better than you," Bon replied.

Within the band Scott described himself as a "toilet poet" and began writing songs about his life as a social outlaw: "Well you can stick your nine-to-five living and your collar and tie/And you can stick your moral standards 'cause it's all a dirty lie/You can stick your golden handshakes and you can stick your silly rules/And all the other shit that they teach the kids at school/'Cause I ain't no fool/Gonna be a rock 'n' roll singer."

"The songwriting was always a combination of me, Malcolm and him," says Angus. "Like, 'Dirty Deeds' was all of us. I came up with the title. I got it from the cartoon *Beanie and Cecil*. There was this guy Dishonest John and he had a card that said, 'Dirty Deeds Done Cheap. Holidays, Sundays and Special Rates.'

"Bon had the spark for a lot of the old ones. 'It's a Long Way to the Top (If You Wanna Rock 'n' Roll)' started with him. He had the lyrics and when we were in the studio my brother George [their producer with Harry Vanda] saw the line and thought it was great. He said, 'Why don't you work on that?' and we'd jam."

How about "High Voltage"?

"I was at home fiddling around and I thought maybe I could get a song from the chords A-C-D-C. It seemed quite sensible."

Their first album in the States, *High Voltage*, appeared in 1976. The cover featured Angus in his schoolboy uniform with his Gibson SG exploding out of his fly. Quite plainly, he is whacking it off. Scott's voice is high-pitched, nasal and out of control. All the songs were long and, depending on your predisposition, either monotonous or hypnotic boogie. Critics generally hated the record and accused the band of stupidity.

After three more albums in the U.S., all with the same demo-tape rawness, Atco saw a chance for a bigger return on its investment and paired them with producer Mutt Lange.

"George said go ahead. He told us, 'Don't let them mess with what you are. Always remember you're a rock 'n' roll band.' I think the thing about *Highway to Hell* was that Mutt knew what FM stereo sounded like and we didn't. Every week he'd be there with the Top

## POWERAGE

**ALAN ROGAN, keeper of the guitars, calls the AC/DC setup "simple as fuck." ANGUS YOUNG plays a red '61 Gibson SG with a backup that is exactly the same. The older pickups, he feels, have "more fire." The fire is fired to your ears by a MESA/Boogie Studio Preamp, MESA/Boogie 295 Power Amps and eight Marshall 4x12 cabinets. He keeps a Samson wireless attached to his strap. His strings are Ernie Ball Slinkies (.009–.042) which he plunks with an extra heavy pick. And that's it. "No special effects whatsoever!" MALCOLM YOUNG uses the same amplifier setup except for MESA/Boogie cabinets with Celestion speakers. He has played the same Gretsch single-pickup since 1967 for all stage and studio work. For fear the Gretsch will one day disintegrate in his hands, he has been working with Gibson to come up with a modified Les Paul hollowbody with a hole in the middle. Rogan describes this guitar as "fantastic," while Malcolm isn't quite sold on it yet. In any case, it probably won't be commercially available, because Malcolm just wants to play the thing, not endorse it. A big part of his sound is the Gibson medium-gauge strings (.012–.056) with a wound G. He uses a Nady wireless. Again: "No special effects whatsoever!" CHRIS SLADE's silver Pearl drumkit is distinguished from just about every other kit in the world by the two 22" bass drums mounted about five feet off the ground on either side of his head. An innovation stemming from the need to recreate thunder for "Thunderstruck," the drums are whacked by hand, and combined with the 24" kick drums on the floor, it all sounds like a barrage of howitzers. He also pounds a 14" tom, an 18" floor tom, four Paiste cymbals and three hi-hats (one with a remote pedal). CLIFF WILLIAMS plays four interchangeable customized (extra pickups) Fender Precisions with Dean Markley strings through MESA/Boogie amplification. BRIAN JOHNSON sings through a Shure microphone with a Sony wireless system. And when you see AC/DC in concert, you'll hear them through an ElectroVoice Manifold Technology P.A. system.**

10 of America, listening to the sounds. And he's got a great set of ears. He could hear a pin drop. I know Bon was very happy with him. Mutt taught Bon to breathe, bring it from your stomach. After we'd done the album, Bon said to Mutt, 'I like what you've done. Do you think it would be worth it to me to go and learn off somebody?' Mutt said, 'No, I don't. This is you.' And I think Mutt learned something from us as well. I think he was impressed that we could play and knew what a song was, as opposed to just a riff."

"Highway to Hell" was AC/DC at peak power, breaking out of its insular definition of rock 'n' roll for the first time to meet the public over the airwaves. It was a monster hit, and within a few months the tortured soul, Bon Scott, was dead.

"The thing is, the last two years of his life was probably the most sober I saw him. He just had a magnet for a party. 'Anything I do, you don't do. That's all you have to know,' he used to tell me when I'd tag along for the night. AC/DC was his life, like it is for me. So it was like losing family. Closer than family, 'cause we probably saw more of each other. He had come out of bands that wanted him to sing like someone else. We wanted him to sing like him."

How would you compare Brian and Bon as personalities?

"They both could sing, but they don't sound at all alike. They both had a uniqueness of character that you could hear. Bon had a more subtle humor."

Can you remember any examples?

"In Paris, we were opening for some band—Rainbow, I think. We had to go onstage and they hadn't even put the lights down. So Bon just walks up to the microphone and yells, 'Turn those fucking lights off, you frog bastards!'"

After *Back in Black* and *For Those About to Rock We Salute You*, AC/DC and Lange parted ways. Lange was going into his two-years-per-album phase and had willing clients in bands like Def Leppard. AC/DC has always been of the firm opinion that recording longer than six weeks is placing indulgence before rock 'n' roll. They have most recently tried Bruce Fairbairn, one of the primary reasons for Aerosmith's revival. The first single was "Thunderstruck."

"I was in an airplane over East Germany, and the plane got struck by lightning. I thought my number was up. The stewardess said we were struck by lightning and I said, 'No, we were struck by thunder, because it boomed.'"

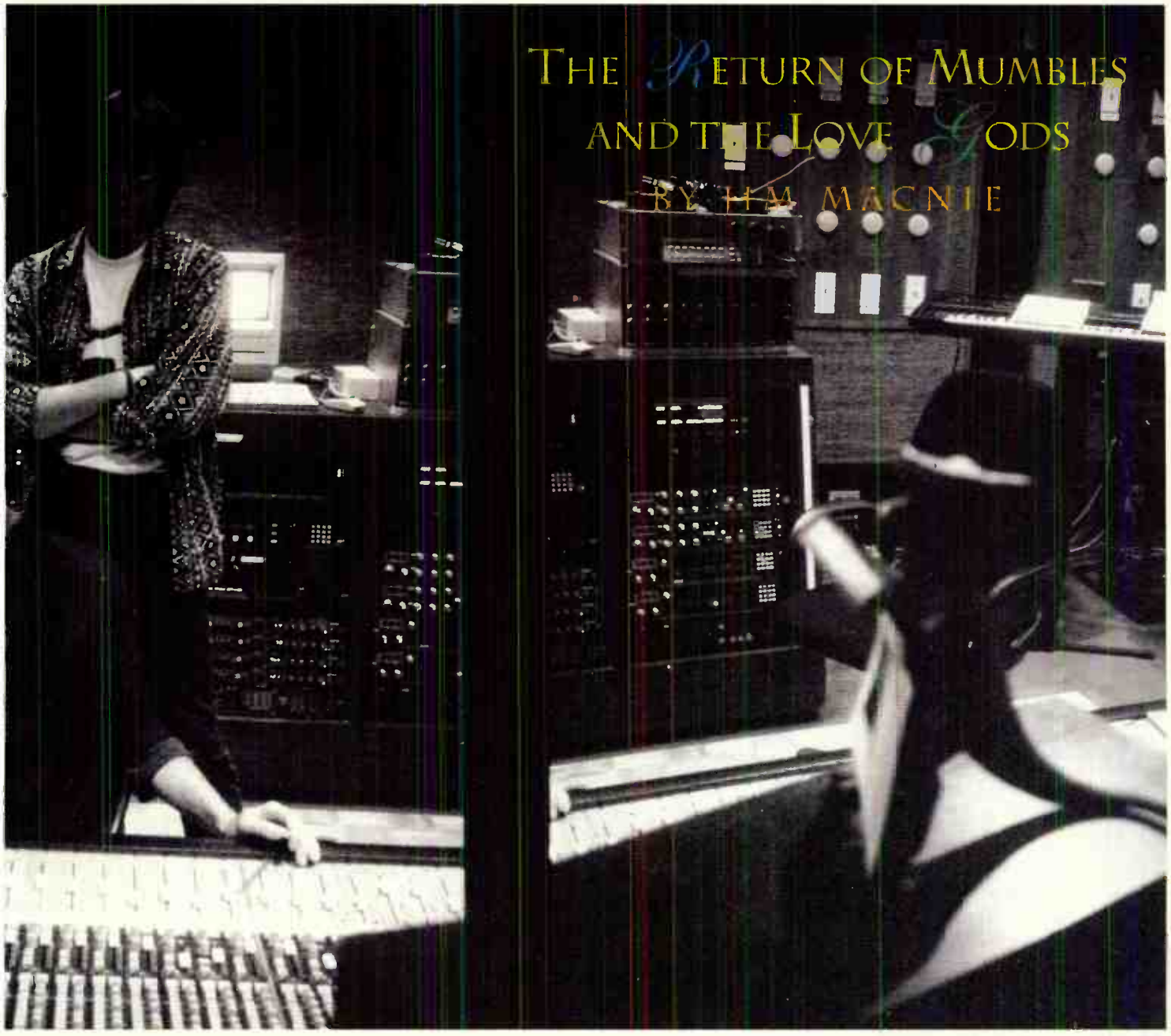
Did you write "Mistress for Christmas" about Donald Trump?

"Not exactly specifically about him. He was in the news when we were writing the song, but he was just an example. It was about people like that, people who want the lot."

Was he also on your mind for "Moneytalks"?

"Yeah, all the flash things, the yuppie syndrome. He's definitely oriented that way. Money's the big divider. Other places aren't necessarily like that. In Europe, they think you've got to be born with class. Here they think you buy it, like it comes with the tux. So it's just our little piss-taking. It's just our dig at that lifestyle of the rich and faceless."

In the overall body of AC/DC songs, you have a contradictory theology. In many songs those who play rock 'n' roll are in the service of Satan and doomed to Hell ("Rock 'n' Roll Damnation") but in other



# THE RETURN OF MUMBLES AND THE LOVE GODS

BY H.M. MACNIE

# STUDIO WITH R.E.M.

A car cranks up the box, a gruff voice bellows out the lyrics and some power strummer kerrangs out the chords. It ain't His Purpleness. It's the guys who pack this Ford Escort, R.E.M.'s Bill Berry, Peter

Buck and Mike Mills, providing the oomph behind the growls of their pal Warren Zevon. There's nothing lavender about their interpretation; this raspberry is blood red. "I was busy doing something close to nothing," croaks Zevon, as if he's singing about the session that produced this track, "different than the time before." Fittingly, producer Scott Litt is controlling the volume from behind the wheel, and he's opting for the red line. R.E.M. all laugh, and the radio voice explains that it's a one-off project of cover tunes by an R.E.M./Zevon collaboration tagged the Hindu Love Gods.

"You know, that sounds better than I thought," muses Peter Buck.

"Last week Warren told me that it was hard for him to be off-the-cuff with his performances," I mention. "Definitely," agrees Bill Berry, "it's a Southern California thing; a lot of those guys want it all perfect. They do things a million times before they can decide what's good. And it's never going to be perfect. So you've got to go for it when you can and live with the results."

"People have said that it's some of Warren's best vocals because he doesn't have time to overthink them," Buck adds. "The stuff just flowed out. We could have made a 10-record set, one for each day of the week."

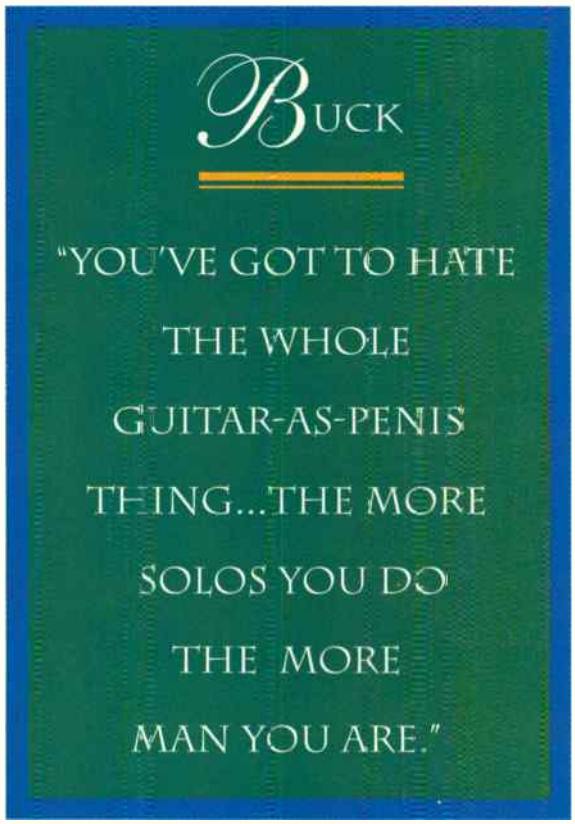
No one informs Buck that he's miscalculated the week by three days; studio living can distort your perception of reality. As the quips die down and the car pulls into the Paisley parking lot, you can actually hear a couple of sighs, as if to say, "Oh boy, here we go." The dinner break wasn't long enough to cancel out the claustrophobic feelings of the control room. But it's time to carry on with work of a more serious nature than one-offs and bash sessions—the mixing of R.E.M.'s new record, *Out of Time*.

Once inside, the music that comes streaming from the studio monitors has little to do with the gnarled highjinks of the Love Gods. The track that Litt and the guys are trying to mold at the moment is called "Shiny Happy People." Its edges are polished, its tone is gregarious, its function to woo the marketplace. The band, especially singer/lyricist Michael Stipe, is paying close attention: Detail means a lot to R.E.M. these days, and they furrow their brows trying to finesse what is essentially a jocular ditty. Literally so.

"Have we decided what we're going to do with the 'dits'?" asks Bill Berry in an earnest tone. "It would be nice to get it right, you know, because if there's a single on this record, this is it."

The "dits" he's referring to are background punctuations sung by Stipe, Mike Mills and suddenly ubiquitous B-52's dudette, Kate Pierson; they're the classic kind of chorus exclamations used by everyone from Spanky and Our Gang to the Mekons. The song itself is a second cousin to R.E.M.'s own innocuous (meaning not harmful) "Stand," which in '88 climbed to the upper echelon of the pop charts. Detractors deemed it overly cutesy and borderline childish; supporters heralded it as pithy and irresistible, a commercial for a can-do philosophy.

"Hey, I'm really proud of that one," grins Stipe. "The words are totally blatant, in fact kind of stupid in a way, but if you can be obvious and good at it, then you can probably say something beyond what you meant to say; if you're just fumbling around, then it can be embarrassing. 'Stand' is about as broad as we get, but at least it's not another dumb radio love song that leaves you cold. I'm glad that four-year-olds enjoy it."




Touché. R.E.M. is not a blatant band. Their sound has long combined wafting layers of folk-rock with the allure of arcane imagery. Most of the band's early pieces seem to be part of one lengthy cycle. Such aural interlocking has its drawbacks, however: Which one is "Kohoutek"? How does "The Flowers of Guatemala" go? "Wendell Gee" is on which record?

These days the personalities of the songs are more individual, R.E.M. have gotten better at making their points. Remember that these guys never looked at a big picture of what their career might hold in the first place. Their initial yen for "beer, girls and fun" (an offhand Berry synopsis) begot a situation where creativity became more important than yucks. From the start they were rewarded for their originality. Critics were full of exaltations, and after 10 years together and a consistent quality to their work, the marketplace has come to realize why each of their seven albums has sold more than the last, and the *Green* world tour placed them in front of millions. It, along with the *Green* album, also placed millions in their pockets. During the days I spend with the band at Paisley Park, the dichotomy of their current position becomes clear: R.E.M. are big guys who cherish most being an anything-goes band from Athens, Georgia, who have no intention of doing things other than in their own, somewhat eccentric, way.

*Out of Time* isn't a careful replication of *Green*, but in fact makes a point of investigating the band's idiosyncrasies. It is stuffed with oddities. Not fragments and throwaways, but whole, full-bodied songs that take chances. It doesn't necessarily sound like an R.E.M. record. "It's a real step forward," exudes Stipe, "putting songs together that wouldn't ordinarily substantiate a cohesive album. Plus horn section, string sections, female vocalists and a hip-hop guy." Take "Shiny Happy People," the most status-quo fare on the album. Everything about it screams radio. Yet just when it's flowing along nicely, the rock song disappears and a string section blossoms, playing in a different time signature. "Whoop!" Stipe calls

PHOTOGRAPHY BY REX MILLER

apologetically when the strings subside and the rock song returns. Though at this point *Out of Time* is still out of sequence and out of sorts, the feeling that it's a tribute to parts unknown, to the power of faith in one's own individuality, is unshakable. "This is us taking our chance," laughs Bill Berry. "People are either going to love it or freak out." And whether or not it shoots right into the hole, it is, for better or worse, what R.E.M. is all about.

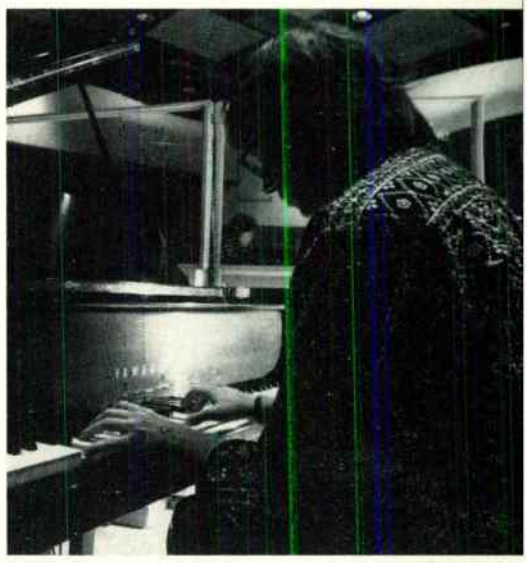
DOWN AT PAULY'S SPORTS TAVERN THEY'VE GOT A stuffed bear that is always being moved around. That doesn't bother Peter Buck, as long as the cold beer stays in one place. "Been here a few nights already," says the wiry guitarist as we slide into the booth and Monday night football looms over our shoulders, "it's the only place in town to go." Buck's a speed rapper with definite opinions and a way of making flippant remarks carry weight—kind of wily, definitely a hot ticket. The only time he gets solemn is right at the start. "You know," he sighs, shaking his head and glancing at the mega-screen, "it takes a lot of inner strength to be a Braves fan." It's a week before Thanksgiving and it's nippy outside. R.E.M. began *Out of Time* in upstate New York earlier in the fall, and though Buck admits that "by the time the mixing begins the process is almost over for me," there's a genuine enthusiasm in his voice as he talks about the project.

"When we came off of the *Green* tour, we were shot, you know? But after a month of being home in Athens we were at a party at Bill's and I said, 'Hey, I'm antsy, let's do something,' and we got together and began to write some stuff. It was sick, we were rehearsing a month after the tour! Anyway, we came up with an amazing amount of songs, 33 or something. We had no idea where we were going, but it was definitely coming out. Traditionally we're of the mind that practicing five days a week is cool because you never know when you're going to be inspired. As we were kicking around ideas, it became clear that this wasn't a typical deal. This record is keyboards and vocals essentially, almost all acoustic—the rockers didn't get finished. I think that's because we'd just got done with playing guitars and basses every night for the tour, and we were sick of all the usual stuff."

But they did have a hit and they did enjoy the power that came with the success. "What I know about making a hit single is very little," Buck says bluntly. "I'm not under any delusion that it will happen again. 'Stand' wasn't deep, it wasn't *Astral Weeks* or anything by Al Green, just a fun song. But I have a big place in my heart for fun songs; as much as *Pet Sounds* is the best Beach Boys record, I still love 'Be True to Your School.' I mean, I play Abba's hit record all the time. We used to do 'Does Your Mother Know.' It's a great song. We did it like the Stones might, but of course Michael has to do his little happy-dance during it, and that undercut any of the intensity we brought to it.

MORE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC: BUCK AND BERRY STRUM.

"This time we sat around in a circle and just hashed it out: Bill played congas or bass, I played mandolin, Mike played organ. I had a feeling that this one should be more baroque, and we talked about it. As we wrote stuff, I kept dropping suggestions in everyone's ears. 'Wouldn't it be great to have strings on this?' Hey, I love Van Dyke Parks' stuff, and on the Kevn Kinney record I produced, we used vibes and fiddles. *Out of Time* is all essentially written in that kind of way.

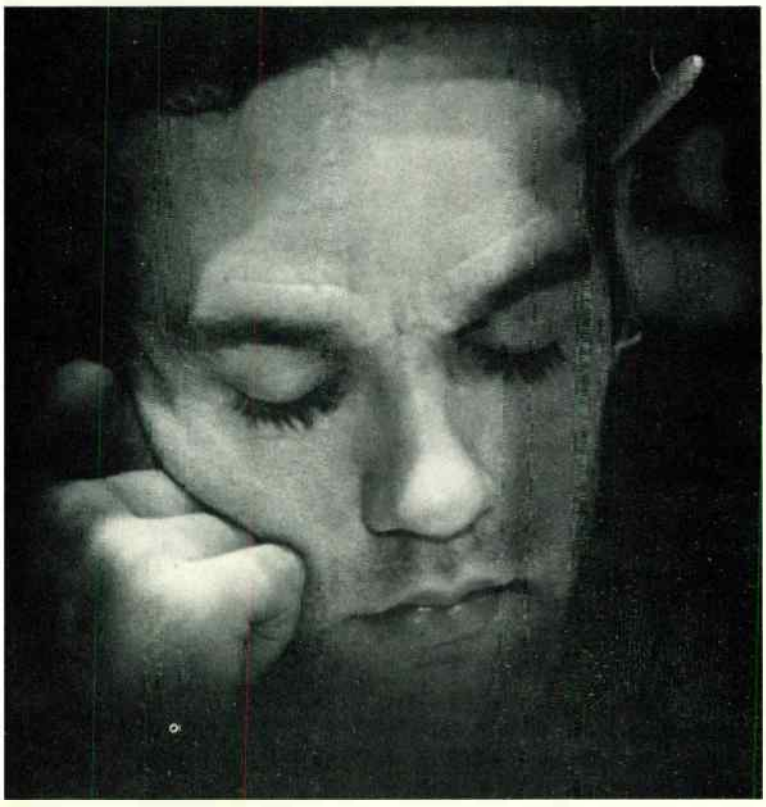


LIKE PRINCE, MIKE MILLS PLAYS EVERYTHING, WRITES, SINGS, RECORDS IN MINNESOTA AND DOES "RASPBERRY BERET."

"Back in the new wave days everyone had two chords and everyone was surprised at our capabilities. They said, 'Holy shit, you've got songs!' So we have been getting a lot out of a little for a while now." Maybe he's talking about "Me in Honey," a soft-shoulder jaunt that rides the bejesus out of a riff thought up by Mike Mills. With little elaboration, the song gallops along briskly. "That's just one chord, as a matter of fact," continues Buck, who has come up with memorable licks. "I definitely love riff songs," he states emphatically, "but there are very few guitarists I like to hear solo: Beck maybe, and Richard Thompson. One of the reasons I don't play solos is because I grew up hearing Glenn Phillips, who's from Atlanta. He never ceases to amaze me. But as a guitarist, I'm an accompanist, I follow the vocalist. I would never want people to watch me play solos—forget it. I write songs, that's enough. People saying, 'Oh wow, man, rip off a hot one' would drive me nuts. When I do a solo, it's two notes, little phrases I make up.

"I mean, you've got to hate that whole guitar-as-penis thing anyway," he continues, now on a roll. "I remember a guitar mag talking about an Athens band who had a dueling-guitar, Grateful Deadly kind of sound, and the reviewer said, 'Finally, a band from Athens that dares to dump the wretched wimp aesthetic of no guitar solos.' And I was really glad that someone came right out and said it: The more solos you do, the more of a man you are. Because that's the implication. It's also complete bullshit. One time Bill thought a song would be good for a big solo, and Michael said, 'What am I going to do, a little interpretive dance?' So we scrapped it. Every time I do a solo I can't help but remember that Bonzo Dog Band thing where a guy's holding a sign over the lead player: BOY, AM I REALLY EXPRESSING MYSELF!"

Buck does express himself, however. "Country Feedback" is a sullen ballad around which he wraps some strands of melted tar—dripping, thick. His guitar lines do an effective job of bolstering the track's dreamy scape ("Paperweight/Junk garage/It's crazy what you could have had/I need this," wails Stipe), perfect for the music at hand. And



STIPE WANTED TO CALL THE NEW ALBUM FICTION OR DIGNITY AND APLOMB.

"Radio Song," a funk tune that features the voice of Boogie Down Productions' KRS-One, resounds with the guitarist's convincing chinka-chink minimalism. "Those were the first ideas I came up with," he beams. "I've got a quick ear. We all do, that's one of the secrets of our success. Over-rehearsing kind of kills the spirit, so we try to get everything as loose as possible and still be tight: three people in a room, looking at each other, playing live. Even though we're branching out these days, I think we're allowing ourselves to be simpler in a way. We had a song that was based around the chords A minor and E minor and Michael said, 'That's the only thing that sounds like R.E.M., let's ditch it.' That was fine with me."

INSTEAD OF PRACTICING HIS GOLF PUTTS LIKE BERRY or pacing like Buck, Mike Mills often heads for the baby grand in the other room and plunks out some tunes. There was a self-penned barrelhouse variation that he went back to over and over, and at one point I caught him turning "Let's Spend the Night Together" into a slightly Monkish lament. "It's fun to rethink things," he offers, "take something familiar and make it your own. I sit here and wonder if I'm a good enough piano player to write an official boogie-woogie; it seems a bit presumptuous, but who knows?"

That's the kind of freewheeling attitude Mills says R.E.M. brings to their composing sessions. "We like to mess around with all the elements," he explains. "Where a riff might usually dominate a song, we have it cut up, or go five times on it instead of four—that's been happening since way back on *Chronic Town*. Where a chorus is often the focal point, we don't always present it as such. Even though our songs have several hooks and a lot of changes, they sound like they're succinct. Basically, we just take some chances."

Behind us, "Shiny Happy People" comes floating by for the thirty-fourth time. "Like that one," Mike enthuses. "It was Peter's idea to have it go to 3/4 time in the middle. I just looked at him because I thought that was something that should have stopped with the Beatles; I personally think that 'Psychotic Reaction' is the only good song that changes time in the middle. But what the hell! Toying around with these kind of things is our forte."

Several of the songs on *Out of Time* create their own particular landscapes. "Low" moves cautiously, with hardly a pulse. ("That one has Peter Holsapple on bass, Bill on congas, Mike on organ," says Buck. "Whenever I hear it I picture people 10,000 years ago sitting around a campfire wearing fur rugs with the fog drifting by.") Evidently, this time around there are more "little things" to fool around with than ever. Some of the strings were arranged by Mills and some by New Orleans nut Mark Bingham, who also brought in the wonderful Crescent City reed player Kidd Jordan to play on some of the tracks. Mellotrons, harpsichords, mandolins, female singers, pedal-steel, tambourines—without forsaking their identity (pretty much guaranteed as long as Stipe doesn't get his lips sewn together), R.E.M. has found a way to subvert the sound that has endeared them to the masses.

"This one is definitely 'our world and welcome to it,'" agrees Mills after plunking through heartfelt versions of "Georgia on My Mind" and Santo & Johnny's "Sleep Walk." "We do things the way we hear them and we don't worry too much. Of course you have to be careful, there are a lot of extras that you could tag on a track which just don't make it. Rather than putting the statement in the songs themselves, the way we make them is our statement. Therefore the songs can be more intimate, smaller in scope and still be effective. To me it seems pretentious to speak in really large terms, or to bite off more than you can chew. Why be Emerson, Lake and Palmer?"

No, this isn't *Tarkus*. But the echoes bound out to places that are somewhat shocking. "Texarcana" harkens to late Moody Blues; "Near Wild Heaven" treads a bubblegum turf as surveyed by XTC. And the strings on "Losing My Religion" have at least a smidge of ELO on them. Is what's bizarre for the Athens boys close to what the mainstream has for lunch every day? "To be honest, I don't think we'd know how to conform to a normal method of songwriting," Mills says. "If someone said sit down and write a hit, I wouldn't know how. Might get lucky, but...I mean somebody that can write singles, that's really cool. We've had a couple, but we're certainly not Leiber and Stoller. We don't know exactly what we've got until we're in here putting it together. This record goes from one extreme to the other—that's just the way it worked out. And sometimes ideas just won't come out," he concludes with a puckish look, "so then you go back and play 'The Tennessee Waltz.'" Without missing a beat he slides into the classic, imbuing it with a soap opera sense of majesty. The thump of "Shiny Happy People" is still audible through the wall.

THE BLACK BEAN SOUP THAT STIPE OFFERS FOR dinner really hits the spot...once I add some Tabasco. When I mention to Michael that the new album sounds like it could be one of the band's most intimate offerings, his face screws up. "Really? I thought that it was more on the brassy side. You must have heard all the slow ones." Turns out to be true. "Country Feedback," "Half a World Away," "Low" and others are definitely introspective, meditations almost. "But things are polarized," he reminds, "quiet, dark songs

and then real frantic stuff. The only thing I can say right now is that it's probably not as raw as I would have had it—at this point I know that. But thematically I felt like I knew what it was going to be about three months ago. Everything changes week to week however, and the final product is just a matter of fitting things together."

So it's an in-control situation, right? "Yeah, sure," says Stipe. But after a few seconds he offers another idea. "But sometimes I don't have an idea of what something's about until after I've done it. I didn't know that *Murmur* was about moving and traveling until after I read the reviews. *Reckoning*—I guess I did have an idea about that; it was about water. *Fables* was storytelling, each song had a specific narrator. This one is all love songs."

Stipe has taken it on the chin more than once for his elliptical verse. But just because you can't explain a few of his lyrics doesn't mean they're not pleasurable.

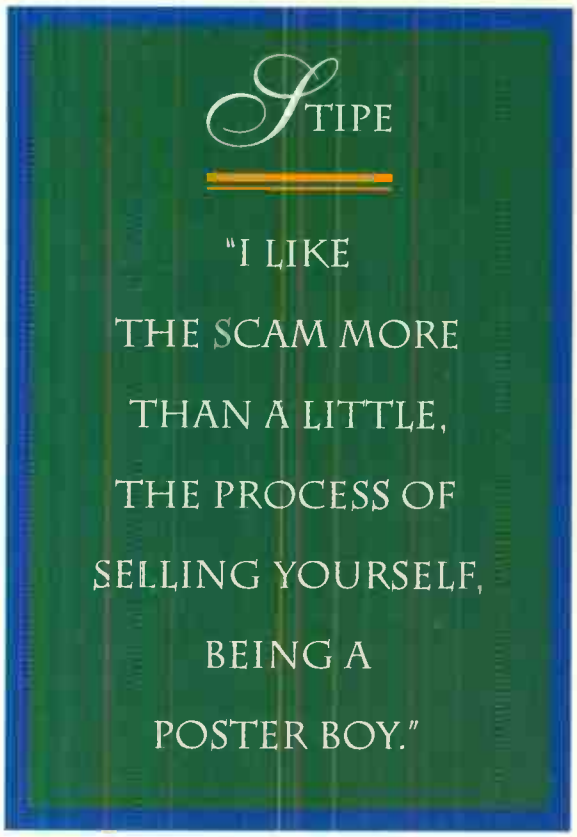
"People aren't shy about coming up to me and saying, 'Hey, that was really full of shit, you kind of blew it on that one,'" admits Stipe. "That kind of feedback, communication, is valuable, and often it's even true. But it's also great when you hit. Much of this record is about memory, I think. I have this theory—it's probably widely held—that the real and the fantastic become one when channeled through memory, and that your past is kind of what you make it. I love that blurred area. I think we all do."

Stipe has been quoted as saying that in the past his lyrics have been overly personal, but he says not to worry, "I know what I'm doing; I'm not opening myself up that much. There's fabrication involved. Some people connect, some don't. Take the misunderstanding of 'World Leader Pretend.' Some interpret it as me saying I'm tired of being an obscure writer, of my position within the band; it's much more broad than that. Not many knew that 'Harborcoat' was about Nazi Germany. And what's that song on *Reckoning*? It's essentially a rewrite of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Still, I maintain that what's implied in the music and how the listener takes it is the most important bridge there is, and I'm not denying anyone an opinion. Which makes the notion of filling in a certain amount of time with something you create a pretty exciting idea. Having to come up with something original in three or four minutes using seven chords is still a challenge. There are seven chords, A-B-C-D-E-F-G," he says in mock pride of his musical ineptitude. The rest of the band used to rib him about knowing little about the mechanics of composition. After a moment Stipe looks me in the eye: "There's no H, is there?" he asks with a smirk.

Manager Jefferson Holt hurrumphs ominously and we're out the door. The shiny, happy mix must continue. However, the next day is gorgeous for Minnesota in the late fall—low 50s, almost balmy. Stipe and I seize the opportunity to continue talking at an arboretum down the road from the studio. He's marveling at the resiliency of gingko trees and I'm trying to get him to discuss the various ways he's grown within the band structure. "I feel much more secure with my duties these days, that's for sure," he confides, "and that has had a lot to do with what you were asking about before, my attitude onstage.

"At first I liked being a musician, but didn't want to be a public figure. In the last few years I've decided to roll with it. I admit to liking the scam more than a little, the process of selling yourself, being a poster boy. You've got to recognize that there's a degree of trade taking place and the product we sell is not used in the kitchen, it's not a utensil. It's not even something you can separate from yourself. It's you! Me. I'm selling my voice, my ideas and our music. Sometimes it's in innovative ways and sometimes it's in normal ways. That's the base of it, and I've finally accepted it, because making music and having as many people as possible hear it is what makes me happy.

"The core of why people listen to us is because we are passionate about what we do, and they can hear that in the music," says Stipe with a dead serious look on his face. "They react because they desire that, crave that, especially in today's world: Something that's real means a lot."




One of the ways that Stipe conveys this passion is by giving free rein to his dramatic impulses. *Out of Time* contains a song called "Belong" wherein a mother urges her child not to live life in the margins. He doesn't sing it, but literally speaks it, addressing the import of each word. To further the point, the vocal was recorded on a Walkman and then integrated into the mix.

"I would think that not being dramatic in pop music would mean being mediocre," he muses. "To me a prime example for this record would be 'Low.' The whole song hinges on the word 'time.' In the last verse I say, 'You and me, we know about time.' And the way it's sung, the thrust of the thing revolves on it. And to me, that's drama. Yeah, it's always been a part of our music, and I'd also say that the songs which failed lacked it.

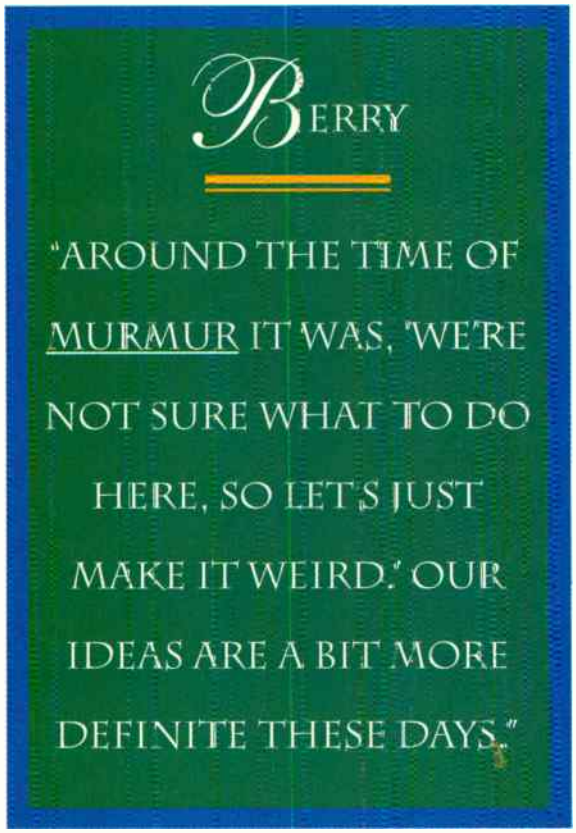
"You know, the first two records were me fascinated with my own voice; I'd never heard it played back or in headphones. After I got over the shock, I tried to figure out what new kind of things I could do with it, and approached it from a different angle. At this point it's like, here's a melody, how am I going to wrap myself around it? A sense of phrasing has come out that was there all along. When it works, it can be wonderfully liberating. But sometimes I oversing. Singing is a real physical act, whereas it doesn't have to be that physical to play keyboards. The voice as instrument isn't taken seriously enough. If it's not right, you can't blame the equipment. It's a lot more humiliating to sing a bad line than it is to play one on the guitar." Stipe, who openly admits to being stymied by pitch ("those guys have to tell me when I'm on or off"), has come a long way from his amateurish origins, does have a strong sense of dynamics and phrasing these days. *Out of Time* might not be the best place to spot

it, however. "We were going to name this record *The Return of Mumbles* because a lot of the songs don't have the voice on top."

Stipe glances at the sky, basking in the glory of the day and feeling a bit guilty that he's not in the studio. Toying with a gingko leaf, he seems to be mulling something over. "This will be described as an enigmatic, far-away look, no doubt," he says finally.

"Ahh, you're not that enigmatic," I answer.

"I know," he says. "Go figure! Artsy and weird. I frankly think that way too much emphasis was placed on me being an oddball. Journalists didn't know what else to write about. The band didn't look like Sigue Sigue Sputnik, we didn't have a persona like Bob Dylan or David Lee Roth. We were just some guys, a pop band. And we happened to be somewhat original. But groups are looked at through the frontperson and the guitarist—that's just the way it's set up. Which is unfortunate because Bill and Mike are incredible musicians. But nobody wants to do an interview with a drummer unless it's for some drum tech magazine. Too bad, because if anyone is wildly interesting it's Bill Berry; he's one of the most peculiar and wonderful people I've ever met in my life. Just this morning he sat down and played piano for MTV, and I didn't even know he could play piano!"




STIPE MAY NOT have known of Berry's keyboard prowess ("Limited, believe me," laughs Bill later), but all the R.E.M.sters know just about everything else about each other. It's clear that camaraderie is the law of the land around here. "It's almost incestuous," says Berry after a morning on the front nine, "you've got to remember that Mike and I have been playing together since we were 14. School band, half-time marches, sock hops, proms, boogie stuff, the whole deal. All four of us have had our blowouts, no doubt, but we're strong, really bonded right now. That's one reason we could take such a chance with this record. We've finally pulled out the stops. All the things we were afraid to do, or felt trepidation about, we just went for. The idea is to push it to the limit and stop right there. And that's where you get the artistic differences between the four of us. No one can be satisfied with everything. If I hear something I can't stand and the other three guys go, 'Hey, Bill, relax, this is a really good idea,' then I figure I must be wrong. If the vote is two and two, it gets a bit weirder. But ultimately we have a lot of trust in each other. You always want to be concerned about your pals' feelings.

"We wrote these songs knowing that we wouldn't have to tour behind them," he says in a very relieved voice. "We could go wild because we didn't have to replicate it. Around the time of *Murmur* it was, 'Well, we're not sure what to do here, so let's just make it weird.' Our ideas are a bit more definite these days.

"I played a lot of bass this time," explains Berry. "There were things that I couldn't play as well as Mike, but there were things that I wrote on the bass that only I had a grip on. That kind of thing keeps the creative process fresh. We switch instruments all the time. I'm not a tenth of the guitarist that Peter is and he's not a tenth of the drummer I am. But each of us can play both, and we do."

One of the new pieces Bill gets a kick out of is "End Game," a fey instrumental in which Stipe lilts some "la la la la la"s along with the melody. "The plucked violin strings make it a favorite of mine," he chuckles. "It's our first Burt Bacharach tribute." "But wait," I ask, "what about that 'up the stairs and down the hallway' thing from *Murmur*?" "Yeah, you're right," he recants. "'We Walk'; that was our first Burt tune."

"If there's anything to be said for the Hindu Love Gods, or for Bill Berry too," Warren Zevon says, "it's that it was always kind of disappointing for me to hear those folk blues songs played by bands because they never swung the same at all. I think we kind of made it, maybe slightly unconsciously, an effort to play the rhythms, like the Delta blues would demand. You say, 'Let's play "Junko Pardner,"' and you count it off and Bill thinks you said 'Jungle Pardner' and he starts with a tom-tom kind of thing...if that constitutes an arrangement."

"PART OF THE BEAUTY OF R.E.M.," Buck says, "is that we set it up nice. We're hired to provide music, there's nothing that says who's going to do what. I mean, we could make a record of our manager singing Chilean folk songs and turn it in, although I can tell you Warners wouldn't be thrilled about that. What I'm trying to say is that there's a moral sense to the band. Every group creates some kind of community around it, and one of our rules is we don't want to work with assholes. Our guitar guy Microwave is truly one of the nicest people in the world; we all just look forward to seeing each other."

In case you think that Buck's just practicing his amenities, he's quick to own up to one-time, intra-ensemble skirmishes: "I remember hitting Mike over the head with a jug of water, and him throwing a table at me, but that kind of stuff was born from the frustration of constant touring. It doesn't happen much these days; we're more on track. When Holsapple first came out with us he was wide-eyed: 'Oh, I understand, you get really pissed with each other and yell a lot, but then no one's mad. Man, we didn't have one fight for 10 years in the dBs—that's why we broke up.'"

"The thing I like about their methods is that they have a really good sense of priorities," says producer Litt. "They don't argue in the studio unless they're vehement over an issue. I've learned the importance of that from them. I know not to pull out certain cards unless I really need them. They won't insist on something that's not really important to them, the group decision thing takes over and it

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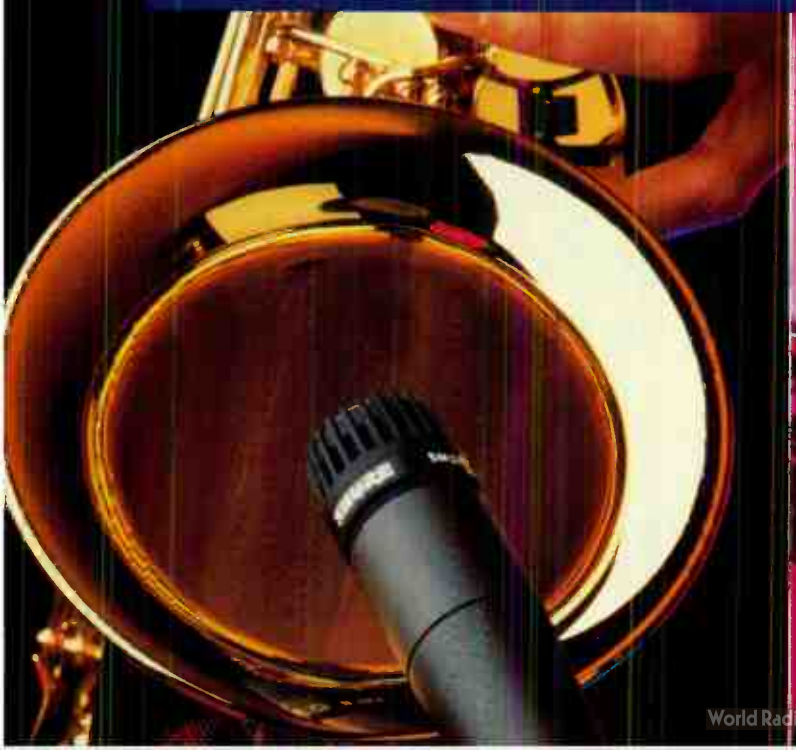

really works; they know when to let something go and when to stick to it."

SO *OUT OF TIME* SEEMS TO BE A REST area off a non-stop turnpike, a chance to reflect on where R.E.M. stands. The band has a series of European TV shows scheduled to get the word out ("One of the main reasons we hooked up with Warners was the international market," acknowledges Bill). *Green* and the tour that supported it was a zenith of sorts; they had it planned that way. "We knew *Green* was going to be a major deal, new label and all," says Berry, "and we needed to throw a switch into the old write/record/tour/short break routine that we've done since day one. It gets to be a bit much."

"Yeah," says Buck. "What I really remember about the last 10 years, and I hate to say this in a way, is sitting backstage in some dump looking at the ceiling, at those shitty acoustic tiles with the little holes in them, thinking, 'God, someone's making a million a year with these ugly tiles that every band in the world is going to poke out.' It really has been a room, a car, a car, a room, a room, a stage and a car. In other words this little break has felt good."

## TUNE YOU INSIDE OUT

**PETER BUCK's got a 12-year-old Rickenbacker 360, a Les Paul '59 reissue, a 12-string Rick, a Robin octave guitar, a Yamaha Weddington Custom and a Paul Reed Smith. During the recording of *Out of Time* Buck also used a Flatiron mandolin and Gibson J500, J200 and Guild 12-string acoustics. On the electrics Buck uses Ernie Ball strings and for the acoustics it's Dean Markley. Buck uses a Vox AC30 most of the time, but also plugs into a Fender Vibrolux, a Fender Twin, a MESA/Boogie Mark III and an old Gibson Discoverer that he found in a pawn shop. Buck keeps effects simple: a RAT for distortion and an Ibanez UE 400 multieffects unit. MIKE MILLS uses two Fender pre-CBS Precision basses, one with EMG pickups and one stock. He also uses a Maton fretless that he picked up in Australia. His amp is a MESA/Boogie 400 with a 2x15 cabinet. Mills also employs an Alembic preamp and a Furman parametric EQ. His strings are Dean Markley medium-gauge flatwounds. Mills also plays a mean Hammond B3. BILL BERRY sits behind a Pearl drumkit with Zildjian cymbals.**

At least two band members concur that the album after this one will ditch some of the formality of *Out of Time* and go for the throat. "A rocking record definitely," says Berry; "maybe live to two-track," offers Stipe. And all were positive about the longevity of their music-making. Buck: "I'll play till I die, I'm sure. Maybe not stadiums and Spandex, but hootenannies at my house definitely."

"No, not the tight pants and funny hats trip," laughs Stipe. "I'm kind of embarrassed for those guys. But I feel like there's lots more to come. R.E.M. has provided each of us with just about everything. Abandoning it doesn't make sense."

"And the thing is," concurs Berry, "we have the money now, we can go whatever way we want: film, whatever. Not too much stage stuff though, I'm going to be bald pretty soon."

THE MTS-1 MANIFOLD TECHNOLOGY® STAGE SYSTEM


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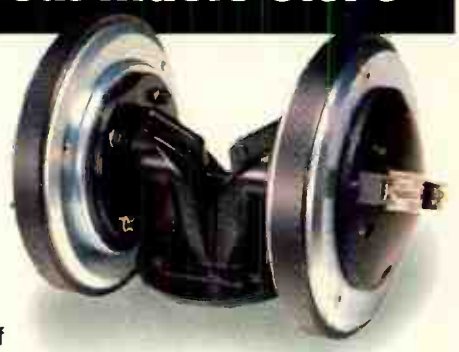

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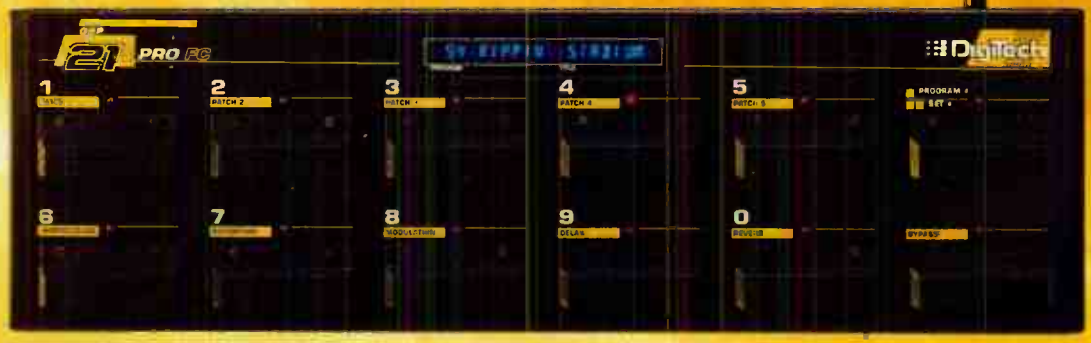


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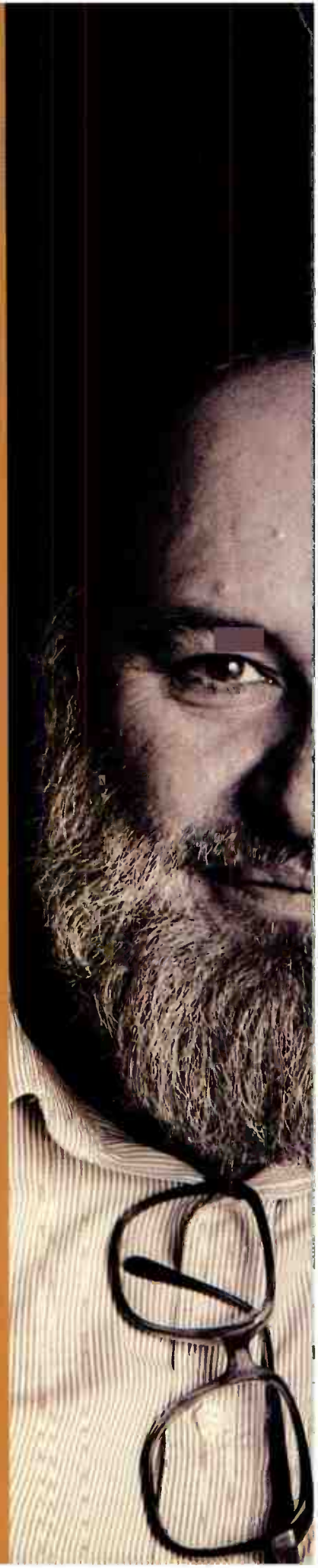
# WE THREE KINGS

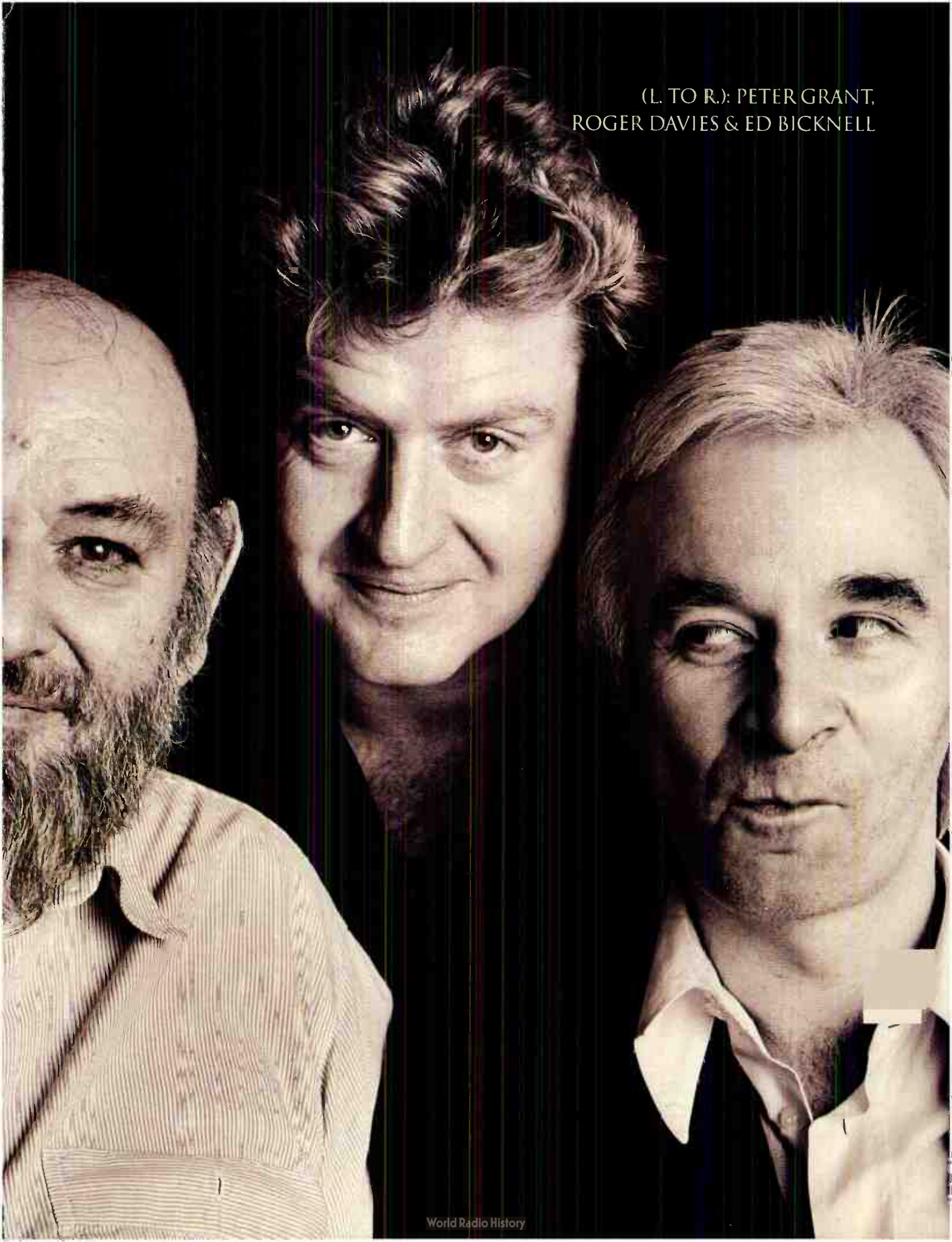
## THE TOP MANAGERS TALK

IT WAS CHRISTMASTIME IN LONDON. BOND STREET WAS STRUNG WITH BIG ELECTRIC MURALS OF SWANS A SWIMMING, MAIDS A MILKING AND LORDS A LEAPING. AT HIS POSH PAD IN NOTTING HILL, ED BICKNELL STOOD BY THE MANTEL OF HIS GREAT FIREPLACE, ROLLING HIS EYES AND TELLING HIS TELEPHONE THAT THE CONCERT PROMOTER IN QUESTION WAS NOT BEING COMPLETELY CANDID. BICKNELL WAS IRONING OUT DETAILS OF A DIRE STRAITS WORLD TOUR THAT WOULD BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER OF 1991 AND LAST FOR OVER A YEAR. IF IT WENT AS PLANNED, IT WOULD BE THE BIGGEST ROCK TOUR OF ALL TIME.

BY BILL FLANAGAN

*Photograph by Jillian Edelstein*



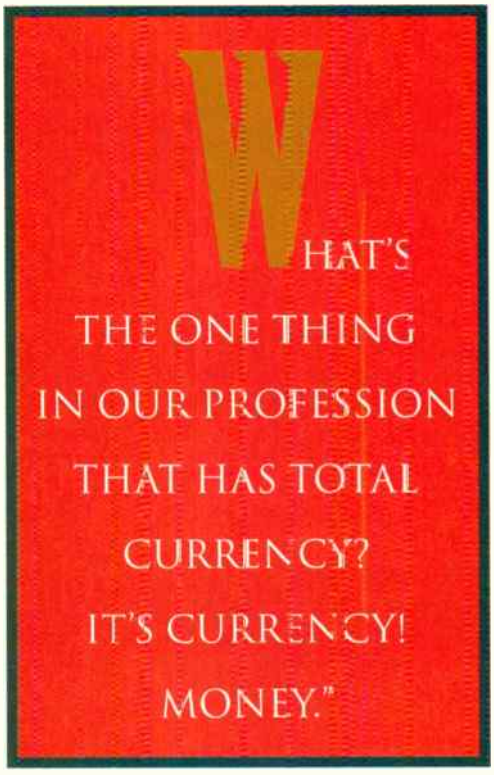


(L. TO R.): PETER GRANT, ROGER DAVIES & ED BICKNELL

To record companies, concert promoters and corporate attorneys, Ed Bicknell is the face of Dire Straits. He has managed the band since the day they signed their record deal in 1978, holding the rudder (and the receipts) as they grew from a four-piece pub band into one of the most successful acts in the world. He turned down offers to manage superstars and run record labels, while occasionally taking on an especially worthy cult figure—such as Bryan Ferry, Paul Brady, Willy DeVille. As a boy Bicknell aspired to be a drummer (a goal he finally achieved last year with Mark Knopfler's Notting Hillbillies). His perspective on the music business was fixed at a tender age when he and some childhood friends snuck in early to a Beatles show. Stunned to see his idol standing there smoking a cigarette, the trembling little Ed approached his hero and gasped, "Ringo!"

"Fook off," Ringo replied.

At that moment a manager was born.




Bicknell's doorbell rang and he buzzed in a good-looking 38-year-old Australian. Roger Davies unwound his scarf and stage-whispered advice to Ed, who was still negotiating on the telephone. Davies knocked around Australia as a bass player and local record producer before taking on the management of Olivia Newton-John and moving to the U.S.A. Ten years ago he was asked to check out another, far less popular singer: Tina Turner. Davies' rapport with Turner was instant. Together they organized one of the most successful comebacks in pop history, assembling the enormously successful *Private Dancer* album and its sequels, huge tours and a best-selling autobiography. Turner and Davies moved to London at the time of her comeback.

Davies recently ended a year of managing Janet Jackson. A few years earlier he managed another singer with a late-blooming solo career—Mick Jagger. Jackson and Jagger are two of the biggest names in pop music, but clearly Davies' devotion was with Tina.

Bicknell's buzzer rang a third time, he warned his telephone that he really had to hang up, and he went to the door to welcome Peter Grant. Grant entered the room like a grizzly bear. A huge man and a huge figure in the history of the music business. Grant is described by Led Zeppelin biographer Stephen Davis as "the most flamboyant character in the history of rock 'n' roll, bar none." Grant grew up in poverty in post-war London, working as a child as a Fleet Street runner before growing into professional wrestling and then roadwork with early rock 'n' roll tours of Britain.

By the mid-'60s Grant was partners with swinging London manager Mickie Most and was steering the careers of Jeff Beck and the Yardbirds. When the Yardbirds disbanded, Grant pledged his full energy to their guitarist, Jimmy Page, who assembled a group they dubbed the New Yardbirds. After a couple of gigs they changed their name to Led Zeppelin. Then Grant and Led Zeppelin changed the way the music business worked. The intimidating manager carved out unprecedented record deals and restructured the balance of power and payment between concert promoters and musicians.

Grant laid the road for the supermanagers who followed. He frightened his enemies, he used force when faced with force (asked about the infamous time he beat up one of promoter Bill Graham's crew during a 1978 Zeppelin concert Grant said, "Grrrnnnkkkkkrrrrr." Then he mumbled, "Why would I talk about that?"). Although Grant managed other acts—most notably Bad Company—it was clear that his heart was with Led Zeppelin and that to some degree the heart went out of him when Zeppelin ended. Grant recently sold his moated castle, suffered coronary trouble and began consulting on a proposed film to be made of his life, to be produced by professional descendent Malcolm McLaren and, perhaps, to star British screen tough guy Bob Hoskins.

In a big chair in the firelight Grant looked less like the fearsome rock legend than Father Christmas. Listening to Bicknell and Davies talk about Dire Straits, Tina Turner and the business today, Grant seemed a bit sentimental. "When you've had an experience like each of us has had with an act," he said, "you never ever get it a second time."

**MUSICIAN:** *Michael Jackson has been negotiating a new record deal with CBS/Sony. It's alleged that he's getting $18 million an album. What ripple effect will Jackson's new deal have on other superstar contracts?*

**DAVIES:** Michael Jackson's an extraordinary situation. It's not normal. The record company is having to pay to save face, it seems.

**BICKNELL:** In the last 10 years the majority of record companies have become parts of multi-national corporations. Michael Jackson is so visible that he is an enormous asset to Sony. The biggest rival Sony has in the field to take a Michael Jackson off them is the MCA/Geffen setup with Matsushita. Matsushita is Sony's biggest rival *within Japan*. That deal reflects Michael Jackson's worth to CBS not so much as a record-selling act, but as their flag-carrier. I imagine that Springsteen falls into the same bag.

**DAVIES:** Janet Jackson's the same to A&M. PolyGram basically said to A&M, "Pay whatever it takes to keep her." Because A&M needs her; they don't have anything else. When PolyGram bought A&M they thought they were buying her. So now they have to save face.

**BICKNELL:** I have no interest in Dire Straits becoming some focal point for the shareholders of PolyGram. I think artists like Michael Jackson are being turned into corporate icons.

Personally, I don't pay much attention to advances. I'd much rather get the points. It's always better to go for a piece of the cake if you can get it. When I was doing the last Dire Straits deal with Warners I got the whole deal in place and then I did a little trick. They agreed to everything and then the next morning I went down to breakfast with the head of business affairs and I said, "Why don't we just drop the advance and you give me a couple more points instead?" 'Cause I'd got the points up almost to the top, and the only way I could get a little bit more was, really, through the cost of money.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I'm doing merchandising deals for the Straits' world tour right now. I asked everybody to give me offers, and then I've asked them what they would offer if they had to pay no advance at all. 'Cause I wanted to find out how many extra points they consider that money to be worth—and on average it's three or four points. So I'm going to go get the whole of the advance *and* all the points—'cause now I know where the points are! It's a game with the other side.

**GRANT**: It's not only the points. It's getting a low "package deduction." They deduct for packages and it goes up and down depending on how many colors the record cover is and so on. In Led Zeppelin's second negotiation—I guess it was after "Whole Lotta Love"—I got a *fixed package deduction*, regardless of whether the album was a gatefold, a triple fold, we had albums without the name of the group. *Physical Graffiti* had windows. That was important.

**BICKNELL**: When somebody says, "I got x points," I immediately say, "Yes, but percentage of *what*? Is it retail? Is it dealer price? What are the package deductions?" Within the management fraternity—particularly in America and particularly in California—there's a lot of competition to give the impression that they got a bigger deal than this bloke got.

**DAVIES**: Also in California, lawyers always want the big advance to justify a higher fee. It looks more impressive to the artists. They won't know about the points or packaging deduction.

**BICKNELL**: Any lawyer will spew into a contract tons of theoretical stuff that never happens. But can I get some tour support? If so, how much of it is recoupable? And most record companies try to charge back 50 percent of the cost of the videos to the acts.

**DAVIES**: For baby acts it's 100 percent.

**BICKNELL**: So Michael Jackson gets 18 million dollars. Fine, I'm very happy for him. Now CBS has probably given away the store to keep him. He's probably got all the things we're talking about. His lawyer will have wrung every last drop out of the lemon. From the point of view of negotiating for your act, the best possible position to be in is when the guy on the other side is the weakest. And after the Walter Yetnikoff thing and the *Hit Men* book, CBS find themselves on the ropes. Now the gossip's getting out that their two biggest acts, Jackson and Springsteen, are unhappy and they've got to save the day. What's the one thing in our profession that

has total currency? It's currency! Money. That's the only thing they can really play with. No disrespect, but I can't imagine that Michael Jackson's going to have deep and meaningful intellectual discussions with Tommy Mottola.

See, when Peter was doing this he was working with an owner/operator. Ahmet Ertegun owned Atlantic Records. He and Nesuhi and Jerry Wexler were spending their own money! It's very easy now for these characters to say, "God, I've got to keep Michael Jackson. I'll ring up some guy in Osaka to pay this out." It's just a drop in this absolute sea of money. Dire Straits is signed in Europe to a company owned by Philips. How many lightbulbs do Philips sell a year? It's because of things like lightbulbs that they've got a record division.

This has given people like us that much more latitude to manipulate them. But ultimately we'll never win, because the corporation will always screw you. Am I right? [*Grant and Davies agree*] We landed men on the moon 20 years ago and publishers still say they can only account every six months. [*laughter*] They should just admit that the interest factor is part of their business. But they won't. They'll say, "Oh, the computer's broken." When I got into the music business I had no idea what publishers did.

**DAVIES:** Still don't know.

**GRANT:** Ed thought *mechanicals* had something to do with cars.

**BICKNELL:** The publishing industry has created a language that those on the outside spend all their time trying to decipher. Our first release sold about 200,000 albums in Germany and our publisher refused to take out an advertisement that cost about $80. I hit the roof and when I redid the deal I made sure they had to do some print advertising and so forth. But it's a small score. The publishing industry is a collecting operation. Once you learn this you figure, "Well, I might as well get the most money 'cause I'm not going to get anything else." My attitude with publishers is very much, "Fuck 'em."

**MUSICIAN:** *Roger, if Janet Jackson is as important to the small world of A&M as Michael Jackson is to the big world of Sony, should she say, "Let's get every bit we can," or "We still have to work with these people, let's let them keep a little something"?*

**DAVIES:** I think in Janet's situation she probably personally feels that she's kept A&M alive for the last four or five years.

She's the only artist they've had who's had two number one albums back to back. I think she feels that they owe her something. If she's going to stay there it's going to cost them a lot of money. In that situation, you push for everything. Again, A&M is owned by a huge corporation.

**BICKNELL:** The way you do a deal with a record company does reflect your relationship with them. I feel very warmly towards Warner Bros.

**DAVIES:** I don't know that Janet feels the same way toward A&M. If you've got a great relationship with your record company you don't try and screw them. You want a great deal but...However if it's just a big faceless corporation, like A&M's situation now that they're owned by PolyGram. I think when Janet realized she was part of the deal when they sold the company she felt, "Fine, then I want the best deal possible." It's not a small company anymore.

**BICKNELL:** Ninety percent of the people I'm dealing with at Warner Bros. now are the same people I was dealing with 12 years ago. At our other record company, PolyGram UK, there is *nobody* that I dealt with 12 years ago. I have gone through 11 managing directors in England in 13 years. I don't feel that same sense of personal warmth to them at all. To me PolyGram UK is just a bunch of faceless executives sitting down in Berkeley Square who wouldn't know a crotchet if it kicked them in the balls. I wish to God there were some music people in that company. [Warner Bros. chairman] Mo Ostin's first statement to me ever was, "I don't know anything about music, go and see the A&R department." And I give him 11 out of 10 for having the bottle to be that upfront. Mo was an accountant and sometime confidant of Frank Sinatra and Frank's friends. But the PolyGram people don't even have the oomph to say that. They could be just as successful flogging condoms. They're very good at marketing, they have a lot of money, but the problem there—and it's true of the record industry generally—is that the record industry has a pipe with a finite diameter. And they keep on acquiring things and trying to shove more and more down the pipe. But they don't make the pipe any bigger and usually in their inefficiency they make it smaller. I cannot get sales figures out of the PolyGram companies. This is ridiculous. I want to know how many records we sold in Germany or Brazil—it's a major tank exer-

cise to find out. The last time Mark Knopfler was introduced to one of their managing directors he just looked at him and said, "You won't last any longer than any of the others" and went off to the buffet.

**GRANT:** You see, at Atlantic I only used to deal with Ahmet, though Jerry Wexler was really the first one who took the interest in Jimmy Page. I could never have Ed's patience, dealing with record companies nowadays.

**MUSICIAN:** *Peter, the Yardbirds had been on CBS—surely Clive Davis wanted Led Zeppelin.*

**GRANT:** Oh, he really did. I remember there was one big fight there at CBS, with Allen Klein. It was a little difficult because I was in business at that time with Mickie Most and Mickie was represented by Allen Klein. So when the Yardbirds were no more and Jimmy Page owned the name and I decided to form a new band, we all went to America, and I remember going to a meeting with Mickie and it was one of the big fights. Clive Davis, Dick Asher and Allen Klein said, "This is it, we're having this band, I don't care!" I said, "Ah, but there's only one thing you forgot." "What's that?" "Jimmy Page was never signed to the Yardbirds. Show me his signature. He isn't going to do anything at all." It took three hours convincing them to fuck off.

**MUSICIAN:** *How did Page end up owning the Yardbirds' name?*

**GRANT:** There was a big row amongst the Yardbirds. It was the end of a tour and there was a day off and they were offered $5000 to do a gig in Miami. Jimmy and Chris Dreja said, "Yeah, we'll do the gig," but the others said, "Screw that." $5000 was a hell of a lot of money in 1967, so there was a row and the others said, "We quit!" I said okay, but I drafted out a letter and had them sign it. It gave Jimmy the name, "The Yardbirds."

**MUSICIAN:** *And you just decided to sign Led Zeppelin to Atlantic? You didn't really talk to other record companies?*

**GRANT:** That's right. I talked to Mo Ostin; Mo really wanted the band very much. I think Atlantic was the label to be on in those days. They said to me, "We'd really like whatever band Jimmy Page gets," and things did go good. Then Dusty Springfield was at Jerry Wexler's house one night and they were playing pool and Jerry said, "Do you know this guy John Paul Jones?" and Dusty said, "Oh, he's a fantastic arranger and bass player. He's done loads of work for me." So that was another plus. The only ones who did turn them down were Pye Records. Atlantic said, "We're not particularly worried about England," so I told Pye they could have 'em for £15,000 and they threw me out of the office.

**BICKNELL:** Power in the music business has become concentrated in just a few hands. The number of top executives in the American record industry is certainly less than 50, and they bounce around. Now they're all looking for Japanese investors! And of course, what the Japanese are after is software, the other side of the equation to all that machinery they're producing.

These days far more records are being broken and many fewer careers are being established, 'cause they want rapidity of turnover, speed, short sales. It's a short-sighted view. An artist's career represents a lot of investment in terms not just of money but of time, energy, sweat and disappointment. It's much easier to take a dance record that's been made in a studio by a producer with no musicians and flog that like you flog beer glasses. You don't have to go

through the human development.

**MUSICIAN:** *And the corporation is not at the mercy of an artist.*

**BICKNELL:** We were once asked if we wanted to float Dire Straits on the stock exchange. Mark said, "Why would I want to do that?" I said, "It could make you even richer than you already are." He thought about that for a minute, then he said, "But I'd have to write songs on time!" I said, "Yup, the shareholders would want to know why you don't have a new record out." He said, "I couldn't do that!" It's a very special type of person who can do that. Andrew Lloyd Webber's the only one I can think of. And he wants to go private again.

**MUSICIAN:** *Peter, you managed to get concert promoters to swallow a change from a 50/50 split between them and the act to a 90/10 split in Led Zeppelin's favor. How'd you do it?*

**GRANT:** It was very simple for them, wasn't it? I said, "Look, there's more than one promoter." I believed so much in Led Zeppelin. Jerry Weintraub and Tom Hulett at Concerts West said, "What do you want?" I said, "I don't want anything." They said, "Well, you must want something." I said, "Let me ask you—sometimes you must lose money on deals?" They said sure. I said, "And, when you take one of these acts from an agent you've got to take six of their wankers as well." I said, "How would you like it if on every dollar we lose, you'll only lose 10 cents and we'll lose 90?" They said that would be fantastic. I said, "You've got it then. And I don't want a guarantee." That's how I got a 90/10.

**MUSICIAN:** *But did a scream not go up from other concert promoters across America begging Concerts West not to make that deal?*

**GRANT:** They didn't know what it was, that was part of the deal. Among managers it was a big thing to go to the Friar's Club in New York and talk about how "I got $55,000. I got $60,000." That's how it was in those days! I told Concerts West they could do all the dates for us except for San Francisco—Bill Graham may be a bit of a prat, but he's the best promoter in the Bay Area—and I love old Jack Hook from Pittsburgh. Also, this saved the artist 10 percent by not having an agent! We dealt directly with the promoter. It was the agents who screamed. And apparently there was a meeting in upstate New York of all the agents when this started to leak out, about what they were going to do about it.

**BICKNELL:** Jerry Weintraub and Bill Graham were really the first national concert promoters, when Bill did Bob Dylan and Jerry did Elvis Presley and Led Zeppelin. The most recent one is Michael Cole with the Stones tour. I've decided on this summer Straits tour not to do that, to be loyal to the promoters in each market that we've worked with previously. A lot of them I like personally and socially. I like promoters more than anybody else in the business, other than managers, because they're practically the only people left who still put their own money down. Why use a promoter in Los Angeles to do a gig in Miami?

**DAVIES:** The agents are very upset with people like Michael Cole. The promoters are trying to form little consortiums to go and buy tours. It's going to be very tough for agents. I think American Express has just bought Paul Simon's tour.

**BICKNELL:** The thing that's upset the apple cart in America is the national tour where the big promoter doesn't give the local guy any piece of the action, or tries to hit him up with a ridiculous deal. As was the

Stones' case. I know one promoter in Belgium who refused to put the Stones on, because of the deal. Whatever you may have read publicly, I can tell you that the deals the Stones were after were often not what they got. You've always got to give the other guy a *crack*. There's no point jamming him up to the wall, 'cause then he'll have to steal off you. Some of them will steal off you anyway. And there's a lot of ways to make money off concerts that have nothing to do with people buying tickets for the show. There's car park surcharges. There's ticket scalping.

**GRANT:** Have you ever shared in car park?

**BICKNELL:** Not to date.

**GRANT:** No. I tried that at the Forum in Los Angeles. "No, no, no, sorry, Peter."

**MUSICIAN:** *So no one's ever gotten a piece of the parking lot?*

**ALL:** No.

**MUSICIAN:** *Who gets it?*

**ALL:** The building.

**BICKNELL:** In America there are associations of hall managers, all of whom are busily saying, "Don't give 'em the car park! Don't give 'em the car park!" They're holding the line on that.

**DAVIES:** They can buy an act and even if they lose on it they're going to make money on the concessions, merchandising, parking. They're covered. They control it. The Nederlanders will buy a block of concerts, they'll buy L.A., they'll buy Chicago. They'll buy a package and if they lose at this one they'll make it up there.

**BICKNELL:** We want rental deals on buildings, we want to get the concessions down so we can sell our merchandise. It's tit for tat, so we say to the guy, "We'll do eight dates with you, all of your arenas, but in exchange we want reductions on such and such." We'll get it. But by doing that we might be placing our act in a building or a market which is not right for them. These are the things you weigh up. I'm installing a £20,000 computer system in my office to keep tabs on all this. It's taken a lot of the fun and the soul out of what we do. Money has become the focal point of the exercise instead of music. Which is unfortunate, but probably inevitable.

I'll tell you one thing, if half of these promoters were running record companies, record companies would be totally different. Take the business acumen of a rock promoter who's managed to survive for 20 years. They'd just be so much better. They're streetwise, they understand the public and they care about the acts. Most promoters are real music fans. 95 percent of the promoters I work with I will work with without a contract, for a handshake.

**DAVIES:** Europe's very much like that. More so than America I would say. Italy is the exception. [*laughter*] We have long-term relationships with these guys. Tina always goes back to the same promoters in Europe 'cause they've always done well with us when we were struggling, when she didn't even have a record deal. Now she's really big and you want them to benefit from it.

**MUSICIAN:** *You've been stiffed in America?*

**DAVIES:** I've been suing this promoter for a while. I finally got some money. It was Tina's *Private Dancer* tour in '85. We sold out the concert totally and reluctantly took a check. He went bankrupt. I never thought we'd see this money again, but he came back in a new situation [*smiles broadly*] and this year he wanted Janet Jackson! Perfect! So we finally got paid. It took five years.

**BICKNELL:** Dire Straits has played Italy twice and on both occasions been ripped off

in a manner that was so enormous that it wasn't even annoying, it was just funny. We played the stadium in Turin, which for a football match holds 60,000. There were 60,000 in the stands and the whole of the field was covered with people. We went to the promoter and said, "How many people are in?" He said, "37,363 and I have an official government stamp to prove it!" There were certainly 85,000 people there, maybe more. But the promoter's stuffing you and the copyright collection society and the government are in on the act, and if you argue too much the tires on your trucks will be shot out with a machine gun, as this same person once did to Uriah Heep. You just think, "Life's too short."

**DAVIES:** We still go to Italy because we feel we owe it to the people who want to see us, but that's the one country where we don't even try. Whatever you get as a guarantee is what you'll get. And the sad thing is that the Italian audiences are really great!

**BICKNELL:** Yes, the Italian public are great music fans, but they have a desert-like concert scene because of these twats.



One of these characters had an insurance claim going through Lloyds of London and I put an attachment on it. He owed us £80,000 and I managed to get 20 of it. And what's really amazing is that this same person called me up this year and wanted to know when he could bring the band back to Italy!

**GRANT:** I had good training for Italy.

**BICKNELL:** Yeah, you were a wrestler.

**GRANT:** In 1958 I was there for four months with Wee Willie Harris. When Zeppelin went to play at that stadium in Milan I said, "What can we actually gross there?" I got the figures. I said, "Add 30 percent, give me all the money," and I put it on the Isle of Man before we went. I'm sure he still made a bit more.

**BICKNELL:** In Italy there is no such thing as a sold-out gig. Everybody who goes gets in. Dire Straits and Led Zeppelin share one thing in common, the most frightening gig for both of us was that stadium in Milan.

**GRANT:** We got trapped in the middle. They started throwing tear gas, the promoter ran away, the security ran away and we locked ourselves in the medical center—the band, the roadies and the one driver who had the bottle to stay behind. I thought, "I'm not gonna make it, I'm not very good at running."

**BICKNELL:** I've had a gun held at my head in Italy, which was fired off in the air just to prove it was loaded. I've been arrested twice, I've been threatened that the band would be kidnapped, that their wives would be kidnapped, that Magic Glue would be put in the truck locks. It's far easier to play in Yugoslavia than in Italy.

**MUSICIAN:** *What will the recession in the U.S. mean to this summer's tours?*

**BICKNELL:** I'm worried about it. Definitely. America responds much more to changes in energy prices. Ticket prices have to get realistic, you've got to give good value, a long show, support acts. We're doing a sponsorship with Philips CD players, the only product we'd endorse. They'll do in-store displays and TV ads. You have to get everything going for you. The *acts* have got to get less greedy. Lots of artists just want the most money and sod the public. Jagger says anybody who goes into this business who doesn't make as much money as they can is a fool. Now the Stones played great, which goes a long way towards making it up to the punter who got ripped off at the concession stand and everywhere else.

**GRANT:** What I find appalling is when support acts are asked to *pay* to be on a gig.

Ringo's son Zack Starkey's band wanted to play at a club called the Borderline in London and they had to pay. That's appalling!

**DAVIES:** It happens all the time. We asked a band if they wanted to open for Tina at Wembley and they asked me what it would cost them.

**MUSICIAN:** *What does it cost to rent a 20,000-seat arena?*

**DAVIES:** Usually the rent deal would be a minimum of $35,000 against a percentage—perhaps 27 percent of the gross—plus the union plus the facility fee. You could pay as much as $80,000.

**BICKNELL:** You could pay more. One of the great jokes in our business is the overtime charge at Madison Square Garden. You get a bill of one or two hundred thousand dollars because you overran by 20 minutes.

**GRANT:** In '77 Madison Square Garden was $25,000 to rent—but the facility fee was $45,000.

**BICKNELL:** We played a well-known arena in this country a few years ago and got a bill for £600 per day to put our name on the outside of the building. They charge you for the dressing room furniture, which is in there already!

**GRANT:** And all the punters have to sit there with freezing cold feet unless you drop some money to the fella to turn the ice off.

**MUSICIAN:** *Are big acts watching each other's plans more closely this year?*

**BICKNELL:** Yes, this is the first year I've ever had at least half a dozen agents and managers of other big acts ring me up and ask what we were doing. Because I was working further ahead than them I already had mine in place, so they're avoiding me.

**DAVIES:** I did the same thing with Tina last year. Tina did 123 dates and played to 3 million people. As I knew the Stones, Madonna and Prince were all going out, I made sure we had tickets on sale early—before Christmas. I wanted to get the jump and it worked.

**MUSICIAN:** *Peter, as always the possibility of a Led Zeppelin reunion hangs over the well-laid plans of every other act. Are there contingency plans ready in case Robert Plant drops his objections to a Zeppelin tour?*

**GRANT:** I know that the various promoters have it worked out. I get calls constantly. But whether they'll ever do it, I don't know. Robert doesn't want to.

**BICKNELL:** Their strength is in North America. I know that in the conversations between them they've set aside—if they are going to do it at all—July to October of 1991. And the primary thing would be the States. I don't think they'd do Europe or the Far East.

**GRANT:** They'd play North America, the U.K., possibly Rio.

**BICKNELL:** It's power, but it's also a temptation. They lost a musician who was absolutely intrinsic to what they were. I suspect Robert doubts whether it's worth recreating something which isn't the same, just for a lot of money.

**GRANT:** Taking a risk to blow their credit.

**BICKNELL:** The two reunions they've done...

**GRANT:** Have been disasters. Atlantic was dreadful.

**BICKNELL:** And do they want to go the nostalgia route, like the Who did? Or do they do a new record? If they do a new record they can't tour until 1992. And then you've got to keep these three very wealthy guys interested.

**GRANT:** To me, personally, it could never be the same. It just couldn't.

**BICKNELL:** The reason many of these acts are out again is because the money they could make touring now is a million light

years from what they made in the '60s.

**DAVIES:** Pink Floyd never made that kind of money before.

**GRANT:** In the '70s $50 or $60,000 was big money.

**BICKNELL:** Now I'm offered guarantees of $300,000 upward.

**DAVIES:** I think a few of the Stones needed the money.

**GRANT:** The Who as well. Pete must be fairly well off 'cause he wrote all the songs.

**BICKNELL:** Remember, as rock stars' wealth comes through the letterbox, the letterbox gets wider, the door gets bigger, the lifestyle more expensive. Roger Daltrey's sitting down in Sussex with his trout farm. His kids are 17, 18. They want cars. Old Roger's ringing up his bank saying, "How much is in the account?" Then [manager] Bill Curbishley rings him up and says, "Well, boys, there's the possibility of another 70 million quid. We've got to start working on Pete. We'll get him a plastic box to stand in, fill his ears with cotton and give him an acoustic guitar."

It takes on a scale that boggles the mind. Pete told me it costs him 800 quid a week to look after the lawns at his house. Well, then, it must cost George Harrison eight *grand* a week. I actually got out of the car to touch George Harrison's grass! It's like velvet. He's got something like 40 gardeners.

**MUSICIAN:** *What's the relation between agents and promoters like?*

**DAVIES:** In the old days a promoter could buy an act for a set fee and whatever profit he made was his. Nowadays agents go in and screw the promoters with such tough deals that the profit margin is very minimal.

**BICKNELL:** In America often the agent allows the promoter to make his money on "expenses." They'll put in as a show cost an advertising budget that is ludicrously high. Another way some promoters in America make money is scalping.

**DAVIES:** The agent has to book 10 more acts that year with that promoter. They don't want to burn him totally 'cause he'll say, "No, I don't want to take your next act."

**BICKNELL:** Every city in America has the number one guy and then there's usually quite a drop down to numbers two and three. Who say, "Why can't I get your band to play for me instead of the big promoter?" I'm afraid when you're carrying a £60,000 a day overhead you can't afford, in the words of Maurice White in *Hit Men*, to be the other guy's experiment. Promoting these days is getting the stage right, the P.A. right, the toilets sorted out.

**DAVIES:** With Tina or Janet we have about 85 people on the road. 12 to 15 trucks. Our overhead would be 75 to a hundred thousand dollars a day. Maybe a bit more.

**BICKNELL:** We're looking at 60–70,000 dollars a day for indoor shows, for outdoor shows 100 to 125. That's before the musicians get anything. By doing a sponsorship deal with Philips we get their new video screens—video screens are very expensive.

**GRANT:** That's blowing my mind. Led Zeppelin's last tour was '77. We had eight trucks, sound and lights and a bus to take the crew around. It was $15,750 a night. I remember thinking how expensive it was. When Jimmy did the bowing with his guitar there was a sheet of lightning. People said, "How do you do that?" We had an arc welder with a mirror. It cost nothing but the effect was fantastic.

Zeppelin never carried support acts, but when we did Knebworth we had to, because the kids were going to be coming in for hours and they had to be entertained.

**BICKNELL**: And Dire Straits turned it down. Yeah, they weren't ready. They'd been playing the Hope and Anchor the week before, Peter, and you wanted us to play for 400,000 people.

**GRANT**: It was good judgment from you. Dire Straits was the band that was coming, that's why we wanted them on there. I take my hat off to you, because I remember upping the money. What did I offer? Twelve thousand pounds?

**BICKNELL**: More than that. It was such a large amount I had to go lie down.

**GRANT**: I think it was £25,000 for one date—which was a lot of money.

**BICKNELL**: Yeah. Then you asked us to play two! 'Cause you did the following week. The biggest crowd they'd ever played to was about 3000, and these shows were set to do 200,000 people each. Dire Straits would have been wandering out on Led Zeppelin's show with Led Zeppelin's sound, no lights because it was daytime. We had done one outdoor gig not long before with the Police and the Police just blew us off. Because the Police just went for it and we were being too timid. The Straits are now expert at playing outdoors. Tina's a classic example of somebody who can work a big crowd just beautifully.

**DAVIES**: But it was a big transformation for her to go from playing the Ritz to playing football stadiums. Tina could go onstage with a follow spot, but we realized we had to have the video screens and big production, because that's what people expect nowadays. The reason I've gone after sponsorship and big advances on merchandising on our last three tours is to cover my expenses. 'Cause we'll spend over a million on start-up costs, and it's hard to take that out of your pocket.

**MUSICIAN**: *These great costs and high expectations are why a lot of people are lip-syncing. Janet Jackson's one of the people who always gets flack for that.*

**DAVIES**: I was fairly shocked, actually. I'd never been involved in that. Janet's attitude is, it's a new age. It's something Tina Turner couldn't relate to—Tina wouldn't know what a Synclavier was. Janet's a video artist and her opinion is that her following—whether it's right or wrong, I didn't have a lot of say in the matter—want to see the video recreated. Her dance moves and choreography are so intricate that there's no possible way that you could sing and recreate the exact moves. I think if you asked her audience they'd probably agree. And it was her first tour and I think her brother may have done it in the past as well. Certainly Madonna and a lot of other acts out there are doing it. I mean, she didn't lip-sync the whole show.

**BICKNELL**: There's a kind of band—including Zeppelin, Dire Straits and Tina—who are presenting music and songs. The show is part of that, but it's not dominant. The Madonnas and Janet Jacksons are presenting something which really equates with *West Side Story*. You wouldn't consider it peculiar if you went to a large stage musical and artists lip-synced.

**DAVIES**: It's been going on on Broadway and in movies for years. Natalie Wood didn't sing those songs.

**BICKNELL**: Madonna's taken Broadway into stadiums. The question is, should the public know? My view is that 99 per cent of the Janet Jackson/Michael Jackson public would not care at all.

**MUSICIAN**: *But if the fans wouldn't care—why not tell them?*

**DAVIES**: But how do you tell them? What I find really annoying is these senators trying to get publicity by passing these bills. Aren't

there more important problems in their communities than worrying about lip-syncing? That is total political bullshit. I don't know. Would you put a big sign up? Maybe you should put a notice in the program: "Parts of tonight's show are pre-recorded."

**GRANT:** I don't think you should say anything. You're right.

**DAVIES:** This has been going on forever. I mean, how many live albums are really live? How many drummers play on records now?

**BICKNELL:** All these things simply reflect the technology that's available to people. When Synclaviers and Fairlights came along it gave people that opportunity. It's been more primitive in the past, but now the con can be pulled off with almost perfect execution. We take a Synclavier on the road, but Guy Fletcher plays it as one of the keyboards. We have a human being play the keyboard, but the result is the sound of a symphony orchestra. Are we conning the public?

**MUSICIAN:** *No, of course not.*

**BICKNELL:** What if the same keyboard player pre-recorded a tape of it and then the sound guy turned it on at the proper moment? To me it's a very narrow line.

**MUSICIAN:** *This may be applying an athletic standard to music, but I think that as long as there's a chance of that keyboard player hitting a bum note, it's legitimate. 'Cause then when he gets through it without hitting a bum note he's earned his applause.*

**BICKNELL:** Fair enough. But whatever we sitting around this room say, this is going to become more and more a part of live performance. We have a generation of kids coming up who see popular music on television. Their demands are different from ours.

**MUSICIAN:** *Let's talk about your relationship with the artist.*

**GRANT:** An act needs somebody who's not just telling them, "Oh, that was great!" You do get a lot of managers who are like that to artists. They don't want to hear that, do they?

**BICKNELL:** The bigger you are the less likely you are to hear the truth. Also, if Led Zeppelin went out in New York and urinated on the front rows, they'd still get a standing ovation.

**DAVIES:** Time after time, after Tina's had the worst gig, the record company comes in saying, "It was great! It was great!" Now sometimes *I've* come back and said it was a great show, only to find out the band hated it because the monitors were bad or there was feedback onstage.

**BICKNELL:** Of course, a lot of artists are seduced by flattery.

**DAVIES:** I've had the situation where no one was *allowed* to say anything negative backstage! Certain acts do want yes-men. Whereas Tina figures, if she wasn't going to listen to me why did she hire me?

**BICKNELL:** If I might brown-nose Roger for a minute, the thing he did for Tina that was most important was to find the material that she's been recording since *Private Dancer.* Tina Turner's always been a great performer, always looked good. When Roger got involved she was a little bit frayed around the edges, let's say. There was a tatty ostrich feather protruding from her rear quarters and the wig was definitely a bit of a worry. Songs are very important. My great advantage is that I've got a guy who writes everything. Same with Zeppelin—they either wrote it or they plagiarized it. [*laughter*]

**GRANT:** I remember a conversation one night between Jimmy Page and Mick Jagger. They said, "Between us we've had the best of Chess." [*laughter*]

**BICKNELL:** Roger and I still let artists come into our offices and say, "We want you

to manage us." You'd be amazed at some of the characters that walk through the doors. I always say, "I can only work with what you give me." You might be the greatest act in the world but if you only sit in your garret making tapes and cutting your ear off what am I going to do with it?

They come in and immediately announce what they're *not* going to do. "I don't want to do videos, I don't want to meet the record company, I don't want to do in-stores." They want a shortcut, they want the result without the work.

I once had an artist who cancelled a £109,000 video shoot the night before because he had a sore throat. I said, "But you're *miming*!" He cancelled the shoot, we lost 22 grand, and he blamed me because I hadn't insured him against having a sore throat. Needless to say, we parted company.

**GRANT:** You can't indulge them. Once you do you're a goner.

**BICKNELL:** This same artist, the week after I took him on, had to go to Paris. I got him a car, sent him to the airport. He phoned me. "I missed my flight."

"Well, it's a shuttle. There'll be another one along in an hour."

"You do realize I usually have people to put me on planes."

I said, "Look, you're 43 years old now, you must be able to get yourself from the check-in desk to the departure lounge!"

"No."

This person was simply the result of 15 years spent with somebody who'd done that for him. If you take a 20-year-old and do everything for him, put his nappies on in the morning and wipe his bum, you'll end up with a vegetable. You may end up with a money-producing, performing vegetable, but it will be a vegetable.

**GRANT:** I knew an artist whose puppy drowned in the river. He knew there'd be hell about it from his wife, so he got the road crew to get another dog, a ringer. Only thing—it was a bitch! But it lasted a week before the wife found out.

**BICKNELL:** The trap to avoid is the one at the very beginning—when the first call comes that the artist wants a limousine that he can't really afford. But you say yes. Soon the laundry is going out in the limousine.

In bands it helps to reduce the democratic process to the absolute minimum. You know where democracy in bands inevitably breaks down? Picking photos for the album cover.

I once went to a Frankie Goes to Hollywood session and asked [producer] Trevor Horn, "Where's the band?" He said, "What do we need them for?"

**DAVIES:** I've watched sessions where people have spent five hours dropping in one word on a vocal track. Ludicrous. Before Tina had much going she was asked by Martin Ware to fly over and sing the Temptations' "Ball of Confusion" for an album of modern arrangements of old songs. She rang me up and said, "It was incredible! There was no band! There was just these guys typing things into TV sets and brass was coming out!" She had no idea! And they couldn't believe that she sang it in one take.

**BICKNELL:** If Miles Davis could make *Sketches of Spain* in three days, why does it take Fleetwood Mac two years?

**MUSICIAN:** *Put Miles Davis next to Stevie Nicks, Ed, and you might get a clue.*

**GRANT:** The first Zeppelin album cost £1800, including the cover. Also we had a rule: you don't rehearse or write songs in the studio.

**DAVIES:** I met with an artist the other day who said, "I want a 48-track studio at my

disposal 24 hours a day, in my house, so if I wake up at four in the morning with an idea I can put it down.

**GRANT:** That's rubbish! Put it down on a little tape recorder.

**BICKNELL:** When an act's had a couple of hits they can go to the record company and demand virtually anything and the record company will do it. It isn't in my interest to say this, but I sometimes wonder, "Why on earth don't they tell me to sod off?" But they won't. Too many acts are allowed to indulge themselves. And of course, ultimately it's the artist's money.

**GRANT:** But if it's the artist's money why don't the managers say, "Oh, come on now, don't do it"?

**BICKNELL:** You're quite right, Peter. But you know as well as I do that many, probably most, managers indulge their acts in the same way the record company does.

Late in my sojourn with the artist I talked about earlier, he was about to go off to do a promotion tour of Australia and New Zealand. I said to one of my peons, "Go down to the video shoot and check his passport." The guy rings me back and says, "He needs a new passport." I said, "Get the photographer down there to do some shots." So we got the shots, got the artist to sign a form, took it to the embassy and got the passport. I said, "Take it 'round to his house and shove it through the letter box." He did. The phone rings. It's the artists' wife: "Um, he's destroyed his passport."

"Why?"

"He hadn't approved the photograph." [*laughter*]

Now, he's got to leave England for tax reasons. I just started laughing. I said to the wife, "I'll tell you one thing. Nobody who works for me is going to go get him another one. Where is it at the moment?"

She said, "It's in the dustbin."

I said, "Go get it." Clip clop clip clop clip clop. I said, "Now, what state is it in?"

She said, "It's all crumpled up and there's a heel mark on the cover. He jumped up and down on it."

I said, "Go and get your ironing board, get a wet cloth and iron the passport." You know what was wrong with the photograph? He was smiling.

**MUSICIAN:** *Have any of you ever audited a record company and not found money?*

**DAVIES:** No.

**BICKNELL:** No. Also, most American record companies will resist paying interest on audit claims. In Britain it's the law.

**GRANT:** I've always been satisfied.

**BICKNELL:** Peter goes in with a big bag. One of the things that pops up in every audit of an American record company is a problem with "sales to military bases." [*laughter*]

**GRANT:** Oh yes! The armed forces!

**BICKNELL:** The armed forces on Guam have been getting too many records at too low a price.

**MUSICIAN:** *Ed, when you renegotiated Dire Straits' contract with Warners did you win the right to audit at the pressing plant?*

**GRANT & DAVIES:** Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!

**BICKNELL:** Uh, I can't comment on that, Bill. That's a bit below the belt. [*laughter*] We have some unusual provisions in our agreement but I can't confirm or deny the one you just put to me. Anyway, having the right to do things doesn't always mean you do them. By the way, in all new record contracts the territory you're contracted for is no longer the world. Now it's the *universe*!

**MUSICIAN:** *Even when you get to heaven...*

**BICKNELL:** I'll still be hearing "Sultans of Swing." Oh God...

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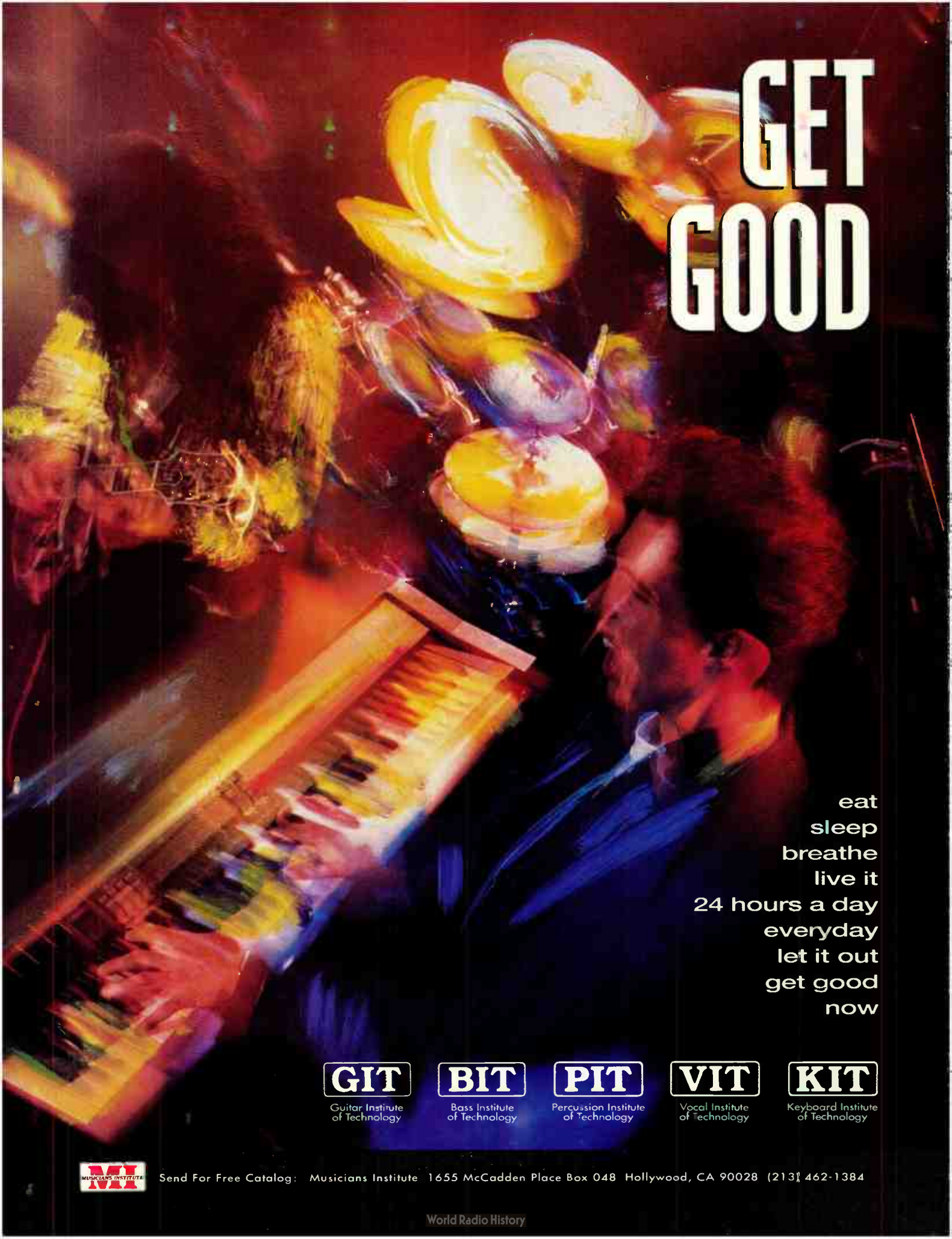

GUITAR

# LONNIE MACK PULLS A WHAMMY

## The shake and rattle of an original twang bar king

*By* Rick Mattingly

"I'M PROBABLY THE ONLY GUITARIST who has a callus on the pinky of his *right* hand," Lonnie Mack laughs. "From hangin' onto that Bigsby."

Strapping on his red Flying V, Mack rests the Bigsby whammy bar snugly in the third joint of his pinky and rips off a couple of blues licks. It sounds like he's employing the usual left-hand vibrato and string-bending, but his left hand is just fretting; the whammy bar messes with the notes.

"I mostly use it for raising the pitch," Mack says. "That way I can bend notes without pushing so hard. Sometimes I'll bend as far as I can with my left hand, and if it doesn't reach I'll pull up on the Bigsby. Occasionally I pull it so far the spring falls out."

It also affects his picking: "On a lot of lead stuff, I'm picking up instead of down. As you pick upwards, you want to pull up at the same time. If I pick down, I have a tendency to want to push the Bigsby down, and that ain't what I'm after." Mack also enjoys using the whammy for a vibrato effect. "In the old days," he says, "I used Magnatone amps, and they had a vibrato which I liked to use to get an organ effect. It wasn't a tremolo that just moved the volume up and down; it actually moved the pitch. But Magnatones just aren't powerful enough nowadays, so if I don't have vibrato on the amp, I get it with the bar. I can just use it on the long notes or chords, where I need it, and choose the speed according to the tempo of the song."

When playing low notes, Mack will occasionally push the bar down to drop them even more. "I was listening to Merle Travis and Chet Atkins, and they would lower the pitch on a chord and bring it back. I tried to do that by sliding my left hand back one fret. But then a friend of mine got a guitar that had a bar, so I got a Bigsby. From then on, I put one on every guitar I got a hold of."

When Lonnie first attached the Bigsby to his Kalamazoo guitar, it was known as a vibrato unit. Somewhere along the way, people started referring to it as a whammy bar. "I've been told that it's because of a song I did called 'Wham': People would say, 'Use that "Wham" bar.'" Of course, there are other designations. "An old Louisiana boy named Bucky Lindsay used to tell me, 'Shake that 'coon's dick!'"

Mack's trademark Flying V has the same Bigsby he installed in '58. "I changed the

*Photograph: Greg Whitaker*

spring once," he says. "With the new bars, if you barely touch them you're [detuning] all over the place; if you try to hold onto it, it's going to sound like a dogfight in a parking lot."

Lonnie concedes that the Bigsby has a more limited range than other units, since it only bends down about a whole step and up a half. "You can't dive-bomb with it. But *because* they don't have as much range, they seem to stay in tune better than other bars."

On all his Bigsbys, Lonnie sands down the lip at the bar's bolt-in point that prevents it from being rotated over the strings. "That way I can pick on the low strings and still hold it. Otherwise I would have to play at a weird angle." Mack strums a few chords using the whammy to full effect, producing tremolos and downward bends that recall everything you ever hated about surf music. "There are a lot of crazy things you can do," he smiles, "but it's really simple. I like it that way."

BASS

# HARMONIC SUBJECTIVITY

## Hyperbassist Michael Manring taps the imagination

*By* Matt Resnicoff

EXPRESSION IS WHAT IT'S ALL about, trying to say something about me, about where we all are now, something that relates to what's *been* happening but hopefully takes form as a new idea. We're a very progressive culture, and if I played in an existing style, I would feel I was not really saying all that needed to be said."

Michael Manring is trying to justify the thrashing he's given the conventions of electric bass on his new *Drastic Measures* and on numerous recordings with Michael Hedges, Montreux and others. The guy seems gentle enough, but he's a deeply disturbed young man: playing several parts of a piece at once, melodicizing harmonics all over the place, juggling the five dozen tunings stored up in the switchable bridge of his doubleneck Zon bass. Manring lives for the challenge. Playing jazz came too easy to be much fun, so his diatonic textures represent both a heady statement and a personalized new direction. They also demand knowing just how far out of tune you can get without blowing it.

"You're never done working on intonation," he says. "It's not something you work on for a year and then you've got it and you're done. You do it forever. I hung out with people who had better sense of intonation and would bust me for not playing in tune. There's an inborn degree to which you have that ability, and then a degree to which you can develop it. If you work with someone who really can hear in tune, you get so you understand that it's mostly an objective concept—at least in the West, at any rate," he laughs.

Early in his practice day Michael sets up a sine-tone synth drone of, say, a root and fifth, and practices playing against it slowly, until any detuned beats disappear. He might play along with sequenced scales moving at different tempos. What if you don't have MIDI gear? "Use your open strings," he advises. "One of the best exercises is to keep playing every note in the key of E on your bass, using the E string as a drone. It's tough. It's harder when you get into altered tunings because the notes shift: the higher a string is tuned, the flatter you have to play the closed notes, so it gets really crazy. But if you care about it you can get there. Nobody ever plays in tune all the time, but you can get close."

If Manring's dizzying speed doesn't get you, you'll probably be lulled by his chiming compositions. The best exercises he's seen for harmonics are from the second German Simandl upright bass book; he got the rest studying with Jaco. "One of his main things was using harmonics on fretless," Manring notes, "because the harmonics are always a pitched reference; they ring and you can do other stuff. So that's an irrefutable concept, and the challenge is coming up with new

Photograph: David Peterson

# MUSICAL CREATIVITY TAKING SHAPE.



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ways to deal with that.

"One thing I guess I invented—I've never heard anybody do it, but I don't think anybody ever invents anything in music—is what I call ghost harmonics. Tap a note at a harmonic node. If you let up carefully, the harmonic there will also sound." Michael taps a fast figure from his piece "Thunder Tactics" and is left with a rich wash of notes. "In certain positions, the note of the harmonic is a different tone than the closed tone, so you get two notes with one stroke." Michael does pull-off harmonics, where the left hand bars lightly over a harmonic node and the right taps and pulls off from a higher fundamental; the return pitch is the original harmonic. "Another thing is bridge harmonics: If you're playing two closed notes, you can do two harmonics at the bridge and get a very full chord. Select any chord, and if you happen to be playing around where there's a harmonic, hitting it—or them—will give you a four-note chord instead of just a double-stop."

Michael's ideas work nicely with the few harmonics available in standard tuning, but are more useful when the bass is retuned. Try tuning, low to high, to C, G, D, A. Or E, B, D, A. Or C, G, D, G. Right now he's in B flat, F, B flat, F, and by barring the harmonics over where the seventh or fifth fret would be, he produces dulcet V and I chords. "It's so simple," he says encouragingly, "but it opens up a lot of new sounds.

"I have to force myself to do things that are easy," he continues. "Doing something that's hard on your brain—that's when I'm finding something. I was always lucky—like, I can blow on 'Giant Steps.' I have infinite respect for that, but somehow that wasn't deep enough. To play 'Giant Steps' in 1991 is such a different thing than to play it when 'Trane wrote it.

"Great jazz players are always challenging themselves. Everybody else uses things that are just sort of *there*. 'Trane was trying to get out of that, writing changes where you couldn't use all that stuff everyone had learned. You had to look for new ways of dealing with music, and I guess my world is another way; it became harder for me to play my music, and somehow I felt it belonged to me more. When I play jazz I'm borrowing somebody else's music, almost taking more than I'm giving. I have to keep digging in my heart and in my brain, and if I rest too much on a comfortable place, I feel I'm cheating myself."

DRUMS

# THE NEVILLES' NEW ORLEANS GROOVE

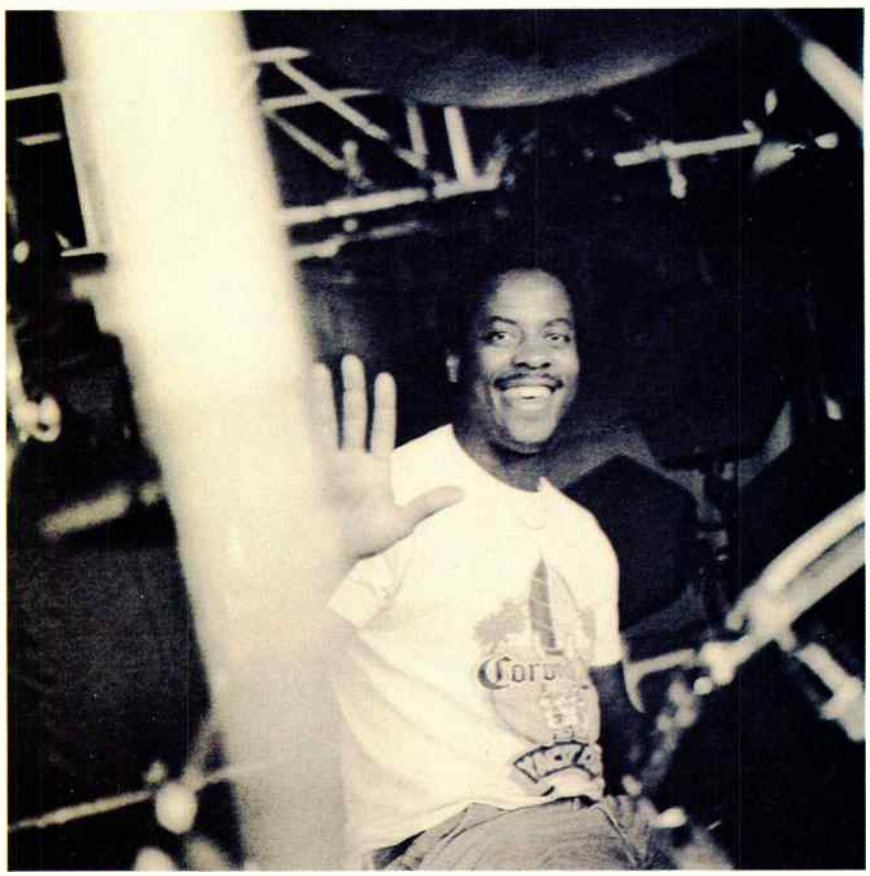
## Willie Green's second-line rhythms

*By* Rick Mattingly

"IF SOMEONE WANTS TO learn New Orleans music," the Neville Brothers' Willie Green says, "they have to come down here and soak some of this stuff up. Maybe go to some funerals."

Green is one of the leading purveyors of New Orleans drumming—a style that encompasses funk seasoned with "second-line" rhythms. "When I was coming up," Green explains, "the second line was like a funeral band. They'd play a sad song while taking the casket to the grave. But then, after the preacher said all he had to say, they would play Dixieland stuff like 'When the Saints Go Marchin' In,' with this second-line type of groove. Everybody would be dancing behind that; there could be a line of people a mile long. There's something natural about the music that just makes you get into this spiritual type of dance. If you're from here, you can feel it; if not, you might look at it and say, 'What in the hell kind of dance is *that*?'"

In a parade band the drumming is handled by two players: one on snare drum, the other using a bass drum with an inverted cymbal attached. That drummer would be



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playing busy, syncopated rhythms with his right hand on the bass drum. There would be a specific rhythm feel, but the pattern would not necessarily repeat. "Nothing is in the same spot at no time," Willie laughs, "even when the turnaround comes and they go back to that part. In a way it's the same, but when they come back, they add more to it."

While the drummer would be playing that with one hand, his other hand would be striking the cymbal. "They play the offbeats on that cymbal," Willie says. "A lot of guys take a clothes hanger and bend it 'round, like a circle, hold it on the end with the hook and hit the cymbal with that. That way, you get that bite from two pieces of metal hitting together, which you don't get with a stick."

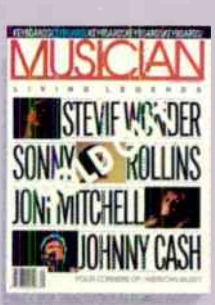
When doing a second-line–type tune with the Nevilles, Green often forsakes the snare drum so he can play the rhythm with his right-hand stick—in the manner of the funeral parade drummers—using a tom-tom instead of the bass drum; the left hand plays hi-hat offbeats. "On 'Fire and Brimstone' from *Yellow Moon*," he says, "I'm playing a second-line beat like that. The Dirty Dozen Brass Band is the horn section on that, and you can hear second-line stuff on their albums, too. On 'Steer Me Right' from our album *Brother's Keeper*, I played on a Chinese floor tom. But the producer

## GREEN MACHINES

**WILLIE GREEN uses a Remo 22" bass drum and Remo power toms with diameters of 10", 12", 13", 16" and 18". "I like to go up and then come down," he says; "I don't like just high and low with no middle." His primary snare is an 8x12 Sonor made of 12-ply birch ("a mama"), and he has a 5½x14 Winkler as a backup. He also uses a 14" timbale. The toms have Remo Pinstripe heads on the tops and clear Diplomats on the bottoms; the snare has a Remo Black Dot head. The bass drum is fitted on the front with a black Remo head with a 16" diameter hole, and has a Winkler muffler inside. His cymbals are all Zildjians: two 16" K crashes, a 17" K Brilliant crash, a 20" China Boy High, a 20" A ride, two 10" splashes (an A and a K) and 14" K Brilliant hi-hats.**

**Willie uses a Gibraltar rack system for his kit, as well as a Gibraltar double-bass pedal. The hi-hat pedal is by Drum Workshop. Willie's sticks are Pro-Mark 2S.**


33
**The Clash**
Ronald Shannon Jackson




115
**Stevie Wonder**
Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash


99
**Boston**
Kinks, Year in Rock '86

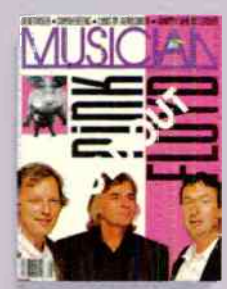

84
**John Cougar Mellencamp**
Bryan Ferry, Maurice White


105
**John Coltrane**
Springsteen, Replacements


104
**Springsteen**
Progressive Percussion


109
**George Harrison**
Mick Jagger, Crazy Horse

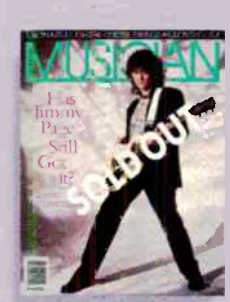

71
**Heavy Metal**
Dream Syndicate, George Duke




118
**Pink Floyd**
New Order, Smithereens

# BACK ISSUES

21... **Brian Eno,** Talking Heads, Weather Report
24... **Bob Marley,** Weather Report, Punk Rock
28... **Dire Straits,** Roxy Music, Robert Fripp
30... **Bruce Springsteen,** Robert Fripp, Miles Davis
32... **David Byrne,** Talking Heads, Brian Eno
33... **The Clash,** Robert Fripp, Joe Strummer
34... **Tom Petty,** Dave Edmonds, L.A. Punk
36... **Grateful Dead,** Frank Zappa, Australian Rock
37... **Reggae,** The Rolling Stones, Rickie Lee Jones
45... **Willie Nelson,** John McLaughlin, the Motels
64... **Stevie Wonder,** Reggae 1984, Ornette Coleman
67... **Thomas Dolby,** Chet Baker, Alarm, Marcus Miller
70... **Peter Wolf,** King Crimson, Boss/Drum Special
71... **Heavy Metal,** Dream Syndicate, George Duke
77... **John Fogerty,** Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
93... **Peter Gabriel,** Steve Winwood, Lou Reed
94... **Jimi Hendrix,** The Cure, 38 Special
99... **Boston,** Kinks, Year in Rock '86
101... **Psychedelic Furs,** Elton John, Miles Davis
102... **Robert Cray,** Los Lobos, Simply Red
104... **Springsteen,** Progressive Percussion
105... **John Coltrane,** Springsteen II, Replacements
108... **U2,** Tom Waits, Squeeze
112... **McCartney,** Bass Special, Buster Poindexter
113... **Robert Plant,** INXS, Wynton Marsalis
115... **Stevie Wander, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash**
116... **Sinéad O'Connor,** Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
117... **Jimmy Page,** Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole
118... **Pink Floyd,** New Order, Smithereens
119... **Billy Gibbons,** Santana/Shorter, Vernon Reid
120... **Keith Richards,** Steve Forbert, Crowded House
121... **Prince,** Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
122... **Guns N' Roses,** Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns
123... **The Year in Music,** Metallica, Jack Bruce
124... **Replacements,** Fleetwood Mac, Lyle Lovett
125... **Elvis Castello,** Bobby Brown, Jeff Healey
126... **Lou Reed,** John Cale, Joe Satriani
127... **Miles Davis,** Fine Young Cannibals, XTC
128... **Peter Gabriel,** Charles Mingus, Drum Special
129... **The Who,** The Cure, Ziggy Marley
130... **10,000 Maniacs,** John Cougar Mellencamp, Jackson Browne
131... **Jeff Beck,** Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
132... **Don Henley,** Rolling Stones, Bob Marley
133... **The '80s,** Studio Special
134... **The Grateful Dead,** Stevie Ray Vaughan, Paul Kelly
135... **Aerosmith,** Acoustic Guitar Special
136... **Eric Clapton,** Kate Bush, Soundgarden
137... **George Harrison,** Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
138... **Tom Petty,** Lenny Kravitz, Rush
139... **Paul McCartney,** Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
140... **Robert Plant,** Suzanne Vega, Drum Special
141... **Jimi Hendrix,** David Bowie, Bob Mcormountain
142... **Sinéad O'Connor,** John Hiatt, World Poetry
143... **Steve Vai,** Michael Stipe, Guitar Special
144... **INXS,** the Neville, Lou Reed/Vaclav Havel
146... **Slash,** the Waterboys, the Replacements
147... **Robert Johnson,** Bruce Hornsby, MacealPorker
148... **Pink Floyd,** Neil Young, Bill Wyman
149... **Jerry Garcia and Elvis Costello,** Pink Floyd, N.W.A.




117
**Jimmy Page**
Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole

115


112
**McCartney**
Bass Special, Buster Poindexter


86
**Joni Mitchell**
Simple Minds, Hall & Oates


114
**John Lennon**
James Taylor, Robyn Hitchcock


116
**Sinéad O'Connor**
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118 119 120 121
122 123 124 125
126 127 128 129
130 131 132 133
134 135 136 137
138 139 140 141
142 143 144 146
147 148 149

took out a lot of that and just left the bass drum and the timbale fills." Nevertheless, Green's bass-drum accents and the other musicians' rhythms give you a good sense of what the second-line groove is about.

Growing up just outside New Orleans, Green began his career playing more commercial music. "I didn't know about second-line or Dixieland or any of that," he says. "I still remember the first night I got with the Neville Brothers and played 'Hey Pocky Way.' That beat was like, 'Where's the "one"?' So Zig [Meters drummer Joseph 'Zigaboo' Modeliste] was the person I had to listen at to understand their music, because it was in that same vein as the Meters. That helped me learn New Orleans stuff, but I never sat down with him and had him show me a beat or anything. I listened to a lot of New Orleans drummers, and when you do that, you can't really give credit to nobody. It's like you're writing a story, and you're just taking different things from what you see and writing them down."

Although Green studied Modeliste's style to get an understanding of New Orleans rhythms, he didn't copy it. Where Zig tended to be very busy with a loose feel (some considered it sloppy), Willie's style is more economical, precise. "I always wanted to be clean," Willie says, "so you could understand every beat. I don't bring one crash in until the last one fades out, so you can hear the difference. I'm not just going to cram a lot of shit in there and hope that you understand what I'm playing."

Drumming in the open-handed style, with his left hand riding the hi-hat or cymbal and his right on the snare, helps Green keep his playing under control. "If I cross my hands," Willie explains, "my hi-hat gets stronger and my snare gets softer. But when I play open, everything balances out. When you're crossed, it's like you have to pick the right hand up to let the left go down. And some drummers have their hi-hats up so high that their hands don't hit together and the backbeat is a little behind. When I play open, I'm right on top of it.

"It takes a while to develop," he continues, "but once you get it, it's something you can feel proud about. I just had to develop not having my left leg do what my left hand would do. Once I got it divided up so all four of my limbs were doing something different, and neither one was paying attention to the other ones, that's when it was, 'Yes, the shit is happening!'" Ⓜ

PERFORMANCE

# INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

*By* Charles M. Young

THE LAST TIME I WENT TO THE ACADEMY, A VENERABLE BROADWAY THEATER ACROSS THE street from the *New York Times*, the place reeked of urine from the homeless men who had taken up residence in the absence of plays. Since the Butthole Surfers were performing, the miasma was somehow fitting. For Nine Inch Nails, I was hoping the place had been disinfected, even if the theme of the evening was the stench of post-modern culture. All I smelled were fresh sweat, spilled beer and cigarette smoke, so I give the Academy's janitors an enthusiastic thumb up.

WHO
*Nine Inch Nails, Die Warzau, Chem Lab*
WHERE
*The Academy, New York*
WHEN
*January 24, 1991*

Chem Lab had a Stooges-in-a-groove approach that held everyone's interest far better than the average bottom of the bill. Their singer inspired the question, "What's this guy's problem?" which was the correct effect for this crowd of alienated—and why not?—college students. Like most "industrial" bands, their instrumentation was post-industrial. No one played the air conditioning duct or the jackhammer; they just had a cabinet of electronic weirdness and a guitarist with incredibly bad posture.

Die Warzau did not inspire the question, "What is this guy's problem?" The singer said right up front exactly what it was: the war in the Middle East. He urged everyone not to register for the draft and, by rock 'n' roll exhortation standards, was pretty coherent. Thus where Chem Lab created a late-'70s atmosphere of everyone being random atoms in a meaningless universe, Die Warzau wanted us to unite and defeat fascism, a friendly ray of solidarity from the '60s. Both riff and groove were mostly in the percussion, but I couldn't tell if it was by design or accident. The guitarist kept kicking over the keyboard, so some of their electronic weirdness was apparently not working. The crowd clearly enjoyed feeling moral while dancing and chanting.

Nine Inch Nails were wonderful. They combined disco groove with screaming punk catharsis and imaginative song structures. People danced, and there was nothing "cool" or reserved or hierarchical about it. Leader Trent Reznor and guitarist Richard Patrick (a shaved wraith covered with cornstarch) immediately started throwing cups of beer and water at people, dissolving the invisible wall between audience and performer. I've never seen so much stage-diving outside of hardcore.

"When we turn up the abusiveness we win over the crowd," explained Reznor after the set. "If I see someone staring at us with his arms crossed 20 rows back, I'd rather hit him with a beer and have him leave hating us for messing up his new-wave haircut than for him to leave with no reaction at all." What about security? "Every show is a battle, not with the crowd but with the security guards. Our crowd isn't out to hurt anyone. We don't want steroid-crazed security guards beating up our fans. We prefer a low stage with no barriers and maximum interaction."

NIN kept their equipment inside a giant metal cage that both musician and fan climbed on as the spirit moved them. "We have a new drummer and he said he'd kill me if I smashed up his kit like the Who," said Reznor, who was quite willing to smash his own guitar. "So the cage is functional as well as decorative."

Reznor is adamantly anti-MTV, so your only chance to see these guys will be live. Ⓜ

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# JAZZIN' THE BLUES WITH CHARLES BROWN

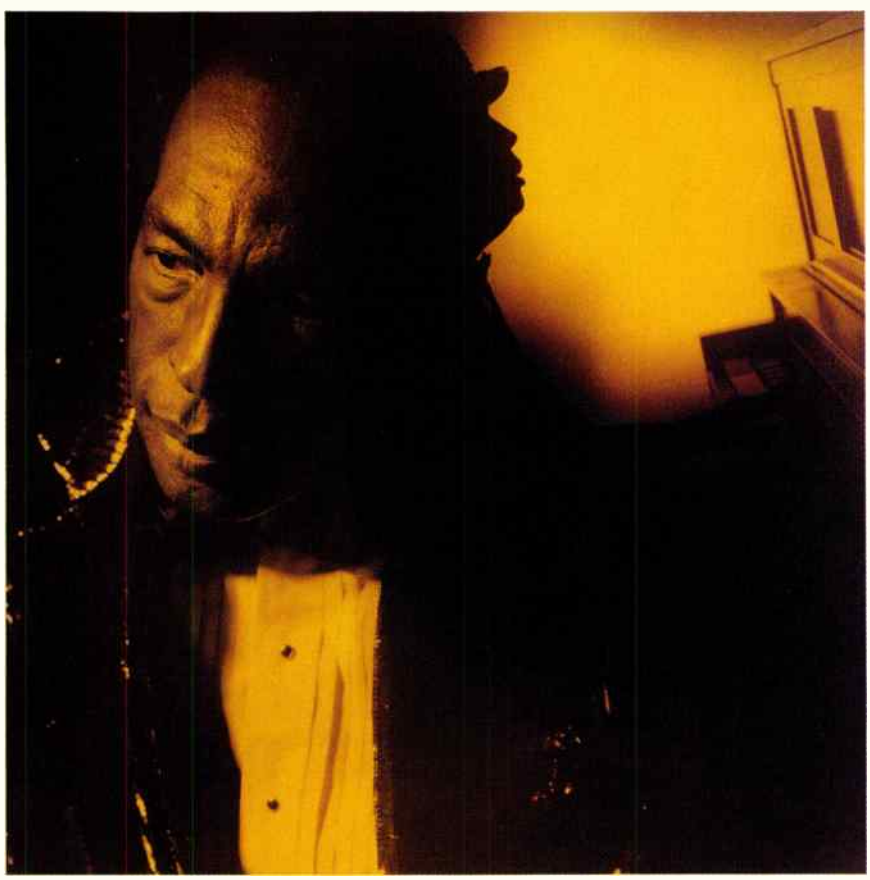
## Sneaking something extra between those three chords

*By* Alan di Perna

BACK IN TEXAS DURING THE '30s, pianist Charles Brown's grandmother encouraged the boy's fascination with the suave stylings of players like Fats Waller and Art Tatum. But he also had an uncle who initiated him into the more earthy, gutbucket piano blues of Leroy Carr and Big Maceo. The two traditions fuse beautifully in the 68-year-old Brown's playing.

"What you're hearing is a cross between major and minor"—that's how Charles describes one key element of his style. "'Driftin' Blues' is a good example," he adds, citing the 1945 hit he wrote and played on as a member of Johnny Moore's Three Blazers. "In most blues, say if you're in E, you'll just hear straight major chords from an E scale. But we went between a major and a minor and that was the key to our success."

There are examples of the very same principle all over Brown's latest album, *All My Life*. Take the opening track, "Early in the Morning." It's a Brown-penned 12-bar blues in E, but it departs from the blues' usual I, IV, V chord structure. In the ninth bar, which usually moves to the V chord—B major in this case—Brown alternates between an Fmin7 and a B7. Minor to major, just like the man says. And in the third bar, where most bluesmen would be content to rest on the tonic E, Brown divides the measure between E and—depending on his mood in each chorus—either B7 or B7 augmented.



Brown's music has been called smooth blues, even lounge blues. But the pianist prefers the more musically descriptive tag of ballad blues. "They always say that blues was just 12 bars," he explains. "But see, ballad blues has a bridge, just like a pop number."

*All My Life* is a melting pot of blues, R&B and even gospel-based styles. Brown's Chopinesque arrangement of the traditional "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" is adapted from a late-nineteenth-century transcription of the Jubilee Singers. Charles is an arch-assimilator. He starts laughing when I ask him about hand-over-hand sixteenth-note accompaniment patterns he uses on "Early in the Morning" and other tunes. He'll use his left hand to pick out some notes of a chord—say the E, B and D of an E7—while his right hand takes the remaining notes—G sharp and the high E, for instance—alternating rapidly with the left hand. "Know where that comes from?" he demands. "The old piano rolls! Years ago, we had a big old roll piano in the house, and it always interested me the way it would roll those notes. I tried to capture that."

"Joyce's Boogie" is named for yet another relative: Brown's niece Joyce, who kept an eye out for the pianist's church-going grandma while young Charles practiced his sinful boogie-woogie licks. Bless you, Joyce. Even the very traditional boogie that bears her name benefits from Brown's unique harmonic sense. Check the song's second solo piano break: While his right hand plays a very orthodox tonic-to-dominant-seventh pattern in octaves, his left is adding some harmonies George Gershwin might have been proud of. Here's an example in C: When the right-hand note is C, the left hand's playing E, B flat and D beneath it. And when the right hand goes to B flat, the left plays F, B natural and E flat.

"They're half-step nines," Brown adds helpfully.

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# OPERATION NAMM, PART I

## The instrument biz finds its way through troubled times

*By* Alan di Perna

THE WEIRDEST NAMM SHOW in history? This year's big musical instrument summit may truly live up to that title. War was just breaking out in the Persian Gulf as slightly stunned conventioneers began converging on Anaheim, California. More surprising than Bush's invasion of Iraq was the announcement that the National Association of Music Merchandisers had finally rolled over and canceled the much-despised summer NAMM show. One NAMM a year? A new world order indeed! Given that we're having a recession *and* a war, this was actually a pretty upbeat NAMM.


One of the more exciting new goodies was **Kurzweil**'s new K2000 synthesizer. It's the first all-new Kurzweil product to emerge since the company's recent acquisition by piano manufacturer Young Chang. While the K2000 won't be finalized till May or June, the prototype we heard at NAMM sounded fairly promising—great dynamic range and very distinctive, though smooth, filters. It's all based on a programming scheme called Variable Architecture Synthesis Technology (VAST). Specs are still being finalized, but it looks like the K2000 will be capable of up to 24-voice polyphony, and will have a built-in effects processor and a SCSI port. The Kurzweil guys figure it'll sell for under $3000 and will be capable of producing about a trillion sounds. That's a new sound a second for the next 300 years—let's hope the world lasts that long.

The other *possible* big news at NAMM was **Alesis**' new digital eight-track system, the ADAT. It will sell for a precedent-shattering $4000, but specwise, it's primo: 16-bit, 64× oversampled, 48kHz bandwidth digital audio, recorded onto conventional VHS S-format cassettes. The S (or Super) format is the new VHS technology that packs more oxide density onto the tape—which, in digital terms, means mondo storage capacity. You can get up to 45 minutes of audio on one cassette. However, while there was plenty of proto-hype, there was no prototype that we could listen to, just a pretty black box. It's due out by the end of the year. Time will tell.


The Palaedium, designed with Jeff Berlin, features the Badass bridge.

Yamaha's new product rollout evinced a stripped-down, pragmatic marketing strategy for these tricky financial times. They didn't trot out the ton o' gear they typically introduce at NAMM, but every piece they did exhibit counted big. In addition to the new guitar equipment we reported on in our NAMM preview (Feb. '91), the Japanese giant displayed their new Maple Custom series of drumkits, a drum triggering system called the DTS70 and two products that elude easy characterization.


Yamaha calls the RY30 a "programmable rhythm synthesizer." It's a drum machine! It's a synth! No, it's both! Leastways, there are drum and cymbal samples inside (none looped, by the way), drum-machine-style programming pads on the front and the usual facilities for building patterns and songs. But there's also a synth-style pitch wheel on the front panel, plus synth sounds and filters inside. The item that got the most oohs and aahs at Yamaha's press conference, however, was the QY10 Compact Music Processor. It's an eight-track/eight-song sequencer, 28-note polyphonic tone generator and drum machine combo that's exactly the size of an ordinary VHS cassette and sells for an equally minuscule $399. The front-panel drum programming pads even double as a tiny one-octave keyboard. The heart of the thing is 76 preset bass, drum and chordal backing patterns from which you assemble "songs" of your own. But you can write in 24 completely original patterns as well. An impressive piece of technology; but I can't help thinking you gotta have a brain as miniature as the QY10 itself if you



*Photography: Susan Goines*

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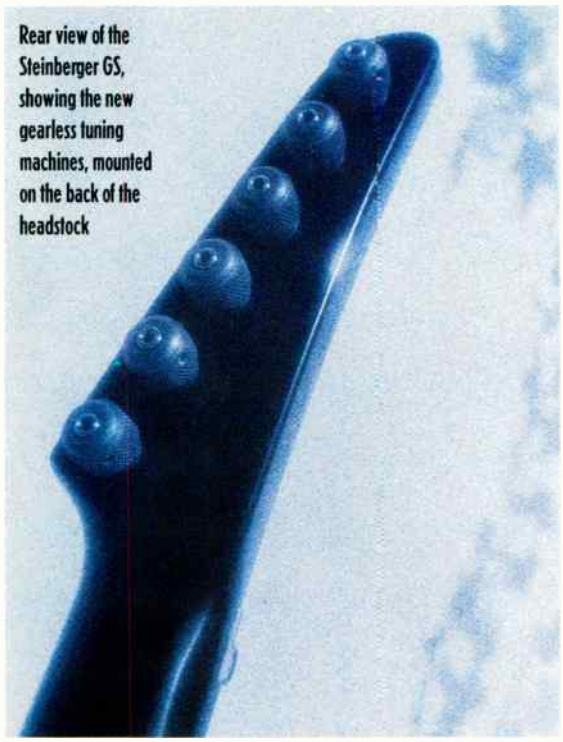
need to get your riffs all readymade out of some box.

King Retro continues to rule a sizable portion of Guitardom. **Gibson** brought out limited-edition reissues of the original '58 Explorer and Flying V, a 30th Anniversary SG Custom and 40th Anniversary Les Paul Standard. All this was in addition to new designs like the electro-acoustic Chet Atkins Studio Classic and the M III guitar, with an all-new body shape and elaborate switching system for getting zillions of sounds out of its two humbuckers and one single-coil pickup.

**Rickenbacker** pulled the wraps off two new limited-edition instruments: a Chris Squire bass and a Tom Petty 12-string guitar. The neck on the Petty model is a bit wider than most Rickenbacker 12s, which is a much-welcome modification. The guitar's got the same 12-saddle bridge that was introduced on Rickenbacker's Roger McGuinn model, so the instrument intonates much better than old Rick 12s. The Chris Squire bass is modeled on the mid-'60s Rickenbacker the Yes-man has played throughout most of his career. But it incorporates modifications Squire had done in '71, including a neck shave. Charvel, perennial favorites with the modern headbanger set, have ventured into retro waters with their Surfcaster, a stylish little semi-hollow single-cutaway guitar. There are two diagonally mounted lipstick-tube pickups and a knife-edge vibrato bridge. It comes in six- and 12-string versions.



Rear view of the Steinberger GS, showing the new gearless tuning machines, mounted on the back of the headstock

But not every guitarmaker was looking fondly back at the past. Ned **Steinberger** surprised everyone by introducing his first guitar with a headstock, and not just any headstock. The Steinberger GS is designed to eliminate the need for pesky locking nuts and still have tuning stability even under the most violent wang-bar attacks. Trick number one is a new nut with a knife-edge pivot. Bend a string and the nut bends with it—an idea that promises to rival graphite and roller nuts in its ability to prevent string hang-ups. Then there's Steinberger's new gearless tuning machines, mounted on the back of the headstock. The string slips into a groove and is up to tune in less than one turn. The tuning controls are more like smooth-feel volume knobs than conventional pegs: With a superfine pull ratio of 40:1, there's no need for fine-tuners. And as if all this futurism weren't enough, Steinberger has also taken over manufacture and distribution of the Klein Electric, progeny of ace luthier Steve Klein, with its ergonomic-but-mighty-strange-lookin' body shape.


**Peavey** introduced a bass designed in conjunction with Jeff Berlin. Called the Palaedium, it incorporates such Berlin specs as a narrow, graphite-reinforced neck with an angled heel, a **Badass** bridge and new four-coil pickups. Peavey also made their first foray into the electro-acoustic market with the new Ecoustic guitar. The electro part includes a bridge-mounted piezo pickup and an onboard three-band graphic EQ. Acoustically, it's a mahogany body, non-laminated cedar-top instrument, with a single cutaway and a slick-looking oval soundhole.

Surprises, surprises. Like how about a **Paul Reed Smith** *acoustic* guitar? That's just what was being shown in prototype at the PRS booth. In fact, they were very craftily upstaging PRS' new Artist Series, those new four-grand electro-aristocrats that will inherit the throne from Smith's Signature Series once production on those reaches 1000. But back to this acoustic thing: Seems Paul has teamed up with acoustic luthier Dana Bourgeois. Their three prototypes on display had necks and headstocks similar to those found on PRS electrics, and Bourgeois explained they were designed especially with band situations in mind. Indeed, they did seem to speak quite nicely in that upper register so crucial to making an acoustic cut through an ensemble.

Our NAMM report will continue next month with more developments exciting enough to make strong men weep and pretty women lose control.

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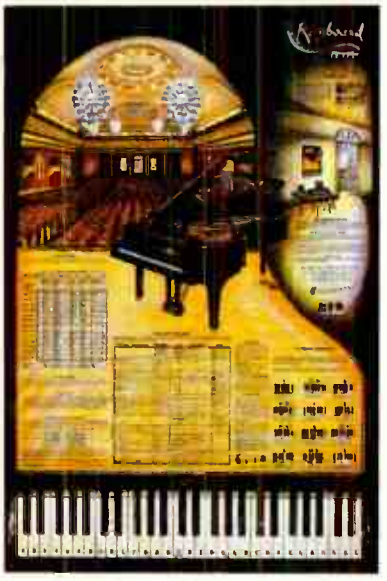

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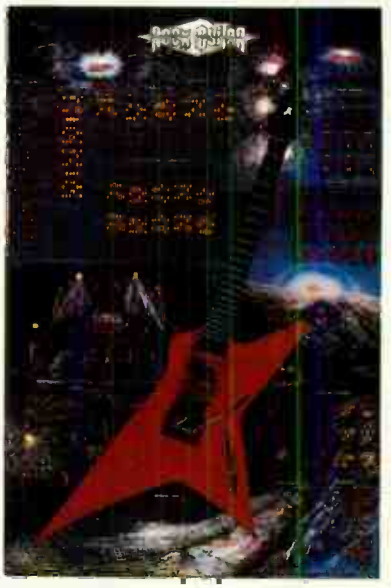

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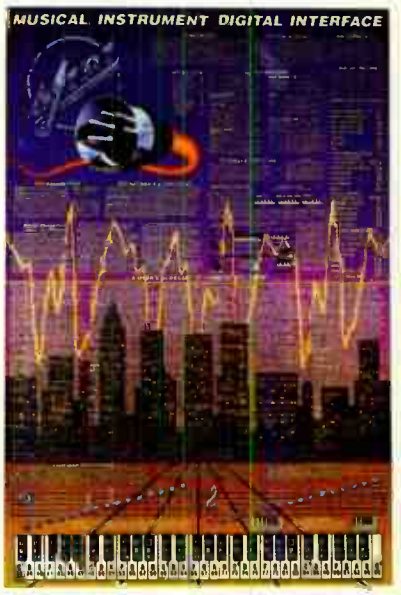


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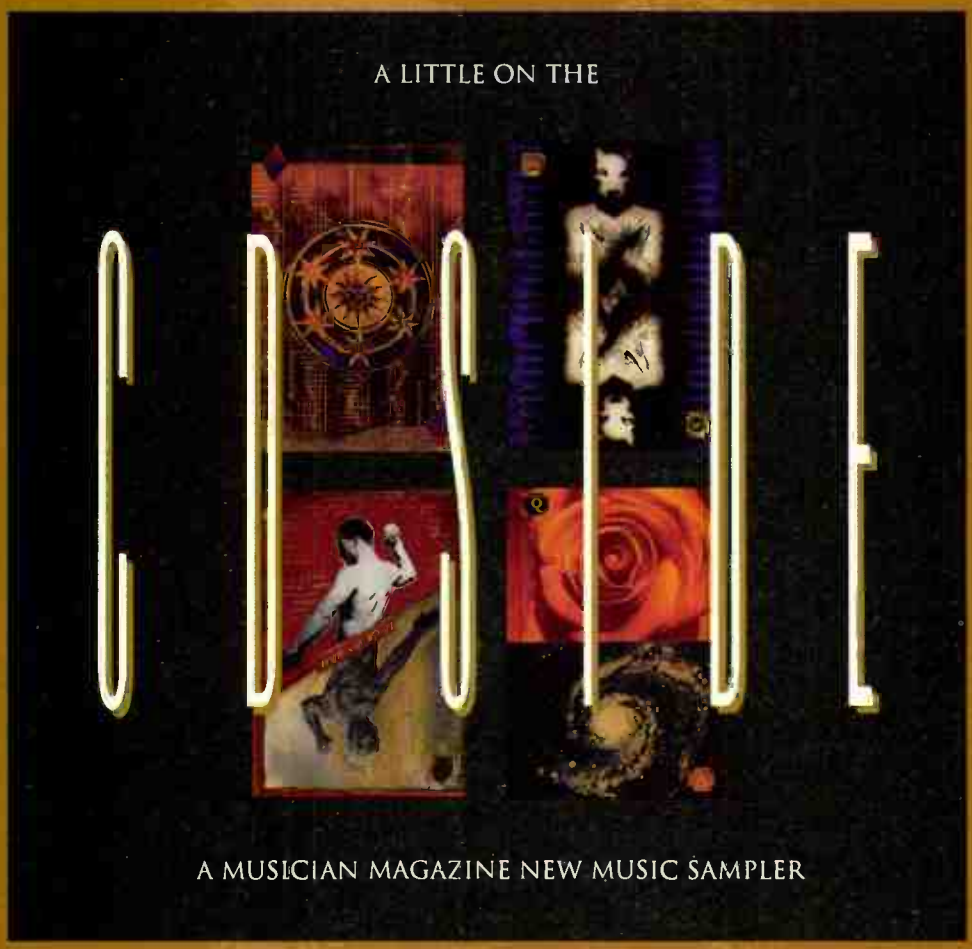


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# Thirty Years of Singing

## & they put you in a boxed set

*Bob Dylan*
*The Bootleg Sessions 1961–1991*
(Columbia)

LIKE JACK NICHOLSON SAYS, AS long as Bob Dylan's alive he's the greatest living songwriter. Just when you start to forget it something like this comes along: three hours and 50 minutes of 57 previously unreleased Dylan tracks, a high percentage of which are top-notch. I asked Jeff Rosen, the man who compiled and produced this collection, why two of my favorite Dylan obscurities weren't included. Rosen opened a closet filled with cassettes. All the cassettes were unreleased Dylan songs.

How do you like that?

Dylan's people—and Dylan's record company—agree that it's time to start putting this stuff out, but there's so much of it. They've started with this three-CD, three-cassette box of unavailable songs, spiced up with a few drastically different early versions of hits ("Like a Rolling Stone" as a piano waltz, a solo folkie "Subterranean Homesick Blues"). And the stuff is superb. By running in chronological order *Bootleg Sessions* avoids the odd juxtapositions that made listening to *Biograph*, Dylan's pre-

Photograph: David Gahr

vious box, disconcerting.

A lot of space is given to songs from Dylan's folk period. Dylan made four acoustic albums before switching to rock 'n' roll in 1965, and the 28 acoustic songs here are very nearly the equal of those four LPs. Certainly there is nothing among Dylan's previous recordings of traditional folk songs to equal the beauty of this version of "Moonshiner." (And how come his guitar playing was so much better in his folkie days than it has been since?) Just as impressive is Dylan's 1963 concert recitation of his poem "Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie." "Moonshiner" shows Dylan doesn't need his lyrics to be great and "Last Thoughts..." shows that, even stripped of music, his poetry has enormous power.

There are four tracks here from the original, unreleased *Blood on the Tracks* sessions, two of which are more emotionally open than anything that ended up on that album. With lines like "The children cry for mother, I tell them mother took a trip," "Call Letter Blues" is like peeking through a keyhole. A stark, acoustic version of "Idiot Wind" puts the familiar one to shame. The *Blood on the Tracks* version was Dylan railing and wailing and we could, in those Watergate/Saigon days, choose to hear it as a general indictment of collapsed obligations. This version offers no such possibility. It is bleak and confessional: "Ladykillers load dice on me while imitators steal me blind... You can have the best there is but it's gonna cost you all you love."

Also remarkable is "Blind Willie McTell," recorded in 1983 and left off *Infidels* to the horror of producer/guitarist Mark Knopfler. The song is haunted—Dylan reinventing the lonely knowledge of the blues in his own mature voice. "Blind Willie McTell" could only have been made by a man who had already mastered the tradition of "Moonshiner," the poetry of "Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie" and the bare grief of "Idiot Wind." And who, after all that, had kept going.

There are many here among us, good people and sincere music lovers among them, who would rather pass a kidney stone than listen to four hours of Bob Dylan leftovers. But for the rest of us, the power of Dylan's creations is almost overshadowed by the fierceness of his creativity. The sheer volume of good stuff is staggering. It's like that big Picasso show in New York in 1979. They emptied out the whole Metropolitan museum and filled every room with Picasso paintings. After a few hours your brain was smoking. Of course, there were days when Picasso just scribbled a flower on a napkin, stuck a "P." on it and laughed about how much money that napkin was now worth. Dylan's sold us some doodles, too.

But not too many and not here. Here Dylan seems, more than ever, like Picasso, like John Coltrane. Like he's operating not so much on a higher level as on a different trajectory than other artists. Like the talent moves faster than the man. Hero worship is for children; Dylan the person is not saint or superman. But music is there for anyone to hear—and to call this music anything less than great is to lie about it. —**Bill Flanagan**

## Rick James

*Kickin'*
(Reprise)

RICK JAMES HAS ALWAYS LONGED TO BE CONSIDered Important. Why else would he continue to footnote his late-'70s "Superfreak" stardom with outbursts that, among other things, 1) claimed excessive credit for starting the '80s' ubiquitous "punk-funk" amalgam; 2) accused MTV of not playing his below-average videos because of his race and 3) maligned hit rapper M.C. Hammer after Hammer fairly compensated James for the use of his "Superfreak" riff (unlike, say, the writers of "Der Kommissar"). Partly thanks to Hammer, James has been allowed to make this big Comeback Statement, which naturally begins with applause. Is it truly as Important as James would have us believe?

Hard to say. A couple of tunes on *Kickin'* really light up the scoreboard, notably "Black and White," a sizzling Sly Stone tribute that symbolically ends with a frenzied metal guitar soloing over Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. "U Got It Good (Real Good)" has a snaky, dancefloor intrigue, and the album's closer, "Rock-N-Roll Eyes," is a decent rock ballad that incorporates *Sgt. Pepper* strings and screaming electric guitar.

Then there are the grooves. Peppery rhythms, massive ultra-low bass pops, interesting synth textures, horn blasts, big vocal choruses...though James may not be in the Jam/Lewis or Babyface category as a producer, he knows how to make his records pop when he feels like it. But a lot of *Kickin'* is just that, grooves in search of a song, which means we get more than our fair share of minor-key, midtempo funk vamps. Lyrically, things are especially dim. James never gets beyond a one-dimensional pitch for bump 'n' grind romance—he even electronically modifies the original "little black boys and black girls" line in Dr. King's speech to "black boys and white girls."

All of which suggests the cold opportunism James' fabled punk-funk fusion has always radiated (and other than a hard rock guitar player and a few synths, there wasn't ever much punk in there). This calculation seems to infect much of *Kickin'*. Yet, when James becomes less self-conscious, as on side two, things warm up a little and give us solid reasons to like him, and this record. He may not be as heavy in the '90s as he'd like to be, but at least he's breaking a sweat again. —**Jock Baird**


## The Horse Flies

*Gravity Dance*
(MCA)

GIVEN THE NAME, YOU'D EXPECT HOARY SEA chanties. Instead, the Horse Flies suffer an attack of the twentieth-century blues on their arresting sophomore album *Gravity Dance*. Fluent in a variety of styles and probably too educated for their own good (see the Anne Sexton quote), this upstate New York sextet repackages alienation as sleek, attractive entertainment; 10 years ago, the chunky rock of "Cold Out There" would have been New Wave. Don't expect the cavalier gestures that can make Camper Van Beethoven or Too Much Joy so annoying, though, because the Flies lack comparable glibness. For all the witty touches, they seem truly, deeply distraught.

Like ad copywriters adept at verbal hooks, they concoct clean, attention-grabbing titles: "Life Is a Rubber Rope," "Passion Is an Art Form," "What Does Family Mean?" and so on. The follow-through is messier, since the Flies populate their tunes with misfits in the Randy Newman tradition (minus his sarcasm, fortunately). Powered by Judy Hyman's whirling-dervish violin, the breathless "I Need a Plastic Bag (To Keep My Brains in)" finds Rich Stearns exclaiming, "Like a monkey/Who lives in the zoo/I have a bad day/I throw my shit at you." Jeff Claus' listless delivery adds a sad edge to the snappy tempo of "Needles on the Beach," which recounts a vacation spoiled by syringes. The recurring sense of helplessness approaches critical mass in "Time Is Burning," a gorgeous meditation that views reality itself ("Lost time is never found") as the enemy.

*Gravity Dance*—itself an expression of feeling overwhelmed—works because of the prickly emotions contained in the material. However, the Flies are darn good players, too, dedicated to a punchy, coherent band groove. Hyman teams with keyboardist Peter Dodge to create woozy roller-coaster effects; Stearns and Claus play their guitars like percussionists, jabbing rather than massaging the melodies.

Too much tension? Rest assured their absurd humor comes through loud and clear. Note "Road-

kill," a sick-joke raveup drenched in images of animal guts ("Blood on your bumper/And hair on your wheels"). Okay, that's not so funny. Even aiming for laughs, the Horse Flies rub your nose in somebody else's weirdness—but they do it great. Are we having fun yet?

**—Jon Young**


## Bob Marley and the Wailers

*Talkin' Blues*
(Island/Tuff Gong)

SLY STONE WAS RIGHT TO WORRY. NO MATTER HOW hotly his troupe played during their 1973 road-trip through the American Southwest, "If You Want Me to Stay" was simply no match for the catchy reggae fire of the opening band's "Slave Driver" and "Get Up, Stand Up." And so, after only four dates, Sly dismissed Bob Marley and the Wailers from the Jamaican band's debut U.S. tour.

*Talkin' Blues*, a marvelously intimate document of the Wailers' mid-'70s prowess, contains seven tracks from a spirit-reviving 1973 radio concert on San Francisco's KSAN-FM, following the Wailers' firing from the Family Stone's tour. Their lineup featured the Wailers' finest road warriors: Marley, Peter Tosh, keyboardist Earl "Wire" Lindo, drummer Carlton Barrett and bassist Aston "Family Man" Barrett—plus Wailers' mentor Joe Higgs, whose harmony vocals and congas filled the gap left by Bunny Livingston (whose dislike of travel had kept him in Kingston). Each of the group's intriguingly rearranged selections—interspersed with 1975 interview commentary from Marley himself—proves a revelation.

Marley's singing has never seemed so free-wheeling as here, his yodeling scats offset by snarling descants from Tosh on an unforgettably passionate "Burnin' and Lootin'," while on "Rastaman Chant," Higgs' Niyabingi-style congas weave a bold tattoo around Lindo and the Barretts' rhythmic brawn. Other highlights from the KSAN sides include a revamping of "Walk the Proud Land" (a tale of fugitive rude boys, titled "Keep On Moving" when it appeared on the 1970 *Soul Revolution* LP) and a biting treatment of Tosh's "You Can't Blame the Youth."

The songs are sequenced in tandem with Bob's spoken reflections on the original Wailers' early history and breakup. To hear Marley trace the Wailers' evolution from a ska vocal unit with two female backing singers (Beverly Kelso, Cherry Smith) into a full-bore reggae band is riveting, as is his sad soliloquy on Livingston's quiet departure ("Bunny make a new plan, say him no tour, me can agree with that") and Tosh's hurtful excuses for quitting ("Peter say, '...Something financial'; me *don't* understand that").

The rest of *Talkin' Blues*' cuts are auxiliary takes or unreleased material from the 1974 *Natty Dread* sessions and the 1975 *Live!* LP sets at London's Lyceum Ballroom. Fans will be delighted with the impromptu discussion of Marley's prowess as a flutist, prior to a pipe-driven alternate rendition of "Bend Down Low." But *Talkin' Blues*' crowning treat is "Am-A-Do." Marley flirts shamelessly with the I-Threes as he fuses James Brown riffs with Family Stone licks to create a slinky West Indian groove.

The album closes with an unissued Lyceum performance of "I Shot the Sheriff" taken from the first night of the famous two-show concert stand. This version is more experimentally hard-rockin' than the second-evening "Sheriff" preserved on *Live!*, and builds to an exultant farewell from Robert Nesta Marley: "God bless you all until we see you again!"

**—Timothy White**


## Liz Story

*Escape of the Circus Ponies*
(Windham Hill)

## Preston Reed

*Blue Vertigo*
(Capitol)

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF ONE-PERSON/ONE-instrument music (OPOIM). It puts me in the mood to write, probably because I'm a one-person/one-typewriter-kind-of-guy (OPOTKOG). OPOTKOGs are always looking for substances to facilitate the process of getting words on paper, and OPOIM is efficacious without causing either hangovers or anxiety attacks. Indeed, proper OPOIM leaves one invigorated even after the most difficult writing sessions.

Two creators of OPOIM who have been spending a large amount of time in my CD player of late are Liz Story and Preston Reed. Story lives on a mountaintop in Arizona and plays piano roughly in the tradition of George Winston, a name that inspires fear and loathing in the average rock fan. The average rock fan does not, however, understand that there are uses for music other than to accompany headbanging. Some music takes adrenalin out of your bloodstream so you can think or meditate with heightened clarity, and this style of music Story plays with direction, melody and technical skill that is rare in a genre that tends to deteriorate into noodling most of the time. *Escape of the Circus Ponies* is a beautiful record that puts my brain in a rhythm where it hits on all eight pistons.

Another creator of OPOIM to whom I am partial is Preston Reed. Reed's style falls in the range of Leo Kottke and Michael Hedges, which is to say he's a knockout virtuoso deserving of his own cult. He's been around for several albums now, and I've never understood why he isn't featured all the time in the transcription magazines under headlines such as "MAKES STEVE VAI SOUND LIKE JOHNNY RAMONE!" Perhaps his problem is that he plays acoustic and has never backed Ozzy Osbourne or David Lee Roth. Anyway, his latest, *Blue Vertigo*, is first-rate OPOIM, played with astonishing power, virtuosity and humor (the cover of "I Got You" is a major-league chortle). Without him and Liz Story, my last several articles probably would not have been written, so I feel a special obligation to recommend them. The more OPOIM they produce, the more us OPOTKOGs will write.

**—Charles M. Young**

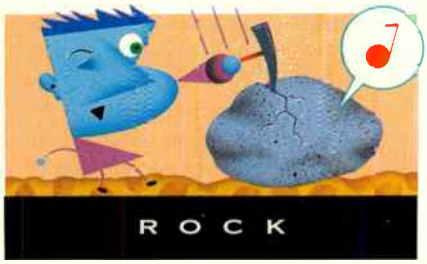

## Divinyls

*Divinyls*
(Virgin)

AUSTRALIAN CHANTEUSE CHRISTINA AMPHLETT has a dirty voice tailor-made for double entendres and brazen come-ons. A raspy purr that swells to a full-bodied roar when she turns on the juice, it's a classic rock 'n' roller voice, so it's kind of baffling that she's been hanging around singing like that for eight years without scoring a mainstream hit. If there's any justice in life, that should change with the release of this, the Divinyls' fifth LP. It's a solid record on every score: great songs, good production (by David Tickle, Amphlett and guitarist Mark McEntee) and, most importantly, Amphlett's voice is front and center throughout.

*Divinyls* is kind of like a pedigreed mutt, as it filches the best bits from various tunes of the past 30 years. The album kicks off [*cont'd on page 94*]

# SHORT TAKES




BY J. D. CONSIDINE

### ROGER MCGUINN

*Back from Rio* [Arista]

Because his close-harmony vocals and 12-string twang defined the Byrds' sound, it's tempting to take McGuinn's solo flight as a one-man reunion. But what makes this album work isn't McGuinn's past so much as his presence—the way his voice wraps around the chorus to "Suddenly Blue," or the shimmering guitar break in "King of the Hill." Which is why even his weaker songs (such as "Car Phone") pack more wallop than most of what's on the radio now.

### YOUNG BLACK TEENAGERS

*Young Black Teenagers* [Soul/MCA]

Gimmicks come easy to these guys; if they're not trashing Fox fox Kelly Bundy ("Nobody Knows Kelly"), they're mocking justified love with "To My Donna." Even so, when these rhymers "of the caucasian persuasion" insist they're "Proud to Be Black," it's time to believe the hype. Not because they walk it like they talk it (which they do), but because a commitment to music like theirs has to be more than skin deep.

### DAVID LEE ROTH

*A Little Ain't Enough* [Warner Bros.]

Wanna bet?

### LONDONBEAT

*In the Blood* [MCA]

The approach may play on the familiar—some Soul II Soul here, some Fine Young Cannibals there and a mess of Was (Not Was) everywhere—but what Londonbeat lacks in originality it more than makes up in melody. The result is classic Brit-pop; even after admitting it's derivative piffle, you can't wait to hear it again.

### THE KNACK

*Serious Fun* [Charisma]

Anyone who believes the musical legacy of the '70s is nothing to be ashamed of might want to reconsider after hearing this one. Sure, the sound is as upbeat, energetic and aggressively catchy as in the band's glory days. But what set "My Sharona" apart back then was that the Knack saw its smirky melodicism as a statement of identity. Here, it's just a matter of product.

### DIGITAL UNDERGROUND

*This Is an EP Release* [Tommy Boy]

...but it packs an album-length punch. Among the highlights are jazz-tinged raps like "Same Song," which tops a lumbering bassline with a lithe, Jimmy McGriff–style synth solo, and "Nuttin' Nis Funky," which lives up to its title even as it scratches a Miles Davis solo. The smartest moment, though, has to be "Arguin' the Funk," which plays out the whole new jack/old school controversy in both words and music. A bargain at any price.

### GLORIA ESTEFAN

*Into the Light* [Epic]

Estefan is awfully earnest about the meaning-of-life slant these songs take, even if most of her apercus seem to have been gleaned from self-help articles and greeting cards. Though the attempt at gospel-soul in "Coming Out of the Dark" is a move in the right direction, she seems out of her element unless cozied up to bland ballads like "Can't Forget About You."

### SUSANNA HOFFS

*When You're a Boy* [Columbia]

Hoffs certainly tries to stay hip, what with a Bowie cover ("Boys Keep Swinging," from which comes the title), a Robin Lane number ("Wishing on Telstar"), even a co-write with Blake Baby Juliana Hatfield ("That's Why Girls Cry"). But what could possibly be hip about Hoffs' calculated coquettishness, even if it is dressed up in a near-perfect Ronnie Spector purr?

### QUEEN

*Innuendo* [Hollywood]

Between Freddie Mercury's compulsive multi-tracking, Brian May's bombastic guitar and the rhythm section's rigid arrangements, this comes across as a real return to form for Queen. Unfortunately.

### ENIGMA

*MCMXC a.D.* [Charisma]

So what if the title is a year late—the music is up-to-date and audacious. With a high art/high camp concept unlike anything else in pop music, this German dance-music outfit tries a bit of everything: heavy breathing, hip-hop beats, new age keyboards, even Gregorian chants. Though the most obvious hooks are crammed into the haunting, atmospheric "Sadeness," the album's giddiest moments belong to the adorably operatic "Callas Went Away."

### JESUS JONES

*Doubt* [SBK]

However much hard rock and high technology might define the Jesus Jones sound, it's the songwriting that ultimately defines this album. That's as true of "Who? Where? Why?," where the slyly insinuating melody lies nestled in a swirl of exotic samples, as it is of the more conventionally structured "Right Here, Right Now." Forget Manchester—*this* is the future of English rock.


BY PETER WATROUS

### FRANK MORGAN

*A Lovesome Thing* [Antilles]

Playing with Frank Morgan is a bit like sticking your head in a meat grinder. As he did with Wynton Marsalis on his last album, Morgan grinds up a poor hapless young trumpeter (Roy Hargrove), making the younger musician seem hidebound and limited by blowing eccentric, rhythmically adventurous improvisations. And like his last album, *A Lovesome Thing* is a masterpiece, not just for the playing, which is extraordinarily assured, but for the thought which went into making it. For one, Morgan plays some ballads without veering

*Illustrations: Chad Draper*

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from the melody, improvising with rhythms and pitch and phrasing. For another, the album is split into quartets, quintets, duets and more; Abbey Lincoln comes on to sing "Ten Cents a Dance" about a taxi dancer, which turns into a heart-crushing lament for anybody who's ever been stomped.

**GERI ALLEN**

*The Nurturer* [Blue Note]

Finally, proof that Allen is the master people who hear her live or on other people's records know her to be. An all-acoustic date, featuring Marcus Belgrave on trumpet, Kenny Garrett on saxophones, Bob Hurst on bass and Jeff Watts on drums, it's about as heavy as a new jazz record gets nowadays, with the rhythm section changing tempos and coloring the improvisations with texture after texture. Allen's piano, evasive and elliptical, rounded and constantly shifting directions, bows its head towards all the right icons, from Andrew Hill and Monk to stride players. It's her own rhythmic, jackhammer-like accentuations that make her distinct, though, allowing an intensity other young pianists can't touch.

**JAMES CLAY**

*I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart* [Antilles]

A tenor saxophonist who made better-than-average appearances on records in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Clay used to come up from Texas to New York in the 1980s with Red Garland. He made a reappearance with Don Cherry at the Village Vanguard last year; his best album, Lawrence Marable's *Tenorman*, has been reissued; now *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart* appears and presto, a minor James Clay renaissance. It's deserved. Though it's erratic from track to track, it's his tone and phrasing that make the music work. Backed by Cedar Walton, David Williams and Billy Higgins. Clay knows how to place a phrase so it makes you want to get up and dance. It's all about ease and pleasure: There isn't a formally divergent moment on the album, and who could possibly care, given the amount of bliss it produces?

**GRAHAM HAYNES**

*What Time It Be!* [Muse]

Washing-machine rhythms, funk textures, nasty solos and odd time signatures all mark this as an M-Base production. Haynes, who plays cornet, whirls around the pieces with a fat tone that reminds you of Miles Davis, but in a presently smarter context. Haynes knows how to write tunes as well, meditative pieces alternating with furious and alienated space marches.

**ARNETT COBB, JIMMY HEATH, JOE HENDERSON**

*Tenor Tribute* [Soul Note]

"Just a blowing session," some clod might say. But there's more information on this album, recorded live a couple years ago, than on any four of most studio albums. Example one: Jimmy Heath and Joe Henderson go at it on a couple of tunes with an intensity that might not have been found in a studio. For another: These saxophonists, at the peak of their powers (well, almost; Cobb died 11 months later), slur and slide and howl and glide. One of the most intense examples of saxophone virtuosity to be recorded in awhile.

**BOUKMAN EXPERYANS**

*Vodou Adjae* [Mango]

Like a lot of young Haitian-American bands, Boukman Experyans are investigating carnival and voodoo rhythms. They've also changed up the traditional compas group sound, making it closer to zouk; the result is beautifully undulating high-tech music, with keyboards being driven by rolling percussion. It's probably good that us non–Creole speakers can't understand what's going on, making the music that much more sensual without any cognitive interference.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Chicago Blues: A Quarter Century* [P-Vine]

Three CDs, 71 tracks, ranging from solos by Johnny Shines in the early 1950s through Little Willie Foster from the late 1950s to Jesse Fortune in the early 1960s (and including lots of Earl Hooker, Sunnyland Slim, Otis Rush, Magic Sam and more), the collection traces Chicago blues from rural solos and trios through the modern band sound. Sidestepping the obvious with impeccable taste (and drawing on the JOB, USA Cobra and other labels to find tunes like "Pet Rabbit" by Baby Face Leroy), the collection gives an idea just how creative the scene was in Chicago. This every-day, one-shot stuff was nearly as good as the masters; the genre at its best. (Down Home Music, 6921 Stockton Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530)


**BRIAN RITCHIE**

*I See a Noise* [Dali]

On past solo efforts Ritchie's tended to sound like the most violent of the Violent Femmes. *I See a Noise*, though, is breezy and (relatively) benign. Idiosyncratic lyrics—no love songs here, folks—accompany music that's heavy on Eastern and/or '60s-pop influences. And the title track's deviously catchy refrain deserves to become an anthem for misfits everywhere.—*Scott Isler*

**MARCIA BALL/ANGELA STREHLI/LOU ANN BARTON**

*Dreams Come True* [Antone's]

Apart from proving (again) that singing the blues is by no means a man's job, what makes this session sizzle isn't the all-star lineup so much as the all-friends rapport that holds these performances together. Which is why the best ones here—"It Hurts to Be in Love," "I Idolize You," "Something's Got a Hold on Me"—are wish-fulfillment for both listener and performer.—*J.D. Considine*

**ADRIAN LEGG**

*Guitars and Other Cathedrals* [Relativity]

Add veteran English guitarist Adrian Legg to the growing list of players making the world safe for intelligent instrumental guitar music. Across the drink, Legg has become known as a fretboard poet as well as a guru of guitar customizing. On his first domestic release, he demonstrates a breadth of musicality and a look-ma-no-hands facility that commands attention from guitarphiles everywhere. Occasionally, he dips into the realm of music to shop by, but he's equally adept at crisp electric guitar etudes, full of artful string bends and slippery fingerpicking. This is some serious guitar playing that refuses to take itself too seriously.—*Josef Woodard*

**THE NEIGHBORHOODS**

*Hoodwinked* [Emergo]

Not-that-young, loud and snotty tunes from the venerable Beantown trio, mainly about girls desired and girls who got away. Standouts include "Roxxanne" (not the Police song) and "Southern Girls" (yes, the Cheap Trick one). No ground broken, a few of the songs tend to drag and it ain't quite as furious and driven as the last one, *Reptile Man*. For all that, *Hoodwinked* is still full of swagger, stinging guitars and crunchy pop. Produced by Aerosmith's Brad Whitford and plenty o' attitude.

—*Amy Linden*

**DAVID TORN**

*Door X* [Windham Hill]

That Torn is a brilliant guitarist there's no doubt, and previous enthusiasts will find plenty to chew on here—feedback wailing, whammy-bar Islamicisms and all manner of righteous compression. The mock-country solo on "Diamond Mansions" may be the finest six-string moment of the year. Unfortunately, most of Torn's compositions are too static for enduring interest, and his excessively mannered singing sounds thoroughly inadequate when paired with his masterful fretwork. Silver lining: Four tracks are instrumentals.—*Mac Randall*


**ELLY AMELING**
**GRAHAM JOHNSON**

*The Hyperion Schubert Edition: Complete Songs Vol. 7* [Hyperion]

Before this unstuffy British label began to offer all of Schubert's 600 lieder, standard recordings existed, as well as many individual recital discs. Hyperion, though, felt that while the big collections could be authoritative, they also could be forbidding, and that while recitals were popular, they were by design incomplete. Preserving the virtues of both, the label commissioned a series of records where a particular singer performs a carefully selected chunk of Schubert's 600—obscure or famous, highly esteemed or ignored, but always right for the voice of the volume. Here, Ameling sticks with the violet-hued purity of line and the woodsy flights upward that have made her so strong in Mahler. She's following unusually gung-ho Schubert by the mezzo-soprano Dame Janet Baker (*Vol. 1*, 1987) and the very together tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson (*Vol. 6*, 1989). Ameling's

higher, lighter impressions aren't at all foreign to the 24 songs here; they comprise, as the series intends, her Schubert.—*James Hunter*

MOSCOW VIRTUOSI

*Modern Portraits* [RCA Victor]

Here's a painless introduction to Western art music of the twentieth century, and not a moment too soon. The five pieces include two uneasily neoclassical items (Stravinsky's *Concerto in D*, Schnittke's *Suite in the Old Style*), and showcase violinist Vladimir Spivakov (Hartmann's *Concerto funebre*) and oboist Alexei Utkin (Penderecki's *Capriccio*). Prokofiev's whimsical *Overture on Hebrew Themes* rounds out a well-crafted program, whose clean, analytical recording suits the works and performances.—*Scott Isler*

AARON COPLAND

*Symphony No. 3/Music for a Great City*

*Leonard Slatkin, St. Louis Symph. Orch.* [RCA]

If Copland's death made a bitter postscript to the ninetieth birthday celebrations, it also underscored the immortality of his music. These two works amply demonstrate his near-trademark qualities. The *Symphony No. 3* is a massive expansion of *Fanfare for the Common Man*. *Music for a Great City* is also an expansion, but of a soundtrack for a sleazy 1961 film. The latter's astringency plays nicely off the former's bombastic tendencies. A spacious recording does justice to both.—*Scott Isler*


JIMMY ROGERS

*Chicago Bound* [MCA]

Though Rogers is best known as Muddy Waters' rhythm guitarist through that band's glory years on Chess, his "That's Alright" (included here) was one of the label's first hits—which makes it all the stranger that he didn't do a solo album until 1970. As this reissue shows, at least it gave him time to put together a great record. Rogers' combination of eloquent guitar and suave vocals is reminiscent of Lonnie Johnson, but he rocks harder. And there's no mistaking the presence of Muddy's guitar, Otis Spann's piano and especially Little Walter's mercurial harp. In short, one of the best workouts by one of the best Chicago blues bands ever.—*Thomas Anderson*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*The Danwich Records Story* [VOXX/Tutman]

This unexported indie compilation continues what *Early Chicago Vol. 1*—an obscure early-'70s sampler on the Happy Tiger label—started: documenting the hep, underrated mid-'60s Chicago rock scene that evolved into such memory fodder as H.P. Lovecraft, the Illinois Speed Press, Bangor Flying Circus, the Flock, Aorta, Rufus and the Shadows of Knight, among many others. Unlike its predecessor—which leaned toward the pop one might expect from past-and-future Buckinghams, Cryan' Shames and Chicago Transit Authority members—this new, Bomp-related set starts with the Shadows and gets much grittier. Major attractions include the Del-Vetts' inspired "Last Time Around" (also on the H.T. sampler, but always worth hearing) and great tracks by Saturday's Children and the Knaves. More than simply garage rock, the best stuff here takes its cue from Them and the Yardbirds, cranks it up mercilessly and makes you wonder why, for most people, this genre began and ended with *Nuggets*. (Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)—*Dave DiMartino*

ARTHUR BROWN

*The Crazy World of Arthur Brown* [Polydor]

Perhaps *the* embodiment of Britain's late-'60s countercultural pretensions, Arthur Brown was the kind of performer who'd come onstage wearing a flaming helmet and later on run naked from curtain to curtain. His unique brand of blues-based B-movie psychedelia only connected with a large audience once, on the 1968 hit "Fire" (included here). The rest is an acquired taste, but undeniably original: Brown's voice covers the dynamic range from Boris Karloff–style narration to seagull shriek while his band, the

Crazy World, keeps the gas on behind. As Who fans know, the words "produced by Kit Lambert" are usually synonymous with "atrocious sound quality," but here it's mostly clear and detailed. The album's first half is included in both mono and stereo versions; they're incredibly different, and not only soundwise.—*Mac Randall*

ELVIS PRESLEY

*Hits Like Never Before* [RCA]

The titles are familiar, but not the music: Two-thirds of this CD's 24 tracks are previously unissued alternate takes from 1958 recording sessions. So this one well deserves its *Essential Elvis* subtitle. A completely different arrangement of "King Creole" than the issued version is just one of the surprises herein. But if you've read this far, you probably already have a copy.—*Scott Isler*

MAGIC SAM

*Live* [Delmark]

Sam Maghett, whose skull-popping singing and vibrant guitar work made him the nonpareil star of Chicago's West Side blues scene during the '60s, is heard in his element and at his best in this great collection, first released on LP in 1980. Magic Sam, who died in 1969 at the age of 32, is captured in gut-ripping low fidelity during dates at Chicago's Alex Club in 1963–64 and at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival in '69. The dim sound does nothing to diminish his feral power, which is heard near its high-watt peak in the brawling trio set at Ann Arbor. Some of his studio work may be more manicured, but little of it surpasses the live stuff in sheer intensity and enthusiasm. Snatch it up and rock it out.—*Chris Morris*

THE BELMONTS

*Cigars, Acappella, Candy* [Elektra]

This astounding, unjustly obscure album of unaccompanied vocals, originally issued by Buddha in 1972 and reissued on CD with new notes by Greil Marcus, finds Dion's old compatriots singing circles around the moon. The three Belmonts take on a breadth of material—doo-wop standards and obscurities, '60s pop tunes, even such oddities as Steam's "Na Na Hey Hey (Kiss Him Goodbye)" and George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord"—and inject fresh life and spirit into all they survey. The album closes with a 14-song medley of doo-wop vocal hooks that will make your jaw hit the floor. This is no mere oldies album—it's an ambitious, personal, intensely emotional serving of heart-and-soul music, as performed by master practitioners of a vital form.—*Chris Morris*

## RECORDINGS

[*cont'd from page 89*] with "Make Out Alright," tethered to a riff that sounds like a hybrid of opening salvos from the Beatles' "Ticket to Ride" and "She's a Woman." "Love School" (featuring a string arrangement by Van Dyke Parks) also tips its hat to the Fab Four, while "Need a Lover" is pure Zeppelin. "Touch Myself," an onanist's ode that centers on the provocative refrain, "When I think about you I touch myself," is an admirably audacious first single. However, the real killer track, "Bullet," is buried deep in the second side; a wicked and rough love song that Amphlett works for all it's worth.

Debuting in 1983 as part of the Australian punk scene, Divinyls was originally a full band, but over the years has winnowed itself to core members Amphlett and McEntee. In those early days Amphlett adopted a schoolgirl-in-disgrace persona that involved a pouting Lolita mouth smeared with lipstick and chaste little uniforms. She's abandoned the adolescent tart routine and it's not missed; with a voice like hers gimmicks aren't necessary.

—**Kristine McKenna**

### Various Artists

*Golden Voices from the Silver Screen*
(GlobeStyle)

*GOLDEN VOICES FROM THE SILVER SCREEN* draws from a massive British television series on Indian cinema, a gargantuan industry devoted to churning out mindless pap for the masses—just like Hollywood. Unlike

Hollywood, however, the Indian film genre of choice is the musical, showcasing often delirious song-and-dance numbers. If your only association with Indian music is Ravi Shankar, you may have a pleasant shock awaiting in these three CDs: *Filmi* music and the Indian classical variety are as far apart as Madonna and Mozart.

While the songs here partake of India's rich melodic tradition, they tend towards repetitive structures and seductive but down-to-earth rhythms (for the dances, naturally). They also can cross-cut among foreign styles for dazzlingly hallucinogenic listening. One unsettling convention is a steely string section that roars in for passage work, then disappears. But after adjusting one's cultural parameters, *filmi*'s strengths come through. Foremost is its headstrong romanticism; lyrics (summarized in the booklet notes) are invariably about love, and the post-dubbed singing is passionate. The vocal royalty of this "playback" system are sisters Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bosle, heard on over two-thirds of *Golden Voices*' selections. (Mohammed Rafi sings almost everything else.)

Volume 2 may be the easiest jumping-off point for beginners. (The three albums are available separately.) It includes some musical boundary-hopping—yes, including rock 'n' roll on a 1959 selection—guaranteed to leave your brain a puddle of ghee. It also features a 10-minute dream sequence of full-tilt expressionism. But then the point of these films and their attendant music is to go over the edge, around the bend, providing release from the relentless confines of life outside the theater. No wonder *Golden Voices*' appeal doesn't stop at India's border. (48-50 Steele Road, London NW10 7AS)

**—Scott Isler**

## Motörhead

*1916*
(WTG)

CONTRARY TO CONVENTIONAL COMMERCIAL wisdom, we live in a world that is far from harmonious; to survive you sometimes have to fight fire with fire. That's what Motörhead is all about. For over 15 years they've constituted a grimy, sweaty, screeching antidote to that stupor frequently induced by lethal doses of media. In that regard, *1916* contains a healthy dose of standard Motörhead-banger fare, yet the band also makes some remarkable departures.

With vaguely gothic flair, vocalist/bass-meister Lemmy stalks creepily through the recited passages of "Nightmare/The Dreamtime," shadowed by demonic backing vocals amid layers of droning guitar and distortion. Clocking in at just under a minute and a half, "Ramones" is a blistering tribute to their American contemporaries featuring a fine selection of Ramones motifs, while "Angel City" makes a jocular jab at the metal scene they inadvertently helped inspire.

Assuming an unexpectedly sober tone, Motörhead also tackles more staid subjects—love and war. They swing from subdued melancholy to defiant rage in "Love Me Forever," which finds Lemmy skewering ironic romantic statements onto guitar solos by Würzel and Wizzö. The real surprise, however, is the title cut, as Motörhead conjures the sort of surreal post-war horror that haunts Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. Lemmy intones a lurid, slow-motion account of the Battle of the Somme (which saw some of the worst carnage in WWI), deliberately twisting his usually amusing rhyme schemes into grim verses that drift through an alarming musical calm, while peppered with the bitter military rat-a-tat of snare drums. Coming at the end of this album, it's an unsettling conclusion.

Exaggerating and flaunting death imagery, as metal acts are wont to do, is like giving the grim reaper the finger. In parodying death you defy it—an attitude many find hopelessly adolescent. But by employing the same wit that fueled classics like "Killed by Death" to make a serious statement about the senselessness of war, Motörhead shows a surprising emotional range. Maturity even.

**—Sandy Masuo**

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*[more classifieds on page 95]*

[*cont'd from next page*] in the knowledge *Musician* pays many times that amount for a major feature. The dilapidated Dionysian snatched the money and stuffed it in his pocket. "Let's rap, baby," he snickered. "You've got Jim Morrison."

**MUSICIAN:** *So what have you been doing for the past 20 years?*

**MORRISON:** I've been workin', man. I've been busy. I worked with Iggy Pop—helped him get his stage act together. Helped Jim Carroll with some lyrics. Produced *Radio Ethiopia* for Patti Smith. Wrote the screenplay for *Eddie and the Cruisers*.

**MUSICIAN:** *Yet, you've done all these things anonymously.*

**MORRISON:** Sure. I'm bidin' my time, plannin' my big comeback. "Lizard King Rises from the Grave!" I'm set, baby. Me and Morris the Cat.

**MUSICIAN:** *Why did you stage your death?*

**MORRISON:** I saw what it did sales-wise for Hendrix and Joplin. 1971, man, was not exactly a hot time for the Doors. All the little honeys were buying James Taylor albums and movin' out to the mountains. I was gettin' fat and gross, we couldn't get a single. It was the only move left.

**MUSICIAN:** *Worked, too.*

**MORRISON:** There ya go. Actually, me and John Kay from Steppenwolf were sort of in the same boat—heavy-duty sexy mysterioso lead singers in psychedelic leather bands. But I knew when to die and Kay didn't. Hell, if he'd kicked the bucket in '71, 15-year-old kids would be walkin' around today singin' "Monster."

**MUSICIAN:** *Why do you think the Doors continue to appeal to young people?*

**MORRISON:** 'Cause I articulated what every young American desires but can't put into words: "I woke up this mornin' and got myself a bee-yuh!" That speaks to youth a lot more deeply than anything Dylan ever said.

**MUSICIAN:** *Elektra released a posthumous Doors live album. Your version of Van Morrison's "Gloria" got a lot of airplay. Why did you pick that song to cover?*

**MORRISON:** 'Cause the credit said "Morrison." Figured I'd make some bread on publishing.

**MUSICIAN:** *Speaking of publishing, your contribution to the Doors' biggest hits was minimal. Robbie Krieger actually wrote "Touch Me" and "Love Her Madly." Did Krieger write "Hello, I Love You"?*

**MORRISON:** Uh, no...Ray Davies wrote that one.

**MUSICIAN:** *Well, Krieger wrote "Light My Fire."*

**MORRISON:** He only wrote the chords and melody and chorus and first verse. I wrote the important part.

**MUSICIAN:** *Which is?*

**MORRISON:** "No time to wallow in the mire." That was mine.

**MUSICIAN:** *What did that have to do with the rest of the song?*

**MORRISON:** It rhymed! It's not easy to find a rhyme for "fire" but I came up with some good ones. "Pyre." The toughest was actually finding something to rhyme with "Come on, baby, light my *fire*." I thought we'd never get anything! Then we hit, "Try to set the night on *fire*." It rhymed great, it made sense. I'm a genius, what can I say? I'm, if not a god, certainly a lord.

**MUSICIAN:** *Given material like that, were you surprised when people started calling you a great poet?*

**MORRISON:** Hell, no. I said it first.

**MUSICIAN:** *You used the same "fire" rhyme in "L.A. Woman," which also contained some liberated—if not surreal—grammar. I'm thinking specifically of "Girl, they are a liar." I'm fascinated by such grammar, and especially by your unusual use of the first person pronoun. For example: "Till the stars fall from the sky for you and I." Why not "me"? You could have had the stars falling in the sea or something.*

**MORRISON:** "I" is my favorite word. I used it every chance I got. I, I, I, I, I! I was heavily influenced by the Rastafarian concept of "I and I." Also by Steve Roper's pal Mike Nomad, who talked a lot like a Doors lyric: "Let's I and you go, pal." I always dug that.

**MUSICIAN:** *Which post-Doors lyricists do you admire?*

**MORRISON:** I really liked America. They had good lyrics. I liked, "There were plants and birds and rocks and things." Of course, I really dug [*sings*] "Alligator lizards in the aiiirrr." Those guys would have been smart to die.

**MUSICIAN:** *That reminds me. Your producer, Paul Rothchild, walked out on the* L.A. Woman *sessions saying the Doors by that point sounded like a lounge band. Response?*

**MORRISON:** I'm a lounge *lizard*, bay-bee. I always dug lounge singers. Robert Goulet was a heavy influence on my vocal style. The big croon, man. [*sings*] "Takay Long Holly-dayyy." Yeah! When I was a little boy growin' up on the naval base, I heard some old lounge singers croonin' in the officers' club one afternoon and that was *it*, y'know? That was the most real sound I had ever heard. I knew right then that's what I wanted to be. My parents didn't understand at all. They tried to get me to sing like a black man, like Woody Guthrie, *anything* but a lounge singer. But I did what I had to do.

**MUSICIAN:** *Yet your vocal style had little influence on other rock singers.*

**MORRISON:** [*angry*] Bull*shit*, bay-bee! What about David Clayton-Thomas? Huh? What about that? *Everything* Blood, Sweat & Tears did was laid out in "Touch Me" by the Doors! The horn parts, the tasteful use of strings, and *especially* the vocals! Listen [*croons*]: "AHHHHM GONNA *LOVE* YA!" I was so pissed off when BS&T came along and started outselling us. Damn! I'm not absolutely sure about this, but I believe I wrote "Lucretia Mac Evil" one night when I was stoned and Clayton-Thomas stole it. I could be wrong, but it sure *sounds* like me. Me or Steve Stills.

**MUSICIAN:** *I always thought it was remarkable that the Doors had no bass player.*

**MORRISON:** Huh? You mean the big fiddle that stands on the floor? What are you talkin' about, man?

**MUSICIAN:** *Electric bass. You know, like Paul McCartney in the Beatles, Bill Wyman in the Stones. Bass players!*

**MORRISON:** Those guys play guitar.

**MUSICIAN:** *No, Jim, they play electric bass. It looks like a guitar but it has four strings.*

**MORRISON:** Oh, well, um. Robbie's guitar had *more* than four strings.

**MUSICIAN:** *It's not the same thing. Look, you want to take a walk? I'll show you. [We get up and proceed down the Rue D'Urso to a small musical instrument store. I ask the clerk to lend me a Fender bass. I play Jim the bass riff from "Sunshine of Your Love."]*

**MORRISON:** Huh! Sounds like a tuba!

**MUSICIAN:** *Yeah. You never saw one before?*

**MORRISON:** I've seen a lot, man. I probably saw one and forgot all about it. How do you spell that? Like "*base*ball"?

**MUSICIAN:** *No, like the fish.*

**MORRISON:** Look, man, let's wrap this up. I gotta meet Marc Bolan for dinner and my stomach's squirmin' like a toad.

**MUSICIAN:** *Okay, one last question. Do you feel it hurt your poetic credibility at all when it was revealed that you wrote the whole first Doors album and part of the second in a single afternoon, while tripping?*

**MORRISON:** Nah, I thought it just proved I was a lord.

JIM MORRISON

# ALIVE HE BELCHED

STORY BY SAM SELBY • *Illustration by Mike Hodges*

I HAD SEEN JIM MORRISON ONLY ONCE BEFORE—in Paris in the spring of 1971. I was 16 years old and tearing up the town with a bunch of my high school buddies. We spotted Morrison at Napoleon's Tomb. He heard our American accents and asked if we were into music. We said yeah, not having the heart to tell him that at that point the Doors were considered somewhere between Neil Diamond and the Monkees on the hipness scale. Things sure have changed. Now everybody likes the Monkees.Twenty years later I was in France again. Sipping a vodka on a bench outside the Hôtel des Invalides, I recalled that chance meeting with Morrison, and considered the unending speculation that his mysterious Parisian death later that year was faked. The more I thought about it, the more I drank. The more I drank, the more familiar the husky, bearded fellow across the park began to seem. I cautiously moved closer and heard that his French was spiked with an American accent. Although the features visible through the shredded netting of wild hair and thick beard did not much resemble Morrison as I'd known him, something in the seedy bum's manner said to me, "It's Jim!"

Switching my Walkman to the record mode, I approached my countryman. "Jim Morrison?" I asked.

"Sorry," the hirsute ragamuffin replied. "You've got the wrong guy."

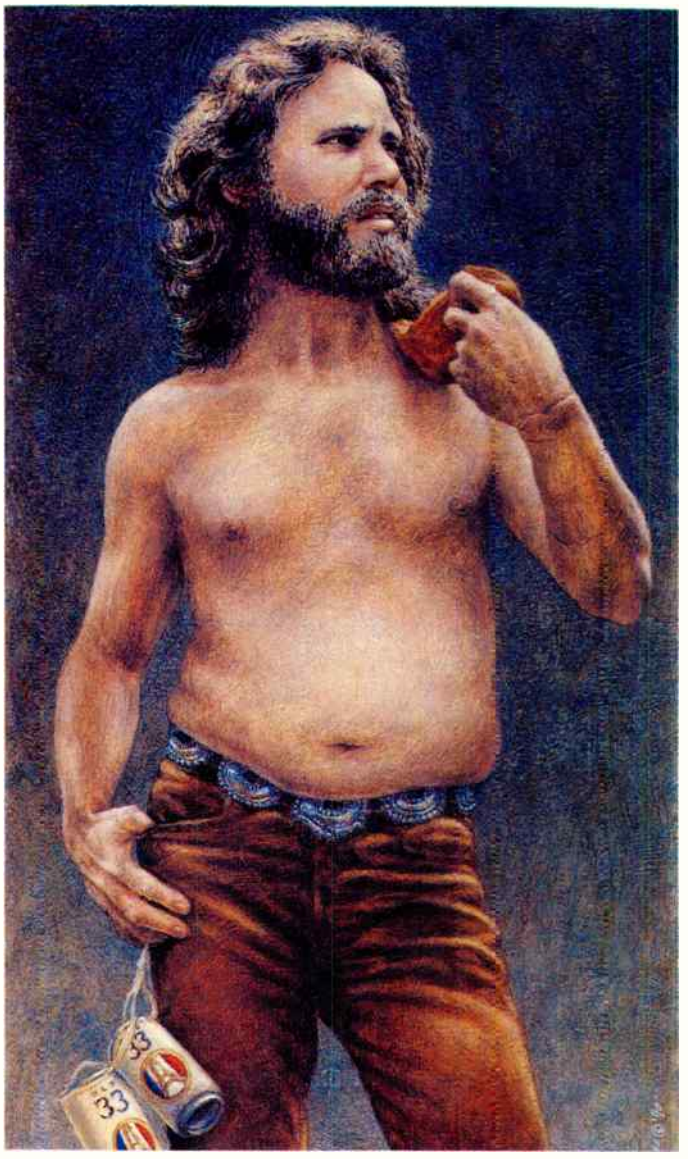
"No, I don't," I pressed. "We met here years ago, Jim, when I was a high school kid and you were a famous rock star. Now I'm a writer and you're paperback history. I don't know what strange fate reunited us—but I just can't turn and walk away."

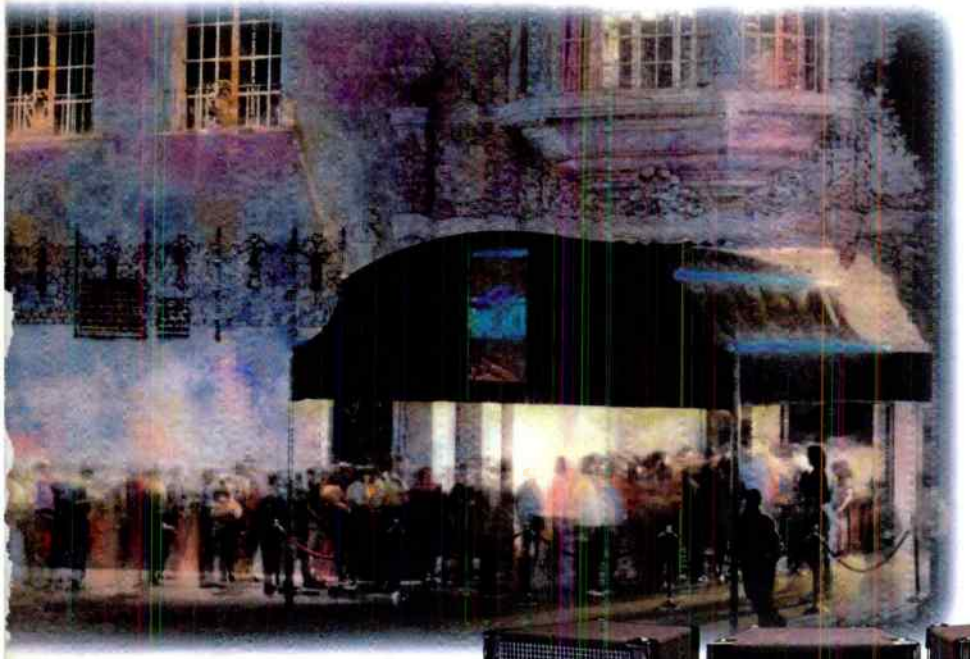
"You're making a mistake," the decimated derelict insisted. "I'm not Jim Morrison. Jim Morrison died a long time ago."

"Look, Jim," I insisted. "Let's talk. An interview could mean a lot to your fans, to your old friends and to everyone I owe money."

"Wellllll," the ragged Rimbaud said cautiously. "Suppose—just suppose—I am Jim Morrison. Whoever I talk to's gonna have quite a scoop. Earn a lot of bread off me. Don't I deserve a cut of that?"

I reached down for my wallet and peeled off five American hundred-dollar bills. "Take it or leave it," I said, secure [cont'd on page 97]





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