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INTERVIEW BY MATT RESNICOFF

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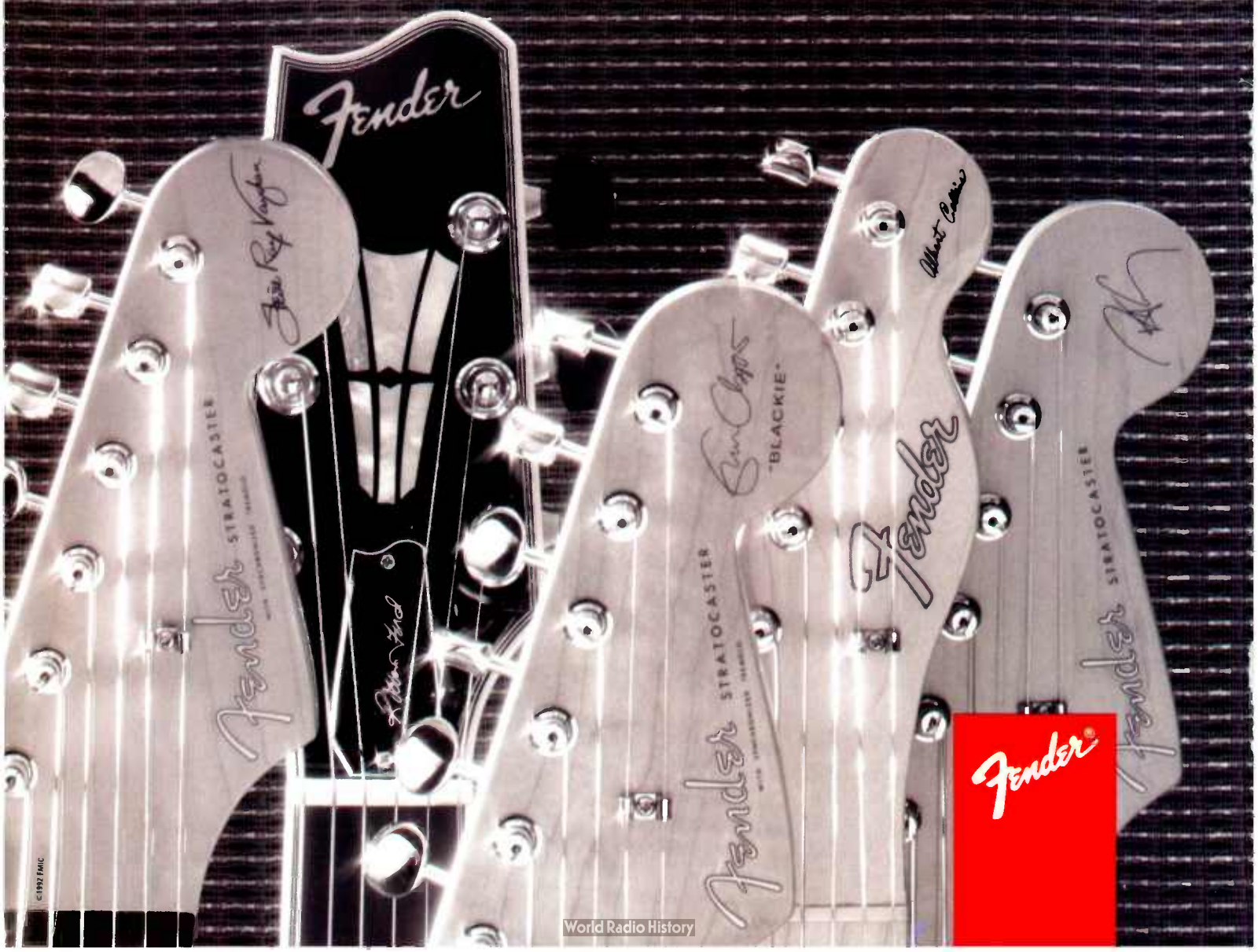

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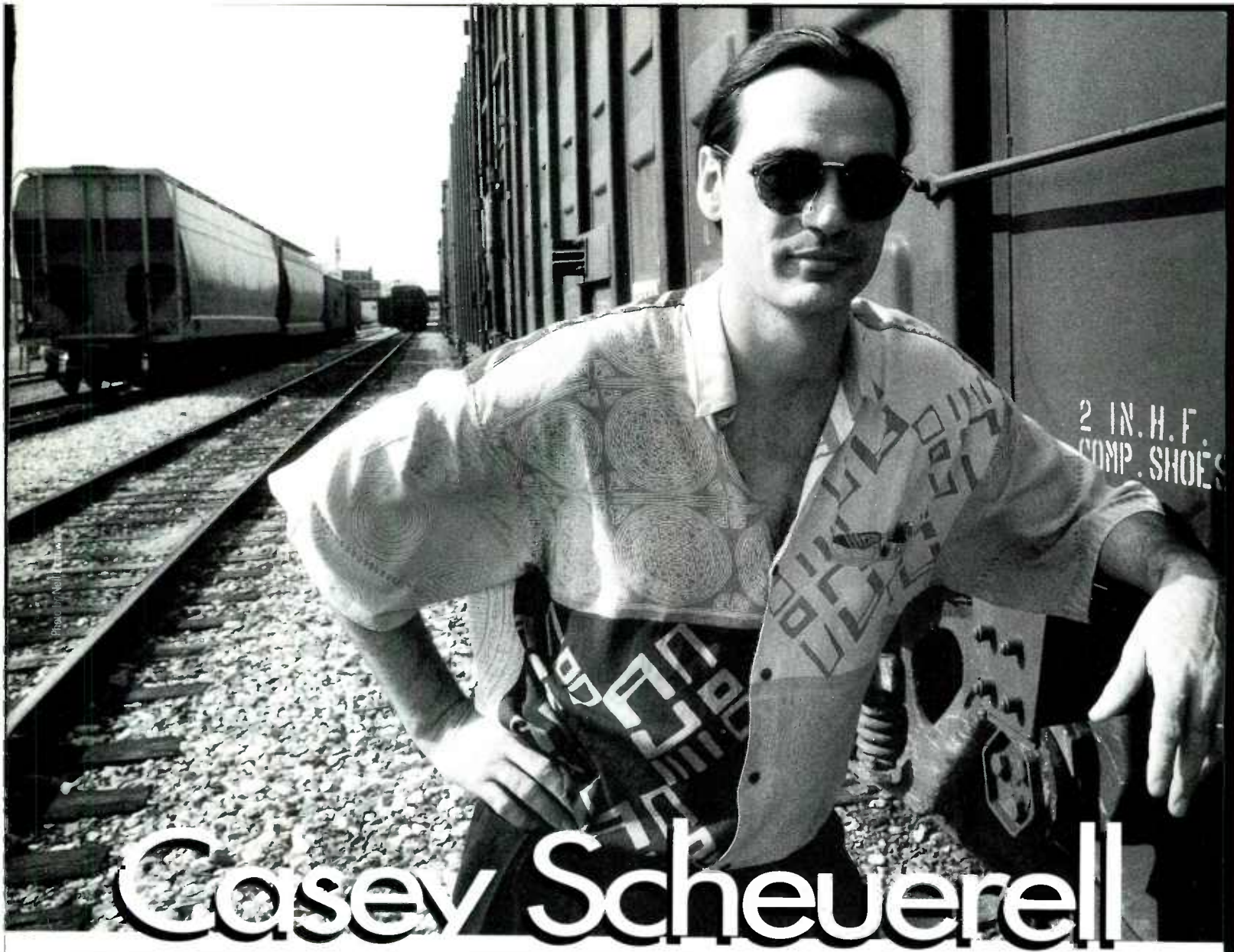

Casey Scheuerell

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ON TOUR THIS SUMMER

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WORKING MUSICIAN

DEPARTMENTS

COVER
David Gilmour aboard his houseboat/studio in London; photograph by Jill Furmanovsky. Photographs this page: (Left) Michael P. Smith/Sygma; (Top) Liz Finlayson

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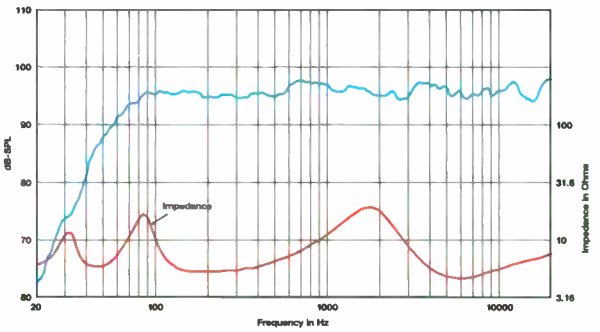
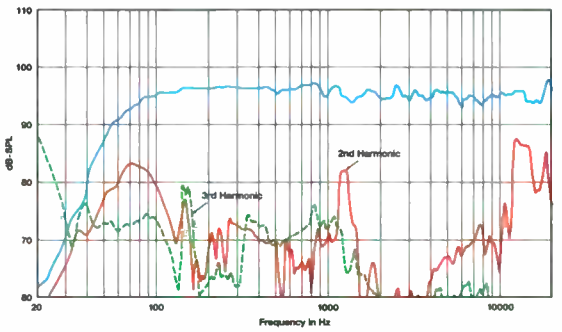


Frequency Response (Model 4206): 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels



Distortion vs. Frequency (Model 4208) 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels (distortion raised 20 dB)

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CARL PERKINS

FRONT MAN

You've had some real ups and downs in your career, but your brush with cancer last year was a little too close for comfort.

This thing was found, lucky for me, by accident. I had started wheezing while I was sleeping and last April my wife insisted I go to a lung specialist. He found that I didn't have emphysema—which is why I was afraid to go. I just had some bronchial stoppage. On the way out he said, "You've been singing for so many years, I'll just look at your vocal cords. I figured they'd be big as a mule's." And he saw a little spot on the left side of my neck.

That day I went to a throat specialist. He examined me, looked me in the eye and said, "Carl, I hate to say this but I think I'm looking at cancer." I said, "Oh no, man, no!" I had already cut this new album [*Friends, Family & Legends*]. My throat had not bothered me. I had no warning signs.

This was on a Thursday. On Monday morning I was at Vanderbilt University Hospital in Nashville. They agreed that it was throat cancer. They took the route of radiation treatments first. Then if there's surgery it will be minor. Not knowing about radiation, I didn't know what I was in for.

I was grateful to them to let me go home [to Jackson, Tennessee] to take these treatments. I was not hospitalized. They set me for 30 treatments, and decided at the end of the 25th that they were gonna add seven more—at which point they turned the rads up. And I knew it. When I got through with it I had lost about 35 pounds. I went back to Vanderbilt. They said, "We're not going to have to do surgery"—which was wonderful news.

There were some awfully low points during that time. But Val, my wife of 39 years, laid awake with her hand on my head to see if I had fever. My children gathered around me. I just got surrounded with love from my family, from my friends, fans who wrote me cards. I started looking at not what I had lost but what I had left. I found that column to be much bigger. I said, "Well, if I can't ever sing again, at least I can talk." My voice was raspy and I was weak. But somehow I knew all along that I was gonna pull it up. 'Cause I had exactly what we must have to survive something this hard, and that is love everywhere I turned.

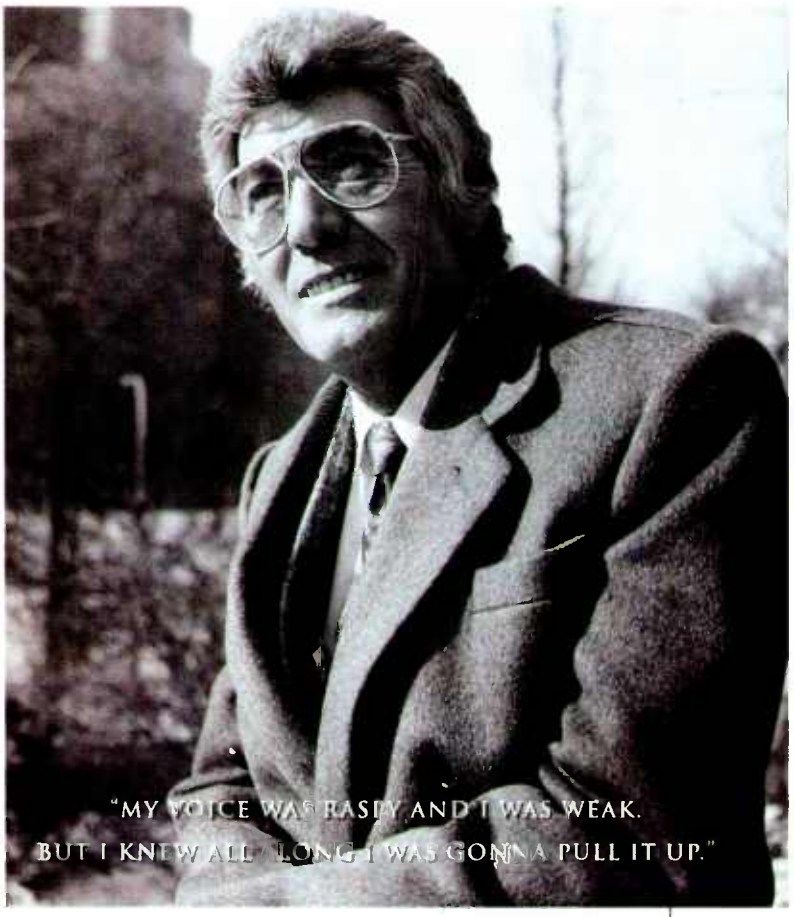
The farther I get away from where I was, the more the odds shift to my favor that it won't come back and that I'll be able to sing again. I tried that at the Hard Rock Cafe a few days ago. I intended to do a couple of songs; five slipped by me real fast. I'm feeling stronger every day.

At this point in your life do you feel less compelled to write songs?

I've never been able to sit down and write songs. That's really not good, but that's the way it is with me. I can write when it happens. It happens in the strangest places. I'm taking my pants off, man, to go to bed; a quarter rolls out of my pocket across the floor. And I griped about it to myself: "Aw, let it stay there, that old silver." Silver. Silver and gold...waita-minute! [*Snaps fingers*] Down the hall I go to my catgut and 30 minutes later I have [*starts singing*], "I met an old man/Easin' down the street..." The song just came. But if somebody walked up to me and said, "Carl Perkins, write me a song about silver and gold," it wouldn't work. I might go fishing and it just happens. It happens on airplanes, just weird places.

Did George Harrison want to record "Your True Love" with you on a Traveling Wilburys album?

When we did that Cinemax special he insisted that we do that song. I said, "George, that old song ain't no good." There's a lot of stuff I'm embarrassed about. Really. I didn't know it was being recorded at Sun [Records]. "Your True Love" was a song that I wrote in the studio. I started singing that thing and [Sun owner] Sam Phillips says, "Hey! Whose song is that?" I says, "It's mine." He says, "Well, you ought to write it down 'cause you're singin' it different every verse!" So I did write some words down but we cut it right there that day. After that session I left Memphis to go out on tour. Sam said, "That thing ain't fast enough." So he turned [the tape speed] up and I sound like Mickey Mouse!



You had a big birthday this April.

Don't remind me! I've earned every one of those 60 years. Naturally nobody wants to get old but I like to think if you like rock'n'roll you don't grow old. You just hang there and rock and enjoy the music.

You've always had one foot in rock 'n' roll and one in country.

Exactly. George Strait did a song I wrote in 1965, "When You're a Man on Your Own," in the platinum album *Livin' It Up*. Country music's always been a part of my life. Let's face it, "Blue Suede Shoes" is as country a song as ever been written. Who drinks liquor out of a fruit jar but a country boy? Or who's more proud of a pair of shoes than a country boy? That's what I was saying.

SCOTT ISLER

PHOTOGRAPH: CLAUDIO VASQUEZ

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LETTERS

STONED AGAIN

Thanks so much for "Talkin' About My Inspiration" (May '92). It reaffirmed my faith in music journalism. We need more articles like this, which explores a pertinent issue in the music world with an untarnished, unbiased point of view. I marveled at the intelligent, eloquent contributions of the artists that were asked very private and difficult questions.

Carrie Fox
Oklahoma City, OK

I was somewhat disappointed in the lengthy article entitled "Drugs, Booze and Creativity." For one, few of the artists interviewed talked specifically about drugs. And for two, who really cares? It seems that they (the artists) either end up sounding arrogant and self-righteous (i.e., the particular quote from Branford Marsalis), or they sound simplistic and simple-minded (i.e., the quote from George Harrison: "LSD and pot did definitely open up some doors for me..." Wow).

Jeff Wall
Bellingham, WA

It's amazing that the pressures of celebrity often lead to self-destruction for many of these talented performers.

Jim Smith
Albany, NY

Was Sinéad O'Connor smoking "quite a bit of dope" when she did her research on the English Romantic poets? It is true that Samuel Taylor Coleridge was *tragically* addicted to opium. William Wordsworth and William Blake, however, were not dependent on drugs of any kind. Coleridge's addiction had severe consequences on his health and has been blamed for his inability to finish many of the projects he started. His addiction was tragic because it diminished his greatness both as man and poet. Imagine what he could have done if he didn't have a monkey on his back.

James W. Hagen
Norristown, PA

I suppose I don't read your periodical because you're a medical journal, but I believe you have provided a great disservice to your readers by never stating that the substances the artists eschew or denigrate are habit-forming: addictive. Only two artists you interviewed, Peter Gabriel and Branford Marsalis, clearly opposed the use of substances as a means to create; I think others you talked to would, strongly. I would hope so anyway.

Keith Richards points out some people might emulate their musical heroes by assuming their addictions, especially when they read articles such as yours, full of casual stupid comments like Joni Mitchell citing the "great Welsh alcoholics." As far as I can ascertain, there's still nothing creative about being dead. How does the old joke go? How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Oh yeah, smoke a few joints and drink some warm saki.

Jon C. Lundell
Brookline, MA

MICHAEL: FORGIVE US

I realize Lyle Lovett (May '92) is VH-1 performer of the month, but I found his comments on Michael Bolton very inappropriate. Michael Bolton is a very talented individual and maybe it's about time the Grammy Awards had a little shaking up. I hope Michael Bolton ignores comments like this and keeps giving us the first-rate quality he has for the last nine years.

Carlene Mills
Honolulu, HI

I felt like I was in the truck with you [George Kalogerakis] and Lyle tooling around Texas. Great writing.

Doug Bell
Nashville, TN

REQUIESCOTT

There are indeed "few facts" concerning Mozart's death, as Dennis Polkow notes (May '92). But he doesn't help by then perpetuating two of the most stubborn Mozart mistruths: "His economic situation dictated that he be buried in an unmarked pauper's grave, and inclement weather kept mourners from going to the grave itself."

NOT! There were no "pauper's graves" in 1791 Vienna. Mozart was buried like all of his Viennese contemporaries—in a communal grave—and reportedly in a coffin, not a pauper's sack. If there were no graveside mourners, that is also in keeping with Viennese tradition: The burial was the morning after the well-attended funeral.

Let's leave the Mozart fiction to *Amadeus*.

Laura Picone
Brooklyn, NY

MIKED BY THE FEDS

Brent Hurtig and Rolf Hartley should earn high marks for their article "Cut the Cord: A Crash Course in Wireless Mikes" (May '92), but I must flunk them both for not mentioning the licensing requirement. It is a violation of federal law for you to energize the transmitter on your fancy new wireless system without the blessing of the Federal Communications Commission. All wireless systems other than 49 MHz types must be licensed under either Part 74 or Part 90 of the FCC Rules and Regulations. Before spending any money for a system that you might not be able to use legally, call the FCC at (717) 337-1212 and request information and forms needed to license a wireless microphone system under Part 90 in the Business Radio Service. A wireless license costs $35 and takes six to nine months to process. Licensing your new wireless system is *your* responsibility!

Eric G. Lemmon
Owner/Chief Engineer
Videotel Sound

ERRATTOR

Your recent feature story on musical inspiration hit some high notes, but could have gone higher if Jenny Boyd, Ph. D! had included comments from Jerry Garcia. Instead, you insulted one of popular music's most inspiring figures by printing a photo of Jerry and Bob Weir on the "New Releases" page, captioned "Weir and Garcia: Cartoon Heroes." There was no accompanying review of anything associated with Bob Weir or Jerry Garcia. Was the item an editorial comment or simply a production error?

Bob Langmaid
Toronto, ONT

Production error. The review of Grateful Dead Comix #3 *appeared in the July '92 issue on page 101.*

—Ed.

J.D. Considine's June review of Soul II Soul's Just Right: Volume III *incorrectly states that Caron Wheeler sings on "Joy." Richie Stevens sings on that song, while Wheeler sings "Take Me Higher."*

—Ed.

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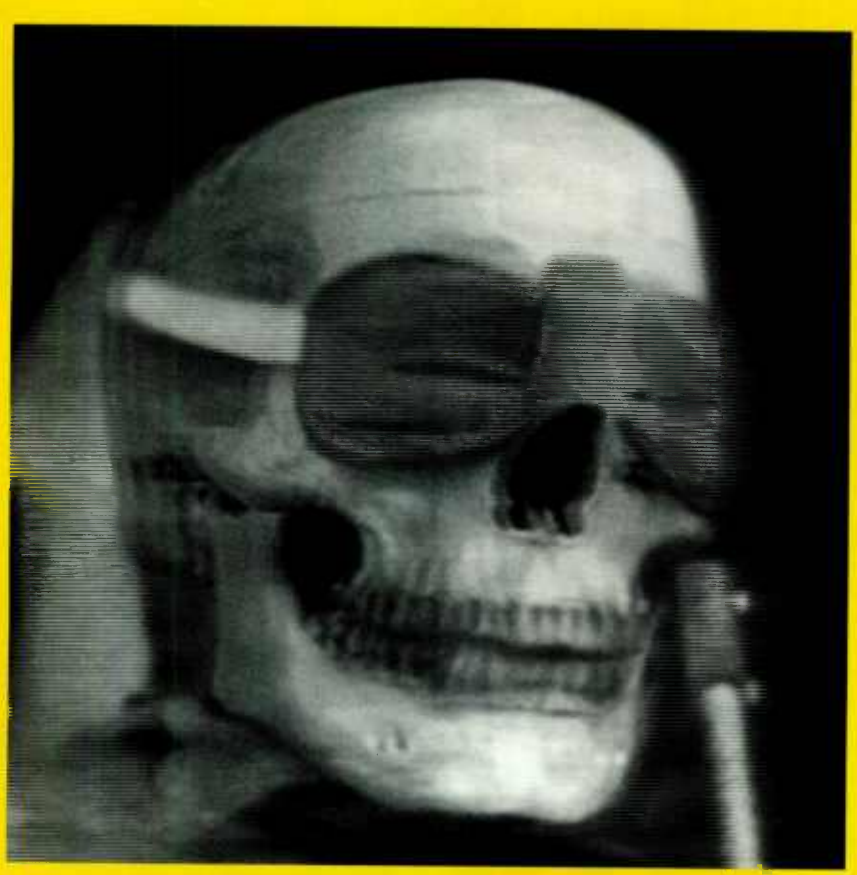

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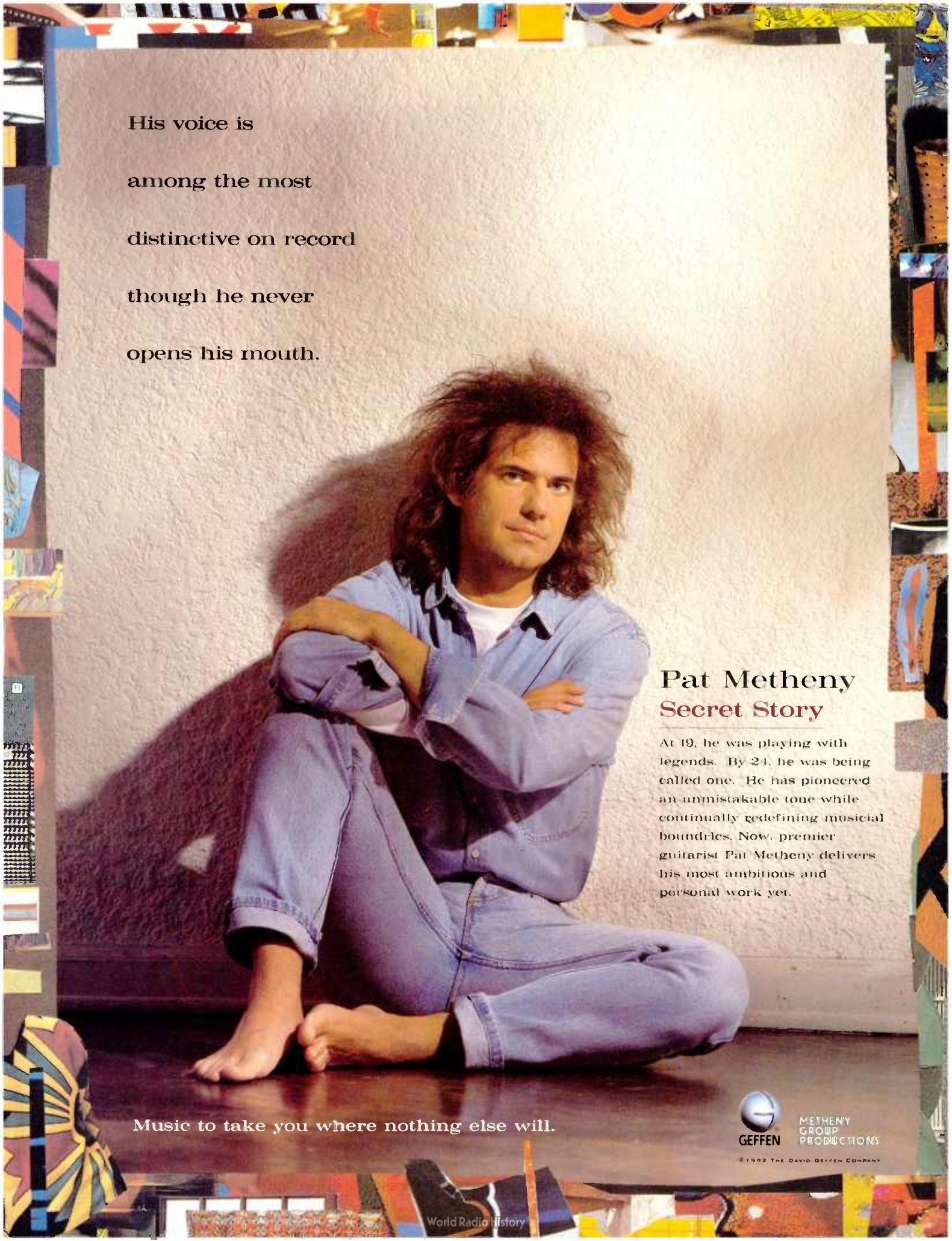


WHY I SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. A ROCKER'S CONFESSION

LET'S FACE IT...IT'S A LOUSY SONG.

The melody—singable by possibly .01% of the population—careens around aimlessly like your Uncle Jerry after a few dips into the Christmas punchbowl. The words suggest that the best thing to say about this country is that we kick butt on the battlefield.

How did we get stuck with an anthem as lame as "The Star Spangled Banner" anyway?

And given these complaints, what was I—pathologically liberal dedicated songwriter—doing in Minneapolis at the Twins/Orioles baseball game last April singing this travesty of a national anthem?

Well, as far as the melody, I figured I couldn't sing the tune any worse than Roseanne Barr. I wondered how my favorite singers—Leonard Cohen, Howlin' Wolf, Joseph Spence, for instance—would have tackled the song. I remember from my youth a rendition by former Dodger pitcher Ralph Branca that had all the pitch control of a lawnmower. He was roundly booed.

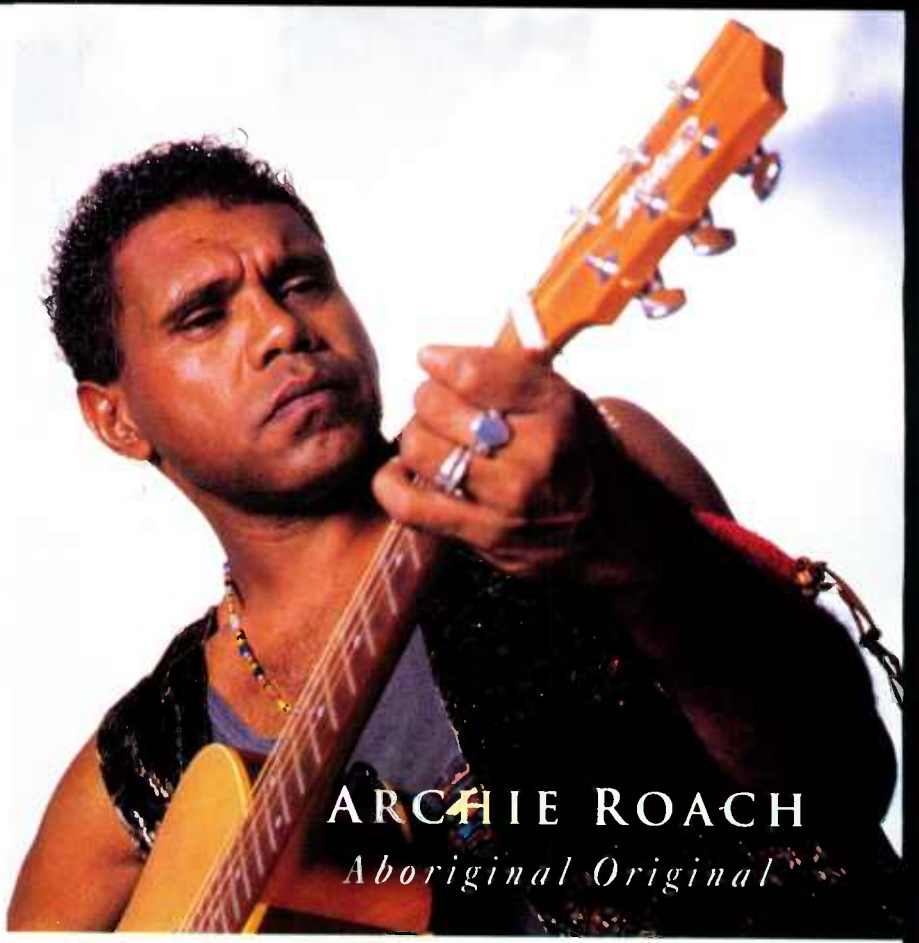
As far as the words, idiot lyrics and quickly declining American moral and political status aside, I still carry tainted but stubborn pride to be a citizen of a country that could produce Ty Cobb, Lenny Bruce, Bella Abzug and John Coltrane. And as a fanatical baseball fan, I figured that by accepting the Twins' request, I'd probably score some amazing seats.

How did it go? Let me put it this way: I will never play a show that will frighten me a tenth as much as this two-minute concert did. Maybe it was the close proximity to Kirby Puckett. Maybe it was seeing my jet-lagged face magnified onto the giant sports screen. Maybe it was the stadium echo that was still returning my opening lines long after I had finished the song.

I don't know how, but I managed to pull it off even as my knees were shaking like a '63 Corvair with a blown gasket. No heckling. No complaints. No beers thrown. I was a good opening act.

Oh, by the way, the seats were lousy. STEVE WYNN

Steve Wynn's latest album is Dazzling Display.



ARCHIE ROACH

Aboriginal Original

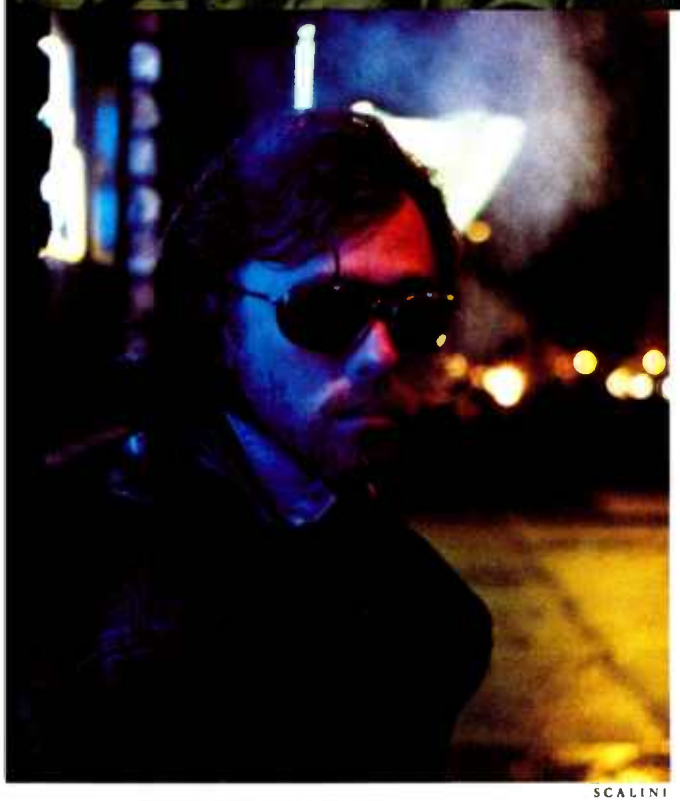
When he was six years old, the Australian government forcibly took Archie Roach from his family, beginning an odyssey that included foster homes, arrests, alcoholism and life on the street. Three decades later, you can hear the repercussions on his stunning debut, *Charcoal Lane*. In simple, painfully honest folk songs, Roach recalls his experiences as an Aboriginal in an often-hostile society, the victim of an official policy that decreed non-white children should be raised in proper white homes.

"I'm trying to tell people, 'I'm not angry or bitter about what happened—I'm sad,'" Roach says softly, explaining the surprising lack of rancor in his heartbreaking stories. "It took me a long time to reach that point, but my anger and bitterness got me into a lot of trouble, in fights and in jail."

The healing process started with a guitar. A fan of American country music—reflected in the down-home twang of his vocals—Roach began exorcising his demons 15 years ago with original tunes like "Took the Children Away." Alcoholics Anonymous helped break the chains of drink, and he eventually settled into stable life in a Melbourne suburb, complete with day job. "I'd play a few shows in clubs here and there, but I wasn't thinking about a record contract," he recalls. "It was just something I enjoyed doing."

After the opening spot at a Paul Kelly concert brought him exposure in 1989, he went on to record *Charcoal Lane* with Kelly and bandmate Steve Connolly handling production. The quiet power of Roach's autobiographical songs inspired critical raves and turned him into an unlikely celebrity, something he still feels uncomfortable with.

Determined "not to become too clichéd," Roach plans a second album with fewer personal tunes. Some Aboriginals want him to be a spokesman, which he bluntly calls "a pain. My history is important to me, and I *am* Aboriginal, but I'm not interested in heavy political things. I'd rather be known as just a singer/songwriter, without labels." JON YOUNG



SCALINI

LARRY CRANE

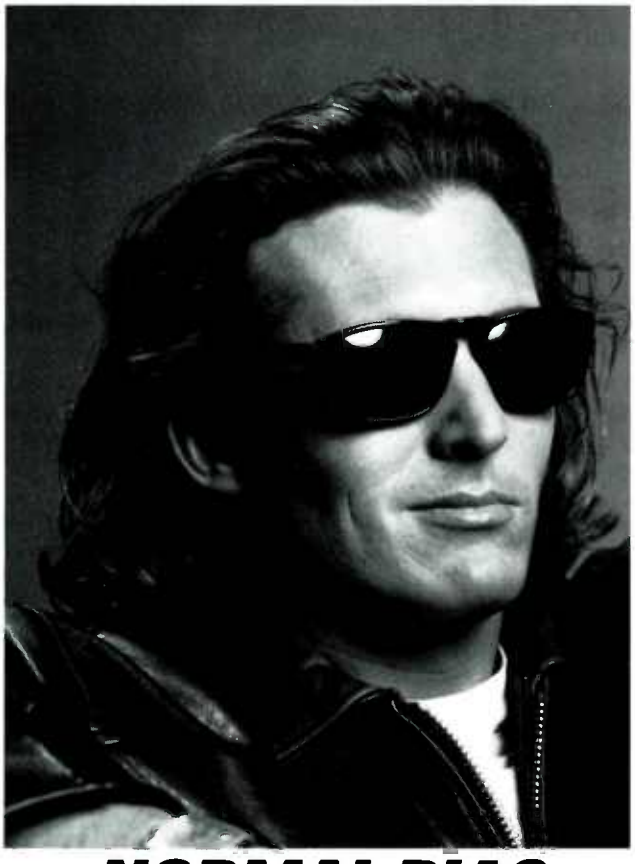
Happy Ex-Mellencamper

"JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY I KNOW THINKS I'M EITHER THE bravest guy alive or the stupidest," says Larry Crane, who gave up a cushy gig as John Mellencamp's guitarist to strike off on his own. "Financially, it was probably stupid, but I've never done anything for the money. It just felt right."

Bloomington, Indiana–based Crane, 35, has been piling up kudos for his independent six-cut CD *Eye for an Eye*, released last October and already in its second pressing. Regional fans, he says, had been clamoring for "something to take home." Crane was Mellencamp's guitarslinger for 16 years, and has led his own band since 1990. Both he and the former Johnny Cougar hail from Seymour, Indiana, where they played together as teenagers. Crane "dabbled in writing" songs throughout his tenure in Mellencamp's group, eventually coming up with some things he wasn't too embarrassed to play for the chief. "John'd say, 'Man, that's great—you need to start recording,'" recalls Crane, who went on to pen a quartet of songs, including the title track, for Mellencamp's movie *Falling from Grace* (in which he also portrayed his mentor's onscreen brother-in-law).

Crane's material—heartfelt heartland rock exploring the lives of ordinary folk—does invite comparisons to Mellencamp's. But that's inevitable, says Crane: "It just shows much of that sound was actually myself. Sometimes I'd like to say to people, 'If that's John's sound, how come I can do it without him?'"

MOIRA MCCORMICK



NORMAL BIAS

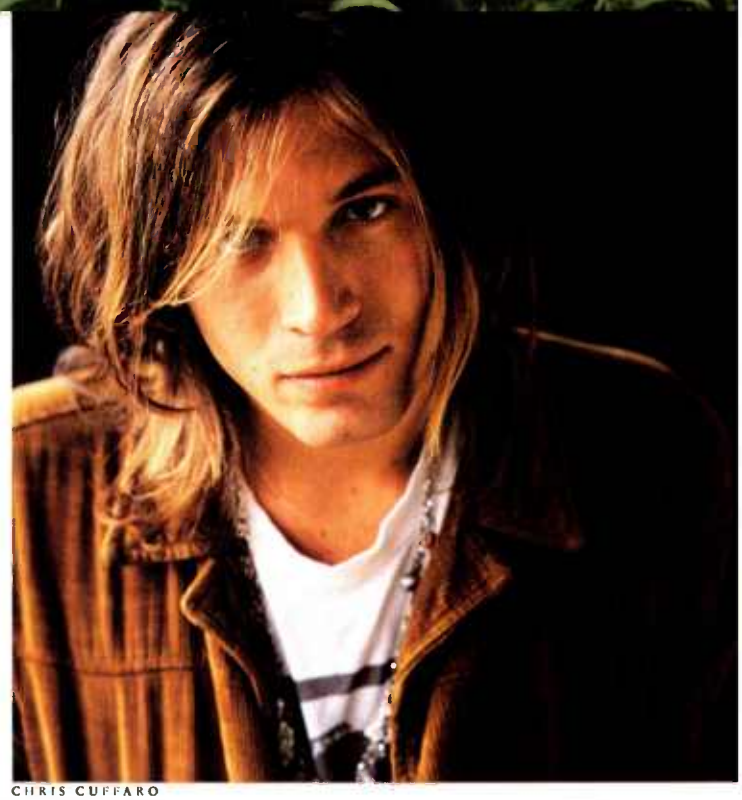
HIGH BIAS

THE LEMONHEADS

Evan Dando Unscrews the Cookie

EVAN DANDO RECOGNIZES QUALITY. THE DAY AFTER *MAD* magazine publisher Bill Gaines died, the Lemonheads singer/guitarist assessed the historical status of smart-assed juvenilia. "*Mad* was the Oreo, and *Cracked* was the Hydrox; I always dug Oreos. I used to read my dad's copy, and I'm sure it helped shape me in some way." Maybe that accounts for the frivolity on the band's new *It's a Shame about Ray*. Indie rock that doesn't hate mainstream pop, it sounds Oreotic—a real-deal confluence of smudged guitars and vocal élan. Dando's a hit-and-run songwriter with a sharp eye, and the record's crammed with tunes that get to the center of their subject matter toot suite. "Real short songs are it," he confirms. "The CD trend is to stretch everything out. Nah. A great album can happen in a half-hour. Look at *Rubber Soul*—12 short songs."

The Beatles aren't his only reference point. A few nights earlier he busked himself through Gram Parsons' "$1000 Wedding," Billie Holiday's "Jim" and other chestnuts at CBGB. They fit in with the Lemonhead ditties, which range from a that's-that breakup song for his parents to a capsulated moment of self-doubt in a diner. "General stuff doesn't have much weight. I learned that in high school, from Joyce's *Dubliners* and Dylan Thomas. They're specific in talking about experiences, and that's what I model my songs after. It's about language and words, and not being afraid to state the obvious." JIM MACNIE



CHRIS CUFFARO

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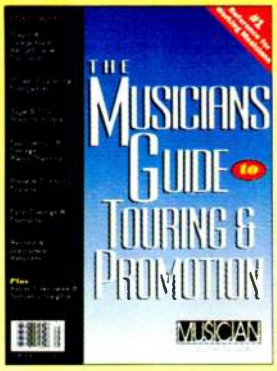

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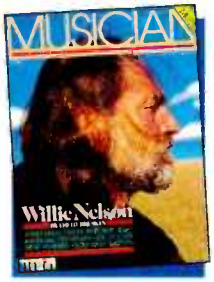

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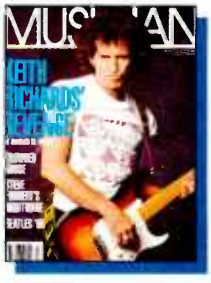

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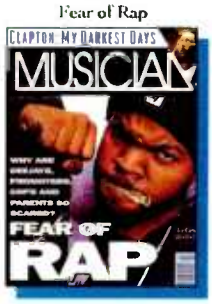

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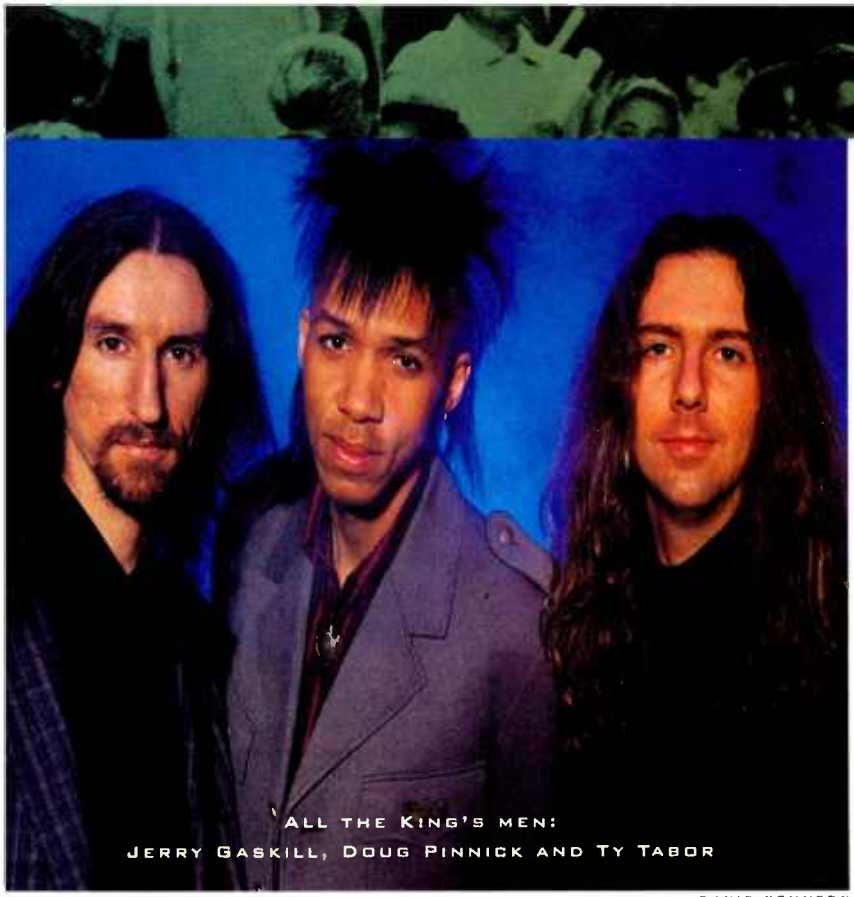


ALL THE KING'S MEN:
JERRY GASKILL, DOUG PINNICK AND TY TABOR

DAVID KENNEDY

KING'S X

THINKING MAN'S METAL

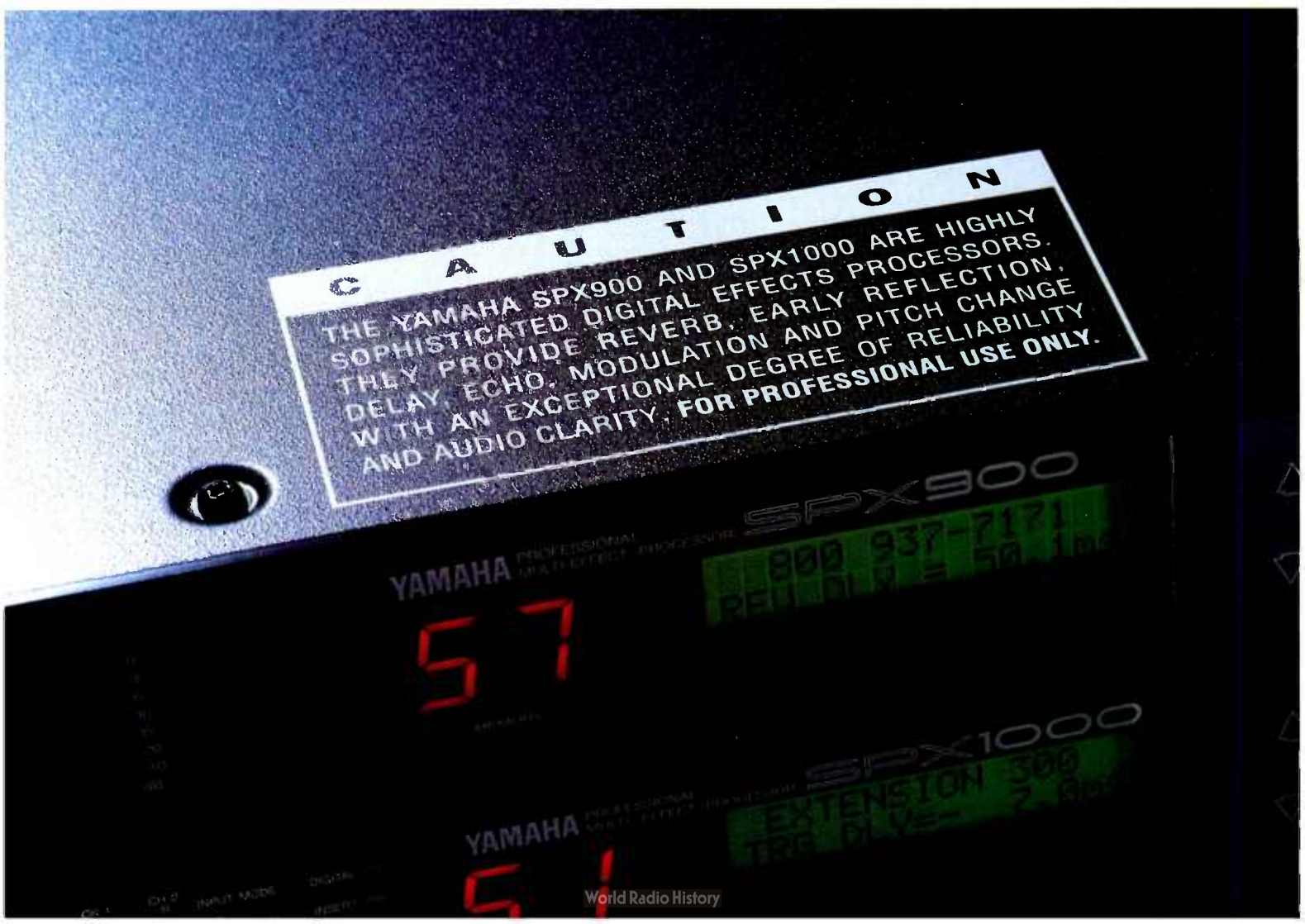
SIT IN THE AUDIENCE AT A KING'S X SHOW AND you'll see something you wouldn't have expected: adulation. "Every town we've been to on this tour has sold out, and everybody there knows every note and drum roll," says bassist Doug Pinnick. "We're not big, but we sure have a loyal following."

What makes these fans so devoted? Some of it may have to do with the band's signature mix of sledgehammer riffs and lush, Beatlesesque vocal harmonies, and some with its introspective, semi-mystical lyrics. But it's mostly because King's X is by no means a typical metal band.

"Somebody called us the thinking man's metal," says Pinnick. "A lot of people who listen to us seem to be the type of people who are thinking of things other than sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll."

"We're just playing the music we want to hear," adds drummer Jerry Gaskill. "We draw from all our influences and inspirations, and it just becomes this new thing. It turns out to be King's X."

J.D. CONSIDINE



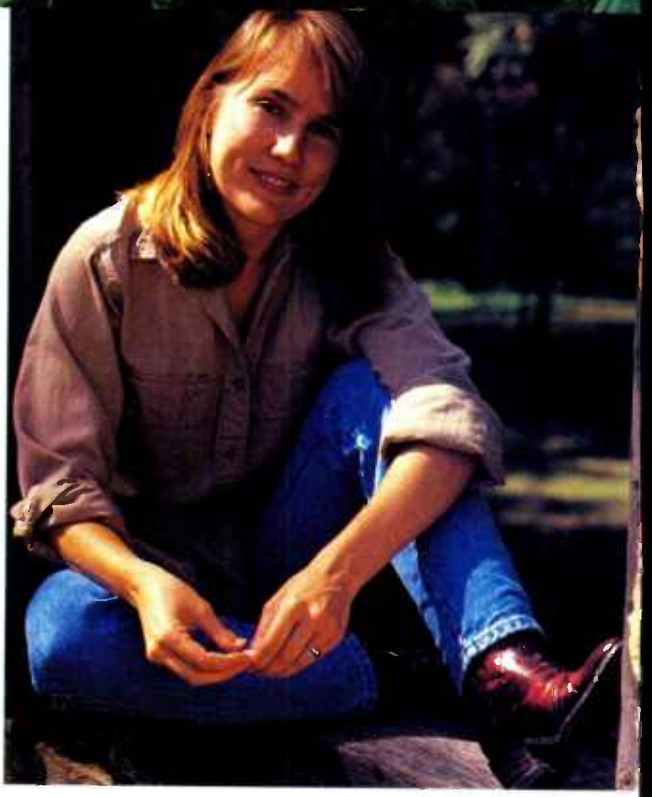
IRIS DEMENT

Simple Country Values

"OVER THERE WAS WHERE I BOUGHT MY FIRST CAR," Iris DeMent sings on her debut album. "It turned over once, but then it never went far." Although she recorded *Infamous Angel* with some of Nashville's finest, DeMent, like that old car, has never been able to spiritually pull herself (or her songs) too far away from the small Arkansas town where she was born. As a result, her songs retain a genuine charm lacking in most of what comes out of Music City. "In big cities it's easy to get away from people you don't like," she says. "But in a small town you have to deal with those people 'cause you're gonna have to see them every day of your life. I think that can enrich you as a person."

As a child DeMent fell under the spell of the "neat little songs" that her parents sang around the house. It was only later that she found out she'd been listening to the music of Jimmie Rodgers, Woody Guthrie and the Carter Family. "When I was in junior high I started going to the library and checking out those old records and it was like, 'I know that song!'" Unfortunately, the down-to-earth, acoustic qualities DeMent shares with those artists will probably keep her off country playlists. "I don't think my music fits in with what gets played on the radio," she says, "but it *should* 'cause what I'm singin' about is some pretty basic stuff."

PETER CRONIN



ON STAGE

BOB DYLAN

THE UNITED STATES MAY BE too vast a place for any one person to hold the title of greatest living songwriter. So let's be fair about it. In Times Square, it's Lou Reed. On Zuma Beach, it's Neil Young. Everywhere else, it's Bob Dylan.

Lord knows Dylan's played everywhere else, on a tour that's been going now for about three years—or maybe it's three decades—and shows no signs of abating. He plays the small cities and burgs most rock stars write off as not cost-effective and treats publicity for the plague it mostly is. He changes his band members and song arrangements without notice, and does not share billing with Miller Beer. As a consequence, his performances retain an aura of expectation and mystery that would be far beyond that of comparable legends, if there were any.

Dylan played seven nights in May at Hollywood's handsome old Pantages Theatre. There was no advance hype, which in Los Angeles is a rare and wonderful thing.

Dylan appeared in the familiar vest and hair and guitar that looked like it had been borrowed off a gypsy wagon, and lo, he was great. An ovation of greeting turned into one of thunderous recognition as he launched a torrid "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35," sending twin signals that the evening's repertoire would draw generously from the classics and that Dylan, on this night at least, had the voice and the spirit to give them their due.

He also had the band, an amalgam of drummers Charlie Quintana and Ian Wallace, bassist Tony Garnier, lead guitarist John Jackson and pedal-steel guitar/mandolinist extraordinaire Bucky Baxter. The result was a hybrid that could burn like the dickens on "Maggie's Farm," or turn "Just Like a Woman" into an undulating country tonk lament.

And he had the occasion. Two weeks before, riots and firebombings had torn Los Angeles apart, their causes and effects bringing back into focus moral issues that have always been at the core of Dylan's artistry. He framed those issues with the force and zeal of a prophet. "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" was no longer a lament for a '60s martyr, but the reflection of Rodney King. His withering rendition of "Ballad of a Thin Man" brought to mind a gaggle of contemporary candidates, while the meditative bluegrass sway given "The Times They Are A-Changin'" recognized the permanence of the conditions which spawn such sentiments.

For his second encore, Dylan returned alone and sang "Blowin' in the Wind." "How many years can a man turn his head and pretend that he just doesn't see? How many years can some people exist before they're allowed to be free?" Then he gave a little bow and left the stage.

—MARK ROWLAND

MOOG '92

CONCERTS OF NEW MUSIC BY university professors seldom attract wide attention, but the public unveiling of the new Multiple-Touch-Sensitive Moog Synthesizer May 29th in Chicago made a concert of works by University of Chicago composer/professor John Eaton an event for the curious and skeptical alike. Eaton, a pioneer in extended performance techniques and electronic music composition, and Robert Moog, the man who in 1964 introduced the commercial synthesizer, have been collaborating on the Multiple-Touch-Sensitive Synthesizer for 20 years. Creating synthesizers that generated new sounds was not difficult, Moog told the audience, but fully controlling them was. With help and suggestions from Eaton—not to mention two decades of trial and error—Moog thinks the problem has finally been solved.

Eaton was the sole performer for his piece "Genesis," the first specifically written for the new instrument, which attempts to electronically contrast the cold, dark abyss that existed before creation with the warmth and light of the emergence of life.

Sitting at a console of two keyboards, three "black boxes" or tone generators, three computers and several swell pedals, Eaton created elaborate pitch-fluctuating sequences and musical gestures—all in real time—using only his fingers to control vibrato, volume, tremolo, pitch and timbre fluctuation, even cross-fading.

Each key on the keyboard has its own elaborate sensor system which registers the motion of fingers in five different ways: up and down, left and right, front and back, how much of the finger comes in contact with the top surface of the key and how hard the key is being depressed. Each of these controls can then be programmed to control any and every aspect of sound production.

Though there was little in "Genesis" that hadn't been heard in earlier electronic pieces, the means to achieve similar ends—hours of pre-programming—have been transformed. Now, electronic music is capable of responding to human nuance. —DENNIS POLKOW

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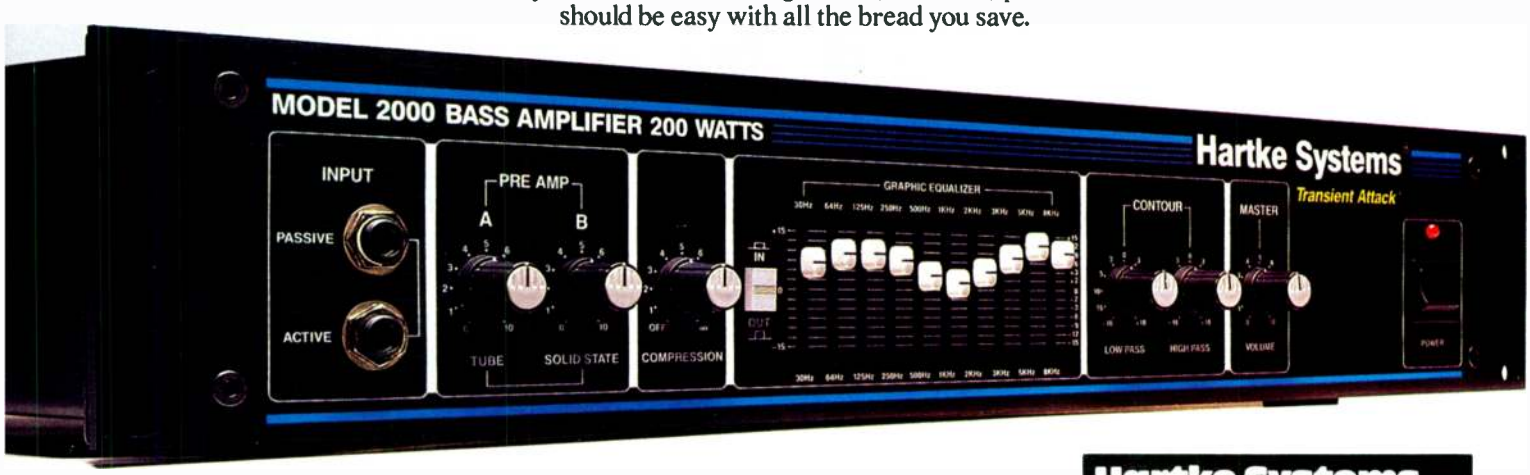

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NILS LOFGREN STOPS AND POPS

ERIC AMBEL AND NILS

FOR ALL THE DISSING RECORD COMPANIES RECEIVE FROM FRUSTRATED musicians, they do occasionally hit on some genuine creative inspiration. Last year Paul Dickman, a lawyer for Rykodisc, went to see Roscoe's Gang in Philadelphia. Afterwards he went backstage and suggested that Roscoe—a.k.a. Eric Ambel, former lead guitarist for the late and lamented Del-Lords—might like to produce Nils Lofgren.

"I thought, 'Fuck you,'" Ambel recalls. "He seemed well-meaning, but if he was well-meaning I figured he could get me a beer."

Fortunately, Dickman prevailed, getting Ambel and Lofgren together on the phone, and some simple ground rules for collaboration were established: Eric would produce, and Nils wouldn't. This was something of a departure for Nils, who was used to at least co-producing his own projects. The idea was to free up maximum energy for Nils' guitar bashing, while Eric dealt with record company politics, technical stuff, putting a band together and overall "vision."

The idea worked, because the resulting album *Crooked Line* is a terrific collection of songs, weaving a crooked line through the various styles that Lofgren has mastered over a long career, somehow adding up to a hugely satisfying whole. We're talking seriously demented crunch here on songs like "Drunken Driver," sweetly chiming acoustic spirit-lifters like "Blue Skies" and everything in between—all with Lofgren's smooth tenor that manages to convey character without sandpaper on the vocal cords, and his signature, thumb-picked guitar technique. Long-time Lofgren fans—who have followed his career as leader of Grin, solo artist, sideman to Neil Young, sideman to Bruce Springsteen and this summer as an all-star among many in Ringo Starr's All-Starrs—will find themselves wondering more than ever why he's not a superstar himself. If he gets a break on radio playlists, maybe they won't have to wonder anymore.

> *"Playing live is like basketball. You play the best you can and then it's over."*

"As I get older, I've become really impatient with the recording process," says Nils. "It's something that I have to do, so I do it. But playing live, that's what I do best. It's like basketball: You play the best that you can, and then it's over. If I'm in the studio, I just try to get that emotion. I can't play anything more than three or four times. Then I'm tired of the song and I lose the focus. So we kept the rough edges on this record. On my first solo album, only one vocal was live. On this one, every vocal is live. That's something I learned from Neil Young."

Famous names drop like rain in Lofgren's conversation. And it isn't that he's trying to impress you. There just seems to be a large part of his brain that's about 14 years old and completely knocked out that he's met so many famous musicians. Lofgren regularly describes himself as shy, but he was surely the ballsiest shy kid in suburban Maryland, where he grew up, still maintains a house for when he gets sick of L.A., and recorded *Crooked Line*. Sitting in the control room at Omega Studios in Maryland, where he and Ambel were doing the final knob-tweaking, Nils talked about what he's learned from working with his influences.

"From Ringo, I learned about just enjoying it," says Nils, who's in the middle of his second tour with the All-Starrs. "People see his personality and forget he's one of the great feel drummers. He came up on the circuit, just like the one I did. It was funny—the whole idea of monitors was new to him. He actually asked, 'What is this?' They didn't have [*cont'd on page 35*]

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT REX ELY

DAVID DUKE'S KLASSIC KUTS

FORTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD DAVID DUKE, A FORMER GRAND DRAGON of the Ku Klux Klan, wraps the smiling personality and cultural references of a baby boomer around the gutter politics of prejudice. Talk to Duke about race and he'll eventually start jabbering about the difference in brain size between whites and blacks. But put him in front of the baby grand piano in his office (white, of course), and "Stairway to Heaven" is the first tune his fingers labor to find.

MUSICIAN: *What, if anything, do you like about black culture?*

DUKE: They're very good musicians. Very good dancers. As a Southerner I enjoy jazz. I'm not an aficionado, it's not my first musical preference, but I enjoy going down to Bourbon Street, Preservation Hall. I'm a native New Orleanean. It's not something you escape easily.

MUSICIAN: *Do you relate to the blues?*

DUKE: There's no Southerner who can't relate to the blues. The story of the South, the defeat of the states...

MUSICIAN: *You've been lifted up by the blues?*

DUKE: The blues don't lift you up. The blues are a kind of wallowing in self-pity. You don't ever listen to the blues to be lifted up. It's much better to listen if you feel okay. [Otherwise] it makes you feel more down. I'd rather listen to something more inspirational—Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Man of La Mancha, Les Misérables.*

MUSICIAN: *Has black culture enriched your life?*

DUKE: Sure, sure...Diana Ross. I grew up with the music of the Supremes. Freda Payne, "Band of Gold" is a really great song.

Nazi, Klansman, rock 'n' roll fan

MUSICIAN: *Did you have a favorite Beatle?*

DUKE: That's hard. I never thought about that...I like McCarthy. McCarthy and Lennon.

MUSICIAN: *McCart*ney—

DUKE: Yeah, well, I mispronounced it. McCartney and Lennon are my favorites. They were the most creative.

MUSICIAN: *You were a big Beatles fan? In 1964?*

DUKE: No, I wasn't really a big fan in '64. I became more appreciative as I got older. The diversity of the music was so tremendous. The same band that could do "I Want to Hold Your Hand" did "Yesterday" and "Hey Jude" and "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "Back in the USSR."

MUSICIAN: *1967, the year of* Sgt. Pepper's, *was the year you joined the Ku Klux Klan. You'd go to a cross burning and then go home and play* Sgt. Pepper's?

DUKE: Sure. That was very common. That's right. It wasn't like you were on the moon to be a Klansperson in those days. And I'm not a Klansperson now. I repudiate the racism that existed. And there wasn't violence in my group. That should be known, too. We were just young people who were very conservative and committed to the preservation of our heritage and values. We saw the Klan as a heroic organization of the old South, its traditions and values.

MUSICIAN: *But the Beatles stood for something so different.*

DUKE: We didn't see that. We saw the music for what it was. What is anti-Southern in "I Want to Hold Your Hand"?

MUSICIAN: *Do you have a favorite Beatles album?*

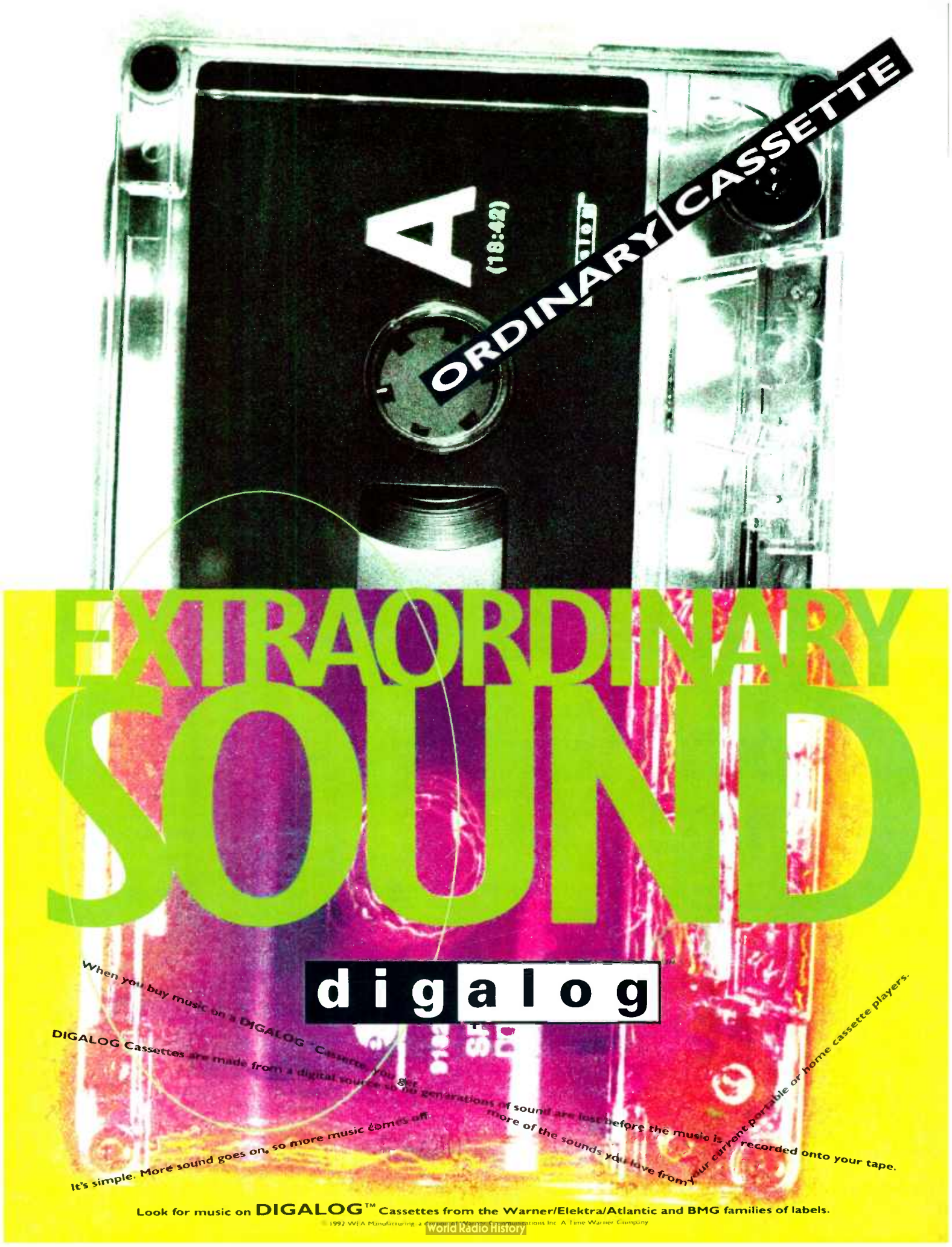
DUKE: The White Album.

MUSICIAN: *Because of its title?*

DUKE: [*laughing*] No. It had nothing to do with the title. I just like the songs on the album. "Revolution," that was a good song. Talking about

BY HENRY SCHIPPER

PHOTOGRAPH: LEE CORKRAN / SYGMA



you may want a change but you want to do it through love and not hatred.

MUSICIAN: *Weren't you a member of a hate organization at the time?*

DUKE: Well, a lot of people considered it that. I didn't consider it that.... I'm not defending the KKK, but the average person in that group is not a lyncher, okay. The average person is not a cross burner.

MUSICIAN: *But you were. You burned crosses.*

DUKE: Not on people's lawns. No. It was a ceremony...almost like lighting candles in the shape of a cross, in a church. That's how we did it. We would not tolerate someone breaking the law. That was kids, ruffians to us. We felt that gave the organization a bad name.

MUSICIAN: *I've seen footage of you at a cross burning and as the cross ignited you raised your fist in a white power or Nazi salute and cried, "White victory!"*

DUKE: Well, that's an old Klan salute that's been around since 1866. You mean victory for your heritage and values. Again, I think that's too intolerant. You don't have to be that blatant, that strong about that type of thing. That's some of the things I would change, but you can't go back in life and change. All you can do is move forward and I have.

MUSICIAN: *You frequently characterize your past racism as "intolerant" and "strident." That's a pretty benign description.*

DUKE: Well, benign compared to violence and I never engaged in any sort of violence.... There are different Klans like there are different fraternities, and one might be an Animal House and another Phi Beta Kappa.

You can do me in with some of this conversation, because it's very easy to say I'm apologizing for the Klan, which I wasn't doing, you know. If you took some of those things out of context, that'd be pretty, ahhh, unfortunate.

MUSICIAN: *Back to the Beatles. You didn't find any inconsistency in being a Beatles fan?*

DUKE: No, nothing at all inconsistent.... I don't listen to a record because of its logical content. I disagreed with John Lennon very much politically, but I enjoyed his music a lot. I disagreed with the theme of "Imagine." I believe in private property, free enterprise. I'm a Christian. But at the same time, the music was entertaining.

MUSICIAN: *How about Bob Dylan?*

DUKE: I like "Lay Lady Lay"..."Positively 4th Street" is a really fine song. I like Johnny Rivers' rendition of "Positively 4th Street."

MUSICIAN: *You didn't despise Dylan as a radical, Jewish songwriter?*

DUKE: No, I didn't despise him at all. I don't know if he's the best singer in the world, but some of his songs I really appreciated.

Joan Baez. Here's an example. A radical leftist but a beautiful voice. She had the ability to empathize with the South. "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" is one of the most beautiful songs. It evoked the old South, things I believed in. And yet Joan Baez sang it.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me a good joke.*

DUKE: I've heard all the David Duke jokes.... The other day, some liberal said, "You know what you get when you cross David Duke with a pit bull? An all-white neighborhood." [*laughing*] I don't agree with that, but there's a lot of jokes like that out now.

MUSICIAN: *Have you ever thought of yourself as an artist or that you might've been an artist under other circumstances?*

DUKE: Well, my friends say that if I hadn't been a politician I'd've been a rock star.

MUSICIAN: *In the overall scheme of things, who are more important, artists or politicians?*

DUKE: I guess overall, as far as importance meaning quality of life, the way most politicians are today, the artist is far more valuable. Because I think that politicians, most of them, are a very low form of life.

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TOM HARRELL'S ALTERED ENVIRONMENTS

TOM HARRELL'S FACE IS SWELLING. HE IS SITTING AT THE CARD table that doubles as a desk in his well-ordered Upper East Side studio apartment, smiling and nodding frantically. He starts, then halts. Each phrase is hard work. The words well inside of him, then rush out, washing away the uneasiness with a quick shower of relief. "I guess...I guess not everything I play is improvised."

Harrell, 45, is talking about the importance of having some patterns at the ready—auto-pilot stuff to play while waiting for the next inspiration to strike. His point is more observation than earth-shattering admission, but it is remarkable just the same: Anyone who has heard Tom Harrell knows that he simply doesn't play licks. He is that rare improviser who never resorts to cliché, a talent who seems to have an underground reserve of melody.

"I've heard instances where people have played runs that you could tell were written," he goes on. "It didn't feel natural to do that. But I practice patterns sometimes, and if I'm going after a certain feeling, I might know what I'm going to play." He pauses, and breaks into the grin that crosses his face each time one of his influences is mentioned. "Fats [Navarro] used to write out whole solos, then improvise on them. I did that a long time ago, and it's great. Why should there be a boundary between the written and the improvised? If you are an improviser, the spirit of creative discovery is conveyed in the way you're playing, not what you're playing."

Jazz has its original thinkers, the people whose every phrase is so genuinely wrought as to sound newborn. And it has its stylists, the people whose command of an instrument allows them to pass the most weatherbeaten licks off as the stuff of genius. Harrell is a bit of both. The "what" he plays is cutting and articulate, and how he does it—his glib, facile finesse sounds easy to everyone but other trumpet players—is equally striking.

BY TOM MOON

> *"Why should there be a boundary between the written and the improvised?"*

Particularly when you consider that Harrell, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1967, hardly cuts a picture of musical daring. He'll be sitting sullenly in the corner of a club, waiting his turn with a blank expression on his face. He'll take baby steps to the bandstand, shuffling apologetically; then he'll put the horn to his lips, and all sense of hesitation falls away. His playing suggests a never-ending series of musical opportunities, each of which he pursues with a savant's bold-and-breezy intuition. Harrell's lines command attention, as though trying to make up for the times when he can't express himself, as though he's attempting a cathartic healing he can't get any other way.

To offset his mental illness, Harrell takes the powerful psychotropic drug Stelazine, which can make him sluggish and withdrawn but doesn't appear to interfere [*cont'd on page 34*]

PHOTOGRAPH: SYLVIA PLACHY

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DANNY GOLDBERG'S HAT TRICK

MANY IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS WERE SURPRISED BY DANNY Goldberg's announcement in February that he was moving into a new post as senior vice president of Atlantic Records. The high-profile manager was just hitting his peak with such prestige clients as Bonnie Raitt, Nirvana and Sonic Youth. Why would he give up that hard-earned success to go to work for a company that, by his own admission, wasn't even in the running when he was looking for a label deal for Nirvana?

"I hated dealing with the money every day," Goldberg shrugs, ensconced in his new office at Atlantic's West Coast headquarters in Beverly Hills. "The insecurity of running a management business and the amount of my time that was occupied thinking about money and cash flow started to grate on me over the last couple of years. What no one understands is how much of your life as a manager is spent running and administering a small business. I had to spend a lot of time talking to the accountants, to the banks, to my bookkeeper and to our controller—and that wasn't going to change. That really wasn't the life I wanted to have.

"Making the numbers come out each month, unless you've got a stadium act, requires constant juggling. I look with great admiration and envy at Paul McGuinness, Jon Landau, Howard Kaufman—the handful of managers who reach the numbers where they can have economic security. The majority of managers, even successful managers, live with a lot of insecurity in terms of money."

That's what made the timing so surprising: Goldberg, 41, bowed out as a manager just as he was hitting the big leagues with Raitt and Nirvana. "That's why it was a good time to do it," he parries. "I liked the idea of going out on top."

As part of the deal, Atlantic bought out Goldberg's management company, Gold Mountain. Goldberg's contract stipulates that he can spend up to 10 percent of his time on management of non-Atlantic artists, specifically Raitt, Nirvana, Sonic Youth and Hole. "The aspect that I am involved in with those acts is the big picture: being a counselor without any of the day-to-day

ACLU activist, rock manager, Atlantic Records executive

responsibilities. The business structure is really very unpleasant. There's a reason why so many managers have gone into the record business: Tommy Mottola, Irving Azoff, David Geffen, Chris Blackwell. I only hope I have a fraction of the success of some of those guys."

Goldberg's main focus at Atlantic will be on the two areas of his greatest success as a manager: alternative rock and the baby-boom market. "We don't have an R.E.M. or Nirvana or Jane's Addiction on the roster, and there's no question that's a weakness," he admits. "There was an attempt at an alternative department at Atlantic in the mid-'80s that was ill-conceived. That set the company back two to three years in that area of modern rock'n'roll." Goldberg will also focus on the expanding upper-demo market, looking for acts to replicate the current multiplatinum success of Raitt, Natalie Cole and Garth Brooks. "It's a real source of emotional reward, to be involved with records made for people my own age by people my own age."

At the request of Doug Morris, the Atlantic group's co-chairman, Goldberg will be working with three baby-boom acts—David Crosby, Stevie Nicks and Foreigner—to advise them on the making and marketing of their albums. All three

BY PAUL GREIN

PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN MILLER

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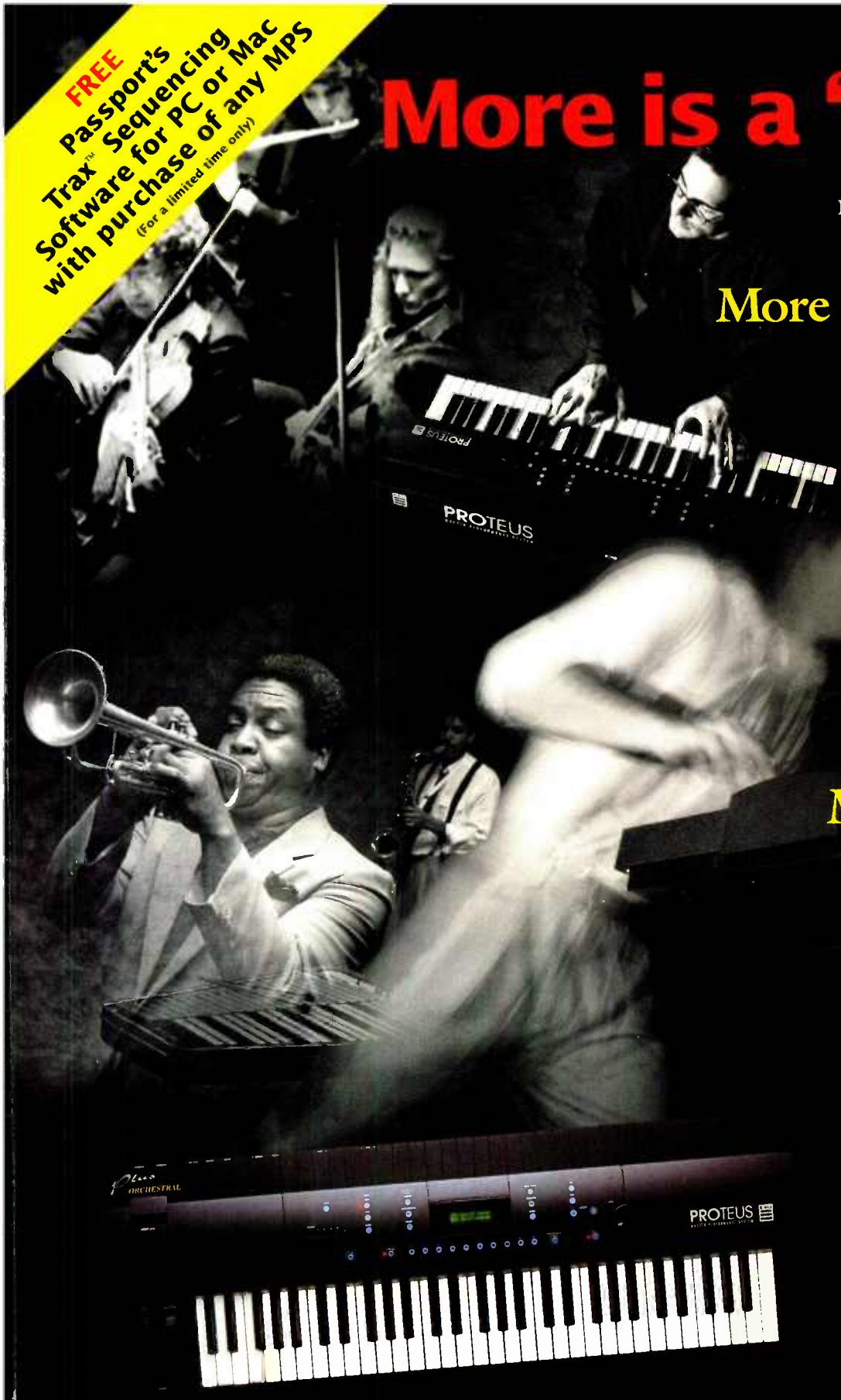

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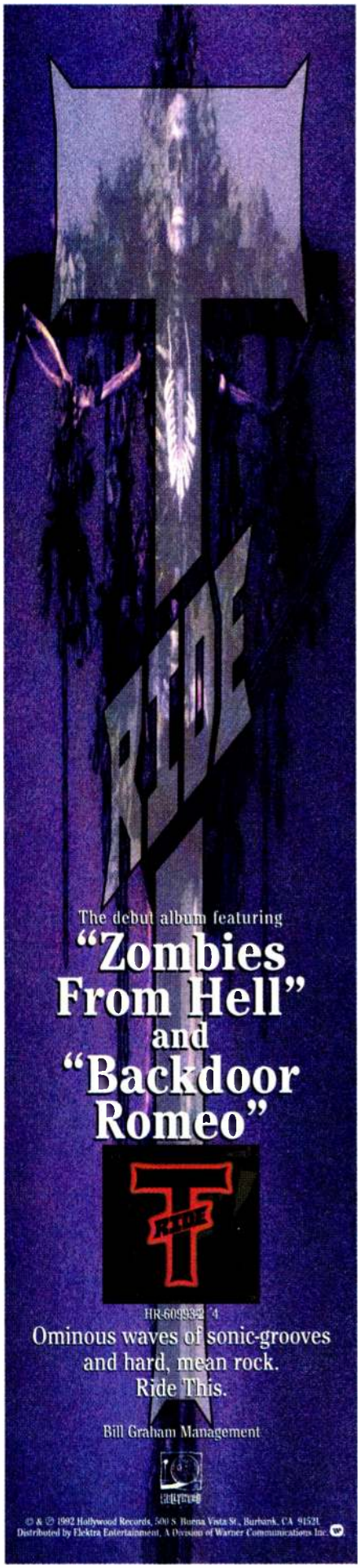


have hit-studded pasts at Atlantic, but are fighting a perception that they have passed their peak. Goldberg notes that Raitt and Cole had also been written off before their comebacks.

"I think the key for any artist like that is not to compete with Guns N' Roses and Nirvana for the hearts and minds of teenagers," he says. "Bonnie has some teen fans but that's not her main audience. People who try to reinvent what they did 10 or 15 years ago are not likely to be successful."

Though Goldberg has moved to the other side of the desk in record company/manager dealings, he thinks the similarities outweigh the differences. "I'm still a go-between between musicians and their fans, a non-musician trying to maximize this complex system of getting music to the public. Look, I can't play the guitar, sing or write a song. Even *average*-level artists are so much more talented than me, because they can bring something to the world that I can't."

Goldberg began his career as a music journalist, working for *Billboard* and *Record World*. He later became managing editor of *Circus*, where he showed a characteristic populist streak (and earned the disdain of other rock writers) by putting Grand Funk Railroad on the cover. In the early '70s he segued into publicity, working with the era's mightiest rock act, Led Zeppelin.

In 1979, Goldberg and partner Paul Fishkin formed Modern Records, which was distributed by Atlantic. The label's first signing was Stevie Nicks. Another 1979 project, the "No Nukes" concert at Madison Square Garden, had an even deeper effect on Goldberg. The all-star show, which was produced by Raitt, Jackson Browne, Graham Nash and John Hall, sparked Goldberg's latent interest in politics; he's been a staunch liberal activist ever since. Two years ago, he was named chair of the ACLU Foundation of Southern California.

Goldberg regards his political work—writing op/ed pieces, appearing on CNN's "Crossfire"—as a release for his music-biz tensions. He remembers the time he drove to a synagogue in the desert "to debate a conservative.

"I came back like I was five feet off the ground: It was so rejuvenating. It's so much *fun*. It's the best therapy. What other people get out of skiing or playing tennis or going to Lakers' games, I get out of doing that work."

As a manager, Goldberg wouldn't represent an act whose lyrics he found offensive. As a label executive, he might have to. He did support Atlantic's decision two years ago to pick up distribution for 2 Live Crew after dealers in Florida were arrested for selling the group's music.

"I certainly don't like 2 Live Crew," Goldberg says. "The way he talks about women and gays is offensive to me. But I thought it was fantastic when Atlantic picked them up. It was a statement that pressure groups and Florida sheriffs are not going to decide what's available to the American public. In that context, I would put it out; absent that context I wouldn't."

Likewise, Goldberg says he would pass on signing a band like Guns N' Roses—whose 1989 song "One in a Million" was viewed as anti-gay and anti-black. "If they were already on the label, I wouldn't censor them: I take a dim view of telling artists what they can say. But if they were a new act, there was a bidding war and that was one of the songs, I would pass."

Goldberg emphasizes that he is still sorting out these thorny issues, and he doesn't plan to force his views on the company. "A major label is not the result of one person's vision. And I do think that honest, sincere people can disagree about these things. The whole nature of music is diversity, and people have different tastes. There are examples where I might not like something but would respect the rationale behind someone else doing it. I'm not going to agree aesthetically with every signing, but I'm not going to be some taste policeman at Atlantic Records."

HARRELL

[*cont'd from page 30*] with his creative faculties. Drummer Bill Goodwin, who played with Harrell for five years in the Phil Woods Quintet, and who produces Harrell's solo records, suggests that Harrell overcomes his illness when he plays: "Tommy's artistry transcends whatever may be happening to him internally at the time. He's able to create an aura of right now."

Bassist Chuck Israels, who hired the then-unknown Harrell for his National Jazz Ensemble in 1973, calls it "beautiful focus"—a singleness of emotional purpose as well as technique. At a recent reunion with Woods at the Blue Note in New York, for instance, Harrell duplicated from memory intricate Woods heads he hadn't performed in years. And when any of his solos began to hint at predictability, Harrell displayed an almost physical aversion, abruptly veering into unexpected side streets where once-mundane themes became suspenseful inspirations.

According to Israels, he's had this gift all along. "Sometimes he would make guys in the band cry with the beauty of his playing. His improvisations were always clear and concise. But that was equally true when he was playing Bix Beiderbecke's solo to 'Singing the Blues'—he could make that come alive, too."

Harrell is too modest to take credit for his ability, saying only that he spent time as a kid making up melodies: "I was exposed early to the

idea of composing spontaneously. I would sit at the piano and just try things." But he does recognize that something happens when it's his turn to play: "At times, I'll start a solo, and I'll feel the energy level rise. That's not a gimmick, I know that's real. The thing I've learned from the innovators is the importance of being yourself all the time. So I try to bring as much of myself to the situation as I can."

As his confidence has grown, Harrell has put himself in increasingly varied situations. He plays in standards settings (the New York Giants of Jazz, the Wein festival circuit), where his interpretations add elegant stanzas to familiar poems. He plays in freer aggregations with folks like saxophonist Joe Lovano, and relishes the ability to stretch beyond basic bebop. Here, too, is the hallmark Harrell touch: Without overreaching, he integrates his bebop skills into harmonic structures that demand pastel colors, or blues inflection, or unvarnished romantic lyricism.

Whatever the setting, Harrell navigates from one chord to the next in magical, unpredictable ways: His ability to voice-lead is one of the things that sparks awe among musicians. "That's one of my goals, to link chords in interesting ways. I love Tadd Dameron's melodies—he always made fresh connections. It's really pleasing on a lot of levels when you do that. It makes people listen harder, because they don't know what to expect." When writing, Harrell goes on, "I like to create different environments, so what I'm writing puts me in a different frame of mind, and enables me to find new melodic directions. It's all interrelated."

He points to his new album *Passages* (Chesky) as proof: The compositions are heavily Latinized, displaying a harder rhythmic edge than anything he's done in the past. Harrell wrote the tunes in a period of three weeks, aiming to expand his understanding of the clave, and to create new arranging possibilities for small groups.

"The idea is to write something that is essentially new," he says, explaining that his goal is to compose the aural equivalent of an Escher painting: "You could have different things happening at the same time—that's possible to do with harmony by playing in two keys, and with counterpoint. And when you get inside that [Latin] music, it forces you to approach the rhythm in a more central way, no matter how much technical stuff you have together."

Harrell clearly values his choices. "Music calls on the intellect and intuition in ways no other art can," he says. "On a spiritual, physical and emotional level, music can be the most unified statement. It encompasses all the elements of what it is to be a human being."

LOFGREN

[*cont'd from page 25*] the technology for the Beatles to hear each other when they played, but they'd played so much in small clubs, they didn't *have* to hear each other."

What did you learn from Springsteen?

"If I had to pinpoint one thing, I would say the delivery of the lyric. Make sure the song is delivered. The song and lyric come first, then the guitar. I'm much more focused now on the song."

It's probably that spirit of wanting to learn that makes *Crooked Line* a genuine work of art. It's by an artist whose style is familiar after all these years, but with enough input from Ambel and everyone else he's collaborated with that it sounds fresh and original. "I found him to be the most cooperative guy I ever worked with," says Ambel. "He was willing to try anything, and had the chops to execute *any* idea. Young guys tend to think a song can be done only one way, but a good song can be done a lot of ways. Nils was completely open. And he let me produce. That's what he did. He let me produce."

WE ALL STRUNG TOGETHER

To hang with NILS LOFGREN is to subject yourself to equipment lust in the worst way. Here's a partial list of what made it onto *Crooked Line*: a couple of '61 Fender Strats, a Martin D-28 and D-18 (a gift from Neil Young), a Petillo 12-string, a Takamine EF391 cutaway that Bob Dylan once asked to borrow because it was so sweet-sounding, and a Danny Gatton Telecaster ("the second one made") with the back of the neck unfinished, a bent pickup switch and extra-heavy knobs. He endorses D'Addario strings ("whenever I need something, I get it the next day"). And his amp collection includes a '65 Fender Super Reverb, a '58 Bassman, a '54 Deluxe, a '65 Princeton and a MESA/Boogie Mark III with "top-secret modifications."

ERIC AMBEL played an ESP Telecaster with B-bender, a '54 Les Paul Custom and a '68 gold-top. He used a 1987 Marshall JCM 800 50-watt, a 1963 Fender Bassman and an ancient Supro Vibroverb Guitar and Accordion Reverberation Amplifier. ANDY YORK played a '65 Fender P-Bass and an ESP through an Ampeg SVT. JOHNNY BADANJEK and FRANK FUNERO, two of the greatest drummers around, played Ludwigs with Remo coated Ambassador heads, and Zildjian cymbals.

TOUGH GUYS DON'T *Dance*

BILL NELSON MEETS ROBERT WYATT

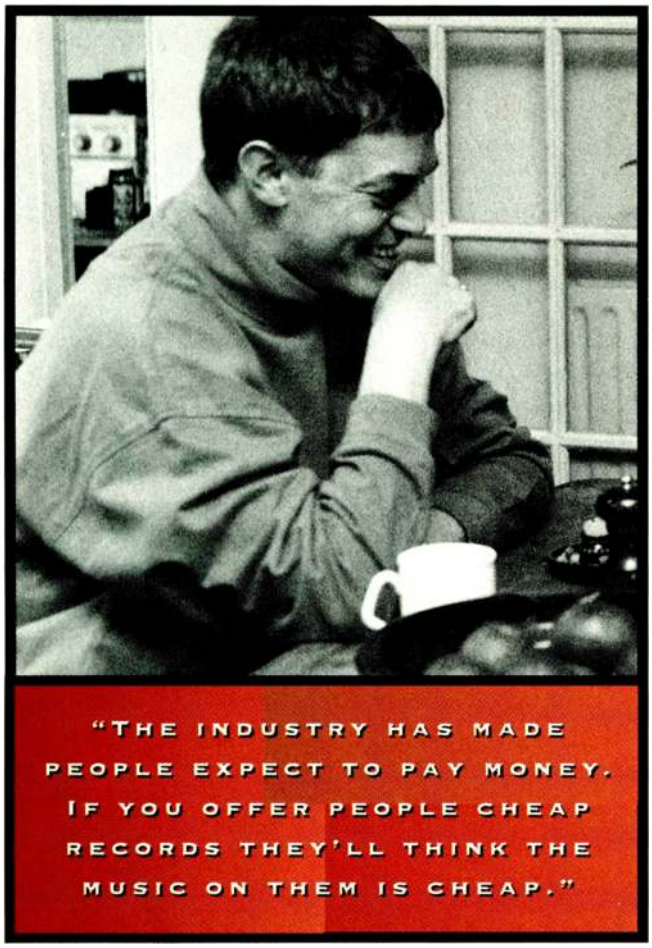
FOR 20 YEARS THEY'VE BUCKED THE SYSTEM AND MADE MUSIC AT THE EDGE OF ROCK. TWO VETS DISCUSS THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE

by Mac Randall

THE FIRST TIME BILL NELSON MET Robert Wyatt, in 1974, Wyatt asked for his autograph. Nelson, the Yorkshire-born singer/songwriter/guitarist, was just starting as a professional. He'd released a limited-edition solo album called *Northern Dream* and formed a band, Be-Bop Deluxe. The solo album caught the ear of legendary BBC DJ John Peel, who played it on his influential Radio One show. Peel must have been impressed because he invited Nelson to his wedding. Among the celebrities in attendance was Wyatt, who'd established himself as drummer, vocalist and writer for the Soft Machine and Matching Mole before falling from a third-story window and permanently paralyzing his legs. Nelson admired Wyatt's work, but couldn't get up the nerve to start a conversation. Wyatt had heard *Northern Dream* and liked it. He wheeled his chair over to Nelson and asked, "Could I have your autograph?" Nelson said, "Only if I can have yours."

The second time Bill Nelson met Robert Wyatt was for this interview, nearly 18 years later. "You haven't changed at all," Wyatt said cheerfully to Nelson. Maybe he hadn't, but much had happened to both of them. Be-Bop Deluxe recorded six albums, getting a British Top 5 hit with "Ships in the Night" and achieving moderate cult status in the U.S. In '78 Nelson formed Red Noise, which made one brilliant album that went nowhere. After that, he began a solo career (literally solo—most of his post-'79 music has been recorded at home without collaborators). On the one

PHOTOGRAPHS: LIZ FINLAYSON



hand, he produced a series of instrumental records on his own Cocteau label that could almost be called "ambient music" if they weren't so sophisticated. On the other, he made left-of-center pop gems like *The Love That Whirls* (1982), *Vistamix* ('84), *Getting the Holy Ghost Across* ('86) and last year's *Luminous*, filled with great radio songs that somehow never made it to the airwaves.

Meanwhile, Wyatt recorded two discs for Virgin in the mid-'70s and then dropped out of music for several years. He resurfaced in 1981 with a stunning series of singles that were later compiled on *Nothing Can Stop Us*. His music, like Nelson's mostly recorded solo, was more stark and somber than before, his lyrics more political. One thing hadn't changed, though: his heartbreakingly tender singing. For the first half of the '80s Wyatt was relatively prolific; then, after '85's *Old Rottenhat*, he vanished again, emerging after six years with *Dondestan*, perhaps his best album.

This interview took place over two days in March at Wyatt's cozy 19th-century house in the Lincolnshire town of Louth, a charming village of narrow, winding streets, antique buildings and crooked alleyways isolated by miles of flat green fields and marshland. There's no railway station, and the nearest noteworthy town's about 30 miles away. To most of Louth's inhabitants, Robert Wyatt is simply the guy in the wheelchair, who moves around faster than some cars. Almost nobody here knows about the 30 years he's put into music, and he likes it that way.

At the time of the interview, neither Nelson nor Wyatt had much reason to be cheerful. Nelson was in the middle of a lawsuit with his former business manager who, Nelson says, is illegally claiming full rights to the Cocteau catalog. He says Virgin has agreed to release three new Nelson albums provided they get the back catalog too. So until the ex-manager lets go of it, Nelson says, there's no deal. What with mounting costs and the lack of cash coming in, he may lose his house, his car, his studio—in short, everything he owns.

Although Wyatt's living in comfort for the first time in years (thanks to friends of his wife Alfie, who gave them the money to buy the house in Louth), his future is also uncertain. Rough Trade, the label he's been signed to since 1981, has gone bankrupt. Though Gramavision is licensed to distribute his records in the U.S., he is essentially, like Nelson, a man without a contract. And like Nelson, he's seen no money for some time.

For decades Wyatt and Nelson have struggled on the perimeter of pop, often with little reward save the devotion of a select group of listeners. They simply love what they do. They are, as Nelson put it, representatives of "two complementary aspects of the human condition—the inward-looking, spiritual side (Nelson) and the outward-looking, political side (Wyatt) that's concerned with how that spirit deals with the rest of the world." And, as *Musician* quickly learned, they are talkers of a very high order. When the articulate, soft-spoken Nelson and the earthy, wisecracking Wyatt sit across the table from each other—drinking wine, laughing, and talking about music in the company of Wyatt's comfortable old mongrel, Flossie—you can't help wishing the conversation won't stop.

MUSICIAN: *It seems there's a small group of English musicians who spend most of their time staying home and making records, including both relatively famous people—Peter Gabriel, XTC—and some lesser-known ones—the Bevis Frond, Peter Hammill. And then there's you two. Do you see yourselves as part of this—if you can stomach the apparent contradiction—group of individualists?*

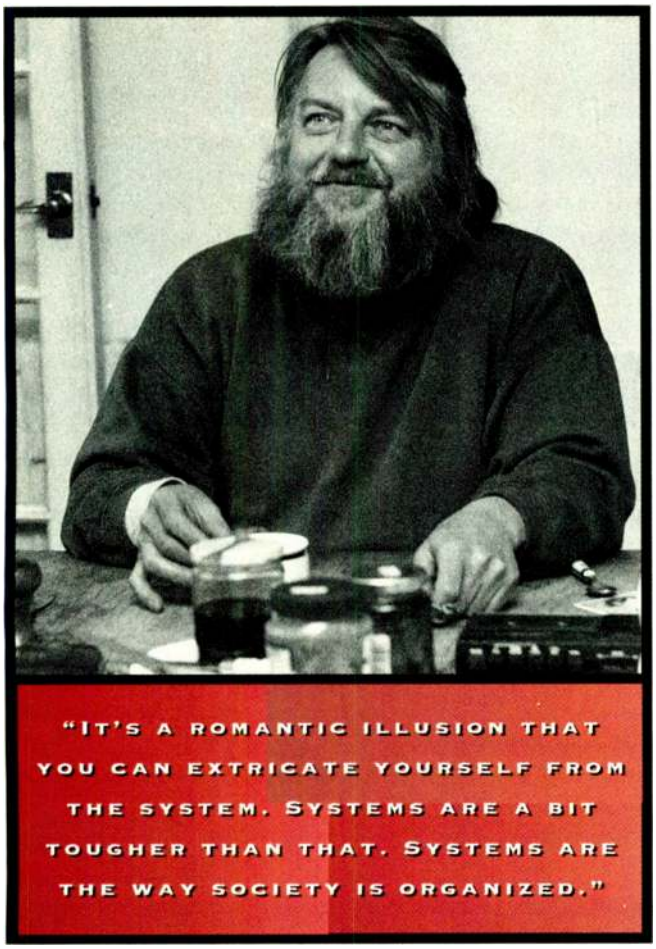
NELSON: Sometimes I wonder whether all these people had train sets when they were kids. I know Andy [Partridge, of XTC] and I know Peter, and there's something of that in me as well. It's the boy in his loft with his gear. Life passes him by. He's living inside his head all the time. It's an obsessive thing, and you tend not to have time for other people. It's a sad, sick reflection on what we've become. [*laughter*] I'm terrible sometimes, I don't want to know that there's a world outside that door.

WYATT: Not all of the arts are intrinsically performing arts. Composers, painters, novelists, poets are solitary workers. That's what the job requires. You have to get into a state of mind which too much human traffic can destroy. To use a crummy metaphor, you're working in a pond and it has to be still; otherwise you'll never see to the bottom. In music this may seem odd, because people think of music as something that's performed. But compare it with painting, and you see an analogy that's very obvious.

A lot of English pop music of the '60s came more out of the art college tradition than the conservatory tradition. John Lennon, Pete Townshend, Brian Eno, Ian Dury, were all art students. In the '50s, it was one of the only places where kids could go who didn't have qualifications, who weren't articulate or impressive in academic fields. They could suddenly feel welcome, allowed to do their own thing. They could become kings of their imagination, instead of failures in some system they couldn't understand. I was only in one for three months, but it has to be acknowledged as an English thing.

NELSON: I'm from a working-class family, and I wasn't happy at school, but I always liked painting. When I got to art college, it was like going to heaven; everything that made me an outcast before made me acceptable there.

WYATT: I don't think this maverick thing you're talking about comes out of the music colleges. These mad breakthroughs that have taken place from John Lennon onwards, totally unpredictable things that set off a chain reaction, that has to be attributed to the anarchism of art colleges. By that I mean the lack of hierarchy, the governmentlessness, the feeling that you could be anything you wanted to be.



NELSON: When I was at art college, I used to pick up the *International Times* to find out what was happening in London. I read about Robert's band, and I'd think, "This sounds wild!" And without being able to go down there and see for ourselves, we made up our own version of what we thought was happening. We did concerts with light shows and the whole thing. Nobody knew what was going on—"Where the hell's this coming from?"—because it was only three of us reading the *International Times* who knew what was happening anywhere south of Barnsley.

WYATT: That's fantastic.

MUSICIAN: *Robert, how did you become a part of that underground London scene in the mid-'60s that Bill thought was so wild?*

WYATT: I'm afraid I may have to dodge that question, because...well, people think I must have problems talking about my accident. But I don't; what I have problems talking about is what happened *before* the accident. *Rock Bottom* [1974] and beyond, that I see as me. But my adolescent self, the drummer biped, I don't remember him and I don't understand him. I have a hard time dealing with the way I was before; it's almost as if the fall affected my mind. I see the accident now as being a sort of neat division line between my adolescence and the rest of my life.

This was how the accident went: in order, wine, whisky, Southern Comfort, then the window. The doctor was amazed. He said, "You had to have been really drunk to fall in such a relaxed way." If I'd been any more sober, I probably wouldn't be here today; I'd have tightened up with fear and just shattered. It's been a long time now and it's been hard, but at least the top part of me works, though I'm never quite sure about this bit here [*points to his head*]. I do know exactly what I can and can't do, and that makes it easier.

MUSICIAN: *Which players inspired both of you?*

NELSON: When I first started out, I played in groups that did everything—country & western, jazz, blues, rock 'n' roll, psychedelic. At one time I just wanted to get all the technique together. I had a turntable that went down to 16 so I could slow it down: "Ah, that's how it's done." First it was Duane Eddy, Hank Marvin and the Ventures, the twang. Then Beck and Clapton, and Townshend, more for his attitude than anything else. That little flourish in his chord playing, which is a sort of Wagnerian thing—every guitar player's got that in his book of tricks now, but Townshend was the guy who did it. And if you want to hear the entire catalog of what a guitar can sound like, you have to listen to *Electric Ladyland*. Nobody yet has gone much further than Hendrix.

WYATT: Music was my way of escaping from school. Mostly jazz; old as I am, I'm more old-fashioned than I need have been. I did have a romantic association with pop records of the time—Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran—but that had to do with where the girls were. Whereas jazz was my comfort when I was struggling with homework that I couldn't make head or tail of. Miles Davis' voice, getting lost inside a Mingus arrangement, being carried along by the band, chucked from one soloist to another—that saved my soul as a schoolboy.

Then Coltrane and Miles Davis encouraged me to listen to Indian music. At that time more musicians were coming from the Indian subcontinent to England, so Indian music was around. And the fringes of Europe generally, where European harmonies meet something else, that's interesting to me. Not for some ulterior motive, I'm just an aural tourist.

MUSICIAN: *Both of you have definite Eastern influences in your music.*

NELSON: It's weird. The first time I worked with Yukihiro Takahashi, it was for an instrumental piece. He had a half-completed track and no ideas for melody lines. So I put some things down using the E-Bow. And he said, "God, you sound more Japanese than I do." [*laughter*]

WYATT: It's just a question of using scales which tend to be identified as Oriental or non-European. But often you'll find they're discarded versions of Greek modes, perhaps from someplace like Macedonia. You hear it in Bulgarian folk music to this day, which is probably closer to ancient Greek music than we realize. I've always liked scales that had an ambiguity about whether they were major or minor. What I like about flamenco is they use gypsy scales, where the second note is only a half-step up; both our major and minor scales go up a whole tone on the second note. That half-step's a North African thing, because a lot of Egyptian scales are like that.

MUSICIAN: *How important was John Peel for your musical generation?*

WYATT: I think you'd hardly recognize English rock without him.

NELSON: After I first heard Peel, I started buying American imports, because you could only hear them on his show. And that influenced the way I played. Then he picked up on my things and played them, so it's almost like showing me what was possible and then giving me space to do it myself.

WYATT: By the way, the bloke who put out *The Peel Sessions* in the States made a fortune. None of us got much of a look-in on that. It's depressing that the memory of the Peel days is spoiled by people who think, "Oh, these lot are a bit innocent, they're looking the other way, we can clean up."

NELSON: You know Imaginary Records, that put out *Luminous*? They asked, "Why don't we get the Peel sessions that you did with Be-Bop Deluxe? Would you mind?" I said no, there's some good stuff there; in fact, some songs we did for those sessions never got recorded. There'd been no plan to release the Be-Bop Deluxe Peel sessions. But as soon as these people found out that Imaginary were thinking of doing it, "Ah well, we might wind up putting them out." It's still not resolved.

WYATT: Columbia has a load of stuff I was involved in, both in Soft Machine and Matching Mole. It comes out here and there, on Japanese imports or whatever. But if any of the musicians phone them up to get a

handle on anything, they say, "Sorry, he's out of the office," "Oh, you want the legal department," "He's not here...." They treat musicians like crap, unless, I suppose, you're Wynton Marsalis. And it's a shame, because I know people who want to put that stuff out but CBS won't put it out. So I'm getting publicity for stuff that nobody can buy.

NELSON: All you need is one Top Ten mainstream-play record and that stuff would just roll out. It's waiting for that moment.

WYATT: That's right, and whether you earn a living in the meantime is not a major concern.

NELSON: I've had a lot of pressure from people on the business side. Normally I'd ignore that, but sometimes it looked like by the end of the week we wouldn't have a roof over our head. Then you start thinking, "Maybe I could compromise...." You always regret it. A few people make a career from music and are utterly uncompromising. They don't give a shit what anybody thinks, they just do what they do. I admire that. It's the only way.

WYATT: Some people can't do that. For kids from tough backgrounds, the only way out is to "make it." The only other choice is the dole or a boring job in the local factory, and they want to make something more of things. So they go for success. The people at Motown said, "We want a classy black record label," and they groomed it to be an imaginary mainstream America. It was a bit utopian, but I find no fault with that, because what were the alternatives?

NELSON: And they actually produced decent music.

WYATT: Wonderful stuff. Marvin Gaye knocks me out to this day. You know, politically speaking, black America has been a failure—but listen to what's come out of it! All this music that's been my sustenance and made life worth living. Never underestimate the power of failure.

NELSON: I played a long time before I ever thought of making a career from it. One of the spurs in the early days to practice a bit harder was what happened the first time I gave a public concert at school: Suddenly girls would talk to me. I mean, sex had a lot to do with it.

WYATT: Oh yes! He's got a point there..."Sex had a lot to do with it." That's gotta be my epitaph. [*laughter*] Especially since I couldn't dance...I mean, how do you *meet* them? Let's see, a drummer gets to meet them... *right*. Lester Young started out as a drummer, and he figured that the saxophonists got the nicest girls because they wouldn't wait for the drummer to dismantle his kit. [*laughter*] So he changed to saxophone, and became one of the most important players in the history of the instrument.

NELSON: I've worked with young bands in the studio, and you discover people's motives quickly. For a while now there's been a push for music to be a career move, which I think is dangerous. That's forced upon us by the economic climate we live in; there's desperation in this country. Not only do people not have money, but they lose self-esteem. And the myth that pop music creates is so glamorous to younger people. This can show they've achieved. But when they've got into it, they find out it's all a front and they're still stuck with nothing at the end of the day.

WYATT: They're calculating career moves, and that's okay, but it can be the wrong place to take your talent...that week. Talent is a tough taskmaster; first of all, you never know whether you've really got any. But you have to follow it, you can't afford not to. It tells you what it needs. And if you have another master, you're just thinning it out.

MUSICIAN: *You would say that the audience is secondary, and when you're working, you do it primarily for yourself.*

NELSON: It's a totally selfish experience, creating—it has to be. It's one of the few things where you have to deal entirely with yourself, with your own experience and limitations. But despite that, it still will connect. I think the more true you are to yourself, the more chance it has of connecting with other people, because there are common threads under the surface.

MUSICIAN: *What are your views now on the progressive scene of the '70s that you were both, to some extent, a part of?*

NELSON: The '70s I spent mostly on tour. I was so wrapped up in what the band was doing that I didn't notice anybody else; I was dismissive of other people. I don't see anything important about what I did then—still [*laughs*]—although EMI re-released the records and people still liked them. But I can only listen to them and hear a young guy struggling with ideas.

I went through a period of buying music that was difficult to play and difficult to listen to. The idea was, if you even pretend you can listen to this, you must be pretty bright. It's like watching people with muscles flex them. They're all oiled up and you can see there's years of work gone into this. But a lot of those people who had all those muscles never actually went out and hit anybody. They didn't do anything except pose around. And the older you get, you see that truth doesn't reside in incredible shows of technique. I used to do 20-minute guitar solos, but I don't anymore; some might call that a retrogression. But I think, why waste your energy?

WYATT: As a drummer, I tried to play things people needed, but at the same time I had my own ideas, and I didn't know anybody except me who was interested in them. [In Soft Machine] they wanted a drummer who could play in any time signature for very long solos. They didn't want a drummer who kept showing alarming tendencies toward turning into something else. I'd already done what amounted to a solo record, which was "Moon in June" [on the Soft Machine's *Third* album]. I'm not credited with it, but I played it nearly all myself; I got the others in just to do a sequence towards the end. They didn't want to play it, and I was embarrassed to ask them. I don't think they liked me having ideas, but I don't know; we didn't talk to each other much. I thought, "If I weren't in a band, I could do more." But obviously, if I wanted to work as a live musician, I had to be in a group. So I wasn't released to concentrate on what was growing in my head, funnily enough, until I found myself in the wheelchair. Then I couldn't live a group life anymore, so I had to take control. And everything got simpler.

MUSICIAN: *Didn't you do some live performing after the accident?*

WYATT: I did two or three gigs, and the practical side was very difficult; I was nearly fainting with exhaustion onstage. I suppose vanity prevents me from wanting everybody to know that I'm incontinent, but I am, and that's a big problem when you're on a stage somewhere. It's too embarrassing. If I go anywhere or do anything, it has to be carefully worked out.

MUSICIAN: *What are your feelings now on the punk revolution of '76-'77? It really seemed to change your music, Bill; Red Noise sounded so different from Be-Bop Deluxe.*

NELSON: I was listening more to electronic music, and people like the Residents; I'd always liked Terry Riley, Karlheinz Stockhausen. I was using a synthesizer guitar instead of an ordinary guitar, and putting the snare drum through fuzz boxes, making drum loops, manipulating tape. Those were the concerns and not so much the punk thing. The good thing about what happened then—briefly, before the industry grabbed hold of it and strangled it to death—was that it opened up possibilities for people to have

a platform to say something. I didn't think the music was all that wonderful, because it sounded incredibly old-fashioned. Apart from John Lydon's voice, I thought the Sex Pistols sounded so dated. Amateur Chuck Berry, full-stop. But John Lydon's voice was very interesting. And I still like Public Image, I'm a big fan. I was listening to a lot of American bands of that period, more than English ones. I liked Television and Talking Heads.

WYATT: What was I listening to then? Calypso and Nat King Cole. [*laughter*] And shortwave, getting the Latvian version of events. If I heard music that I liked, it was usually Radio Sofia, Bulgaria. But it's the age-old thing, the young bullets coming up. I thought they were sweet little things; Johnny Rotten makes me laugh every time I hear him. And I tend to like things when they're in a state of terminal collapse.

I was taken by [Rough Trade's] Geoff Travis to meet some people, and I thought, "Do they allow people over 21 in here?" 'Cause I always think of rock 'n' roll as being the land of age apartheid. But people were friendly, they came up and said hello. And I felt at home with them, except I suddenly realized that they were saying hello like I used to say hello to an uncle. They weren't saying hello to a contemporary, and that's a very funny feeling, because I'd never grown up inside.

NELSON: The industry is so youth-oriented. That ageist thing is as bad as any divide between the sexes.

WYATT: And you really feel you're just getting there now. That's accepted in painting, in classical composing. If we were politicians, we'd be considered still in nappies. It's a cruel irony, in a way, that just as we reach adulthood, we no longer belong to anything we can participate in.

MUSICIAN: *What prompted you to get back into music, Robert?*

WYATT: Alfie saying, "We're running out of money and you can earn it quicker than I can." And Geoff Travis saying, "If you want to record for us, you can." I fell into it. I might have drifted away altogether, except that I think Alfie worried that whatever I was drifting into didn't constitute earning a living. She also felt I was fraudulent, because on the marriage contract, she married a musician. You can't marry someone and then they turn into something else, that's cheating. [*laughter*] So she and Geoff got me out of it. But if I didn't have to earn a living, I'd be quite happy to disappear completely. I'm not in the music world half the time anyway, I'm somewhere else. There's a dog to be fed—this is serious stuff, you know [*laughter*]. And when I listen for stimulus, it tends to be music which I have no part in. I'll recreate Harlem 1940 in my front room, because it's untouchable and I can build up a fantasy about that that isn't brought down to earth by any real experience. I tend not to hear what my contemporaries are doing, especially other songwriters. I'm almost nervous of it in a way. Since I stay home a lot, I like music that's comfortable. If you're in the city rushing about, you might very well want to hear music that's like a train driving through your skull. But I don't listen to stuff like that so much. Also, since I haven't been able to see the world, particular emphasis has been on vicarious travel.

I've worked with musicians who are really prolific; I wish I was like that. [Elvis] Costello writes a lot of songs, they pour out all the time, and I was impressed that he was so certain. I think Bill's more like that. I get disheartened, and I spend a lot of time thinking I just can't do it. Nobody's that noble—if you're trying to do something and can't get it how you want it, you go fry an egg. 'Cause I can do that, I know it's going to work. [*laughter*] Even out of the amount I do, not a lot gets out.

MUSICIAN: *That's very different from Bill.*

NELSON: But don't forget, I've had the luxury of having my own studio and label. It's like self-publishing; you can foist it on people and they've got no say in it whatsoever: "You *will* see this exists." If I hadn't had that outlet, it would have been different.

WYATT: Peter Cook, the English comedian, once said his motto was "If at first you don't succeed, give up." Unfortunately, he's had an enormous influence on me. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Do you miss working with others?*

NELSON: There was a time when I struck out just to see what happens when you play everything rather badly and only one thing slightly well. [*chuckles*] At the moment, I'd crave to have musicians around me to take a skeleton of a song and say, "Okay, you can go down the pub for half an hour, we'll make it sound good." But that's an impossibility at the moment.

WYATT: I don't understand machinery well enough to do the finished object myself, only enough to get the ideas down. My room's just a sketchbook, not a painting; I need people with know-how. The real problem is there just isn't the money. Usually when you're making a record, a record company puts up money upfront. Well, our record company has no money. They can't pay *me*, how can they pay someone else? That's the inhibiting thing at the moment. It's not an abstract thing of "what would you like to do," it's "what *can* you do." And I've ended up just doing what I can. But there's a kind of pride in that. I made the great discovery, influenced by Stevie Wonder, that you can play your own basslines. I thought it wouldn't sound right, but his are so organic. And by covering everything himself, he was compensating for disabilities in real life. There may be an element of that in me as well. I like to hear that rhythm section, that bass player, that drummer...that's me. Even if somebody else could do it better, it's still a nice feeling. And at least they're playing within your range of technique. They know the tune. [*laughter*]

NELSON: For me, it's also a way of seeing yourself in a clearer light, because you see everything undiluted.

WYATT: That's very true. Undiluted is a good word.

NELSON: And it might not be brilliant, and it might not be what you'd like to achieve, but it's honest and it's a real mirror. Which is why sometimes it's uncomfortable to listen. I hear everything that's wrong with it and nothing that's right. Then you get on with the next one and say, "This one'll be okay." But it isn't. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Yet you make such a point of declaring the imperfections in your work—the broken tape machines and so forth—that you seem to have a certain pride about them too.*

NELSON: It's a romantic thing. I've put on the back of my record sleeves that only 14 of the 16 tracks work and the speaker distorts. It's a charming thing to write about, but sometimes it's a bitch to deal with.

MUSICIAN: *Robert, have you ever put out anything recorded completely at home, as Bill does?*

WYATT: A couple of things. In the early '80s Dave Macrae, who was the keyboardist in Matching Mole, helped me out on a couple of old jazz standards, "'Round Midnight" and "Memories of You." I wanted somebody who had enough of a jazz education to play the chords right, but at the same time could drain out everything. I just wanted the skeleton of the tune, but having revealed it, I wanted the bones in the right place.

MUSICIAN: *Trying to get to the skeleton of the tune seems to sum up your general approach to music.*

WYATT: I've been looking for the essence of what it is I like about a piece. Is it just that one bit where the harmony changes or that one note or the way that beat falls...it's a process of tracing it and thinking, "Well, if I'm right, it should stand without any covering." If it collapses under exposure, then it isn't right and I've exposed a fault.

I'm scared of doing what happens a lot in music, which is getting too intoxicated by the beauty of the sound you're creating or the energy you're putting out to actually hear inside it. The skeleton of the music can be a very rickety and inadequate thing that pulls apart once the excitement's over. That's one of the reasons I'm scared of expensive synthesizers, because you can just sit on 'em and sound great. I've got a feeling that's more or less how some records are made. [*laughter*]

NELSON: I wouldn't in real company admit to actually being a musician. I'm more of a person who tries, using music as much as I can get my hands on—which often is not very much [*laughter*]—to express something for myself, about myself, my relationships, whatever. So often my preoccupations when I'm writing aren't musical ones at all.

I'm not a great technician. I've had a reputation in some quarters for being a perfectionist, and I'm not. I'm a lazy sod when it comes to it; I want to get there the quickest route possible. If I had more confidence in myself as a musician, I'd be more thorough, and a lot of what I do isn't. It's not so much that it's slipshod, but I have to let things stand because they came out spontaneously and they're an honest reflection of what I was doing at that moment. Since I often don't know whether it's going to be heard by anybody else, it doesn't matter whether it's perfect or flawed, as long as it's true. So I'm not always pursuing music, it's something else, but I'm not sure how to explain what that something else is.

WYATT: We have a lot of difficulty in this context talking about what we do. When you read about what musicians or artists do, you're not

DON'T TOUCH THEM (THEY'RE ELECTRIC)

How to make a ROBERT WYATT record: Pick up a Riviera portable keyboard and make sure the vibrato's set real slow. "It matches my voice," says Wyatt of the instrument that he found in a Venice toyshop back in '73. Also in Wyatt's Louth abode are a Yamaha baby grand piano and PSS-780 keyboard, and two AKG D1200 E microphones. Percussives include some no-name timbales, Paiste crash, Black Rock ride and an old Gretsch snare which hasn't been used for a while. "I never liked snares because of their martial overtones, so I've gotten rid of them for my solo records." He also favors brushes and mallets over sticks. Wyatt gets it all down on a Tascam 244 four-track recorder, hidden underneath the Kampuchean flag.

And here's all you need to duplicate BILL NELSON's Studio Rose-Croix in your very own home: a Fostex B16 tape machine, A.H.B. Systems 8 32-channel mixing console, Sony PCM-F1 mastering deck, Quad amp driving Tannoy Little Red Monitors, and for outboard, a Yamaha SPX90, Fostex compressor/limiter, and MXR 0/1 reverb. Keyboards include an E-max Series 1, Yamaha DX7 and CS70M, while the drum machine's an Akai MPC 60. For guitars, Bill's got three Yamaha SG2000s, Ovation 6- and 12-string acoustics, a Rickenbacker stereo electric 12-string, a Guild D50, and a custom-made Vielette-Citron. A devoted E-Bow user, Nelson has one of the original silver models.

reading about what I sit down and think about when I go to work. If I'm full of too many ideas and theories, it just blocks every route to getting there. It has to be a physical, instinctive thing, just you and the instrument and the sound you're making. All this analysis is retrospective.

Say you sat down and talked with your girlfriend about exactly why you were about to go to bed, it could kind of...spoil it. And I think a lot of important activity can be talked out. It's pretentious to use words like "sacred"; all I mean is that the whole point about music is it isn't accessible to logical analysis. And I don't think those of us who make it know quite what we're doing. Professionalism just consists of knowing which trigger mechanisms are most likely to work. We turn on the tap, and what comes out, that comes from somewhere else. Art Blakey said that music comes from the Creator through the musician to the audience in one split-second. I understand what he meant, though he used the word "Creator." But I know Americans are very religious people, I've read about it in the papers. [*laughter*]

NELSON: I think you'll find that people who are committed to music—and, despite Robert saying he doesn't do it all the time, there's obviously a life commitment there—everyone I've met with that commitment is very cagey about going into too much detail about what the actual creative process is. But if they've had a drink or two, or they know somebody well, you'll always get this reference to it coming through from somewhere else. There's a kind of religious feeling, an awe about it. You know that it's something you can't trivialize or muck about with because it's so fragile. There are so many explanations for where it's coming from, the unconscious or wherever, but whatever it is, it's intangible. So you don't feel comfortable talking about it in front of just anybody.

WYATT: There's actually a hint of apology. We're saying not that we're at the source of creative power, but precisely the opposite, that we're simply tools in the hand of forces that we cannot presume to understand. Even the best gardener couldn't make a single flower. He can only understand how to nurture the process.

MUSICIAN: *Do you believe there is a musical mainstream and consciously see yourself as outside it?*

WYATT: Stan Kenton was once asked, "Where is jazz going?" and he said, "Well, we're going to Cleveland on Tuesday." [*laughter*] I've always considered myself absolutely normal. Not only am I in the mainstream, I'm possibly the only mainstream there is. I write absolutely normal tunes, I make absolutely normal records, and it sounds totally sensible to me. People who are deliberately eccentric must be insane; I have enough trouble just trying to be normal. [*laughs*]

NELSON: It's always a shock when you offer something you've done to someone to listen to and say, "This is really commercial," and they go, "This is *weird*. Where's your head?" And you say, "No, honestly..."

WYATT: That happened to me when Virgin wanted me to make singles. I'm a girl who likes to say yes, so I did one [a cover of "I'm a Believer"] and then another, and I really enjoyed it. I did "Yesterday Man," a major-key, upbeat, jolly pseudo-reggae thing. I bent all the chords out of shape and did the whole thing kind of sideways. And I was so happy with that. They said, "We're not putting this out. It's too lugubrious." I thought, "That must be good," but I got a dictionary, and it's not. [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *Robert, how did you go about setting your wife Alfie's lyrics to music for the first five songs on* Dondestan*?*

WYATT: I work from sound, from atmosphere, and the words have to appear out of that, like out of the fog. I had some unpopulated landscapes, and what was surprising was, the words

that came were Alfie's and not my own. She wrote those poems in the mid-'80s when we were in Spain. I happen to know that everything she describes is true, like when she describes the wind on the beach sweeping everything away ["The Sight of the Wind"]. Everything she describes—"a plastic bag caught by a rail"—that's what we saw. So I wanted the music to give a sense of the event, the time and the location. I worked on it a lot, because I wanted the end result to sound fairly spontaneous. I have to do a lot of work on words to make them sound like there hasn't been a lot of work.

I recorded the whole LP 10 times at home, a kind of dry run before going into the studio. What's in this room is what's on the record. I work at home on the four-track and get it as near completion as I can, and then I beg the studio for a bit of cheap time. And I get in there and work as fast as possible. I have to work cheap because my records don't sell enough for me to work any other way. The last expensive record I made was *Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard* in 1975. That was with the Virgin lot.

NELSON: That's still selling, isn't it?

WYATT: Yeah, and thank goodness it is, because I only finished paying for it about two years ago. Virgin charged me for making the record. They're a clever lot, you can see how Branson got rich. Everything's collateralized. Any money that came in from a record, instead of you getting it, they'd say, "Well, you're recording again now, so we'll put it straight back into your next one." You're always behind, and someone's getting your money. I was in debt for years on that one, and I thought, "I can't live like this." So I had to start working dead cheap. But it doesn't make much difference, because Rough Trade's going bust. We're all going bust in England; you've landed on a sinking ship. [*chuckles*]

MUSICIAN: *I guess so. Bill's been telling me all his horror stories.*

WYATT: Well, tell me then.

NELSON: Oh, I'm trying to take some people to court at the moment, and they're blocking everything. I set up a label 10 years ago which I funded out of my own income. The guy I'm suing was my business manager; I hired him after the label had been set up, to do the administration, because I didn't have time for that and music. It turns out he's put things through different companies and various manipulations till it's ended up all in his name. He claims that all my work of the last 10 years is his and not mine. And I've just had a deal...from Virgin, ironically. They want to buy the back catalog, which would bail me out of a lot of problems, because besides appropriating the label, my ex-manager didn't deal with taxes, and I ended up getting stuck with them. Virgin wants my catalog, but my ex-manager's claiming that the stuff's his. And I'm saying he has no right to it. It was my label in the first place, I set it up and ran it, and I was virtually the only artist on it! We've got to resolve this, and all he did was apply for extension after extension for time to put his defense together. And when his defense came through, it was a tissue of lies, so that's got to be taken apart. This could go on for months and months.*

WYATT: And it costs, doesn't it? Apart from burning up valuable brain cells?

NELSON: Yeah, the Inland Revenue Bankruptcy Department's on my back, and I stand to be homeless within a few weeks, unless a miracle comes out of the sky. Selling the house would clear up a lot of problems, but I don't know what to do after that. It's more of a worry

*Nelson's ex-manager, Mark Rye, denies ever claiming that Nelson's work belongs to him: "I'm simply trying to get my bill paid. I haven't been paid for the last five years, and until the debts are paid off I'm not prepared to let anything go. He had a debt when I took him on, and he still has one because he spends more than he earns. The trouble with Bill is he doesn't understand business. He's very talented, but when things go wrong, it's always somebody else's fault."

because I have a family; I worry about them being warm and fed more than myself.

WYATT: Oh, it's a bastard. It's such a cesspit, this industry. People think we live on a higher plane, we're artists. But we're talking about the mechanisms whereby we live. It would be so easy to do a straight deal: "You make the records, I'll sell them. Percentage so-and-so of retail, we'll cross-check accounts regularly. You get this amount, I get that amount. Deal? Deal. Right, sign here." Why work out all these fucking scams?

NELSON: It's not like we're talking about huge amounts of money, especially with people like me. My ex-manager knew how much music I put together on a daily basis. It's been 20 years since my first record, and I've done over 40 albums. The majority of that has been on the Cocteau label, which he's got his hands on. And I've no particular faith in the system, or that I'll come out with a fair settlement. I hope so, and the lawyers say so, but they're bound to say that, and there've been so many miscarriages of justice in the past, I don't know.

WYATT: Well, at least you've got a solid body of work, and you know it's yours. There are laws coming to our rescue. I'm thinking of the European stuff about intellectual property and moral rights. There are new laws on the horizon. The last check I got was for what Gramavision picked up in America on my last LP, and that completely disappeared into the Rough Trade debt. So I haven't actually yet made a penny from Gramavision. It discourages you; you think, "How can I afford to make any more records?" But I must say I like Gramavision's catalog, they've got a great bunch of music.

MUSICIAN: *If an artist becomes involved with business, particularly the huge bureaucracy of a major record conglomerate, doesn't that immediately compromise the art?*

NELSON: There has to be some kind of compromise, because of the nature of the beast. I always had this dream that you could change things from the inside, and I don't know if I've completely shaken it off yet.

WYATT: I remember when they said the Clash sold out. Well, the lads are only trying to earn a living, you know! Give me a break. [*laughter*]

NELSON: That's an important point. If you've put your life on the line for music as a career, then you have to survive. A big record company can help make things more successful for you than an independent label. It's not so easy to say, "All major companies are automatically terrible and corrupt." I've met some people in majors who don't give a shit about music and all they want is whatever freebies come with the job and as much cocaine as they can get through. But there are some genuine music lovers as well who've got good taste, who really care, and who give a lot of their time for what you're trying to achieve. And I've seen ripoffs in the indie scene just the same as in the majors.

WYATT: It's a romantic illusion that you can extricate yourself from the system. Systems are a bit tougher than that, systems are the way societies are organized. And you can turn your nose away so the smell doesn't kill you, but really you're in the shit with everybody else. I don't think there's any such thing as an independent record label; there's no such thing as an independent *person*. Put a self-sufficient individualist in a desert without water and he's dead in a day. A thing that worries me is that, even in the indies, there's a tendency for the music to be a hastily cobbled-together afterthought, once the serious business of getting the haircut has been sorted out. [*laughter*] Obviously, I have personal reasons for feeling threatened by that. At the moment I'm nervous about how to function in the future. Because apart from these high aspirations we've been talking about, we are talking about a job and trying to earn a living. I'm not getting any younger, and it's not getting any easier. There are some tough [*cont'd on page 63*]

FREEDY JOHNSTON

THE MIDWEST GIVES UP A GREAT SINGER / SONGWRITER

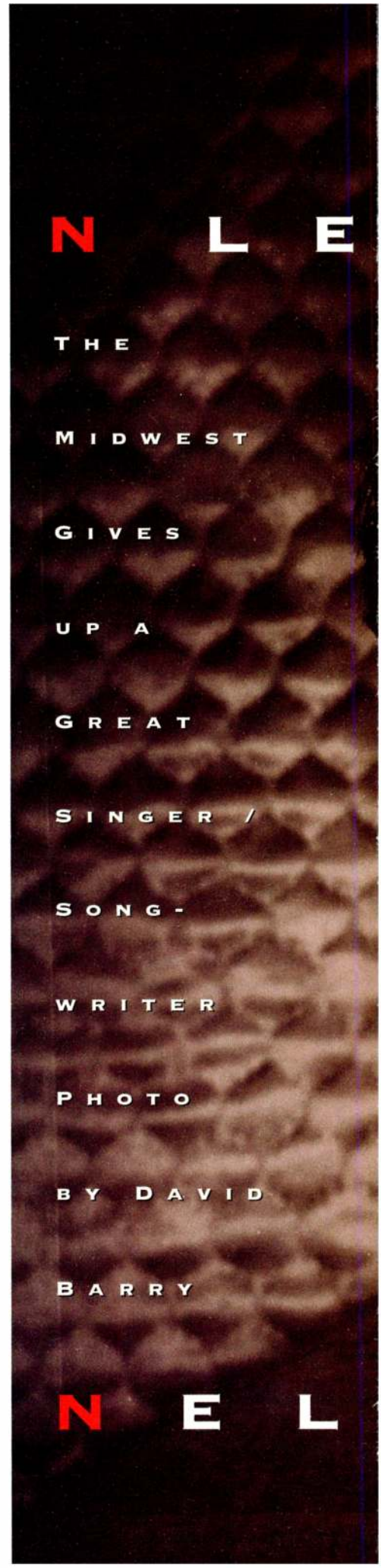


PHOTO BY DAVID BARRY

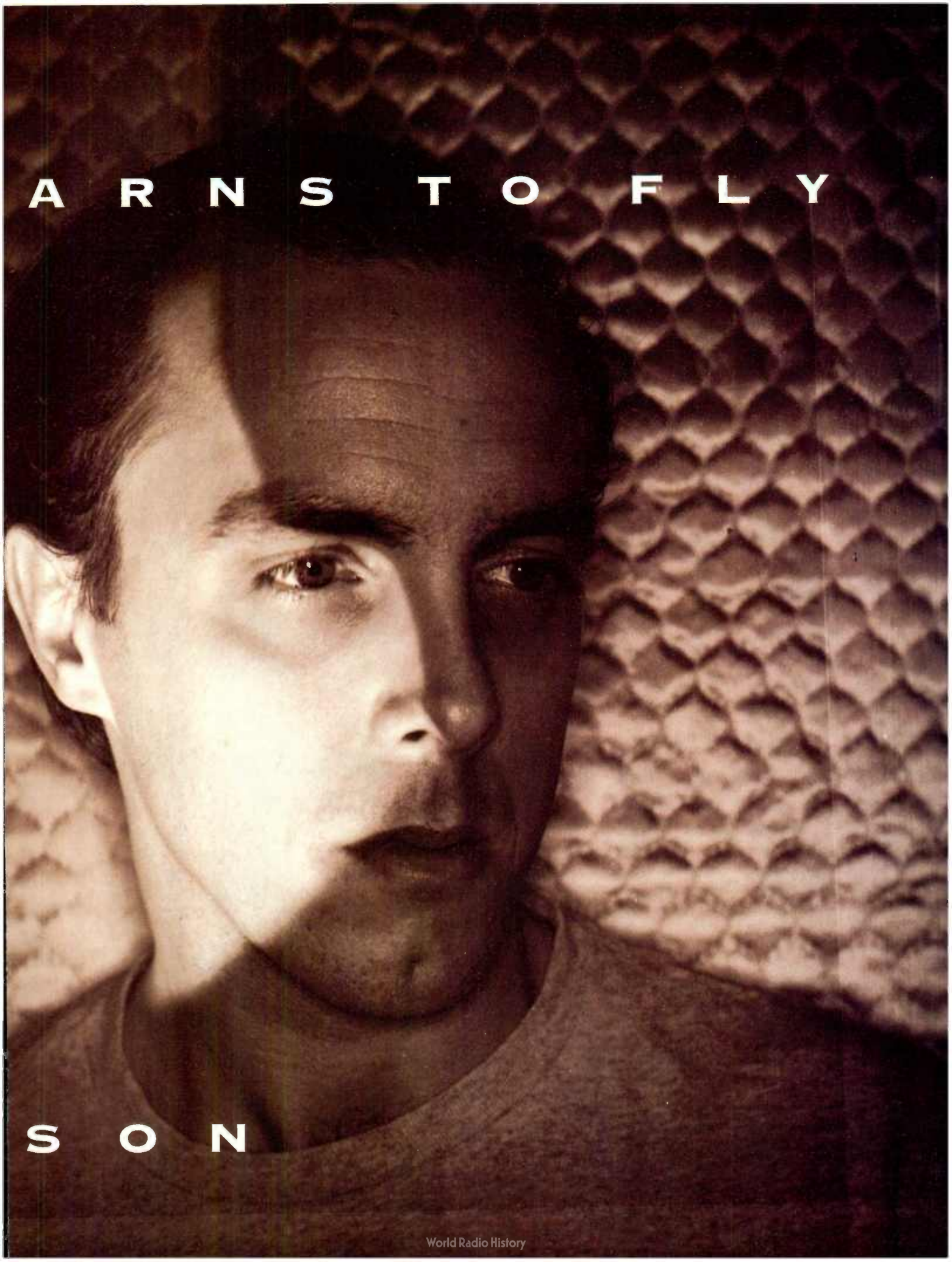
SOMEONE OR SOMETHING FALLS FROM A DARK CLOUD ONE NIGHT AND LANDS IN THE FROZEN MUD. A MAN WONDERS IF HE AND HIS IDIOT SON CAN BE SEEN OR HEARD BY THE FALLEN CREATURE—AND WHETHER HE, SHE OR IT, UPON REAWAKENING, CAN FLY BACK UP TO THE CLOUD FROM THE MAN'S POINTLESS FENCE.

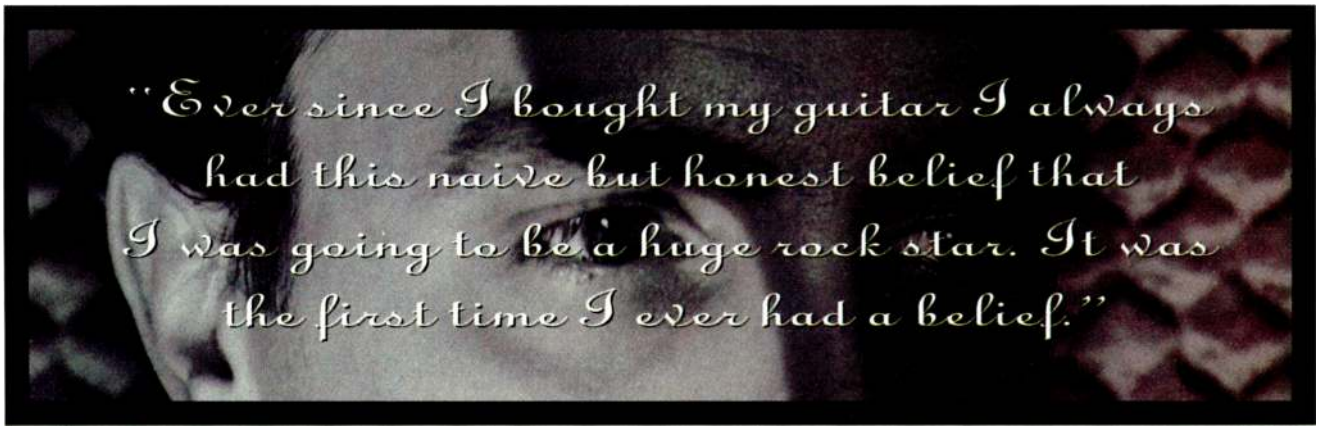
"That's as straightforward as I get in my lyrics," says Freedy Johnston when asked about the title track of *Can You Fly*, his second album and the best record I've heard in years. Aware that he's talking to another small-town Midwesterner, Johnston, a 31-year-old Kansan now living in Hoboken, New Jersey, is pleased that I like the song but puzzled that I haven't worked out all the details. "It's a very simple, although admittedly open, story of an angel falling into this farmer's field and being brought home and healed and then flying away one night."

Right. A mute angel—not at all like the ones in *It's a Wonderful Life* or *Wings of Desire*—landing in a mud field and arousing the pity and wonder of the song's narrator, a dirt-poor farmer who, with his curious neighbors, isn't sure whether or not it can return to heaven. Odds are that only someone from the Midwest could imagine both the awe of the fall and the shabbiness of the circumstances, lay stress on the latter and come through with a song capable of touching anyone. I guess I've lived for too long in New York City, where everything but an angel falls on people all the time.

Kinsley is a town of 2500 in western Kansas near Dodge City and the Santa Fe Trail. Fred Johnston—nicknamed Freedy by his mother—spent most of the first 18 years of his life there, and those years were not good. His parents split up when he was seven, and Johnston lived first with his father and then with his mother. Both parents "had good intentions," he says, "but I still feel an underlying resentment for being brought up in such a tiny, closed-off world when the real world is so big. There was no cultural encouragement. High school was a totally social thing. I have traumatic memories of obligatory sports, the locker room and being picked on as a nearsighted, skinny kid with glasses. I felt

BY PAUL NEL





scarred by fear, and those memories will be with me all my life.

"When I was a kid, my father took me around to the local honky-tonks and bars in the afternoons. Country music was the first music I was exposed to. I used to play with the balls on the pool tables—I was too little to play—and listen to the jukebox. Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, Johnny Cash, George Jones, Buck Owens and Hank Snow became a part of my subconscious, but I never really liked country music until I moved away to Lawrence, a college town, and rediscovered it.

"I am at heart, I suppose, a folk singer. There are Hank Williams songs I wish I had written—classic country songs, so simple and powerful. When I wrote 'The Mortician's Daughter,' my idea was to be as classic and traditional as I could in style, very direct, somewhat timeless. 'Remember Me' has that quality, too. I like to think that Hank Williams might have liked 'The Mortician's Daughter.' And 'We Will Shine' maybe."

Johnston "first started loving music" in the early 1970s while living for a time with his grandparents in Arizona. "I commandeered the radio and listened to it at night. It became sort of my friend. I started having these elaborate fantasies about being a pop singer, a rock 'n' roller, and that it was really me on the radio. Steely Dan was my first favorite band, the first time I remember being really struck. And when I wasn't listening to the radio I would run the songs that I liked best through my head, keep my favorite parts, kind of edit out what I didn't like and then add my own lyrics. That's how I started writing songs—it was good training, but I didn't know it then—and my guilt about it was profound. I felt I'd broken some taboo. I never admitted it to anyone, and I did it for years."

When he was 16, Johnston bought an Ovation guitar by mail order. At 18, he was able to play a few chords. He wrote some "joke" songs for a high school talent show, attended college for a semester, painted, played briefly in a band and stopped going to classes.

"The first five or six years out of high school were very tough on me psychologically," he says. "Basically, all of my hours were spent working to make money. I was just a kitchen slave. I'd hang out with friends and have a good time, I suppose, but inside I was torn up and confused and had no clue as to what I wanted to do. But I kept writing songs, for whatever reason—vanity or just a desire to make my own thing. And ever since I'd bought my guitar, I'd always had this naive but honest belief that I was going to be a huge rock star. It was the first time I ever had a belief. I just knew that someday they were all going to see that I was *the greatest ever*. Of course, that's how kids think when they're persecuted and confused. Slowly, that someday-I'll-show-you-all belief faded to the realization that at least I can play guitar and if I keep at it, I'll eventually succeed with my songs. Today, my idea of success isn't any sort of pop megastardom. It's respect and some kind of even minor financial reward."

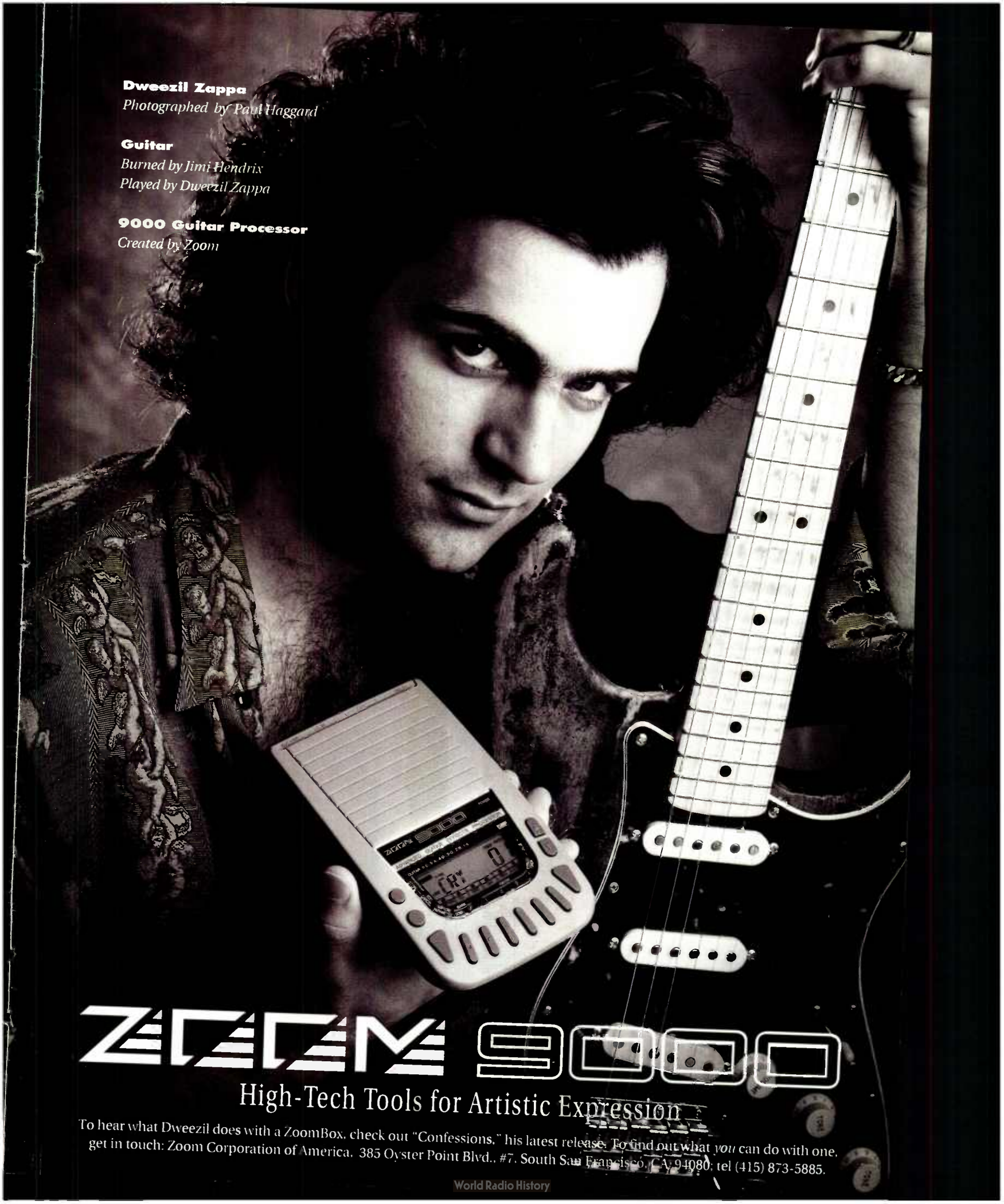
Johnston started making demos in late 1984 but rarely played them for anyone because he felt that no one—not even his girlfriend at the time—would like or understand them. In 1985, he moved to New York and became slightly less secretive about his songwriting. One of his demos reached Bar/None Records by indirect route, and the Hoboken-based label signed him to a three-record deal. "I signed with the first people who offered me something," Johnston admits. "When *The Trouble Tree* came out in 1989, there were friends of mine in Lawrence and Kinsley who didn't even know I was a musician."

I LIKE *CAN YOU FLY* SO MUCH that I'm almost afraid to write about it, which is probably the reason why I began this article as a sort of oblique carom shot instead of the flat-out rave it could threaten to become. To put it bluntly, Freedy Johnston is the one newcomer in ages who's made me feel good about the future of rock 'n' roll. I've played "Down in Love" (Johnston's stupendously beautiful duet with Syd Straw), "We Will Shine" (an exquisitely frayed vocal), "The Mortician's Daughter," the ambiguous and heart-rending "Responsible," "Wheels" (a desperate brag about freedom) and "The Lucky One" (in which a self-deluded small-time gambler, even after losing his last dollar, still feels goofily confident that he's "the lucky one") dozens of times, and the rest of the album's songs (except for "In the New Sunshine" and "California Thing," which I don't much like) only slightly less.

When I finally meet Johnston, who has just returned from a tour of the Netherlands (the only place in the world where he's considered a star), I guess I expect him to be eight feet tall because I don't recognize him at first. He's articulate and soft-spoken, intense, modest on the surface but with a strong undertow of determination and frustration.

"I'm a self-taught guitarist and self-taught songwriter," Johnston says. "I just kind of jumped in and made all the mistakes, and a lot of my success probably came from ignorance, because there was never anybody to tell me what it took to be a musician or what the odds were against me. Lately, I've been writing songs in blocks of a dozen or so—sort of like a set or a record—trying to stress their differences rather than their similarities. When I write a song, the chords come first, then the vocal melody, then the title. The songs are like shells, waiting for the words to come. Sometimes I just meditate on the music, play it and see what it's trying to say to me, and find the story. I think you are obligated as a songwriter to make sense. I never write a song if I don't have a plot or don't know what I'm saying or can't make the meaning accessible to the listener. Of course, I leave some room for interpretation. Otherwise, I feel I've almost done a disservice.

"I suppose I have a kind of theme. Some of my songs are about, if not the outsider, then the wanderer, the person who is trying to get somewhere or trying to escape from it. I've realized that I have a melancholy



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strain. I don't think there's a happy song at heart on either *The Trouble Tree* or *Can You Fly*."

In the short time he's been around, Johnston has been compared with more artists than anyone I can remember. "In Holland," he says, "every journalist asked me, 'How does it feel to be the new Neil Young?' It's a high compliment to me, but I've never listened to much Neil Young. Our voices have the same timbre, but I think any white guy from the Midwest with a high voice who plays rock songs as well as acoustic songs can't avoid that comparison." How about Pere Ubu, the Fall, Big Star, John Mellencamp, the Carter Family, Bill Morrissey, the Replacements, Bruce Springsteen? "Springsteen and early Paul Westerberg have influenced me somewhat. I'm a big Bruce fan. I hate Mellencamp. I can't listen to Big Star. None of the other names on that list have anything to do with my music. The Mekons and the Pogues showed me that I could write country songs with lyrics that have nothing to do with country music. Tom Waits has got to be a true influence. Lyrically, he's the best—an unbelievable poet. Certainly, artists like Hank Williams and Johnny Cash. Creedence probably, because I've heard them all my life. Aerosmith, Steely Dan. I think my biggest influence and my favorite rock band of all time is Led Zeppelin—not lyrically, but musically. I mean the idea of doing screaming stuff with acoustic music, but I don't think I've ever done anything that sounds like Led Zeppelin. I probably don't even know my influences."

Throughout our two days of interviews, Johnston and I talked a lot about the songs on *Can You Fly*. Here are some of his comments.

"'Sincere' was inspired by Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real*. All of the song's images are lifted directly from that. It's the oldest song on the record and means a lot to me.

"'Wheels' is a sad song. The verses are fairly autobiographical, but not the chorus: I never had a car. The sign referred to is a big part of my life. On it were written the highway mileages from Kinsley to New York and San Francisco.

"'Can You Fly' came about when I saw a Chinese-American author on PBS talking about how mesmerized a bunch of kids were by her reading to them. They thought she was a witch. One of the kids stood up and asked her, 'Can you fly?' I don't know where the angel came from.

"In 'Tearing Down This Place,' the narrator is looking at a long-abandoned house and either thinking about or imagining the events between the man and woman who once lived there.

"'In the New Sunshine' is a post-apocalyptic comic dirge, a sci-fi pop song and kind of a collage about our changing environment and the new conservative, military atmosphere since the Gulf War.

"'The Lucky One' is about the wandering, compulsive gamblers walking the twilight streets of Las Vegas. That's all the song is about. Others have said it's about sex and drugs.

"'Responsible' is about a father whose daughter has run away. He feels responsible, but he knows he's not completely responsible for her unhappiness. It's based on a story that a friend told me. I left out a lot of the details. Maybe that's what confuses some people.

"'Down in Love' is an open song written with Syd in mind. It's a sad song about a jilted lover thinking about her boyfriend and his new girlfriend. It's also sort of a haiku: The ring of the words is almost more important than any concrete meaning. The phrase 'down in love' can refer to a place—down in the city, for example—as well as to romantic loss."

"'California Thing' is a nonsense song about a trip to San Francisco, where things got screwed up. It *does* have a plot.

"'Remember Me' has elements of autobiography. I went back to Kansas not long ago.

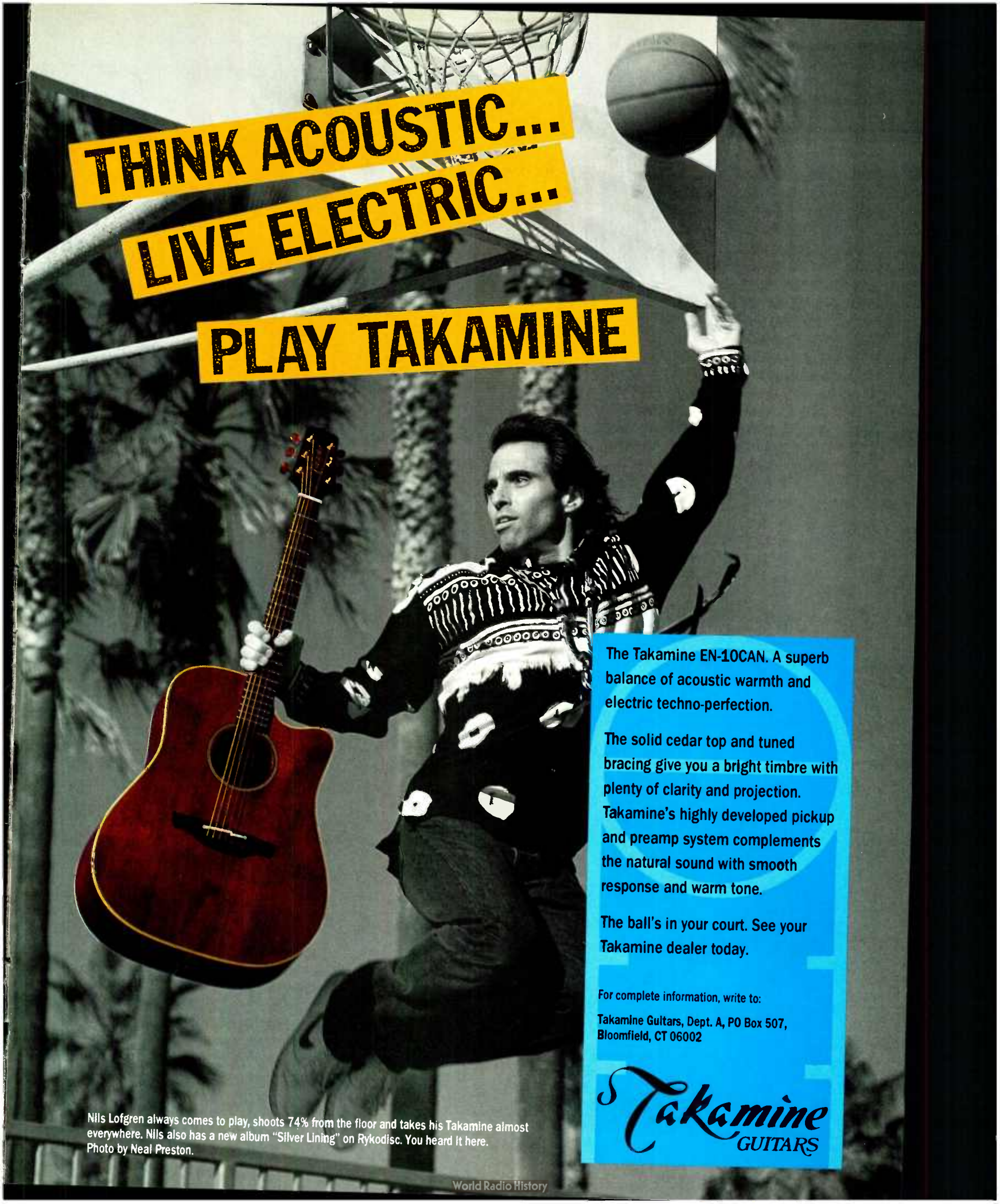
"In 'We Will Shine,' this Springsteen-like character comes home and finds his wife crying on her birthday. He's just so tired he can't believe it, but he's going to do the right thing and take her out on the town. It's not about despair really. You're too tired for despair. One of my favorite songs on the record.

"'The Mortician's Daughter' is a reverie. The narrator is sitting alone at night and finds an old letter from a lost love. Or a letter telling him of her death. In Kinsley, the mortician had a very lovely daughter who went out with a football player."

"Trying to Tell You I Don't Know": "I dedicated *Can You Fly* to my late father, but I should have dedicated it to my late grandfather, Elmer Fatzer. He gave me a few thousand dollars, some land and a house when he died, and I spent all the money on music. When it came to finishing the record, I needed $10,000, and the last thing I had of any value was the land. I'd already used up the Bar/None contractual budget, so I sold the land and paid $10,000 out of my own pocket for the last half of the album. The record means more to me than the land. I have no remorse about it, but it's difficult to talk about because it seems like such a blasphemous thing to sell the family farm and the first home I ever lived in. But I did it for the long term. I'm firmly committed to music, and selling the land was part of that commitment. This song is strictly autobiographical."

NO VIOLINS

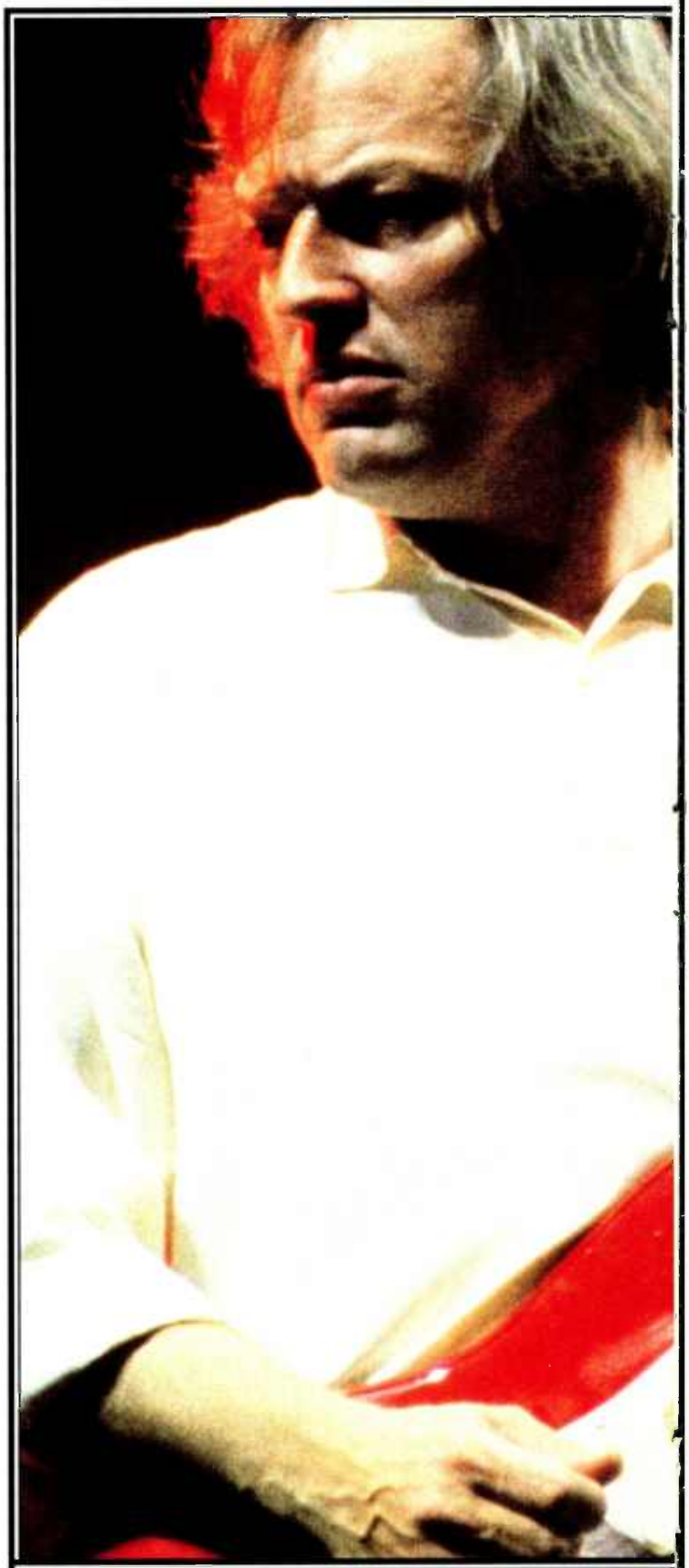
FREEDY JOHNSTON plays a Guild GF30 acoustic guitar and uses non-phosphor regular Martin medium strings. His electric guitar is a Schecter Telecaster, "but the main thing that makes it worth a damn are the Seymour Duncan humbucking pickups." He prefers a Vox AC30 amp in the studio and is looking for a perfect small amp for gigs. His studio "mike of choice" is an AKG 414. He would like to promote Jim Dunlop guitar picks (the green ones), which he claims he can't live without.



Nils Lofgren always comes to play, shoots 74% from the floor and takes his Takamine almost everywhere. Nils also has a new album "Silver Lining" on Rykodisc. You heard it here. Photo by Neal Preston.

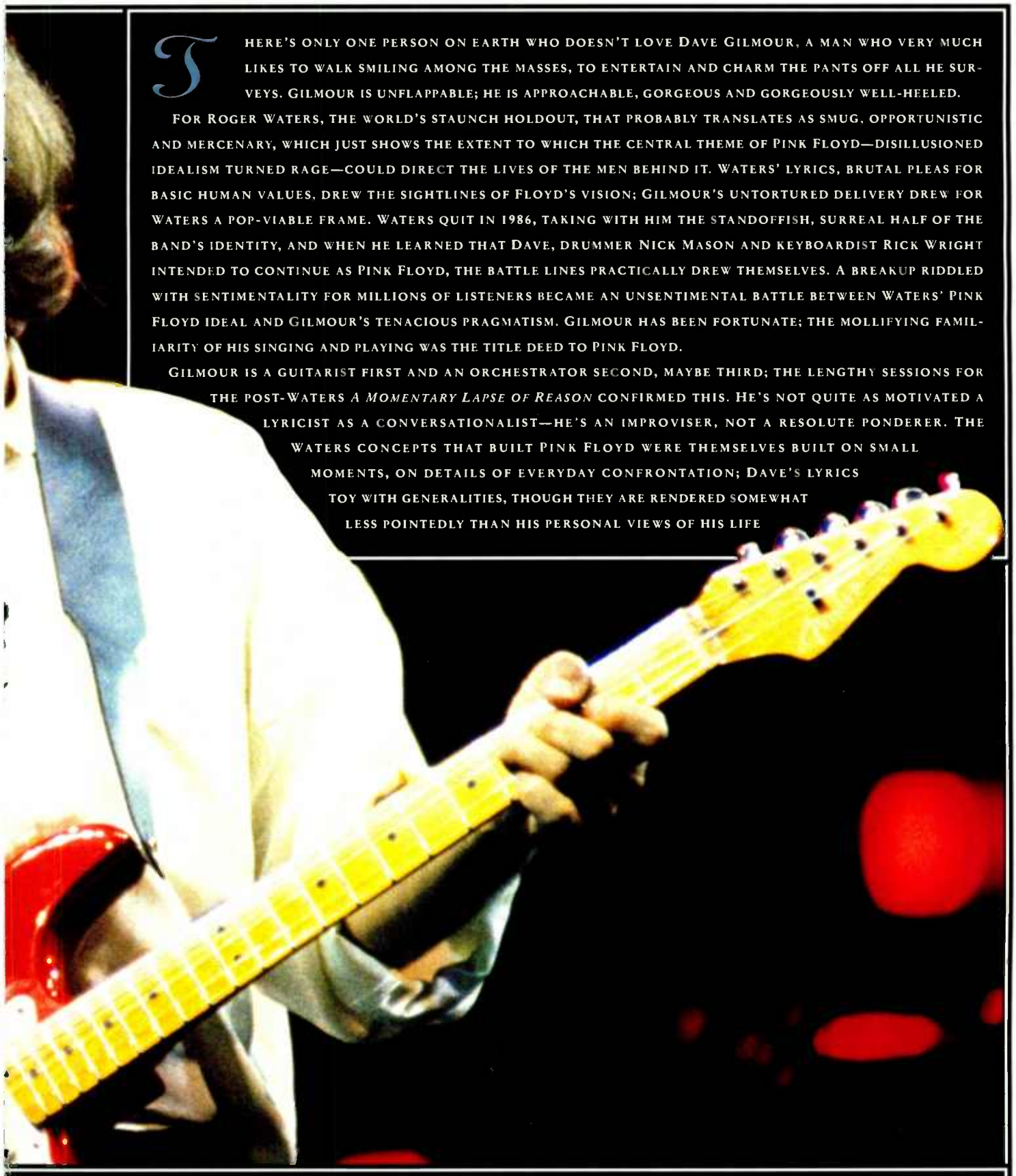
CAREFUL WITH THAT AXE

Photograph by Neal Preston



BY MATT RESNICOFF

DAVID GILMOUR CHOPS TH



THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON ON EARTH WHO DOESN'T LOVE DAVE GILMOUR, A MAN WHO VERY MUCH LIKES TO WALK SMILING AMONG THE MASSES, TO ENTERTAIN AND CHARM THE PANTS OFF ALL HE SURVEYS. GILMOUR IS UNFLAPPABLE; HE IS APPROACHABLE, GORGEOUS AND GORGEOUSLY WELL-HEELED.

FOR ROGER WATERS, THE WORLD'S STAUNCH HOLDOUT, THAT PROBABLY TRANSLATES AS SMUG, OPPORTUNISTIC AND MERCENARY, WHICH JUST SHOWS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CENTRAL THEME OF PINK FLOYD—DISILLUSIONED IDEALISM TURNED RAGE—COULD DIRECT THE LIVES OF THE MEN BEHIND IT. WATERS' LYRICS, BRUTAL PLEAS FOR BASIC HUMAN VALUES, DREW THE SIGHTLINES OF FLOYD'S VISION; GILMOUR'S UNTORTURED DELIVERY DREW FOR WATERS A POP-VIABLE FRAME. WATERS QUIT IN 1986, TAKING WITH HIM THE STANDOFFISH, SURREAL HALF OF THE BAND'S IDENTITY, AND WHEN HE LEARNED THAT DAVE, DRUMMER NICK MASON AND KEYBOARDIST RICK WRIGHT INTENDED TO CONTINUE AS PINK FLOYD, THE BATTLE LINES PRACTICALLY DREW THEMSELVES. A BREAKUP RIDDLED WITH SENTIMENTALITY FOR MILLIONS OF LISTENERS BECAME AN UNSENTIMENTAL BATTLE BETWEEN WATERS' PINK FLOYD IDEAL AND GILMOUR'S TENACIOUS PRAGMATISM. GILMOUR HAS BEEN FORTUNATE; THE MOLLIFYING FAMILIARITY OF HIS SINGING AND PLAYING WAS THE TITLE DEED TO PINK FLOYD.

GILMOUR IS A GUITARIST FIRST AND AN ORCHESTRATOR SECOND, MAYBE THIRD; THE LENGTHY SESSIONS FOR THE POST-WATERS *A MOMENTARY LAPSE OF REASON* CONFIRMED THIS. HE'S NOT QUITE AS MOTIVATED A LYRICIST AS A CONVERSATIONALIST—HE'S AN IMPROVISER, NOT A RESOLUTE PONDERER. THE WATERS CONCEPTS THAT BUILT PINK FLOYD WERE THEMSELVES BUILT ON SMALL MOMENTS, ON DETAILS OF EVERYDAY CONFRONTATION; DAVE'S LYRICS TOY WITH GENERALITIES, THOUGH THEY ARE RENDERED SOMEWHAT LESS POINTEDLY THAN HIS PERSONAL VIEWS OF HIS LIFE

ROUGH PINK FLOYD'S PAST TO BUILD A NEW FUTURE

AND BAND. FLOYD'S VIDEO *LA CARRERA PANAMERICANA*, DOCUMENTING AN AUTO RACE HE AND MASON DROVE ACROSS MEXICO LAST YEAR, IS CAUSE TO WONDER IF DAVE STILL HAS A BEAD ON HIS AUDIENCE—AND WHETHER FANS IN MIDDLE AMERICA AWAITING THEIR FIRST HIT OF FLOYD IN FIVE YEARS COULD APPRECIATE A RICH MAN'S INTEREST IN DRIVING AROUND WITH BAD RADIO RECEPTION ON HOT STICKY SEATS FOR A WEEK. IS THIS THE GILMOUR IDEALISM? MAYBE, BUT IN THE FINAL ACCOUNT, DAVE IS A FABULOUS MUSICIAN, AND IF HE CAN'T—OR WON'T—HANG THE WORLD OUT TO TWIST IN THE WIND FOR ITS OWN FOLLY, HE'LL AT LEAST HAVE IT FILLING ARENAS TO WATCH HIM NOT DO IT.

YES, THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO DOESN'T LOVE DAVID GILMOUR, AND HE SHARES WITH DAVE THE ONE THING NEITHER SHARES WITH ANYONE ELSE: THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHAT, OR *IF*, PINK FLOYD IS. WATERS ULTIMATELY HAD TOO MUCH RESPECT FOR THE BAND—AND FOR HIMSELF—TO EXPECT FLOYD TO SURVIVE HIM; GILMOUR HAD TOO MUCH CONCERN FOR HIS CAREER TO LET A GOOD THING GO. BUT STEALING YOUR OWN LEGACY IS NO CRIME. WATERS ALWAYS MADE THE PLEA TO CONNECT, BUT NEVER ACTUALLY MADE THE CONNECTION. GILMOUR WAS *HIS* CONDUIT; NOW THE CONDUIT HAS BECOME THE WHOLE. ISN'T REBIRTH PRESSURE ENOUGH? EVEN ROGER WATERS, WHO ASSERTED FOR 20 YEARS THAT HUMANS ARE BOUND UNDIGNIFIABLY TO HUMAN NATURE, WOULD CONCEDE THAT DAVE IS JUST DOING HIS JOB.

"Maybe if I wore glasses they'd take me seriously..."

MUSICIAN: A Momentary Lapse of Reason *didn't seem to attempt a dramatic overhaul of the band's style. Did you feel pressure to create a new direction or breathe something new into Pink Floyd? Or did you have something to prove?*

GILMOUR: I obviously had something to prove in that Roger was no longer a part of it and obviously I had the view that people may have misunderstood or misread the way it had been with him within our history. It was quite important to me to prove that there was something serious still going on there. It was "Life After Rog," you know. I don't know about any particular change of direction.

MUSICIAN: *The standout track was "A New Machine," at the end of which you suggest that we're caught, trapped by ourselves. I wasn't clear if it was an optimistic comment about self-acceptance or a cry of imprisonment. That ambiguity—and that very message—is something Pink Floyd, with or without Waters, has never abandoned.*

GILMOUR: That's right.

MUSICIAN: *Was the message positive or negative?*

GILMOUR: I don't know if I want to get into that. Whether you want to take it as optimistic or not...I mean, a lot of people didn't use it as an excuse to go and jump off a cliff or something, did they?

MUSICIAN: *On "Sorrow," where everything "flows to an oily sea," I was thinking of your friend Pete Townshend's river motif. You guys both own floating recording studios that moor on the Thames, and the river figures in pretty prominently. In "Sorrow" the sea is dark and troubled, while Pete's was a welcoming sea.*

GILMOUR: "The Sea Refuses No River." Yeah, yeah. "Sorrow" was a poem I'd written as a lyric *before* I wrote music to it, which is rare for me. The river's a very, very common theme; rivers are a very symbolic, attractive way of expressing all sorts of things. There's a Randy Newman song, "In Germany Before the War," where he talks about a little girl who gets killed by an old pervert. "I'm looking at the river but thinking of the sea." The chorus I just love; the river has nothing directly to do with it, but sums it up perfectly.

MUSICIAN: *Is your boat near Townshend's?*

GILMOUR: Yeah, a couple of miles up the river. Peter's boat is a big steel-hull barge. His main studio is not on the boat, his Eel Pie Studio is right by the mooring. In my case, I just happened to find this beautiful boat that was built as a houseboat and was very cheap, so I bought it. And only afterward did I think I could maybe use it to record. The control room is a 30-foot × 20-foot room. It's a very comfortable working environment—three bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, a big lounge. It's 90 feet long.

MUSICIAN: *Might you record the next Pink Floyd record there?*

GILMOUR: We would do a lot of it, yes. We did a lot of early work on the last album there. And I'd like to work with people playing together in a room next time, so if I need to add the vocals I can do all the incidental bits there. Things like the solo at the end of "Sorrow" were done on the boat, my guitar going through a little Gallien-Krueger amp.

MUSICIAN: *Townshend wrote lyrics to two songs on your solo album* About Face. *You and he have both alternated between doing your own records and being the force behind a very successful band.*

GILMOUR: I think Pete feels some restrictions on what he likes to do with the Who, as I guess we all feel restrictions within everything we attempt, just because of the types of personalities and role you've created for yourself. I know he's felt uncomfortable about certain things—things he *could* express in solo stuff. For me, the restriction was the *scale* of what Pink Floyd had become more than anything. It's nice to get out and do something on a slightly different scale; go out and do theaters, which is not really a possibility with Pink Floyd, until we get a

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL NATKIN

lot less popular.

MUSICIAN: *So the grand scale is important to you?*

GILMOUR: I *like* the grand scale of Pink Floyd. A lot of people want to buy tickets and see that stuff. And that carries a responsibility which doesn't fall on me when I go out on my own. It's a change, it's nice.

MUSICIAN: *But even so, you did most of the work on* Momentary Lapse. *Nick Mason admits to being an ancillary part of the band and Rick Wright had for all intents and purposes been gone since 1980. That last Floyd album was a project you cooked up and realized with the help of session musicians and one other lyricist. Aside from the name Pink Floyd and the business considerations, it was a David Gilmour solo album.*

GILMOUR: Well, I don't know what is a solo album and what isn't, really. I approached that album like I would have approached a Pink Floyd album and I approach a solo album as I would approach a solo album. There's a difference in thought process in the way you go into these things. But yeah, in some ways it could have been. Yeah. And one could say that on my last solo album I could have steered more towards Pink Floyd than I did. Maybe it would have sold a few more, who knows?

MUSICIAN: *"Murder," from* About Face, *certainly had the elements.*

GILMOUR: I steered those things away from the Pink Floyd because...I don't *know* why, I just felt like doing that at the time. But there's nothing within the Pink Floyd sound that I don't *like*. I'm not faking or having to do anything any different to do a Pink Floyd record. And we never sat down and said, "God, this doesn't sound Pink Floyd enough—let's do this to make it sound more Pink Floyd."

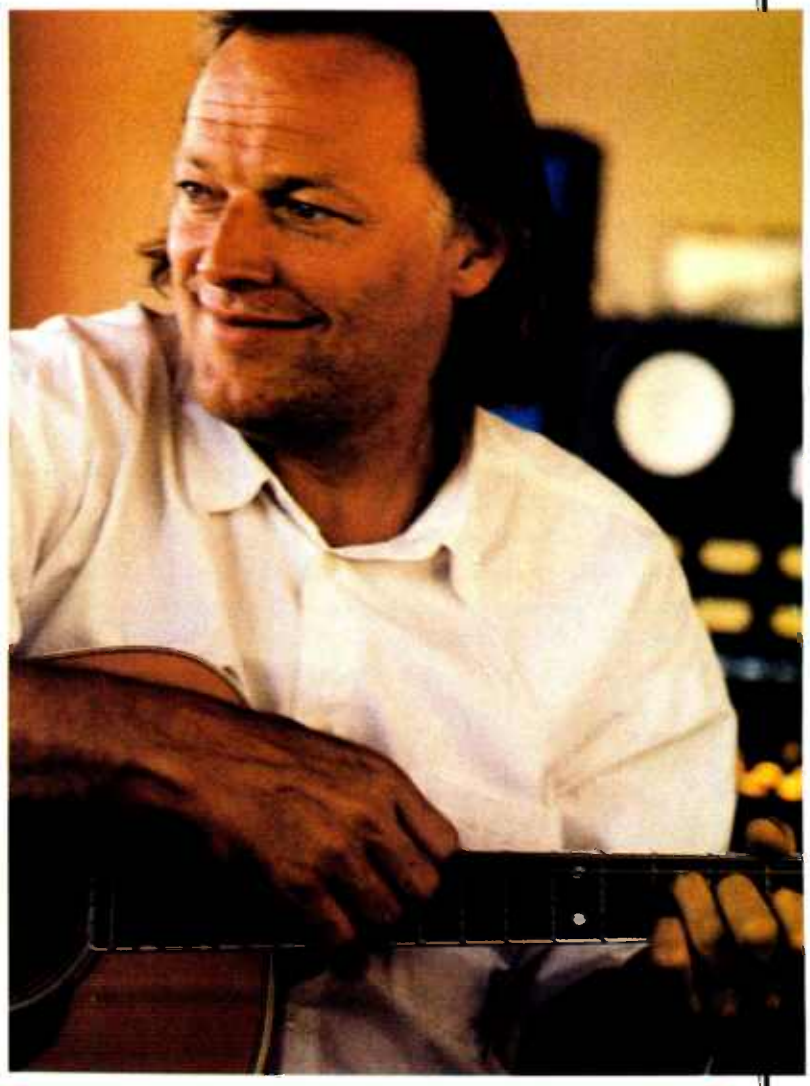
MUSICIAN: *If there was a formula for the Floyd, "Murder" fits it: a plaintive acoustic section, a statement, a sudden band entry, some kind of guitar solo and a restatement of a more universal theme based on the first. Yet that formula was not as present on* Momentary Lapse. *Did you find that during the conception of the record you were fumbling with the idea of what Pink Floyd should or shouldn't be once you took over?*

GILMOUR: No. I didn't do that at all. I simply thought, "Are these songs good?" and worked on trying to make the ones I thought were good into a record. It can't help sounding quite a bit like Pink Floyd if it's got my voice and my guitar playing on it anyway. Why my second solo album and this one should have a different sound to them, I don't really know. I think it's just in my attitude towards it. On the solo one, I was actually steering a bit away from it, a little more rock 'n' roll.

MUSICIAN: *The beginning of "Short and Sweet," from your first solo record, sounds like the germ of "Run Like Hell."*

GILMOUR: Yes, it's a guitar with the bottom string tuned down to D, and thrashing around on chord shapes over a D root. Which is the same in both. [*smiling*] It's part of my musical repertoire, yes.

MUSICIAN: *For a "progressive rocker" you don't play atonally; the only time I've noticed it is in the fadeout on "You Know I'm Right." You rarely get anarchic.*



"My fingers weren't designed to go very quickly. Any trick or device I can buy to make me sound more technically proficient is fine with me."

GILMOUR: I have a keen sense of melody. I don't want to be experimental to the extent of doing things I don't like. I *do* do a lot of that stuff in the studio when I'm mucking about; you just don't get to hear it, 'cause that's when I'm *searching*. By the time they get out as finished product I've ironed them into stuff I like.

"New Machine" has a sound I've never heard anyone do. The noise gates, the Vocoders, opened up something new which to me seemed like a wonderful sound effect that no one had done before; it's innovation of a sort. But exploring live in front of an audience, the way we did in the '60s and very early '70s, you make as many mistakes as you get things right. A lot of it was *awful*, [*chuckles*] and I just don't feel like *being* that person anymore. That was then, and that part is done.

MUSICIAN: *Coming from R&B cover bands, were you disconcerted by the wayward improvising of those shows, or did you relish the challenge?*

GILMOUR: I had a large background in improvisation, but I didn't think a lot of it that the Pink Floyd were doing was very good. And

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yes, it took me a while before I felt I understood where they were trying to get to and it took a while for me to try and change it into something I liked as well. It was a process working two ways after I joined: me trying to change *it*, and it trying and succeeding in changing me.

MUSICIAN: *You opened the sound up; it was initially very dense late-'60s English pop music.*

GILMOUR: The band felt we achieved something with the title track of *A Saucerful of Secrets*. I can't say as I fully understood what was going on when it was being made, with Roger sitting around drawing little diagrams on bits of paper. But throughout the following period I tried to add what I knew of harmony and bring it slightly more mainstream, if you like. And the way they worked certainly educated me. We passed on all our individual desires, talents and knowledge to each other.

MUSICIAN: *Was Roger an effective bassist back then?*

GILMOUR: He had developed his own limited, or very simple style. He was never very keen on improving himself as a bass player and half the time I would play the bass on the records because I would tend to do it quicker. Right back to those early records; I mean, at least half the bass on all the recorded output is me anyway.

MUSICIAN: *This is not a widely acknowledged fact.*

GILMOUR: Well, I think it's been said, but it's certainly not something we go around advertising. Rog used to come in and say "Thank you very much" to me once in a while for winning him bass-playing polls.

MUSICIAN: *Did you play the fretless bass on "Hey You"?*

GILMOUR: Yeah. Hmm. Roger playing fretless bass? Please! [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Do you think any of the aberrations in his lyrical ideas were an attempt to contrive the kind of madness Syd Barrett communicated?*

GILMOUR: I think there's something to that. How far you want to go I don't really know, but yes, I think there's certainly something to that.

MUSICIAN: *Did you find any of the stranger lyrics tough to stomach?*

GILMOUR: No, very few. Once in a while I would find something uncomfortable to sing. The first lot Roger wrote for "Dogs," when it was called "You Gotta Be Crazy," were just too many words to sing. But most of the *ideas* were ideas I felt good about, and encapsulated a lot of the thinking that I had as well. I often wished I had been able to express them as well as he did.

MUSICIAN: *The potency of your creative relationship would lead an outsider to think that maybe his not wanting you to continue Pink Floyd was simply because he didn't want to see it exist without the Roger Waters/David Gilmour collaboration—not just because he thought it shouldn't go on without* him.

GILMOUR: He didn't want it to continue *with* the Roger Waters/David Gilmour collaboration; he wanted it to continue with the Roger Waters–only writing force. He didn't want me to be part of it, which is why it got so difficult in the end. And the reason he didn't want us to carry on was because he wanted to go out as "Roger Waters of Pink Floyd" in rather large letters and kind of purloin the name for himself.

MUSICIAN: *Yet looking at his solo records, he doesn't seem egomaniacal: He doesn't proselytize, he doesn't have any* photos *of himself on the sleeve.*

GILMOUR: Hmm. He *is* an egomaniac, whatever particular way it wants to manifest itself.

MUSICIAN: *But he eventually relented and let you be.*

GILMOUR: I think his lawyers advised him that he wasn't going to have any prayer of winning, and in the end we paid him off anyway. It was not a court case he had any chance of winning whatsoever. I mean, on what basis could someone leave something that had been successfully operating for a large number of years and then say the other people in it couldn't carry on? That isn't the way the world works. Fortunately.

MUSICIAN: *Some would say the band's magic existed in the interplay.*

GILMOUR: That is suggesting that if it carried on, it would be a good thing. No one is really arguing that point. The point is that I hadn't had enough of it, it was my career. Nick hadn't had enough of it. Why should we be forced not to do it anymore? Whether it's as good or not afterwards is really kind of beside the point. To me.

MUSICIAN: *Really?*

GILMOUR: Yes. Whether it's as good or to as many people's taste is beside the point. If they don't like it as much, they don't have to buy it. But no one can tell me to stop doing it. I do my very, very best to make it as well as I can, to make the records and put on a show. I still fail to see why morally I should be persuaded to give up something I've given most of my adult life to, just 'cause one guy doesn't feel like doing it anymore.

MUSICIAN: *Except simply the fact that you could both have gone on to solo careers and left Pink Floyd, the creative dynamic between you, as a very pleasing piece of history.*

GILMOUR: Yeah, yeah, that's quite true; one could have done that. But why? Why would I want to do that? It's very, very hard work to struggle a solo career up to the level that Pink Floyd stands at.

MUSICIAN: *But even so, wasn't the effort in putting on the last tour—traveling, fighting Roger's injunctions, worrying about re-acceptance—as draining as pushing on alone?*

GILMOUR: I didn't want to! I *like* the Pink Floyd very much. I don't want to get over-defensive about what I felt like doing, but it is what I do and I feel I should carry on doing it. And bring back into it the people who were pushed out. It would take a book to tell what went on within our band, and Roger's later megalomaniac years, and precisely what psychologically he was attempting to do to all of us. Because he is a megalomaniac. He really is. His thirst for power is more important than anything else—more important than honesty, that's for certain.

MUSICIAN: *Well, he donated a lot of money to charity. And one symptom of megalomania is all-possessing greed.*

GILMOUR: Well, yeah. What money did he donate to charity?

MUSICIAN: *The Berlin* Wall *proceeds.*

GILMOUR: You think that donated a lot of money to charity?

MUSICIAN: *Certainly the TV rights, and the record sales, which were respectable, brought it in. It was a mammoth thing.*

GILMOUR: It was a mammoth thing, from what I understand. And from what I understand the *costs* of putting it on were absolutely enormous, and the receipts in were nothing *like* enormous, and the record didn't sell terribly well. TV rights were sold at the very last minute for very low money, because TV rights are not very easy to sell, I can tell you. [*chuckles*] There's lots of stories about people not having been paid. Sorry, I don't want to get *too* heavily into that, but I suspect that the motivation for putting the *Wall* show on in Berlin was *not* charitable. I don't think that was Roger's motivation at all.

MUSICIAN: *Were your two or three songs' worth of publishing royalties from that record paid to you after the broadcast?*

GILMOUR: I have no idea. I don't know, I didn't check whether money for performing rights came my way or not. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Have you been writing for a new Floyd record?*

GILMOUR: I've been writing a bit. I've spent time in the studio fiddling around, but not really doing anything serious. Until it feels right. That

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE: MASON, GILMOUR, WRIGHT

last Pink Floyd project took a lot out of me. I haven't been in any great hurry to do it all again. I'm not a big workaholic. I've written quite a few things, but a lot is not complete—which really requires me to sit down in a studio and start finding a direction and the desire to do it, which has been lacking in me. I'm beginning to feel it starting to trickle back.

The last tour was a very long hard road and it took away my taste for it for a while. I've been busy flying airplanes and driving cars and enjoying those things. I'm 46, and being in Pink Floyd is not something I wish to take up all my waking hours or take up all my life.

MUSICIAN: *Was it always all-consuming?*

GILMOUR: Yeah. Really, all the things we've done have been all-consuming affairs for a while, but have never been quite as high-pressure; it was hard to put the last one together because it was a lonelier task. I mean, I don't know what it was like for Roger because I'm not Roger, but he may have felt the same pressures doing things like *The Wall*. When Roger was writing *The Wall* he had a band and experience, including my abilities, to help him achieve those things. Making this last one, it was very much me on my own. There was quite a lot of weight on my shoulders, as you would imagine.

MUSICIAN: *There's the corporate pressure...*

GILMOUR: There's no real corporate pressure.

MUSICIAN: *When you brought in* A Momentary Lapse of Reason, *there was absolutely no concern that it echo the Pink Floyd sound?*

GILMOUR: Oh, well, I don't take any notice of record companies, they just make the records. They never get any say in it. They don't usually get to listen to any of it until it's finished, and until such a day comes as they make a loss on one of our records, which they've never done, it'll stay that way. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Does the fact that it's almost a guaranteed smash take away some of the more desirable uncertainty about being a rock musician?*

GILMOUR: It's not a guaranteed smash. I mean, *The Wall* certainly did very well. The follow-up to it, *The Final Cut*, didn't, and following on from that one, with Roger gone, and the previous album having not done terribly well, I don't think any of us were thinking we were onto any guaranteed sales whatsoever. Certainly, I would have been surprised if it had sold less than a million around the world. My two solo records sold three-quarters of a million each, and the Pink Floyd name on top of that would have added a little. But we had no serious guarantees in undertaking this project. A lot of people *didn't* buy *The Final Cut*.

MUSICIAN: *It was a good record.*

GILMOUR: Yeah, but it only sold about a *fifth* of *The Wall*, really. I'm not talking about quality, although I personally don't like it; there were three good songs, then just rather average filler. In terms of numbers, it was the worst sales we had since before *Dark Side of the Moon*.

MUSICIAN: *Have you given thought to what kind of production the next album will be? I would personally rather listen to an album like* David Gilmour *than one like* A Momentary Lapse of Reason, *my taste goes away from bombast and towards the sound created by a smaller number of musicians, doing it in an apparently spontaneous way. Now that you've established that Floyd can continue, is the possibility of what Floyd could do...*

GILMOUR: I don't see any change in the philosophy of where it comes from. The way of recording, the way we go through it, I suspect may change a bit. I'm very, very keen on doing it much more live, in-the-studio with people actually playing together. But when we get half a dozen people in the studio and playing together it does tend to start getting weighty and big. So I guess that's just the way I like it.

On the *Momentary Lapse of Reason* album Nick's belief in himself was pretty well gone, and Rick's belief in himself was *totally* gone. And they weren't up to making a record, to be quite honest about it.

MUSICIAN: *You mean the physical act of keeping time, or playing piano?*

GILMOUR: Yeah, I mean, Rick really just didn't believe he could play. You see, this is part of what had been going on for *years*. Roger's very good at belittling people, and I think over the years he managed to convince Rick completely that he was useless and more or less had convinced Nick of the same thing. And they both did not play a major part on that record. But we put a touring band together, and I got Gary [Wallis] to back up Nick on percussion and drums, and I got Jon Carin to help out on keyboard stuff, and at the beginning, they played strong roles—in playing drum *parts*, in Gary's case, and keyboard parts in Jon's. But by halfway through the first leg of the tour, Nick was starting to believe in himself again. And by the time we did the live album at the end of the first year, they were both playing absolutely

PHOTOGRAPH: NEAL PRESTON

great, and the drumming on the live album is all straight Nick. And Rick's playing is great. Now, two years later than that, we went into the studio at Christmas to do these tracks [for the video] and they just picked up and played fantastic. There's been a rehabilitation through the touring and the project that has been not far short of miraculous, in my view. It has been a great thrill and has given me the confidence to make the next album the way we did these things at Christmas.

MUSICIAN: *So on the new record you'll take a freer approach?*

GILMOUR: I don't know. You are putting words into my mouth there. I said I want to do it with a band playing in a studio; how much work it'll take before we get to that point, I don't know. Now that I've got Rick and Nick rehabilitated and playing as well as they've ever played, and I've got these good, younger characters to help fill it out and do stuff with me, we can go in with a sense of fun and still get to the end product.

MUSICIAN: *Are you considering a concept record?*

GILMOUR: Concept, [*hippie accent*] a *con*cept record. Umm. I'm considering all sorts of things, and that's one of the things under consideration, yes. I've kind of got one, but I'm *certainly* not going to tell you about it. [*laughs*] It's premature for any announcements.

MUSICIAN: *You envision another tour?*

GILMOUR: Yeah. I don't think I could handle another tour doing the same material. And having moved from a Pink Floyd that did basically the newest album on all our old tours to a sort of greatest-hits show last time, I couldn't do that same show. And we did pick *all* the numbers we liked—more than we felt justified in doing—that I had sung or had major involvement in.

MUSICIAN: *If Nick decided he didn't want to do it, would you still do it as Pink Floyd?*

GILMOUR: Yeah, I think so. But I don't think that's a problem. I want Nick *and* Rick to do it. You can never quite tell what makes something have its magic, and the more you fuck with it, the more you get away from that. And I don't want to fuck with it. I *like* it as is. I liked it when Roger was there too, but that's outside my control. What I can do to maintain it is what I'm doing.

MUSICIAN: *"Money" is in 7/4 time. Initially, Roger's sense of song form was somewhat elastic.*

GILMOUR: He was always a big fan of John Lennon, and was very keen on changing rhythms in the middle of songs. And Syd. Syd used to sing a lyric till he finished it and then change. There are old songs of Syd's in which you can't count how many beats are in the bar—drummers would have hell trying to get through these things. I was always keen on changing from 4/4 time to a triplet 3 time, which were considered against each other. I don't know where Roger came up with the 7 time for "Money"; I've got the demo tape of it someplace. It's funny. It's just him and a double-tracked acoustic guitar.

On "Mother" the timing follows the words: "Mo-ther-do-you-think-they'll-drop-the-*bomb*?" How many beats is that? Nine. It was very, very difficult to get it to work. You can't [*mimes standard Floyd 4*]—there's no rhythm that carries on straight through like that. You've got to find a way of floating through it, which [session drummer] Jeff Porcaro did immediately.

MUSICIAN: *I had no idea session musicians played on* The Wall. *Nobody other than singers was credited.*

GILMOUR: Yeah, there were quite a few on there. There's a guy playing the Spanish guitar on "Is There Anybody Out There?"; I could play it with a leather pick but couldn't play it properly fingerstyle. I got a rhythm player in on "One of My Turns" because I couldn't think of a good part to play. [*laughs*] Lee Ritenour played that part on the last half of that, and we had a Hammond organ player, Freddie Mandell, on "In the

Flesh." Don't ask me why. [*laughs*] Who else was on there? Loads of singers, Toni Tennille and Bruce, from the Beach Boys.

From *Dark Side of the Moon* on we had backing singers and a sax player added. On the *Animals* tour we had singers, a sax and a guitar player. And on the *Wall* tour we had everyone doubled up. It's been moving at a steady progression since *Dark Side*.

I have no *pride* about this sort of thing. I've thought of parts that I can't play. If I can't play it I'll get someone else to. Why not? I don't worry about that stuff, really. You're trying to get something that's in your head out into other people's heads. Any way of doing that is cool with me. Like I say, the objective is to achieve what you're trying to do on tape, and if that involves using other musicians, then so be it. I have no shame about it whatsoever.

MUSICIAN: *What was challenging about setting Roger's lyrics to music? Did you work with him or bring together individual ideas?*

GILMOUR: Usually the music got written and the lyrics came afterwards. On "Wish You Were Here," he wrote the song to the rhythm of the intro. We changed things until they started sounding nice. "Dogs" had *so* many words, I physically couldn't get them all in. [We] just cut out two-thirds of his words, to make it possible rather than impossible.

We had few big arguments or disagreements. We argued over "Comfortably Numb" like *mad*. Really had a big fight, went on for ages. We recorded two versions. We took a drum fill from one take and had to cut the 16-track tape in half—we'd *edit* like this—run the razor along the middle and then insert a piece of tape one inch wide into the other piece to put a drum fill in on another track. That's what we used to call a window edit.

MUSICIAN: *What part of the song?*

GILMOUR: I can't remember. These things that seem so important at the time, I can hardly remember why one thought they *were*. [*laughs*] I doubt if I could even tell the difference these days. I mean, they were exactly the same tempo; one was just a little looser—I'd call it a sloppier version myself, and I liked it slightly tighter. Roger liked the looser one. They were both recorded to the same demo; we had a demo of it on a four-track tape. We would get a basic drum track. Then we'd have an acoustic guitar, a guitar and a vocal, and a drum machine pumping, and we'd just play away to that guide and record.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think your being the only vocalist in Pink Floyd works, and can work as a rule? A cynic could say that your highly processed vocals on "A New Machine" are an attempt to sound eccentric and shrill, perhaps like Waters at his more theatric, trying to create variety.*

GILMOUR: Would you say so? I don't know. I don't think so. I mean, I sang "Money," that's fairly strident. I sang *most* of the early stuff, on *Meddle*, *Dark Side of the Moon*, *Wish You Were Here*. It's never occurred to me to think about that. I think it's harder to sit through a whole album of Roger's voice than of mine. I always felt our two voices worked very well as counterpoints, but we don't have that option, so...

MUSICIAN: *So things are unpatchable between the two of you.*

GILMOUR: Yeah. You could safely say that.

MUSICIAN: *And even after Roger, Rick's not been reinstated as an equal.*

GILMOUR: No, Rick's in there. There are one or two legal things slightly unresolved from Rick's agreement when Roger threw him out in 1979, and there are other reasons of *his*. Mostly that he didn't want to get involved in the lawsuits, so he was not involved in the *risk*, in any possible loss financially, and consequently reaped less of the profits, which Nick and I took more of, as we were the ones who put *all* the money up to put the record and the tour together. The record com-

pany gave us an advance when we *delivered* the record, which covered all the recording costs. And then the tour was a *load* of money to put together under threat of lawsuit and the injunctions from Roger which could have stopped the whole thing. And if we couldn't get the receipts in from the shows, our accounts were shot down and we could have lost everything. A waste.

I'm sure we could have gotten someone else to put up the money, but anyone who puts up money wants a large slice of the profits. And I believed in it totally. I knew we were going to do well, so screw it.

MUSICIAN: *Your prospects are better now.*

GILMOUR: Yeah. As I'm not under any imminent threat of a lawsuit, it's not a problem.

MUSICIAN: *And Rick's not involved even after the disposal of those problems?*

GILMOUR: Well, I'm a really selfish person, and Rick is not realistically going to put in as much effort next time as I do. I'm very happy for Rick to be part of it all, but I can't see any point...it's still my life, and a *lot* of my life, and I didn't fight my way through all that lot just to start handing out larger chunks than they deserve to anyone who comes around. [*laughs*] If that sounds ruthless, it's not—it's just the hard reality. Rick is happy to sail off on his yacht and be part of this thing, and earn very good money out of it. He doesn't like shouldering responsibility, so it's a very good arrangement.

MUSICIAN: *You don't seem nostalgic for the days of the teenage rock group.*

GILMOUR: I've got some nostalgia for it, you know, but I'm *46*, it's a different era. There's lots of kids developing their own nostalgia for their things; there are people living that stuff. I mean, it's stupid to pretend. We're not a teenage pop group. We are a big old dinosaur, and it takes a lot of work to get it lumbering on its feet. It's not the same thing as it was. But I still love it.

THE GREAT RIG IN THE SKY

PHIL TAYLOR, GILMOUR's longtime tech, asserts a philosophy based on the shortest, cleanest signal path, via guitar, cable, amp, speakers. Well, almost. In Dave's case, the guitar is a '57 Strat reissue with EMG SA pickups, an EXG expander and an SPC mid boost. Onstage, things get complex thereafter. His pedalboard is a giant effects loop: Two Boss CS2 compressors and a Digital Metalizer, an Ibanez Tube Screamer, a Rat II, a t.c. electronics line driver and a Big Muff are all EQ'd separately by modified Boss GE7s. The distortion pedals get smoothed by a Boogie Studio 22 preamp. Next is an Alembic F2B preamp with an extra tube for lower impedance and a Summit Audio F100 EQ. The signal then goes to a modified Ernie Ball volume pedal, splits into t.c. 2290, Lexicon PCM70 and MXR Delay System delays and is summed with the dry signal. Two Hiwatt 100-watt heads with Mullard EL34s power two Celestion-loaded Marshall 4x12 bottoms and two Fane Crescendo-loaded Wem 4x12 tops—a stack on each side. The left power stack is chorused by a CE2 for fatness. Dave sets delay times and patches through a Custom Audio Electronics pedalboard, substantially modified by Taylor and Pete Cornish to include a high-end audio routing system with gold-plated relays.

At home Dave fiddles with a Zoom 9030, a GK 250ML, a '59 Fender Bassman, a Hiwatt SA212 and a Sansamp. He uses GHS Boomers. Oh yes, he also owns the first Fender Strat ever made—serial number 001.

[*cont'd from page 47*] times ahead. And there's nothing I can see on the horizon that'll help much; we're on our own.

NELSON: Everybody could make their own records. It doesn't cost an awful lot to print up a few. I had this dream once that you could release them like you would a newspaper, on a regular basis and quite cheaply. People could try them out and throw them away; they weren't precious so it didn't matter. But the industry has made people expect to pay money. If you start offering people cheap records, they'll think that the music on them is cheap; there's a psychology that goes with it.

WYATT: In my case, I don't think people are saying, "Well, we've got Diana Ross, I know what we need now...Robert Wyatt!" [*laughter*] But I don't want to say anything about my decisions which might cast aspersions on somebody else's. For example, I personally have had a very hard time with Columbia, but I also know they've looked after some musicians I admire very much. Maybe there's an inadequacy in me that I'm dumping on the record company. Look at the art industry, the film industry, the way people run supermarkets. There aren't a lot of virtuous organizations out there, really. Just the way things are done is pretty hair-raising.

You may have thought, "If he's struggling, how come he's got this nice house?" And I'll tell you. My wife knows a film actress, and after I had the accident, this film actress, in an amazing act of generosity, gave Alfie the money that she'd earned off a film so we could buy a flat. And it was with the money from that that we got this house. This isn't music money. Ronnie Scott and Pink Floyd and a few others also helped set us up. So a lot of what I've got is due to the generosity of particular people, and I'm just glad to have the opportunity to say thanks again.

This is indulgent of me, but one man was very nice. I'd only met him once, and at that time I'd had a blazing alcoholic row with him—I can't remember what side either of us was on or what the details were, but there was a lot about Pinochet and Chairman Mao in there. That was the only time I met him, and I was just a friend of a friend. When I broke my back, he was in America. He came to England to see me in the hospital and he said, "I want to put you in the best hospital money can buy. I'll take you anywhere and you won't have to worry about the bill." Isn't that amazing? It was Warren Beatty. Since he's the kind of man who often gets unsympathetic press, I just wanted to say there are some things about him that he himself would never talk about.

MUSICIAN: *If the music world is really so terrible, why carry on?*

NELSON: Musicians do complain about business and the rest of it, but...they're so damn lucky. Despite all the threats of bankruptcy and all the angst, I wouldn't change any of it, because I love what I'm doing and I couldn't do it any other way. I've got a life that would be a dream for some people, so there's very little room to complain. And I'm bloody useless at anything else. [*laughs*]

WYATT: My maths teacher at school told me once, "Look, if you don't pass maths O-level, you'll be coming back here, 'cause you won't get any work, you know." And I haven't had to go back to him yet. I've gone a long way without any exam results—I must be well over halfway by now. And I'm proud of that; it's pure vanity.

NELSON: That's like the day I left my day job. The boss said, "Now, about this pop business, Bill... [*laughter*] it's rather flaky, you know. I don't want to put you off or anything, I'm wishing you all the best, but your job's always here for you if you have to come back." I got outside that door and I went: "*Yeah*!" And I've never gone back. Not even to give them any autographs.

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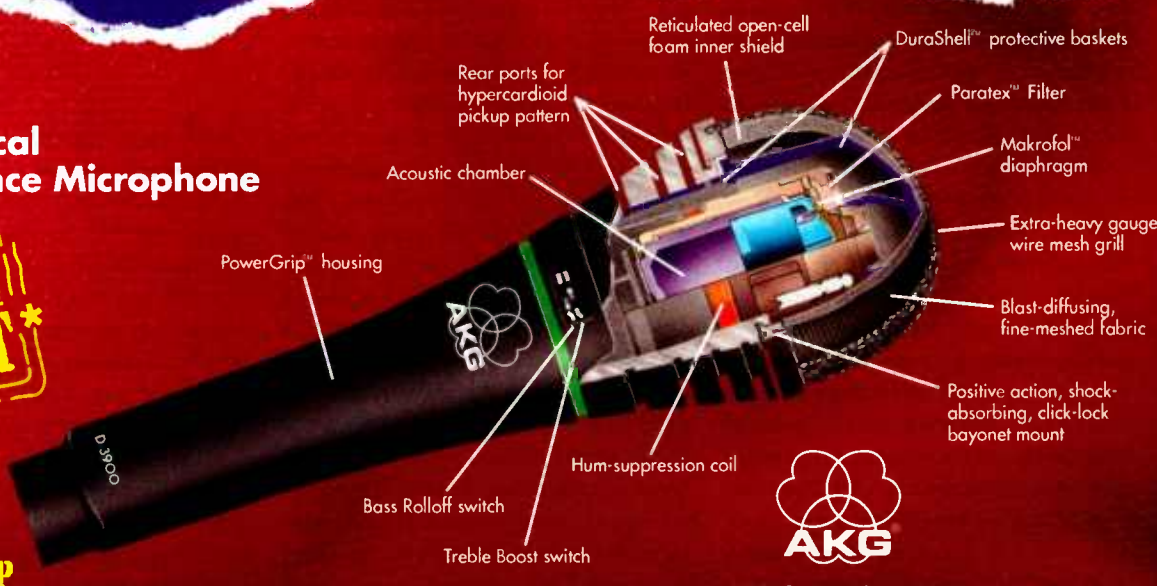

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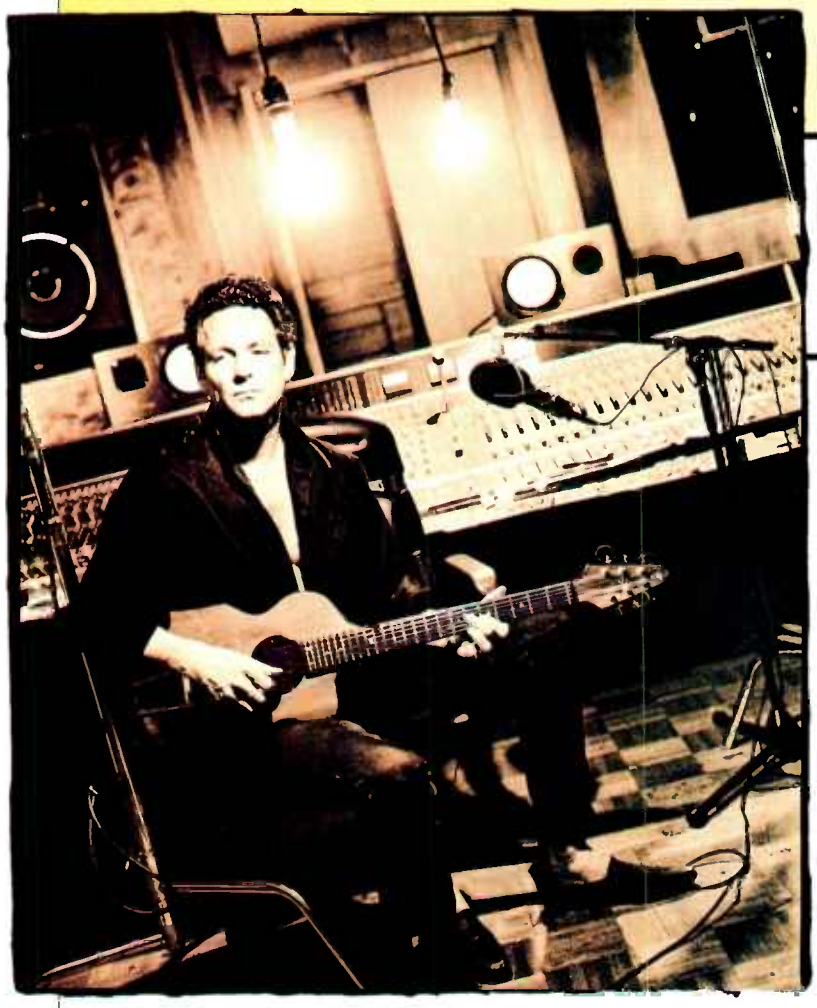


Lindsey Buckingham gets tight with tone

by ALAN DI PERNA

"I WANTED TO ASSERT THE GUITAR MORE THAN I'D BEEN DOING IN THE PAST." COMFORTABLY SEATED IN HIS GUITAR-LITTERED HOME STUDIO, LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM IS DESCRIBING THE GAME PLAN FOR HIS NEW ALBUM *OUT OF THE CRADLE*. IN THIS ROOM, HIGH ON A BEL AIR HILLSIDE, HE'S BEEN WORKING ON IT SINCE LEAVING FLEETWOOD MAC IN 1987. HIS LONGTIME CO-PRODUCER RICHARD DASHUT SITS OPPOSITE HIS OLD FRIEND AS HE CARRIES ON EXPLAINING HIS DESIRE TO "FLAUNT THE GUITAR THIS TIME."

UH-OH. WHEN MOST GUITARISTS START TALKING like this, it's a sure prelude to bombastic power chords and overinflated leads. But on *Out of the Cradle*, Buckingham went in the opposite direction: The result is an album full of subtle, spiky guitar textures that draw listeners in rather than blasting them out. Buckingham and Dashut have successfully snubbed the "ambience is next to godliness" rule that governs modern record making.

"We did a lot of mono recording of instruments, instead of stereo spreads," Buckingham elaborates. "Some arrangements are fairly dense. Mono made it possible to have a series of contained points going from left to right, which made it easier to put more parts in the songs and still have them clean and defined."

And nearly 95 to 98 percent of the guitars on the album were recorded direct—even the distorted ones. Some of Buckingham's stinging solo tones pose a challenge to the received wisdom that the only way to get a good, raunchy lead sound is with close and ambient mikes on an amp.

"With an amp in a room, you've got acoustic reverberations and delays to deal with," Dashut explains. "They just fill up space in the track. The way Lindsey works, a lot of parts make up the whole. And if we're to hear all those parts, there can't be a huge room guitar washing over the spectrum. The trick was to get a distorted sound with balls, but more contained."

The most important technique used to achieve the album's unique, concise guitar timbres was analog tape varispeeding. Buckingham is a VSO fiend from way back, and uses it on backing vocals and drums as well as guitar. "It's a voicing tool," he says, "a way of refining a sound—the harmonics of it—so it sits right in the track. It's like another version of EQ."

The actual technique is pretty obvious, says Lindsey: "You just slow the tape down to where you think it's going to sound right. Then you just play to the slowed-down tape; you've got to transpose, of course. After that, you take it back up to normal speed and see how it sounds. It's a real [*cont'd on page 71*]

PHOTOGRAPH: REISIG AND TAYLOR / OUTLINE
GROOMING: KENDRA RICHARDS / CELESTINE

The New Recording Formats

The battle for digital domination

by CHRIS GILL

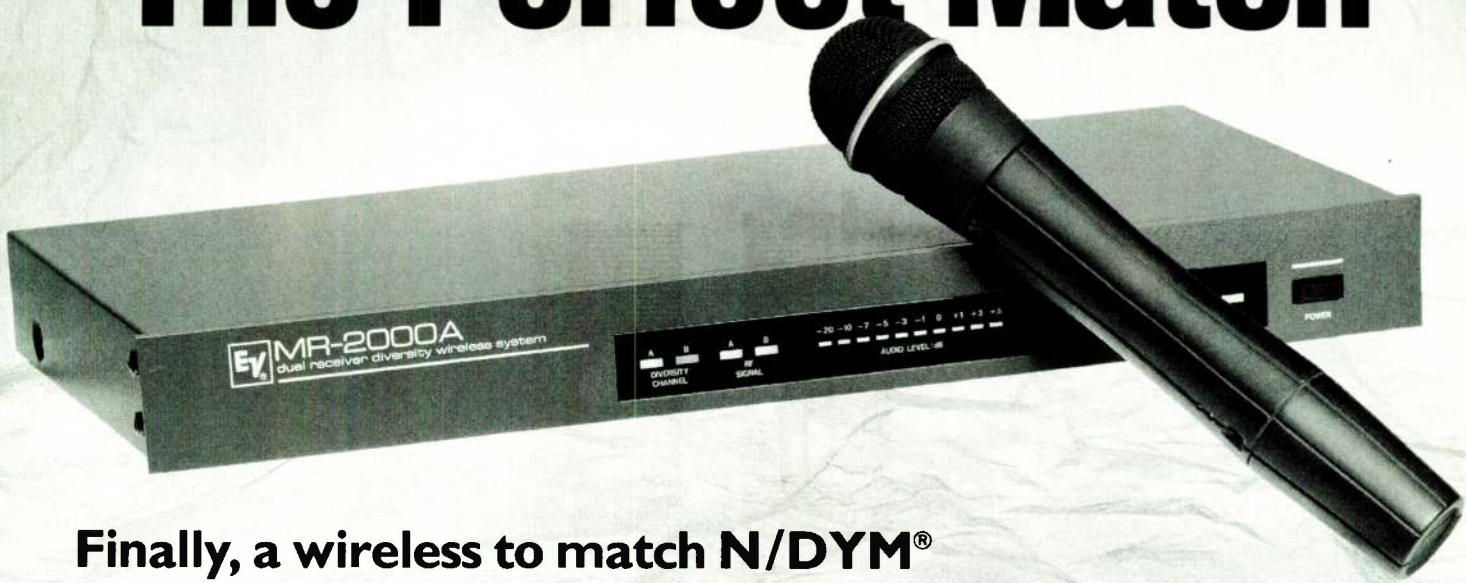
NOW THAT DIGITAL MULTITRACK RECORDERS COST ABOUT THE SAME AS THEIR ANALOG COUNTERPARTS, MUSICIANS ARE CONSIDERING GOING DIGITAL IN THEIR HOME STUDIOS. BUT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS SEVERAL NEW DIGITAL FORMATS HAVE EMERGED, SHIFTING THE DECISION FROM A SIMPLE CHOICE BETWEEN ANALOG OR DIGITAL TO WHICH NEW FORMAT TO CHOOSE. IF YOU COUNT CONSUMER FORMATS, THERE WILL SOON BE SEVEN DIFFERENT MEDIA FOR digital recording—hard disks, DAT, S-VHS tape, 8mm tape, DCC, MiniDisc and CD. While each looks promising, who wants to spend the price of a fully loaded Yugo on something that could go the way of eight-track tape?

The most anticipated digital multitrack recorder is the **ALESIS** ADAT. With eight tracks of digital recording for $3995, it's the recorder that may bring digital multitrack to the masses. The optional BRC controller ($1995) can link up to 16 ADATs and control up to 128 tracks from one location; musicians can have a 32-track digital system for less than $18,000. The ADAT has a rotary-head design like a DAT recorder or VCR and records 40 minutes of material on a standard S-VHS tape. The biggest threat to Alesis will likely come from the company that put multitrack in musicians' homes in the first place. **TASCAM**'s digital unit is an eight-track that records 60 minutes of material on an 8mm videotape. Like the ADAT, Tascam's machine uses a rotary head, but features an industrial-grade transport to handle tape shuttling. They promise a competitive price.

Digital hard disk recording received a lot of attention over the past two years. More than 40 different disk recorders flood the market, including computer-based systems like **DIGIDESIGN**'s Sound Tools and Pro Tools and stand-alone systems like **KORG**'s SoundLink and **ROLAND**'s DM-80. With their random-access design, hard disk recorders provide unmatched editing power: You can cut, copy, paste and rearrange tracks using functions similar to those on a MIDI sequencer. Some systems allow you to speed up or slow the tempo without changing pitch, so you can easily make guitar solos as fast as Yngwie Malmsteen's. But there are drawbacks—these babies are expensive. By the time you've put together a system including the computer, you can count on spending over $10,000; the storage and backup medium is also expensive. [*cont'd on page 70*]

 PHOTOGRAPH: WILLIAM DUKE

The Perfect Match



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HOME ALONE WITH They Might Be Giants

Getting the hothouse effect

by PETER CRONIN

HOME STUDIOS MAY BE ALL THE RAGE THESE DAYS, BUT FOR JOHN FLANSBERG AND JOHN LINNELL, THE CONCEPT GOES WAY BACK. "EVEN EARLY ON WE WERE BOTH INTERESTED IN TAPE RECORDING," SAYS SINGER/ACCORDIONIST LINNELL. "WHEN I WAS A KID THE BEST I COULD DO WAS TO OVERDUB BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MY LITTLE BROKEN CASSETTE DECK AND MY SISTER'S LITTLE broken cassette deck. Flansberg was the kid who actually had a two-track that did the same thing—that was sophisticated back then." The two exchanged songs by mail before hooking up on Manhattan's Lower East Side in the early '80s and mutating into They Might Be Giants. Their twisted vignettes and super-nerd presence gained them a cult following and eventually a major label deal. But their music retains what Flansberg calls the "hothouse" quality of the bedroom studio. Sitting in the sea of processors, wires and floppy disks that doubles as his apartment, he says, "If you do home recording and get used to writing that way, the songs never get that audience-tested, wind-tunnel aspect. Our stuff is not good-time rock 'n' roll; it's a more personal, hide-in-your-room kind of thing."

Flansberg's room is dominated by a **MACINTOSH** IICI loaded with **MARK OF THE UNICORN**'s Performer sequencing software with a 15" Radius monitor. "I recommend the big screen," he says. "You really move fast if you can open up a lot of windows and see everything going on, and it's black & white so it's not too expensive." All that digital info is fed through an **OPCODE** Studio 3 and then over to an **OTARI** MX5050 eight-track. TMBG own two Otaris and take them both on the road, one for onstage backing tracks and the other for a spare. "They're tanks," says Flansberg, "but besides being durable they're gourmet decks with tremendous transparency and headroom."

The other key piece of gear in their setups is the **CASIO** FZ1 sampling keyboard; they're obsessed with that technology. "You can transport fragile musical ideas easily into a big studio," Flansberg says, playing one of the band's trademark cheesy sax samples. "'Spider,' from our new album, is a good example. No engineer would let us record vocals that way because technically they're distorted. It's not a good recording, but it's got character." The vocals on "Dig My Grave"

 PHOTOGRAPHS: SYLVIA PLACHY

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went through a rackmount **CHANDLER** Tube Driver in Linnell's studio/apartment down the street. "I also put my accordion through distortion effects," he says; "that *always* works."

In the hands of an average producer the songs might drown in their own cleverness, but the sonic twists that grow out of They Might Be Giants' homegrown approach keep them afloat. "When we started all we had for a drummer was an early Dr. Rhythm," says Flansberg, "and at one point we replaced all the kick sounds on the machine by thumping a microphone with our thumb. That was the best kick we could get; it sounded like 'buff,' but at least it made the speaker move." Four releases later, the pair are at home in a pro facility or their living room, but there are times when there's no place like home. "When you do a demo there's often one element you can tell is the best secret part of the song," Flansberg says, "and we go to great pains to preserve that in the studio. Sometimes I think there's a special angel that looks over home recording enthusiasts."

NEW FORMATS

[*cont'd from page 66*] And as anyone who uses a computer learns the hard way, hard disks are unreliable. It's not a question of *if* a disk will crash, but *when*.

Magneto-optical recorders offer the same benefits as hard disks, but are more portable, with a higher memory capacity and, as there's no contact between a head and the medium, are much higher-reliability. They're also much more expensive. The **AKAI** DD1000 is one of the few magneto-optical recorders available, but the market is sure to become crowded as prices drop. Experts feel that lower-priced magneto-optical recorders will eliminate hard disks from the market.

Several digital formats exist on the consumer level. While these currently only provide two-track, stereo capability, some may be configured into multitrack products for home and project studios in the future.

PHILIPS and **MATSUSHITA** (Panasonic, Technics) worked together to develop the Digital Compact Cassette (DCC), which promises to bridge the gap between analog and digital by allowing users to play analog cassettes on the same system used to record and play DCCs. Home, portable and automotive units will be available this fall. But because the format uses data compression to fit large amounts of digital data onto a cassette, professionals are cynical about DCC's sound. Despite this, the music industry supports DCC and promises to deliver over 500 pre-recorded titles when the units hit the market.

While DCC may win with consumers, **SONY** hopes their Mini Disc format will dominate. Two kinds will be available—prerecorded discs that look like a small CD encased in a cartridge, and recordables that look like a smaller version of a 3.5" floppy. They use magneto-optical technology and data compression to fit large amounts of audio data on a small medium. It offers the benefits of CD, including quick random access of material and up to 74 minutes of playback. With units smaller and more shock-resistant than CD players, Sony plans to market the format to the people who buy Walkmans and car stereos. Sony will deliver over 500 pre-recorded titles when the units ship this fall. Sony is also developing products based on Mini Disc technology for pro applications.

Early this year the first CD recorders became available from **DENON, YAMAHA, CARVER** and **MARANTZ**. The least expensive model, Marantz's CDR600, retails for around $7500. Because CD recorders utilize write-once discs ($30 each), they're most useful for pro applications like storing masters or archiving old recordings. But like everything else, the price of this technology is dropping, and it may not be long before low-priced consumer CD recorders become available.

Now a staple of most studios, DAT maintains its appeal with pros though it never caught on with consumers. It seemed doomed from the start with protests from the music industry and legal battles in Congress, but the units enjoy steady sales. Companies building DATs will still manufacture and support pro units, but seem to have given up on pushing the format to the consumer.

And don't give up on analog. Advances like Dolby S allow analog decks to provide sound quality to rival digital. Many engineers, producers and musicians, particularly guitarists, still prefer the sound of an analog recording. So while it looks like the final product to reach consumers will arrive in a digital format, there's a good chance that analog and digital technology will continue to coexist in studios. There's even talk about systems that combine analog and digital technology.

It's possible that all these formats may enjoy longevity. But you can bet a stack of eight-track tapes that there will be casualties in the war for digital domination, particularly on the consumer level. After all, who wants to own five different copies of Meat Loaf's *Bat Out Of Hell*?

[*cont'd from page 65*] trial-and-error thing."

Varispeeding accounts for some 40 percent of the guitar sounds on the record, Buckingham estimates: "On 'Countdown' a lot of rhythm stuff was [recorded with tape speed] taken down, in order to come up more crystalline. And the lead sound is a Tele recorded through a fuzz preamp and VSOed. The idea was to make it come up like a violin sound. When [engineer] Chris Lord-Alge was mixing that he kept trying to fatten it up. I told him, 'No, it's gotta sting like a bee.'"

The dulcimer-like timbres in the intro to "Soul Drifter" were made with several tracks of VSOed guitars. "The ascending line"—Lindsey sings the riff—"that's two guitars in octaves. Then there's a [muted] 3/4-time pattern that goes across that."

Buckingham says VSOing produces results very much like Nashville tuning—"that high, harpsichord type of sound." While there are no Nashville-tuned guitars on the disc, there are a few open-G, -E and dropped-D tunings. There's also one Lindsey invented and dubbed his "oriental" tuning: "We put all high E and B strings on my Strat and tuned them all a half-step or whole-step apart. So you get this...[he imitates the sound of a sitar's sympathetic strings]. You can get these nice open things going with it, like in the verses of 'This Is the Time.'"

With all this trickery, it's no wonder that listeners start hearing things as they ain't. "A guy in New York was swearing he was hearing all these effects," Buckingham recounts. "He was saying, 'Yeah, you used a harmonizer on there.' But I didn't use any of that stuff. I had to tell him, 'I hate to burst your bubble, but it's just a different approach to recording.'"

OUT OF THE CATALOG

Onstage, LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM has used a custom Rick Turner guitar for years. On *Out of the Cradle* he turned elsewhere: to a '63 Fender Strat, a Tele, a Steinberger, an Ovation and a nylon-string Takamine; he uses Martin Marquis on acoustics and D'Addarios on electrics. A Groove Tube Studio Series Tube Preamp proved indispensable in recording D.I. guitar sounds through a Neotek console. All of the tape-speed manipulation happened on an analog Otari 24-track synced to a Sony 3324 digital multitrack. On the rare occasions when an amp was used, it was a MESA/Boogie. Two old Fairlights (Series I and II) provided other sounds. Mikes were Neumann U47s, U87s and a Sennheiser dynamic.

MIX AND MATCH

TASCAM MM-200 STEREO KEYBOARD MIXER

IF YOU'RE THE proud parent of a growing MIDI-based studio, you know the problem. Keyboards and modules, drum machines and processors run in stereo, and between MIDI and audio ins and outs, mixer channels disappear faster than the song idea you forgot while you were looking for a channel to record it on. Tascam designed the MM-200 Mixer with this problem in mind, and threw in stuff that makes this $799 unit work hard for your money.

Home recordists and working keyboardists should find the MM-200 practical for routing stereo instruments and effects into one convenient place. With two-band sweepable EQ on each channel, BBE aural enhancement on the stereo buss mix (a nice plus), stereo effect sends and a MIDI patch bay for quick keyboard routing and re-routing, the MM-200 can do a lot to beef up sound while it cleans up the mess.

I hooked the stereo outs to the buss ins of my own overcrowded-mess-of-a-mixer. From there I used the MM-200's first four channels for stereo keyboards and effects, opening up eight mono channels I could then dedicate back to my eight-track recorder. In a manual written in their usual broken English, Tascam boasts unusually high gain available from the trim control of any of the channels, and they're not kidding: An un-preamped Strat had more than enough volume to stand up to any mix, and was about the quietest this buzz-bomb of a guitar ever sounded.

The four 1/4" effects-send jacks on the rear panel can work as conventional mono sends or as two pairs of stereo sends; this is very useful with "true stereo" signal processors where inputs are fed to two internal DSPs instead of being summed to one. By treating both sides of a stereo signal with different delays, I was able to get some incredible guitar and vocal effects. An Effects Mode switch on each channel tells the mixer whether your inputs are being summed to mono or running in stereo.

The "BBE Professional" circuitry inside the unit is a pleasant surprise. Consisting of an on/off switch and a "definition" control, the circuit adds an "aural excitement" to the mixer's stereo buss. During a mixdown, I added this to sequences running through the MM-200 and got a pronounced high end without the harshness that would have resulted with EQ; it compensated nicely for the degradation associated with the final mix to cassette. The unit's 4-in/8-thru MIDI patchbay on the rear panel makes it easy to, say, hardwire three or four keyboard modules into a rack with all MIDI and audio ins and outs in one easy-to-reach location, saving the rack-space and expense of a separate MIDI mixer.

Speaking of rack spaces, the MM-200 takes up only three—another advantage over mixers with comparable features. Tascam's less expensive MM-100 ($599) has all the workhorse capabilities of the 200 but without BBE circuitry and stereo sends. PETER CRONIN

MACKIE CR 1604

WHEN THE HOME recording boom began several years ago, the item most likely to put a budget over the edge was a mixer; even a modest unit capable of professional results *began* around $10,000. And as bells, whistles and boxes fleshed out home systems, the need for extra inputs became a costly priority. At $1099, Greg Mackie's intelligently designed, solidly built CR 1604 mixer is a viable alternative: It has 16 channels, with the first six inputs switchable between balanced 1/4" line and XLR mike inputs (with phantom power). The remaining channels accept unbalanced 1/4" line only. The feel of the faders is surprisingly nice for a mixer of this size. Center detents are on all faders and pots, and there's even an overload light for each channel.

The channels can be routed to any of four output busses, and the path design is unique in that the mute switch can transfer from one stereo buss to another; there is no sub-master grouping. The constant-power pan pots maintain level when their stereo field position is changed. There's also a solo buss—nice for a low-cost mixer. A clever approach to gain control places the trims at the rear of the unit; the concept is to set unity gain for all channels at once, with the faders at center detent. The trims have specific settings for +4db and -10db. The mixer has plenty of headroom and still manages to be quieter than most mixers 10 times the price. The master output level is displayed on a 10-segment LED meter.

There are seven aux sends per channel (one pre-fader and -EQ for monitor and cue applications, the rest post), with any four available at a time. Four stereo returns also work as dual mono, adding eight inputs to the stereo mix. The three-band, fixed-frequency EQ has shelving on the high and low ends; the ranges are 1 kHz, 2.5 kHz and 80Hz. Unfortunately, there's no EQ defeat switch, but there are inserts on the first eight channels if you need to add more powerful filters or outboard effects.

The 1604 has a rugged metal case and sealed pots. A "Rotopod" feature allows the unit to be configured from tabletop to rackmount (rack ears are included). The XLR-10 accessory adds 10 mike inputs, and the MixerMixer links three 1604s, for a total of 48 inputs. BILL SEERY

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MODULAR THINKING

PROTEUS/3 WORLD SOUND MODULE: SOUNDS SPANNING THE GLOBE

E-MU GOES INTERNATIONAL with the new Proteus/3. From bagpipes to didjeridu, all the instruments in this "World Sound Module" are 16-bit samples from E-mu's top-of-the-line Emulator III sampler. With 32-voice polyphony, 16-channel, multi-timbral capability and 191 preset sounds, the architecture of the Proteus/3 is similar to other Proteus models; 128 of these presets are permanently stored in ROM, with 64 in RAM for those who like to create their own. Computer owners will be pleased to hear that most of the editor/librarian software for earlier Proteus models will be compatible with the Proteus/3. Despite the spartan appearance of this unit's front panel (four buttons, a data-entry knob and a master volume), the interface is well-designed and easy to navigate.

As with earlier Proteus models, each Proteus/3 preset contains two instruments: primary and secondary. These instruments contain one or more samples that are the foundation for each preset. The scope of the Proteus/3 instruments is huge; in addition to traditional ethnic sounds, there are several instruments consisting of single-cycle and harmonic waveforms that produce unexpected results when combined with the more traditional instruments. The overall quality of the samples was acceptable despite noticeable split points on some instruments.

Volume, panning, tuning, sample start time, direction and key range are independently changeable for each instrument within a preset. Each instrument also has a five-stage envelope generator. The Proteus/3 shines when it comes to modulations and real-time control, offering 33 possible destinations for keyboard and velocity modulation and 24 destinations for real-time controllers; a total of 14 modulations are allowed per preset.

If you're after huge layered sounds, the Proteus/3 won't disappoint. Any preset can be "linked" with up to three others to create immense combinations—the only drawback to linking is that the polyphony of the sound is reduced. MIDI implementation on the Proteus/3 is adequate, though the manual does not include a standard MIDI implementation chart. With six outputs (four of which can be used as effects sends and returns), the Proteus/3 seems designed primarily for the studio; the plastic case has a cheap feel and may not stand road abuse.

More standard sounds—pianos, strings, horns, choirs—are absent, but at $999 the Proteus/3 is a luxury, an extra spice in the mix.

ROB DWECK

ROLAND SC-55 SOUND CANVAS: SONIC BREAD AND BUTTER

THIS 16-PART multi-timbral synth module is housed in a half-rack case and has only a stereo pair of RCA jacks for output connections. While these two features may lead you to believe that the unit is less than "pro," some time spent with the Sound Canvas shows that appearances can be deceiving.

The SC-55's econo-box exterior conceals a digital powerhouse that creates sounds by playing back samples stored in internal memory. This method provides the most realistic imitative sounds of any type of synthesis. Even if you never go beyond the unit's first level of programming (called Capital Instruments in Rolandspeak), there are 128 instruments to choose from, including the bread-and-butter sounds: good-sounding acoustic pianos, strings, basses, brass. In addition, there are seven Drum Sets with 61 sounds each and a fun Special Effects set containing a variety of longer sampled sound effects. Deeper in the memory you'll find Variation Instruments and a bank of MT-32 emulation patches, bringing the total library to more than 300 sounds.

The SC-55's sound engine is multiplied into 16 "Parts." Each acts as a separate synth, with each Part's control of volume, pan, MIDI receive channel, reverb depth and chorus addressed individually from the tracks of your sequencer. If you're syncing your sequencer to a four-track recorder, for example, you can control up to 19 tracks of music with no bouncing at all. More unexpected features: built-in programmable digital effects including six reverbs, two delays, chorus, flange or doubling; a remote control; a large LCD to show which parts are playing with a bar graph display. By sending two or more Parts of the SC-55 to the same MIDI channel and using the Key Range parameter to create separate zones for two or three Instruments, you can get much more mileage out of 16 MIDI channels.

Roland just released a new version of the Sound Canvas, the tabletop SC-155, which adds a band of faders for sending MIDI control messages in real time, allowing you to mix "on the fly." Both units work hand-in-hand with the companion Sound Brush, an easy-to-use, 3.5" floppy disk–driven MIDI song file player. All conform to Roland's new GS format. But if you're already fluent on a particular sequencer and just in the market for more quality sounds at a good price, the $795 Sound Canvas is a smart way to go.

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The true story behind Burge's best-selling Perfect Pitch method

"How I discovered the secret to Perfect Pitch"

A perfect ear for music means knowing how to listen.

by David L. Burge

It all started in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry.

I was practicing the piano about five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. But somehow Linda always seemed to have an edge which made her the star performer of our school.

It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Then one day I ran into Sheryl, Linda's best friend. She bragged on and on about Linda, adding fuel to my fire. "You could *never* be like Linda," she taunted. "*Linda's* got *Perfect Pitch*."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl told me all about Linda's *uncanny* abilities: how she could name tones and chords—*just by ear*; how she could sing tones on pitch—*from sheer memory*; and how she could play songs after merely *hearing* them on the radio!

My heart sank. *Her fantastic ear is the key to her success* I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

Then I doubted it all. How could she *possibly* know F# or B♭ just by *listening*? An ear like that would give mastery of the entire musical language!

It bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch? I finally got the nerve and asked her if the rumors were true.

"Yes," Linda nodded to me aloofly.

Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied cheerfully.

I couldn't wait to make her eat her words...

My plan was ingeniously simple:

I picked a moment when Linda least suspected. Then I boldly challenged her to name tones for me—*by ear*.

I made sure she had not been playing any music. I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made certain other classmates could not help her. Everything was just right so I could expose her claims as a ridiculous joke.

Nervously, I plotted my testing strategy. Linda seemed serene. With silent apprehension I selected a tone: F#. (She'll *never* guess F#!)

I had barely touched the key. "F#," she said.

I was astonished.

I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. *Instantly* she announced the correct pitch. I played more and more tones here and there on the keyboard, and each time she knew the pitch —without effort. She was SO amazing—she could identify tones as easily as colors!

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up.

Quickly she sang the proper pitch. I made her sing more tones (trying hard to make them increasingly difficult), but still she sang every one perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "*How in the world do you do it?*" I blurted.

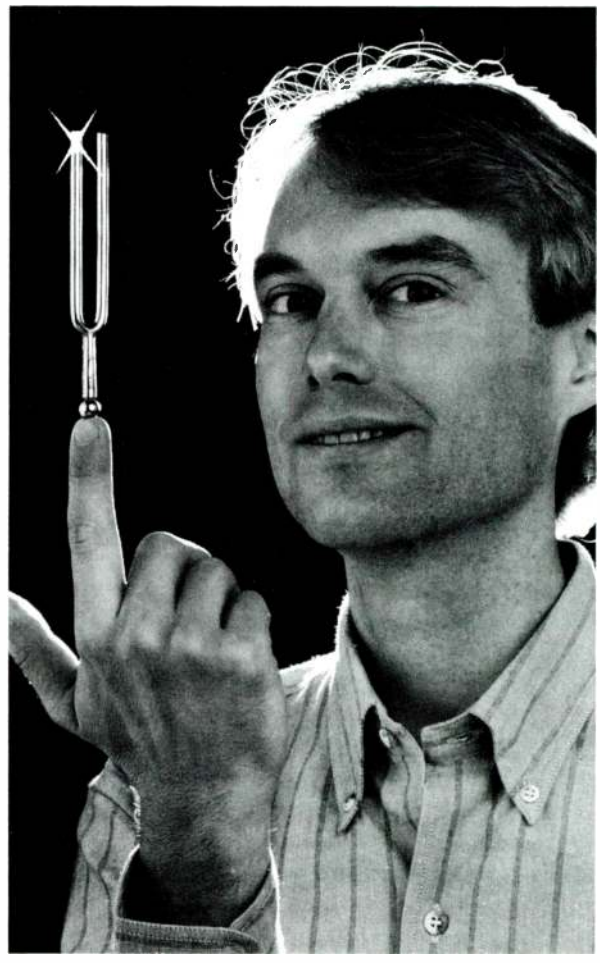
"I don't know," she sighed. And to my dismay that was as much as I could get out of her!

The reality of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet I now knew that Perfect Pitch is real.

I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she do it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* identify tones by ear?

It dawned on me that most musicians can't tell the sound of C from C#, or the key of A major from F major—like artists who brush painting after painting without knowing green from turquoise. It seemed odd and contradictory.



I found myself even more mystified than before. Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my brothers and sisters into playing tones for me so I could guess each pitch by ear. Most every attempt failed miserably.

I tried day after day to learn the tones. I tried playing them *over* and *over* in order to memorize them. I tried to feel the "highness" or "lowness" of each pitch.

But nothing worked. I just could not recognize the tones by ear. It was hopeless.

After weeks in vain, I finally gave up. Linda's gift was indeed extraordinary. But for me, it was out of reach.

Then came the realization...

It was like a miracle. Once I had stopped *straining* my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

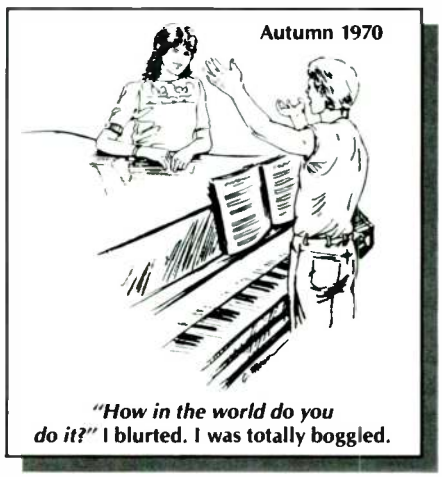
I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors—but colors of *pitch*. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever "let go" —and just *listened*—to discover these subtle differences in the sounds.

Soon I could name tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way—while B♭ has a different quality. It was as easy as seeing red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally envision music—and identify tones, chords, and keys at will—*by listening for these pitch colors.*

I became convinced that *anyone* could gain Perfect Pitch by learning how to unlock this simple secret of "color hearing."

When I told my friend Ann that *she* could have Perfect Pitch, she laughed. "You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted.



"How in the world do you do it?" **I blurted. I was totally boggled.**

"You don't understand what Perfect Pitch *is*," I explained. "It's easy!"

I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she could hear the colors too. Soon she also had Perfect Pitch. We became instant celebrities; everyone was amazed.

As I continued with piano, my Perfect Pitch allowed me to progress faster than I ever thought possible. (I would later *skip over* required college courses.) Perfect Pitch made *everything* easier—performing, composing, arranging, sight-reading, transposing, improvising—and it skyrocketed my enjoyment as well. Music is definitely a *hearing* art.

Oh yes, and as for Linda—well, time found us at the end of our senior year of high school, with my *final chance* to outdo her.

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Research references: *A study to determine the effectiveness of the David L. Burge technique for development of Perfect Pitch*, M. E. Nering (1991), The University of Calgary; *An experimental investigation of the effectiveness of training on absolute pitch in adult musicians*, M. A. Rush (1989), The Ohio State University

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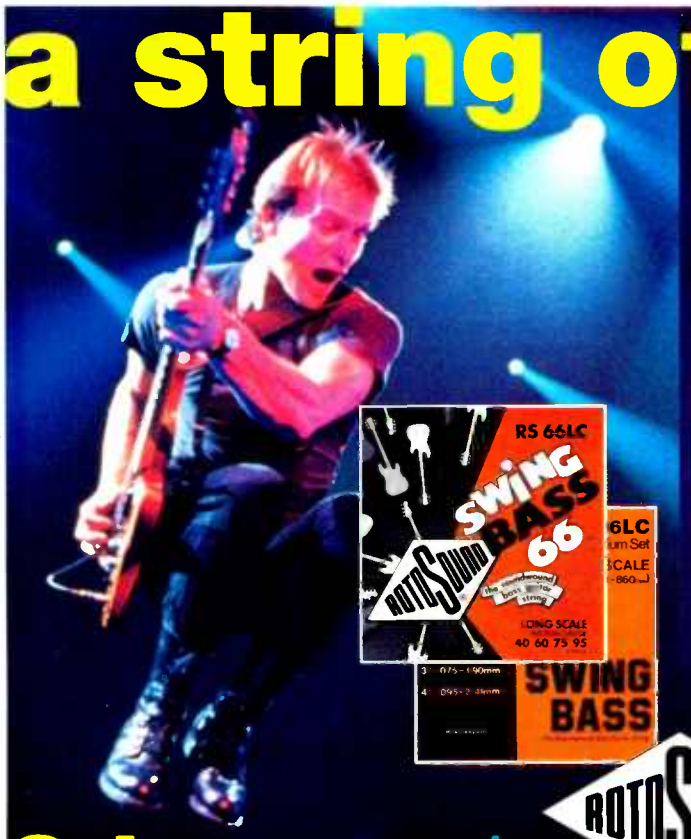

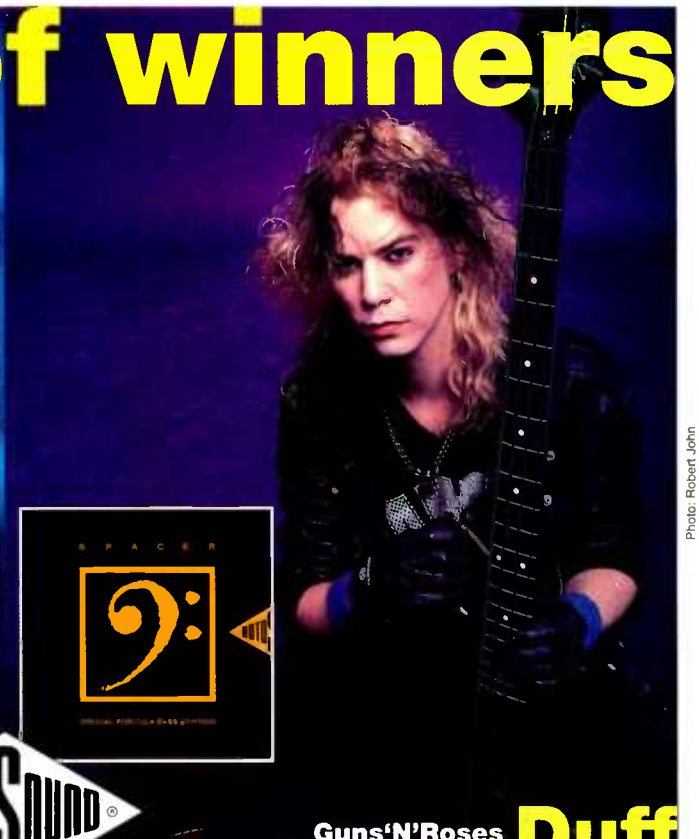

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WORKING MUSICIAN

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE * AUGUST 1992

Bass

LIVING COLOUR'S SAVING BASS

Doug Wimbish mixes the color back in

by MATT RESNICOFF

"WE'RE LIKE A BIG DEMO *TAPE*," Doug Wimbish sang with his trio Tackhead five years ago, "nobody will *sign* us...." During the set, some of his guitarist friends made cameos: Joe Satriani, in New York for a few days, came up to jam on "All Along the Watchtower," and Vernon Reid did "Stormy Weather." Wimbish slapped and popped, ran distorted bass leads up everyone's behind and summarily rocked the house. Joe and Vernon went on to do their thing, hit big, and Tackhead kept on keeping on.

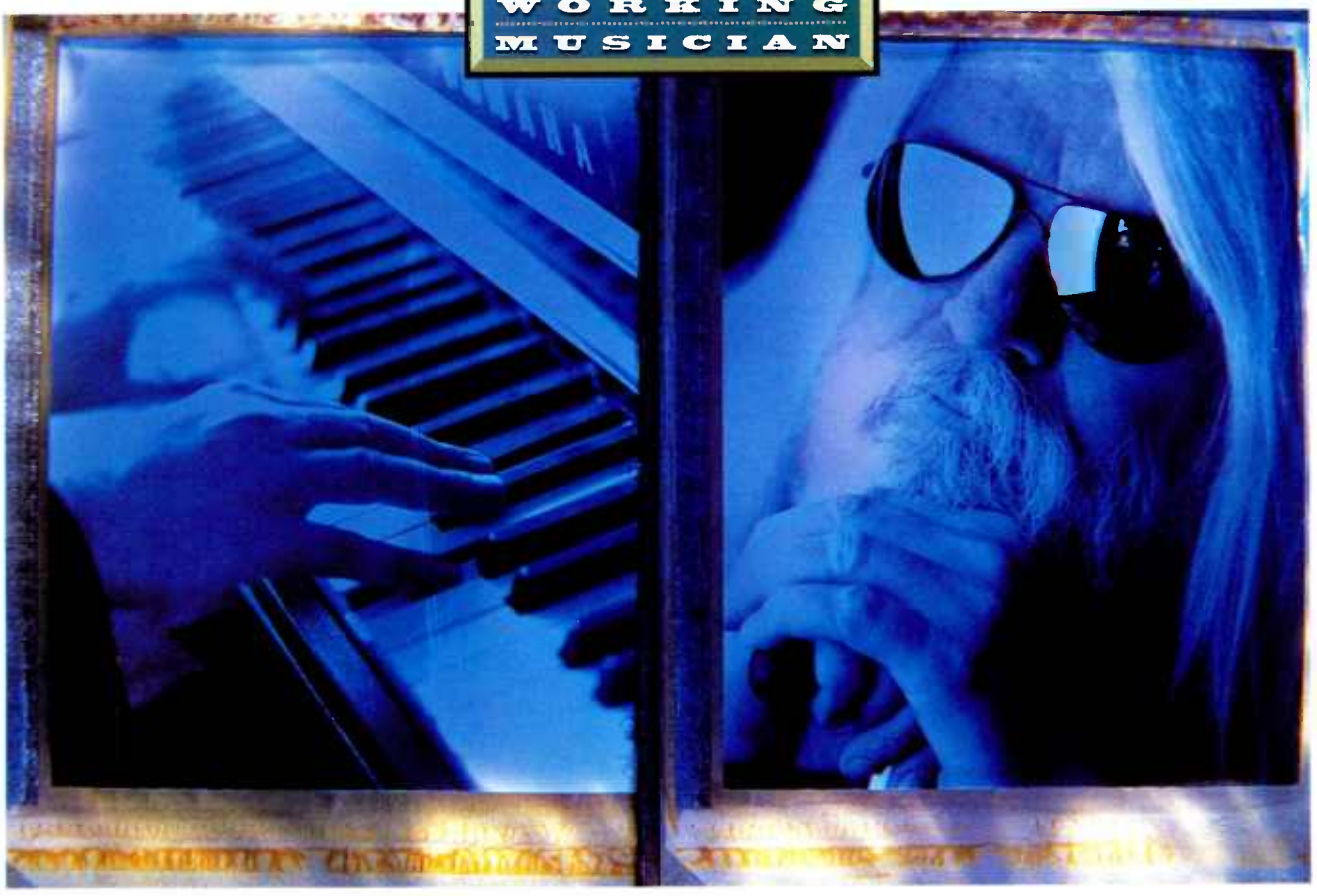
And so on it went. The bassist who bottomed the house rap band for Sugar Hill Records, this space-funk terror, could only get his group over on an indie level, so he had to settle for sideman gigs with Mick Jagger, Jeff Beck, George Clinton, Steve Winwood and Jan Hammer.

It turns out that Vernon was showing up at the Tackhead gigs early in the afternoon, long before the bandleader, wondering where he was going to plug in to do his thing. They would hang at Doug's loft on 14th Street, hook up at Funkadelic gigs, jam with Steve Coleman and Cassandra Wilson—exploring, perfecting and dismantling many styles. Thereby came the two calls to Doug's house one week several months ago: Bruce Springsteen, and Reid to pitch the newly bassless Living Colour. Wimbish was overseas, doing sessions and playing with old friend Adrian Sherwood when he took up Colour drummer Will Calhoun's pitch over lunch in London.

The band, suffering a bit from limp production and commercial streamlining, couldn't have roped a better bassist at a better time. Earnest, hyperbolic and hilarious, he makes the instrument howl; he sees few delineations between bass and the big picture, and even fewer between propriety and wild invention. If recording a hip-hop scratch means rubbing a drinking glass on the strings between verses, Wimbish is ready. "Stuff I'm doing with Adrian you would never hear on pop radio, ever," he says. "We might do a record, just myself and him. I'll program drums, make all the guitar sounds with fuzz-bass, use string sounds on pedals, some chords and a bassline; you can build a whole track through effects that represent a beat."

In more mainstream work with the Jaggers and Annie Lennoxes, Wimbish relegates his unorthodox bass behavior to punctuative, percussive highlighting. The rehearsals with Living Colour are allowing him to rediscover and extend ideas he only began exploring in Tackhead. A new 12-string bass—four groups of three strings—is undergoing major retuning experiments; a new song called "Walls" is based on echo, his bassline a psychotic trance of digital regeneration. Wimbish likes pedals better than high-tech gear, though he uses both, and he's got 10 fingers everywhere: [*cont'd on page 84*]

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT LEWIS



Keys

LEON RUSSELL GOES OUT ON TWO LIMBS

The right hand knoweth what the left hand do

by RICK MATTINGLY

SITTING IN THE STUDIO AT HIS NASHville home, Leon Russell recalls a show he played when Miles Davis was on the bill. "His keyboard player said he didn't like to play anything he'd played before. He always wanted to play something different. Well, that's kind of a religious desire. That's like waking up one morning and speaking fluent French. Practice in private and play what you know in public. It upsets my balance to hear somebody looking for stuff in front of me."

The hint of a self-conscious smile flickers across Russell's deadpan expression. "I *will* preach, now," he warns in his relaxed Tulsa drawl. "You'll have to stop me if I get going too long." Indeed, he projects a ministerial aura, his flowing white hair and beard offset by black clothes and dark glasses. The large rosary around his neck doesn't lessen the effect.

Appropriately, he launches into the two-bar riff in the biblically inspired "Jezebel" from his album *Anything Can Happen*. On his digital piano, Russell's left hand plays a D-F-G ostinato over the first nine 16th notes of each bar; the right hand accents the Gs with full chords. On the "and" of beat three, both hands hit a B flat chord, moving to a C chord on beat four. On the second bar, the chords reverse. It's a classic Leon Russell riff: rolling left-hand figures beneath syncopated, staccato right-hand punctuations.

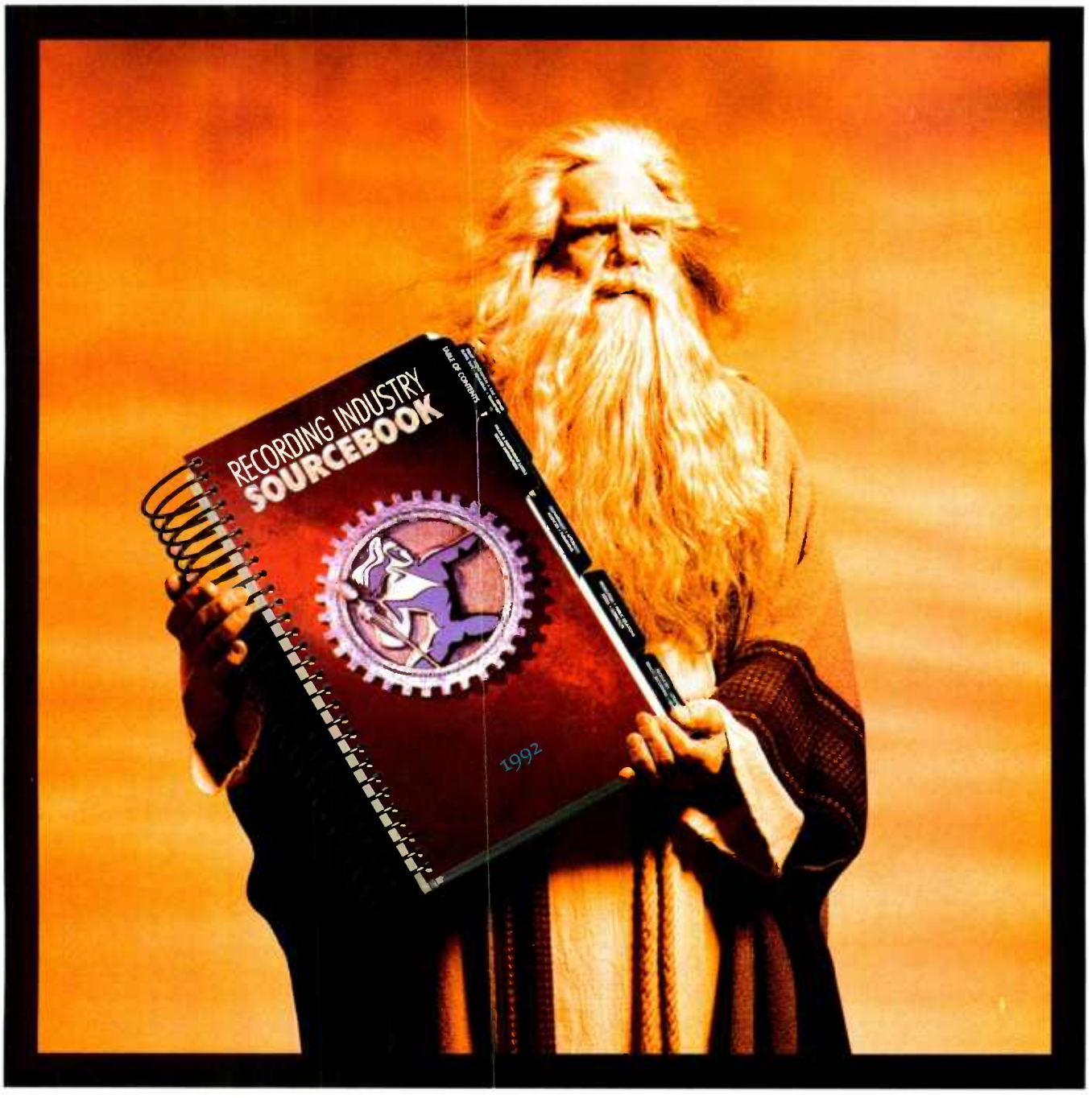
"I was born with cerebral palsy," he says, "and I have paralysis on the right side of my body. That's why I'm a left-handed piano player, and everything I play attempts to disguise that impediment. After I had taken piano lessons for five years, I got very depressed: People who'd studied for a year were playing circles around me. So my teacher took me to see a classical pianist who only had one hand, and he played it all. I thought, 'Well, I haven't got a real right hand, but I've at least got a representation of one.'

"I've been in embarrassing situations, like when this guy heard me and said, 'You're the guy I need for my recording session tomorrow.' I said, 'There's a string to this: I only play what I invent. I might not be able to play something written.' He said, 'Don't worry, it's real easy.' So I arrive at the session and these parts look like Chopin. I said, 'Look, this is no false modesty. I can't play this.' The guy tried to play it himself and couldn't, so they got someone else. But I can only play stuff I design to get around that deformity." Russell sits silent for a moment. "It's kind of a magic trick, now that I think about it," he smiles.

Turning to the keyboard, Russell plays a few chords, and then looks over at the two techs who have been busily patching various pieces of equipment together. "You haven't got any strings handy, have you?" Russell asks. "I could get some," one replies, coming over and crawling into the tangle of wires, cords and pedals underneath the instrument. "I'm about to do some solo concerts," Russell explains, "so we're getting this keyboard ready."

As he plays random upper-register chords with his right hand, the piano is suddenly en-

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK TUCKER



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hanced by synthesized strings. On the lower half of the keyboard, which still sounds only like a piano, he sets up a funky left-handed bass-and-chords groove, over which the right plays the melody from "Paint It Black." Often only the right-hand thumb and little finger strike keys.

Russell's jumping left hand puts one in mind of stride playing. "Yeah, I try to do that. I come from a family of aunts who all play that left-hand stride piano, plus both my parents played that style as a duet. My dad played the left hand and my mom played the top." He bangs out a few bars of blues, stride-style, but stops short. "You have to play that every day to keep it together. It's easy to make a lot of clams in there."

Russell's back-and-forth rhythms between low- and mid-register notes in his left hand under a seemingly independent line in his right recall how a drummer defines a beat between bass and snare against a cymbal pattern. "Years ago, that very thought occurred to me," he replies. "A lot of music is created by limitations, like with harmonica players. Guys who get great mileage out of harmonica absolutely know which of their six notes will get the job done. Same with a drum, which only makes one note.

"Pianists have this stack of 88 notes, which they sometimes play without the same regard the drummer has for one drum. It occurred to me that each note has its own characteristics, and it's important to look at each individually. And with digital and MIDI technology, each note can be a different instrument. So I have to think of it as playing 10 instruments at once.

"Of course, it's not quite as spectacular as that, but theoretically it could be. And I've always played piano from an arranger's standpoint, as if I were playing a 24-piece band. I'm playing the bass, rhythm and horn parts. That works good with the synthesizer stuff I'm playing now, because I can actually make all those sounds. But it started as a rhythm adventure."

Russell has come to regard right-hand paralysis as a blessing. "It's made me aware of my duality; I have two distinct sides I play with. This," he says, holding out his left hand, "has this capability, and this," he says, extending his right, "has others. I've had to struggle for control, but it's made me aware of independence, the way a drummer is aware of a bass drum and snare. It's trying to develop independence and yet have a unity between the two."

Drums

JAN KINCAID'S DOWN-AND-DIRTY FUNK

How to add attitude to aptitude

by KEN MICALLEF

VARIOUSLY GARBED IN SUEDE FLARED pants, platform shoes and plaid vests, the Brand New Heavies look like escapees from a "Soul Train" segment, circa 1973. N'Dea Davenport, the sexy frontwoman, has all the sassiness of Betty Wright, the Clean-up Woman, and the itchy rhythms are straight out of the Ohio Players' nasty lowdown and the funk-jazz of Herbie Hancock's Headhunters. The London quartet's stock-in-trade are chinka-chinka guitars, bubbling clavinets and other period sounds, but the main ingredient's a butt-shaking groove.

"Keeping it in the pocket is the most important thing in any pop music, but especially in funk," says 25-year-old Jan Kincaid. "As drummer, I've got an absolutely central position. I'm the pivot. If I miss a beat it disrupts the flow. When the groove is expanded, it has to be done gradually, keeping everything in the slot."

Tall and moonfaced, Kincaid played snare drum in his grade-school orchestra ("you'd wait five minutes for a roll and a cymbal crash") and developed an interest in jazz. "I'd play along with Steely Dan records, especially *The Royal Scam* with Bernard Purdie, or the Prestige funk records with Idris Muhammad. Also Mike Clark on the Headhunters' stuff—he's amazing. Most drummers I like are fairly jazzy. I'm influenced by the *sound* of '70s funk drummers, but their styles are rather nondescript. My style comes from being self-taught. It's good to know how to read music, but it's more important to know how to relate to other musicians; to learn the role of the drummer in real-life accompaniment, and the ways that role can change."

On songs like "Dream Come True" and "Ride in the Sky" from the Heavies' first album,

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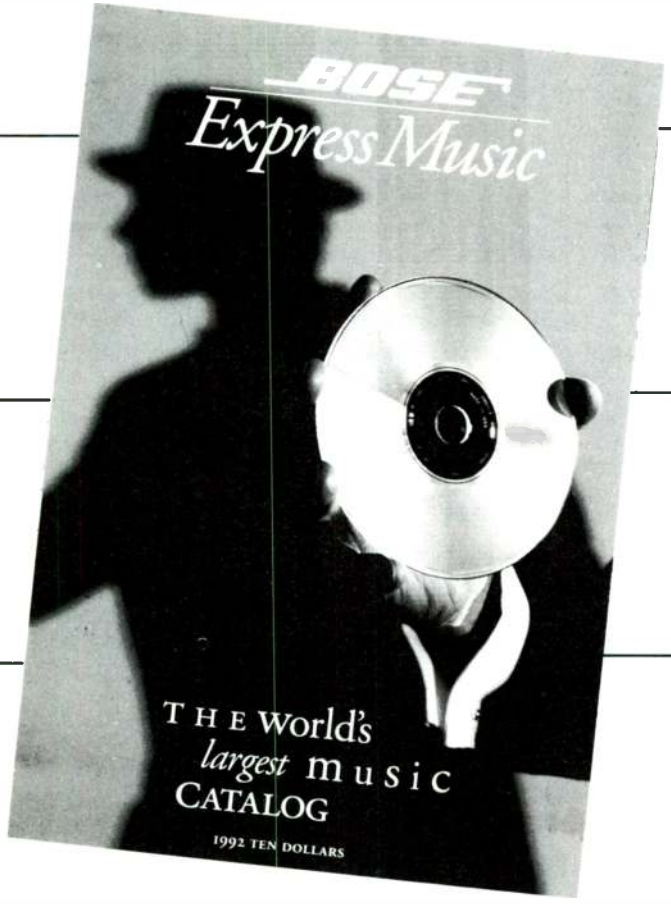

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Kincaid plays nimble hip-hop and 16th-note grooves, breaking up the flow with snare-drum accents or deftly placed cymbal splashes. Live, Kincaid and bassist Andrew Levy intentionally change their patterns from night to night.

"We slow them down, speed them up; we'll shift accents around—it changes, like any good relationship." There's two versions of "Dream Come True." On a practice pad and a phone book, Jan plays the album or "straight" version: a light, consecutive eighth-note pattern on the right hand (hi-hat), using the tip of the stick, with the left snapping out a 16th-note double on the two of the bar, a solid accent on the last 16th note before three and an accented quarter on four. The left hand also plays unaccented ghost notes and ruffs in between the accented notes, while the bass drum sparsely plays the first two eighth notes of the bar, an eighth note after three (three *and*) and the first 16th note after four. Then, by slowing the tempo, eliminating a few grace notes and playing the snare more forcefully, the rhythm becomes bouncy, staccato: It's Version Two, punchier, more ragged, streetish, a New Orleans feel.

How does Jan play something slow, like the Heavies' "Put the Funk Back In It"? "To be funkier than it could ever possibly be, it has to be *exactly* the right tempo and have perfect feel. You play slower than your initial idea might lead you to; only then will the band slow down as well. This song is like reggae: At a slower speed you can get 'round the set, concentrate on the toms. Listen to the Ohio Players or early go-go, or P-Funk with Dennis Chambers." At 70 beats per minute Jan plays an eighth-note rock pattern. On the first beat of every other bar, he leaves the hi-hat open, dragging out the note until the last possible millisecond before closing it, striking two on the snare slightly behind the beat. By calling attention to and then dragging the first beat of the bar, he makes the time seem to spread, hang back. When the song modulates for a few bars, he accents the *bass* drum on every downbeat; emphasizing the low end of the kit also helps stretch the time. When the band rests for a bar before the final chorus, he plays a single flam on the floor tom on four, creating an impression of wide-open space.

"Avoid being too heavy. Heavy *is* one side of funk, but there's a more subtle side. Harvey Mason, Mike Clark, the James Brown drummers [Clyde Stubblefield, John "Jabo" Starks] break it down to the finer points, the buzzes and little ruffs on the snare. That punctuation is more important than almost anything."

What about a complicated pattern that still grooves? "James Brown's 'Funky Drummer' is a good example of a funky beat that has a lot of notes," Jan says. "That's Stubblefield. It's where you put the emphasis, and the relationship between hi-hat and bass drum. If you're thinking in snare drum, it's like having a long line, then cutting out bits of it. It's like a sentence: If you don't punctuate it right, it doesn't make sense." On "Ride in the Sky" Jan plays a busy 16th-note rhythm at 105 bpm. Bass drum and bass guitar lock up across the entire tune, creating a net of accents, biting through horn riffs and wah-wah guitar. From intro to chorus to verse, he varies snare accents with snare ruffs and occasional hi-hat *shoops*. In the bridge, he pops the snare in unison with horn kicks. On the intro, he and the bassist create a backwards illusion, accenting four and one before the verse comes, which sets things nicely off-kilter until your ears adjust. He plays a lot, but always in support of, or as a unison accent to, another instrument.

"In funk, the emphasis is off individual things. It's more in line with jazz; the emphasis switches between beats and between individual drums. In some rhythms the bass drum is up front, in others the snare or hi-hat is prominent.

"When someone solos, a lot of communication happens between myself and Andrew. We are like gears. We lock rhythmically, which comes from listening. That's the most important thing. It seems obvious, but real listening is a challenge you're always striving to meet. I've played with bassists who don't listen; it's very one-sided. You're trying to keep up, there's no buzz, no interaction, it's not musical. Music shouldn't be selfish. To have a band groove, you have to listen to the players around you."

KINKY FUNK

JAN'S cans are Yamaha 10", 13" and 15" toms; 22" bass. ("I want a Drum Workshop set but I'll have to change the hardware.") He uses a Premier or DW brass piccolo snare—"the Premier is amazing; stays in tune gig after gig." His brass are Zildjian 14" Quick Beat hi-hats, 20" heavy ride, 16" and 18" crashes and 10" splash.

WIMBISH

[*cont'd from page 79*] on the neck tapping notes or scrapes, on delay-time knobs, on the pulse, in the groove.

"I like to mix myself while I'm playing," he says. "My vibe has always been degrees of overload; I'm into this peekaboo stuff, like how to have sounds coming in like, 'What was *that*?' Then it's gone and all of a sudden might make an appearance again. And character sounds: like Funkadelic had all these Sir Nose D'Voidoffunk, with the phonoscratch style. It's like a person using 'funky drummer' 137 times. Everybody's used it, so you develop a sound and ambience with that funky-drummer beat. I use sine waves and identifiable flange sounds that will make an appearance. Certain songs have those characters, like some heavy 30 cycles, like 'don't sit in the 10th row during the concert'—or don't eat anything that might want to come up."

Nothing Wimbish does at home will escape him live, and he swears off the cheat of sequencers, tapes, even mortal fallibility. He'd rather struggle to master, say, rolling a pick into his palm like a magician rolls coins over his fingers than force an engineer to stop tape while he repositions his thumb for the funky section. Combined with his flamenco-slap technique, that flexibility should make for a variety of textures alongside Calhoun. Doug's slaps aren't standard, where the wrist runs parallel to the neck, fingers toward the headstock, and rotates to let the outer edge of the thumb hit the string. Using his right index and middle fingers like drumsticks sitting perpendicular to the string, he taps syncopated rhythms, subtly muting to deemphasize certain notes, hitting harder for accents and often using his thumb as a *third* hammer.

"You get polyrhythms," he says. "Your fingers are already lined up on your hand, so with them you can do more. The thumb is mono; this is more of a triad approach, two fingers and the thumb. I also want the pick in there; the chorus might require that attack, without having to stop the take, overdub, 'Punch me back in,' because live, you can't fuck around."

With Wimbish, Living Colour will not have to worry about stasis. "You have to share the radical information," he says. "A lot of people are like, 'I wanna stick my tongue in your ear'—'circling the vagina music,' I call it. No offense, everybody's got to get paid. Here I am in a situation where I'm bringing in a different attitude: the rap thing, Tackhead and still doing the mainstream stuff. I'm just vibing off the different things I've done; it keeps me from getting bored. I don't like the nine-to-five; I'll do it, but it's '92, it's time to take it to a different level. But people always want to go back—it's like going back to BrylCreem.

"There's a good vibe with me there in rehearsals. I see they're grinning, they seem secure that if Vernon does this mixolydian-against-the-Yusef-Lateef-minor-descent-to-whatever, the fort's going to be held. But I get away with craziness. Know when to use it, that's the key. Convince the person to trust your judgment as you trust them to give you guidance. Pace yourself so when you suggest something out of the *realm*, people listen. The main thing is keeping it focused and on the route that isn't boring. It's like, 'Today we're going to the South Street Seaport'—'Fuck that, let's go to Jakarta.'"

TACKHEADSTOCKS

WIMBISH has a 12-string Warwick bass, with Rotosound mediums, through Trace-Elliot AH300s. His stereo system runs four 10s and four 15s; he's undecided about a final setup. He's also got a Guild Ashbory and a MIDI bass, and tweaks Eventide Harmonizers, a DigiTech IPS33B, Yamaha SPX90 and REX50s, t.c. electronics 2290 and parametric EQs, MIDI Step pedals, a Zoom 9030 and a Sansamp. He loves it all, but usually the "bypass" lights are on—he calls up each box for momentary effects.

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MATERIAL ISSUE
DESTINATION UNIVERSE
(MERCURY)

OLD MATERIAL, NEW ISSUES

Jim Ellison, the lead singer, guitarist and songwriter of Material Issue, is a modern kind of pop guy, and he hangs with modern kinda pop gurls. Take the one he's with in "What Girls Want," the lead-off track from *Destination Universe*. She may have some back-dated ideas about what she desires in her man—he's got to be a combination of Rod Stewart, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards—but she also wants drugs and sex on top of the usual love and affection. And she proclaims these needs loudly, even stridently, throughout the punchy rocker.

"What Girls Want" exemplifies Ellison's neo–hard pop approach on this impressive album. You can hear the band leader's manifold influences—the sound and stance of the Beatles and Stones (natch); the Who and the Jam (in the knock-down instrumental trio format blasted across here by Ellison, bassist Ted Ansani and drummer Mike Zelenko); even Illinois homeboys Cheap Trick. But unlike so many contemporary power poppers, Ellison keeps messing with the formula. There are no whiffs of nostalgia for an earlier pop age.

In that respect, Material Issue share much with Shoes, their brethren in nearby Zion, Illinois, and it's not surprising that Shoes co-leader Jeff Murphy, who piloted Material Issue's debut record, *International Pop Overthrow*, has returned to co-

PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN MILLER

produce this one. The best material here reflects an up-to-date combo of traditionalist sweetness and revisionist bite. There are confections like the blissful "Everything" and the exuberant fantasy "Girl from Out of This World" (in which Ellison is whisked away to another planet by an interplanetary cutie). The flip side is explored in songs like the bluntly titled "Who Needs Love"; "Next Big Thing," in which a tentatively romantic barroom conversation devolves into a tart farewell; and the broodingly explosive "Ballad of a Lonely Man," a saloon confession by a homicidal, self-destructive cuckold.

Not all of the 13 songs here have the same impact, but the writing is hookily convincing. The playing never flags—Ellison has a spare but always heatedly apropos guitar style, and his bandmates support his playing without excess fuss. Best of all, Ellison's voice, which was sometimes wobbly and mannered on *International Pop Overthrow*, has developed into a poised instrument, comprising toughness and tenderness in equal portions.

So chalk up a big success for Material Issue. The band has become that *rara avis*, a hard pop outfit that can chart the future from the vantage of the past. **—Chris Morris**

DEEE-LITE

Infinity Within
(ELEKTRA)

"HOW DO YOU SAY DEEE GORGEOUS?" Lady Miss Kier demanded on Deee-Lite's debut *World Clique*. Having been certified not only gorgeous but gold, the question that motivates the New York–based trio's sophomore effort, *Infinity Within*, is "How do you say deee politically correct?" Most dance music is determinedly meaningless—even Madonna, foremother of the contemporary dance scene, lets her image, not her music, do most of the preaching. But no sooner have Deee-Lite broken big and worldwide than they're anxious to reaffirm their commitment to the aesthetics and ethics that sharply define life—and death—in their 'hood.

Like their neighbors on Manhattan's hip tip, from Blondie to the B-52's, DJs Dmitry and Towa are constantly searching for better ways to scratch and graft new info onto hoppin' beats. *Infinity*'s most exciting discoveries evolve the old-fashioned way—by letting lions like Bootsy Collins, Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker roar anew, instead of conventionally sampling their golden moments with Funkadelic or James Brown. But as hypersensitive citizens of the world, never mind New York, Deee-Lite can't afford to live in the past. The stakes, one is constantly reminded here, "are too high." "Vote, Baby, Vote" revolves around a haiku-like lyric which climaxes with the magnificent come-on, "Are you registered, baby?" On the safe-sex ode "Rubber Lover," Lady Kier bravely flails against the constraints of her tiny voicebox, demanding, "Put your brain before your ding-a-ling." In these moments, Deee-Lite forces us to think hard and anew about the eternal conundrum of the dancer and the dance. **—Deborah Frost**

BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE

Coincidence and Likely Stories
(ENSIGN/CHRYSALIS)

THE ARTIST WHO MADE THIS RECORD is a total stranger.

If you ever caught the old Buffy Sainte-Marie at an anti-nuke concert or a Native Indian rights rally, you may recall the raw sob and odd quaver in her delivery. Fans from her coffeehouse era know that Donovan became a star in '65 with a cover of her "Universal Soldier." Some may remember that she wrote the '72 Elvis hit "Until It's Time for You to Go," as well as co-authoring the '82 Joe Cocker/Jennifer Warnes smash "Up Where We Belong." She was a sincere, mid-tier folksmith with a stubborn activist's streak. Frankly, that Buffy Sainte-Marie is gone.

Her modern legacy starts with *Coincidence and Likely Stories*, and not since Tina Turner has a nearly forgotten veteran reinvented herself to such stunning effect. But don't take my word for it. Instead, try this simple test: Play "Bad End" for any friends who might have a passing acquaintance with Sainte-Marie's previous output. Then make 'em guess who the singer is. Watch their concentration lock as "Bad End" begins, knifing drums grinding against a strange, robotic wheeze. Note their grim expressions as the guitar takes on an ugly gleam, and the vocalist's tone passes from bleak anxiety to blunt panic. The song is a dreadful fever dream, and it's doubtful there's one in a thousand who'd pin it on anybody named Buffy. It's what Native Americans mean when they talk about a *vision*—those rare, unwanted glimpses into the way the dead see the living.

A mixed-blood Cree from Saskatchewan, Sainte-Marie has awoken to find herself living in the prophesied time when there is no longer anything that is *ka-na-tan* or "clean." Centuries ago, the Cree predicted the coming of the new breed who would turn away from the Master of Life, replacing humility with denial, and knowledge with cleverness—the final corruption. In bearing witness to this ancient doctrine, Sainte-Marie has somehow discovered a sound that's leaner, scarier and more spontaneous than anything to which she's previously put her name. The bulk of *Coincidence and Likely Stories* is a curious blend of pretty constructions and disturbing confidences. Powwow chants, rock sensibilities and topical piss and vinegar merge with impressive ease.

You don't play this music so much as hear it take place, and it's an often-sobering experience. Most of the material is Sainte-Marie's, and she shares credit with Rick Marvin and Chris Birkett for the production's near-hallucinatory clarity. Like "Bad End," *Coincidence and Likely Stories* reveals a narrator whose deep disillusionments as a Native American, woman, artist and common citizen have grown more universal than the folkie in her ever dared fear. **—Timothy White**

THE B-52'S

Good Stuff
(REPRISE)

I USED TO THINK I DIDN'T LIKE THE B-52'S because they're not more like Deee-Lite. Deee-Lite made that '60s/'70s retro look seem so neat, while the B-52's looked silly in their bee-

hive hairdos and vintage glitzy outfits. But *Cosmic Thing*'s hits eventually won me over. Maybe it was visuals, punctuated by lots of tongue-in-cheek travel scenes and awesome computer graphics. Maybe it was the choice rhythms of "Roam." Or maybe it's because the B-52's' lyrics are a lot wittier than what you get on your average dance hit. Call them alternative dance.

But fans of the last record may greet *Good Stuff*, their new one, with ambivalence. For starters, co-singer Cindy Wilson decided to take a sabbatical, leaving Kate Pierson and Fred Schneider to create the same Indian-whoops, cheerleader choruses, etc. that made *Cosmic Thing* so popular. Wisely, the band seems to realize that another wiggy party record without Wilson would be futile, and the result is an album that's relatively adventurous (at least for them). On that sure-to-be-huge title song, there's a Sly Stone reference so funny it might be the last time anybody borrows from him, a "Roam"-worthy pop chorus, and enough P-Funk style to sound as warm-yet-smart as, well, a Deee-Lite song. The album's other standout is "Revolution Earth," a ballad (!) that evokes the same romantic feeling as, say, Fetchin' Bones' "Deep Blue," as Kate Pierson sings with appropriate restraint. Pierson is still no Mariah or Hope Nichols; fortunately she's not Courtney Love either.

Overall, *Good Stuff* isn't good enough to match *Cosmic Thing*'s witty concepts. But you can count on its better songs to be spinning on the turntable this summer. **—Jill Blardinelli**

WAILING SOULS

All Over the World
(CHAOS/COLUMBIA)

THIS IS NOT YOUR OLDER BROTHER'S Wailing Souls album. Known for more than two decades for righteous three- and four-part roots reggae harmonies, these one-time students of Joe Higgs employ a myriad of '90s production tricks to complement their vocal communalism on the group's first major-label outing.

Original members Winston "Pipe" Matthews and Lloyd "Bread" McDonald aren't so much diarists of the human condition as celebrators of and commentators on it. The finger-wagging counsel to swaggering youth on "Get Real" achieves dancefloor credibility with its fatback raggamuffin bassline. "Shark Attack," a thematic echo of "Harbour Shark" from the group's old days, finds the Rastamen railing against "a new world order...a wicked world order" over a dubwise bottom that even purists put off by some of the album's modernisms could embrace.

It's this ongoing combination of odes to progress and nods to tradition that helps put the sinew between the bones on *All Over the World*. "If I Were You" offers an if-the-shoe-were-on-the-other-foot plea for unity in tandem with a funky-dread beat. Guest vocalist U Roy, Jamaican granddaddy of rap, adds elastic syllabics to the easygoing rhythm of "You Ain't Leaving." The Rolling Stones' languid "Sweet Black Angel" is reborn as globo-folk, fueling gospelish choruses, solid-sendin' sax, Nyahbinghi solemnity and thumb-piano pluck.

The Wailing Souls' commercial update of the sufferer's sound may disappoint those trapped in a one-drop or rockers' time warp. But there's a dance-hungry world eager for their ghetto-smart message of romantic and planetary love.

—Tom Cheyney

OTIS SPANN/SAM "LIGHTNIN'" HOPKINS

The Complete Candid Otis Spann/Lightnin' Hopkins Sessions
(MOSAIC)

IN 1960 TWO DISPARATE BLUES PRACTITIONERS—Mississippi-bred and Chicago-based pianist and singer Otis Spann and Texan guitarist and singer Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins—each recorded single-day sessions for Nat Hentoff's small mostly-jazz label Candid. With its usual exemplary annotation, Mosaic has turned those two days' worth of work into an impressive three-CD boxed set—not a relic for hard-core fans, but rather a vital collection bound to appeal to anyone who's ever responded to the blues.

The Hopkins solo session, on acoustic guitar and/or piano, is especially choice. Drawing from a rich Texan tradition going back to Blind Lemon Jefferson, Hopkins had a bruised whiskey voice and a subtle, at times almost deadpan delivery; it's a clipped but expressive sound, a singular and affecting mix of private pain and public celebration. Only rarely during this performance does he really emote, and when he does it's hair-raising ("The Trouble Blues," "Your Own Fault, Baby, to Treat Me Like You Do"); more often he draws the listener in, confides or states a plain truth, letting his virtuosic guitar playing elaborate on the feeling.

Spann's session has the dynamic of an inspired into-the-night gig, starting off with exuberance, hitting some oiled-by-spirits heights, then winding down with a sensual stretch of ballads. With Muddy Waters, Spann was an alert abetter and punctuater; on his own, his barrelhouse blues and boogie variations are aggressive and full-bodied, a lone rent party pianist simulating big band moxie. With a rock-steady left and a testifying right, he shuffles the riffs and deals, a sophisticated Chicago gloss lurking in the chords. At first he's joined by guitarist/singer Robert Lockwood Jr. (who was taught to play by his stepfather Robert Johnson), a blues-rooted accompanist but a jazzy solo picker, and with a voice rougher, less mellifluous than Spann's, Lockwood offers meshing contrast. A little later St. Louis Jimmy Oden appears and his mordant "talking" style boosts the set through its final exultations and soft landing.

Those of you who were among the throng which recently put Robert Johnson on the charts would be well-advised to jump into these deep waters too. As for longstanding blues fans, well, you can't tell them anything they don't already know. **—Richard C. Walls**

THE BLACK CROWES

The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion
(DEF AMERICAN)

TO SAY THE BLACK CROWES ARE OVERly derivative, to say [*cont'd on page 97*]

NEW RELEASES

august

ROCK

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

THE FAIRFIELD FOUR
Standing in the Safety Zone
(WARNER BROS.)

AN OLD-STYLE gospel quartet, the Fairfield Four sing traditional spirituals in a style that hasn't changed appreciably for half a century. Not that there's anything pro forma about their performances; their a cappella arrangements of oldies like "Roll Jordan Roll" or "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" are as distinctive as they are dramatic. But it's the vocal virtuosity crackling throughout that makes this recording such a find. From the angelic heights of Samuel H. McCrary's tenor to Isaac Freeman's bullfrog bass, these four singers have been blessed with a sound that must be heard to be believed.

T-BONE BURNETT
The Criminal Under My Own Hat
(COLUMBIA)

THERE ARE TWO T-Bone Burnetts. One is the studio mastermind who lives for the perfect production; the other is a musical moralist who likes nothing better than wrestling a crisis of conscience for a couple of verses. This album satisfies both, offering messages that are pointed (the biting "Humans from Earth") and poignant ("Kill Switch"). But it's never preachy, and the settings are never less than exquisite, from the twangy Bo Diddley beat of "Tear This Building Down" to the string quartet and slide guitar combination employed on "Every Little Thing." A remarkably absorbing album.

VIJAYA ANAND
Asia Classics 1: Dance Raja Dance
(LUAKA BOP/WARNER BROS.)

WITH TRADITIONAL INDIAN instruments pressed cheek-by-jowl against the latest in synth technology, and a sense of style schizophrenic enough to find room for anything from hoe-down fiddle to surf guitar to musical car horns, this collection of Indian film music may at first seem more campy than classic. But Anand's writing is first-rate, and between his unflagging imagination, impeccable technique and unrelenting melodic sense, there's much to admire about this music—even if it is a hoot.

MARIAH CAREY, MTV UNPLUGGED EP (COLUMBIA)

STRIPPING AWAY THE *studio gloss doesn't just emphasize Carey's strengths, it also underscores her genuine affection for gospel singing. But as much as that adds to "Emotions" and "Vision of Love," what really makes this EP worth hearing is her version of "I'll Be There," which one-ups the knowing innocence of the original.*

RINGO STARR
Time Takes Time
(PRIVATE MUSIC)

LIKE HIS DRUMMING, Ringo's vocal style is more impressive for what it does than how; it's incredible how much pop sense he can pack into that drawling deadpan. But that only works when the songs do, and thanks to compositions by everyone from Stan Lynch to Diane Warren to the Posies, that makes this album his most consistent since *Ringo*.

IRON MAIDEN
Fear of the Dark
(EPIC)

THE DEVIL MADE them do it.

T99
Children of Chaos
(COLUMBIA)

TECHNO MAY BE okay for dancing, but what makes much of it worthless as listening music is that it's all impulse and texture, with little melodic input to soften the aggressive electronic grind. But T99's techno tracks are built around actual songs, with tuneful synth hooks shoring up the sequenced groove and a sense of dynamics that pulls you into the music instead of merely pounding you with a beat. All of which makes this something even non-dancers can enjoy.

WILSON PHILLIPS
Shadows and Light
(SBK)

THEY'RE SENSITIVE SOULS. They have difficult family relationships and awkward romances. They address their problems with psycho-babble and three-part harmony. They bore me to tears.

ANN PEEBLES
Full Time Love
(BULLSEYE BLUES)

IF YOU EVER wondered what happened to Peebles after "I Can't Stand the Rain," here's the answer. Recorded in Memphis with the Hi Rhythm Section and the Memphis Horns, this album doesn't just hearken to the way she used to sound, but picks up where the hits left off, with solid songs and a sure, soulful groove. In other words, this is

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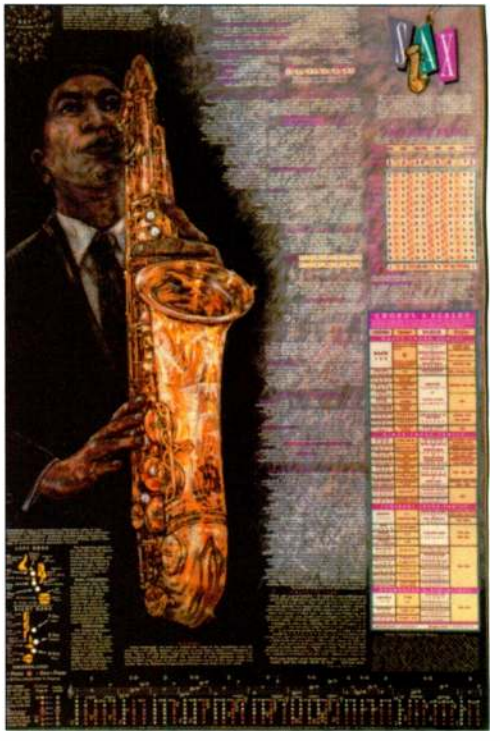

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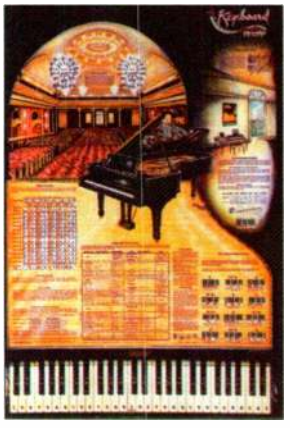

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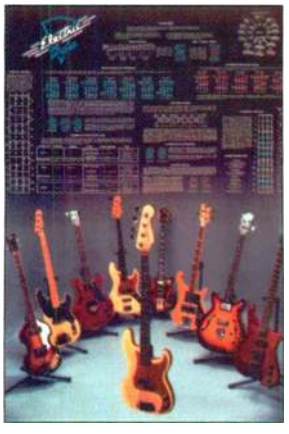

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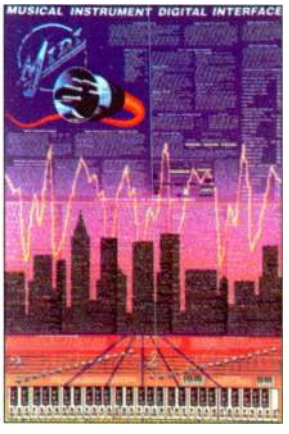

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not a retread, but a full-scale revival—and I, for one, can't wait for the next installment.

ERIC B. & RAKIM
Don't Sweat the Technique
(MCA)

WHAT KEEPS THIS duo dynamic is that they understand the importance of sticking with the basics—hard beats, sly samples and imaginative cadences—and foregoing fashion. And it works, too, from the brutal punch of "The Punisher" to the persuasive tenderness of "What's On Your Mind."

BOOTSAUCE
Bull
(ISLAND)

UNLIKE MOST RED Hot Wanna Funkers, this Canadian crew refuses to treat funk/metal as mere formula (one part slap bass, one part thrash guitar, add attitude and crank). Instead, they build off a genuine R&B foundation, pump it full of aggressive audacity and kick it as hard as they can. That's how they can get away with updating "Love Rollercoaster" as "Rollercoaster's Child." And why even the slow ones are convincing.

JAZZ

BY CHIP STERN

LIONEL HAMPTON
Lionel Hampton & the Golden Men of Jazz—Live at the Blue Note
(TELARC)

MOST SO-CALLED ALL-STAR dates tend to disappoint (me, anyway), but here's an exception, drawn from a sold-out engagement at New York's Blue Note. These men don't just draw upon the tradition, they *wrote* it, and while Hamp might defer to Olympian co-conspirators (Milt Hinton, Hank Jones, Grady Tate, Harry Edison, Buddy Tate, James Moody) more than his hardcore fans would like, there's no denying the joy, grace and easy mastery on display—while his ballad turn shows what a modern ear for harmony Hamp's always had. Moldy figs, hectic eclectics and post-mods will be charmed, and it's worth noting for neophytes how much Hampton's music and personal charisma has helped both to span and delineate the swing, bop and rock epochs, from the era of Louis Armstrong and Benny Goodman on.

LARRY CORYELL
Toku Do
(MUSE)

SINCE CHARLES MINGUS' *Three or Four Shades of Blue* (Atlantic), Coryell has geared his considerable techniques towards a bop and post-bop repertoire in a series of excellent albums on Muse, where his harmonic interplay with pianist Stanley Cowell and bassist Buster Williams is singing, free and boisterous. But drummer William Godvin "Beaver" Harris (who passed away this past Christmas) is the real star on *Toku Do*. Typecast throughout his career as an avant-gardist because of his 10-year association with Archie Shepp, Harris was one of the truly great drummers of his generation, a big-time swinger who lifts this entire date with his formidable chops and sensitivity. Matching Coryell's high-strung intensity beat for beat at any tempo (try "Just Friends" on for size, kids), his resilient grace and effortless jet-propulsion keep the proceedings happy and focused. Meanwhile, Beaver's brushwork (particularly on "'Round Midnight") evinces more variation and color inside each sweep than most drummers elicit from their entire kit with sticks and feet flying.

MILES DAVIS
Miles Smiles
(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)

TONY WILLIAMS
The Story of Neptune
(BLUE NOTE)

MILES SMILES WAS one of the first 10 albums I ever owned, and to these ears, it has lost none of its cutting edge—still my favorite of the great quintet albums. The band was beginning to open up here, egged on by the edgy hyperdrive of a young Tony Williams, and animated by the vitality of Ornette Coleman's group conception (on a lot of tunes, Herbie Hancock simply drops out and lets Miles and Wayne lay with the rhythm, interjecting jittery, cubist melodic passages right out of Herbie Nichols). Has any band ever grooved harder than Miles and company do on "Orbits," "Dolores" or "Ginger Bread Boy"—and has Miles ever penned a more touching ballad than "Circle"? This exploratory verve energizes Williams' own group some 25 years later, especially on a burner like "Birdlike," with the drummer's trademark tempi and aggressive percussive commentaries. But it is Williams' ever-blossoming arranging skills (the drum concerti effects of his title suite) and the acoustic wallop he gets from his drums that distinguish this session, while characterizing all of his Blue Note dates with his longtime working group of Ira Coleman, Mulgrew Miller, Wallace Roney and Billy Pierce.

INDIES

BIG DADDY
Sgt. Peppers
(RHINO)

THE LATEST IN an honorable line of Beatles-inspired parodies, *Sgt. Peppers* adapts the most

famous pop record of the '60s into a variety of '50s styles, with mixed results. But there are two moments of brilliance—a Johnny Mathis–cloned "With a Little Help from My Friends" replete with strings and a cooing female chorus, and "Within You Without You" rendered as a beatnik/jazz rap. For fans of a certain age—you know who you are.

—*Mark Rowland*

JOSEPH SPENCE
The Complete Folkways Recordings 1958
(SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)

The Spring of Sixty-Five
(ROUNDER)

THE LATE SPENCE played acoustic guitar like a vibraphone: percussive, polyphonic and swinging. The Smithsonian Folkways CD assembles the Bahamian master's first session, originally spread over two LPs. The recording is on the hissy side but Spence is in fine form. Seven years later he accompanied his sister, Edith Pinder, and her husband and daughter singing spirituals. Although Spence here is considerably toned down from the freewheeling *Folkways* soloist, the Pinder family part-singing has a powerful charm of its own. Just where do you think the Grateful Dead found "I Bid You Goodnight," anyway?—*Scott Isler*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri Rainforest
(SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS)

THE TITLE MAY attract sensation-seekers; the music will captivate them—haunting chants, songs and flute, thumb-piano and jew's-harp solos. This late-'50s recording reinforces the sense of an endangered lifestyle ineluctably receding into history.—*Scott Isler*

THE ED THIGPEN TRIO
Mr. Taste
(JUSTIN TIME)

REMEMBER THIS NAME: Tony Purrone. He's the guitarist in Ed Thigpen's trio, and his speed and fluidity bring to mind Di Meola and Martino, while the two tunes he wrote for *Mr. Taste* (entitled simply "Ballad" and "Tony's Blues") attest to a unique musicality. Best of all, Purrone's one of three great musicians here; bassist Mads Vinding is exemplary, and Thigpen, who's been drumming a long time, is his usual self. If you've been looking for merciless swing, you can end the search now. (Mesa/Bluemoon, Box 5510, Glendale, CA 91201)—*Mac Randall*

DILLON FENCE
Rosemary
(MAMMOTH)

ELEVEN TEXTBOOK EXAMPLES of clean, jangly, straightforward pop. The songs are comfortable upon first hearing, the band has a tasty two-guitar dynamic, and Greg Humphreys' chameleonic vocals grab the ear (first they're coming from the nose, then the throat, then the gut, with hardly a breath between). "Hey Mockingbird" and "Danger!" are probably the best demonstrations of Dillon Fence's ability to take the predictable and give it that interesting twist; but truth be told, it's all worthwhile, from the casual "Daylight" to the climactic "I Will Break." (Carr Mill, 2nd Floor, Carrboro, NC 27510)—*Mac Randall*

THE JODY GRIND
Lefty's Deceiver
(DB)

IT'S HARD TO know what to write about the best young band in the South when their new record arrives simultaneously with news of two members' deaths in a car wreck. Suffice it to say that their spare, eclectic sound—'40s jazz/hillbilly/postmodernist rock—is as brilliantly delivered here as on their debut, and that originals "Lounge Axe" and "Third of July" show a new-found confidence in their songwriting abilities. For those who have heard them, the Jody Grind's talent and verve have opened a lot of ears as to what kinds of music might be incorporated by a four-piece indie band. Here's hoping we hear more.—*Thomas Anderson*

PHAROAH SANDERS
Journey to the One
Rejoice
(EVIDENCE)

TENOR SAXOPHONIST SANDERS early on had the bright idea of putting his split-tone screeches in engagingly melodic, even mellow contexts (on his own albums, that is—when he hung with Coltrane, it was take no prisoners). Each time he lets loose with a grinding howl and the rhythm section just burbles on its merry post-bop way as though there weren't a madman in the room, it sounds less like the fire next time than just ecstatic eccentricity, a good-natured orgasmic/apocalyptic vision. But then Sanders has always been a peace/love kinda guy, a muscular Charles Lloyd. There's also some surprisingly effective Eastern Indian stuff, some Trane-ish ballads, the usual just-barely skirting of sentimentality and a few flat-out descents into kitsch. In a word, definitive.

—*Richard C. Walls*

REISSUES

LONNIE JOHNSON
Losing Game
(PRESTIGE BLUESVILLE ORIGINAL BLUES CLASSICS)

BOTH ACOUSTIC-GUITAR master and empathic singer/songwriter, Johnson was overqualified as a

blues artist. Thus some listeners may resent that he doesn't play more on this relaxed 1960 solo session. Still, they'll have to admire his personable vocal technique—whether on haunting originals like "Lines in My Face" or even non-blues standards like "What a Difference a Day Makes" that Johnson makes his own.—*Scott Isler*

MOONDOG
More Moondog/
The Story of Moondog
(PRESTIGE/ORIGINAL JAZZ CLASSICS)

IN THE TRADITION of Great American Unclassifiables, Moondog (Louis Hardin) falls somewhere between John Cage and Harry Partch—only they never dressed in Viking costume and hung out on New York streetcorners. Hardly the musical academic, Moondog concentrated on irregular-metered percussion fused with street sounds and occasionally his aphoristic poetry. This two-fer CD reissues his second and third albums, from the mid-'50s; the first is already available by itself. This could be the soundtrack to your next mock-beatnik party. Taken more seriously, Moondog is an intriguing ear-stretcher. Janis Joplin, who re-recorded one of *More Moondog*'s tracks, must have thought so.—*Scott Isler*

CREAM
Wheels of Fire
(DCC COMPACT CLASSICS)

IT'S NICE TO have "Anyone for Tennis," slight as it is, reunited with its sessionmates. It's even nicer to hear 80 seconds of previously unreleased jamming in the middle of "Passing the Time." Whether such niceties are worth this gold-plated double-CD's $49 list price is for individual consciences (and pocketbooks) to decide. These ears found DCC's remastering virtually indistinguishable from Mobile Fidelity's LP pressing; *Wheels of Fire* was no audiophile recording to begin with. Bonus points awarded for DCC reinstating the aluminum foil and Dayglo graphics.—*Scott Isler*

WEBB PIERCE
The Wondering "Boy" 1951–1958
(BEAR FAMILY)

IF YOU HAVE only a casual interest in country music, this four-CD, 113-track West German boxed set (with 36-page booklet, including all recording session info) is not for you. But if you ever wondered about a possible missing link between Hank Williams and rock 'n' roll, Webb Pierce completes the puzzle. Though his voice, a high nasal whine, represents the ultimate hillbilly stereotype, the sweeping pedal-steel and thumping guitars behind it created a driving sound that Gram Parsons dreamed about. Here is the complete hillbilly Pierce, alternate takes and all, cleanly remastered and full of hidden treasures. The lyrics never go beyond "you, true, blue" ambitions, the chord patterns rarely venture beyond the I-IV-V, but the melodies enriched by his unusual voice offer clear explanation why Pierce had 13 number one hits on the country charts during the 1950s. For a time, he was the best in country music. (Box 1154, 2864 Vollersrode, West Germany)—*Rob O'Connor*

THE MAGIC BAND
Doc at the Radar Station
(BLUE PLATE)

THIS 1980 RELEASE, the Captain's next-to-last before giving up on music, contains what has to be his greatest single achievement: "Brickbats." As the Magic Band pounds out in unison a demented series of rhythmically contorted figures, Don Van Vliet (Beefheart) rants over the top, something about bats in the mental fireplace, before segueing into his best Howlin' Wolf (or is that Wolfman Jack?) imitation. Add to this such perverse classics as "Ashtray Heart," "Best Batch Yet" and "Making Love to a Vampire with a Monkey on My Knee," and you've got a masterpiece. Digital remastering only serves to reiterate what an odd-sounding record *Doc* is—completely dry, with no reverb or effects of any kind, all the better to hear every jagged-edge guitar line. (Caroline Records, 114 West 26th St., New York, NY 10001)—*Mac Randall*

THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

THE TOP 100 ALBUMS

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

1 · 2	KRIS KROSS	*Totally Krossed Out*/Ruffhouse
2 · 8	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	*Blood Sugar Sex Magik*/Warner Bros.
3 · 1	DEF LEPPARD	*Adrenalize*/Mercury
4 · 6	GARTH BROOKS	*Ropin' the Wind*/Capitol
5 · 11	QUEEN	*Classic Queen*/Hollywood
6 · 14	GARTH BROOKS	*No Fences*/Capitol
7 · 20	PEARL JAM	*Ten*/Epic Associated
8 · 52	ZZ TOP	*Greatest Hits*/Warner Bros.
9 · 63	THE CURE	*Wish*/Fiction
10 · 12	EN VOGUE	*Funky Divas*/Atco East West
11 · —	THE BLACK CROWES	*The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*/Def American
12 · 13	U2	*Achtung Baby*/Island
13 · 16	GENESIS	*We Can't Dance*/Atlantic
14 · 5	WYNONNA	*Wynonna*/Curb
15 · 30	SIR MIX-A-LOT	*Mack Daddy*/Def American
16 · 7	NIRVANA	*Nevermind*/DGC
17 · 81	BEASTIE BOYS	*Check Your Head*/Capitol
18 · 17	BONNIE RAITT	*Luck of the Draw*/Capitol
19 · 18	MICHAEL BOLTON	*Time, Love and Tenderness*/Columbia
20 · 58	"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC	*Off the Deep End*/Scotti Bros.
21 · 15	METALLICA	*Metallica*/Elektra
22 · —	LIONEL RICHIE	*Back to Front*/Motown
23 · 78	SLAUGHTER	*Wild Life*/Chrysalis
24 · 3	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	*Human Touch*/Columbia
25 · 19	MICHAEL JACKSON	*Dangerous*/Epic
26 · 22	VANESSA WILLIAMS	*The Comfort Zone*/Capitol
27 · 79	DAS EFX	*Dead Serious*/Atco EastWest
28 · 4	SOUNDTRACK	*Wayne's World*/Reprise
29 · 25	COLOR ME BADD	*C.M.B.*/Giant
30 · 32	ENYA	*Shepherd Moons*/Reprise
31 · —	BILLY RAY CYRUS	*Some Gave All*/Mercury
32 · 21	BRYAN ADAMS	*Waking Up the Neighbours*/A&M
33 · 34	GARTH BROOKS	*Garth Brooks*/Capitol
34 · 10	UGLY KID JOE	*As Ugly As They Want to Be* Stardog
35 · 23	BOYZ II MEN	*Cooleyhighharmony*/Motown
36 · 26	HAMMER	*Too Legit to Quit*/Capitol
37 · 29	NATALIE COLE	*Unforgettable*/Elektra
38 · 43	REBA MCENTIRE	*For My Broken Heart*/MCA
39 · —	IRON MAIDEN	*Fear of the Dark*/Epic
40 · 9	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN	*Lucky Town*/Columbia
41 · 33	AMY GRANT	*Heart in Motion*/A&M
42 · 27	MARIAH CAREY	*Emotions*/Columbia
43 · —	INDIGO GIRLS	*Rites of Passage*/Epic
44 · 40	JODECI	*Forever My Lady*/MCA
45 · 68	ALAN JACKSON	*Don't Rock the Jukebox*/Arista
46 · —	ANNIE LENNOX	*Diva*/Arista
47 · 83	CELINE DION	*Celine Dion*/Epic
48 · 44	TLC	*Ooooooohhh... On the TLC Tip* LaFace
49 · 28	MR. BIG	*Lean Into It*/Atlantic
50 · —	KISS	*Revenge*/Mercury
51 · 47	TRAVIS TRITT	*It's All About to Change* Warner Bros.
52 · 82	BROOKS & DUNN	*Brand New Man*/Arista
53 · 39	OZZY OSBOURNE	*No More Tears*/Epic Associated
54 · 37	BODY COUNT	*Body Count*/Sire
55 · 42	YANNI	*Dare to Dream*/Private Music
56 · —	GEORGE STRAIT	*Holding My Own*/MCA
57 · 36	CYPRESS HILL	*Cypress Hill*/Ruffhouse
58 · 24	SOUNDTRACK	*Beauty & the Beast*/Walt Disney
59 · 86	R. KELLY & PUBLIC ANNOUNCIMENT	*Born into the '90's*/Jive
60 · 38	RICHARD MARX	*Rush Street*/Capitol
61 · 90	TORI AMOS	*Little Earthquakes*/Atlantic
62 · 50	HAL KETCHUM	*Past the Point of Rescue*/Curb
63 · 84	TRACY CHAPMAN	*Matters of the Heart*/Elektra
64 · 35	BLACKSHEEP	*A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*/Mercury
65 · —	ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT	*3 Years 5 Months & 2 Days in the Life of.../*Chrysalis
66 · —	LORRIE MORGAN	*Something in Red*/RCA
67 · 80	TRISHA YEARWOOD	*Trisha Yearwood*/MCA
68 · —	XCLAN	*Xodus*/Polydor
69 · 49	AARON TIPPIN	*Read Between the Lines*/RCA
70 · 60	K.D. LANG	*Ingenue*/Sire
71 · 31	SOUNDTRACK	*Rush*/Reprise
72 · 41	MELISSA ETHERIDGE	*Never Enough*/Island
73 · 87	SAWYER BROWN	*Dirt Road*/Curb
74 · 56	TESLA	*Psychotic Supper*/Geffen
75 · —	SOUNDTRACK	*The Commitments*/Beacon
76 · 46	NAUGHTY BY NATURE	*Naughty by Nature*/Tommy Boy
77 · 59	LYLE LOVETT	*Joshua Judges Ruth*/Curb
78 · 57	LISA STANSFIELD	*Real Love*/Arista
79 · 48	PRINCE AND THE N.P.G.	*Diamonds and Pearls* Paisley Park
80 · —	SOPHIE B. HAWKINS	*Tongues and Tails*/Columbia
81 · 69	ORIGINAL LONDON CAST	*Phantom of the Opera Highlights* Polydor
82 · —	DOUG STONE	*I Thought It Was You*/Epic
83 · 54	VAN HALEN	*For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* Warner Bros.
84 · 55	GUNS N' ROSES	*Use Your Illusion II*/Geffen
85 · 100	THE BLACK CROWES	*Shake Your Money Maker* Def American
86 · —	TESTAMENT	*Ritual*/EMI
87 · 45	QUEENSRYCHE	*Empire*/EMI
88 · —	GANG STARR	*Daily Operation*/Chrysalis
89 · —	PENTHOUSE PLAYERS CLIQUE	*Paid the Cost*/Ruthless
90 · —	DIAMOND RIO	*Diamond Rio*/Arista
91 · 51	RIGHT SAID FRED	*Up*/Charisma
92 · —	FU-SCHNICKENS	*FU: Don't Take It Personal*/Jive
93 · —	MICHAEL BOLTON	*Soul Provider*/Columbia
94 · 99	JOHN ANDERSON	*Seminole Wind*/BNA
95 · 66	PAULA ABDUL	*Spellbound*/Captive
96 · —	A TRIBE CALLED QUEST	*Low End Theory*/Jive
97 · —	LYNCH MOB	*Lynch Mob*/Elektra
98 · 73	STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN & DOUBLE TROUBLE	*The Sky Is Crying*/Epic
99 · —	KID FROST	*East Side Story*/Virgin
100 · —	KENNY LOGGINS	*Leap of Faith*/Columbia

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 May. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for May 1992. All charts are copyright 1992 by BPI Communications.

TOP CONCERT GROSSES

1 Grateful Dead, Steve Miller Band *Sam Boyd Silver Bowl, Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV*/May 29–31	**$2,738,158**
2 Genesis *Stadium, Ohio State Univ., Columbus, OH*/May 22	**$1,788,750**
3 Jimmy Buffett & the Coral Reefer Band, Evangeline *Riverbend Music Center, Cincinnati, OH*/May 26–27, 29–30	**$1,626,473**
4 Genesis *Cleveland Municipal Stadium, Cleveland, OH*/May 25	**$1,229,600**
5 Jimmy Buffett & the Coral Reefer Band, Evangeline *Merriweather Post Pavilion, Columbia, MD*/May 22–24	**$1,094,893**
6 Genesis *Joe Robbie Stadium, Miami, FL*/May 16	**$1,087,515**
7 Genesis *Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh, PA*/May 26	**$1,047,668**
8 Genesis *Pontiac Silverdome, Pontiac, MI*/May 24	**$904,225**
9 Eric Clapton *Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, IL*/May 13–14	**$898,440**
10 Eric Clapton *Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA*/May 4–5	**$845,608**

STATE OF THE CHARTS

AS I WRITE, IT'S BEEN A YEAR (WELL, 13 months) since The Great Soundscan Upheaval, when record execs were rendered apoplectic by the replacement of *Billboard*'s hallowed and chaotic old charts system with a spiffy new electronic scorecard. So how has Soundscan, the new system's parent, progressed in its efforts to subjugate duh numbiz to its computerized will?

More than 60 percent of America's record sales market is now tracked by Soundscan, says the company's Michael Fine. That's only a few percentage points more than last December's 56-or-so percent, but Fine isn't especially concerned—as statistical samples go, 60 percent is pretty huge. Soundscan is tracking some 9000 record outfits in all; 3600 are retailers, the rest are "racks"—discount store record departments. Although chains—Musicland, Tower, etc.—account for the bulk of America's record business, Soundscan says it's making an effort to add independent stores too; it's online in some 275 independents so far, with plans to add maybe 150 more. Several large chains—Disc Jockey, Central South—have yet to join Soundscan's network; only six of Tower Records' 72 stores have Soundscan equipment.

In addition to pop and country albums and singles, Soundscan is scheduled to start tracking *Billboard*'s R&B and rap charts (R&B albums and singles, rap singles) this month (August). A heavy metal/hard rock chart is also ready, says Fine, with several metal magazines planning to pick it up. "There's probably no genre of music that's really underrepresented," he says. "With something like Latin music we might need to add some independent stores to get more data"; with jazz and classical, Tower is such a major player that accurate tallies might be difficult without the big chain's participation.

Every major label, says Fine, now subscribes to Soundscan, despite the companies' howls of execration when the system first went up. "I think it's changing some of the ways record companies operate. Where they used to be heavily concerned with chart position—'Am I going on at number five?'—now they're getting interested in actual numbers sold, because we can give them that information. I think we've brought them closer to the consumer. They're learning more and more about actual sales patterns. They can see the results of their marketing immediately, and it's making them more efficient."

—TS

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RECORDINGS

[*cont'd from page 89*] that their music, their looks, their hairstyles, even the extra "e" in their name, have some hidden, subliminal purpose is simply not the truth (*Jeff Beck album, 1968*) and beside the point (*Nilsson album, 1970*). They will rock you (*Queen song, 1977*), and do so royally on *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*—which, despite its complex and involved title (A Nod Is As Good As a Wink to a Blind Horse, *Faces album, 1971*), is a simple, gut-busting pleasure. Okay, maybe some tracks *do* lack a certain originality, maybe "Black Moon Creeping"'s title sounds like something, say, Free would've used, maybe its verse too (*"All Right Now," 1970*)—but hey, at least not the chorus.

I'm inclined to agree with singer Chris Robinson's assessment of his band's career—thoughtfully penned in longhand in the groovy elaborate "prayer book" bio Def American sent along with this new album, which like its predecessor *Shake Your Money Maker* may sell five million copies or so. Says the singer: "Everyone's so jaded—they say, 'I've seen it before, heard it before.' We really have chosen, and I think some of our fans have too, to step outside of that jaded thing and look at the music for what it is." Well, since I'm a fan—and I guess I'm not in bad company (*formed 1973*)—I think I'll do that, too. I hear a hot and nasty (*Humble Pie song, 1972*) collection of songs striking in their production and, especially, arrangement. The pleasing mixture of acoustic guitar and Hammond organ (Gasoline Alley, *Rod Stewart, 1970*) that opens "Thorn in My Pride" here superbly sets up the emotional resonance of Robinson's closing chorus: "Let your lovelight shine, let it shine" (*Bobby Bland, 1962; Grateful Dead, 1970; "Kow Kow," Steve Miller Band, 1969*). Heck, resonances abound on this baby—check out "No Speak No Slave"'s opening reference to "rooster (*early hairstyle of Rod Stewart*) crows (*proper spelling of contemporary '90s group's name*)."

But if every picture tells a story (*ibid*), this album tells a very happy one. The Black Crowes have learned to take classic rock forms and feelings (*Love Sculpture album, 1969*), meld them into one burning urn of churning funk (*"Steamroller Blues," James Taylor, 1970*), marry it (*Steve, vocalist, Small Faces, Humble Pie*) to their vision of what rock 'n' roll *should* be in the '90s, and produce one kickass album after another. So if people tell you the Black Crowes' music is as safe as yesterday is (*Humble Pie album, 1969*), they're wrong. Face it. **—Dave DiMartino**

AD INDEX

The following companies are more than willing to fill you in on their products. Call or write them, and tell 'em you saw it in MUSICIAN.

J.D.'S GOLDEN DECADE

Musician's J.D. Considine is from Baltimore and shares the repressed lunatic dignity of that city's other journalistic giants—John Waters, H.L. Mencken and Edgar Allan Poe. J.D. showed up at the *Musician* office last week, twirling his oily moustache and fingering the tight Windsor knot in his starched collar, and announced, "You do realize that as of this issue I have been writing 'Rock Shorts' for ten years! Ten years! I suppose that's worth something, wouldn't you say?" Uh-oh, we thought, he's looking for a raise. A quick-thinking editor leaped up, grabbed J.D.'s hand and started pumping it, shouting, "Ten years! J.D., that's wonderful! Congratulations! Such length of service to *Musician* should not go unrewarded! We're going to dedicate the entire prestigious *Backside* page in our August issue to a retrospective celebration of your nastiest, most unfair, most vicious reviews! Think of it! A decade of venom and screed condensed and distilled into a single pile of bile! What an honor! What a tribute! It'll be like the *Rolling Stone* 25th Anniversary Issue except without all the nostalgia for nudist editorial meetings! Fellows, let's escort J.D. back to his train so we can get to work on this right away!"

One of our interns took J.D. to lunch at Hamburger Harry's ($9.73, no tip) and then made sure he left town. Here's why:

NICOLETTE LARSON
All Dressed Up & No Place to Go
If, like me, you believe that the lack of quality on a female vocalist's album is directly proportionate to the amount of clothing worn on the cover, be advised that on this one, Larson is wearing a towel. 11/82

PLASMATICS
Coup D'État
Ever wonder what Black Sabbath would have sounded like with a chainsaw as lead singer? 2/83

MEAT LOAF
Midnight at the Lost and Found
I don't think I've ever heard a performer more desperately in need of a duet with Cher. 8/83

MICHAEL SEMBELLO
Bossa Nova Hotel
You could sum up Sembello's sound as Michael McDonald with a rhythm machine, but that would be unnecessarily cruel to McDonald. And the rhythm machine. 1/84

UTOPIA
Oblivion
Further proof that "Utopia" is derived from the Latin word for "nowhere." 4/84

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Official Music of the XXIII Olympiad
2.8; 2.5; 3.0; 2.7; 3.1; 2.4. 9/84

J.D. SOUTHER
Home by Dawn
Don't wait up. 10/84

QUIET RIOT
Condition Critical
Prognosis: Terminal. 10/84

KANSAS
The Best of Kansas
Why did I expect this to be blank on both sides? 11/84

ANDREAS VOLLENWEIDER
White Winds
Don't call this "mood music," unless you consider sleep a mood. 5/85

THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT
Stereotomy
Unnecessary surgery. 4/86

JULIAN LENNON
The Secret Value of Daydreaming
At least he got his father's looks. 6/86

GTR
GTR
SHT. 8/86

DON JOHNSON
Heart Beat
Don Johnson sings as well as Glenn Frey acts. 11/86

PATTY SMYTH
Never Enough
In case you ever wondered what Eddie Money would have been like as a girl. 5/87

NICK KAMEN
Nick Kamen
Proof that bimbo rock isn't gender-specific. 7/87

WETTON/MANZANERA
Wetton/Manzanera
Asia Minor. 10/87

LOVERBOY
Wildside
Take a walk. 12/87

YES
Big Generator
Just say "no." 1/88

JAMES TAYLOR
Never Die Young
Ever notice how people, as they get older, begin to repeat themselves? 4/88

JOHNNY HATES JAZZ
Turn Back the Clock
Yeah, well, J.D. isn't too wild about Johnny, either. 6/88

SADE
Stronger Than Pride
...and faster than Sominex. 8/88

MICHELLE SHOCKED
Short Sharp Shocked
Showy, shallow, shrill. 11/88

PINK FLOYD
Live: The Delicate Sound of Thunder
Further proof that you can't listen to a light show. 2/89

SIMPLE MINDS
Street Fighting Years
Is it just me, or has Jim Kerr begun to sound uncannily like Bill Murray? 8/89

BAD ENGLISH
Bad English
Grammar is the least of their problems. 9/89

L.A. GUNS
Cocked and Loaded
...and shooting blanks. 10/89

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For those who found Rick Astley too manly. 11/89

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For white girls who have considered suicide when an acoustic guitar is enuff. 2/90

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Come back, Blues Brothers. All is forgiven. 6/90

THE LONDON QUIREBOYS
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False Faces. 7/90

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Bum rap. 1/91

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DAVID LEE ROTH
A Little Ain't Enough
Wanna bet? 4/91

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Love Hurts
Not this much. 9/91

MARKY MARK AND THE FUNKY BUNCH
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...who think Vanilla Ice invented rap. 11/91

RIGHT SAID FRED
Up
Wrong said J.D. 5/92

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