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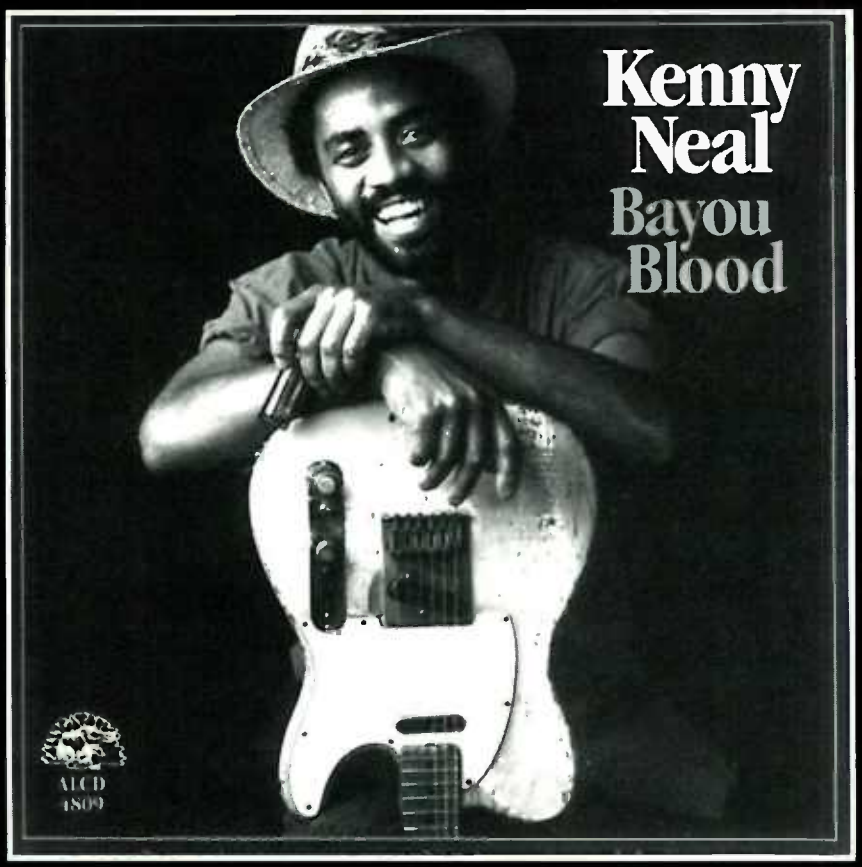

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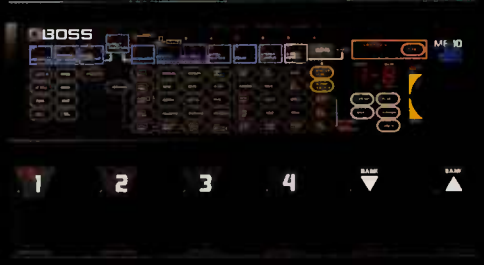

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MUSICIAN MAGAZINE
APRIL 1993 · ISSUE NO. 174

WORKING MUSICIAN

DEPARTMENTS

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STING

FRONT MAN

There's a warmth and a lightness to your new album, Ten Summoner's Tales, *an element of humor. It's a big change from* The Soul Cages.

I think the record came from a feeling of contentment. I was—I am—very happy. The last record was very dark and personal and confessional—and therapeutic, ultimately. And it worked. I moved on and decided to make a record for fun, to write songs that aren't necessarily about me. I recorded in the house, in the dining room with the kids around, with the desk and the drums all in one big room. We didn't separate anything. The windows were open, so we weren't trapped in the studio for months on end, and that warmth and ambience seemed to be a personality of the record.

Making Soul Cages *was therapeutic for you, but does that automatically make it as useful for your audience? Perhaps you should have recorded it and not released it.*

Maybe, but some people liked it. Three or four people liked it. Maybe three. But perhaps you're right. Still, if it's been useful to me, then I think it has to be useful to somebody else. The fears and anxieties and strengths and weaknesses I have are all common to lots of other people.

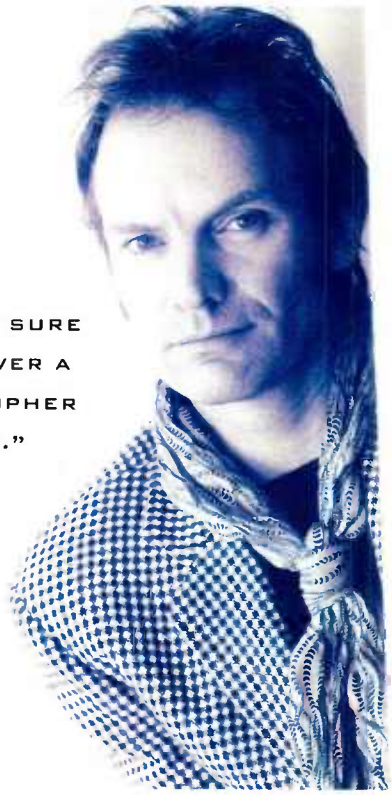
The narrators on some of these new songs aren't at all like philosopher kings, brimming with wisdom and insight. They equivocate.

I think that they're facets of my personality, without being the whole of it. Actually at the end of making this record, I thought, "There's none of me in this record, this has just been a technical exercise," which is why I added that song, "Nothing 'Bout Me." But I now feel I was kidding myself, and I probably revealed more of myself by accident than I'd planned to, because people asking me about this record have read very clearly into the lyrics and figured it out while I was trying to hide it. I'm not sure I was ever a "philosopher king," but I think people got the impression I was—that was a distortion brought about by people's focus on songs about issues or politics, because they're easier to write about, and so I end up looking like that's all I ever do. It's not true and it never was.

There are definitely more echoes of the Police on this album, things like ringing guitar parts and odd time signatures like 7/8 and 5/4.

Yeah. Because then I was writing for a small group, a three-piece, and now I'm writing for a four-piece. I'm the same guy, so I have the same sensibilities. Yes, there was very little guitar on the first two records, and that was a deliberate strategy. The obvious move for me as a solo artist would have been to recreate the Police, which I suppose I could've done. But I decided not to. I made a career on the *momentum* of the Police without resting on its musical heritage. But I'm very proud of that band, and although I don't want to recreate my youth, I can use elements from it without feeling bad about it.

The Police got back together for my wedding. We played three or four numbers, and it was funny because 10 years just slipped by and I became the person I was 10 years ago, and so did Stewart [Copeland]. I turned around to look at him, because he was playing a little faster than



"I'M NOT SURE I WAS EVER A PHILOSOPHER KING."

I wanted—he's hell to play with, in terms of where the beat is. I turned around and [*makes a snarling expression*] and so did he. And then we both caught each other doing this and we both started to laugh. It was like we were *back!* But we really get along much better now.

You're planning to tour with the Grateful Dead?

Yeah, this idea was floated to me a couple of months ago as kind of a ridiculous thing. I've never opened for anyone before, so this would be a first. But I figured the Dead have this home-grown audience that travels with them, and I think this is a totally new audience—I doubt if they've even heard of me. I can go out there and play to totally new people, and lots of them. What do I have to lose? The Dead are good musicians, they play, they improvise, and so does my band. It might pay off, it might not. And in between I'll be headlining my own shows.

Implicit in that decision is your recognition that your clout in the market may have diminished. And the word on the street is that A&M was hoping for a more commercially viable album.

This record casts a wider net, and the record company is thrilled that it's a lot easier to get on the radio. So I'm willing to play that game as long as it gives me more freedom to do as I choose the next time. I made the record I wanted to make, but I think it'll also create a sense of freedom for me the next time. It's only a game, and staying in that game as long as possible is all you can do. I don't necessarily want to *win* the game, but just to keep playing.

JOCK BAIRD

PHOTOGRAPH: DEBORAH FEINGOLD

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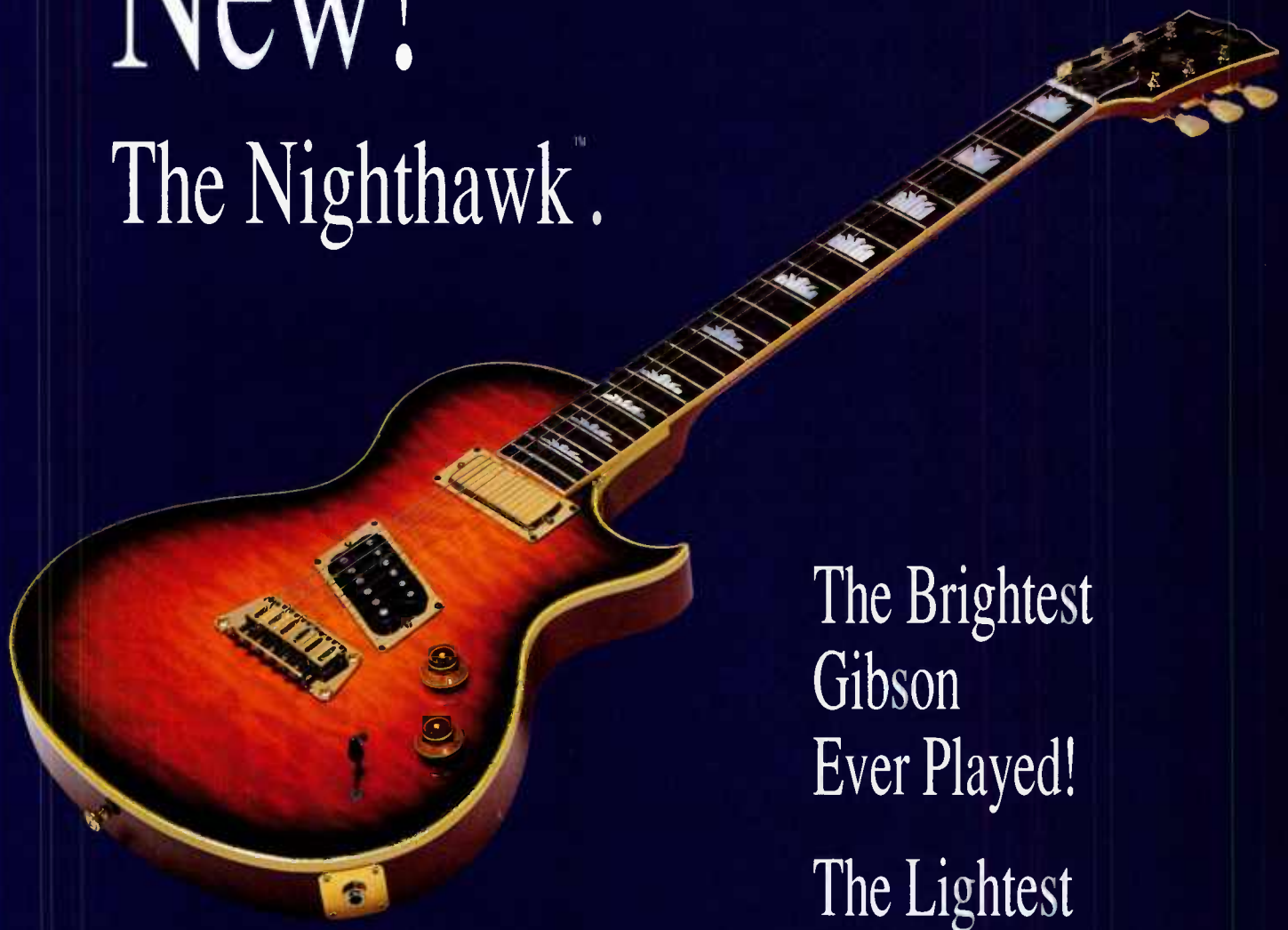

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LETTERS

YEAR IN ROCK '92

Your interviews with Anthony Kiedis of the Chili Peppers and Nuno Bettencourt of Extreme (Jan. '93) strengthened my faith in the fact that not only are there talented and, um, attractive men in rock these days but that some of them also have intelligent and thought-provoking things to say. I applaud Kiedis' concern with rain forests and Bettencourt's opinion on premarital sex. But the devil in me can't help but to ask of Nuno: So, are you a virgin or a hypocrite?

Rachel Remick
Philadelphia, PA

Your cruel and vicious cheap shot at Michael Jackson (Jan. '93) turned me off big time. Reprinting that doctored photo of Michael proves beyond a shadow of doubt that *Musician* is a mean-spirited publication, and I want no part of your sleazy brand of journalism.

Jennifer Peters
New York, NY

After your interview with Trent Reznor, I love NIN even more—the fact that he doesn't really want radio and video play is exactly what I love.

Mike Brown
Philadelphia, PA

RESPONSE TO GILMOUR

Please permit a very brief followup to David Gilmour's shrill letter of March 1993 regarding supposed "lies" in my years-past "account" of a 1986 lunch with Gilmour, Bob Ezrin and CBS Records' Steve Ralbovsky regarding Pink Floyd's then album-in-progress. The only "accounts" of this meeting were from Roger Waters and Bob Ezrin, and both were quoted verbatim.

Timothy White
Editor in Chief
Billboard

YEAR IN JAZZ

Tom Moon is clearly disturbed because young jazz musicians have chosen not to sink down into sound effects, funk and imitations of either television scores or twentieth-century concert music clichés ("Year in Jazz," Jan. '93). Though they are usually described as reactionaries, these musicians are truly rebellious; they refuse to be dictated to by MTV or those jazz critics outraged by good grooming and the determination to master the rich and varied language of jazz. Such musicians are familiar with Mr. Moon's argument: It hardly originates with him and represents a now predictable appetite for novelty that has been presented under many bylines over the last decade.

Mr. Moon also distorts a significant quotation to provide his piece with a conclusion. In his attack on Wynton Marsalis and, by more than implication, the jazz program at Lincoln Center, Mr. Moon holds up Randy Weston's *The Spirits of Our Ancestors* as one of "the year's notable efforts." Most of that music was presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center for the opening concert of the 1991–92 season, before the recording was released. Mr. Moon's truncated quote of an Andre Hodeir observation about Thelonious Monk is a perfect example of intellectual dishonesty. What Hodeir actually wrote is, "Monk's solution, though related in some ways to the formal conceptions of serious modern music, is not indebted for its guiding principles to any school of music, past or present, which is foreign to jazz; this, I feel, is essential." Mr. Moon uses a version that ends with the word "present." Obviously, the meaning becomes very different, ignores Monk's relationship to Ellington, Basie and the Harlem stride piano school. It also sets up your writer's decision to conclude his essay by going on about what "we" should do in order to become jazz visionaries instead of students.

Well, Mr. Moon, I suggest you and your "we" organize a situation that presents what the rest of us need to hear. Since we know that you won't do that, you should face a fact that the Arabs expressed quite clearly, "The dogs bark, but the caravan moves on."

Stanley Crouch
Artistic Consultant
Jazz at Lincoln Center

PRINCELY THORN

It's no wonder that Prince has a thorn in his ass about U2. They are original, political, not to mention that they are the biggest and best band in the world. But they don't have to wave their butts all over TV, wear chains on their faces or sing songs proclaiming their name.

Rachel Kratz
Winston-Salem, NC

TINY BUBBLES

I think you've finally blown a gasket. After reading "Rest in Peace" in *Backside* (Jan. '93), I couldn't believe you included Lawrence Welk, but excluded Dee Murray, the backbone of Elton John's band! How could you include Welk, who is not even a musician, and not Murray, whose basslines are nothing short of incredible??

Mark Miglietta
Port Washington, NY

TOMMY'S TUTU

While Tommy Stinson (Feb. '93) has now matured into a semi-respectable solo artist, I hope that he will not discontinue such antics as twirling himself around like a drunken ballerina during guitar breaks. As once witnessed at New York's Beacon Theater, his "Tutu Rock" beats the current "Flannel Goth" any day of the week.

Robert Wallman
New York, NY

CONSIDINEKILL

Okay, even I'll admit that calling GTR SHT is funny, but some of J.D. Considine's capsule reviews fall into the category of completely inane, if not complete BLL SHT. Of particular note: Julian Cope's *Jehovahkill* (Jan. '93). Cope has consistently released thoughtful and probing music that compares favorably with *any* rock music being produced today. J.D. may not have ever given Cope's oeuvre a good listening, or he may just not get it. But the bottom line is, he's simply wrong.

Chris Grimm
Norcross, GA

ERATAH

You guys really messed up in the Awards and Embarrassments article (Jan. '93): Vince Neil was ousted from Mötley Crüe, but Rob Halford *is* still in Judas Priest. As for Charlie Benante, he is Anthrax's drummer—not the lead singer. Their former lead singer, Joey Belladonna, was the one who was ousted.

Antonio Cheng
Puntarenas, Costa Rica

It was beautiful to see Rage Against the Machine (Jan. '93), but the caption was incorrect. From left to right, it should read: Zack, Tom, Brad, Timmy. Thanks.

Galeen Leigh Roe
Los Angeles, CA

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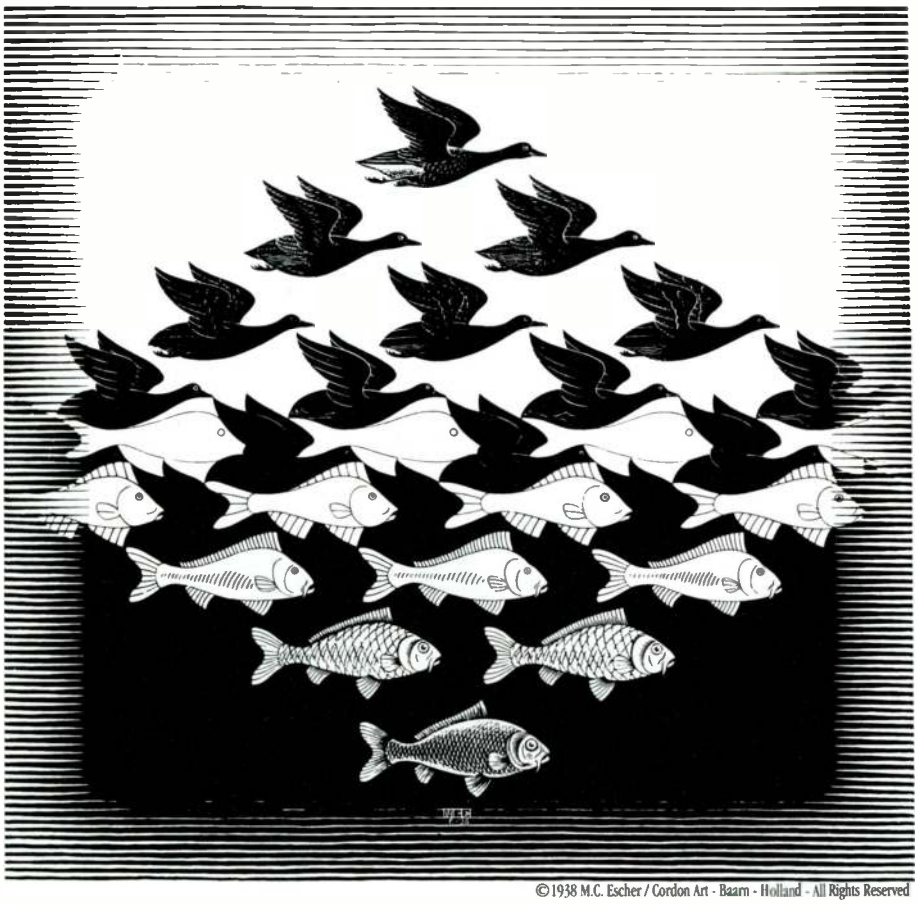

Study the illustration. Are the geese becoming fish, the fish becoming geese, or perhaps both? Seasoned recording engineers will agree that your eyes *and* your ears can play tricks on you. In the studio, sometimes what you think you hear isn't there. Other times, things you don't hear at all end up on tape. And the longer you spend listening, the more likely these aural illusions will occur.

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CHARLES THOMPSON IS BLACK FRANCIS IS FRANK BLACK

Breaking Up the Pixies

The Pixies were alternative rock's most popular puzzle makers, trailing weird lyrics about the apocalypse, mystics, death by drowning and sensual awakening through a tangle of riff-heavy rock. Now Pixies leader Black Francis is offering a new conundrum. He's disbanded the group, flip-flopped his name and become his own twin: Frank Black.

"We'd made five records and it was enough," Black says of his group's dissolution. "It wasn't a matter of our being on good or bad terms. Some people are quite comfortable working in a factory for 30 years. That's fine, if it suits their purpose. But I need to change things once in a while."

Black had already begun recording *Frank Black* when he announced the Pixies' demise; Pixies guitarist Joey Santiago even appears on the new project. Mostly, though, Black and co-producer Eric Drew Feldman (who's played with Captain Beefheart and Pere Ubu) concocted these 15 new songs alone, with the help of some computer technology. "With just Eric and me, there was plenty of elbow space," says Black. "I was playing producer, and so I felt more like I was making a record than just being involved in one." The songs, from the shipwreck tale "Parry the Wind High, Low" to the UFO love song "Places Named After Numbers," will satisfy fans of the Pixies' elusive pop. While marking no great change in Black's style, they represent his

determination to move beyond what's familiar. "I can't attach much nostalgia to my music," he says. "If it becomes precious, making it gets weird. I'll start thinking about what the lyrics mean and how they connect to my soul and ah...forget it. I don't want music to be that serious."

ANN POWERS

PHOTO: MICHAEL HALSBAND

THE WORLD FROM YOUR ARMCHAIR

Some sounds are easy to find: Garth Brooks and Pearl Jam are no further than your radio dial or nearest mall. But say your taste—or curiosity—runs toward Mexican zither, Mongolian folk or Philippine gong music. Who you gonna call?

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Executive and artistic director Robert Browning says the Institute's best sellers are in its extensive Arabic/Moroccan holdings. But why go with the crowd? Although offering a seemingly bewildering variety of styles, the catalog carries out Browning's agenda of "trying to get people to understand other people." The surprise is it isn't that hard. (World Music Institute, 49 West 27th St., Suite 810, New York, NY 10001)

SCOTT ISLER

VICKY KASALA

EFUA

Singer/songwriter Efua (pronounced "Ef-wa") figured out at a tender age that image means everything and nothing at all in this business of pop music. Her translation: If you don't have a look, no one will listen; if you don't sound good, no one will look at you. Hence it's no accident that the adjectives *eclectic, insouciant* and *seductive* could describe Efua's sound and style.

"My writing is an extension of myself," says the 26-year-old former fashion model and dancer about her Virgin debut *Dream Juice*—a refuse-to-be-categorized album which draws on pop, R&B, hip-hop and reggae stylings (thanks to her father, who is Jamaican). "I try to be honest. I thought about writing songs about the homeless and Somalia when I was recording. But that's not what I think about *every* morning. I write the way I dress and walk—with a sense of humor."

The feline, husky-voiced Efua began studying jazz dance at age 15. By the age of 18, she was a triple threat: touring Europe as a runway model and choreographer for multimedia Nike and Levi trade shows as well as studying arts and sociology in college. Later the fashion plate appeared in numerous music videos, including Maxi Priest, Lil' Louie and Soul II Soul, to pay the bills.

But after a while, Efua got bored with merely stylin' and profilin'. Or as she sings in "Down Is the Drop," "I'm no background chick." "As a model I got taken out by a lot of people. But a lot of the time, if you're a pretty woman, you don't get introduced to people. You're treated like an ornament."

Those days are over for Efua, who has joined the cadre of post–Soul II Soul, high-style black Londoners like D'Influence, Ephraim Lewis and Lil' Louie, who are tantalizing listeners with late-'70s, smooth-funk sound and poetic lyrics.

"I've done a lot of 'being the chick in the video,'" she says. "That's why I started writing songs." GORDON CHAMBERS

GUTTERBALL

Taking Care of Business

LINDA COVELLO

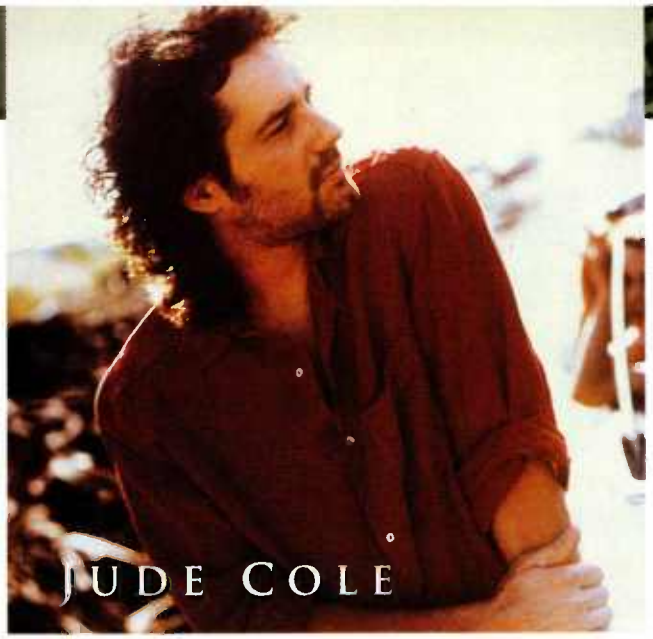
Gutterball is a decidedly informal band of indie vets who'd love to keep their guitar rock on the ad hoc side. The product of that old pop myth—camaraderie being exceptionally fruitful—jumps out of their *Everybody-Knows-This-Is-Blonde-on-Blonde* rave-ups. House of Freaks guitarist Bryan Harvey says, "We found out feeling is more important than thinking."

Gutterball was recorded in Richmond, Virginia (it's the next big spot, you A&R folk—stop off on your way back from Charlotte) with ex-Silos bassist Bob Rupe and HOF's Johnny Hott on drums; Long Ryder Steve McCarthy played guitar. Steve Wynn bused in from Nashville, where stabs at churning out some C&W hits made him bug out. "I wouldn't say it was a miserable experience... well, yeah, I would say it was miserable," he carps. Inspiration was waiting at the end of the Greyhound trip.

For an impromptu session ("It was eye contact, a kerosene heater and lotsa drink," offers Wynn), *Gutterball* is arguably the most vivid pop these guys have ever made; it seems fully lived-in. Mixing literalisms (Willis Reed, Fontella Bass and *Sassy* all get name-dropped along the way) with metaphors (preachers and prostitutes go head-to-head), the writing matches the gusto of the performance.

The handful of cavalier live dates confirm the tacit Gutterball credo; fooling around helps facilitate their collective inspiration. Wynn: "Some people get together with their buddies and go bowling, or play poker, or go to the bar. This band is our social event. We converse through BTO covers."

JIM MAGNIE



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Rambling Gambling Man

"My father's a gambler. Always has been, probably always will be. That's the way he's made his living, first as a pool hustler and then as a poker player," says Jude Cole, strumming his guitar as we talk about "First Your Money (Then Your Clothes)," a song from his new Reprise album *Start the Car*. "He'd come home from playing cards and when he'd win, we'd go to the music store—I was 14 years old and had a Les Paul and a Marshall stack. When he'd lose, he'd pull out his pants pocket and say, 'Well, that's the way it goes. First your money and then your clothes.'"

Cole, who was born and grew up in a small Midwestern town, never had any doubts about becoming a musician or his lust for big cities. "At 18, I figured I'd had enough cold weather, so I took my first plane ride, to L.A., and got lucky."

Cole landed an immediate job as lead guitarist and backup singer with Moon Martin and the Ravens. "If it weren't for Moon, I don't think I'd be a songwriter," he says. "I wrote 'Paula Meet Jeanne' and Dave Edmunds recorded it. I owe a lot to Moon."

Start the Car is filled with good songs: the title tune (about a love-hate relationship with Los Angeles), a California-rock anthem "probably inspired by Jackson Browne and Bob Seger" called "Open Road" and "Just Another Night" (based on the Arturo Bandini character in John Fante's novels), a song to which all ink-stained scribes can ruefully relate.

"Me, I'm a poor pool player. That's what I do in my spare time. I play every day and I gamble every day, and the parallels are kind of uncanny. It's taught me quite a few lessons—about life and about gambling."

PAUL NELSON

BRAD
Heart of Stone

Stone Gossard wants to make one thing perfectly clear: Brad, the Seattle guitarist's first outside project since Pearl Jam skyrocketed into the superstar stratosphere, is a group effort. "It's not my solo ego trip, it's not 'Stone Alone,'" he says. Gossard, who cropped his shoulder-length locks, dyed the rest of his hair blonde, and now resembles Perry Farrell crossed with mid-period Lou Reed (sans the black nail polish), hooked up with three buddies to knock off the loose and limber *Shame* in just two weeks.

Shame may surprise fans of *Ten*'s proto-power grunge attack, and Gossard admits that the album's overall tone is "somber." The darkly elegant lead track "Buttercup" signals a gentle groove, as minor chords back the soulful vocals of Shawn Smith, who's apparently well acquainted with Lionel Richie's days as head Commodore. Other tracks, like the mega-flanged "My Fingers" and the sustain-laden "Screen," spotlight Gossard's previously downplayed soloing prowess. Additionally, some studio clowning made the final cut, like Smith's funky smarm on "Rockstar" and his robotic Archie Bunker–meets–Andrew Dice Clay tirade following "We."

Much of *Shame*'s vibe evolved from in-studio jamming. "This may sound peculiar," relates drummer Regan Hagar, "but we knew to record the moodier songs after we drank wine and ate dinner at a nearby pasta place. That made us a lot more relaxed during evening recording."

(L TO R) JEREMY TOBACK, SHAWN SMITH, STONE GOSSARD, REGAN HAGAR

LANCE MERCER

While the specter of Pearl Jam's upcoming sophomore album hovered over the project, Gossard enjoyed the generally pressure-free atmosphere of the Brad sessions. "What a refreshing way to make a record," he says. And that freedom, Hagar adds, also led to Brad's establishing a clear identity. "We didn't feel we had to write Stoneyish songs," he says, "to please Stoneyish fans."

MIKE METTLER

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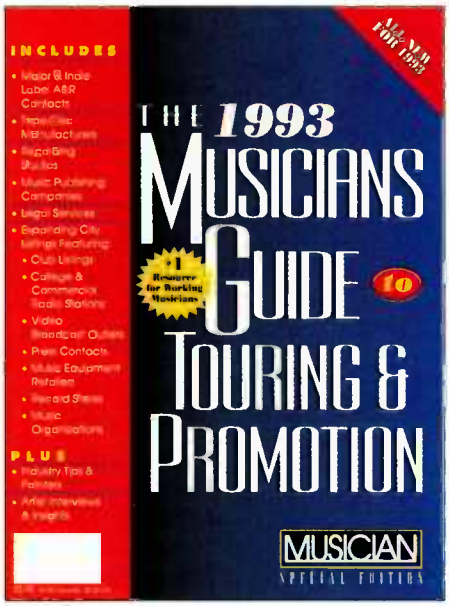

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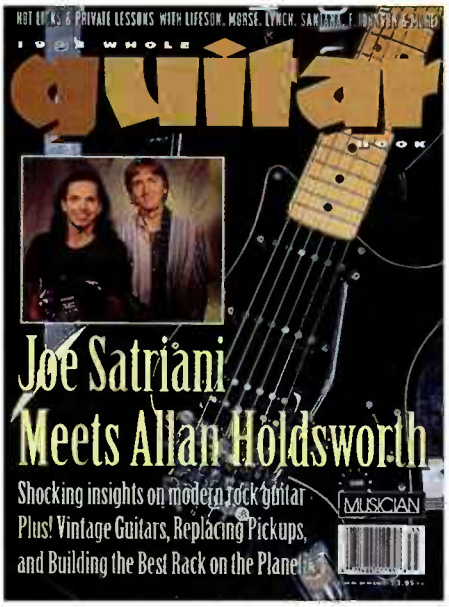

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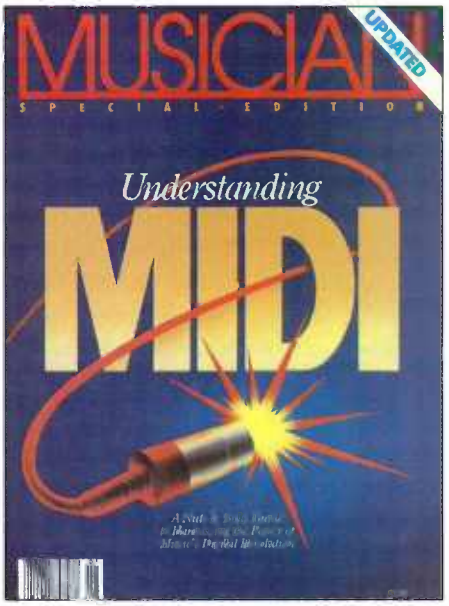

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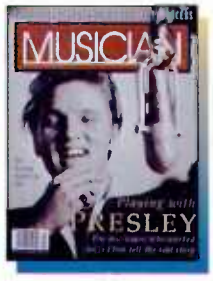

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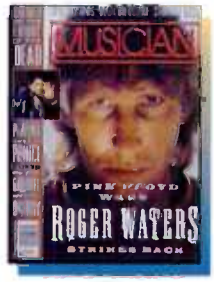

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PAUL McCARTNEY

"THE WEEKEND STARTS HERE," beamed a well-preserved Paul McCartney, surveying the friendly crowd at London's Docklands Arena one dank Friday night in February. Say what you will about the variable quality of the former Beatle's solo output, but the man sure can put on a show. Cramming nearly two dozen tunes into 90 brisk minutes, Paul and a punchy ensemble did some old favorites proud and added an extra zing to the best songs from his new *Off the Ground* LP. Life begins at 50?

Though McCartney frequently reminded the audience of press and invited guests that the gig was meant as a rehearsal for his upcoming world tour, there wasn't a ragged edge in sight. Backed by the same efficient crew that made the 1989–90 global trek, except for the addition of ex-Pretender Blair Cunningham on drums, he breezed through classic after classic with the easy confidence of someone who no longer feels the need to prove himself. "Lady Madonna" and "Drive My Car" crackled like they should; a loose acoustic interlude highlighted by "Good Rockin' Tonight" and the still-compelling "We Can Work It Out" breathed fresh air into what could have become a stiff recital. Indeed, although McCartney didn't offer any radical revisions, he tweaked the material enough to avoid suggesting a rote oldies act. "I Wanna Be Your Man" became a chunky bump 'n' grind à la Bo Diddley, while "And I Love Her" slowed to an almost funereal pace, adding a strange streak of dread to the expected tenderness.

Otherwise, McCartney still doesn't show much interest in the dark side, which has inspired plenty of criticism over the years. Onstage, however, this chronic sunniness became an asset—when someone enjoys performing so much, it's hard not to smile back. Part of his pleasure clearly came from being part of a strong band. Lead guitarist Robbie McIntosh, the other Pretenders alumnus in the fold, cooked fiercely without violating the melodies, and McCartney and Cunningham made a mighty rhythm section. In fact, the

> *The man sure can put on a show.*

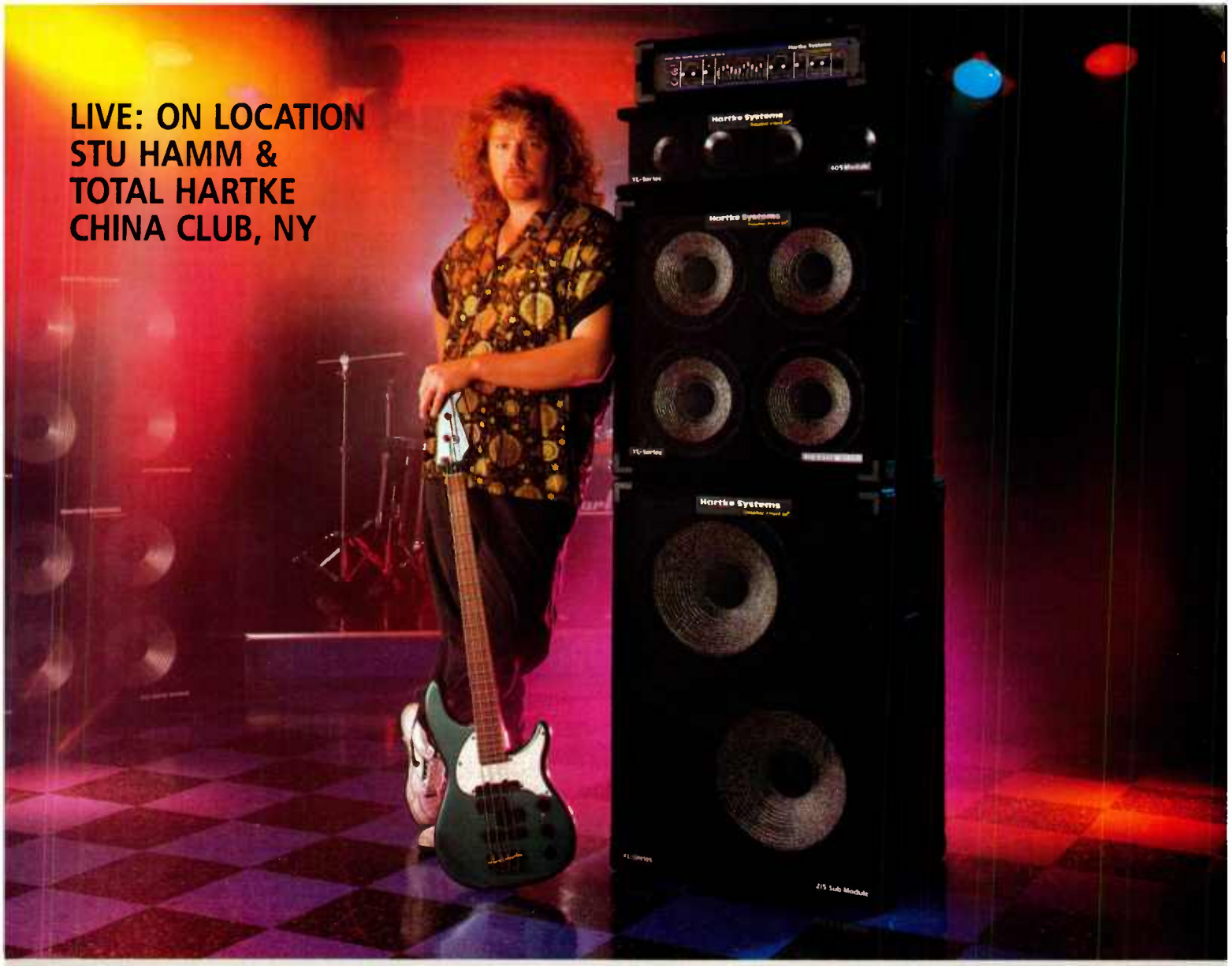
evening's biggest letdown came halfway through the show, when Paul relinquished bass duties to Hamish Stuart and became rhythm guitarist.

So the performance showed that McCartney has come to grips with the awesome legacy of the Beatles, at least as much as anyone could. What it said about his view of the post-Fabs era was less clear. Except for the new album, all but one of the solo songs came from the early to mid-'70s, wrongly implying that the last 15 years didn't produce any music worth preserving. "My Love" and "Coming Up" (funkier than remembered) held up surprisingly well; "Every Night" and a sluggish "Let Me Roll It" raised the usual questions about his artistic judgment. Vibrant new tunes like "Hope of Deliverance" and "Get Out of My Way" made a compelling argument for *Off the Ground* as McCartney's best work in some time. Too bad he'll probably file 'em and forget 'em a year from now.

Given his accomplishments, both artistic and financial, it's tempting to ask why Paul McCartney continues to make the effort. A spirited version of the absurd "Live and Let Die," which he introduced with a reference to the recent Guns N' Roses cover, supplied the answer: Though it's easily one of the silliest things he's ever recorded, McCartney's rousing rendition, punctuated by smoke bombs and noisy crescendoes, spells good old-fashioned fun. The lad's an entertainer, and he gets the job done.

—JON YOUNG

PHOTOGRAPH: TERRY LOTT



We caught up with Stu Hamm and his new Total Hartke bass system at the China Club in New York. After taking us on an amazing journey through the expanded bass tone spectrum, Stu talked about the system.

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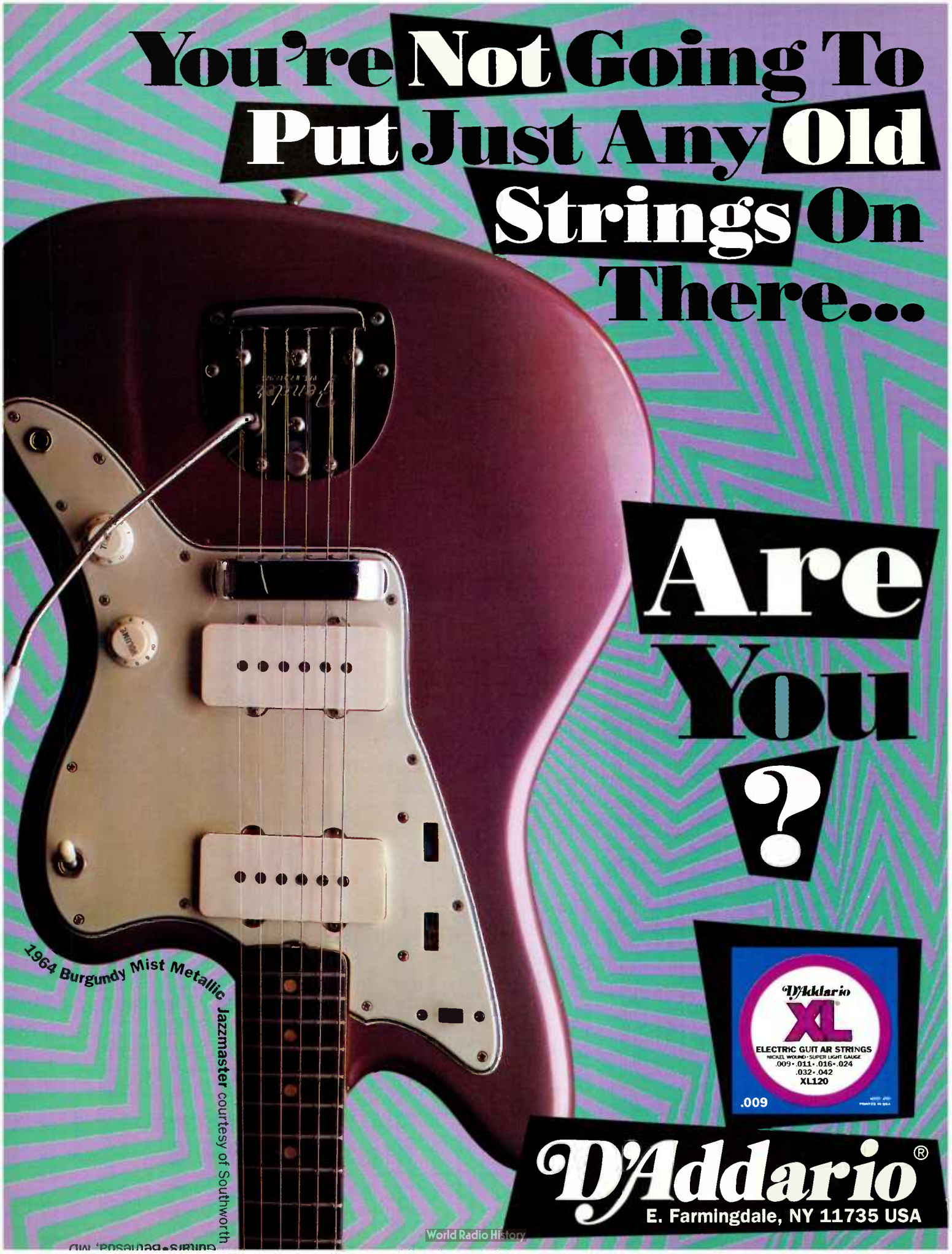

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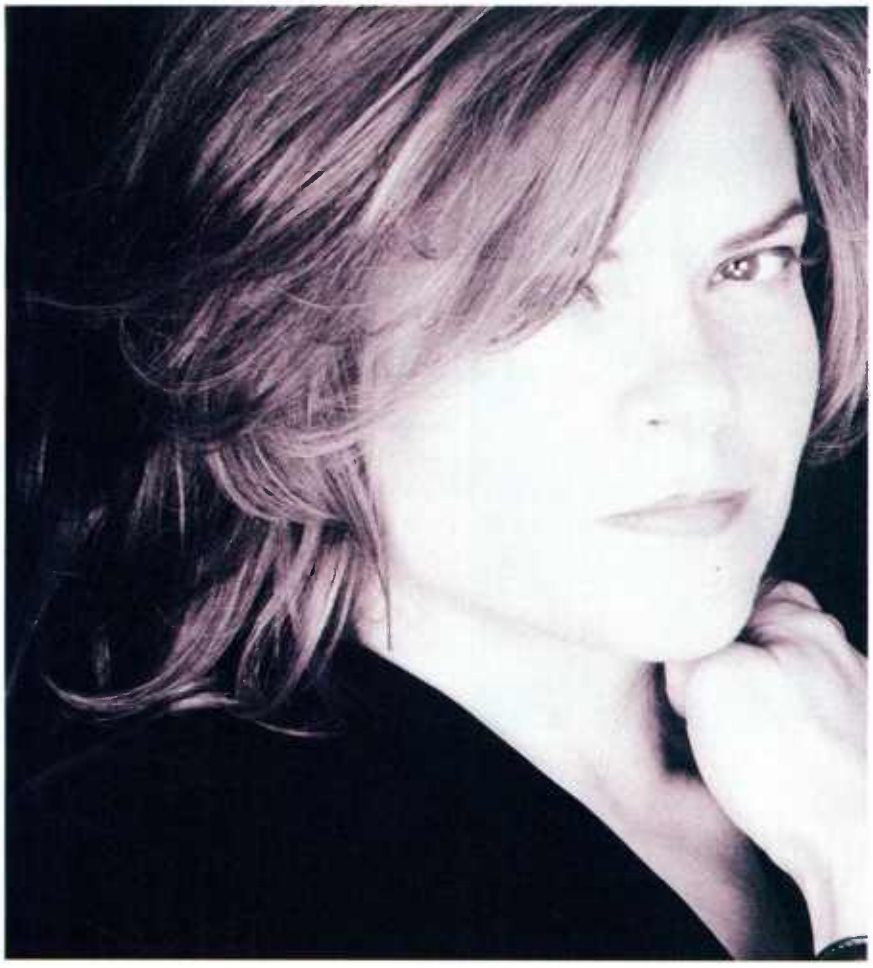
ROSANNE CASH WAKES UP



BY GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

"WAS THAT TOO CONVOLUTED?" ASKS ROSANNE CASH, AT THE first commercial break. She's just given a thoroughly lucid and sensible answer to a question about music censorship, during a taping of NBC's "Later with Bob Costas," but she has her doubts. Backstage she folds a napkin around some goodies she's scooped up from a platter of snacks—"I've been feeding my kids catered food for the last three days"—and worries aloud about her performance. In fact, she has come across just as she does in real life, and in her music: smart, direct, thoughtful and confident—except, of course, when she isn't.

She should be confident talking about her new album, *The Wheel*, a lush cycle of songs on which she's never sounded—or written—better. She's given over this particular day to promote it, but she wonders—since we're at the NBC Studios anyway—would it be all right if we say hello to a friend of hers? The friend turns out to be Bob Morton, producer of "Late Night with David Letterman," and he's in Dave's office—with the door closed—when we get there. A rumor has been buzzing around 30 Rock all morning that Letterman will be moving to CBS, and when Morton returns, the affable producer asks us into his office and confirms it—the announcement will come the following day. Small talk follows, and Morton good-naturedly paws Cash on the sofa. They used to date, Cash will explain later.

Despite her famous pedigree and high profile, Rosanne Cash is like a lot of people: a single, working mother making a go of it in Manhattan. Divorced last year from country star Rodney Crowell, she lives with their two youngest daughters (the eldest, 12, decided to stay with Crowell in Nashville) in a rented SoHo apartment. The place has a spare, homey feel: a nice-sized kitchen, some antique pieces, a small Howard Finster, a tricycle, a guitar sharing corner space with a folded-up stroller. Cash, who grew up outside Los Angeles, loves her new life.

> *"There's no point in denying that I write from experience."*

"I went to the opera last night," she says. "I went to the Matisse exhibit last week. I love the things that are accessible here. And I feel very passionate about my friends here." Pressed, she names a few—G.E. Smith, Marc Cohn—but cuts herself off because "that sounds icky." She's assured it doesn't sound icky in the least. "Okay...yeah, I love New York. I'm more sure of myself. I've got a thicker skin. I'm not so willing to sacrifice my feelings for someone else's. I'm more aggressive. And I don't take shit from the guys who say stuff to you on the street."

In keeping with the spirit of single-working-momhood, Cash sits for her interview accompanied by her four-year-old, Carrie, who she's just picked up from school. Inside an Indian restaurant, Carrie's shyness gradually evaporates, and before long Cash is fielding questions from not one but two directions.

"I felt limited by the country format," Cash is saying, "and I felt limited by myself. I wanted to achieve something I wasn't getting to. I felt pressured to make records before I wanted to make them. (No, sweetie. Do you wanna try some of this? Yes, it's a potato.) If you're in that Nashville community, you're expected [*cont'd on page 26*]

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS CARROLL/ONYX

THE BEST AMERICAN JAZZ FESTIVAL IS IN CANADA

MAX ROACH: MEMORIES OF MASSEY

BY MARK ROWLAND

MY EXPERIENCE WITH JAZZ FESTIVALS HAD LED ME TO BELIEVE that "jazz" and "festival" were mutually exclusive terms. Maybe that's because so many of my festive experiences occurred in New York, site of the JVC Octogenarian All-Stars Salute Bing Crosby Jam, or in Los Angeles, home of the annual Playboy Noisy Fusion Picnic. A few other U.S. cities, like San Francisco, present smaller, more specialized events, and of course there's that bash in New Orleans, where jazz occupies one party portion of an increasingly oversized menu. But if you'd rather attend an event designed to showcase the depth and range of what is, after all, the crown jewel of American culture, it always seemed like your best option was to do what jazz musicians do every summer—pack your bags and head for Europe.

But that was B.C.—before Canada. Or more specifically, before attending the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, where, as New York's own *Village Voice* has ruefully observed, "in 10 days one can hear what one gets in New York during an entire year."

In 1992, the Montreal Festival spread itself over 12 days and 350 musical events, in part to signify the 350th anniversary of the city. But the greater significance was that, in its thirteenth year, it had become the most important annual jazz event on this continent, perhaps in the world. The musical choices, put together largely by festival co-founder Andre Menard, were as tasteful and wide-ranging as any fan could hope for, spotlighting tried-and-true masters like Max Roach with tributes to more esoteric legends like Paul Bley (here presented solo, in duo with John Scofield, and in trio with John Surman/John Abercrombie and Gary Peacock/Billy Hart) and one-of-a-kind matchups like a piano meeting between Joanne Brackeen and Lorraine Desmarais.

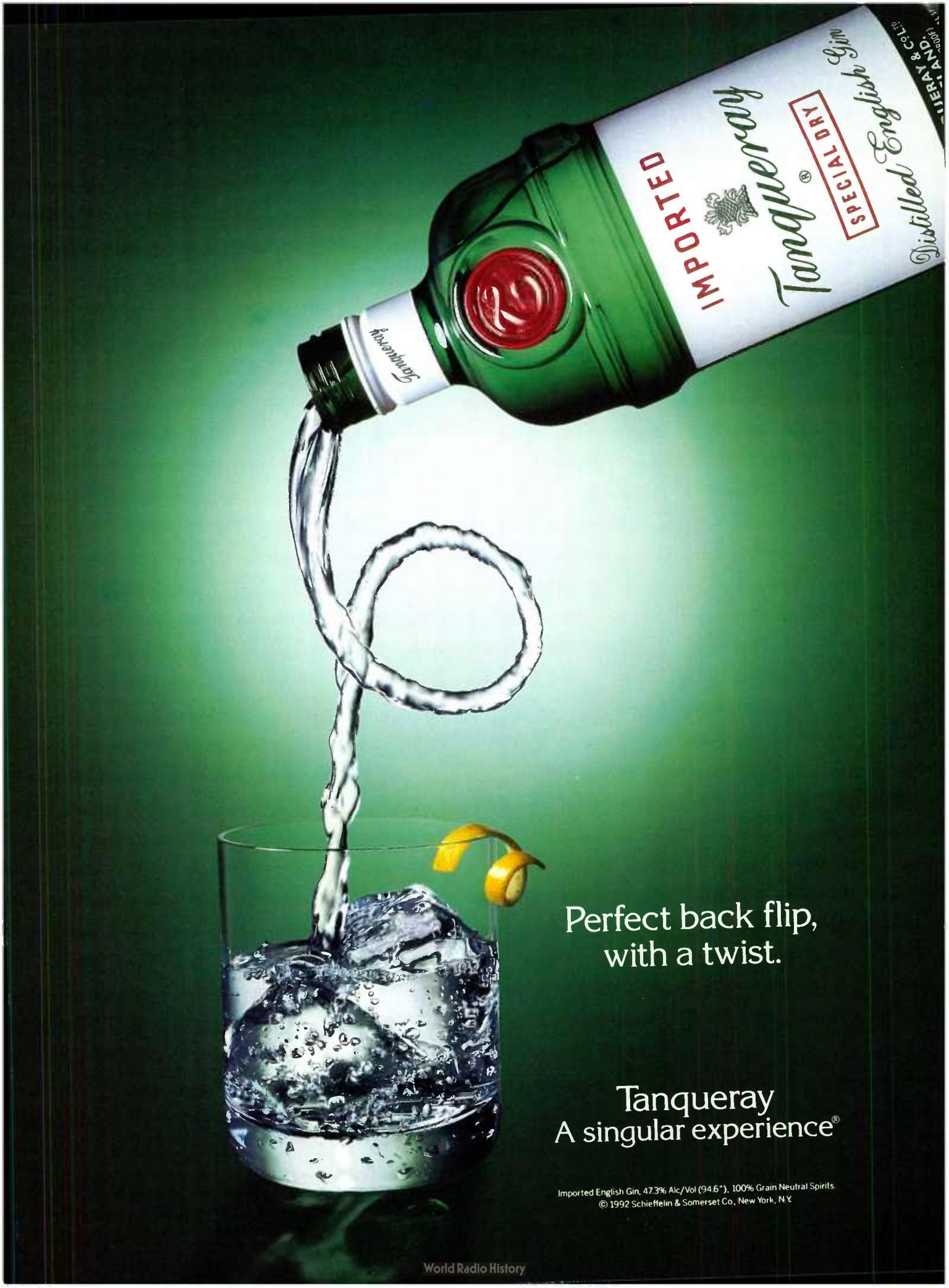
But what really makes Montreal special is its spirit. While the 50 or so ticketed events take place in acoustically splendid halls within a downtown complex of modern buildings devoted to the arts, the real show takes place on the surrounding streets, which have been cordoned off from traffic. There tens of thousands of fans bask in music emanating from any of several stages that have been erected on street corners and in adjoining parks, a nonstop cornucopia of sound that spokes outward from straightahead jazz to flamenco, Brazilian, zydeco, salsa, African music and blues. One evening performance by the popular Montreal jazz group UZEB, for instance, drew 90,000 people—and transpired without a single arrest or criminal complaint. For that matter, the entire 12 nights of outdoor shows—which in '92 took place more often than not in the rain—went off without a security hitch. Try that in New York or L.A.

Montreal steals the show

Credit the famous French reverence for jazz, to which the Montrealers add a concentrated seasonal sense of joie de vivre. "I think you have to spend six months in this winter weather to understand how people are so hungry for fun in the summertime," observes Menard. Indeed, how else to explain a town whose top tourist attraction is a $250 million retractable stadium dome that's usable maybe a dozen times a year? Or whose summer months are utterly jammed with cultural events, including international competitions devoted to comedy and to fireworks?

Menard met his partner, Festival de Jazz president Alain Simard, while in college during the '60s. He'd grown up a rock fan, and recalls a '69 concert featuring Rahsaan Roland Kirk as a jazz awakening. The pair began promoting blues and jazz events through the '70s, and in 1979 attempted their first festival on the site of Montreal's Expo 67.

Menard and Simard are not exactly hippies anymore—they head an organization of about 150 employees whose activities include record-



ing studios, concert promotion and artist management, with gross revenue of about $20 million a year. "But the first thing I do when I get up every day is put on a record," says Menard. "I'm really living the same way I did when I was 18, and getting paid for it. I can't play an instrument, so music is still a mystery to me. So I can't justify my choices for the festival," he laughs. "But I don't mind. Because it keeps a kind of freshness that I want to preserve."

The artists seem to agree. During last year's conclave, when a packed house of 2500 received a challenging performance by Max Roach's double quartet with wild, stomping glee, Roach compared the scene to the famous "Jazz at Massey Hall" concert in Toronto he performed with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell and Charles Mingus nearly four decades earlier. "That concert was the thrill of my life," Roach told the audience. "Tonight you've given me the same kind of charge."

A few days in the aura of the fest might do the same for any fan. Leaving that evening's Roach concert, I sauntered next door to an elegant hall where Montreal's own Oliver Jones was leading a polished big band and gospel choir. Then I took to the streets, where an enormous crowd was doing a collective cumbia to the salsa rhythms of Memo Acevedo and Banda Brava. As that show concluded I ducked into the cozy environs of the nearby Cinquième Salle to watch clarinetist Don Byron lead his modern nine-piece Klezmer band (including a cantor) through celebratory readings of traditional Jewish favorites that peaked with a suitably frenzied "Wedding Dance." By then it was past midnight, and the street crowds reluctantly dwindling. But at the end of one block, a happy assemblage was blissing out to the guitar duets of Boulou and Elios Ferre, the preeminent modern interpreters of the Django Reinhardt style.

For all its sophistication, the festival retains a close connection to both its French and Canadian roots. For the former there's an interesting tangent of performers with French language connections (zydeco/cajun, Haitian and soukous bands) and for the latter a sizable contingent of top-notch Canadian jazz artists. While the plethora of fine summer festivals throughout Europe makes Menard's job increasingly difficult, Montreal's has achieved enough prestige to attract some European artists, such as Jan Garbarek, who won't tour anywhere else in North America.

"We've tended to take more risks through the years," Menard says, "and it's worked because of the confidence the festival generates. Where else in North America would an artist like Barbara Dennerlein or Béla Fleck fill a hall? People's tastes are not as uni-dimensional as the recording industry might prefer. I don't like to use words like 'educational,' but people don't mind learning about something new if it's done in the right way.

"And still have fun," he adds with a laugh. "To discover things and have a good time, so people don't feel excluded. This is not the old Catholic thing of self-whipping. I like a good party." The 1993 Festival de Jazz runs from July 1–11. For information, write 822 Sherbrooke St. East, Montreal, H2C 1K4, or phone 514-871-1881.

CASH

[*cont'd from page 23*] to be a part of a certain ideology. It's about a lot more than music—or a lot less than music. For a lot of people it's wonderful. (What do you need, sweetie?) I didn't have any interest in being a singer when I started, I just wanted to be a writer. And so for a lot of those records I really felt illegitimate—I didn't have any right to be making records, I didn't consider myself a great interpretive singer, and if I wasn't writing the whole record, why in the hell am I doing it? It was a crisis of faith about myself. What I really wanted was to make a singular vision, do

that as a singer/songwriter. And I really didn't do that till *Interiors*. I felt like that was my first record, and that this record is an evolution of that. It's a totally new world to me. I'm really doing what I want. (You're so silly!) 'The Wheel' was the first song I wrote after *Interiors*, and I went, 'Aaawwww—I can breathe now. Thank God.'"

Does it bother her that people assume a lot of her songs are about Crowell?

"No. There's no point in denying that I write from experience. I don't know how I could do otherwise. I respect him deeply, and I love him, and I think one of the hardest parts about not being together is that I haven't heard what he's written lately. But we have an ongoing relationship."

Cash seems stunned when it's pointed out that eight of the 11 songs on *The Wheel* mention sleeping or waking.

"You're kidding. This is really moving to me. I didn't realize it was that much of a theme. It seems I spend a lot of time thinking about (Yeah, we do have goldfish!) waking up in a lot of different ways, about trying to become aware of something that is just out of your reach. (Move your goldfish and your brownies, big girl.) There's something innocent about that struggle, that feeling in a dream when you want to wake up and you can't. (This is spicy, you wouldn't like this. This is some kind of chutney or something. It's a sauce—you want a taste?)"

Would she call *The Wheel* an album of rejuvenation?

"Transformation. Conceptually, that is what it's about. Even though there are some real moments of despair and longing and frustration, it's really about regeneration, resurrection."

Still, the notion of a wheel turning means—

"Means it's gonna come back around to it. (What, honey? Amazing.) But when it does, hopefully it's with greater awareness—and less time on that side of the wheel. (What, honey? It says 'Happy New Year.') I had a house up in Westport the summer before last, a cottage out in the woods. I spent a lot of time alone that year. Also, I quit therapy and went into Jungian analysis. I finally said, 'Enough beating the pillows, I need something more substantial.' So I went to this Jungian analyst and he said, 'You need to take a hot bath, spend some time alone and think.' It was just so *sensible*. And I always liked working with my dreams, so it dovetailed with my life. What generally happens is that I start feeling crazy, and either I'm gonna eat everything in my house or I'm gonna have to sit down and write. So I start writing. (Have this...it's just in a creamy sauce, I think you'd like it.) But I'm always working on ideas.

"I don't think, 'Oh, I've found my formula.' I'm sure I'll go the route where at some point I'll completely lose my audience. [*laughs*] You know how, say, Sting or Joni Mitchell went deeper into what they wanted to do, and they started losing a huge part of their audience because not that many people could relate to it anymore? That is a *great goal*—to just go so deep that people are going, 'What the *hell* is she talking about?'"

FLAT-TOP BOXES

My favorite guitar is a Martin with no model number on it," CASH says. "It used to be an archtop, but it was smashed at a party. It was rebuilt by [New York guitar dealer] Matt Umanov, and I got it from him about 10 years ago. It's got a very thin body of spruce and rosewood, and it has this magnificent tone. Every musician I know envies this guitar." When she's on the road, Cash plays a Guild electric/acoustic. And she loves her Ferrington baby guitar. Her preferred strings are Ernie Balls or D'Addarios. In the studio, Cash likes to sing into Neumann U47s and AKG C12s.

CHRIS WILSON'S REGGAE HEARTBEAT

IF CHRIS WILSON WASN'T IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS, HE MIGHT BE IN THE soul-saving business. He approaches his task of rescuing classic Jamaican ska, rock steady and reggae original master tapes and compiling them for release with the kind of missionary zeal found among hyperactive evangelists. To Wilson, the cause is equally righteous.

"This isn't just some hick music from the islands," he says. "It is really very relevant to how people in the Western world live. It's as important and as interesting to me as Motown or Stax, and it should be taken as seriously, because it is music whose basic conception of the world was born through suffering."

Wilson spent most of his childhood in Jamaica. By the time he was a teenager, he was hooked on soul music, whether it was rock 'n' roll or rock steady, Marvin Gaye or Alton Ellis. But it wasn't until the early '80s, when he met with Rounder Records executives Duncan Browne and Bill Nowlin, that his love and knowledge of Jamaican music was harnessed to vinyl. Wilson's first project for Rounder's Heartbeat Records, *Beat of Studio One*, turned out to be the beginning of an auspicious reissue series now numbering more than two dozen. That he gained the trust of such reggae figures as Studio One godfather/producer Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, a man who had been burnt many times by record-biz privateers, amazes Nowlin.

"We had no idea if there would be a series," Rounder's president admits. "Everybody was so astonished that we'd been able to work anything out with Coxsone in the first place. I think it wasn't until he saw that we supplied royalty statements and there was a check that came along with the statements and the figures seemed to be intuitively correct to him and he got to know us better that things began to loosen up."

Hunting tapes in Jamaica

The Studio One releases have ranged from meticulously compiled collections like *Fire Down Below* and *Ska Bonanza* to single-artist or group records—like Bob Marley and the Wailers' double-CD set of rare '60s sides, and the label's best seller, *One Love*—to re-releases of albums by the likes of Freddie McGregor, the late Slim Smith and Larry Marshall. Although the Coxsone legacy dominates the Heartbeat catalog, Wilson has since secured master tapes from other producers central to the music. In the process, Wilson has refined his method of putting an album together to a science.

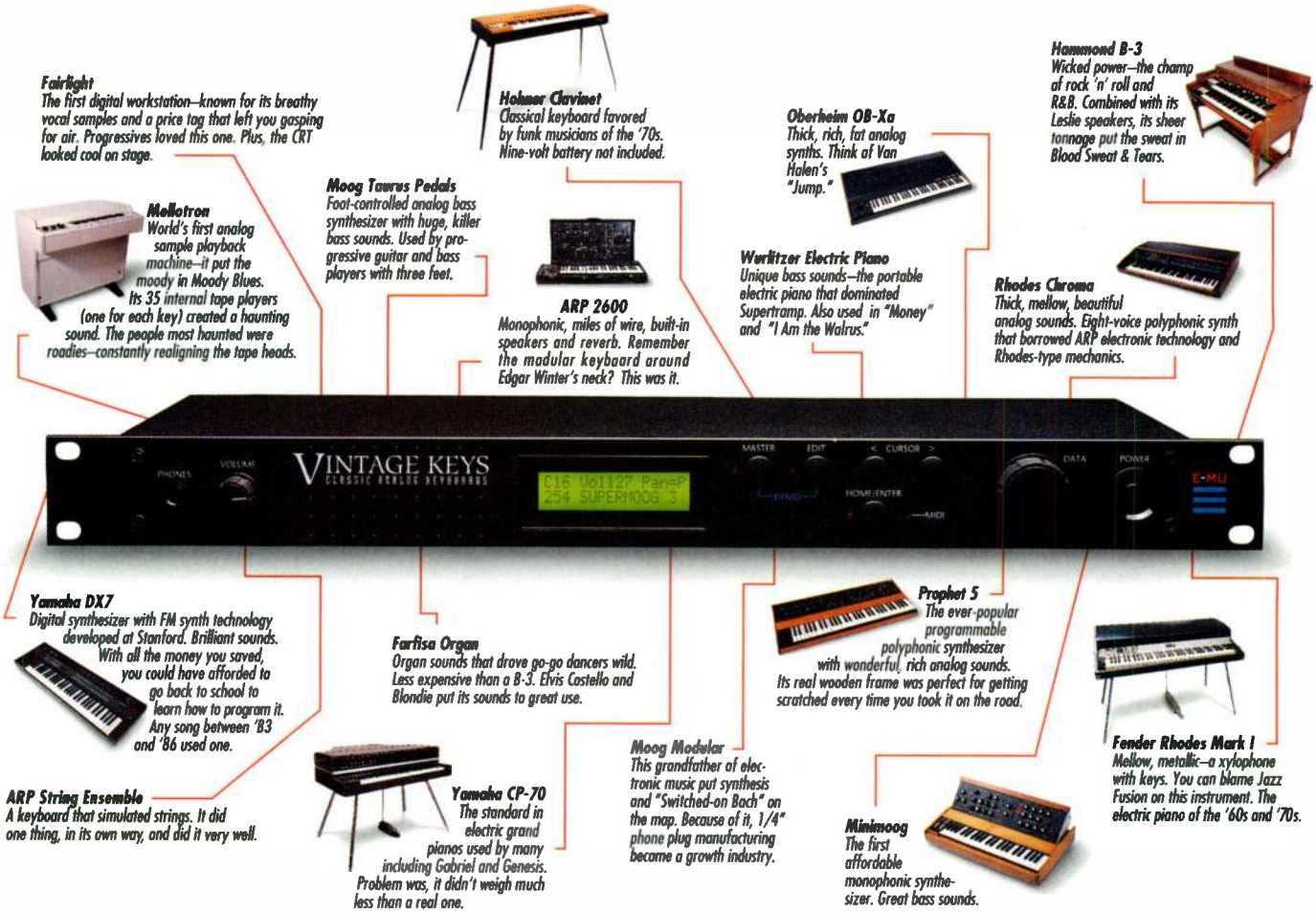
"When an idea comes to me, I go into my collection and pull out the singles that would represent that idea," he explains. "I present them to Bill and Duncan and we basically agree on the direction. I go to the producer with my list and I fill in the gaps with his favorites as well. Then I transfer those master tapes to DAT most of the time, bring them back from Jamaica and pick the songs that I'm gonna use from the ones that I've taken, resequence them, then remaster them and put them on the finished product. Certain songs work together in terms of a sequence. You're not gonna put seven major-key songs in a row. What you try to do is the same thing a DJ does; you try to work the material so that the people who are listening will not want to take off the product.

"Most of what I try to do for, let's say, a Studio One compilation is give a good mixture of the known and unknown," [*cont'd on page 33*]

BY TOM CHEYNEY

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVEN LEWIS

THINK OF IT AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF CLASSIC ANALOG KEYBOARDS.



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AIMEE MANN'S SWEET REVENGE

BY MAC RANDALL

"WE'VE HAD A JOKE GOING RECENTLY," AIMEE MANN SAYS, "THAT the new album has three themes: despair, defeat and revenge." The 32-year-old singer/songwriter is speaking over coffee at Boston's Trident Bookstore Cafe on a stormy January night. It's been four years since her band 'Til Tuesday released their last record, nearly eight years since their only sizable hit. In between, there's been plenty of reason for despair and defeat—years of legal hassles with record companies, the dissolution of the band, an unbroken plummet into obscurity. But now Mann may finally have a chance at revenge. She's putting the finishing touches on her first solo album, *Whatever*, which is probably the finest collection of pop songs you'll hear this year.

What's surprising is that such unpleasant subjects as despair, defeat and revenge should translate into exciting, listener-friendly music. *Whatever* is both a melodious testament to the craft of pop songwriting and an intelligent reflection on the many problems musicians can encounter. Mann's had them all and overcome them all. Yet the fact that her career began with a Top 40 hit may have been the toughest of the lot.

That hit, "Voices Carry," made Boston-based 'Til Tuesday one of 1985's more impressive success stories. But right from the start there were problems. The band disagreed with the choice of "Voices Carry" as a single. "We never thought of it as a real pop song," Mann says now. The song's accompanying video created an image that proved hard to escape from: "Some people may have thought teased hair was the main reason for my success." And when they tried to alter their sound on their next album, *Welcome Home*, their record company demanded more consistency. "I don't think Epic ever understood what I wanted to do. They wanted me to be more accessible and write with other people, but I had no respect for any of the people they mentioned."

"Songs usually are about problems"

Dissatisfaction with the company reached its height in 1989. "When our third album [*Everything's Different Now*] was released, we went to radio stations and very few people were playing the record. The people that did said nobody had sent it to them; they'd read somewhere we'd put something out and then went out and found it. I felt neglected. I didn't want to put my heart and soul into making a great record and then have nobody hear it."

Mann decided to take her talents elsewhere, but Epic was reluctant to let go. Negotiations went on for over two years, during which Mann found herself in an uncomfortable artistic position. "It's hard to look for a new label when you're not really off another one but you're not really on it either," she observes. An agreement was finally reached in late 1991 and Aimee was set free. After talking with several labels, she realized that the album she wanted to make should be recorded independently prior to a signing; her manager Patrick Rains put up the money. "If I didn't have a record deal, then I didn't have to deal with anyone who's trying to achieve a commercial purpose. I saw the situation as a great opportunity to experiment."

While recording the new songs that had been accumulating over the last two years, Mann also decided to retire the name 'Til Tuesday and go

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solo: "On the record we used a couple of different drummers besides Michael [Hausman], and since he's the only other original member of 'Til Tuesday, it seemed best to call it a solo record. We did have some success with the old name, and I like being part of a band, but I think it'll be just as interesting to be on my own." As work on the album neared completion, Mann settled on Imago as her new label.

Two old friends, Jon Brion and Buddy Judge, played important parts in the making of *Whatever*; both were members in the final version of 'Til Tuesday. Aimee wanted Brion, a multi-instrumentalist and '60s pop freak, to produce the album. "He'd never produced anything before, he's a crazy eccentric musician who likes to work till seven in the morning, and it's very unlikely that any record company would agree to have him produce." All the more reason to use him. Brion and Mann crisscrossed the country, working in several studios on both coasts over the course of many months.

The result is a record several times warmer and more mature than Mann's previous work. The songs' general tendency toward slyly revisionist pop is reinforced by the use of analog tape keyboards like Optigons, Mellotrons and Chamberlains. "The great thing about those instruments, and one of the main concepts for this record, is contrast. Not only between high and low fidelity, but between current sounds and instant history—like a crackly recording of some ancient violin player. Three years ago when we started this, the idea was a lot newer; now we've got a whole Mitchell Froom subculture, but I still love it."

That use of contrast between old and new technology lends a distinctive feel to *Whatever*'s songs, which range in style from the bruising guitar whomp of "I Should've Known" to the delicately ironic string arrangement on "Mr.

MANN POWER

On *Whatever* AIMEE MANN used a Martin 000-18 acoustic guitar and a Hofner President hollowbody bass. When coaxed to play electric guitar, she favored either a Gretsch, a Strat or "whatever was around." A Neumann U67 tube microphone captured most of her vocals. Producer JON BRION liked to plug things into Matchless amplifiers when he wasn't busy playing an Optigon, Mellotron, Chamberlain, Hammond B3, harmonium, celeste, tack piano, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel, piccolo, bass harmonica or various toy instruments.

Harris." Two of the hookiest tracks, "Fifty Years After the Fair" and "Could've Been Anyone," feature the unmistakable 12-string work of Roger McGuinn, who contributes some outright Byrds quotes on the latter. Aimee chuckles, "At one point Jon said he was imitating McGuinn so much that maybe we should just call the real thing. But the real thing didn't sound anything like the imitation."

The bitter tone of *Whatever*'s lyrics counters the often exuberant music. Those old companions despair, defeat and revenge are never far away. "Put Me on Top," with lines like "I should be riding on a float in the hit parade," seems to refer to its writer's recent troubles, but Aimee insists the song isn't autobiographical: "It's about a friend of mine in a band called Velvet Crush, who's a champion complainer. He constantly whines, 'When are we gonna get a break? Nobody wants to hear us.' I tend to get depressed rather than complain about things, but after the song was written I thought, 'You know, this could be my story too.'" On the other hand, "I've Had It" is completely personal, a haunting description of a New York showcase gig and a resulting ambivalence about live performing and the music business in general.

You'd think that with the completion of *Whatever* Mann finally has reason to forget those old insecurities. Her problems may not be over yet, though. Apparently certain Imago promotion people have gotten cold feet about releasing a record with no obvious single prospects. The request came down to write a crossover hit; Mann replied simply that she couldn't. After some consideration, she recorded a cover of Badfinger's "Baby Blue" in an attempt to court more potential listeners but was unhappy with the results. Next she tried out two new originals; whether either will be included on the album is still uncertain, but regardless of that decision, *Whatever*'s release date has been shifted from March to late April, and may be moved even further back.

Hopefully the public won't have to wait much longer to hear this collection of masterful pop music. In any event, difficulties like these certainly help to explain why despair, defeat and revenge have been, and may continue to be, important themes in Aimee Mann's songs.

"For me," she says, "songwriting is a way to figure *it* out, whatever *it* happens to be. That's why songs usually are about problems. Because when you can define the problem clearly, it relieves you of the burden of having to go on feeling it. Once you say, 'Yes, I feel completely like giving up, there's no point,' suddenly that *becomes* the point. And then you can continue."

WILSON

[*cont'd from page 28*] Wilson says. Thus tracks from such relatively famous singers as Burning Spear or the Heptones segue into songs by Prince Francis or Jackie and the Invaders.

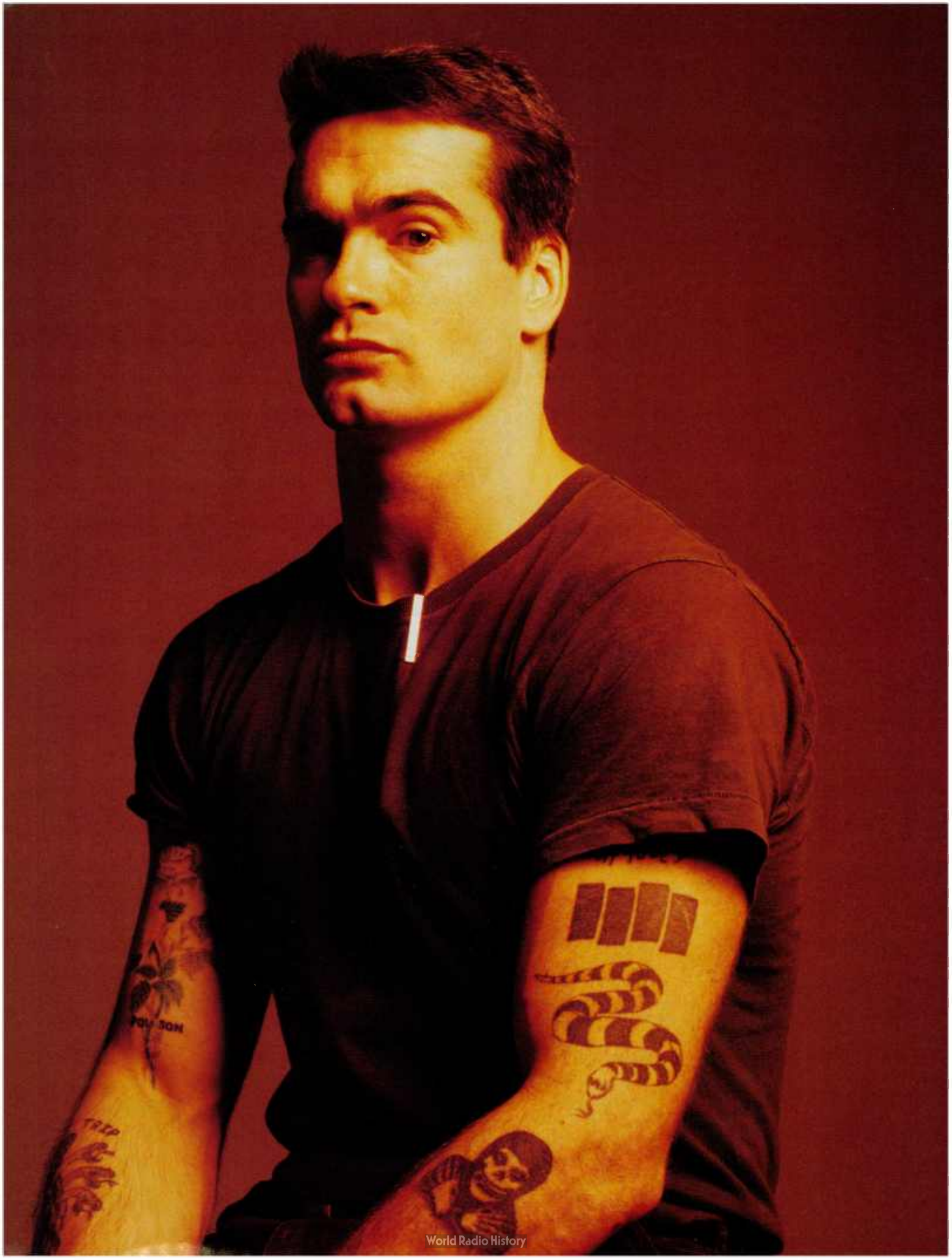
The music holds many mysteries for Wilson since few people really know what's on many of these precious spools he's saving from oblivion. "One exciting thing about working on these master tapes is to hear stuff that was never released, that the producers might have thought wasn't commercial enough or was a missed attempt, and where you really see genius come alive. Or to go into a tape with different producers and go down the particular session that they had...and see how many of those songs you now consider to be classic hits were cut in the same session."

How some of these tapes found their way to Wilson is as intriguing as the music. "One day in Jamaica we were thinking of making a deal with this producer and all of a sudden a truck came up to the hotel," he recalls. "I thought, it looks like they're from the country, like they should be delivering vegetables to the hotel. Lo and behold, in the back of the truck were hundreds of master reels. The person just wanted to drop them off. He said, 'Go and listen to these and pick what you want.' You could actually look on the master reel and see where a rat had bitten and chewed on the reel—some very famous music, too."

Marley's ghost has also inspired Wilson. "A very mystic moment was holding Bob Marley's Studio One material in my hand, the seven-inch reels, and actually playing them back on the original Ampex they were recorded on, directly to my DAT machine. To hear his voice so clear and crisp and isolated on its own channel, as opposed to the band which was on the other channel, was just magical."

Nowlin, who often accompanies Wilson on his expeditions to Jamaica, says he's flabbergasted by Wilson's musical recall. "We get into the back room of some warehouse and you have to blow the dust off the tape boxes and often they're not labeled, and he has to use his own knowledge of the music in tandem with the producer. He'll draw memories out of these producers based on things he can glean or he'll remember a tune and the producer won't."

Meanwhile, Wilson and Heartbeat continue to assemble the definitive canon of Jamaican popular music. More than two thousand songs are already licensed that have yet to be released. Wilson estimates that many times that number are squirreled away on the island waiting to be rediscovered. "Actually," he says, "there are more singers in Jamaica than records by them."



HENRY ROLLINS

THE LONER

It's carbo-loading time. Henry Rollins—singer and lyricist for the Rollins Band—has finished his workout at a local gym and is hunkered down for some pasta and his inevitable double espresso.

Because he's in New York and on the record-company tab, we're dining at the Trattoria dell'Arte, a classy joint across Seventh Avenue from Carnegie Hall. And because Rollins is wearing a black T-shirt that reveals his pumped-up muscles and armfuls of tattoos, the Trattoria has tucked our party—Rollins, a drop-dead-gorgeous woman named Viva and your *Musician* representative—into its upstairs room, where he won't scare too many buttoned-down patrons.

Rollins is holding forth about his five years in Black Flag, the groundbreaking Los Angeles post-punk band whose history he's turning into a book; about the businesslike reorganization of his publishing company (2.13.61, his birthdate), which puts out Rollins' prose along with books by other gritty, post-Beat writers; about his favorite concert of the year, a set by jazz pianist and master of dynamics Ahmad Jamal; and about how he'd like to release the next Rollins Band album in a CD box with room for extra disks, then put out live and collectors'-item EPs every few months afterwards.

But he's also getting a little steamed.

Next to us, a table of white-shirted men and party-gowned women are growing loud and giggly, shouting and back-slapping haw-haw-ing, nearly drowning out our conversation. "It's the wine," says the teetotaling Rollins, glowering. "I don't mind them having a good time, but the way they have fun, it's like their good time has to crush everyone else's." The waiter brings Rollins' next espresso and asks, "Would you like anything else?"

"How about a baseball bat?" Rollins says.

EXTERMINATING ANGEL AND ENTREPRENEUR, compulsive worker and compulsive talker are all cohabiting in Henry Rollins. "I am my work," he says. His work is extensive: seven Black Flag albums between 1981 and 1986, five Rollins Band albums since 1987, seven spoken-word solo albums, seven

BY JON PARELES

books, various solo and collaborative projects, ceaseless touring.

He is also doing A&R work for a new label, One, with Def American's mastermind Rick Rubin, buying out-of-print albums and picking up foreign releases for American distribution. "In two notes I can tell a good band," he says. "I'm never wrong. It's total smell. When I hear the real thing, my ears prick right up, always. I never miss. There's no bad records in my record collection."

And when he's not involved with music, Rollins runs the publishing company (or, as he calls it, his "book label"), works out or gets more tattoos. "They're just like freckles, they're just on me," he says.

For his fans, Rollins is a voice of rage and consolation, howling about pain and defiance and insisting that there's a way to get through, in songs like "Grip": "You'll see how hard they shove you/Hate your guts and tell you they love you/Get a grip right now." His books are full of workaday drones who, one day, explode in fits of violent anger, spraying bullets or doing themselves in.

But Rollins is hardly a one-dimensional ranter. In his solo spoken-word shows, he moves from stand-up jokes about hating Edie Brickell to harrowing true stories, addressing his own troubled childhood or the shooting death of his friend and roommate Joe Cole (who's also the subject of Sonic Youth's "J.C.").

Put Rollins on MTV, and he advises young viewers to check out their parents' record collections for good stuff. Get to talking about music, and he'll cite favorites from Lightnin' Hopkins to Public Enemy to Jane's Addiction and talk about what a thrill it was meeting King Sunny Adé in a hotel lobby. Ask about Black Flag, and he explains that he kept every poster, every flier, every announcement, tucked into envelopes and neatly labeled. He also remembers every gig. "That show you saw at L'Amour in Brooklyn, with the Minutemen..." he says. "I was down rolling on the ground at that one."

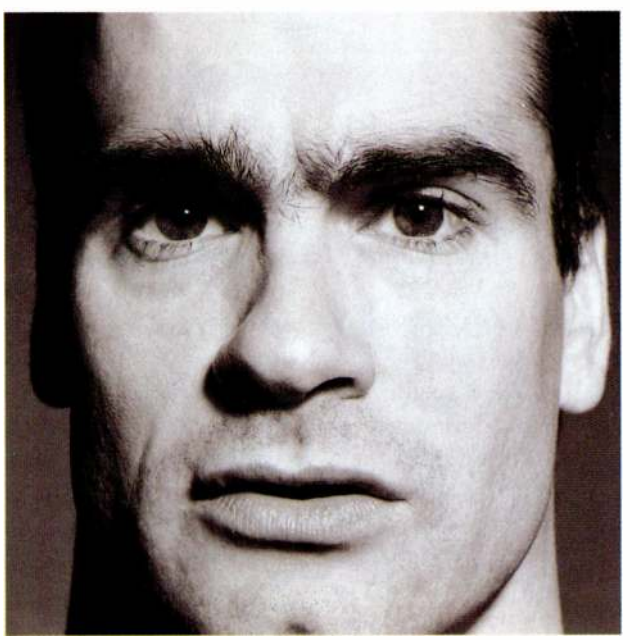
Black Flag was playing slow grinds and shaking its long hair back when the hardcore underground preferred herky-jerky speed and shaven heads. Sim Cain, the Rollins Band's drummer, played in the trio Gone with Greg Ginn, Black Flag's guitarist; he says Black Flag brought a new sense of rhythm to rock. "Ginn was into this block rhythm kind of thing, where notes got real full value," Cain says.

"He didn't do what he called beat-cheating. He and Bill Stevenson, Black Flag's bassist, would be wearing airport headphones, and they would play real slow and solid for hours, lining up the low end. They came up with grooves without the accents, where you'd hit the kick drum on the one as strong as the snare on the two. Each note is this big old fat round thing, all equal—it's the socialist groove. It took the swing out of the music but had a certain quality of its own."

In hindsight, Black Flag seems to have prophesied half of alternative rock, from the Melvins to Helmet. The Rollins Band has kept Black Flag's abrasiveness while adding musicianly flourishes, in songs that whipsaw from Crimsonesque dissonances to brute-force stomps. The music bolsters Rollins' rage with sheer precision; songs jump in and out of odd meters and switch instantaneously from bulldozer riffs to an almost jazzy intricacy.

As a musician, Rollins considers himself an ignoramus. "I don't play an instrument," he says. "I don't even know what a chord is, I don't know what a note is. I really don't. I never picked up an instrument—well, I've carried 'em, I've loaded them in. And I've hit a cymbal a few times, horribly out of time, of course."

"It takes a lot more than turning all your equipment to 11 to be heavy. It's all in your head."



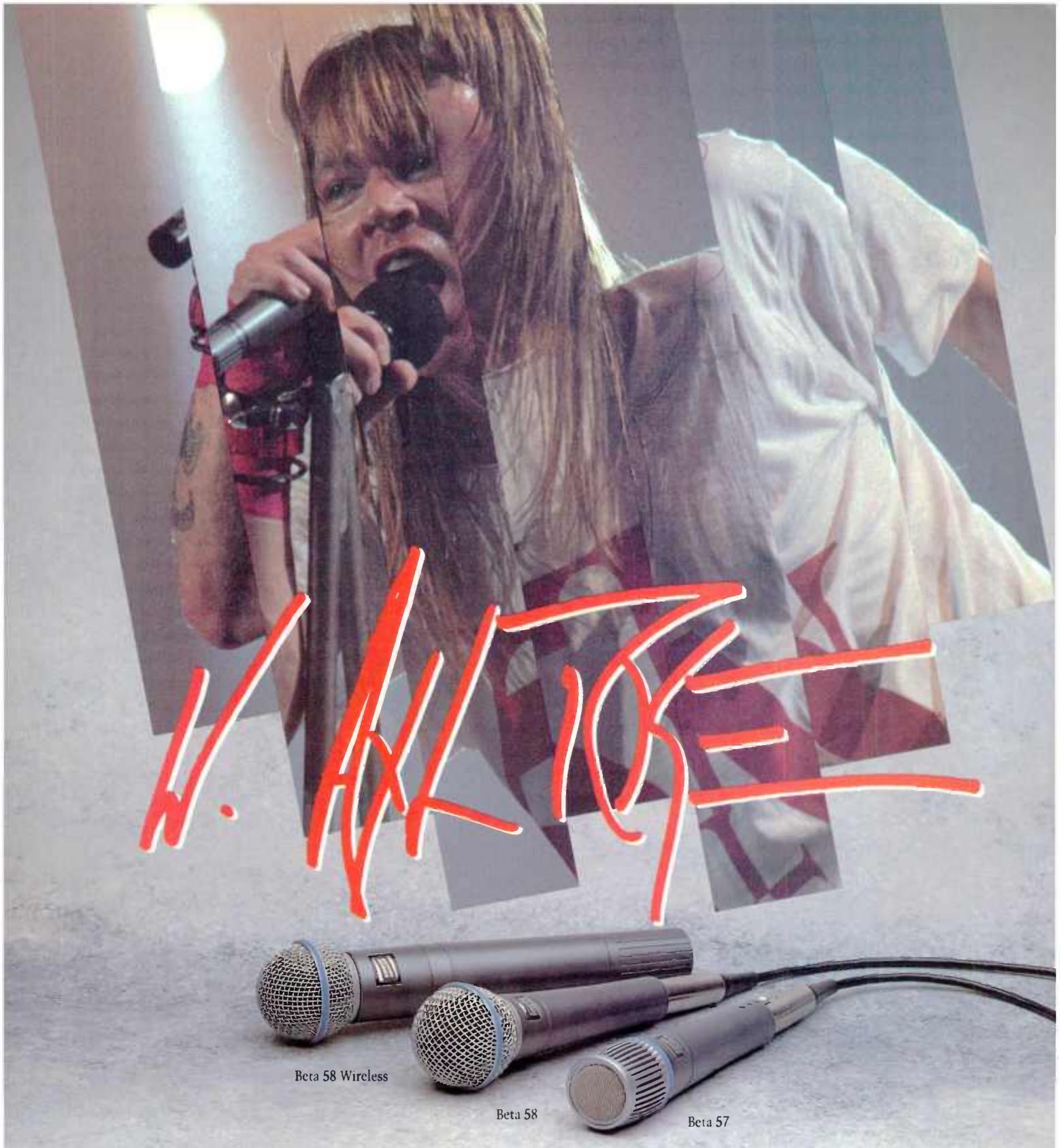
But he does contribute to the band's tunes while writing all the lyrics. "I do know what a riff is. I can hum tunes that I like, or that I come up with, and give them to the guys in the band. On every record there's at least one thing I've come up with. I have a melodic sense, I've come up with bridge sections. And we've got all kinds of riffs that I've come up with, a stockpile."

His main job, though, is to blurt the truth to strangers: in songs, alone onstage doing spoken-word shows, in interviews. And for all his output, he says, he strains to write even a dozen songs a year. "It's hard for me to write a lyric I can't care about all the way," he says. "I've got to be willing to die for these songs. I know it sounds a little dramatic, but I couldn't write a lyric where I went, 'Girl, girl, girl,' blah blah blah. I hear a lot of records, and I think, 'How can you stand up for that, how can you stand next to that and go, "That's me"?'

"When I write these songs, it's gotta be like blood, like, 'That's my man.' And I've got to be able to say, 'Yeah, I'm gonna live with that song for a year and a half and then for the rest of my life.'"

ROLLINS GREW UP in Washington, D.C., where he was friends with Ian MacKaye, later to shake up hardcore with Minor Threat and Fugazi. He was never one for half-measures. "Me and Ian, if we were into something, we were living it," Rollins recalls. "Skateboards, 24 hours a day. Bikes. Whatever we were doing. I worked at a pet shop, I ran the reptile department, inventoried, ordered, did everything. Anything I was into I would just land on and totally take over, I'd want to do 80 hours a day.

 PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL LAVINE/OUTLINE



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"It's like all the projects I do now. I'm obsessed with it, it's all that interests me. That and sleep is it. I get up in the morning: Cool! What's up! Let's do this! New record? Tour? Let's go. I love this shit."

Rollins was the son of a workaholic father—"I'd see him on weekends," he says—who divorced his mother when Henry was very young. "The whole situation with me and my parents was very uncomfortable," he says. "I think they tried. It's just that neither of them were ready to have a kid, that's for damn sure. I think it broke them up, and I've always felt like, here I am, that which got in the way. I am your pain in the ass, thank you very much. So as soon as I could I got the fuck out of there.

"I am a classic product of a typical dysfunctional family. I don't know jack shit about love, or about feeling a relationship with a blood relative. That shit means nothing to me. Like, you can't make me feel bad about missing my mother's birthday. There's billions of people's birthdays I miss."

Rollins grew up middle-class and went to a regimented, all-male boarding school. "I've always been privileged, I've got it all going for me," he says. "I'm male and white and middle-class and American, I'm educated."

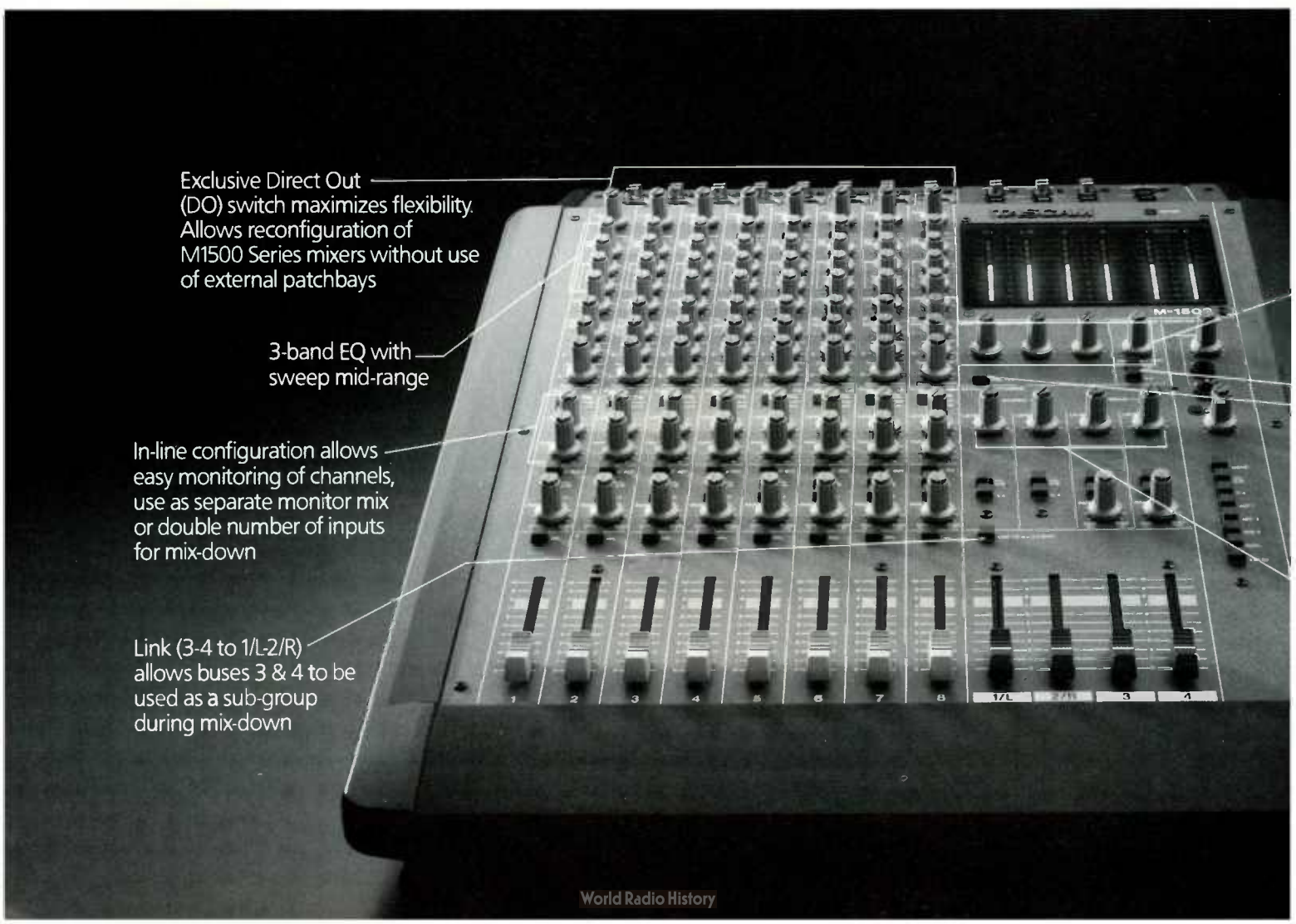
The summer he graduated from high school, a show by the Bad Brains, Washington's hardcore-and-reggae group, was a conversion experience. He lasted only one semester in college, then took a job at a friend's ice-cream store. "I used to work 60 hours a week at my 40-hour-a-week job," he says. "I knew how to use a cash register, knew how to deal with people in a retail situation, knew how to do inventory and all that. Then I joined Black Flag and I learned what real work and commitment were all about."

Joining Black Flag was, typically, a byproduct of obsession. Rollins drove to a New York club from Washington, D.C., requested a song ("Clocked In," because he had to drive back to work the next morning) and then got onstage and grabbed the mike to sing it. A few days later, the band asked him to come back for an audition; when he didn't know the songs, he made up his own words. He passed the audition and moved to California for five years of touring, starving and howling.

"Whenever I had an idea for a lyric, Greg [Ginn, Black Flag's guitarist and leader] would drop whatever he was doing. He might have a pen and a hand grenade in his hand, whatever, working, and he would drop it and pick up a guitar and say, 'Okay, tell it to me.' The guy just didn't get tired, or if he was, he just kept going.

"But, you know, I honestly don't really know these guys all that well," he adds. "We toured together, we played right next to each other, we slept like little sardines in a can. But I can't say I'm really close to them."

Is he close to anybody? "I spend a lot of time by myself," he says. "Saturday night at my place in L.A., you figure, Los Angeles, Henry Rollins, Saturday night, there must be at least nine naked teenagers in there. No—it's Charlie Parker on the box, computer's on, coffee. I stay home, I can't go outside. L.A.'s too weird for me. People stop me while I cross the street: 'Hey, can I shake your hand?' 'Ahhh! I just wanna go to the store! I'm off duty!'



"I'm walking down the street, and strangers come up to me, tell me what they think of me, tell me that they like me, that they love me, that I saved their lives, that I'm a self-righteous ass. When I go out onstage, there's all these strangers out there, too. I'm not complaining, I can quit, I can get a job at Pizza Hut, I can feed myself, I can walk off—but it's a weird way to go through your life, to have all these people going, 'Ooh ooh ooh ooh,' and the more they do it, the more you're isolated.

"There's not many people I know, honestly. I'm not trying to sound all forlorn and shit. I'm a workaholic. I know my computer, I know my stereo, I know my room, and then I live on the road. In the band, we see each other's ugly faces 200 days a year, minimum. It's like living in a submarine. But I don't go to many parties, I'm just not that kind of guy.

"Sometimes I get really lonely like any human does, but it's really hard to talk to someone who tells you they have every record you've ever done. You go, 'God, thanks a lot,' it's an honor that they take the time to check you out. But that might not be a person you want to go hang out with because it's always going to be some weird relationship.

"This one girl that really threw me for a loop, I was at a dinner party and was introduced to her. 'This is Henry Rollins, he does books, records, tapes, jumps through hoops of fire,' and she was totally unimpressed: 'Oh, okay. So?' And I was so impressed that someone wasn't impressed.

"I asked her out, one of the hardest things I ever had to do. So I totally screwed it up, I went, 'I know this sounds stupid, and of course I know you wouldn't want to do it but if you were ever so inclined, would you like to do something with me sometime? I wouldn't mess with you…'

"She said, 'Relax, yes. Sure, no problem.' But my heart was in my throat. I was only out with her for a short time but I still think of her a lot.

"But I can go out in front of 10,000 people, easy. I never get nervous before gigs. I felt pressure before, like, the first gig I ever did with Black Flag. Those were the days where if they didn't like you, they'd take you offstage and beat you up. And they loved me, I was lucky. I gave it my best and they respected me."

FOUR MONTHS AFTER Black Flag broke up, Rollins made a solo album, *Hot Animal Machine*, writing songs with guitarist Chris Haskett. In April 1987, Rollins and Haskett got together with Cain on drums and Andrew Weiss on bass, both from Ginn's trio Gone. The four became the Rollins Band, and were joined when they reached Europe by Theo Van Rock, who became permanent soundman and is considered a full band member.

"You see these guys who break away from the band they were in," Rollins says, "and they're performing at the Enormodome and they do three songs and they just go back to playing all the hits from their other band. You go, 'Where's the balls in that?' For me, it would be disrespectful to the musicians to say, 'Hey, clone my old trip.'

"With the Rollins Band, we went into the new trip from jump—

practiced two weeks and hit the road for the rest of the year. Went out in the summer, finished around Thanksgiving, just went and went and went, and in the meantime wrote an album on the road, recorded it on tour. It was called *Lifetime*, and we did it for 3200 bucks."

On four albums since—three more on independent labels, followed by *The End of Silence* on Imago—the budgets have increased while the ferocity has held steady. The band writes in communal jam sessions. "We like to push it in every direction," Rollins says. "We acknowledge no restriction or no direction or no influence or no genre. We're just not gonna levy that on ourselves. I've got so many hours of tape sitting in my closet, jams, from the most classic ordinary I-IV-V blues to all kinds of stuff that sounds like King Crimson on angel dust to Sabbath. Our stuff goes way out. Every so often we get into these 15-minute, 25-minute jams that hit the root.

"Our next record will be really different and I bet a lot of people will really dig it. I'm leaning toward songs that have that grab-you-by-the-throat weirdness to them and a really aggressive percussion section, that's what I want to get more into. Stuff where like one minute it's this big wall of guitar and one minute you're in the Ituri rainforest. Really aggro and really in your face, yet the musicality will be purely awesome. The music I hear these days, it parks its car next to heavy but it takes a lot more than turning all your equipment to 11 to be heavy. It's all in your head."

Weiss recently left the band, and Rollins has his eye on new bass players who will join in the jams. "When we're writing, we start with nothing, we just go in and jam. Our thing is '1-2-3-play!,' which is great: If you learn how to do that, and really start

BOXED SETUP

In the studio and onstage, HENRY ROLLINS sings through handheld Shure Beta 58 microphones, now supplied by Shure, along with Beta 57s for the drums. "I used to buy a Shure Beta 58 every three weeks because I sweat so much I drown the diaphragm," he says. "I don't break them, like throwing them on the ground, I wear them out. It's a microphone you can take out night after night. Beyer, I sing too hard. Electro-Voice mikes, I sweat 'em out. I've tried 'em all. Sennheisers, the upper-end mikes, they sound great, but they only sound great with me for a couple of days. But Shures, they last really long. Of course, if you're a normal singer, you can take one Shure on the road for years.

"Some producers say, you're not going to use a handheld mike. I go, 'Yes I am. I know how to do this without making noise.' I can't stand in front of a mike and sing, my thing's real physical, I need to move to get the note out the way I want it and I've just got to have it in my hand."

CHRIS HASKETT plays customized Paul Reed Smith guitars through MESA/Boogie amps. SIM CAIN, who does not endorse equipment, says his drums are "big blue ones, and I use big black snare drums. The cymbals are Sabian, the round shiny type." Pressed, he adds that his kit includes a 22" kick drum, a 14" snare, 10", 12", 14", 16" and 18" tom-toms "of the deeper, power-tom variety" and "two 8" very long drums."

His sticks are Vic Firths, "cylindrical wooden ones" that he says are "average-sized. Over the past four years my stick size has decreased, although I have the largest penis in the band."

trusting yourself and trusting the other guys in the band, then you can walk out onstage for an encore, or in the middle of a set, and just go.

"If I don't have an idea, I'll just start running my mouth, I'll just start making vocal sound. It's all feel. With James Brown, that 'Uh!' speaks volumes to me. That's genius, that's one of the best lyrics there ever was. Just hearing that gets you up in the morning. It's not witty and awesome like 'Like a Rolling Stone,' but it says just as much and it's just as genius in its own way.

"I know I'm not awesome like James Brown or like Miles, but these guys are my inspiration. I've got to mean it as much as James Brown meant 'Sex Machine.' I've really gotta stretch, and the songs have to take time, and I've got to put everything I've got into this, and that's all I can do as me.

"When people say, 'What direction is the music going in?' I say, 'That's a really good question, but I haven't been to band practice today.' We get into very ecstatic states of musicdom, where it's us and the heavens. Music can be the most powerful experience, eyes rolled up in your head, endorphins pumping. And someone comes up to you afterward and says, 'Why do you keep playing after 12 years?' and you just laugh. They're never gonna know unless they do it."

After 12 years, Rollins doesn't expect to reach the realm of arena headlining and heavy rotations any time soon, and he doesn't care. "There's so much great music out there and due to media where everything is trying to sell you something, we no longer want to be enlightened by the sheer joy of it. Everything is turned into this commercial, and the kid who watches it is being confused. 'Yeah, this girl is giving me all the soul she's got, yet she takes the same song and uses it as a sword. Friend, friend, friend, *enemy*—ah, god, I'm confused, where do I go?'"

Rollins doesn't pretend to have answers, particularly after the night in December 1991 when a gun-toting assailant threatened Rollins and his roommate, Joe Cole, and murdered Cole. He has posthumously published Cole's diaries and is involved in editing footage Cole made for a video documentary. "You can't bring the guy back," he says, his face growing grim. "You can stamp your little feet, you can find the guy who did it and get five minutes in a room with him and beat him up or kill him, and that won't change anything. You can cry a sea of tears and nothing changes, you can break your knuckles against the wall and feel as guilty as you want, be the king of guilt, the king of pain. I could even kill myself and nothing would change. That's the only reason I didn't kill myself.

"I nearly quit everything last year. Your heart just explodes and dies, and it never goes away. You just learn to deal with it. And the guy who killed Joe, if he'd met Joe, would have liked him.

"After a long time, I have allowed myself to go on, to enjoy the touch of a woman, to enjoy good food, to enjoy playing with the band. I figured the only way to get through the day was to do my guilt time."

Rollins won't be howling and ranting forever, he says. When the inner pressure disappears, he'll get another job—publishing full-time, working at a gym. But wouldn't it be enlightening for his fans to know how he finally found peace?

"The roadmap will be laid out and documented very well in the books and the records," he says. "The A to Z, the last book can get written. And I'll go, 'Ta-daah!' I'm Buddha. I'm outta here."

The Men on the YOUNG

By Mark Rowland

Outside the sky was dark and the rain was falling hard. But the pre-concert scene congealing toward the rear of Universal Studios stage 12 was warm and convivial. The occasion was a taping of MTV's "Unplugged" featuring Neil Young, performing by himself and with the band he put together for his gorgeous record *Harvest Moon*. Set designers had surrounded the stage with nets festooned with autumn leaves, while nearby a small industry reunion of execs, pop stars, press types and old friends of the band commingled in happy expectation of the hour to come. In that homey celebration no one seemed to even notice as a bearded, rain-dampened middle-aged man in a black jacket and toting a battered leather carry bag—Neil Young—walked through the door, sliced through the center of the chattering crowd and disappeared behind the staging area. His eyes were set straight ahead, his mouth tight in an expression of quiet, even grim concentration. But if you did notice, you suddenly realized: Everyone was having a wonderful time because Neil was coming to work.

Among those in the audience was Peter Buck, who'd been a Neil Young fan since he was a kid learning guitar licks off the radio. Since then, Buck's band R.E.M. has managed to simultaneously embrace and transcend the do-it-yourself ethos of the

Harvest Moon

BUCK!

Photos by Aaron Rappaport

underground rock revolution. Though a generation apart, you could draw plenty of parallels between Buck's and Young's accomplishments—a sound based in the deceptively simple melodicism of folk and country, a compositional range from careening rock 'n' roll to elegant orchestrations, an understanding of guitar as a voice whose feeling makes a sham of technical virtuosity, a refusal to take their art too lightly or themselves too seriously, an aversion to razors...but what it ultimately comes around to is an attitude, a shared sense of musical purpose. Both elicit respect from rappers, grunge-rockers and yuppies the old-fashioned way. They earn it.

"The first Neil record I ever bought was *Time Fades Away*," Buck recalled. "Looking back, *Harvest* was a great record, but to me at the time it wasn't very interesting. Then I read this sanctimonious review of *Time Fades Away* by some obviously mellow hippie who was really taking Neil Young to task, like, 'Man, *Harvest* was great, you could twist up a doob and smoke it with your old lady and it was really groovy—and then he makes this thing! It's loud and the guitar solos are deranged and everything's out of tune! Man, his career's over unless he gets back to that mellow music.' And I thought, wow, out of tune, way too loud, deranged guitar solos—that sounds like a good thing to me. And I loved it."

For some fogies, *Harvest Moon* may indeed mark a welcome return to the sweet melodies and countrified laments of *Harvest*, Young's most popular album, after a prodigal detour of nearly 20 years. For others like Buck, the two albums bookend an astonishing body of work that can hold its own with anyone's in pop music. In either event, no one's accusing Neil of coasting. Indeed, he'd already taped an "Unplugged" show about a month earlier in New York, which he decided to scrap because it didn't meet his standards of performance.

So here he was, walking the tightrope again, warming up with heartfelt renditions of "The Old Laughing Lady" and "Mr. Soul" on guitar, then moving to the pump organ for a literally breathtaking version of "Like a Hurricane." On to the piano for an affecting "String Man," a song he wrote decades ago and has performed maybe five times since. He tentatively struck the opening chords of "Tonight's the Night"... "Play 'Needle and the Damage Done'!" someone shouted from the bleachers, and you could see him hesitate. "Alright," he decided, to the cheers of the crowd, who began clapping along to that familiar undulating melody before the chill from the lyrics stopped them cold. He further sabotaged expectations with two songs from *Trans*, of all things, and the new arrangements revealed them as songs of haunting, delicate beauty.

After the show, Neil and Peter were introduced and quickly developed the rapport of seasoned musicians who only need a few bars to recognize a consonant harmony. They even put their two camera-shy mugs together for a picture or two, with Neil strumming Hank Williams' old Martin guitar for spiritual support.

An hour later, after braving the canyon mudslides that inevitably occur any time it rains for more than two days in Los Angeles, they hooked up at a Mexican eatery in Hollywood that featured Naugahyde booths and a smooth-singing mariachi trio, along with Nils Lofgren, Neil's producer David Briggs, his manager Elliot Roberts and a few other unindicted co-conspirators. Over bottles of beer info was secured ("Did you tune that low E to D for 'Harvest Moon'?" Peter asked Neil. Yes, he did) while David Briggs described Young's recent feats of derring-do driving down Nichols Canyon road. Peter explained that his Southern accent doesn't appear until he's had enough to drink—"then I start saying y'all"—but he barely got that far. Relieved and tired and cracking jokes, Neil admitted after a spell that he still wasn't all that thrilled by his performance earlier that evening. "I guess I'm losing my patience as I get older," he said. He smiled and added dryly, "'Cause you know, I always had so much to begin with."

"I like to play really stupid, dumb things, okay? But with a feeling of 'We didn't know this was obvious.'"—Young

The next morning, they got together for the following conversation, after which Neil, the family man, would catch a plane home while Peter, the wanderer, would embark on a two-month sojourn through Mexico and Guatemala. Topics ranged from a gargantuan series of archival recordings Young is preparing for release this year to the public burning of Ice-T to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to...well, you'll see. Breakfast was granola and fruit, respectively. Not very rock 'n' roll, but there's a price to keeping your energy up as you get on in life. In the old days, Neil explained, "I didn't get up until two in the afternoon, so it wasn't a problem. Now I have to get up sometimes before I want to, because I have a family and there's a routine. Now, you're going off hitchhiking," he nodded to Peter. "That's great. I envy you."

"Yeah," Buck agreed. "Just don't tell my mom."

MUSICIAN: *How do you happen to own Hank Williams' guitar?*
YOUNG: Well, I bought it from Tut Taylor in Nashville back in 1976. So I've had it for almost 20 years now. And I have it on the bus with me. Only recently did I start playing it. I wrote songs on it before, occasionally. But it was more of something to just have around and feel. When I carried it on my bus I might have writers that knew who Hank was who were visiting me or something, I'd send 'em back there and tell 'em they could hang out there with the guitar for a while if they wanted to. So...
BUCK: It's nothing like Hank Williams, but I know with guitars I've played all my life, it does absorb something from you. A guitar you've played for 10 years is way different from one you just bought off the rack.
YOUNG: That's right, and if you stop playin 'em they're not as friendly as they were when you were playing them all the time. I guess it must be the way you play changes, but it almost seems as if the guitar is not as easy to play as it was.
BUCK: I had the black Rickenbacker that I'd used on almost every record I'd ever done, and then I gave it to our drummer Bill for a while, and he said, "Peter, it's really a very nice guitar, you should play it again." So I got it back and it was really difficult to play, I don't know why. Then after a while it really worked again. I guess if it ever gets stolen I'll just have to quit the business.
YOUNG: Yeah, it's funny, I'm attached to a couple of pieces of equipment. I think my amplifiers more than my guitars.
BUCK: Like that P.A. system from 1948 with the accordion input? When you were doing *Still Life* we were doing Warren Zevon's record and we bumped into each other; I was there when you were mixing "Mideast Vacation." But I'd walked in earlier and one of your guitar techs let me play your guitar through the rig and I could sort of hear the sounds—"Is that the 'Cinnamon Girl' sound?" I love amps with the accordion input. You know they're the real thing.
YOUNG: Plus, it goes to 12.
BUCK: Have you had that stuff for a real long time?
YOUNG: The Deluxe I bought at Saul Bettman's music store on Larchmont [in Los Angeles] back in the '60s. Place was full of old piggyback amps and tweedies, lot of Fender amps. I used to go in there every week after we'd do a gig with the Springfield, I'd have a few bucks and I'd go in and buy another amp. That one I bought for about 70 bucks [*Peter groans*]. I also bought this old funky Gretsch there. I went back to my place in Laurel Canyon and turned the thing up all the way, and my guitar that was on the bed started going nuts. And I went holy shit, this thing's really got something. After that I just sat there, feeding back. That amp actually shows up on a couple of the Springfield records. I think on "Everydays" there's a feedback note

that goes all the way through the song. I don't know what album that's on. But it goes back to the very beginning, that amp. I didn't use it with the Springfield, just on that section. But I always had it. And then with Crazy Horse, right away, that first album—

BUCK: It's great that you have that continuity. Because with albums, you're in a different studio and with different musicians. I like to use the same equipment. I've had the same amps and guitars for years. It gives you the feeling that something's permanent.

YOUNG: I'm just married to the sound, you know. I suppose if I lost all that stuff it might even be good for me. But I don't want to lose it.

BUCK: I tend to let things go in circles. I don't like to plan things out anyway.

YOUNG: Well, you're lucky you're in the same band for so long.

BUCK: It's pretty ideal. This is actually the first real band I was ever in. We always had this rule that if one of us left it wasn't gonna be the same band—you couldn't use the name. I couldn't have that "one original member left" group. I remember I read this interview with the band Krokus. They asked a guy what the name meant, and he said, "All the original members have left so we don't know what it means." Like it was something passed down from the elders that they forgot.

A friend of mine is a session musician who auditioned for one of "The Association." They had three original members in three different bands, and they just booked them all at once. So it'd be, you're the West Coast Association, you're the East Coast one...they'd learn their 12 songs and go out.

YOUNG: I saw the Platters once in a bar in Evergreen, Colorado. It was Buck Ram's Original Platters. He was alive but he wasn't touring with them. So it didn't matter that much when he died, apparently.

BUCK: I went to see the Drifters once when I was in college in '76, and they were all like, 22 years old. I was counting back...there was one old guy with them who didn't seem to know which were Drifters songs and which weren't. But it was fine. Given that it wasn't the original singers. They did the hits.

YOUNG: So what are you gonna do in Mexico, besides just travel around—you taking a guitar?

BUCK: No, I'm not taking anything.

YOUNG: That's a good idea. You can probably get one down there if you need one.

BUCK: I know this guy who plays in this bar in San Francisco called Athens by Night. He's a great bouzouki player. He's about 60 years old. He said in Chihuahua they make really great instruments. So maybe I'll look down there and pick up something interesting. I don't know, I keep seeing myself carrying a guitar in the rain. That doesn't seem like fun. I may get an instrument there, but for a couple of days I want to just see what I'm doing. I don't have a real plan.

MUSICIAN: *What are the best and—*

YOUNG: Don't talk with your mouth full! [*smiles*] That's what mom would say.

MUSICIAN: *What's the best and worst of being in a band for any length of time?*

YOUNG: The best thing about being in a band is, the longer it's together, the easier it is to fall into a groove. Obviously if you're in a band, it must *be* a groove or you wouldn't be in there. So that's the best thing.

BUCK: You can be really creative without thinking about it. Ideally, you want to get to a place in songwriting where you're not consciously writing a song; that you can just pick up an instrument and the song comes. If you can get that with four people it's really nice. You can be tuning up and playing some inconsequential riff and all of a sudden it makes sense as a piece of music. That's something we've been doing for a long time. We've been writing for 15 years. On the other hand, it's real easy to do the same thing over and over again. You've got to consciously think, oh, we've used that key too much this year.... I think there was a period around 1989 where we decided we didn't want to sound like anything we'd done in the past. Just to get away from it.

YOUNG: Well, the negative side of being in a band is, generally a band can only do what that band is capable of doing. On a general level. And that may be a lot—but whatever it is, it's not everything. For instance, with me, on *Ragged Glory* and *Harvest Moon* I had two bands. And so the limitation is that, in a situation like last night, I can't play the right groove on some of the things, because it just doesn't fit—the whole thing doesn't go. Some people can play one thing, some people can play another, and I'm caught in the middle—I can't go from one to another in my own show! So I have to commit myself when I put a band together, which is another thing I hate to do, 'cause I don't want to put a band together, I want the band to already *be* together. But if I'm gonna play and I'm not gonna play with Crazy Horse, I've got to figure that out.

First of all I don't want a bunch of guys that are great that are on the road all the time—they've had it, as far as I'm concerned. I mean, they're great for somebody else, 'cause somebody else needs them. But I don't need somebody who thinks that they know the right thing to do. I need somebody who doesn't know shit, and is just happier than hell to be there, and will try anything. That's the person I'm looking for. Ultimately it would be people who would play for nothing, who just want to be there, but who are not impressed with me at all.

So that's part of my struggle: to put together new things, something different that has already got some kind of depth to it but is completely innocent and naive and not cynical and all of those things that musicians get with more experience. 'Cause I like to play really stupid, dumb things, okay? Fuckin' obvious shit—but with a feeling of "We didn't know it was obvious. We were believing this." I like to

play with people who can play simple and are not threatened by it, by other musicians thinking they can't play or something. And that eliminates 99 percent of the musicians, okay? [*laughter*] So right away we're down to one out of a hundred. And I'm trying to find maybe three of those, who have been together for a long time.

BUCK: I did this record for Kevn Kinney and hired these guys from a folk music society to play on it. They were so naive about the whole process I had to explain the concept of multitracking and overdubbing. They were like, "You mean I can do it twice?" It was really great, they had never been in the studio and it was so much fun to work with them. None of them felt like they had to have a solo. I'd say, why don't you play something here? And they might play one note—that's what they heard.

YOUNG: I say sometimes to guys, don't play music. Play a sound. Identify this part, put a signature on it. It doesn't have to be musical. Maybe it is musical, but maybe it sounds as if you dropped the dobro. You get the thing going and you drop the other end—maybe that's the sound. Because it's the tone, in some cases, not the music that you play. So many people try to play all the time.

BUCK: Spooner [Oldham, who plays keyboards on *Harvest Moon*] played at Muscle Shoals, didn't he? I heard they nailed the mikes and amps in one place there. They found the sound they liked and then nailed everything so it couldn't be moved...I like that idea too: that there is a certain sound, here's the way you get it, and it's not gonna change. Kids listened to Motown, say a Supremes record, and didn't realize what world-class bass playing and drumming were going on 'cause it just fit the song so great.

MUSICIAN: *Neil, you were a Motown artist for a while.*

YOUNG: Yeah, and it was great playing there. We were the first white group that Motown had. Rick James was our lead singer and the rest of us were white. It was a pretty cool band. We used to do a lot of Rolling Stones–type stuff, and then Rick and I wrote a couple of things together. And we played in there. I remember I had an acoustic 12-string on, playing these country kind of licks, and it was cool—this was '65. The drums were nailed down. We used their drummer, he came in and played. We were singing the background parts, but after a while these three guys were standing behind us and singing all the parts—they'd learned 'em, you know? And they were going, "C'mon, let's go, let's get it moving!" and they helped us get it into the groove. It was really cool the way they did it. This is what they did for everybody. If it wasn't swingin' right away, they'd bring in more people and get it swinging, and they never did anything that didn't swing. So that was a really great experience. Something happened with the tapes—I don't think they know where they are. There is some archivist who has seen them on a list...but there's not that much there really, just the memory and the experience of the way they did it.

I remember signing a contract that was like two inches thick. But I was a minor. It was all in really small print, too. I'm sure I gave everything away.

BUCK: You better be careful. [*mimics a record executive*] "You realize we've owned everything Neil Young has done since 1965?"

YOUNG: Right. Come and get me in the redwoods, boys. I'll be waitin' for ya.

BUCK: When you came out to Los Angeles and started working with Buffalo Springfield, was it done really differently? Were you cutting live at that point? Because that was only about a year later.

YOUNG: Well, my very first records that I made in Canada were live, I sang and played. When I got down to L.A. with the Buffalo Springfield it was just about the time multitrack recording was starting to come in. Four-track was available and people were starting to talk about eight-track. So most of the things that we did didn't have lead vocals on them—they told us that the way to do it was to put down the track and then sing. And that's the way the Buffalo Springfield stuff is. I don't think there's anything on those records that isn't overdubbed vocals.

"We had to buy a copy of Murmur just to learn it again, and there were a couple of chords in the bridges that I had no idea what they were."—Buck

With the advent of the Beatles and the Beach Boys and multitracked recording it took a while for me to realize that the real thing I liked to do was sing and play all at once. And that it was possible to do that. That that's the way they used to make records, and those were the records that I liked. Even back then I thought the way records were being made in the '60s was wrong. But I didn't know what was wrong with it. It just didn't sound right. I mean, the Springfield records are terrible compared to what the band sounded like. If the Springfield had recorded the way I recorded some of the things I did with Crazy Horse and other bands, where I sang the lead and we all played the song and later overdubbed some choruses with maybe a couple of effects, that would have been a great record. But we missed that whole period.

The first stuff where I sang live would be *After the Gold Rush*. Ninety percent of my first album and *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* I overdubbed the vocals. *After the Gold Rush* I turned it around and after that there was no more overdubbing. Until I got to *Landing On Water*. Aptly titled.

BUCK: Hearing those songs from *Trans* last night, I remember hearing you say all this stuff was of a piece, and it sounded like you were right.

YOUNG: I wanted to do a version of those songs where people could understand the words. And I felt that enough time had gone by to

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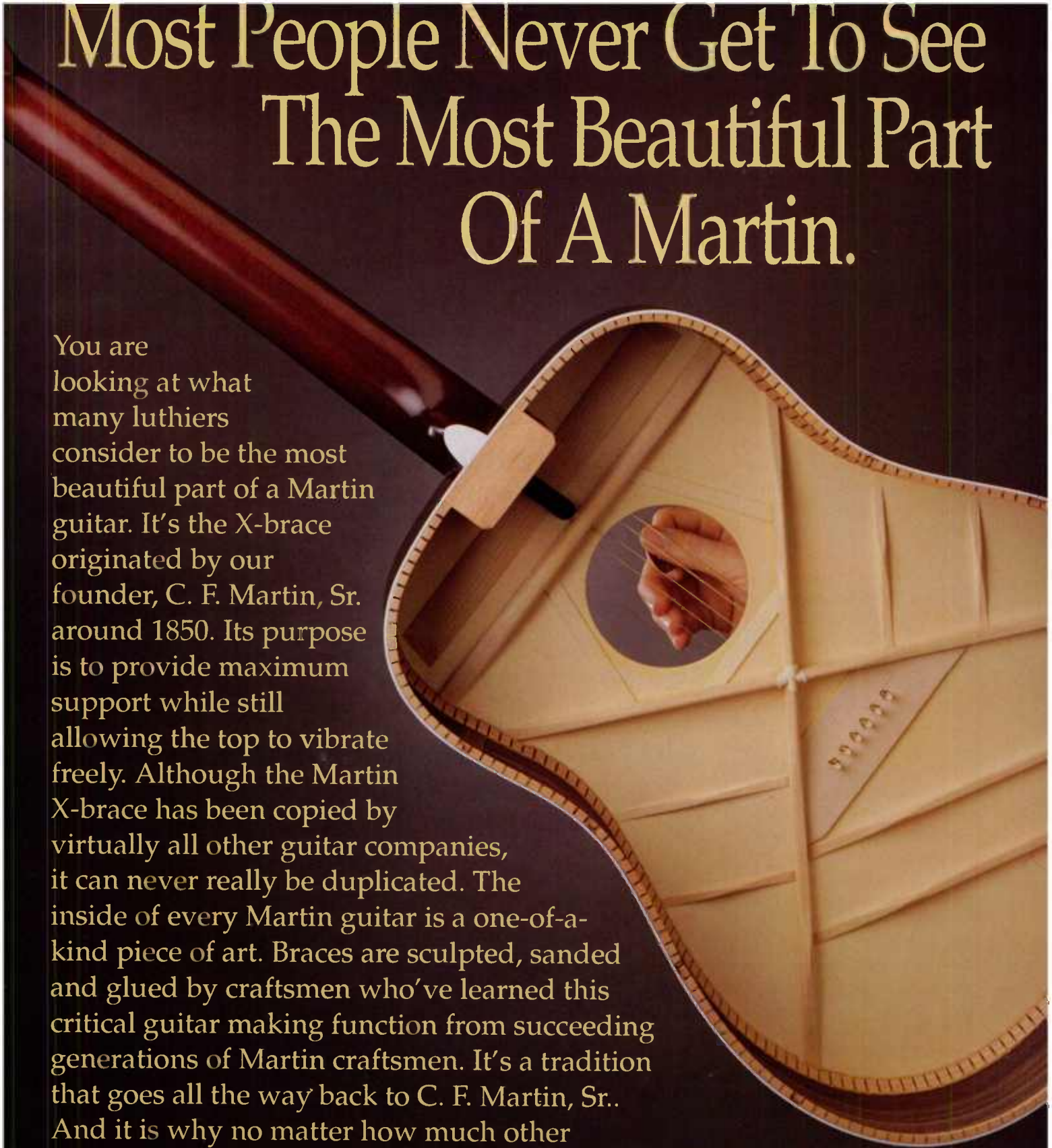

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where that would lend a new dimension to it. Because my original purpose for *Trans* and the videos that I planned for *Trans* was a story about a sort of strangled communication, where you're dreaming and yelling out but no one can hear you, and you're talking but nothing is coming out of your mouth and you can't get it to work. That's why I sang through the machines, because it would make it so people couldn't—or wouldn't want to—hear it, or they could tell that someone was trying to say something but they couldn't tell what the hell it was. So I figured after 10 years that a couple of acoustic versions of those songs would have been cool—but they had to have the magic great groove. You can't make it work without that. The band had it in rehearsal, but they didn't have it last night.

BUCK: I saw that show in '80 where you did a lot of that *Trans* stuff and I thought it came across like a real band, almost. It was really weird.

YOUNG: Oh yeah. Is that the one where I did a solo show, and did "Computer Age" and "Mr. Soul" with the television set and all that?

BUCK: Yeah. But it was really great in a way to look around and see your fans looking really shocked. I guess *Trans* hadn't come out yet. But it was a great version of "Mr. Soul," very incendiary, kind of crazy. It made you see what the point of the technological stuff was.

YOUNG: Well, I was trying. I was out there in the woods with my analog tape recorders and vocoders and all of that stuff. Nothing ever works out the way you want it to, but I had a vision for videos and this whole thing, you know? It was my first record for Geffen, and it was the first time I ever ran into a situation where they wouldn't do what I wanted them to do. They didn't think it was a good idea, I had to convince them that I thought it was cool. Right then I knew, "Oh God, what did I do, what the hell is this?" [*laughs*] 'Cause if I'd been at Reprise I could have come in and said this is gonna be an EP, there's only six of these, but I want to do videos and tell a story with the videos...I had almost a comic strip, TV kind of look for all that stuff. But there's only so much you can do. I was frustrated in that period. So I'm trying to get those songs out now.

MUSICIAN: *Though you recently helped put together the* Lucky Thirteen *compilation CD of your records for Geffen.*

YOUNG: Yeah, I put that together. I have a contractual obligation and that's why that came out. It was part of my deal to get out of Geffen.

BUCK: I know there's a Shocking Pinks song on there, that minor key blues you used to do? ["Don't Take Your Love Away From Me"] That's a great song. I saw you do a show in Atlanta in '84 where you did some acoustic and then some *Trans* and then some Shocking Pinks and it was almost getting kind of Bluenote-y at the end with the horns. It was like The Four Ages of Man. If you play those records back to back you don't really think they'd link, but there's a bridge.

YOUNG: With *Lucky Thirteen* you get a sense for that eight-year period. Thank God they let me do what I wanted, in that instance. I said, there's no hits here, that's why you sued me. [*laughter*] So let's not make a greatest hits, 'cause that's a joke. I picked the songs and put them together to represent a kind of encapsulation of the whole experience.

BUCK: Is that a preview of the archive stuff coming out?

YOUNG: I did take some things out of the archives to give you some kind of an idea of what's in there.

BUCK: I'm real excited about that, as a fan.

YOUNG: There's a lot of stuff in there. I think for fans it'll be fun. There's several ways of doing it, which we haven't quite decided yet. There's a lot of options, since there's so much stuff. I tend to want to do the complete thing, just put it all out in chronological order, and then if you want to get it by mail order, it's expensive as hell but we're not trying to shove it down your throat. Then there's a commercial version where you have respect for the fact that you don't want to make 'em buy a bunch of stuff they may not want to hear but there's still depth and stuff they haven't heard. Not for fanatics. And there's the surface type of thing for whoever, you know, maybe all they have is enough money to buy one CD and have an overview. But nothing's locked in yet.

"Some nights we'll play all five of our semi-hit singles. But you know, that's cheating."—Buck

My idea is to have an unbelievable amount of CDs, each with their own package, representing the time they came from. Some of them being 35 minutes long, some of them being 70 minutes long, depending on what the content was, not just trying to cram the CD full but to make it an era. Some eras have three volumes, some might be only 35 minutes long. But you can hear what was happening and see the images and pictures from that time and take that CD with you. Then you've got 1968, or 1964. There are 11 songs from 1964 and '65.

BUCK: Is that the Squires stuff?

YOUNG: The Squires and other stuff, studio, band stuff. Really funky.

BUCK: There are some bootlegs of some of the Squires.

YOUNG: Yeah, but they don't have the stuff that we have. We've got a couple of really good ones back there—the first time I felt that I'd made a really good record, we have a tape of that. Plus there's a lot of solo performances of early stuff, real early stuff. It's interesting, if you're into it. It's fascinating purely from a librarian's point of view that we managed to keep all this stuff together. I'm such a pack rat.

BUCK: We've been doing that too. Our lawyer was real farsighted and had us recording shows 24-track when we first got our recording contract. So every tour we've done there's probably five shows recorded in 24-track live, then of course all the stuff in the studio which is on a computer, and all our video stuff which we own the rights to. We've got this little vault in Atlanta. It's kind of a daunting prospect to look at—hundreds and hundreds of hours of tapes.

YOUNG: As long as somebody has a memory of what you did. You

probably know everything on there that you really care about and you know there's some gray areas where you should go into it and then maybe 80 percent of it—you know.

BUCK: When we were getting off I.R.S. we were looking for one particular song that we wanted to use for a B-side, and it was the only thing we couldn't find. And none of us could remember how to play the song! I still think that's floating around somewhere, but that's the only thing we're missing as far as I can tell. That's when we got the computer and sent this poor guy looking for a song that was either called "the new song" or "the new new song." We have about 50 "new songs" spread out over the space of 10 years.

MUSICIAN: *It must be an odd sensation to realize you can't recall your own songs.*

BUCK: There was a benefit show we did where we were going to do *Murmur* all in order and then our new record, which at the time was *Green*, all in order. And we had to go buy a copy of *Murmur* to learn it again, just like any bar band. There are a couple of chords in the bridges that I had no idea what they were. Maybe they were wrong. But it was a great, kind of humbling experience to realize you had no idea what these songs were like.

YOUNG: Well, you know it's fun to play the new ones. They're easy to play. And when it starts getting to be work to play the old ones, there's a point you get to where you don't want to do them. And I'm at a point now where the hardest thing for me to do is teach somebody one of my songs—unless I just wrote it. But if it's on record, it's like it's impossible. If you give them the record they'll try to learn it exactly like the record and it sounds like somebody playing somebody else. Then if you don't give 'em the record you're sitting and playing a song over and over again, and it drives you nuts. 'Cause I've got new songs in my head. I don't want to waste my time at this point.

"It's fun to play new songs—they're easy. It gets to be work playing the old ones."—Young

BUCK: There's always that problem with the audience too. Because they think they want to hear the old stuff, but once you do that you're an oldies group.

YOUNG: Right. I've got a problem already with *Harvest Moon.* The band that plays *Harvest Moon* best was there last night. But what I'm gonna do next, there's no way for them, it'll never happen. And I don't even know what that thing is. But I know that whatever band I have next, there's probably no way that *they* can play *Harvest Moon*! So I'll go out there and won't do it. And people think that I do this on purpose, go out and not do what they want to hear, because it's some streak that I have. But the truth of the matter is, it's impossible. How can I go somewhere else and still be where I am? How can I change and not change? I can't drag this with me or it won't let me go all the way. It's like a fuckin' bungee cord. [*laughter*]

BUCK: I saw y'all and Crazy Horse in '78—oh, there I go, saying "y'all"—

YOUNG: Hey, let those y'alls come out!

BUCK: —when you did *Rust Never Sleeps*, before the record came out. And that always fascinates me, when a band challenges you with new stuff. I hate when it's just "these are the hits." 'Cause they always look bored—and I know I am.

YOUNG: I like to do it backwards. Go out and play the songs first before anybody knows what they are, then you really got to bang 'em down. And they get to either dig it or not dig it, but it's real. That makes it fun even if you don't get the big reaction.

BUCK: It's funny, because for years we would make a record and go on tour and do like three or four new songs. And every time, the next year's hit single was one of the new songs. We'd say, here's this song that really means a lot to us, and they liked the old stuff. The next year they're screaming for that one they didn't notice the time before.

YOUNG: Then somebody throws the paper at you: "The new songs don't have the edge of songs you were doing a year or two before." Like somehow you've lost something. Then you go back [to that time] and the same guy was saying, "These new songs are not as good as the ones on the last..."

MUSICIAN: *The songs got good in retrospect.*

BUCK: It's a lovely process. Our first record did relatively well with critics or whatever. And I still hear: "*Murmur*, best thing you've ever done." Well, you just wiped out the '80s and '90s for me, thank you very much.

YOUNG: Oh yeah. What was it some guy said to me? "Oh man, I used to listen to your stuff all the time. You were great!" [*laughs*] I said, what did you do, hit a wall or something? Ah well...

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of critics, what's your feeling about Ice-T being released by Warners, your label?*

YOUNG: Well, Ice is great so wherever he goes it's gonna be great. I've known him for four or five years now, since I met him in New Zealand. I think what he did with "Cop Killer" indicates that people don't understand art. They think art is obvious. If you say it literally, that's what you mean. The context you present something in and the way you present it is meaningless to these censor-types. That's where art meets the wall. That song's attitude is no more bothersome than any other song.

BUCK: I don't know the machinations. Personally, I think [Warner Brothers] should have stuck with him if that's what he wanted. If they dropped him out of cowardice, I think it's a cheap move. If he wanted to get away because of the controversy, that's something else. But I think there's probably racism in that I don't think a lot of people believe that a black guy can create a character and make a piece of art about an experience. Like, "It has to be real 'cause that's all he knows."

YOUNG: I remember when I first saw him, in some little club in New Zealand. God it was crazy. There was this brown line along the wall as people were lined up to go to the bathroom. Ice was playing and these

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lights were going on and off—and then I realized, the line was a line of shit. Somebody had taken a piece of shit and dragged it along the wall. [*laughter*] Now this was way before Ice had his corporate problems. But it may have been kind of a premonition.

MUSICIAN: *When you perform, how much does the audience or the mood of the place determine what you play?*

BUCK: What we owe the audience is the best we can give them. It's not necessarily the hit songs. Some nights I'll put in all five of our semi-hit singles. But you know, that's cheating! What we need to do is what we feel real strongly about. Nothing against the hits. But what I feel I have to do for the audience is show up on time and play to the best of my abilities. It's not necessarily the songs they want to hear.

I do a set list every night but over the course of our last tour I'd say we did about 100 songs, and we do about 25 a night. Only once in our entire career have we gone from the first song to the last according to the set list. The road crew had that one framed for about a month.

MUSICIAN: *Were your solo selections last night predetermined or improvised on the spot?*

YOUNG: Well, for the camera guys I made an acoustic set list. And I stuck to it, mostly. When I started playing out acoustic again a year ago January, I had a set list. I had 15 songs and 11 of them were new, and I didn't even know the songs that well. But after I proved to myself that I could do that, it didn't hold the same kind of challenge. Then it didn't matter anymore, so I started chucking the list and doing it the way I did a long time ago, where it didn't matter if they were old or new songs. That's generally the way I do it. Which is probably the way I appeared last night, even though in reality I sat down and thought about it. 'Cause I had the band there, and all the new songs that I would do acoustically at random I had to compartmentalize and think about, "Well, should the band play this song first so if they play that one well they'll be confident when the one they don't know that well comes along, and they'll think that they're great and they might play it well without thinking about it?" [*laughter*] All these things that you have to think about are extra when you're dealing with a band that may or may not know the material.

So I picked the two *Trans* songs first. 'Cause if they were as into the groove as I was, or in the same way that I was, then it would have been a really great transition. David Briggs and I were talking about the show last night. And we feel it was like, we went up, we flew and we landed it. But the thing never should have left the hangar. There were things ready to fall off everywhere and we could have crashed very easily. [*laughs*] But we got enough so that on the report card it looks very good.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think the performance was altered by the fact of being a TV production?*

YOUNG: I don't think so. I think that particular venue for playing music and the way it was in there was as good as it can get. It was like a beautiful thing.

BUCK: That's why "Unplugged" is kind of pleasant, because it actually mimics a live show. So much other TV has nothing to do about anything except what goes on this little screen and comes out of this three-inch speaker. I hate to sound like Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard* but you've got a guy juggling plates and a guy teaching a bear to dance and Oprah over here and you're in the middle, and it kind of reduces you to that level. When we did "Saturday Night Live" I saw the show and it was like, "Oh, I'm not in that song, am I?" Kate Pierson was singing, and she's a great singer, dressed real nice, and there's one second where the camera pans past her and you see the back of this guy's head—that's me!

We did all these European TV shows where it's local and there's a Belgian synth pop duo and then some little kids singing a song about going to the beach and then a dance contest and then us. Just like amateur hour. I remember one show where they had to supply the drums and there were no cymbals. The guy said, well, you only said you wanted drums. [*laughter*]

"I think they ought to close the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I think it's full."—Young

MUSICIAN: *Is your opposition to current digital technology related to the fact that several of your records have yet to be released as CDs?*

YOUNG: No, it's not connected. The records that haven't come out on CD haven't because the record company doesn't want to put them out, usually. In the case of Geffen it's not worth the money to them. But we've mastered them all recently. And it keeps changing too, every three or four months there's a better way to master digitally. To get a little closer to the original sound. But digital is completely fucked anyway. We're in the dark ages of recorded sound. And there's no solution other than changing to a different thing that hasn't been invented yet, some kind of chemical-based computer, instead of being based on precious metals. Maybe a kind of chemical gas that does the same thing but has more variability in its computation so you get more colors. 'Cause we're not listening to music, we're listening to a reconstituted replica clone of music. We don't hear it anymore. Since '82 it's been gone. That's how I feel about it.

But I could go on about that for a long time. And if they ever put me in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame they'll regret it, 'cause I will not stop talking about it, it'll go on all fucking night. So let that be a warning to all you assholes with your tuxedos.

MUSICIAN: *So what do you think about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?*

BUCK: Maybe when I'm 45 I'll dig it. It does kind of smack of this older rich boy's club. But for people who haven't seen that kind of financial reward, the Ruth Browns and Etta Jameses, it's a great thing. I went to the Grammys one time, and the Grammy show itself is a stultifyingly boring piece of shit. But if you go in the afternoon

when it's not televised, and they give out the gospel and blues awards, for them it's often like a validation of their life. It's very moving, and people break down and cry...and it's beautiful. It's the real thing. So for that alone they should have the rock and roll hall, for the pioneers, the rhythm and blues folks. And maybe when we're eligible I'll like it. I've figured it out, that's in 2006 or 2007, depending if they count our first single. But right now the '70s are coming up. That's pretty grim.

It's pretty funny that they still haven't broken ground yet. It's like some really long joke where you keep waiting for the punch line. Maybe Andy Kaufman will dig the first spoonful.

YOUNG: You know, I think the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame was a great idea when it started out. But I think they ought to close the hall. I think it's full. I think it's too early for a lot of the people who are going in now, and they're just looking for people to go in because they're out of people! Okay? They've got this thing going but let's face it—they've had the whole past to draw on for the first two or three years, and then they took all of that, what really *is* the hall of fame stuff. And now, they've got to come up with new stuff every year: "Let's see, what happened in 1968?" Before they had 50 years to draw from.

So they should close and reopen it. It just came to me. Closed "for renovations and repairs." Due to lack of interest. I think they can say they have enough people in for the foundation. Now they should wait 20 years. Or close it now and call it the "Original Rock and Roll Hall of Fame." Then they could have a grand re-opening.

And I say that in all sincerity. Close the doors. I think I'm developing an attitude about it.

THE ONES THEY LOVE

Old NEIL put digital down: When he plugs in either of two '53 Les Pauls, he goes nearly all analog. The guitars, with well-lubed Bigsby vibratos, stock P90s in the neck position and chrome Firebird pickups in the bridge, hit an old Fender reverb unit and, if desired, go straight into his main sound source, a '59 tweed Deluxe. On top of the amp sits a "Whizzer," which actually turns the knobs on the Deluxe to any of four presets called up by a footswitch. There's an Echoplex if desired, a (digital!) Microverb, an MXR analog delay and a Mutron octaver. The speaker output of the Deluxe goes through a Magnatone stereo vibrato amp and a Baldwin Exterminator with two 15s, two 12s and two 10s. The electrics are strung with Dean Markley SLPs, which are high in iron content for max output. Neil's longtime tech Larry Cragg dislikes wireless for its tone degradation; Neil plugs his own acoustics, all equipped with stereo FRAP pickups and varying gauges of D'Angelico 8020 strings depending on the tuning, into a FRAP preamp under his stage seat (Cragg, incidentally, is *the* FRAPman—415-453-3336). Neil's got a '67 Martin D-45, a herringbone D-28 which belonged to Hank Williams, a pre-war D-18 and another 28 for D modal tuning, two Taylor 12-strings and a high-strung '27 Mastertone ball-bearing-loaded banjo. On "Unknown Legend" from *Harvest Moon*, Neil doubled an old Esquire with Cragg's custom baritone Silvertone. Also on hand are Gretsch White and Black Falcons, a Roundup and a 6120.

Equipment-happy PETER BUCK plays a Rick 360 with heavy Dunlop picks and Markley .013s through a Vox AC30.

How Fusion Drumming's Father Ditched the Ratrace for the Globetrot

WHERE'S BILLY COBHAM

THE YORUBA LANGUAGE HAS THE UNUSUAL, HIGHLY POETIC property of letting a speaker telescope whole phrases into one word; conversely, a word can be unpacked into a number of possible phrases. "Iya," the word for mother, unfolds into "the one who draws my picture"; Socrates, the pet monkey of a German academic who often visits Nigeria, was renamed by the scholar's Yoruba friends "Sokoti," or "blacksmith of heaven." The professor, noticing his good friend Bill Cobham's affection for Yoruba music, decided to give Cobham a little present. He asked two Yoruba musicians: Could they think of a phrase that could be reduced to a word sounding just like "Cobham"? The pair, after a long huddle, announced that the only possible candidate was a phrase that means "a descendant of the god of drumming."

BILLY COBHAM, who may or may not be descended from the Great Drummer in the Sky, sat in his lawyer's apartment recalling his more immediate forebears. Forty-eight and a grandfather, he might be 38. He has at least three voices: boyish-excited, Afro-street and formal-stilted; a West Indian lilt fitfully announces itself. The dominant physical characteristic is a frighteningly massive, knotty pair of arms. Musicians, for some reason, tend to offer limp handshakes; Cobham's induces limpness.

Although most of his life has been lived outside it, Billy Cobham's short stay in the American public eye—roughly, the 1970s—was sufficient for him to cast a very long shadow. In the late 1960s, well-trained young jazz musicians, infected with the spirit

BY TONY SCHERMAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT LEWIS

of rebelliousness, began investigating rock. One, a 25-year-old New Yorker named Billy Cobham, Jr., played drums for a band called Dreams the way Jim Brown had played football until a few years before—without mercy. If one spirit can be said to have presided over the marriage of jazz and rock drumming, it is Cobham's. Tony Williams played rock-loud, but his exploratory figures were a jazzman's. Cobham played real rock and funk beats of unbelievable speed and force, their precision rooted in his drum-corps background. With the Mahavishnu Orchestra, a comet that flamed out in five years (Cobham was gone in three), and solo albums like the bruising *Spectrum* (a '70s friend of mine liked to blast it at his noisy upstairs neighbors), Cobham's impact was huge. A new drumming generation arose, adept at mixing rock heaviness with polyrhythmic smarts: Dennis Chambers, Simon Phillips, Living Colour's Will Calhoun. The drumming god from whom they descend is Billy Cobham. "The first time I saw Cobham," says Will Calhoun, "I froze. I had been hit. Everything became practice, practice, practice, work on this, work on that—anything to get to his level. Suddenly I was a different kid."

But Cobham, meanwhile, had vanished, taken his bad self to Europe, sick of fighting the American odds against even well-known jazz musicians. That he chooses to live outside the U.S.A. constitutes a nice symmetry—he wasn't born here, either. "I never considered the United States the end-all," he said in Manhattan recently, bound for Switzerland in the morning. He's a mongrel, an exotic, shaped from the start by the whole world's sounds.

"HERE'S A DREAM: FOR A MUSICIAN TO BE ABLE TO LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT HAVING TO STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET."

"MY FAMILY LIVED IN Barbados and St. Lucia–St. Vincent. My mother is rooted out of a family called the Walcott family, from Barbados. My father's father left St. Lucia–St. Vincent for Panama to work on the canal, and that's where he stayed. I was born in Gatun, Panama in 1944.

"In 1948 we came up to New York on a boat called the *Cristobal*. We went first to Harlem, then Brooklyn. Bedford Stuyvesant. When I was 11 we moved to South Jamaica, Queens, and from 1959 to 1962 I went to Music and Art High School in Manhattan.

"I was pretty much into playin' ball, playin' drums and playin' ball. I got my first set of drums probably at about four. My real foundation was the drum corps, the Marching and Maneuvering, M&M, Corps. Now, this was a way for me to actually learn how to play the drums; how to play rudiments and read music. Catholic churches promoted the bands, and if your band was really good there were contests to enter. Offseason were the 'individuals,' weekend contests to keep us practicing. I was in two corps, St. Catherine's Queensmen out of Albany and the Mineola Sunrisers. The corps wasn't an especially black thing; in fact, they were mostly white.

"New York State–wide, there were hundreds of corps in the '50s. Steve Gadd came out of one, I think the Gray Knights, of Rochester. Major, major, very, very good ones, there were maybe about 20. The bands are still going today, it's a quietly done thing with tremendous interest. I went back to watch the Sunrisers practice 18 years after I left, things had changed a *lot.*" ("Things," which I expected from his grave tones to be major socio-musical changes—the corps were two-thirds women in bikinis and featured a rapper—turned out to be extremely technical details, such as what yard-line the marchers now start from. Cobham's absorption in these minutiae revealed, a little touchingly, a mind in love with order.)

"When we lived in Queens...aw, that was a beautiful time! Drum corps took the place in my life of parties and hangin' out, I was never good at hanging out, it seemed like a waste of time: girls, and trying to take on this macho existence. I was an aberration. Music was available, and in a very disciplined way. I remember sitting in my room, a phone book under each arm to make me work my wrists and fingers harder, playing rudiments on a pillow for hours.

"But my happiest time growing up was Music and Art. There were some, I mean, in*spir*ing young players, Leo Mitchell and Al Foster, Larry Rosen (he was before us), Larry Willis, Bobby Colomby, Jimmy Owens, George Cables, in *high* school, at the same time! All we talked about was Monk, Miles. That environment was so, *so* great, 'cause you learned from your peers. Teachers tell you something, you say, 'Aw, go fly a kite.' But kids like Leo Mitchell, Leo was a drummer, he'd come in: 'Damn, I been practicing my paradiddles. How fast can *you* play?' You play 'em and Leo come in: 'Brrrrrrrrr.' You go 'Woww!' You can't let that happen to you, not if you're serious. So you get him to sit down: 'How'd you do that?' 'I did such and such.' 'Hmm! Really!' You go home and practice, couple days later you whip his butt. It's competition. You got a *reason* to get better. Today they have no time for that, it's Nintendo time. But we did all kinds of crazy things. You got a quarter?"

"Let me look.... Nope."

"Okay, gimme a dime." Cobham placed the coin on a coffee table. "The object is to play rolls on a coin, like so, keeping the sticks out of each other's way," which he proceeded to do, talking the whole time. "Coin's not allowed to budge. We'd have contests: Put a 50-cent piece on the wall and try to keep it up there by playing a roll on it. Takes concentration. Or get a cup, fill it to the brim and play a roll on the water without spilling any. Kids came up with these things, 'Hey, lookit what I can do!,' and they made sense.

"Then this kid named Donnie Perrillo, only one of us who could afford drum lessons, took me downtown to see his teacher, Charli Per-

Steve Ferrone

A Musicians' Musician.

Few musicians get an opportunity to record or tour with one of the true legends in popular music. People like Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Steve Winwood or Pat Metheny for instance. Guys like this seem to choose only the very best musicians to work with. Steve Ferrone hasn't worked with just one of them, he's worked with all of them. And you could add a list of others that would seem beyond belief. Although he has worked with many great musicians over the years, one constant has remained...his instrument of choice, Pearl Drums.

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sip, in a big-band session. It was *The Jazz Soul of Porgy and Bess* [reissued last year as a Capitol CD]. Incredible lineup of guys, they had six hours to cut the whole thing and it was a *lot* of music; they're all talkin' yah yah yah, 'Okay—one, two, one-two-three-four' *BAM*! Laughin' and talkin' right to the moment they play and it's perfect, first take. They never even saw the music before! I went 'Waaaaahh!' I was scared! Charli came in late, he's under the extra pressure of setting up, checking out the music and he *hits* it, man. Knocked me out. There's tunes on that album they only played once. I'll always remember that day, it made me want to become a studio player."

First came the Army, "the only time I ever really, *really* woodshedded. I enlisted in 1965. If I'd been drafted I'm not sure I'd be here talking to you. They sent me down to the Naval School of Music in Norfolk, Virginia. Friday afternoons I'd take a stack of 30 or 40 albums into a practice room and write out the drum parts for every song on every album. So I had like *piles* of music to play. Basie, Bobby Darin. They'd close the building down and wouldn't hear me from the outside, I wouldn't realize time was passing, so I'd get locked in for the whole weekend. I never went outside at all for a couple of days. Didn't even remember 'bout eating. Honest truth. I was into it. When they opened the door the guys said, 'Jesus, there's a cloud in here, it smells awful.' I was AWOL even though I was on base; got in trouble for it, too. But they kept that stuff I wrote and they still use it today."

Out of the service in 1968, he leapt into Manhattan's jazz scene, joining Jimmy Owens and Ron Carter in something called the New York Jazz Sextet. Touring with Horace Silver's group, he met 19-year-old Randy Brecker. "I got involved with a sort of school of thought that worked at Bank Street Recording: Joe Zawinul, Wayne Shorter, Miroslav Vitous, John McLaughlin, Larry Coryell, Chick Corea. I played on Larry's *Spaces* and Miroslav's *Purple*." He broke into studio work—George Benson's *Giblet Gravy*, James Brown's "King Heroin"—and played timbales at Latin dances uptown. When trombonist Barry Rogers, whom he'd met playing salsa, started a rock-band-with-horns, they asked Cobham in.

The band was called Dreams, and it was where the world first heard Cobham, a rock drummer who terrified rock drummers. The group itself was frightening, an embryonic fusion Who's Who: Randy Brecker, by now a refugee from Blood, Sweat and Tears; his 19-year-old brother Michael; John Abercrombie; Cobham. The great forgotten band of jazz-rock's first wave (the term "fusion" didn't exist), Dreams managed to screw up its potential, crapping out after two albums. The first (*Dreams*, just reissued on CD) still sounds wonderful; the second (*Imagine My Surprise*) has its moments.

"The problem was Dreams had no real leader," said Cobham, "which was a vacuum created by paranoia. Barry Rogers [who died last year] didn't want to acknowledge that he was the leader; on the other hand, he didn't want anyone else to take that step. Randy and Michael just wanted to play; if you asked them a question, you'd get, 'I dunno, man, yeah, okay.' Jeff Kent and Doug Lubahn had wonderful material and, looking back, appear not to have had a direction. Everything had to be discussed. Factions broke out. Eventually it all fell apart.

"I always felt like an outsider. The other members of the band tended to stick together, especially the horn section. It wasn't race; it was that I wanted to get some business done and these guys didn't want to do that.

"I don't know how much the first album sold. We didn't make anything. By the second album Will Lee and Don Grolnick were in the band, and I felt even more excluded. I was trying to be road manager at the same time I was playing, and I ran into a tremendous amount of static around that. It was a quote cooperative unquote band where nobody cooperated, you know? On one tune—and I never experienced this in my life, before or since—we did a hundred some takes and ended up using the first take. I just went, 'Oh, this is *in*correct.' There was a point where it became horrors, man, a week at the Jersey shore when I was depressed for seven straight days. I ran away. Didn't want nothin' more to do with them. They hired another drummer. Hired a bunch of drummers—they never *could* make decisions!

"Yet this band stood off by itself, it had the potential to be eons beyond anything else. 'Try Me,' 'New York City,' that stuff hold up right now, no problem. Barry could put those horn charts together, that's the interesting thing. It just seems...it's so difficult to talk about what happened, it is so much, *much* more complicated than words can present.

"I don't miss Dreams, no. I'd rather have looked towards the Orchestra staying together. The Orchestra had more lasting power." Cobham's stint with John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra is well documented (less so is the fact that Miles called often; Cobham is on *Bitches Brew* [uncredited], *Jack Johnson, Live Evil*—eight Davis albums in all). The Mahavishnu years were Cobham's heroic period, when he made his reputation for life. Assembled a year after Weather Report, the Orchestra steamed past Zawinul/Shorter to become fusion's earliest supergroup (*Birds of Fire* hit *Billboard*'s #15 in 1973), its tortured lyricism frying the brains of intellectually striving hippies everywhere. McLaughlin's mysticism notwithstanding, Cobham says John was no egalitarian. "The Orchestra was not a cooperative band. John McLaughlin was the leader. We were employees. Oh *yeah*, for sure. That was why we broke up, because the band received very, very little acknowledgment from John McLaughlin, on a business level."

Cobham released three viciously tight, muscular and extremely popular fusion records, *Spectrum* (#26 in *Billboard*), *Crosswinds* (#23) and *Total Eclipse* (#36); *Spectrum*, just issued on CD, has sold 600,000 copies worldwide. "The earlier solo stuff had a really strong musical motive, saying something on my own, breaking free of the constraints I'd felt in Mahavishnu. Whereas the later stuff, some of that was just for survival." He became a boss himself, with the attendant nightmares. Though he had a nose for talent (Tommy Bolin, John Scofield, Sheila E.), though he was one of a half-dozen Supreme Drum Gods, he was getting stale and knew it. His marriage broke up, he hid in busywork (commercials, the "Saturday Night Live" band); he became, as he puts it, "anal retentive," going on aimless shopping sprees. "Everything just seemed real dead."

In early '81, touring Europe, he saw something "that blew me away. I watched Reagan get shot on TV, but from about five perspectives on five different countries' TV stations, all at once. You saw five different things happening and I realized, 'Holy shit, it's a big world out here. French got one angle, Germans got another, Italians got another...wonder what it'd be like to stay here for a while?'" As if in an existential novel, he closed down one life and opened another, just like that, pulling in off the fast track...in Zürich, where the pace was slow and he could decompress.

For five years he hardly played in the States.

Awareness of Billy Cobham faded. *Yeah, the guy from Mahavishnu, where's he? Northern California? Soundtracks? Dead?* Busier than ever, a globetrotting musical entrepreneur by the end of the '80s. In 1992, for instance, Cobham played or taught in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Japan, China, Brazil, liable at any time to pop up lecturing in Naples, playing the Jazz Cafe in London, lecturing at the People's University in Beijing.

"Finally I have *options*. I can say, 'I'm gonna write these pieces they commissioned me for the Frankfurt Radio Band.' These are musical statements, major statements. These people are *interested* in what I'm talking about. They don't just want to make some scene. It's no longer about sittin' in this place, smoke's heavy, you work till three o'clock in the morning. After a while I went, 'Okay, that was an experience. I don't want to do it anymore.' And what's heavy is, you realize you don't know nothin' when you go to Bombay, hear some of the most amazing shit and don't have a handle as to how they do it. There are great musicians outside the U.S. You don't think there are Europeans playing great jazz? Come see."

Performing takes up about 70 percent of Cobham's time; he spends the rest giving clinics, teaching at the Academy of Contemporary Music in Zürich, composing. "Right now I'm immersed in something really heavy, percussion and mental health, working with UNICEF to develop programs for percussion and mental health in Third World countries." He produced two African percussion groups, Farafina and Okuta, at Peter Gabriel's annual "recording week" at Real World Studios. His plans for now are "to perform more actively with Okuta," to visit Africa, "to play again with Louis Bellson, maybe to play with Max [Roach]. I want to get more and more into different types of percussion, away from traps and conventional jazz." There's a chance he'll start making regular visits to the U.S., to lecture at the New England Conservatory of Music.

"Here's a dream: for a musician to be able to live in this country without having to struggle to make ends meet every day. My dreams are all practical. I believe that all of us, one hundred percent of all musicians, even the ones that make money, are still not behind the eight ball. We don't govern ourselves well, we've never been disciplined to. We always start at a loss, everything's always done from behind, behind, behind. Most of us, our objective is to not fall behind more than we already have. In the next echelon, we're trying to catch up, break even before we die. Then there are a few of us who are looking beyond breaking even to being ahead, to actually be totally solvent *and* create. I think that's possible. That's a dream for me. An attainable one. That's why I left. It was very difficult in the

JET SET

BILLY COBHAM sits in a forest of Mapex drums and Sabian cymbals: 24x16, 22x16 and 20x14 bass drums (that's right, three; behave, and we'll tell you how he does it—next time), five rack toms (12x8, 13x9, 14x10, 12x15, 16x16), two floor toms (18x16, 20x16), four snare drums (3.5x13, 6.5x14, 8x14, 15x16 concert field snare). Cymbals: China, ride, three crashes, hi-hat. Electronics: Kat controller, E-Mu Procussion tone module and Korg 01R/W keyboard.

U.S.A. I'm doing better now, much better, much much *much* much better.

"If I never came back here, that'd be no problem. I enjoy New York more than ever—I got a ticket to get out. When I go to a place like Japan it's not someplace I have to stay, but I enjoy the environment, I like to work with the people, and then I like to move on, 'cause there's *so much goin' on*!"

COBHAM ON DRUMMING

You have to get used to the actual balance between the reaction of the drumhead to the bead of the stick and what you do with your body. You have to actually be that sensitive. So you can just *draw* the sound out. I add firmness, more control, to the reaction of the stick off the surface, depending on how fast or complex the pattern is.

I'm interested in getting to where I can have the stick hit the drum while it's—almost—not even in my hand. If I could will the drumstick to the drum and not touch it, that'd be exactly what I'd do. It's just like Segovia playing the four-part fugues of Bach on the guitar—*all* the parts, on guitar!—despite having acute arthritis. Yet he could do it. It's almost theological. It's how you present yourself, or how you create your environment, while sitting at the instrument. How do you teach that? You start by teaching fundamentals in interesting areas like posture. Breathing. How to address the drum set. You teach respect for the instrument. And you don't teach by speaking, you teach by doing. At our school in Zürich, I'll ask students to play something and then to play it again, but at 50 percent of the volume. What's revealed is that they have no fundamental concept of presentation. They go, 'Fifty percent of the volume.... How loud did I play?' They can't even remember. And right there they're stuck. So now they're thinking. The light bulb starts to flicker, all of a sudden they have to use their brains. They're starting to use the drums to *express* themselves.

Not only drummers, but most musicians, just *play*, they go for it; you know, primal, primal, primal. But the guy who decides to take up racquetball to get his frustrations out—after a while, getting used to his surroundings, he starts to see there's another level to it, far beyond what he'd thought. It becomes a dance, an art. Same with drums.

I've never stopped practicing rudiments, I practice every time I sit down at the drum set. If your mind's working, you're practicing. In a drum solo I might end up practicing more than anything else. Trying to figure out what's wrong with my double-stroke roll. Trying to conceptually and practically piece all these little bits of things together. The funny part is, today I'm hearing things kind of in slow motion, no matter what the tempo is. So I can play very, very quickly.

Am I satisfied with my playing? No. I need to be more disciplined.

LOCK UP YOUR ROADIES!

IT'S THE MUSICIANS CONVENTION

Early Saturday morning at the "Karaoke for Profit" seminar in the Capistrano Room of the Disneyland Hilton, they introduce this panel of guys who come at the topic from a variety of perspectives ("Bob introduced karaoke to cruise lines") and the audience of about 200 music store managers all flare their nostrils, trying to decide if that's money they smell or bullshit.

Founded two years ago, the Karaoke International Sing-Along Association (KISA: "Commitment to Sing-Along") has discerned two types of karaoke consumers: drunks who wish to emote to pre-recorded music in saloons, and serious competitors who actually take lessons and practice at home in hopes of impressing their friends. The drunks will be a market forever, and the serious competitors are a burgeoning demographic, according to KISA. Hence today's subtext: KARAOKE IS NOT A FAD!!!! Hence the smart entrepreneur will cater to his customers directly through in-store displays of hardware and software, and indirectly through mobile KJs (karaoke jocks) who do weddings and parties in any of five formats: cassette, CD, VHS, CD graphic and CD-ROM.

The Glam of NAMM

This is the sort of information that makes your eyes snap open after a long night of party-hopping at the National Association of Music Merchants' annual convention: 799 booths spread over 800,000 square feet with 46,281 officially registered attendees, every last one drooling with equipment lust. Some of them are drooling with just plain lust—karaoke manufacturers seem especially intent on associating their product with babes—although NAMM veterans claim the bimbo quotient has fallen drastically from previous years. The celebrities make up for it. Jeff Ament of Pearl Jam sits at the Dean Markley booth under a poster of himself, commenting, "I guess that's me"; Glenn Frey, Rick Nielsen, Lemmy Kilmister, Chuck Rainey, Michael Manring and a host of first- and other-rate musicians sign autographs

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG, MATT RESNICOFF & PETER CRONIN

PHOTOS BY KAREN MILLER

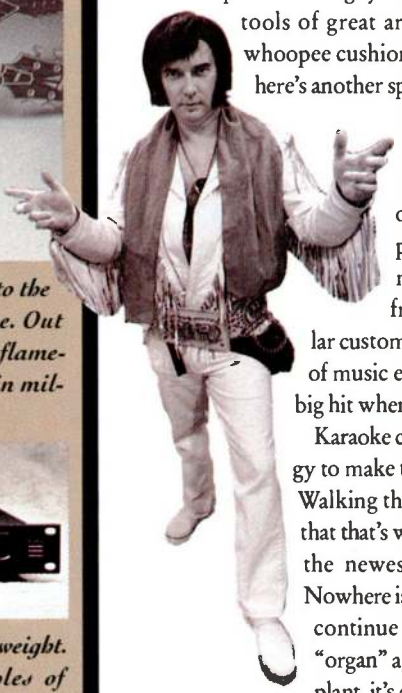
Gibson's "new" vintage line represents a return to the methods and materials of the company's prime. Out this year: goldtops, Black Beauties, Super 400s, flametops and the megabuck Citation—crafted within millimeters of their original specs.

It weighs in at just a few pounds, but it's no lightweight. E-Mu's latest module is packed with samples of yesteryear—from Hammond B3 to Fender Rhodes to Prophet V and beyond.

In the rush to recreate the Vox AC30, Bedrock (above)—who went as far back as Vox's schematics—is building amps that sacrifice nothing but foresight for a ringing, dynamic sound.

Yamaha's first eight-track cassette machine—13 inputs, three-motor drive, dbx noise reduction and dual speeds in forward and reverse—all this and good looks.

and demonstrate product. While the science of NAMM may be in the display booths, the fun is in the constant collisions of the sublime and the absurd. Here is a place where big hair and spandex pants shakes hands with beer guts and business suits, where a Hartley Peavey might easily cross paths with a guy who builds kazoos in his basement. Here are the tools of great art right up next to the musical equivalent of whoopee cushions. And here's my coffee, here's my aspirin and here's another speaker proselytizing for karaoke.



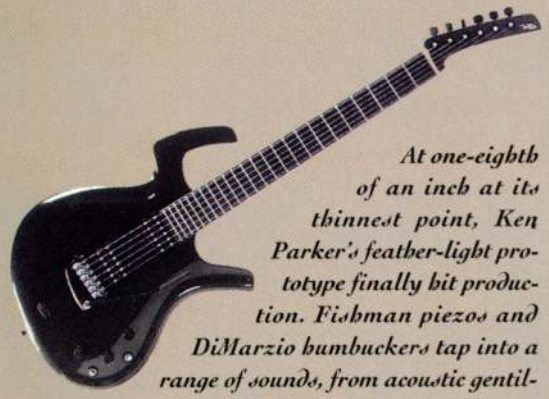
"The market for band instruments fell apart when they cut music education in the California schools," says John Bertrand of Simi Valley, owner of two music stores. "I investigated new product lines and karaoke seemed to be the most natural. In '92, 25 percent of my income came from karaoke sales and rentals." One of his regular customers is the local elementary school, where instead of music education they now have karaoke contests (it's a big hit when the principal sings) to raise money.

Karaoke consumers are people who use the latest technology to make themselves sound like old records from the '60s. Walking through this year's NAMM show, it occurs to us that that's what almost everybody wants these days—to find the newest breakthrough in sounding old-fashioned. Nowhere is this more apparent than in keyboards. As synths continue their struggle to sound more like real piano, as "organ" again means something you play rather than transplant, it's clear that the keyboard industry is turning at least one ear backward. What they're hearing is a word that has long motivated guitar makers: "vintage." Hammond introduced the XB3, a MIDIfied update of the classic B3. Not only did they get the sound right, but they also made the weight authentically vintage. That "B" must stand for "behemoth."

To illustrate what's inside their new Vintage Keys sample playback module, E-Mu has a huge, '70s-era multi-keyboard setup on display. Wacky conventioneers get a chance to dress as hippies and spread their wings à la Keith Emerson while a happy E-Mu person snaps souvenir Polaroids. They've dedicated almost half the memory of their module to the task of recreating several variations of the classic B3 sound. It comes pretty darn close, right down to the variable-speed Leslie speaker simulation. Other onboard sounds include dead-on Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos and meaty analog synths like the Prophet V. With a list price of $1095, you can pick this one up with the money you save on chiropractor bills.

That's only one ear that keyboard makers are pointing backwards. The other ear detects home stereo, signal processing and computer companies reaching aggressively into the home studio market. "Is live music dead?" you ask, as the giant steamroller of sequencing grinds the traditional garage band into the asphalt. General MIDI toys are popping up all over, as home studios crowd musicians out of the garage. At the Hal Leonard Publishing booth they have a Roland Sound Canvas set up to demonstrate a new series of music-minus-one–style sheet-music books. After inserting a floppy disk into the GM sample playback module, students can isolate parts and slow tempos without changing key.

Other developments in General MIDI include: the Korg Audio Gallery GM Module, the first product in the upcoming Audio Gallery line of GM-compatible gear; the highly versatile Kawai G-Mega GM module; and the Kawai K11, a GM-compatible 32-channel, 32-voice multitimbral keyboard with a super-friendly interface, 128 preset sounds, a programmable user bank with room for 128 additional sounds and internal reverb, for around $1295. In general, General MIDI is being marketed to the multimedia producer and



At one-eighth of an inch at its thinnest point, Ken Parker's feather-light prototype finally hit production. Fishman piezos and DiMarzio humbuckers tap into a range of sounds, from acoustic gentility to full-on crunch.

The much-copied folks from Mackie continue to offer lots of features for not much money. Their cool new eight-bus mixers are available in 16-, 24- (pictured) and 32-channel versions.

Peavey's expansion into the world of keyboards and samplers continues with the SX II, a nice-priced stereo version of last year's SX sample expander.

High-end amp analysts have begun to agree—the power amp is a crucial stage in the move toward serious tone. VHT's Classic is the step after the 2150, with EL34 power, half-power and triode/pentode operation. The amp also has a voicing option for further vintagization.

the student/hobbyist, and makes life vastly easier for the non-keyboard-playing home recordist as well.

If you're into the serious stuff, Roland's got the JV-1000 Music Production System, a 76-key, souped-up version of their JV80 with an MC50 40,000-note, eight-track sequencer. It also reads and writes smart FSK, washes dishes, mows lawns and changes the cat box. Another do-it-all keyboard is the Alesis Quadrasynth. With 64-voice multitimbral capability and ADAT compatibility, this one packs a load of promise—if they can get it out of the display case and into the players' hands. Also still under glass at Alesis was the QuadraTrack eight-channel, four-track recorder with built-in digital reverb and Dolby S noise reduction. With those features and a price of $695, it has the potential to set the standard for four-track cassette machines—when they get it into production.

Yamaha introduced an eight-track cassette recorder/mixer, the MT8X—a lightweight, portastudio-style machine with a 13-input mixer, three-motor drive and dbx sound reduction. And it's the best-*looking* multitracker we've seen in a while. But Yamaha's big news was the CBX D5. With support from Mark of the Unicorn, Steinberg/Jones and Dynatek, Yamaha developed this four-track hard-disk recorder with an onboard processor that frees the computer from having to deal with both MIDI and digital audio processing. That's cool because you can get into digital recording with a smaller computer like a Mac Classic II or SE30 or an Atari ST. Its built-in stereo digital effects can be automated using Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer. Cost: $5000.

The Akai booth offers plenty of evidence that the age of the digital bedroom studio has arrived. Their DR4d is a four-track hard-disk recorder that works just like a tape deck and costs less than $2000. Spend another $500 on a decent hard drive and you're ready to go. That price, combined with terrific fidelity and editing capability, may make this the real ADAT killer.

Speaking of which, Tascam formally introduced their 8mm-format DA88 digital eight-track recorder. And Fostex gave us a backroom peek at their upcoming ADAT machine. Due around mid-year (they hope), this eight-track digital machine will be similar to Alesis' entry, with improved time-code capability.

Digidesign induced many swoons with their Session 8, an integrated digital recording system that runs on Windows and the Mac. Combined with the optional R1 controller, the Session 8 neatly takes care of all routing, mixing and editing chores and brings CD quality to the home studio.

Even high-tech companies have to look back now and then. Opcode introduced *Looking into Vision*, an instructional video for their popular sequencing program for the Mac. It's designed not only for the beginner, but for the experienced user who wants to get deeper into this bottomless program.

The digital recording market is heating up faster than anyone could have imagined a few years ago. ART, a company chiefly known for signal-processing gear, displayed a prototype of a "non-tape" digital recording system they're developing.

For music journalists, or anyone who records interviews and speeches, Sony's NT-1 is one useful unit. Up to 120 minutes of info can be digitally recorded onto its cool little postage stamp–size cassettes. The NT-1 is about half as big as a Walkman and sells for $1000. Which, come to think of it, pretty much excludes music journalists.

We stumble over to Trace Elliot just in time to see John Entwistle plug his ears and run from some mook's screaming guitar solo. Hey, if you can't take the heat, get out of the sound booth. We stick it

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out long enough to plug into Trace Elliot's new BLX-80 bass amp. At $896, this little 80-watt room-shaker packs a lot of boom for the buck. When that guitarist finally gets unbearable, we wander over to Ibanez, where Ned Steinberger is admiring Rich Lasner's new whammy bar for acoustic guitar, essentially a Strat block on springs. Lasner was once a designer for Ibanez, before defecting to Yamaha and subsequently launching his own design firm.

"Basically it's a knife-edged tremolo," Ned explains, peering inside the instrument. "David Torn's been bugging me about a TransTrem for acoustic, but there's no real existing market. It's hard to get people wound up about a TransTrem for acoustic guitar."

Hands thrust in his pockets, Ned had walked over from Gibson, the company that bought him out several years ago. One of the most significant and radical guitar designers to emerge in the last 25 years, Steinberger recently shut down his factory at the behest of Gibson and had a small, undecorated corner at the Gibson pavilion amidst a vast display of some of the most beautiful guitars ever made...before 1960. As Ned checked out Lasner's innovations, a Gibson rep brandished an unfinished Les Paul body dotted with technician's markings to show how last year's neck joint was just millimeters smaller than the specs of 20 years ago. The company plainly hears "Why can't you make them like you used to?" louder than "What have you done for me lately?" Even the new Nighthawk, a Paul-meets-Tele amalgamation, available with two or three pickups, sat in back—an afterthought to the Antique Brigade. Then again, you can't argue with a '56 goldtop, a '59 flametop, the Tal Farlow or the $17,000 Citation.

Seymour Duncan's new pickups include Vintage Rails to emulate a '57 Strat, and a revamped JB humbucker to fit into a single-coil rout. They're based on Hot Rails, but with adjustable polepieces for string balance with tailoring for bright harmonics. Duncan also has a five-string bass pickup with a wide surface, which can be operated passively or actively. Their Sadducer is a new acoustic saddle transducer. At the other pickup superpower headquarters, Steve Blucher shows off DiMarzio's Evolution pickup, designed in conjunction with Steve Vai to accent the *low* low and bring up the low midrange—slightly hotter than their PAF Pros. Paul Rivera showed us his new line of amps. Simple, light and capable of producing a wide variety of tones, these great new combos come in 30-, 50- and 100-watt sizes. The smaller two-channel amps have a boost in each side for four sounds activated by footswitch, and an active effects loop with variable send and return. The more complicated 4×10 has a manual practically mounted on top of the housing to prevent confusion.

A high-end amp company, Bedrock is looking to expand with some excellent affordable units. The 621 is an all-tube 25-watt combo with a tight Marshall or Deluxe sound and switchable effects loop. The three-channel 1050 50-watt head sounds as nice as a plexi Marshall or a Twin—that's serious range. The BC75 is an old-style 2×12 AC30 mockup, with a sweet A/B setup and master volume for playing in the vicinity of other humans.

For the play-by-numbers crowd, Fretlight Guitars offers an axe that lights up on the neck where you're supposed to play, and changes to display different scale fingerings. Lyruss has another instructional variation that has guitar hero Steve Morse getting tomatoes thrown at him because he can't play fast enough. A program called Tour, accessed through a suction-cup pickup on Steve's guitar, calls for, say, D♭ on the G string. If he hits it accurately and quickly, he gets cheers from the computer. If he hits it wrong or too slowly, the crowd throws rotten vegetables. This program (part of a full system of instructional software) could be a revolutionary tool in teaching a whole library of licks, coaxing the student to sight-read, analyze chords and visualize the fingerboard. It also opens the possibility of *betting* on a player's ability to get through a song or riff without making a mistake. Thus do the ambitions of the Berklee College of Music converge with those of Jimmy the Greek.

Less interactive, but no less instructive, REH Videos have released a host of new tapes, the most anticipated of which is by Allan Holdsworth. Other fine tutorials include those by Paul Gilbert, Robben Ford, Scott Henderson and Gregg Bissonette. The more acoustically oriented Homespun boasts very useful tapes by Doc Watson, Rory Block, Dr. John, Jack DeJohnette, Bill Monroe, Pete Seeger and Vassar Clements.

Paul Reed Smith introduced his first lefty, and an upgrade of the Artist Series guitar with a bound neck and headstock, gold hardware and ornate truss rod cover. Paul calls the response "outasite" for his new 22-fret guitars. His Dragon series features an ornate inlay on the neck with 217 pieces of mother-of-pearl, turquoise, coral and abalone. That $11,000 dragon also features gold claws and PRS signature.

The Fender Custom Shop topped the one-of-a-kind high-end market with the hand-carved, $25,000 Phoenix Stratocaster; otherwise Fender also seems to be hearing the call of "Make it old, but make it new." They introduced the Deluxe 112 and Stage 112SE "tube emulation" amps, designed to give you that old Fender sound with modern distortion and effects without the hassle and expense of tubes. Since the amps have that classic Fender "black face," the audience doesn't have to know. If you want real tubes with updated circuitry, check out the Vibro King, made in Fender's Custom Shop, with three 10-inch speakers. You'll swear you had one 30 years ago, but it's new for '93. The big news in the Fender bass department is the Stu Hamm model, designed (again) to feel old but sound new, with a lightweight, deep-cutaway body and a combination of one P- and two J-Bass pickups and active electronics.

As long as we're on the subject of basses, SWR has its 900 on prominent display. At 900 watts, featuring two separately EQed channels and a manual that shows you how to dial up any classic bass tone, this could be the next industry standard. They also have a unique, compact 8×10 cabinet.

The Zon booth is drawing huge crowds as Michael Manring plays their Hyper Bass, specially equipped with Extender tuning knobs. Their graphite necks appear to be just the ticket for the bassist looking for a high-end instrument that won't warp in varying weather conditions on the road.

Over in the Korg suite, Marshall has a prototype of its High Dynamics bass amp, rated at 400 watts (but with 4000 watts peak power). It's their attempt to revive a justly low low-end reputation. A limiter supposedly makes it impossible to blow out your speakers with all that power—it's there for greater punch and clarity—but the version we heard still had some bugs (i.e. static) to work out. Watch for the final version this fall.

Korg's Mitch Colby came up and handed us a guitar that weighs five pounds, then took it back and handed us one that weighs half that. The Parker guitar is 98 percent wood; the first production model is, at its thinnest, one-eighth of an inch. Stainless steel frets (read: indestructible) are stuck with a space-age glue right onto the fingerboard. A piezo element built into the bridge gives the guitar a clean, beautiful acoustic tone, which can be mixed with its specially designed DiMarzio humbuckers to produce a crunch that rivals most standard solidbodies. Also at Korg is the A4, a multieffects unit with lots of

goodies: a tuner, distortion, quiet response, seven overdrive modes and delay which feeds back subtly into the next program when a patch is switched. The simpler G3 looks like an old home video game console, but it's a promising pile of wires, with three modes (lead, crunch and clean), a three-color LED for bank ID and a real nice price. They've also got a *real* reissue of Vox's classic AC30 amp, with a 15-watt alnico speaker and accurate detailing based on the original schematics.

There's Gene Simmons at the GHS booth signing string packs. Does the infamous Bat Lizard of Kiss have any wisdom to share on the subject of strings?

"No matter what anybody says, just use your ears," he says, pausing between autographs for a surging crowd. "Forget all this crap about 'Here's why this movie is good.' Or 'Monsieur, here's why you should like thees deesh.' *Forget* that. You either like it or you don't."

Musically speaking, there's plenty to like at this year's show. Reflecting the surge in acoustic sales, the pickers this year share equal space with the shredders at product demos. Country blues duo Cephas & Wiggins turned one end of the Hohner booth into their back porch and attracted heavy metal–sized crowds. Over at the Taylor booth, you could pick up any one of their entirely new line of acoustics and actually hear yourself play; their 612 cutaway and the ornate 900 series are especially nice pieces. Santa Cruz show their environmentally correct "Golden State" acoustic, which sounds real good without using any tropical rain forest woods. Charvel has a new Sadowsky-style acoustic-electric with a built-in, three-band EQ and Fishman transducer.

About a half a mile and a short escalator ride away, we find ourselves in Hall E, the outpost for some of NAMM's more far-flung entrepreneurial attractions. While the blips and beeps from Digidesign's demo mix with the National steel guitar licks of old-timey slide-whiz Bob Brozman and screams from the Bogner amp booth, we stop to talk to MIT graduates Omar Green and Mohamed Eissa.They founded the IXDT company to market their Janus Machine, a small black box that plays music backwards in real time. So if you want a backmasking effect, you can get it live instead of paying for a studio and going through all the rigmarole of reversing a reel-to-reel tape. Down the aisle sits Ken Purcell in a flannel shirt. With his full beard and jolly expression, he resembles Santa Claus, and he is easily the most impressive visual in his display, which consists of a vase of flowers and a cardboard sign. From Lake Minchumina, Alaska, a trapping community of 30 inhabitants, Purcell got sick of breaking his nails while fingerpicking and invented a new design for fingerpicks that notch over your nail. Standard fingerpicks go up from under the tip of the finger, depriving guitarists of feel. Classical players and folkies who spend their lives worrying about breaking a nail now have a viable alternative (marketed as aLaska Pik) that feels like your nail when you pluck. "I left my family behind a month ago," says Purcell. "We first got these things manufactured a week ago. I just rented this stall and here I am."

Finally, with feet aching, ears ringing and vision blurring, we manage to find an exit sign. After having our valises checked by the convention center's crack security force (none under age 70), we make our way back to the Marriott to rest up for the night's festivities. Our only regret is that we never got to see the woman with the goldfish swimming in her guitar. Oh well, there's always next year.

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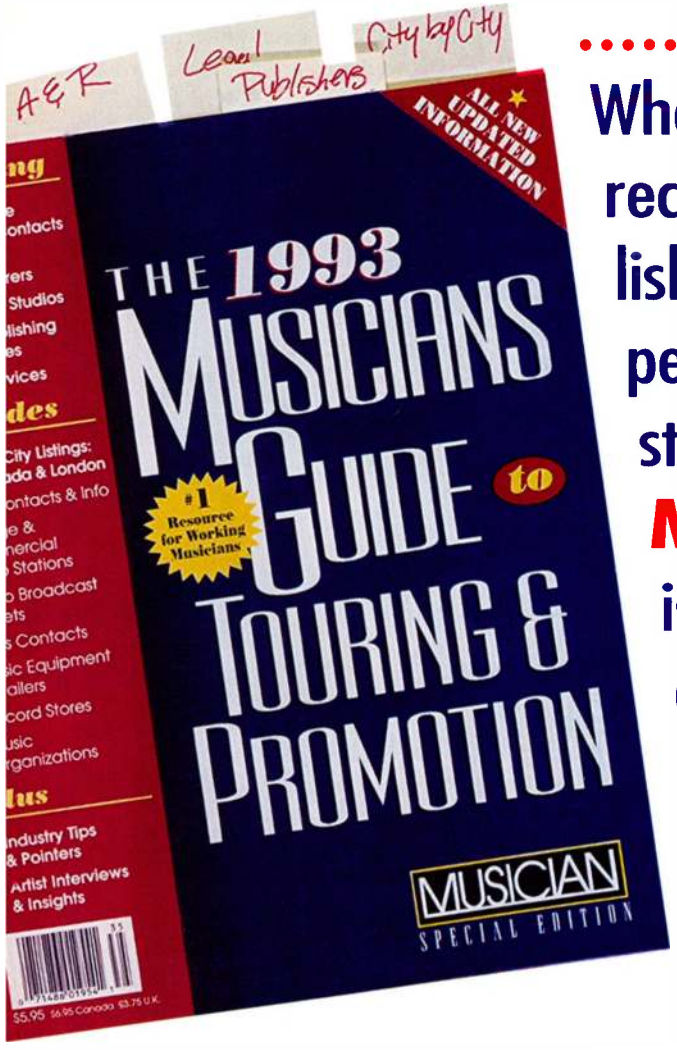

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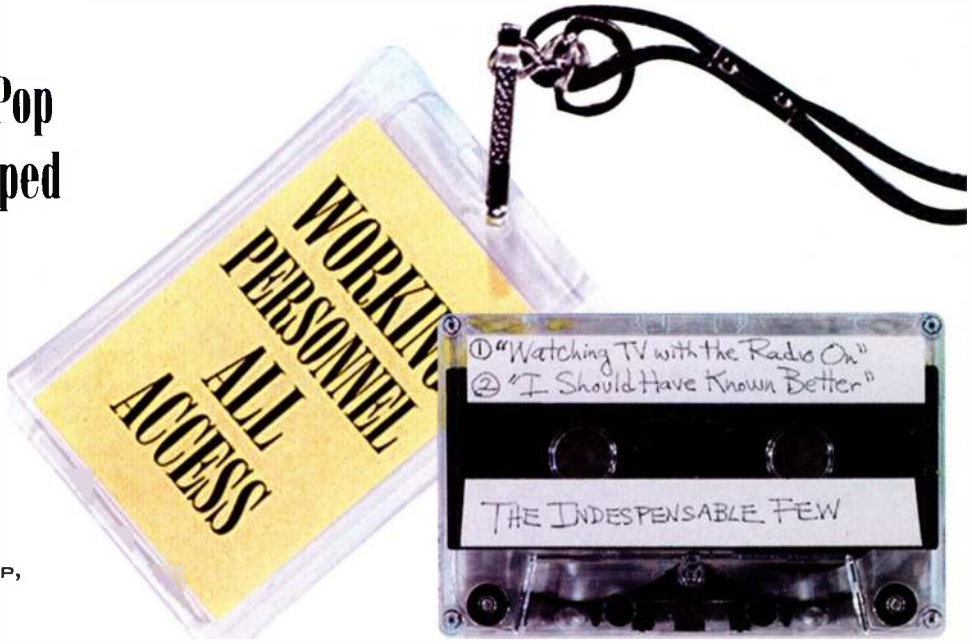

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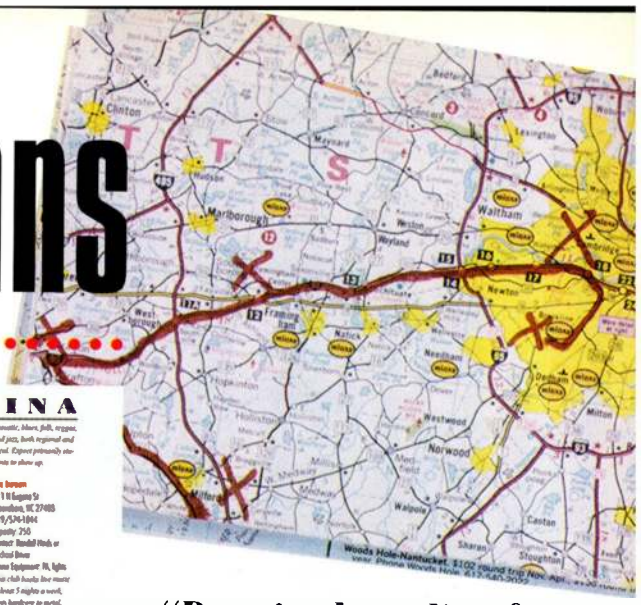

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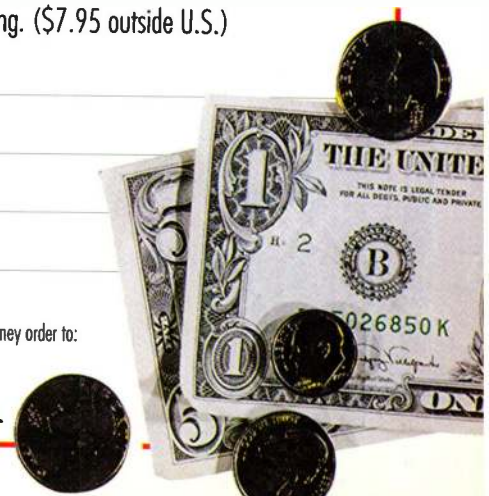

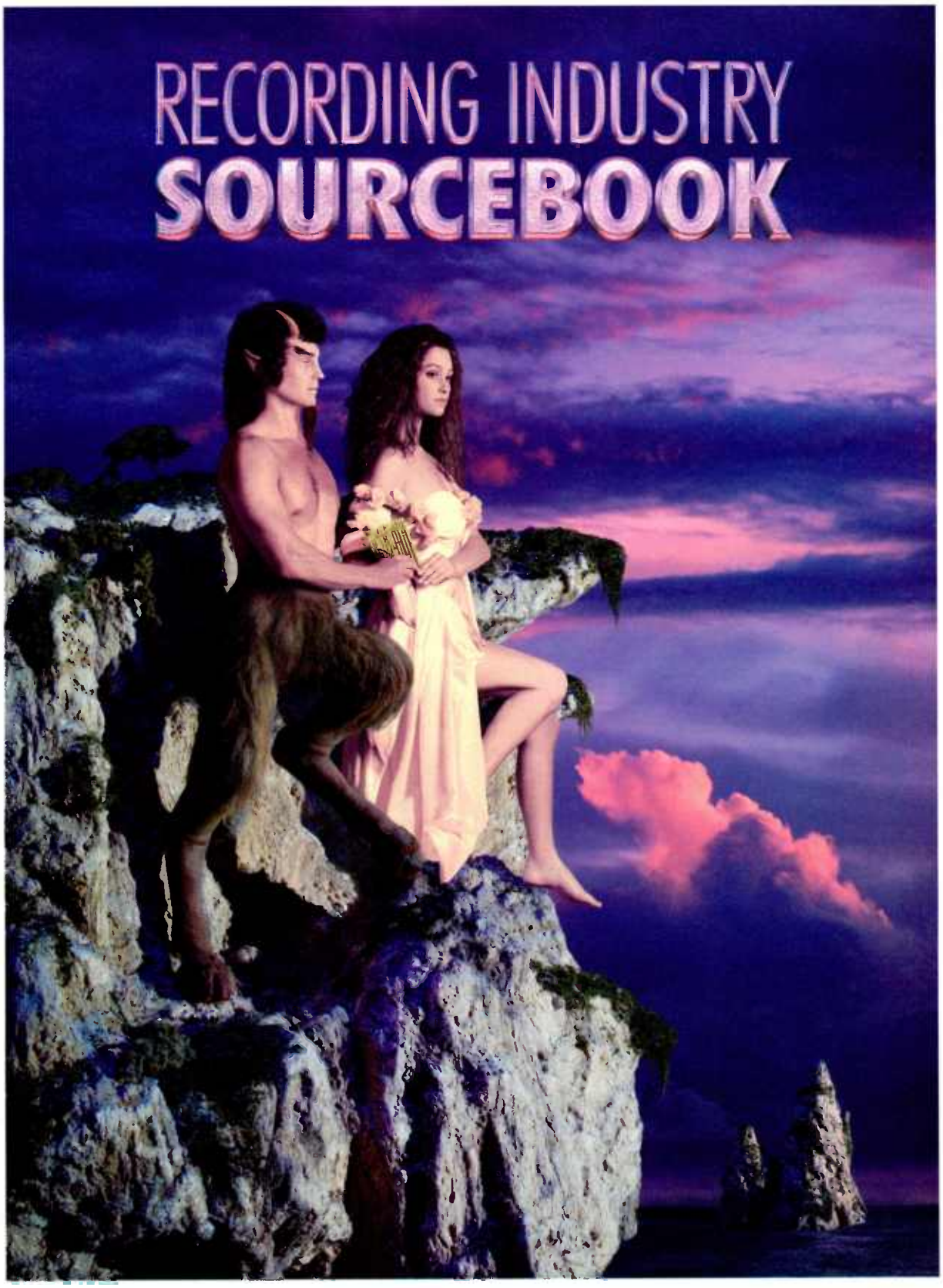

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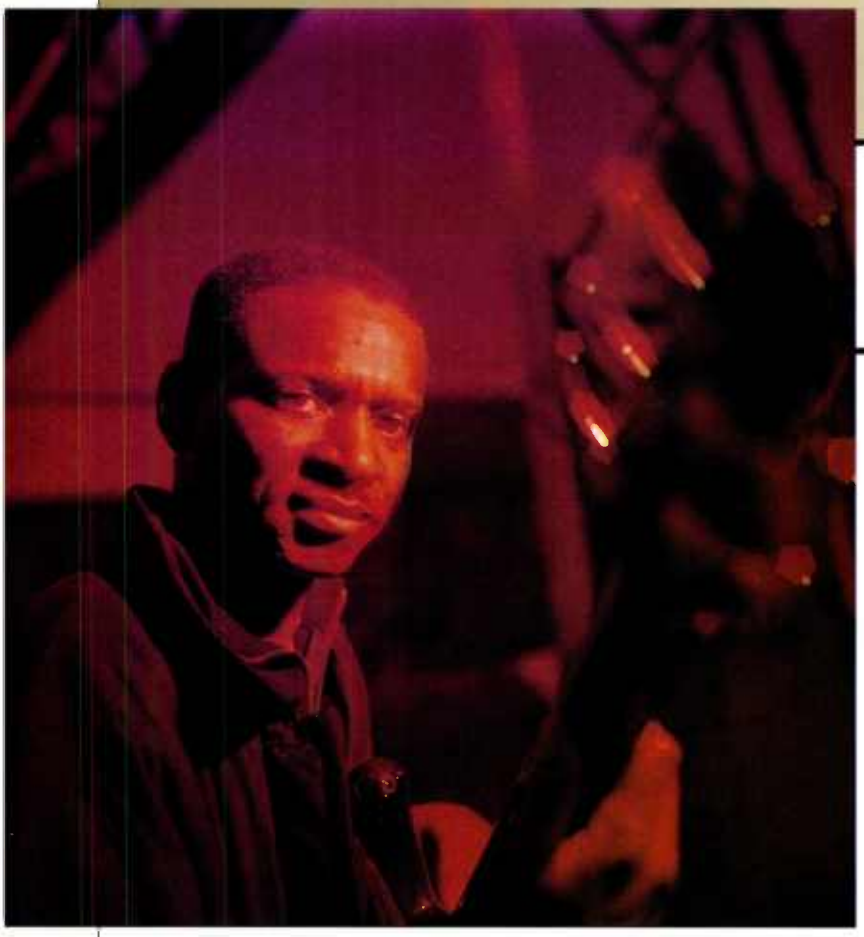
Big Fat Bass Notes



Willie Weeks gets fat

by RICK MATTINGLY

Sometimes I listen to a song that someone else played bass on and I think, 'I'm glad he played it because it's perfect,'" says Willie Weeks with typical self-effacement. "But when I listen to Wynonna's 'She Is His Only Need,' I'm glad I played on that because it needed no more and no less."

Sitting on a sofa in his suburban Nashville home, Weeks reaches for his five-string Ripley bass and plays the pattern from the aforementioned song. He mostly plays whole notes on the roots of the chords, letting each one ring out for its full value.

"I've always gone for a big sound," Weeks comments. "I used to imagine a big, soft, rubber ball bouncing slowly down the road. That's how I wanted my notes to be. Whenever I start playing, my right hand automatically finds that sweet spot where the note lives. Often, it's just above the pickup closest to the neck, but it can vary from instrument to instrument.

"With my left hand, I like to get a firm grip with my thumb pressed against the back of the neck and put some real solid pressure just behind the fret. I squeeze it until the note is finished doing what it wants to do. With my right hand, I play with the meat of my first and second fingers."

Weeks plays the part to "She Is His Only Need" again, and his right-hand fingers glide over the strings in such a way that there is little sense of the notes being plucked. The notes emerge almost as if being bowed. Each one is so fat that a drummer could play behind, right on or ahead of the beat and still be locked in with Willie.

"If a drummer plays a little ahead," Weeks says, "I'll play back to balance it and make it fat. If he plays behind, I try to be on top. Eddie Bayers [drummer on the *Wynonna* album] plays in the center, and that's where I'm most comfortable."

Willie says that in country music, the bass and bass drum must function as though they are one instrument. "The bass drum provides the impact, and the bass makes the note long or short. That gives the music a really solid foundation."

When the music calls for more rhythmic activity from the bass, Weeks will switch to his right-hand thumb to give the note a bit more attack, and he uses a pick on occasion. "We were cutting Wynonna's new album last week," he says, "and on one song I used a pick to give the note a focus, but at the same time I smothered the string with the palm of my right hand." Weeks plays the pattern, and the combination of pick and muted string gives each note a pointed thud, not unlike a bass drum packed with a pillow.

"On 'No One Else on Earth' from Wynonna's first album, I played some of it like this," he says, flicking his wrist so that his right-hand thumb bounces off the string, slapping it against the neck. He alternates staccato notes with longer tones in a syncopated pattern, but his left hand isn't doing much more than it did on the slow song he played earlier—holding root notes for the length of a measure.

"When we first played the song," Weeks says, "I started out playing whole-note roots. I wanted to stay simple, so I put the action back here," he says, indicating his right hand, "and kept the left hand straight. I do that a lot. Sometimes I underplay, but I can't help it. That's just the way I feel music."

Drummer Andy Newmark, who played with Weeks on numerous albums during the '70s, echoes that sentiment. "Willie's simplicity is not an intellectual decision," Newmark says. "The notes go from his soul into his [*cont'd on page 77*]

PHOTOGRAPH: JIM HERRINGTON

Finding New Life in Four-Track

Getting the most out of your home studio

by SCOTT MARSHALL

MOST HOME RECORDISTS HAVE BARELY scratched the surface of what their old machines can do. Without enough help from the people who sold you the machine in the first place, it's easy to be dissatisfied with the quality of the first few recordings you make and then assume the format just can't cut it. This isn't necessarily so. With the exception of a few machines at the absolute bottom of the barrel, a cassette four-track in good working order can produce a demo of a song or band that is of sufficient sound quality to send confidently to any publisher or record company. A recording of this quality is not likely to be produced the first day—or month—you take the machine out of the box. The art of recording is every bit as difficult as writing, playing and singing, and requires nearly as much time and practice to master.

These are basic everyday tips people ignore all the time (I sold these machines for many years—and like Santa, I know when you've been bad or good), along with some quite sophisticated tricks I've learned from my customers and from my own studio career.

Keepin' It Clean The most common "consultation" about a cassette four-track goes like this:

CUSTOMER: Tracks three and four don't record right. When I record the meters go way up, but when I play back there's hardly anything on the tape.

REPAIR PERSON: Do you clean your heads?

CUSTOMER: Sure, once a year, whether they need it or not.

At our shop, we would take the customer to the bench and clean the machine right then, and almost always end up with a Q-tip covered with nasty brown oxide and the four-track right back to factory spec. Cassette tape sheds oxide just as easily as the large tape formats. Clean your heads every time you turn your machine on, and again every couple of hours that you use it. Use a solution from one of the major manufacturers, or pure solvent alcohol from the hardware store; rubbing alcohol contains oils good for your skin but bad for your tape. Swab with a Q-tip both the erase and the record/play head in the direction the tape travels. Dry up with the other end of the Q-tip and go back to work.

Every 10 hours or so, clean the capstan and pinch roller with a special solution that is kind to rubber (alcohol dries and cracks the pinch roller), and demagnetize the heads, capstan and tape guides with a good degausser—the all-time studio favorite is the Annis Han-D-Mag. A good demagnetizer will pick your keys right up off the table. The cheesy little cassette kind don't do squat that I can see.

Don't Be Tight If you spend half a grand on a home studio, does it make sense to try to save a buck on tape? All the major manufacturers recommend Maxell UD XLII. The difference between the tape at the supermarket checkout counter and UD XLII is about the same as the difference between the *Weekly World News* and the New York *Times*.

A Chain and Its Weakest Link Every home studio must have at least two recorders—the four-track and another machine to mix down to. The second machine's quality is as important as the first, especially if you will be making copies of your tape from that machine to a third. Mixing to a portable

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machine (which will almost certainly have automatic level control) is bad for your sound: No matter how carefully you recorded your multitrack, the automatic level control will turn itself all the way up before your song begins, giving you a few seconds of loud hiss followed by a loud first note and then a big drop in level as the ALC adjusts itself.

If you want to master to cassette, get a deck that has manual level controls and a large display to show your record levels as you mix. Each manufacturer makes a low-budget model in the $100 price zone, and most are good enough to make a clean, bright master that reflects how carefully you recorded in the first place.

I have been surprised to learn how many home recordists own Hi-Fi VCRs and don't realize what great mastering recorders they are. These machines have stereo inputs and outputs and, in audio record mode, have specs which rival the best digital recorders. Despite the slow rewind and fast forward, that makes it worth the effort.

The digital audio tape or DAT recorder is the absolute best format for mastering—perfect sound reproduction and convenience. And the music is in the digital format, which can be more or less directly transferred to a CD.

Even those who can't afford a DAT can benefit from the technology, as the advent of the DAT recorder has brought down the price of used reel-to-reel two-tracks. Although these machines are large, and reel-to-reel is inconvenient, they sound great and last forever.

Fly, Don't Bounce Most four-trackers want to record more than four tracks, and quickly learn that it is easy on most recorders to consolidate material (i.e., drums, bass and piano) recorded on tracks one, two and three by recording them to track four. Then more instruments or vocals can be put on tracks one, two and three. This is called "bouncing," and works great. But:

If you have a good-quality second recorder, you can fly instead: Fill up all four tracks, then mix all four to the second machine on just one channel. Then fast-forward the multitrack machine to a blank section and transfer that mix to one track nice and hot and bright. The advantages: You get an extra track, and you don't have to erase your original basic. If you later decide you didn't put enough drums on the basic mix, you can go back to the second step instead of starting all over.

Better Bounces Through Science Most recorders allow you to bounce tracks internally, without external cables. But what if you did it the hard way on purpose, running a cable from the left output of the mixer section to the input of track four? Then you could put an equalizer or a reverb or a compressor or an exciter on your bounce and *improve* the sound as it bounces.

That Sync-ing Feeling The number-one-all-time improvement to a four-track setup is the addition of a sequencer and a multitimbral synthesizer with a sync box. You give up track four as a recording track and use it to keep any number of keyboard sounds and drum machine patterns playing along with your tape in perfect sync. The advantages: Clearer sound on all drums and keyboards; you can change sounds right up to the last moment; you can fix performances after you play them.

Double Your Pleasure Let's say you have an acoustic guitar on track three and in the final mix you want that guitar sound to stand out. Take the direct out of track three and run it into a digital delay. On the back of the delay you'll find two outputs, one "dry" or "direct," the other "mixed" or "delay." Run the dry out to the input of channel three on the four-track. Now set the delay to do a very quick delay—around 60–80 milliseconds—and set the balance. Run the "mixed" output to either an extra channel (if your machine has more channels than tracks, like a Tascam Porta 2) or to your effect return. Pan channel three all the way to the left and the delay return all the way to

the right, and set their levels equally. Wow—stereo acoustic guitar using up only one track. Also works on vocals (ask Robert Plant).

Finding the Time Setting delay time on a digital delay is often hit or miss when it doesn't have to be. Most delays now read out delay times in milliseconds (or thousandths of a second); all you need to do is set a stopwatch and click "start" and "stop" along with the music. For instance, at 120 beats per minute you'll find your stopwatch reading about 50 hundredths of a second. This means that to set your delay to do a quarter note, you set it to 500 milliseconds; for an eighth note, set the delay for 250 milliseconds. When you get the delay time right, the effect helps the groove.

Pre-Delay Your Reverb A nice trick from the big leagues is separating the reverb sound from its source with a delay. Many modern multi-effect units have this programmed in, but you can use older units. Here's how it used to be done.

Run your effect send to the input of a digital delay. Set the balance to all delay. Set the delay time to roughly an eighth note, with no regeneration. Run the delay output to the input of the reverb and return the reverb output to an effect return as you would using reverb alone. When you bring up the effect, the source track sounds clearer because the reverb doesn't start until after the source sound. This effect is used often on vocals, and with shorter pre-delays on drums.

Practice Pays Off Just as in playing, recording is improved by *doing*. Even if you don't have a new original song to record, don't let your equipment sit idle. Record a cover song, or even a piece of one, just to see how close you can get to the original. You'll often surprise yourself. Don't fall prey to "If only I had...," where you don't try to record anything while you wait for the next piece of wazoo gear. Dig in and do it!

WEEKS

[*cont'd from page 73*] fingers, without going through the brain first, as opposed to neurotic white guys like me who analyze every note."

Weeks credits much of his style to the gospel music he heard growing up in North Carolina. "The first time I saw a gospel bass player, I wanted to be like that," he says. "And James Jamerson and Ray Brown both had a big effect on me. They both had a big sound."

Willie first gained notoriety with Donny Hathaway. A chance meeting with Newmark led to Weeks being hired to play on Ron Wood's *I've Got My Own Album to Do*, which featured Keith Richards, George Harrison and Rod Stewart. Harrison hired Weeks and Newmark for his *Dark Horse* album and tour. After moving to L.A. and doing session work for three years, the Doobie Brothers called, and Weeks went with them until their breakup in '83. The following year he moved to Nashville.

"I listened to country stations to get the flow," Weeks says, "and it was just a matter of finding out where the pocket is and learning not to play the fifth of the I chord to lead into the IV. I started out with gospel and R&B, and all of a sudden here I am rocking with Keith Richards. I'd ask myself, 'Man, are you really a rocker?' Now, I sometimes question how genuine my country bass playing sounds, but I'll put something on that I played and think, 'That sounds good.'

"It's just a matter of throwing yourself into whatever you're doing and becoming that. There's nothing to it but doing it—getting in with the moment."

WILLIE'S WORKS

Other than his Fender '62 reissue Jazz Bass, all of WILLIE WEEKS' basses are five-string models: a Ripley, a Yamaha TRB and a Tobias KB, which he favors for live work. His amplifier is an SWR.

Flatpicking and Finger Pulling

Steve Ferguson gets nasty

by RICK MATTINGLY

I have the right hand of a country guitar player and the left hand of a blues player," says former NRBQ guitarist Steve Ferguson, who has spent the past several years pursuing a solo career and contributing to pianist Johnnie Johnson's album. "The result is a rural style of rhythm & blues, and this is the lick that made me aware of that kind of playing."

Pulling his guitar from its case, Ferguson plays the one-bar break from the Joe Tex classic "Skinny Legs and All." It starts on a B, which Steve gets by pushing a third-string A up a whole step. As his right hand plays the syncopated rhythmic figure, his left hand lets the note drop back to an A.

"That had a major effect on my playing, because to do that lick right you have to use your [right hand] second finger to pop the string and then slap the pick against the same note. That gives the second note a stronger click. Then, with your left hand, gradually let the pressure off the string while you're doing it. The note drops as smooth as if you used a pedal.

"And the end result is 'Filthy McNasty,'" laughs Ferguson as he plays the lick again. "I wish I knew who the guitar player was on that record. He had obviously been listening to Nashville guitar players. In the early '60s, Lloyd Green and those Nashville pedal-steel players used that very lick in some of the early Buck Owens and George Jones things. He's obviously got his chops together, because it takes a little bit of coordination to pull off the lick. But the combination of that technique and the dirty tone brings out this *rural* kind of rhythm & blues.

"I prefer the term 'rural' to 'country,'" Ferguson explains. "Country is a predominantly white culture. You can be rural and live in a cabin and eat possum, but not necessarily be country."

Not that Ferguson's from the woods. He was born in an inner-city housing project in Louisville, Kentucky ("*In* the project," Ferguson stresses, "not in a hospital") and grew up in the city's predominantly black West End. "When I started wanting to play at about 12 years old," he recalls, "some black guys up the street were always playing me stuff by James Moody, Charlie Parker and Miles Davis. So I listened to horn players before I ever listened to guitar players. And for the first couple of years, I didn't know any chords. I just learned scales that I could improvise with.

"If you think about it, I sound like a horn player on a lot of things. It's almost like blowing sax, but you have to have the finger and flatpicking action like in the 'Skinny Legs and All' lick to be able to do that. It's like the quick staccato of a horn player's tongue.

"I often use a combination of flatpicking and finger pulls on slow blues," Ferguson says, improvising a solo not unlike the one he plays on "Blues #572" on Johnson's *Johnnie B. Bad*. He doesn't always alternate the finger and pick action, however. Often he entirely flatpicks quick runs and uses finger pulls for notes that he's bending with his left hand. The right-hand finger pops make many of the notes sound as if they are being spit out of the guitar.

"To develop the flatpicking part," Ferguson suggests, "it's best to play in an open key such as E. To begin, double-stroke 16th-notes on a single string for as long as you can stand it to get your right hand loosened up. Then, start fretting different notes with your left hand."

Ferguson plays rolling 16ths on the high E, randomly fretting Gs and As, usually letting the open E ring between each one. "Once you can do that, the next step is to be able to switch strings without breaking the flow. You can also stop the pick now and then to start developing phrases."

This time, Ferguson plays random Gs, As and open Es as before for the first three beats of a bar, sliding his left hand up to a B on beat four. For the next bar he again plays Gs, As and Es for 12 16ths, but this time drops to a second-string D for the fourth beat. He repeats that two-bar phrase a couple of times, and then gradually starts incorporating more notes and strings. His right hand keeps a continuous flow, comparable to a bluegrass banjo player's finger roll, but the 7ths and bent notes give it a bluesier sound.

"I did some of that on 'Flat Foot Flewzy,'" Ferguson says,

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN NATION

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PETER'S PAGE

By Peter C. Knickles, Seminar Instructor - Doing Music & Nothing Else

Dear Peter,

I have been thinking of releasing my own recording to sell at my gigs. Any hints to make the release really successful?

Mr. Red, Portland , OR

Good question. There are alot of things you can do to make sure your release doesn't stiff. Let's take a look at a few.

It all begins with the songs. Pick the best you have. Don't record a full album's worth of material if all you have is 4 really great songs and dozens of tunes that need work. Remember, a career consists of many releases. There is nothing wrong with doing a 4-cut release for your first product.

Next, I would make absolutely sure you use a producer - not an engineer who doubles as a producer **AND DEFINITELY DO NOT TRY TO PRODUCE IT YOURSELF!** You need the best recording you can get. You need someone to guide you through the process of creating that recording.

Let me tell you, as the Publisher of The A&R Tip Sheet and as the DOING MUSIC & NOTHING ELSE Instructor, I get thousands of tapes and CDs every year. The biggest problem with most of them? Almost every single act that didn't use a producer turned in a recording of little more than an amateur effort. It didn't sound like a professional "release". It had no style - no unique sound, raw or polished. It was just short of a mirror of a live performance.

A good producer gets to know you...spends some time with you at rehearsals and gigs. Talks to you about what it is you are trying to get across musically and otherwise. Then uses his (or her) skills to capture that song on tape. You owe it to yourself to use a producer! Don't let your ego ruin it.

Where to find a producer? Network with the acts and studios in your area. Check out **Mix Magazine's Annual Master Directory (800) 233-9604.** It lists many producers broken down by locations. Listen to at least 3 producers' portfolios. Look for someone who can add knowledge and skills beyond your abilities.

Next concern in releasing the product would be promotion. We don't want you to have the "Millionseller" that thousands of people have every year. What is a "Millionseller"? It's when you have enough money to record and press but no money to promote the release...Thus you have a "million-" copies sitting in your "-cellar" and no one knows about it. The facts are that ***you need at least $3 for promotion to match every $1 in production for a successful project!*** And of course you need a powerful marketing plan! Consider attending my seminar to learn which marketing tactics work and which are a waste.

Now, for the packaging. Make absolutely sure that you wrap that sucker in the most eye-catching, professional looking package possible. Reject any ideas of saving bucks here! You need a professional graphic artist to do it right! Believe me when I say you are looking at mainly impulse sales when placing your product in the marketplace. If it doesn't visually stand up to the competition it is very easy for someone to make the judgement that what's inside won't either.

Consider releasing your product in both CD and Cassette formats. Vinyl is just a gimmick at this point. DAT, MD, and DCC are not acceptable. I would suggest a good first run would be 500 CDs and 500 Cassettes for sales and 100 of both formats for promotion.

Remember to put a catalog number on your package for inventory control. It's not so much for you but any stores or distributors that might pick it up. You will also need a UPC number. **LISTEN UP! If you neglect to put these two things on your release, you have pretty much wiped out your chances of moving a significant amount of stock through retail!** Base your catalog number on the 6-8 digits; the first 3-4 an abbreviation of your label's name and the last 3-4 the release number. For a UPC number contact **The Uniform Code Council, INC. at (513) 435-3870.** The registration & UPC number will run you about $300.

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* TIP OF THE MONTH *

Releasing your own music is an important step in your career. And to do it right is to master dozens of details. If you've never done it before **you are going to need some help!** I suggest you check out the new book **How To Make & Sell Your Own Recording** by Diane Sward Rapaport. This is actually the 4th edition of what has become known as the "Bible" of this subject. It's published by Prentice Hall and is available at most bookstores. If you have trouble finding it call my office.

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referring to a track from the *Carl Perkins and NRBQ* album, on which you can also hear Fergie quote the "Skinny Legs" lick. "But playing that way all the time would get monotonous, so I only use it for short runs and phrases.

"There's also a thing James Burton did on a Ricky Nelson record called 'Milk Cow Blues' that combines picking and finger pulling. Play a rolling 7th chord where you pick the lower two notes and pull one of the upper notes with your third finger." Ferguson holds a G7 at the 8th fret—voiced G, B, F, G—picking the low G and B and pulling the F, then picking the low G and B again and pulling the high G. He keeps the pattern going over 15 16th-notes of a measure, then starts over on the next downbeat. While he's doing that, his left hand is shaking the strings vigorously, giving a tremolo effect.

"Terry Adams said that reminded him of a blues lap-slide player named Freddie Roulette who did some records with Big Moose Walker years ago." Ferguson used the lick on "Baby What's Wrong" on the Johnnie Johnson album, and on his own recent *Jack Salmon & Derby Sauce*, on "Hot Walker Blues." In both cases, the finger-pulled notes dominate, with the picked notes almost inaudible.

Combining techniques from different genres has taken some planning. "I try to think with feeling and feel with thought," Ferguson agrees. "If you're just doing one or the other, you're not making full use of your person. I'm happiest with my playing when I'm thinking and feeling at the same time."

FERGIE'S FURNISHINGS

STEVE FERGUSON plays a red Fender 1962 reissue Custom Telecaster with white binding. "It's not quite as solidbody-sounding as Teles I've used before," he says. "The tone has a little more roundness." He uses GHS strings, .010, .013, .017, .026, .036 and .046, and a Fender extra-heavy pick, which he plays on the side, not on the point. His amp is a Fender Power Chorus. He uses no pedals. "Just vibrato on a couple of tunes and a lot of reverb," he says. "In the studio, engineers try to get me to turn the reverb down, but I whine and moan until they let me keep it up."

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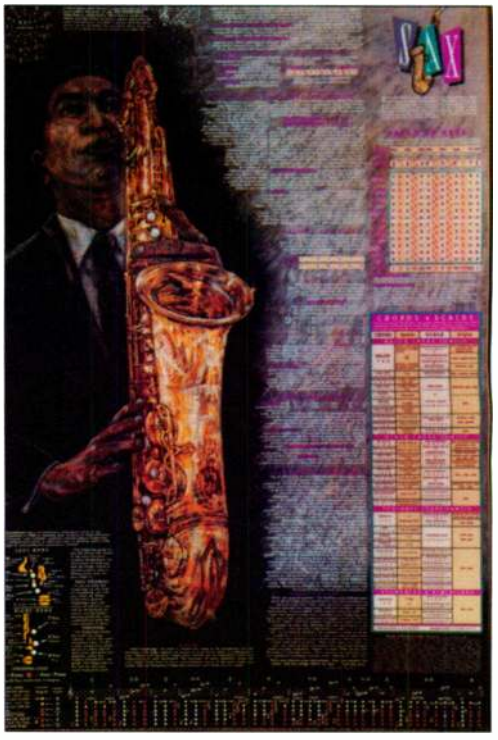

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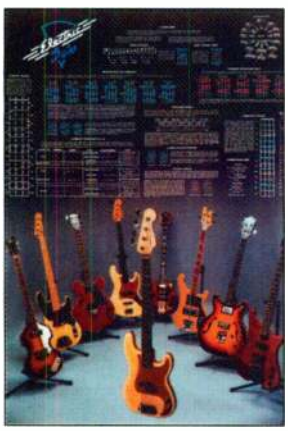

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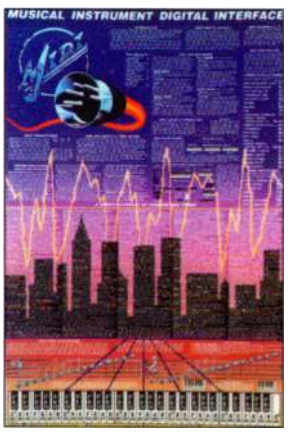

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LENNY KRAVITZ
ARE YOU GONNA GO
MY WAY
(VIRGIN)

LET GROOVES RULE

In the middle of Lenny Kravitz's third album, there's a ricochet of cold, rhythmic guitars and warm, phasey vocal harmonies that wonder, "Is There Any Love in Your Heart." This is an accusatory love tune, and Kravitz plays his '90s version of a '60s/'70s rock-soul dude to the hilt: She's blowing "all my bread" while "fucking all my friends." He makes some other charges, too, then finally spews out his crowning complaint: "You're just the kind that's up on all the latest trends." Now *there's* the ultimate Lenny Kravitz kiss-off.

Are You Gonna Go My Way is the strongest statement yet of Kravitz's style and sensibility, an encapsulation of a '90s view of the rock-soul past bounded by neither the assumptions of Elvis or Dylan, on the one hand, nor punk on the other. It's consciously deaf to the latest trends yet, as a trend itself, isn't textbook retro. Beginning the album with his Hendrix title rocker, Kravitz identifies himself as the messianic MVP of "a game"; a kind of neo-hippie classicist, his credo stems from his own convictions about love, transcendence, beauty—

and recording consoles. What's most impressive about this album is how much he makes of them.

A fantastically alive work of High Analog, *Are You Gonna Go My Way* isn't content with the perfect floral blazers that Kravitz recently designed for Vanessa Paradis and, in the past, for himself. Instead, he orchestrates moods with a freer yet concise hand. "Come On and Love Me" is sexual eagerness '90s-style, communicated with the guitars and percussive rhythms of funk. On climactic pieces like "Sister" and "Eleutheria" his soundscapes are woven out of compassion and religious hope. His orchestral values are such that he might choose a particularly resonant bit of tape noise over a viola, while distortion—the kind of thing that panics pre–Sonic Youth producers—is confidently treated by Kravitz as though it were a mainstream convention. His point of view suggests a contemplative, romantic alternative to the theoretical hip-hoppers and slack-happy Nirvanaites who comprise the rest of the twentysomething nation.

Kravitz doesn't shy from balladry either; songs such as "Just Be a Woman" and "Black Girl" make positive use of his sensitivity and ears, and with the amazing "Sugar" he rolls out a pop-soul stunner that should form part of the soundtrack of the upcoming summer. On "Believe," a mid-tempo song about faith, Kravitz alternates hugely dramatic verses with choruses made out of Beatles-brand ice-cream minus that Beatlehead aftertaste. The song ends with cathedral-worthy guitar passages that are as good as the finest of Boston (the group). You could dismiss such pop as all calculation and borrowings. Or you could praise it as a brilliant balance of selection, re-writing, execution, feeling and recording consoles. I think it's that. **—James Hunter**

LIVING COLOUR

Stain

(EPIC)

BASS LOVERS OF THE WORLD, THIS one's for you. Every track on *Stain*, Living Colour's third record, is a journey to the deepest ends of the groove. New partner Doug Wimbish's performance marks his graduation from session vet to superstar; the sheer size and elasticity of his sound frees Vernon Reid—that rare heavy rocker who can think and play at the same time—and Will Calhoun (ditto) to defy the traditional frustrations of progressive power trios from Cream to Rush.

As Wimbish rumbles and jiffy pops as if all gods of thunder should just blow away, Living Colour's songs revel in their disparate feels, including rechromed Metallica ("Go Away"), reinflated Zeppelin ("Never Satisfied"), hyped hiphop ("WTTF") and alternative void ("Nothingness"). Given the Prince-ly "Bi"'s come-on, you might think the cult-of-personality creators are now coming out for gay as well as black power, but the lyric "everybody loves you when you're bi" refers to a woman who's two-timing her man with the girl *he's* "been seeing on the side." This tongue-in-cheek take on modern sexual politics slyly continues the attack on social and industry conventions Living Colour launched with their revolutionary platinum debut, a commercial feat neither they nor any other black rock band have yet been able to replicate.

Pumped by Wimbish, Reid gets wilder, Calhoun gets rock steadier and vocalist Corey Glover gets a little lost. Perhaps in attempting to celebrate rather than intellectualize the music, leader Reid didn't realize that the melodies and vocal arrangements (never mind the lyrics) got shorter stick than the riffs, for there are times when Glover becomes the odd man out while the virtuosos wail. That caveat aside, which, given most of the major obstacles this band has been forced to confront, must be considered small, *Stain* continues to uphold Living Colour's status as musical visionaries. May success follow. **—Deborah Frost**

SUN RA

Visits Planet Earth/Interstellar Low Ways
We Travel the Space Ways/
Bad and Beautiful
Other Planes of There
Cosmic Tones for Mental Therapy/
Art Forms of Dimensions Tomorrow
My Brother the Wind Volume II

(EVIDENCE)

JAZZ AVANT-GARDIST SUN RA HAS recorded so prodigiously and idiosyncratically during the past 40 years of his career as a keyboardist/composer/band leader that neophytes often can't know quite what they're buying. Those in search of something wonderfully weird might find that they've purchased a muddily recorded swing/bop set with a few admittedly odd percussion touches and eccentric chord changes (so what's the big fuss?). Knowing the recording dates doesn't necessarily help, either—a relatively earthbound set might occur on the Sun Ra timeline *after* one of soaring experimentation.

This latest clump of reissues on Evidence, two albums per CD, again runs the gamut, though this batch tilts toward the more outré and timeless Ra. For example, *Cosmic Tones/Art Forms*, recorded '61–'63: Note the polyrhythmic ruminations foreshadowing the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Marvel at the spacey electric textures and far-out echo effects anticipating Pink Floyd at their druggiest. Savor the more subtle progressive pleasures of John Gilmore's fearlessly free tenor solo on "The Other Heaven," with its ghostly premonition of vintage Wayne Shorter.

Other Planes of There ('64) is also on the outside tip, especially during the long title cut. Ra eschews full orchestration for a series of chamberish encounters between the players; each outburst is an earned respite from the introspective intentions of the overall piece. The second half of *My Brother* is even more dauntingly unanchored—a collection of solo synth sketches, each prodding a specific idea or modulation before returning to silence. Cryptic and bleak, Ra the prophet and intrepid explorer makes music of essential seriousness, angst-tones that hang in the unmerciful void. His work is as much a modernist milestone as Schoenberg, Beckett or Pollock.

Meanwhile, there's the somewhat more conventional, though always pleasingly eccentric Ra. On *Brother*'s first half he plays coolly funky if slightly depressed organ; *Visits/Interstellar* ('56–'60) is typical Ra big-band stuff of that time, occasionally wacky ("Interplanetary Music"), more often nodding toward the tradition while making some surprising formalist adjustments; while *We Travel/Bad* ('56–'60) may have one too many near-stock arrangements, though the full-blown colors he gets from a mere sextet remain impressive. But all this is caviar for devotees. Newcomers are directed to *Cosmic*

Tones; after 30 years it still sounds like an intriguing tomorrow. —Richard C. Walls

GARY THOMAS

Till We Have Faces
(JMT)

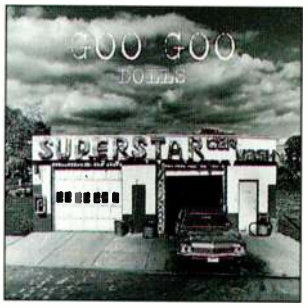
FOR THIS UNEXPECTED AND EAR-SEIZING session, saxophonist Gary Thomas and guitarist Pat Metheny veered off of their regular, respective courses and met halfway. And it's an inspired meeting of remarkable musicians.

Thomas has been busy producing some of the more meaningful funk-driven M-BASE material around. Metheny has been tilling his trademark lyricism (verging on soupiness on last year's *Secret Story*). Together—at last?—the beast and the beauty find a loose, collective groove which is simultaneously ferocious and flexible. More than a casual date, this album bristles with the kind of energy born of a common purpose and forceful personalities.

The subject is standards, but the treatment thereof is anything but straight. Thomas unleashes an edgy Sonny Rollins–like lava flow of modal improvisation on the extended intros to "Angel Eyes" and "It's You or No One." "Lush Life" is musky and spare, with Thomas' tenor slithering atop Metheny's rumbly low-end acoustic guitar chordal bed. "Lament" is reborn as a fiery swing thing, with Thomas' elliptical, Shorter-esque soprano punctuated by some nervous, dissonant urgings from Metheny. Along the way, the rhythm section is more than game. Bassist Anthony Cox locks in and checks out at regular intervals. Most impressively, Terri Lyne Carrington keeps her drums in perpetual, interactive motion, propelling the machine and constantly peppering the dialogue.

There is ample evidence of why Thomas is among the most compelling saxists now out there and doing it, but a greater revelation on this album is Metheny's handiwork. Still one of the most masterful players around, Metheny refuses to be typecast by his "hits," and is a man unleashed here, with a grittier tone and a more volatile sense of phrasing than he usually commits to tape. Raw is the word. Metheny blows his brains out in a most wonderful and cathartic way over a 7/4, quasi-samba version of "You Don't Know What Love Is." Control and abandon seem to be wrestling for the spotlight, as Metheny scampers from polite adherence to the chord changes to flinging himself into wild atonal fits. This is a man with some angst to vent and a rife vehicle in which to do it.

Jazz albums of this magnitude aren't grown on trees or in corporate boardrooms. This one gets under your skin in the most delightful way. —Josef Woodard



GOO GOO DOLLS

Superstar Carwash
(METAL BLADE/WARNER BROS.)

THE GOO GOO DOLLS ARE THE BEST thing to happen to pop culture from Buffalo since Cookie Gilchrist. Blue-collar down to their Polish surnames and old-fashioned working-class ethic, bassist/vocalist Robby Takac, guitarist/vocalist Johnny Rzenzik and drummer George Tutuska owe their sound in equal parts to the Buzzcocks' succinct powerpop feedback, Hüsker Dü's buzzsaw wall-of-noise and the dreamy adolescent angst of the group they're most often compared to, the Replacements. But like all great pop, the Goo Goos stand clichés on their head, while the magnetic hooks suck you in and make it all sound new again—teenage existential angst with a wink and a shrug. As they sing in the album's centerpiece, "We Are the Normal" (whose lyrics were penned by pal Paul Westerberg), "You say that it's all been said before/Now I found that there's something I don't know."

Superstar Carwash sums up the group's sky-above-mud-below ethic...the lads have stars in their eyes, suds in their duds and dirt underneath their fingernails. This is the band's fourth album and marks a quantum leap over their thrash beginnings, a move akin to the 'Mats' breakthrough record *Let It Be*. What gives the Goos an edge over the neo-power pop pack are guitar-slinger Rzenzik's skittery metallic leads, which are never just flash for flash's sake, but extend the melodies with emotional wallop, from the Dolls-by-way-of-Chuck Berry churn of "Fallin' Down" to the wah-wah crunch of "String of Lies" and the Fogerty/Robertson precision of "Already There," which nails the loss of innocence by punctuating the line "My friends are growing old before my eyes."

For a band with impeccable post-modern credentials, the Goos pay heed to their forebears; on previous records, they've covered such chestnuts as Prince's "Never Take the Place of Your Man," the Plimsouls' "Million Miles Away" and Creedence's "Down on the Corner." It's just that pop-ulism which could well have classic-rock prog muso geeks joining the heavy metal and post-grunge Generation X crowd in sending the Goo Goo Dolls into sales Nirvana. A long shot, maybe, but no less than the idea of Bill Clinton being elected President was eight months ago. With any luck, we'll hear the Goos at the *next* inauguration. —Roy Trakin

WYNTON MARSALIS

Citi Movement
(COLUMBIA)

DURING THE MAKING OF *THE DEAD*, John Huston commented that he was investigating a different kind of action film, one that was a bit old-fashioned; all the commotion and thrills were to be found in the cascading flow of provocative dialogue. On the astounding *Citi Movement*, Wynton Marsalis offers us the most adventurously intricate ensemble writing of his career, music that parallels Huston's notion of consequential discourse. With a wide perspective fueled by a personalized sense of inclusion, is it any wonder that the result is cinematic?

The trumpeter's jazz, which has gained enormous compositional ground since he boosted his ensemble to a septet back in '89, reached a high-water mark with '91's eloquent *Soul Gestures* trilogy. Last year's *Blue Interlude* ambitiously addressed extended composition, but faltered in the segues; its nods to specific jazz epochs were heard more as allusions. Therein lies *Citi Movement*'s achievement. Enormous—over 120 minutes on two discs—its true breakthrough is the

focus that the leader applies to his themes. Marsalis is nothing if not discerning, and in his hands scrutiny is an agent of fortification. The record continuously heralds jazz's pluralism, which optimists might perceive as a promising creative symbol for America's multi-culti friction.

Composed for Garth Fagan's dance troupe, *Citi Movement* concentrates on flow; the action is juiced by the hectic character of urban living. Though swing's inherent poise is never neglected, a more kinetic feel dominates, allowing each terse solo to take on dazzling proportions. The leader's horn is especially lyrical. Whether he's toasting Buddy Bolden with blues pronouncements or beating Lester Bowie at the old peck 'n' smear game, Marsalis is teeming with sumptuous ideas.

Fueled by the rousing conflict of polyphony, the bittersweet intimacy of the blues, reassuring humor (yup, Wynton's learned how to laugh) and in whomping amounts the brash dignity of certitude, this is music impossible to dislike, largely because its sophistication never winds up sparring with its gregariousness. Marsalis—hands-down the man to beat in jazz these days—has come up with a masterwork whose details only contribute to its sense of panorama. —Jim Macnie

ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS

Respect
(A&M)

IT'S DIFFICULT TO THINK OF ROBYN Hitchcock as anything other than the ginchiest, what with his near-sainthood decreed by college-radio types, his ultraswift Soft Boys catalog reissued by a loving Rykodisc, his impeccable taste in perfectly chosen cover versions (not one but *two* songs from Van Morrison's *Veedon Fleece*), his buddy-buddyness with alterno-popes R.E.M., and, what the heck, his actual music. That, however, has been in decline since 1986's near-peak *Element of Light*—or more specifically ever since Hitchcock's lyrics began taking a back seat to his forced persona of *weirdness*, a blind alley you'd think someone so smart would avoid. Peak bad time for me came when I saw him solo, hoped for an acoustic version of his near-ultimate "Fifty Two Stations" and watched him devote most of the night to surrealistic monologues about insects, sex, death and balloon men, as the audience whooped in encouragement. Occasionally, he sang. From that point on—at least to me—what once seemed artful and interestingly skewed felt gimmicky, workmanlike and fake.

But Hitchcock's no dummy—and he knew it was a trap. "I'm not trying to produce anything that makes people go, 'Oh wow, that was clever,'" he says, revealingly, in the bio of the new, appropriately named *Respect*. "A lot of the old songs have words as foliage, verbiage, a screen of words. There was a big gap between expression and communication. But I've got more confidence in my songs now."

Sounds like it. *Respect* is the best album Hitchcock's made since signing with A&M in '88. In practice, his new, no-bullshit resolve means fewer (but more meaningful) words, reduced science-fiction imagery—or whatever you call songs about tropical flesh mandalas, globes of frogs and madonnas of the wasps—and, not to forget, catchier tunes. *Respect*'s opener "The Yip Song" sounds more like the Soft Boys than anything he's done in years. Throw in tracks like "The Wreck of the Arthur Lee"—with its *Forever Changes*/Herb Alpert-esque trumpet blares impeccably placed—and it's scary, but obvious: Hitchcock—who digs Love, who's covered Morrison, Barrett and the Byrds—would've ended up a rock critic, if he weren't a skilled musician. He—and we—can be grateful for such favors.

—Dave DiMartino

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NEW RELEASES

APRIL

ROCK

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

ZAP MAMA
Adventures in Afropea
(LUAKA BOP)

ZAP MAMA ARE five women, based in Belgium, whose a cappella material spans the African diaspora. Musically, however, the group defies description. They weave vocal harmonic tapestries that rival the Bulgarian Women's Choir for richness and lustre, while their gift for musical mimicry puts them on par with Bobby McFerrin (check out the traffic jam in "Plekete"). But it's their stylistic range that most amazes, equally fluent in the idiomatic ornamentation of Arabic laments, the chirping polyphony of Pygmy chants or the blues inflection of American R&B. An addictive debut.

PAUL MCCARTNEY
Off the Ground
(CAPITOL/MPL)

THE GIMMICK IS that Macca has gone topical, writing about animal rights, respect for women, cosmic consciousness and what not, but what we end up with is typical McCartney: well-crafted, well-meaning, impossible to take seriously. I mean, really, "Golden Earth Girl"? "Biker Like an Icon"? Further proof that writing memorable melodies is not necessarily the same as writing great songs.

DURAN DURAN
Duran Duran
(CAPITOL)

GIVE 'EM CREDIT: In addition to comeback-quality singles like the treacly-but-pleasant "Ordinary World," the Durannies are cool enough to import Milton Nascimento for a save-the-rainforest number called "Breath After Breath." Then give 'em hell: Even *they* should know better than to make easy-listening music of "Femme Fatale."

CHRIS MARS
75% Less Fat
(SMASH)

NO, PAUL WESTERBERG isn't the only ex-Replacement capable of writing killer pop songs. Nor is he the only one desperately in need of elocution lessons. But if you can bear Mars' mush-mouthed delivery (okay, Chris—what language *did* you use for the chorus to "Car Camping"?), you're sure to love the hook-filled exuberance of "No Bands," "Public Opinion" and "Bullshit Detector."

INCLINED, BRIGHT NEW DAY (CHAOS)

ON SOME SONGS, *Inclined comes across like a younger, funkier version of the Police, fleshing out the likes of "Two Minds" or "Far from Afraid" with jazzy harmonies and slick, supple rhythm work; on others, like "Somewhere in the Middle" or "How Deep Is This Well," they attack the groove with all the ferocity and twice the chops of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. If this is the sound of the future, sign me up today.*

BOBBY PARKER
Bent Out of Shape
(BLACK TOP)

UNLESS YOU'RE A hardcore blues buff, odds are you've never heard of Bobby Parker. But you know people who have—like John Lennon, who based "Day Tripper" on Parker's "Watch Your Step," or Robin Trower, who considers Parker superior to Hendrix. His current sound suggests a cross between Albert King's searing tone and Pops Staples' soulful understatement, and it's put to excellent use on the 11 funky blues collected here. Worth getting to know.

FRANK BLACK
Frank Black
(ELEKTRA)

THINK OF THIS as the Pixies frontman's David Bowie move, complete with new name, arty arrangements, obtuse lyrics and quirky production. Taken on its terms, *Frank Black* works at least as well as *Lodger*, and the best songs, like "Hang On to Your Ego," are mesmerizingly tuneful.

UTE LEMPER
Illusions
(LONDON)

IT TAKES MORE than nerve to stake a claim on the better-known parts of Marlene Dietrich's or Edith Piaf's repertoire—it takes chops. And Lemper has them, caressing each melody with care, and sounding like a native in English, French or German.

MARTY BROWN
Hillbilly Heart
(MCA)

THERE'S NO DOUBTING the honesty of Brown's honky-tonk tunes. Who else in Nashville today could pull off a lyric like "I'd Rather Fish Than Fight"? But there's plenty of reason to wonder why he bothered with overblown balladry like "God Knows." Maybe next time he'll let that hillbilly heart overrule his record-business brain.

ALL NEW

PHOTOGRAPH MIKE RYAN

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JAZZ

BY CHIP STERN

JULIUS HEMPHILL TRIO
Julius Hemphill Trio
(MUSIC & ARTS)

JULIUS HEMPHILL TRIO is vigorous avant-garde blues music with the kind of dangerous give and take too often lacking in today's lockstep ensembles. Everyone knows what a great composer he is, but this is a rare snapshot of Hemphill in a rhythm format, and his gritty tone, fervent backpedaling melodies and rhythmic audacity mark him as a singular jazz improviser. Cellist Abdul Wadud's quirky harmonic variations and quicksilver approach to time give this ensemble an airborne, elliptical contour, and where his unfettered interplay with Hemphill would send most drummers howling to intensive care, Joe Bonadio accepts Wadud and Hemphill's duality as an existential challenge: to engage, propel, assert, yet stay the hell out of the way. No drummer has ever made "Dogon A.D." swing like this, and precious few could complement their elegiac chamber nuances on "Testament #5" with such subtle dynamics. A formidable band in the making. (Box 771, Berkeley, CA 94701, 510-525-4583)

CINDY BLACKMAN/
SANTI DEBRIANO/
DAVE FIUCZYNSKI
Trio + Two
(FREE LANCE/QUALITON IMPORTS)

THIS IS DEBRIANO'S date, and his lithe, richly colored basslines move translucently between springy swing and freely inflected vamps. He has a nice ear for melody and the timely dissonance, and the way he hooks up with powerhouse drummer Cindy Blackman suggests something of the Tony Williams Lifetime. Greg Osby and Jerry Gonzalez make strong cameos, but the real star of *Trio + Two* is Dave Fiuczynski, a rising star in a galaxy overrun by technosnore guitarists. Combining the look-ma-all-hands abandon of Allan Holdsworth with the elliptical quirkiness of Wild Bill Frisell, Fiuczynski's feel for lines, chords and the whang bar is full of surprises. Watch out.

BUELL NEIDLINGER QUARTET
Big Drum
(K2B2 RECORDS)

BASSIST BUELL NEIDLINGER has the kind of woody, low-end sensibility that made Wilbur Ware and Oscar Pettiford so satisfying. This latest offering is dedicated to piano innovator Herbie Nichols—though there isn't one Nichols tune here. Instead drummer Vinnie Colaiuta brings a nervous, hyperkinetic energy to unfamiliar swing terrain with some of his loosest free associations since he was blowing "Canarsie" back with Frank Zappa. Neidlinger gives him a steady anchor, while tenor virtuoso Marty Krystall and trumpeter Hugh Schick feed off of his animated parries and thrusts. (1748 Roosevelt Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90006-5219)

LOUIS ARMSTRONG/KING OLIVER
Louis Armstrong/King Oliver
(MILESTONE)

JELLY ROLL MORTON
Jelly Roll Morton
(MILESTONE)

FOR THOSE TOUCHED by Wynton Marsalis' exemplary evocations of the New Orleans tradition, these early-'20s masterpieces aren't optional purchases. Armstrong seems about ready to bust out, suspended between the polyphonic interplay of the New Orleans ensemble and his love for role model Joe Oliver (it's often challenging to tell who's who), with teasing intimations of the solo breakthroughs to come. In Morton's solo piano and his extraordinary duets with Oliver, with their rumbling, rolling rhythms, cunning breaks and sophisticated harmonies, you can hear the roots of his own ensemble breakthroughs, and of big band swing to come. Joyous.

JOE HENDERSON
So Near, So Far (Musings for Miles)
(VERVE)

JOHNNY GRIFFIN
Dance of Passion
(ANTILLES)

ALRIGHT, THE NEW President is a tenor player, but who is the new President of the tenor? Here are a couple of leading candidates, with two of the most fervent tenor dates in recent memory, deeply felt and beautifully orchestrated, with a soft furry burnish that invites repeated listenings. *So Near, So Far*, Joe Henderson's tribute to Miles, employs late electric Miles sidemen (Dave Holland, Al Foster, John Scofield) to explore pre–*Bitches Brew* chestnuts, with one funky ("Side Car") dance for good measure. The result is every inch as potent as his heralded tribute to Billy Strayhorn. Henderson is so cool and painterly and heroically laid-back you're like to burst, while Al Foster's crystalline Paiste colors and pianistic snare-tom-bass counterpoint suggest a Bill Evans–Thelonious Monk level of involvement. Johnny Griffin's use of a tuba-trombone–French horn front line echoes *The Birth of the Cool*, but it's Monk's friendly shadow which hovers on the periphery of *Dance of Passion* (particularly on the bluesy "You've Never Been There"). The record highlights Griffin's superb writing, and pianist Michael Weiss shares arranging chores, lending a rich Mid-Eastern cushion to the title tune, while the touching "Make Up Your Mind" comes off like Ben Webster meets Monk. The rich brass colors enliven the Little Giant's voluminous harmonic flights, and Steve Turre's growling, playful trombone is the perfect melodic foil.

INDIES

ABANA BA NASERY
Nursery Boys Go Ahead
(GREEN LINNET)

IT MAKES PERFECT sense that one of the first releases from Green Linnet's new Xenophile world-music imprint would contain tunes that can best be described as "Afro-Celtic." Abana Ba Nasery, or the Nursery Boys, are a West Kenyan trio many decades out of the playpen whose twin single-note acoustic guitars, scraped *guiro*-like Fanta bottle, church-inspired harmonies and reality-based lyrics have captivated audiences in their homeland for some 25 years. They're joined by members of the Oyster Band and 3 Mustaphas 3 as well as Irish uilleann piper Tomás Lynch and multi-instrumental trouble-maker Ron Kavana. While the Boys shine alone on "Esiesi Siolle" and "Mabingwa," the inspired cultural collisions of "Esimiti Khusilenje" and "Abandu Bandi" offer good-hearted proof of music's universality. (43 Beaver Brook Rd., Danbury, CT 06810)—*Tom Cheyney*

KENNY NEAL
Bayou Blood
(ALLIGATOR)

HE PROUDLY HAILS from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, but the thirtysomething Kenny Neal is an all-American bluesman who plays in the direction of Texas and Chicago blues traditions as well as sweet home Louisiana. Neal's fourth album on Alligator finds him in fine form, with a warm gruffness in his voice, a sharp and assured sense of guitar riffing and a certain suavity in his harmonica chops. Versatility within the blues spectrum is Neal's specialty, as he shifts easily from urban turfs to the acoustic delta of "Going to the Country." Echoes of Robert Cray resonate in Neal's stinging, economical solos, and on material like the minor blues tune "Smoke Signal." But Neal is less of a smoothie than Cray. He lays into the blues like nothing can stop him, or tame him.—*Josef Woodard*

COUPÉ CLOUÉ
Maximum Compas from Haiti
(EARTHWORKS/CAROLINE)

FOR MORE THAN 20 years, Haitians have checked Jean-Gesner "Coupé Cloué" Henry for his humor-

ous, off-color take on matters of the heart and libido. His populist brand of *compas* hints at Dominican *merengue* in its rhythmic drive and Congolese *rhumba* in the three-way guitar mixup, led by scion Bellerive Dorcelien's thumb-plucked riffing. Cloué's scat-singing peppers the smooth frenzy of "Kiliboi," while the deceptively languid tempo of "Net Al Cole" (All the Way) creeps up on your head like the last glass of Barbancourt rum. (114 W. 26th, New York, NY 10001)—*Tom Cheyney*

SKY HIGH AND THE MAU MAU
Marcus Garvey Chant
(RAS)

MARCUS GARVEY WAS pissing off the white establishment and offering hope to those with African roots long before Malcolm X came on the scene. It's only fitting that large segments of one of the Jamaican-born Pan-Africanist's seminal speeches would be sampled in the context of Nyahbinghi riddims, since reggae's canon has done the most to honor his legacy. This album can be divided into two parts: three tracks carrying Garvey's words and harmonies by producer Hartnel "Sky High" Henry and his Mau Mau crew, and five cuts by various singers and toasters (including young Rasta firebrands Tony Rebel and Yami Bolo) honoring the prophet's message in a fresh dancehall style. One question remains: When is the epic bio film of the man who said, "You cannot shackle or imprison the minds of men" going to be made? (Box 42517, Washington, DC 20015)—*Tom Cheyney*

HEAVENLY
Le Jardin de Heavenly
(K)

THESE INSTANTLY APPEALING songs make naiveté an asset, and vocalist Amelia Fletcher, whose fetching lilt makes Juliana Hatfield sound like Janis Joplin, knows exactly where to file the cutesy artifice: somewhere near the middle of their bottomless bag of hooks. At a time when caterwauling represents emotionalism, Heavenly turns cooing into a most fervent form of sensitivity.—*Jim Macnie*

LE MYSTERE DES VOIX BULGARES
From Bulgaria with Love
(MESA)

COLLECTORS OF THE extraordinary Bulgarian Voices recordings may gasp in horror at this "pop" project. With a variety of producers, the settings that frame the all-female choir's eerily breathtaking harmonies range from Vangelis-like new age to hip-hop rhythms. The results are rather uneven, but several numbers are surprisingly engaging, especially "Pippero," which is hilariously kitschy. While the album is sure to alienate strict "ethnic music" purists, it should interest people who believe that "world music" should be defined as music where ethnic sounds *mix*.—*Geoffrey Welchman*

BONE CLUB
Beautiflu EP
(IMAGO)

COMING ON LIKE Alice in Chains on speed, Bone Club sounds like a band still searching for its own sound. *Beautiflu*, a five-song EP, is hampered by perfunctory wah-wah soloing and a not-too-steady drummer (since replaced), but the band makes up for its limitations with fiery hooks, clever time-stops and some catchy choruses. Singer Andrew Arashiba adds authority and a touch of charisma to the band. Provided they come up with a few new melodies, their first album should be interesting.—*Geoffrey Welchman*

ANTENNA
Hideout
(MAMMOTH)

FOR EX-BLAKE BABIES John Strohm and Freda Love, Antenna's second release, *Hideout*, casually affirms their commitment to life after Juliana Hatfield. More focused than their debut, *Hideout* pulls the standard "alternative" trick of layering guitars over half-realized vocals. Not such a big deal, since Strohm admits his lyrics are "not much for storyline or linear thought." Besides, it's the lush wall of guitar atmospherics that delivers satisfaction.—*Rob O'Connor*

FUDGE
The Ferocious Rhythm of Precise Laziness...
(CARDLINE)

RECORDED IN "MID-SUMMER" Richmond, Virginia and it sounds like it: Not only lazy, hazy and crazy, but hippie, trippy and dippy. Apart from a whiteboy dub cut that (almost) makes the Clash sound good, *The Ferocious Rhythm* sails along, as seductive and relevant as a sunny day. Maybe the song titles even mean something; after repeated listenings this reviewer still couldn't concentrate on the lyrics. Praise enough?—*Scott Isler*

CARL STONE
Mom's
(NEW ALBION)

CALIFORNIA COMPOSER STONE samples and snips his way into rich creations, alternately balmy and disturbing. A phrase is stated, reiterated, elongated, with additional sonic values picked up at each juncture. This ceaseless enhancement renders moot the mechanical aspects of the process; his capacity to turn machine lingo into the kinetic language of flesh and blood is uncanny. To wit: "Shing Kee," which frags a Schubert lieder and then stretches it like taffy. When the vivid flourish emerges from all the incremental repetition, you know that Stone has had a magnificent destination in mind from the get-go. Gorgeous.—*Jim Macnie*

REISSUES

RICHARD AND LINDA THOMPSON
Sunnyvista
Strict Tempo!
(HANNIBAL/RYKODISC)

AMONG THEIR LESSER-KNOWN efforts, *Sunnyvista* finds the Thompsons doing the Ray Davies twentieth-century displacement thing, with highlights including "Civilization"'s gleeful celebration of xenophobia, hard-rock anthems like "Borrowed Time" and a bonus remake of "Georgie on a Spree." Seldom was their sound brighter or their wit blacker. The huge cast includes most of Fairport, the McGarrigles and Gerry Rafferty. The all-instrumental *Strict Tempo!*, on the other hand, has no back-up (not even Linda) save drummer Dave Mattacks. Though inexplicably mastered off an LP, this reissue does restore Thompson's extensive liner notes, and where else are you gonna hear his formidable guitar chops on classics like "The New Fangled Flogging Reel"?—*Thomas Anderson*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Rockin' in the Farmhouse: Original Rockabilly and Chicken Bop, Volume 2
(HOLLOWBODY)

SOME ALBUMS APPEAR to have been designed to answer obscure musical trivia questions, and this compilation of 1957–60 recordings by the second-string rockabilly label Roulette and its subsidiaries is certainly one of those. The good news is that several tunes transcend mere humor: Don "Red" Roberts' "Only One" is relentless, near-chaotic rock, Jimmy Lloyd's "Rocket in My Pocket" has a marvelous swagger and Roc LaRue & the 3 Pals' "Rockabilly Yodel" defies description. Primal guitar displays and vocal hiccups are in abundance throughout. (Sundazed Music, Box 85, Coxsackie, NY 12051)—*Mac Randall*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Monterey International Pop Festival
(RHINO)

NEARLY FIVE HOURS of sounds from the mother of all pop festivals, this lavish four-CD package constitutes an extremely mixed bag, artistically speaking. You've already heard the best sets—Jimi Hendrix and Otis Redding—though the Who's giddy blend of pop and chaos doesn't trail by much. Guess you hadda be there to dig some of the others, including the painfully ragged Byrds, spirited but nondescript Steve Miller and Mike Bloomfield's drab Electric Flag. Still, pleasures abound, among them Lou Rawls' uptown cool, Steve Cropper's minimalist licks and Elvin Bishop's wailin' axe. Whatever its flaws, *Monterey* offers a fascinating map of the intersections between black and white cultures, circa 1967: White rockers celebrate the blues, Redding dazzles a new audience simply by being himself and Hendrix reinvents electric guitar. This big ol' box also provides a valuable reminder that the peace and love thang once seemed like a viable option, instead of a foolish cliché. (Sigh.) Throw in a fat, handsome book of photos and quotes from the principals, and nostalgia pangs become unavoidable.—*Jon Young*

THE COASTERS
50 Coastin' Classics
(RHINO/ATLANTIC)

DON'T MISTAKE 'EM for puppets performing disposable novelty tunes—the Coasters were a stellar R&B group whose output included an astonishingly high number of gems. From Leiber and Stoller's sly songwriting and cagey production to the solid support of King Curtis, Barney Kessel et al., to the robust vocals of Billy Guy, Bobby Nunn and the gang, all the pieces fit together beautifully. Along with obvious hits like "Charlie Brown" and "Yakety Yak," *50 Coastin' Classics* (51, actually) unearths such relative obscurities as "The Slime" and "What About Us," each a true delight. Painstakingly constructed, these glorious mono tracks refute the notion that great rock 'n' roll has to be a spontaneous event.—*Jon Young*

BESSIE SMITH
The Complete Bessie Smith Recordings, Volume 3
(COLUMBIA/LEGACY)

WITH THE AMAZING success of the Robert Johnson recordings and a feverish unearthing of Columbia's vast treasure trove of back catalog, *The Complete Bessie Smith Recordings* are clearly the pick of the litter. *Volume 3* finds her at the peak of her powers and popularity, featuring her work with Fletcher Henderson, her voice in full throttle, putting down the real funk like God's own gutbucket diva. Lawrence Cohn's painstaking production and Chris Albertson's richly detailed, authoritative notes make this collection a true no-brainer for anyone interested in jazz, blues and soul.—*Chip Stern*

WASHBOARD SAM
Rockin' My Blues Away
(BMG/BLUEBIRD)

WRY, SARDONIC, FOLKSY blues stylings that walk the line between the South Side and Highway 61. Sam's washboard gives each tune a chugging kind of groove, while Big Bill Broonzy and Memphis Slim add plenty of blues hot sauce to this collection.
—*Chip Stern*

PINK FLOYD
Shine On
(SONY MUSIC)

EVER THE AUTEURS, Dave Gilmour and Nick Mason steered clear of greatest-hits rudiments for this box and ordered the remastering of seven entire albums—*A Saucerful of Secrets, Meddle, Animals, Wish You Were Here, The Dark Side of the Moon, The Wall, A Momentary Lapse of Reason*—to be heard the way they were intended to be heard. They do sound better here, and if that improvement merely outstrips the original CD issues, this package obliterates them, and repositions Pink Floyd at the vanguard of the movement for sound as experience. Nine-disc sets like the Bill Evans and Stax collections use LP-sized boxes and booklets, but *Shine On*, true to Floyd proportions, is the biggest, most lavish creation on either side of the Thames. Custom black jewel boxes, laser-decorated discs, collector's postcards and a hardcover book detailing the conception of the music and graphics all sit within a huge case anointed with new, typically abstruse commemorative artwork. A ninth disc presents Syd Barrett–era singles like "See Emily Play" and "Arnold Layne," but is light on real rarities, emphasizing *Shine On*'s one liability: no unreleased demos, no outtakes, no flaws. Roger Waters got outvoted quite a bit during the selection process, but his remarkable work is well-tended; owing much to Dave, it's never sounded better.—*Matt Resnicoff*

RCA VICTOR JAZZ
The First Half-Century: The Twenties Through the Sixties
(BMG/BLUEBIRD)

A MOST ATTRACTIVE jazz compilation, full of treats for true believers and converts alike, but ideally a fine introduction to the art of jazz. Like the title says, from the 1920s through the '60s, with names like Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Coleman Hawkins, Lionel Hampton, Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Rollins, RCA Victor and Bluebird helped shape jazz as a popular art.—*Chip Stern*

GILBERTO GIL & JORGE BEN
Gilberto Gil & Jorge Ben
(VERVE)

GIL IS THE Brazilian master who appeals to rock fans who hear too much sky and not enough earth in Caetano Veloso; Ben is a meticulous Rio record-maker who opened David Byrne's 1989 *Brazil Classics* set with a big bang. Together, they made this record one night in 1975 with only a bassist, a percussionist and their own voices and guitars. And they left on tape as moving a realization of the resonant spaces and gaits of an all-acoustic groove album as you'll discover. At almost 80 minutes, the songs work themselves into frenzies or take their sweet time, always more concerned with feel than accuracy. The superb singers' pitch infelicities aside, though, rhythmic accuracy for Gil and Ben comes naturally anyway. And the particular feel they indulge is extraordinary: They drench their respective Brazilian pop styles in African sources and offshoots, then move along through their bold jams with all the elegant inevitability of prime bossa. This album offers acoustic music devoid of the usual ponderousness or self-satisfaction, certainly without any of the stiffness. Songs like "Nega" and "Filhos de Gandhi" make ecstasies sound conversational.—*James Hunter*

THE METERS
Uptown Rulers!
(RHINO)

THE METERS' DISDAIN for the One is exceeded only by their respect for the booty, and this is a treatise on why old farts get nostalgic for "real" R&B. Fierce, jagged funk, all rhythms and movement, that transforms even the dreariest pop covers into syncopated Crescent City celebrations. Drummer Ziggy Modeliste and bassist George Porter make today's click track–happy rhythm sections cower in shame, and when the band chooses to improvise a taste, the groove's energy never wavers.—*Chip Stern*

THE BONZO DOG BAND
Cornology
(UK EMI)

EVERYONE ELSE GETS a multiple-CD anthology, so why not the Bonzos? Three fully packed discs in a slipcase contain the viciously funny group's five albums, hard-to-find singles and a sampling of early solo work (including Eric Clapton, not on ukelele). Perhaps only the swinging London of the '60s could have encouraged such inspired lunacy: Veering in and out of '20s jazz, the Bonzo Dog Band was the real rock 'n' roll circus. Listen, laugh and be awed.—*Scott Isler*

CHRIS SPEDDING
Cafe Days
(MOBILE FIDELITY SOUND LAB)

THIS COULDN'T HAVE been released for audiophile purposes, normally Mobile Fidelity's priority. Still, it's about time we had a domestic (and expanded) version of the 1991 *Cafe Days*, the most recent recording from the Great Lost British Guitar Hero. In keeping with his reputation, Spedding's nicotine-stained vocals range from a whisper to a croak. His songwriting, however, is tuneful—that's how you tell the originals from the next-generation '60s revivalists—and his guitar exudes confidence with every well-placed note. Simply but effectively produced, *Cafe Days* is one guilty pleasure about which no one need feel guilty.—*Scott Isler*

MUDDY WATERS
Live at Mr. Kelly's
HOWLIN' WOLF
Live and Cookin' at Alice's Revisited
ETTA JAMES
Rocks the House
(MCA)

THREE VINTAGE LIVE sets from the Chess vaults, all with previously unreleased tracks and the usual

excellent liner notes. Etta James tears up a Nashville joint circa 1963 with a mix of hits ("Something's Got a Hold on Me") and covers ranging from Ray Charles to Robert Nighthawk. Wolf was getting a bit long in the tooth when captured at this hipster coffeehouse gig in 1972; instead of the hits he gives them classic sleepers like "Don't Laugh at Me," plus some strong harp. Best is the 1971 Muddy set, full of stinging slide and commanding vocals on favorites like "She's Nineteen Years Old" and "Long Distance Call." Like the others, it's ample evidence why the blues never die.—*Thomas Anderson*

BOOKS

AFRO-CUBAN RHYTHMS FOR DRUMSET
Frank Malabe & Bob Weiner
(DRUMMER'S COLLECTIVE SERIES/ MANHATTAN MUSIC PUBLICATIONS)

GREAT ROCK DRUMMERS OF THE SIXTIES
Bob Cianci
(HAL LEONARD)

REACHING OUT FOR a pricey helping of info-struction, drummers too often are promised chicken salad but served chickenshit. Herein a helping of each. From the essentials of the clave to the elusive multi-directional syncopations of the music's most important beats, Latin music mainstays Frankie Malabe and Bob Weiner have devised a splendidly clear study, breaking down the basics of this most American tradition in terms of both the music and (in passing) its folkloric heritage. There are dozens of practical recorded examples (which could have gone on longer) to give neophytes a foothold in this joyous music—a must for drummers who want to grasp the full extent of the Latin tinge in popular music and jazz. Alas for rock drummers, music-biz wannabe Cianci's sampling of stylists is an inept term paper, superficially annotated and dreadfully written. Culled primarily from second-hand sources, there are mounds of mistakes and mis-information, mostly self-inflated opinion masquerading as fact.—*Chip Stern*

THE JAZZ PEOPLE OF NEW ORLEANS
Lee Friedlander
(PANTHEON)

TALKING JAZZ
Ben Sidran
(POMEGRANATE)

THESE TWO COFFEE-TABLE books effectively cover the alpha and omega of jazz in distinct fashion. Friedlander, who needs no introduction to photography buffs, combined his passions for the camera and New Orleans jazz with these touching black-and-white portraits (taken between 1957 and 1974) and lively marching-band scenes. Although Friedlander doesn't identify his subjects beyond naming them, his images pack enough atmosphere to seduce even those unfamiliar with the music. An afterword by Whitney Balliett adds verbal seasoning to the visual gumbo.

The weightier *Talking Jazz* collects 50 of Ben Sidran's radio interviews from his 1985–90 NPR series "Sidran on Record." He covers virtually all stylistic twists since bebop, from cornerstones (Miles and Diz) to Young Turks (Wynton/Branford)—even less obvious choices like Donald Fagen, Charles Brown and Steve Gadd. Conversations are relaxed and illuminating.—*Scott Isler*

VIDEO

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Kings of Independence
(VIDEO MUSIC INC.)

JUST RELEASED IN the U.S., this 37-minute live video of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, Crime and the City Solution and the Swans captures an eerie deliverance of decadent squalor as it happened at Knopf's Music Hall, Hamburg, August 15, 1987. The lighting is dim, the atmosphere smoky, the sound muddy, the performances commanding. Nick Cave sputters through "Saint Huck," Crime rattle through a Doors-ian set, but Michael Gira steals the show—groveling in his misery, droning excessively into wordless moans. (Box 1128, Norristown, PA 19404)—*Rob O'Connor*

MULESKINNER
Muleskinner Live—The Video
(SIERRA HOME VIDEO)

CLARENCE WHITE, RICHARD Greene, Peter Rowan, David Grisman and Bill Keith were asked to back bluegrass legend Bill Monroe on a February 1973 PBS television special. Monroe never made it to the TV studio because his bus broke down, but in the spirit of showmanship and with only three hours to rehearse, the musicians went on with the show. Tunes like "Dark Hollow" and "Land of the Navajo" sparkle as former-Byrd Clarence White weaves beautifully syncopated runs and fills. On the fiddle tour de force "Orange Blossom Special," Greene's stellar playing lends the tune a new fiery dimension supported by Grisman's manic mandolin and White's offbeat jazz chordings. (Box 5853, Pasadena, CA 91117-0181)—*Rick Petreycik*

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Wild Style
(PDW WOW PRODUCTIONS)

WHAT HAS BEEN called hip-hop's "first and best" film doesn't supply much storyline, and the pro-

duction values are so low that if it weren't for the goofy dialogue you might think you were watching a documentary. *Wild Style*'s significance is that not many people were filming when old-school rap legends Busy Bee, the Cold Crush Four, Grandmaster Flash and others pioneered a new popular music form in the South Bronx of the early '80s; footage of Flash doing theretofore unheard-of things to three turntables is alone worth the video price. Director, writer and producer Charles Ahearn provides a fictionalized account of hip-hop culture's spread to the Downtown art scene in the person of a graffiti artist named Raymond. The movie culminates with a huge party in Alphabet City; in real life, we got Marky Mark on MTV...but that's another story. ($29.95, Pow Wow Productions, P.O. Box 892, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10036)

—Nathan Brackett

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Good Mornin' Blues
(YAZOO)

NARRATED BY B.B. King, this 1978 documentary is a worthy attempt at tracing the evolution of the blues from century-old field hollers to today. Along the way you get footage of the Dockery Plantation where originators like Charlie Patton lived, and live performances by everyone from former Mississippi Sheik Sam Chatmon to Johnny Shines. The occasionally dour tone of the proceedings is relieved by a rambunctious set by Big Joe Williams, and an amazing final sequence where a very old and bedraggled Sam Chatmon delivers a defiant "Sitting on Top of the World."

—Thomas Anderson

CLASSICAL

CAPELLA ALAMIRE
Motets: Busnoys, Josquin, Gombert
(TITANIC)

THREE GENERATIONS (ROUGHLY) of Franco-Flemish Renaissance composers are represented on this album of choral music. Antoine Busnoys, Josquin DesPrez and Nicolas Gombert were all regarded as masters in their time; Busnoys, the earliest, appears to have had a sizable influence on the other two. Though these 11 pieces are called motets, not all of them are based on religious texts. Busnoys' "In hydraulis," dedicated to fellow composer Johannes Ockeghem, is a short treatise on music theory and Pythagoras' "harmonic science," with mathematical vocal counterpoint to match. Most interesting are Gombert's three pieces, which continually flirt with dissonance—his "Sancta Maria" is positively polytonal, and over 400 years before Hindemith or Milhaud. Capella Alamire generally perform these pieces with a canny mixture of passion and detachment, but on Busnoys' "Victimae paschali laudes," they leave caution behind, giving the swiftly moving imitative lines an urgency and momentum that make for compelling listening. (Box 204, Somerville, MA 02144-0204)

—Mac Randall

MITSUKO UCHIDA
Mozart Piano Concertos Nos. 8 & 9
(PHILIPS)

PIANIST UCHIDA COMES near to concluding her complete Mozart piano concerto cycle with this offering, the negligible eighth and the turning-point ninth—the latter being the earliest of the composer's piano concertos to remain a mainstay in the current repertoire. Uchida's great talent is a combination of impressive facility with a sensitivity to the often subtle fluctuations of Mozart's narrative. It's this poised alertness which prevents the operatic languidness of the ninth's second movement from dissolving into a pretty soup, and sees that the third movement never totally succumbs to its youthful exuberance as the mood swings from frolicking to a gently ironic *minuetto* respite, some brave-faced sadness, then back to the party. A definitive interpretation, with Jeffrey Tate and the English Chamber Orchestra providing simpatico support.—*Richard C. Walls*

JOHN BELL/
CONSTANCE KEENE
Piano Music of Friedrich Nietzsche
(NEWPORT CLASSIC)

MUCH OF THIS is juvenalia—13 of the 16 pieces here were composed before Nietzsche was 20—and probably would have remained forgotten if the composer hadn't become one of the most original and controversial philosophers of the nineteenth century. Eleven of the pieces are the slightest of songs, averaging about a minute-and-a-half, and a surprising number of these are utterly charming, a word one doesn't normally associate with this particular iconoclast. Interesting that the fiercely penetrating aphorist started out as a musical sentimentalist (and perhaps remained so—after rejecting the lofty Wagner, he sang the praises of Bizet's *Carmen*). The longer pieces—two are just over 15 minutes—sound more dutifully "Germanic" than inspired, as clichéd purple interludes lead to assertive anti-climaxes (one of these mini-epics reportedly reduced Wagner to convulsions of laughter). Still, in his less ambitious moods, the boy had a knack.

—Richard C. Walls

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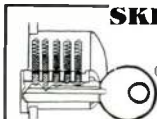

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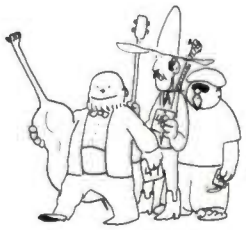
The Bookies' Guide to Picking the Stones' New Bassist



Charlie Drayton
Ex-bassist with Keith Richards' X-Pensive Winos. Drayton left Keith's band on New Year's to pursue his own career, but moving up to the Stones might be irresistible. Odds: 5–1

Doug Wimbish
Played on Jagger's solo work. This top gun would be the number-one contender if he had not just joined Living Colour. Wimbish says that if nominated he will not run. However, Mick helped Living Colour get signed, produced their first hit and gave them the opening slot on the *Steel Wheels* tour. They owe him one. 5–1

Steve Jordan
Right, he's a drummer—but he plays solid bass, too. More important, Jordan has become Keith Richards' main sidekick (look what that did for Woody in '75) and musical collaborator. Jordan played on the Stones' *Dirty Work* album. 5–1

Ron Wood
Woody might not want to move to bass, but as Mick's talking about the possibility, he better watch out. Many rock fans rank Woody the bassist (Jeff Beck Group) above Woody the guitarist, and he has handled the bottom on Stones records on more occasions than Bill Wyman might care to admit. Problem: His bass playing might be too busy for the Stones. Solution: Tell him to calm down. 10–1

Joey Spampinato
Not the ass-kicker Mick says he wants, but a terrific R&B player who shares the Stones' roots, sings well and would look very much like Bill Wyman from beyond the tenth row. Played in Keith's band for the Chuck Berry documentary *Hail! Hail! Rock & Roll.* 20–1

Flea
Excellent young bassist who plays on Jagger's new album. But would Flea give up the young, hot Chili Peppers for the old, hot Rolling Stones? And what would Charlie make of him? 30–1

John Entwistle
This has been promoted by people who listen to Classic Hits Radio and think all '60s British rock legends sleep over at each other's houses. But Entwistle is a mighty busy bassist for the Stones and he has a beard and wears bad pants. 50–1

Busta Cherry Jones
When Wyman made noises about quitting in the early '80s, Busta was waiting in the wings to take over. Unfortunately, he told everybody. 50–1

Peavey Bass Module
Not much to look at, but neither was Wyman—and at least it wouldn't quit. 70–1

Sting
He's a good bassist, young enough to give the band some pizzazz but old enough to fit in, and he's English—which has meant a lot to the Stones in the past. But he might encourage Charlie's jazz ambitions, in which case Keith would have to shoot him. 100–1

Paul McCartney
A fine bass player with similar pro experience to the Stones, he wrote "I Wanna Be Your Man," the Stones' second British hit. But Mick has in the past made fun of Paul for having "his old lady onstage," which might limit the chances of Macca accepting the gig. 200–1

Ray Manzarek's Left Hand
Hey, it was good enough for the Doors. 300–1

Danny Bonaduce
His chops have gotten a little rusty since his days pumping bottom with the P-Family, but his substance abuse problems and scuffles with the fuzz make him prime Stones material. 400–1

Tina Weymouth
Under their thumb? More like "She's the Boss." Not bloody likely, mate. 500–1

Tom Hamilton
Too tall. 1,000,000–1

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