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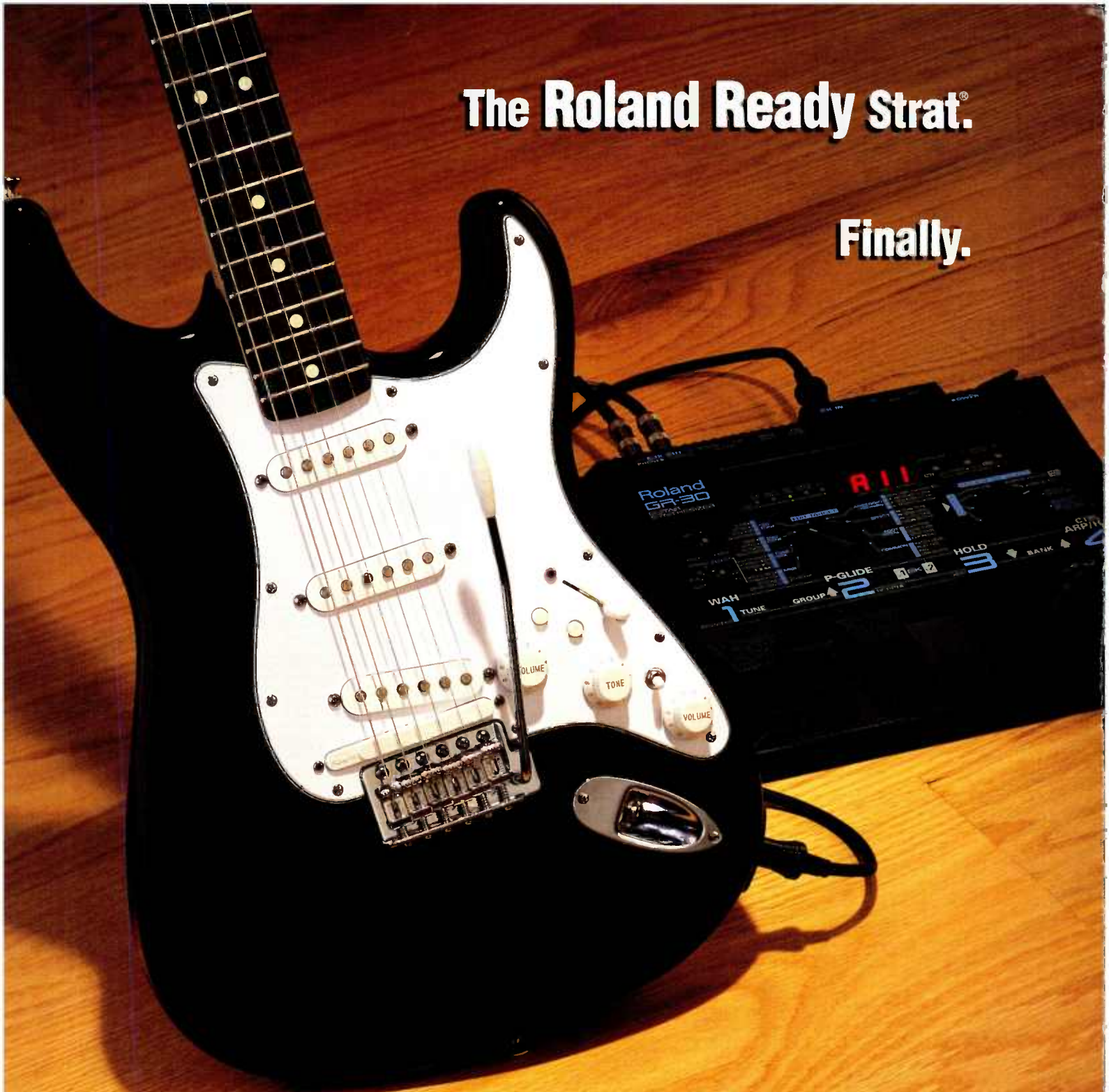
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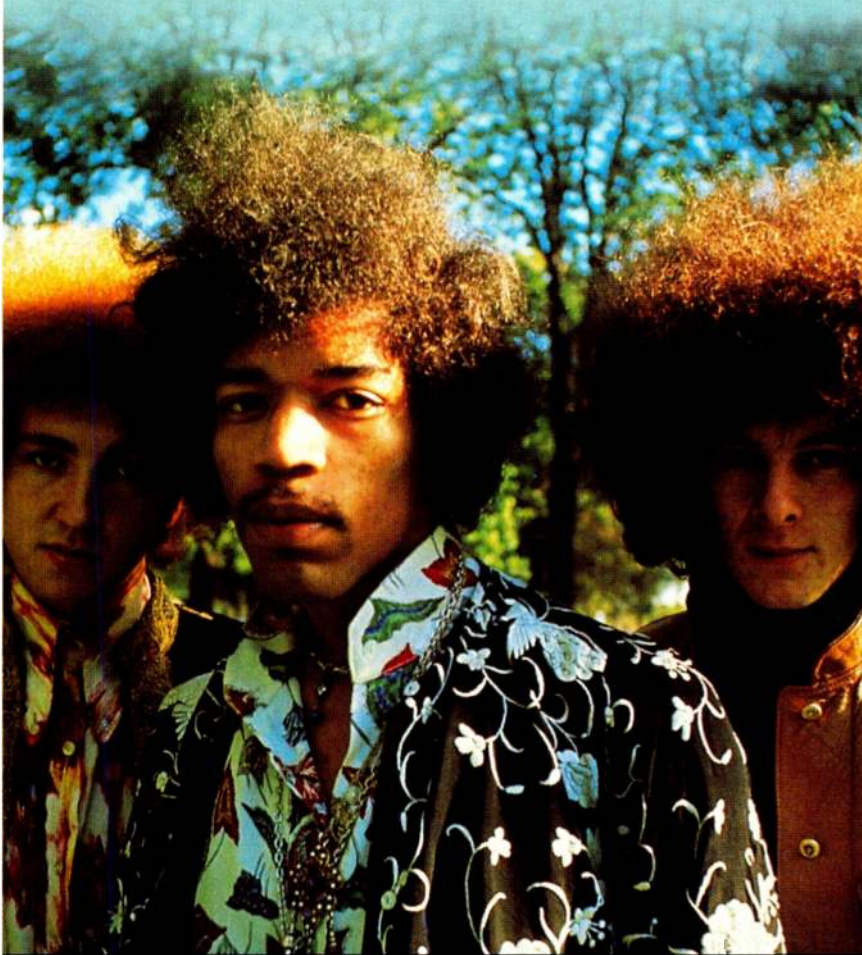


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kudos

I've been reading *Musician* for almost fifteen years. As the owner of a retail music store, I read (or have read) every music magazine out there. *Musician* is the one I read for myself, not for my business. Maybe I'm unusual, but I'm not asking you to change anything. I look to *Musician* as a pipeline for new ideas, styles, and artists. Rather than tell you to cover the music I'm interested in, I count on you to show me things that *are* interesting. That's what I want out of your publication, and you have consistently delivered it. Thanks, and thanks for doing it in a most literate way.

dan vedda
skyline music
cleveland, OH

On December 22, 1997, I began working at the new *Musician's Friend* store here in Las Vegas. For one solid month, my colleagues and I prepared for the grand opening. Even though my musical career spans some twenty years, not to mention six years of retail experience, it was next to impossible to learn about all the inventory as we finished our final stocking of merchandise. I subscribe to the guitar magazines, but they only cover guitar-related issues, and my job demands that I perfect my knowledge of amps, effects, keyboards, drums, and pro-audio equipment as well as guitars. Frankly, I was worried that we may appear incompetent to assist our customers.

But after scanning my initial subscription issue of *Musician*, all I could think was, "Cool!" The March '98 issue gave me insight I can use for my customers on noise reduction, TC Electronic's G-Force guitar processor, and other vital stuff. After showing this issue to several co-workers, I know that any one of the following will hold true: (1) Most, if not all, of them will become new subscribers; (2) we will very soon be carrying *Musician*; or (3) everyone I work with will realize they don't need to pick up each issue, since I'll be bringing my copy in as soon as I receive it in the mail.

ric st. john
las vegas, NV

[Umm, we recommend options one and two. And thanks to both of you for the good words.]

surviving carpal tunnel

As a longtime reader of *Musician* and founder/president of a new nonprofit organization called the International Foundation for Performing Arts Medicine, I applaud Michael Gelfand's article on carpal tunnel syndrome (*Working Musician*, March '98). Although anyone who spends long

periods of time engaged in activities that require repetitive motions—painting, computer programming, cleaning teeth, carpentry, and music performance—may develop this problem, repetitive motion is not the only contributing factor. And "inflamed tissues surrounding the nerves in your wrists and hands, potentially creating numbness or even shooting pain" is not exactly an accurate description of the scenario inside the wrist.

The numbness and pain is from one of three nerves that provide sensation and signal the muscles to move in a part of your hand that has had an injury from inflammation or some other problem inside the wrist. Usually the pain is worse at night in the thumb, index, middle, and sometimes the ring finger, and might be bad enough to wake you from a good night's sleep.

If intervention is started quite soon after confirming that you have carpal tunnel syndrome, surgery can sometimes be avoided. One successful treatment that I use with my patients is called iontophoresis; this involves driving an anti-inflammatory medication directly into the wrist via a very mild electrical impulse. I know it works, as I use it on myself; as a health professional, and as someone who plays two instruments and uses a computer too often, I certainly want healthy hands. Anyone who suspects they may have carpal tunnel syndrome may reach IFPAM at the email address below to find a performing arts medical specialist near you.

nina paris, OTR
IFPAM@bigfoot.com

rock of ages

Mark Rowland's article "Don't Sign Anyone Over 30" (*Headlines*, Apr. '98) is a must-read for anyone trying to break into the pop/rock/country genres. But if he had expanded his research to include other styles, the results would have been different. For example, while there is an age barrier in R&B, you'd have to raise it to 35 or better: Ever hear of Keith Sweat, Phil Perry, Roger Troutman, Luther Vandross, Oleta Adams... hell, what about Dave Matthews? And in gospel and jazz, age is truly just a number. Besides, I don't think a whole lot of your readers want to be the next Hanson or Pearl Jam—at least none of them aged 25 to 50 would admit it.

dee manor, jr.
Starfit@Bellsouth.net

Send letters to: *Musician*, 49 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203.

Email: editors@musicianmag.com.



from the editor

How many times have you asked yourself how you would do things differently if you had a second chance? I'm sure plenty of you look back with the wisdom of experience and say to yourself, "Man, I know I should have gone to that Hanson audition," or "Why did I wait so long to subscribe to *Musician*?" Me, I kick myself over something that happened back in college, when I elected to play piano for some skits in the USC annual musical *Trolios* rather than accept a position as synthesist in the pit band for the world's first staging of the Who's *Tommy*. (The musical kept me so busy that I also turned down an invitation from my theater arts teacher, Joan Tewkesbury, to submit some of my writing to "a friend of hers" for an upcoming project. The friend turned out to be Robert Altman, and the project was the film *Nashville*. Sigh.)

Anyway, *Musician* bounced this question off of some of the most respected people in music and used their answers as material for its Apr. '95 cover story; we called it, "If I Knew Then What I Know Now." It was, in a way, a perfect *Musician* story: We used our access to the biggest names in the business to convey their insights about real-world issues directly to players. That's why the story drew a strong reader response—and that's why we're reviving the idea as a regular feature of our Working Musician section. Check out the first monthly installment of If I Knew Then What I Know Now, featuring the comments of Cheap Trick bassist Tom Petersson.

This issue also features our new Website Exclusive! notices. You'll find them with every story that's expanded on the *Musician* website by unpublished interview transcripts and other material we couldn't fit into the magazine. That's it for now—see you next month.

—Robert L. Doerschuk, editor

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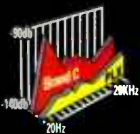
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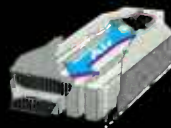
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Sean Lennon

“I get charged by Brazilian jazz the way I used to get charged by Slayer.”

Your album, *Into the Sun* [Grand Royal], has almost a “lounge” feel. Have you been listening to that kind of music lately?

I don’t like to call it lounge music, because that implies some kind of no-soul piano bar guy, but if you mean lounge music by people like Antonio Carlos Jobim . . .

That’s exactly who I was about to mention.

Yeah. I know what you mean when you call it lounge music, but that label undermines the real beauty and intensity of this music. To me, it’s more like soul music. It’s some of the deepest shit I’ve heard in my life. I used to think of it more as lounge music when I was younger, when I was more into rock and stuff. I considered all the Brazilian jazz to be light, cheesy music. But now it’s like heavy metal to me. When I listen to it, I get charged the way I used to get charged when I listened to Slayer. There’s an intensity to the energy, and the music is so subtle because everybody is playing so quietly but it’s tight and the musicians are so connected.

And there’s no mixing involved on those records. They play the mix. If something needed to be quieter, they would play it that way. If something needed to be sung louder, that’s how they would sing it. It’s such a high level of musicianship and composition, and it’s just incredible.

So I’m not trying to be cheesy or do some artful interpretation of elevator music. I’m trying to be very soulful in everything I do. I love Jobim, I love Sergio Mendes, I love Caetano Veloso, all those Brazilian guys, a lot. That music is heavy. Even though it’s light in tone, it’s heavy in content.

*You were just talking about how the Brazilian guys played the mix. Did you try to play the mix on *Into the Sun*?*

Well, a little bit, but it’s really hard. Much

of the time I was playing a lot of the instruments myself. I’d be doing the drums and then the bass or something, and I guess I *could* do the dynamics—and I tried to—but I haven’t really mastered that technique fully. I’m still learning.

There was a sense of immediacy in the feel of your album.

That’s mainly because we recorded it in the space of a month. We’d record the song, do the vocals, do the backing vocals, and then mix it all in one day. Nobody does that anymore—I mean, that’s how jazz records are made, but it’s not done in my field of work.

For me it’s a lot about getting this first step over with so that I can move on to new things. I really felt it was important to get this record out of the way so that I didn’t have to worry and could just make music instead of always worrying about what my first [album] was going to be like—which was troublesome, you know, because there was so much pressure from a lot of Beatles fans, the press, and the media.

When you refer to Jobim’s music as “soul,” you don’t mean that you put it into an R&B category, do you?

It’s of the soul. That’s the best kind of music in any genre. I wanted to do *Into the Sun* to say, “Look, we don’t have to stick to genres.” I can make a record with jazz, country, Seventies funk, and grunge rock, and it’s still my record, and it’s still cohesive, and it still makes sense as a whole. This record shouldn’t be a revolutionary statement, but these days it strangely *is* because nobody does that.

You listen to most records, and they pretty much [stick to] the same vibe, the same style. If they’re good at one style, they go for that style. These days it’s important to experiment with different styles because that’s the only way you can [create] new sounds.—**Michael Gelfand**

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To read more of Michael Gelfand’s interview with Sean Lennon, visit Musician Online at www.musicianmag.com.

sideman

You've built up a lot of miles playing roots-oriented gigs and sessions. Does it help to know about the history of that music when you're looking for work?

Well, I'm not working very much right now [laughs]. But I think it helps once you've already hooked up for a gig. It helped with Keith [Richards], because he's such a blues fan. When we started jamming around, he'd play a Chuck Berry tune, and he knew that I knew the right stuff to go with those tunes because I've listened to tons of Willie Dixon.

What did you learn about the blues from listening to those old records?

For one thing, everyone is constantly playing, but it's call-and-response. The harp player blows, and the guitar player does something against that, and the piano player does something against that. It keeps going around in a circle, with no one laying out. Yet they're not in their own little world, like in free-form blowing. They're really

listening. Nobody's playing any incredible shit, since it's not jazz, so you listen to it as a whole groove. Like, what's the soul of this music? The vibe?

There are blues bands that stick faithfully to twelve-bar verses with a straight-up rhythm . . .

Blues-rock bands.

You can kind of cruise on automatic with those groups. So how do you develop the sensitivity to know when to add or drop beats in that more authentic Muddy Waters style?

It's really about listening to the vocalist. You'll never figure out what to do from the guitar. You've got to follow the singer.

On that kind of a gig you wouldn't walk up to a chord change.

Right. If you're walking the bass, you're forcing the issue.

You have to lay out on roots so you can make the change without sounding like, "Oops! Here's the change!"

You once jammed with Marshall Crenshaw at a party. Then a few weeks later you sent him a postcard that offered your services as a bassist. Nine months later he called you for a European tour. Do you think that postcard is what got you the gig?

Yeah, but that's because a postcard wasn't inappropriate. I wouldn't have called him, for instance; I didn't know the guy. And I didn't say, "I need a gig. Please hire me." I just said facetiously, "If you ever need a bass player, give me a holler."

No pressure.

Yeah. Just like Keith. After we met and



Jeff Sarli

"You'll never figure out what to do from the guitar. You've got to follow the singer."

played some, a mutual friend gave me his phone number and said, "You should call and tell him you had a good time." That kind of thing means something to him. Later he gave me his fax number—Keith loves to get faxes—so every few months I faxed him this cartoon of myself that someone had drawn. I certainly didn't hound him, but I said, "We don't get to see each other much, so in case you forget what I look like . . ." It had this extreme nose and hair all over [laughs], so I thought he'd get a kick out of it.

Are you still playing session gigs?

Sure. Right now I'm mainly taking rock & roll gigs—straight-up, sweaty, roots rock & roll. Ignorant, gut-level shit. I love it.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

résumé

The Rolling Stones
Marshall Crenshaw
Jimmy Witherspoon
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Sharing the Songwriting



Connells

Writing a hit song—i.e., the act of creating an emotionally stirring chord progression, an infinitely catchy melody, and compelling, insightful lyrics—is perhaps the high art of a musician’s job. In fact, it is one of the main reasons that so many of us join bands in the first place: We want to play songs that we create in hopes that other people will like them. The problem is that bands have creative hierarchies, meaning that the most prolific songwriter usually ends up writing the songs and running the show. But is this a good thing?

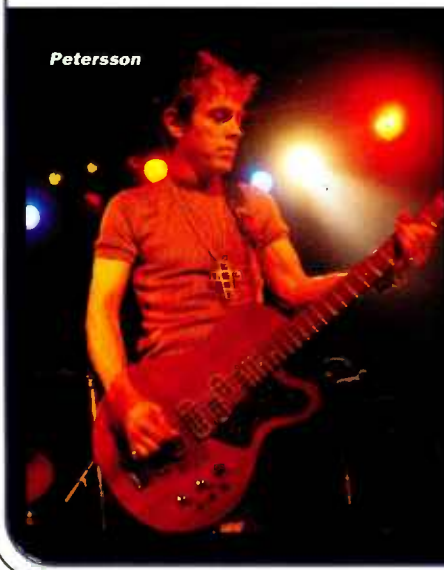
When Mike Connell started writing songs as a distraction from law school in the late Seventies, he probably had no idea he’d be doing it almost two decades later. His band, the **Connells**, an aggressively melodic folk-pop band out of Raleigh, North Carolina, came together in 1984. Today, after seven albums and fourteen years, Connell is still at it, scribbling chord progressions, scripting out lyrics, and performing in front of modest but enthusiastic crowds from coast to coast.

For most of that time, Connell has served as the band’s principal source of material. When songwriter George Huntley joined the band,

Mike conceded a track or two per album, allowing Huntley to bring in songs of a contrasting style. “I was okay with George’s participation,” says Connell, “so much as I liked the songs he came in with.” There was a point, Connell recalls, when Huntley tried to wrest more control of the writing. “I said to him, ‘Yeah, I know you write songs. but this is my thing.’” Huntley eventually took the songs that were unfit for the band and recorded a solo album.

Over time, as the Raleigh boys have tried unsuccessfully to crack the mainstream, Connell began loosening his grip on the songwriter chores, allowing his bandmates to come into recording sessions with more of their own material. The levee broke in 1997, when band morale ebbed during the sessions and tour for *Weird Food and Devastation* (TVT): the members came within inches of calling it quits before deciding it was time for a major change—which meant that Connell would open the floor to all potential contributors. What did he have to lose?

The resulting new album, *Still Life* (TVT), showcases thirteen tracks—with only five songs credited to Connell, the fewest in the band’s seven-



Petersson

CHEAP TRICK’S TOM PETERSSON

IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW...

... my bass sound would have been simpler [because] you don’t hear anything that you think you’re going to hear when the tracks are finally finished; you don’t hear those subtleties. Like when you’re doing a track with this nice growl on it and you’ve got great tone and it sounds great with the drums, the minute you add guitars or a piano or anything, all that edge is gone because unless you’ve got it way up in the mix, you don’t hear that

range of the bass; all you hear is the low end. So a lot of basses are just good for low end and people don’t use them, because they think, “Aw, there’s no brightness,” but you don’t hear that unless you’re playing alone. You just gotta style your playing knowing that you’re not gonna have the sound you really hear.

For me, what I’ve found is that even as much as you try out a bass in a store, or even in your home,



disc history. "I guess there's some idea of fairness," he says, "that after all this time some of the guys get to hear their own songs done up by the band."

Drummer Peele Wimberley agrees. "I work every bit as hard as the other guys, so I feel I should have some input on writing." In fact, all five members contributed tracks to *Still Life*, bringing the band—a longtime songwriting autocracy—to a true meritocracy in the course of an album. "The changes in songwriting responsibility bring changes to the dynamic in the band," says Wimberley. "Now everyone

feels more involved in the whole thing, and we can start looking forward to that point in the set every night where our songs come up."

The equal-footed making of *Still Life* also helped band members earn each other's respect. Now, rather than viewing the band as a showcase for Connell's material, they appreciate each other's abilities and strengths. "I think we're more mature because of *Still Life*," says Wimberley. "I learned some things about myself and I learned how I could be more respectful of the other guys. We all benefitted from the experience." —**Bob Gulla**

you can't really tell if it's going to sound that good unless you're in the studio, and that's mainly for dead spots. Maybe the D and the G strings won't ring out, and there's very little you can do about: It's not even, and it drives you crazy. That really stands out in recording, and you hate to have to use a compressor or a limiter. That's only good for effect, like if you're looking for a McCartney sound and you want to squash the shit out of it. Another thing I've found is that if an electric bass sounds good acoustically, it probably will sound good plugged in. If it sounds dead and you think it'll sound good plugged in, forget it. It's not going to have any clarity or anything.

Amps really depend on personal tastes. I'm

not even sure what I was using for *Cheap Trick* at *Budokan* (Sony Legacy), but you shouldn't worry about low-end at live shows, because there's so much of it in P.A. systems. You don't need to worry about it onstage—just get a good tone and let someone add the low end in. Low end travels a lot, and if you've got a lot coming off the stage, it's not good. . . . You've got a kick drum going, and these days every soundman has the drums up louder than hell. That's all they worry about, and then they add everything else in around it. I mean, have you ever been to a concert where you couldn't hear the kick drum louder than any other instrument? What the fuck is that about?

—**Michael Gelfand**



Runga

RISING ABOVE intolerance

From getting heard to getting signed, hurdles confront any performer trying to make it in the music business. For most of us, those obstacles don't include racism or sexism, but dealing with such prejudice is still a major problem for many artists. **Bic Runga**, a diminutive half-Chinese, half-Maori pop singer from New Zealand, has had to confront many of these evils rather frequently. "I don't enjoy moaning too much about prejudice," she prefaces, "but it's out there. I just consider it another obstacle to overcome."

When Runga, now 22, emerged on the Kiwi indie scene four years ago, she toured the isle's ferocious pub circuit and was shocked at the primitive redneck behavior. "I feared for my life at some of those places," she says. "It can be quite violent, but it was good for me." She endured that experience in part by writing material for her U.S. debut, *Drive* (Columbia), which offers an enlightened batch of fragile folk-pop centered around Runga's crystalline voice. "I found [the songs] tamed them," she laughs, "and the music spoke for itself."

Runga also feels that the hostility she faced in the pubs toughened her to handle the difficulties she knew she'd encounter down the road. "Being young, ethnic, and female may seem like a gimmick to some skeptics, so I end up having to prove myself on all counts," she says. "I know I'm not the only one who feels the way I feel, so to succeed in spite of it feels good." —**Bob Gulla**

From Led Zeppelin's bombastic days to Kiss decade of flash, bands in all genres have blended equal parts style and substance to score success. The idea that the live show was supposed to be . . . um, entertaining? . . . seemed to have been lost in the alterna generation, but now entertainment is coming back.

Bands like L.A.'s **Ten Speed** welcome the change. More than a smoke machine (which they use) or Seventies-style garb (which they wear), the trio jazzed up their show with red, blue, and green vinyl-covered Kustom amps and a custom-made drum riser complete with silver cones that double as stage lights. The props are just that, though, since Ten Speed takes just as much care to craft a set list. "We rehearse our asses off and work on getting our set order right, making sure that drama builds in a set and that a story is told sonically," says Hutch, the band's singer/guitarist.

Bassist Dimitry agrees: "With our music there are lots of ups and downs, there's a lot of drama to Hutch's vocals, and that lends itself perfectly for us to manipulate the kinds of elements we want to use live. It's not just a matter of being really shallow and saying, 'Okay, let's bring as many girls and backdrops as we can and keep the masses entertained while we fool them.'"

The **Upper Crust**, on the other hand, depends on as



many naked girls and backdrops as possible to make a splash. Over the past three years, this Boston-based band has taken their powdered wigs, velvet pants, and ruffled shirts across the country. At times, like the New Year's Eve they opened for Aerosmith, they can turn up the prop-notch by using an antique, guilded amplifier that blows smoke, lackeys to offer the drummer his sticks on a tasseled pillow, and a variety of serving wenches. "We can't really travel at this stage of the game with a big crew or a lot of props, so we usually travel with a couple of candelabras to suggest the ambience of elegance," says Nat Freedberg, who's alter ego, Lord Bendover, is the band's lead singer and songwriter.

It's Bendover who explains the driving motivation behind the outlandish stage show: "Entertainment is the best way to espouse frivolity." So what would Bendover like his fans to come away with after a show? "Well, I'd like them to come away with venereal disease and ringing in their ears." Ahh, perhaps the Seventies have come back after all.—**David John Farinella**
Next month we'll talk to bands who think dynamic shows are less than essential, if not a barrier, to their music.

Amaze or Shoe-Gaze?

THE VALUE OF SHOWMANSHIP

attitudeadjustment

When the youthful aggression and fury of the Eighties thrash metal scene began to show cracks during the alternative revolution of the Nineties, protagonists Megadeth and Metallica were the only bands able to make a successful transition from underground cult favorites to mainstream rock radio bands.

Times have changed since then, but **Dave Mustaine**, a founding member of both bands and **Megadeth's** creative force, acknowledges that staying successful in the company of today's hard rock scene without altering his band's aggressive sound had less to do with questioning his artistic vision and a lot more to do with some self-realizations of his notorious past. "When I walked around spitting on people and sticking my thumb

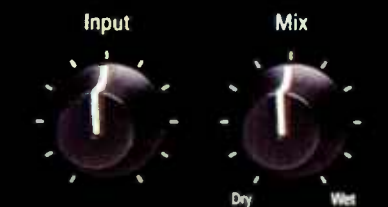
in the eye of society, I may have had a great reputation, but record sales suffered and I wasn't really fun to be around," says the oft-opinionated guitarist and singer.

Having been sidetracked by a career full of setbacks—including a history of substance-abuse bouts, three lineup changes, and a host of unscrupulous lawyers and managers—Megadeth today is under the auspices of clear-eyed Mustaine, who is in his third year of sobriety and recently fathered his second child. "For me it's about playing music, being healthy, and treating people with dignity and respect," he says. "Now it's like people can't get enough of me." For those of you whose thumb is still stuck in society's eye, it might be a wise long-term career move to eventually, gently, take it out.—**Mark Marone**



Megadeth

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the Art of Illusion

Leon Russell reveals how illness helped define his piano style.

by robert i. doerschuk

The press and the fans went nuts when Elton John made his American debut at the Whiskey a Go Go nearly thirty years ago. But there was only one person in that crowd that John wanted to see. And before the night of his triumph had ended, the nascent superstar managed to have a few minutes alone with his predecessor as a giant of rock piano and, already, a legend in the business.

Leon Russell gave John his benediction that night, much as years before the original king of the keys, Jerry Lee Lewis, had nodded approval to Russell. But as seminal as Lewis had been, and as prodigious as John was about to become, Russell was the most important pianist in rock at that time. As with all great instrumentalists, his sound could be instantly identified: It was simultaneously facile and raw-

boned, riveted by chordal jabs and laced by wild, two-handed octave runs that echoed his yowling, holy-roller vocals.

Behind his façade—the waterfalling hair, the mirrored shades—there was a foundation of legit training that helped buy him access into the elite circle of L.A. session players. Years before his ecstatic, near speaking-in-tongues rap on “Stranger in a Strange Land,” Russell was doing record dates with Frank Sinatra and Herb Alpert. Clearly he could cover all the bases as a player—yet in conversation with *Musician* last April, he shrugged off his accomplishments, maintaining that his piano style was largely based on “illusion.” Not only that, he admitted to not having played an actual acoustic piano in some four years and vowed that he’ll never play one again.

Of course, Russell hasn’t abandoned the spotlight. He’s still touring, though his emphasis is more on the singing







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persona he created years ago under the transparent pseudonym Hank Wilson—last April saw the release of *Legend in My Time: Hank Wilson Vol. III* (Ark 21). He plays too, but only on electronic keyboards. To longtime admirers of Russell, these changes could seem inexplicable—something like Jimi Hendrix switching to bluegrass mandolin.

When we met Russell at his Nashville home, we were looking for insight into his playing and artistic evolution. Seated in a reclining orthopedic chair, whose position he constantly adjusted with its hand controls, he gave us answers that were as surprising as they were enlightening: His sound, as he sees it, derives mainly from his response to a childhood injury that affects him to this day. . . .

What type of ailment was it?

It was a birth injury to the upper spine that caused a paralysis on my right side. They called it spastic paralysis then; I believe they call it cerebral palsy today.

Is it in remission now?

[Quietly.] It's always there.

How did that affect your playing? Was it hard for you to execute certain parts in the music you studied?

Yeah, it was impossible. It was very disappointing. I studied for ten years—Beethoven, Chopin, all of 'em. It's not a very obvious ailment. I just have a lot of problems with certain things, like scales. I studied for ten years, and finally I just quit because I couldn't play that stuff. I saw people who had been taking lessons for three years play circles around me when it came to classical. But then, after two or three years, one of my piano teachers took me to a concert to see a one-handed classical player. That was very inspirational to me.

Did that experience lead you to take up the piano again?

I never left the piano; I'm just talking about studies. I started playing in nightclubs when I was fourteen.

So your growth as a musician has been strongly affected by your physical limitations.

It's all based on that. New movements are very difficult. It took me a year just to be able to comfortably hold a guitar pick. I had to invent ways to play.

In other words, since you had trouble with scales, you'd have to find a way to create the

impression of that line rather than do it literally.

I developed different things I could do, like arpeggios I could play with both hands. [Illustrates hand-over-hand motion.]

You nailed down octaves pretty well.

That's [from] Edvard Grieg. It all came from him. I worked real hard on certain things because I didn't have other things, and that's one example. I felt that they could work as a melodic tool. I used to practice lines and octaves in both hands.

Simultaneously as well as alternately?

Both, yeah.

What about note choices? Did you have to limit your range of notes you could comfortably hit in a solo?

Well, I tried to play harmonica-like solos in my right hand on the piano, because the harmonica has certain built-in limitations of its own. You really have to have an overview of some kind to make that work, because not all the notes are there, so there's just a few acceptable licks you can do. You've got to know how to put that stuff together. So I studied playing that way as a piano style.

Did you play harmonica too?

I never could get it, actually. I listened to a lot of it, especially the bending of the notes.

And that encouraged you to play "in the cracks," Floyd Cramer style?

Floyd Cramer was a different feel; it's based on steel guitar. Of course, you can't bend notes on a piano, but he was playing pedal steel licks, like if he was playing a C and a G, then he'd slide from the G to the A [in the upper voice]. Blues is different; that's what I was doing.

Did you change your technique much in shifting from piano to electronic keyboards?

I doubt it. I just did that because the new keyboards are easier to play.

But with more young players starting on electronic keyboards, isn't something being lost by not having a strong piano background?

Well, you don't have to be much of a player to make records today. A lot of people who are stars aren't very good players—but that brings a certain element to the music as well. Nothing is ever lost in music; it's just recycled.

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To read more of Robert L. Doerschuk's interview with Leon Russell, visit Musician Online at www.musicianmag.com.

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Keeping track of all the music performed in America is a massive undertaking, as is determining the amount of the royalty payments attached to each performance. That's why there exist not one but three societies that serve this function: ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. These organizations charge licensing fees for the public use of music on radio and TV as well as in restaurants, nightclubs, retail stores, and more. They estimate the frequency of performances throughout the country, then distribute payments based on that estimate to their member writers and publishers.

Each of these societies has its own method for monitoring music and calculating payments. The variations among these methods have led some songwriters to question the accuracy with which their royalties are determined, as collaborators who belong to different societies often receive differing sums for the same song. Let's explore the problems and solutions offered by each organization in the area of performance royalties.

ASCAP (the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) is the oldest member of this trio. Founded in 1914 as a nonprofit organization, it is owned by its members, who include both publishers and writers. ASCAP's present system of monitoring music, according to their chief economist Peter Boyle, involves "a combination of factors, depending on what medium is being measured." The society tapes approximately sixty thousand hours of broadcast music each year and employs a staff of thirty to forty musicologists, who analyze and identify the music. In addition to this research, ASCAP relies on TV and cue sheets, as well as data provided by BDS (Broadcast Data Systems, an electronic fingerprint matching system first used by SESAC), to create a statistical breakdown of titles and performance frequency for songs. According to ASCAP literature, "the cost of tracking each and every performance would be so high as to leave no money to distribute. That is why ASCAP relies on surveys of performances."

Though some have criticized their "human-based technology" as antiquated, ASCAP feels it is just the opposite. "In terms of accuracy, it's always good to have some kind of human element involved," says senior vice-president Todd Brabec. "It adds a dimension that nobody else has, which guarantees that we are the *most* accurate because we are using every possible way to measure performances."

BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) was launched in 1940 by members of the National Association of Broadcasters when they couldn't settle on a new licensing contract with ASCAP. According to Alison Smith, vice-president of performing rights, BMI's system for monitoring musical performances utilizes a "statistical sample that monitors 450,000 hours per year of commercial radio and approximately fifty thousand hours of college radio and TV." This sample is based on data submitted by broadcasters, who fill out logging sheets. Although BMI provides broadcasters with an "easy

electronic method of logging music," Smith says, "many still prefer to manually fill out the logs." In essence, this is an honor system, but BMI works to assure its accuracy by employing an outside accounting firm to send out the logs and issue notices when the time comes for broadcasters to complete and return them. BMI also does its own sample taping across the country to verify the information on the logs.

SESAC (originally standing for the Society of European Stage Artists and Composers) was founded in 1930 by the Heinecke family, which retains ownership of the organization today. As the smallest of the three societies, SESAC considers itself best suited to be more



The Royalty Game

selective with writers and publishers and best able to provide "efficient and personalized service" to each of its members.

In recent years, SESAC has made news by signing up some major songwriters, such as Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond, who were said to be attracted by the organization's willingness to embrace new technologies. "We're proud to be the little engine that could," says SESAC president and CEO Bill Velez, "and try to change things in an industry that hasn't changed for decades."

For example, SESAC announced an alliance with ARIS Technologies

Will new technologies finally ensure that songwriters get the performance royalties they deserve?

by paul zollo



to adopt their MusiCode system, which is a form of digital watermarking—i.e., embedding into recorded music a transparent signal that can be digitally detected. According to ARIS, this watermark is entirely inaudible and indelible, and it travels with recorded music even if the recording is distorted, copied to analog, or compressed for the Internet. Previous watermark technologies, such as BDS, which is presently used to varying extents by both SESAC and ASCAP, rely on relatively long sampling times, which prohibit their use for TV jingles and other short sections of recorded background music. The ARIS watermark can reportedly be detected in seconds by an ARIS decoder; ARIS then provides the relevant data. (The agreement between ARIS and SESAC is non-exclusive, meaning all of the societies could share the same data and thus begin leveling the playing field of performing rights.)

MusiCode, however, isn't infallible. Because it relies on the embedded watermark, only new releases that bear that watermark

can be measured. For those recordings that were released prior to MusiCode, SESAC will continue to rely on BDS, which is a "passive" technology in that the digital fingerprint it assigns to each song is applied after a CD is already released and in the market. But even with BDS, Velez says, "the number of hours that SESAC monitors on the radio side is ten times greater than BMI and ASCAP combined. We monitor eight million hours, as opposed to their combined total of eight hundred thousand hours."

To imprint a recording with the MusiCode watermark, ARIS provides SESAC members with computer software that allows easy application via any PC. ARIS will also send out hardware that can do the encoding without the use of a computer. According to ARIS vice-chairman David Leibowitz, the cost to SESAC members for this gear isn't prohibitive. "We haven't settled on the price," he says. "It won't be a major figure. I doubt it would be five figures."

Along with potential cost issues, the rate of implementation may be a drawback to the MusiCode option. Because of the nature of the system, its use by SESAC will be initially only for TV broadcasts and won't be applied to radio or Internet monitoring for several years.

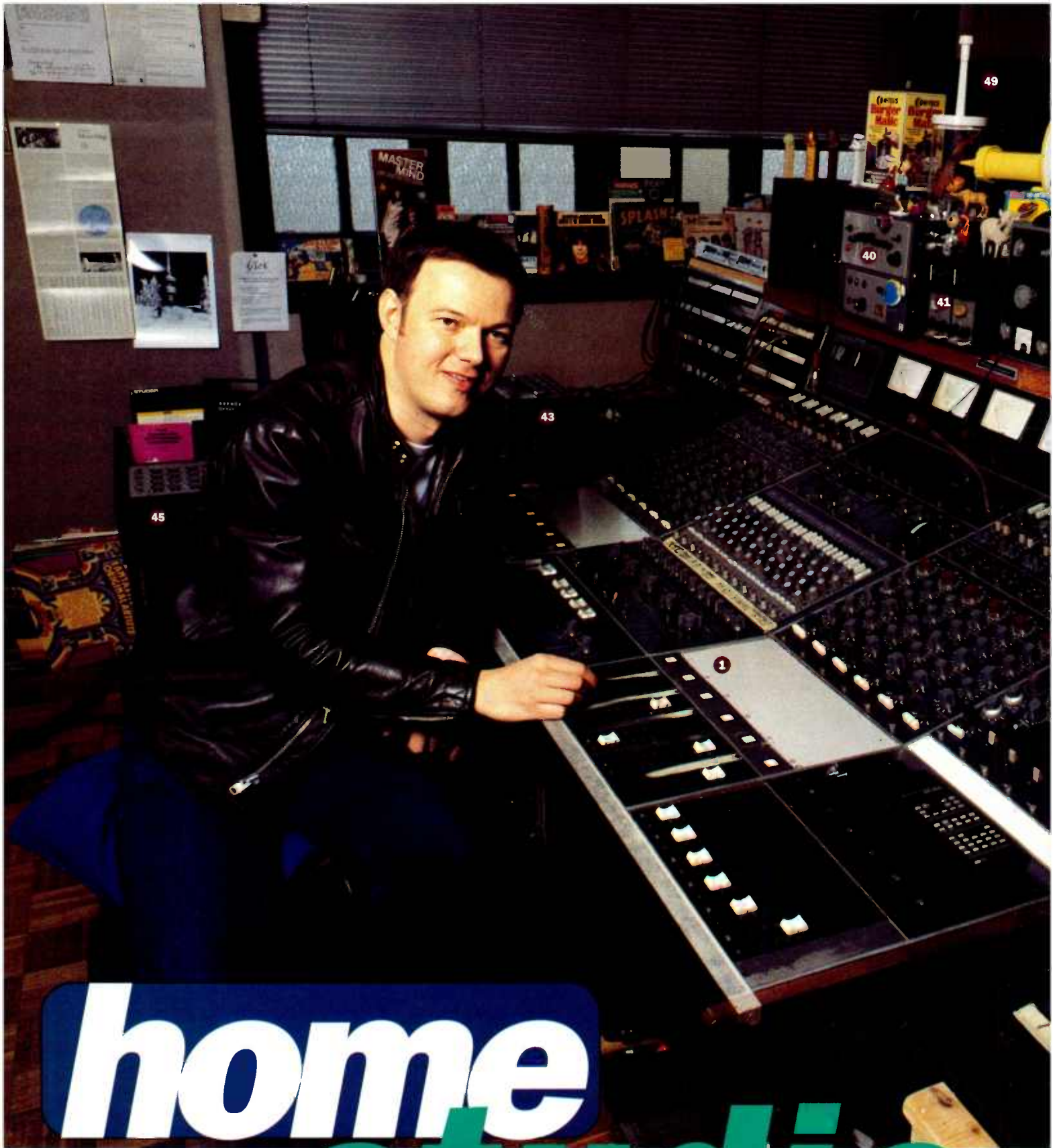
Though the other societies have yet to adapt similar technology, such evolution seems inevitable. "We're working closely [with ARIS]," says ASCAP's Boyle. "We've promised them we wouldn't discuss anything publicly for the time being. But we're always looking for new and better ways of identifying performances if it will make the survey and payment systems more precise—and particularly if it will reduce our costs and allow us to have more money available for our members."

As the oldest society, ASCAP is concerned about protecting copyrights created long before the digital era. "ASCAP has a vast repertory that goes back eighty or ninety years," says Boyle. "Many of those songs are still performed. Any kind of watermarking system would be difficult for those existing recordings. For that reason, I think you will always have a hybrid of systems."

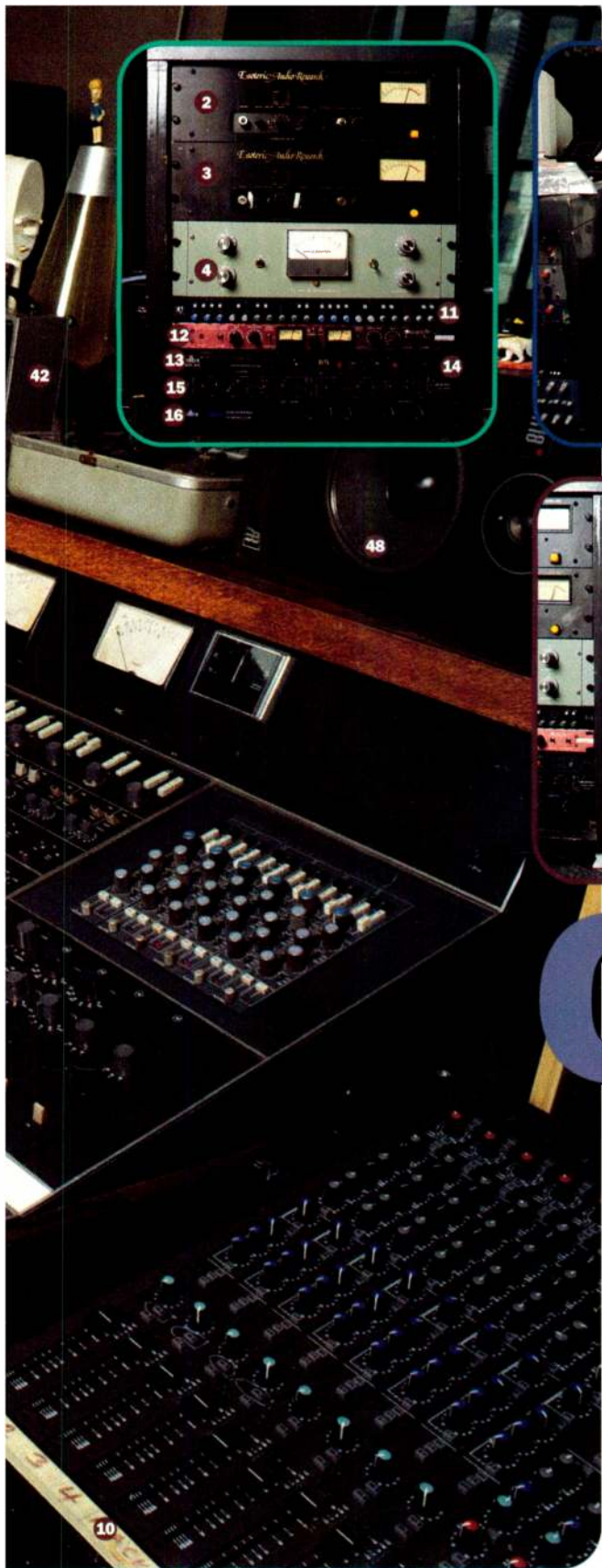
BMI has also been paying a lot of attention to digital watermarking systems. "I think that it is ultimately going to be the way things go," says Alison Smith. "I would have to give SESAC a lot of credit for jumping in and doing it. [BMI] has also looked at the existing technologies. While we're not yet comfortable with totally integrating something like that into our system, we're certainly not going to miss a change. And we do take all the meetings we can with virtually every company that's involved in this kind of technology."

Whichever direction the three societies take in coming years, one hopes that the result will mean a more accurate tally of how often each licensed work is performed. At ARIS, says Leibowitz, "information is power. We provide the data and a songwriter can say, 'I'm entitled to these payments because these are the numbers my hits have had.' I assume that will be an accepted process in the future."

Contributors: Paul Zollo is a songwriter and author of *Songwriters On Songwriting: The Expanded Edition (Da Capo)*. 



home studio



E d w y Collins

by ken micallef
photos by jonathan mark

Edwyn Collins is a satiated victor in the analog-vs.-digital war. Originally an old schooler from his days in the Scottish pop band Orange Juice, Collins went on to enjoy the cash-flush aftermath of his 1996 smash single, "A Girl Like You"; currently he is recording Bernard Butler and developing soundtrack music for the upcoming film *Dwarfs of Death*. These various activities brought in enough scratch to let him outfit his West Hampstead studio with an impressive array of technology, both old-world analog and future-proof digital. It's here that Collins practices what he calls his "analogue-enhanced digital" process, which mirrors the Sixties-meets-Nineties aesthetic of his recent, liquid-sounding album, *I'm Not Following You* (Setanta/Epic).

From its 1969 Neve 24-channel mixing console to an EMT 240 Goldfoil Plate echo unit to a valuable collection of Telefunken U47, AKG C12A, and Neumann KM85 microphones and several Moog synths, Collins' studio looks like a thief's haul from a BBC heist. "The Neve console ① came from Goldcrest Studios in London," says Collins. "It was used to record the films *Brazil* and *The Last Emperor*. It's completely discrete: no integrated circuits, Class A. It has Neve 1064 mic preamp and EQ input modules, which many reckon are the finest mic preamps ever made. In terms of transparency and overall sound quality, these old Neves just breathe. And the Neve EQs are very

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forgiving; you can't go wrong. For purist recording, before you start to get creative, that technology has never been bettered."

Warning: Collins' crowded live room (former home to the Alan Parsons Project) may cause instant fits of envy. Keyboards include a Sixties-era Wurliitzer electric piano and a Solina C117 Arpeggio Matic string machine. A passel of guitars—Gretsch Synchronomatic acoustic, pre-CBS Fender Stratocaster, Gretsch Chet Atkins Country Gentleman, Harmony Dobro, and Fender Electric XII twelve-string—share space with Gretsch "Exclusive" Electromatic and Fender Vibrolux amplifiers. GEC, EV, AKG, and Shure microphones sit atop clunky metal stands. A Seventies black Ludwig kit, currently owned by the Sex Pistols' Paul Cook, sits defiantly in the corner. Though it looks (and smells) like a museum, everything in here works.

"This isn't a hi-fi, purist approach," Collins asserts. "I'm using a variety of techniques. Like on 'Country Rock' [from *I'm Not Following You*], I used a Seventies-sounding drum loop, but with very flanged guitars. My recordings are about different juxtapositions and techniques, including digital. Everything has its own sound—and before you debate analog versus digital, one is not necessarily better than the other, just different. I like to use the differences as light and shade."

Be it guitars, bass, keyboards, or vocals, each track is treated with choice effects. "I particularly like the compression from the **Esoteric Audio Research 660s** ② ③ and the **Audio And Design F600** compressor/limiter ④, all of which is valve [i.e., tube] gear. We [Collins and engineer Sebastian Lewsley] put the attack time as slow as possible to get an extreme pumping, like the vocal on 'A Girl Like You.' For clarity I like to exaggerate the sound of the consonants. I want the listener to imagine the singer is two feet away. Sibilance exists in real life. Engineers often de-ess the life out of the vocal or get rid of it with EQ, but that kind of detail is very important."

The **Sequential Prophet 2000** ⑤ functions as a mother keyboard, while acoustic drums are looped via the modern technology of two samplers, the **Akai S2800** ⑥ and **Akai S3200XL** ⑦, run by an **Atari 1040 STE** computer ⑧. An **Oberheim DPX-1** sampler ⑨ is also on hand. The Koss

headphone level for the live room is maintained on a **DDA 12-track console** ⑩.

From there, Collins' "light and shade" takes control. Effects are added anywhere in



the recording chain, with Collins employing an **LA Audio 4X4**, a four-channel **Dynamic Sound** signal processor ⑪, a **Langevin** electro-optical limiter ⑫, **dbx 263X** ⑬ and **D&R** ⑭ de-essers (sibilance removers), a **Drawmer Dual Gate DS 201** ⑮, and, for the bass drum, a **dbx 120XP Subharmonic Synthesizer** ⑯.

Transistor continues to vie with tube in the middle of the effects rack, with a **Yamaha SPS90** (for "trashy" reflections) ⑰, an **Alesis XTC** digital reverb ⑱, a **Urei 1176 LN** peak limiter (for acoustic instruments) ⑲, a **Roland SDE-3000** digital delay ⑳, a **Bellari** dual tube compressor/limiter ㉑, a **Chiswick Reach Valve Distortion Unit** (valve=tube) ㉒, a **Chiswick Reach VK1** valve compressor/limiter ㉓, and a **Vortexion 4-15-M** mixer (as used by Joe Meek) ㉔.

More effects abound at the right end of

the rack: a **Martin Audio PEQ 500 EQ** ㉕, two **Pultec MEQ-5** midrange EQs ㉖ ㉗, a **Pultec HLF-3C** filter ㉘, an **API 5502 EQ** ㉙, an **Orban 674A** stereo EQ ㉚, a **Lexicon FX** multiple processor ㉛, and a **Dolby Spectral Processor** ㉜.

Other vintage pieces scattered about include a shiny black and gold Binson Echorec 2, a Moog Model 10 modular synth, a Caltrec Audio Limited mixer, an Electro-Harmonix Echo flanger, Moog Taurus bass pedals, a Roland Chorus Echo, a Colorsound Wah Fuzz Swell and Tone Blender, an Electro-Harmonix Memory Man, a Morley Rotating Power Wah pedal, a Hog's Foot Bass Booster, a Mu-Tron III Plus, an LEM Echo Effect, and numerous Gibson and Rickenbacker guitars.

To the right of the effects rack are two more Seventies-era products: an **Oberheim SEM** synth expander ㉝ and the **Oberheim Digital Sequencer** ㉞. Below the Prophet 2000 is an **Ovation Bass Station** ㉟, along with a **Kentston Electronica Pro2000** MIDI-to-CV converter ㊱, an **EMS Vocoder System** ㊲, an **E-mu Proteus 1** digital sound module ㊳, and a classic **Electro-Harmonix Vocoder** ㊴.

Some of Collins' most unusual gear lies within close reach, atop the trusty Neve console. A Sixties-vintage **Astronic Response Control EQ** ㊵ sits next to a Sixties dual-channel **Pye** compressor (for guitar and vocals) ㊶, bookended by a **Levell Transistor R.C. Oscillator/TG15 ODM** attenuator ㊷ and the Relaxacizor electro-shock machine for those late-night pep-ups. To Collins' left sits an **Audio And Design EQ** ㊸, originally made for the BBC. The Seventies-era **3WE EQ** ㊹ rounds out the effects artillery.

All signal enhancements run through the Neve console to a **Studer A800** tape machine (formerly owned by Gerry Rafferty of Stealer's Wheel) via **remote** ㊺, with final mixdown to a **Sony 60ES Super DAT** ㊻ or a **TASCAM DA-30MK** DAT machine ㊼. The entire affair, including a pair of monitors—**AR 18s** ㊽ and **Tannoy System 12s** ㊾—is juiced up by three tube power amps: The Great Little Valve Company's P50S Power Station, a Vortexion 30-50-M, and a Quad 405 with—what else?—four Neve power supplies adorned with the lettering, "By the Designer—Rupert Neve." ㊿

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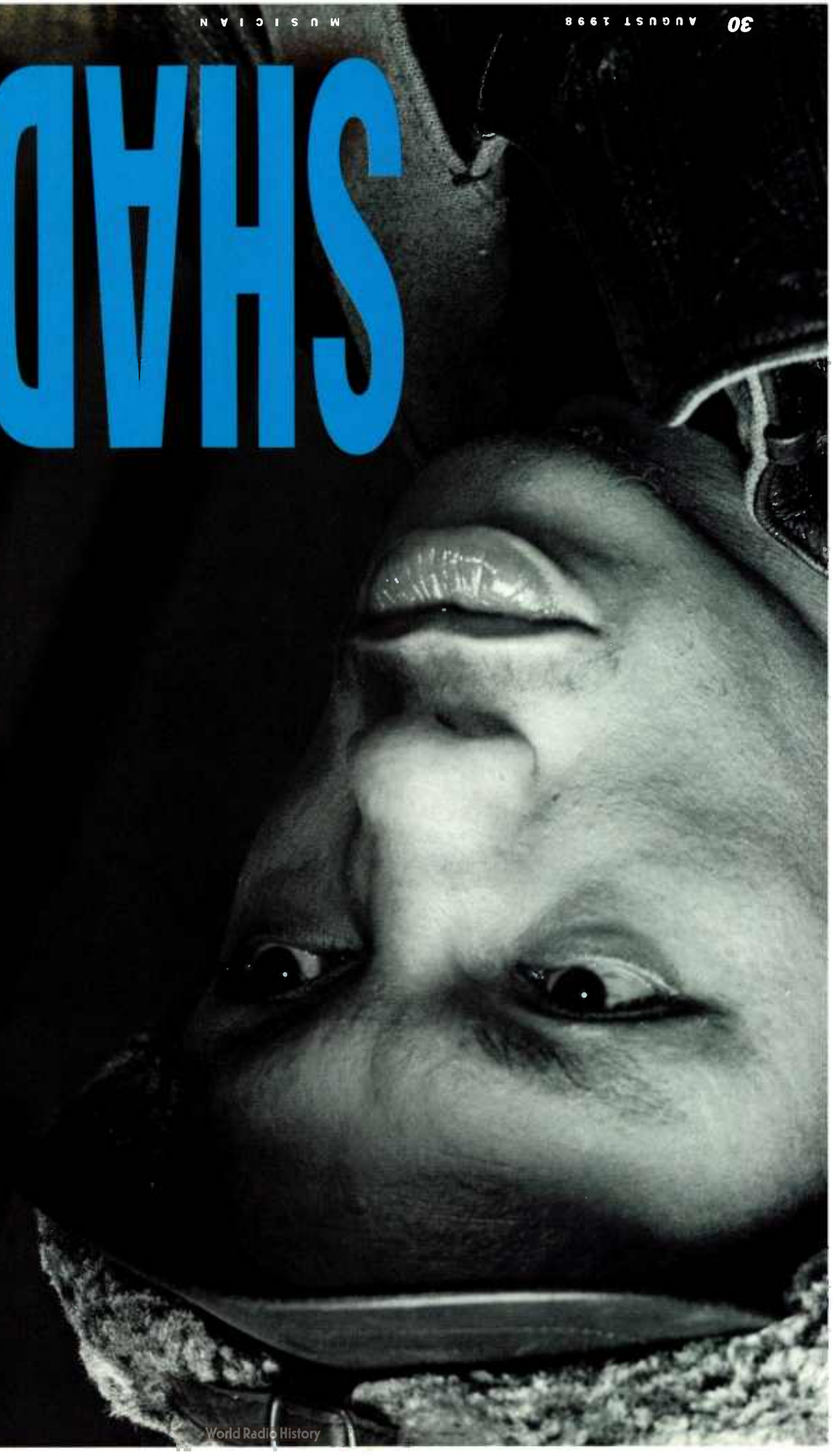
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SHADOW



S&LIGHT

Inside the method
of pop music's
most enigmatic
soundsmith.

by Michael Gelfand

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MELANIE WEINER



Who is Tricky?

To those who wish to decipher

his complex musical method,

this question is fundamental.

Yet no one has yet been able to

construct a complete picture from the clues that lie strewn about in his wake. His very name warns of the contradictions that await those who try to separate the truth from the hype.

Ever since *Maxinquaye* (Island), his 1994 debut, slithered into our collective consciousness with its sinewy “trip-hop” grooves, Tricky’s musical peers as well as astute listeners have scoured his cumulative body of music for evidence that might reveal what kind of mind it would take to create such a disturbing though engaging sound. Judging from the dark, violent energy that permeates his work and the intensely aggressive manner in which he cross-dresses in press photos and in public, you’d be hard pressed not to conclude that Tricky is a confusing—if not very confused—individual.

What makes the task of figuring him out so dicey is that he thrives on spontaneity, which makes him an inveterate risk-taker. His bluntly honest lyrical approach and musical dynamism reflect—and often exaggerate—the turmoil of his past (as a troubled youth growing up in Bristol, England, and as an under-utilized, short-lived member of the band Massive Attack), his present (as a major-label recording artist and owner of a small record label), and his future (which is geared toward securing his place in music history while providing emotional and financial comfort for his three-year-old daughter). The disjointed androgyny of his public persona—an obvious extension of his provocative

artistic vision and the fulfillment of his desire to be all things to all people (including himself)—further muddies the water by subverting the values most of our society still embraces.

As far as his music is concerned, Tricky has made a habit of forcefully layering and intertwining disparate styles to forge an enveloping sound that thrills us with examples of what can happen when rules are ignored. It’s the sound of someone who disavows all musical theory and goes only where innate creative instincts lead. It’s a sound that seems to come from everywhere at once: a complex hybrid of hip-hop beats, gothic moods, psychedelic samples, and epic hard rock riffing that’s made all the more unsettling by the sickly gurgle beneath Tricky’s own subterranean growl. (Many people refer to the sub-genre he created as “trip-hop,” but Tricky abhors that name and, not surprisingly, prefers to call it “Tricky music.”)

The release of *Angels with Dirty Faces* (Island), his third record, is sure to add another wrinkle to our skewed perception of his work. As with past efforts, the music is moody and chaotic, but Tricky’s sound has evolved, resulting in his most sonically challenging and focused effort to date. He continues to offer his hallmark of warbling, twisted vocal harmonies and desperately dissonant textures, but with tempos more frenetic than either *Maxinquaye* or 1996’s *Pre-Millennium Tension* (Island), *Angels* points to his growth as a composer.

Current tracks like “Money Greedy,”

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To read more of Michael Gelfand’s interview with Tricky, visit Musician Online at www.musicianmag.com.

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“Mary McCreary,” “You,” and “Talk to Me” are infinitely more insidious than, say, the sexy lull of *Pre-Millennium Tension*’s “Christiansands,” with an off-kilter harmonic complexity and an intangible menace that’s at once dangerous *and* sexy. This is due in part to the fact that *Angels* is Tricky’s most player-oriented album yet. He inspired his studio band with his ideas, conjured the appropriate vibe, gave them space to create, and conducted the overall performance to his complete satisfaction. “Everyone who was involved [in the making of *Angels*] trusted his vision,” recalls Martina Topley-Bird, whose soulful croon is often used as a textural juxtaposition to Tricky’s gravelly song-speak vocals. “He directed it all. He’s the center of everything, you know?”

In person, Tricky proved not nearly as “dark” as he seems from afar. He readily admits to being cocky and fiercely competitive, but the man behind the demonic public façade is actually friendly; clearly, he enjoys the life he leads. Also, during the hours we spent together in his loft apartment in New York City’s downtown Tribeca and subsequently in his favorite East Village restaurant, it became clear that Tricky always gets what Tricky wants. (In particular, this means that you should never order crispy fried red snapper in his presence unless you are prepared to go hungry—he ate mine right off my own plate. Tricky indeed.)

You’ve been quoted as saying that you want to be the best musician alive, but gauging from the credits on your records, it doesn’t appear that you play too many instruments. Looking around your apartment, I see a guitar over here and a keyboard over there, so I know that you’re at least vaguely familiar with these instruments, but apparently you’re not playing a lot of stuff. Isn’t that problematic?

I’ve done the studio thing on my own and done everything on three albums, and I’ve done strong live shows. So now I know I can do the studio thing, and I know I can direct a full band, and I have to keep knowing I can do all this stuff. This album is the most I’ve ever used other people; almost twenty percent of it is other people playing live. A lot of it is samples that I play live, which is kind of hard to explain, but I feel like I’m strong enough now to direct anybody.

So when you say “the best musician” you’re talking about being a conceptualist rather than a player?

Sometimes. It all depends. On this album, yeah . . . like the drums on “Mary McCreary,” [drummer Calvin Weston] didn’t

play *all* that. He played it, I took it and played it again. I didn’t loop it—just flew it in live. I played that guitar line live. If you’ve got a guitarist in there, it’s kind of stupid to try and direct them unless you’ve got a melody. I might say to someone, “Play this”—and I did that a lot on this album—but then, with the cello, I don’t know a fuck-all about the cello. I have to let [cellist Jane Scarpatoni] do her thing.

A song like “Money Greedy” started out with sampled sounds, but it all depends. I wanted “Money Greedy” to sound like a rock band. I wanted it to sound bigger than anything I’ve done. The only way that we’re going to get any more success than what we’ve got really is the sound; the music ain’t gonna compromise.

I played the drum pattern on that one, but the original sounds are from the QY20 [Yamaha workstation], and then I got the drummer to play on top of that. I never have someone live playing on drums and then play to that. Nah, nah. I give them something to work around, and that’s probably what keeps it strange as well. But it’s good. A lot of people say that my music doesn’t have standard four- or eight-bar patterns to play to, so it’s a challenge as well. That’s what keeps it fun, I think.

But when you say you want to be the best musician, what does that mean? What will you be the best at?

Where I’m going. I want to turn things around.

If you work to be the best, you imply that someone will be the worst. You turn the subjective value of someone’s creativity into

an objective fact, and a competitive, contentious fact at that.

Well, I’ve got to have something to live for. I don’t give a fuck about getting paid. *I do not give a fuck!* I have to get paid so that my kid has got money and I can be comfortable, but it ain’t just for money. Apart from that, you get bored.

So you view music in competitive terms?

I see music as war. I’m that sort of person. I don’t want you doing better than me, and if you do, there’s no way I’m going to listen to it. No way it gets played in my house. That goes for hype as well. Everyone’s talking about [Mercury electronica artist] Roni Size. I’ve never heard his stuff, but I’ll be fucked if you’re going to tell me what to listen to. If you’re going to dictate to what I listen to, you’ve got no chance. I’m not disrespecting him. People are loving his music, but I will not get dictated to. It’s war. Perhaps it’s because I’m competitive. People strive to be the best.

You’re rumored to have a limited attention span . . .
Very limited.

- TRICKY’S TOOLS -

Tricky relies on a modest amount of equipment to bring his sonic creations to life. Both at home and on the road, his musical universe revolves around his trusty **Yamaha QY20** workstation, but he’s been known to capture sounds off of vinyl and CD with a **TASCAM DA-30 MKII** DAT player, a **TASCAM CD-401 MKII** CD player (with a remote), and a **TASCAM 122 MKII** cassette recorder. A **Korg X5** keyboard provides Tricky with an outlet for experimenting, while an **Akai MPC2000** holds down the sequencing duties and supplies most of his drum sounds—although he’ll occasionally employ an **E-mu Planet Phat** for kick drum parts. A **Lexicon MPX1** handles all the digital effects. Tricky sings into a **Shure Beta 58A**; a **Spirit by Soundcraft Rack Pack** is used to mix all the madness down to an **Alesis ADAT** so that Tricky can use his original vocals in case they capture the right vibe. Mixes are monitored via a pair of **Event 20/20 bas** powered speakers or **Sennheiser HD265** headphones (with the help of a **Furman HA-6A** headphone amp). A **Furman AR-1215** voltage regulator and **PL-8** power conditioner/light module keep all the equipment fired up and ready to go.

Does that make it hard for you to write music?

A lot of these hip-hop kids do their drum beats at home, get their sounds up on a general basis, and then take it into the studio and work from that. Every time I go into the studio, I go in there with no ideas. Just my sounds and my keyboard.

“I see music as war. I don’t want you doing better than me.”

Then I make a tune. I do it one time. Sometimes I don’t get it right, and these kids will laugh at me. Just the other day I was mad tired and I was fucking around with this tune, and they were all laughing because they all get their shit together before they come into the studio. I don’t give a *fuck* about getting my shit together before; I make music. I fucking act off of

instinct. If my instinct’s working good this day, great. If it’s not, this tune ain’t working. That’s natural instinct.

I know kids who can create something they want. I can’t create something I want—I can only create. My music has a mind of its own. I play around with sounds, I record it, and I’ll play around with more sounds. I can’t have an image in my mind where I say, “I’m going to do that.” It don’t work. I have tried it, but it goes off in its own way.

Some kids can go in and say, “I need a four-bar loop, and it’s gonna go *boomp-da bah-boomp didit-dah*,” but I can’t do it. The music’s got a mind of its own. You don’t have to try too hard. You go in and play around and keyboards, and the fact you can’t play makes it even more interesting ‘cause you’re thinking, “Ah, what’s this, man?” And you record it. Say there’s a drum set. I’ll go *guh-guh guh-guh* and record that into a computer. Then I’ll do a keyboard part over top of it, or a string sound. Then I’ll sit back and listen

and hope that I like it and that it moves me. It’s just instinct. Music grows; it’s got a life all its own. If you listen to something long enough, it’ll tell you a part. It’ll say, “I need a string part here. I need this melody.” It speaks to you.

If it’s not speaking to you, how and when do you push it?

I’ll know. If I’m in the studio and it’s on my time, I’m gonna whack that song off and do another one, but if I’m making an EP with some kids who are waiting to do their thing, I’m just like, “Fuck it, go on.” I don’t mind looking stupid in front of people. I know some people don’t understand what I’m doing, but that don’t matter.

I don’t need to look for the inspiration. It’s there. I *love* playing around with a guitar, and especially instruments I have no knowledge of. I love it. Making sounds out of things, it’s just fucking great. I don’t need [to force] inspiration. I’m like a kid sitting there with a crayon and a pen: I’ll sit there at the keyboard for ages, just to hear the sounds coming out of the speaker.

That’s pretty cocky of you. Some

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people would probably even say that it's ignorant and that you're diminishing the value of practicing and studying your instrument, as if you're saying, "I don't need to prepare. I'll just do it."

I suppose it is kind of cocky. I'm lazy, cocky, and risky, but when you get into risky situations you perform better. Like putting yourself in a situation to do an album in a week.

It involves making a leap of faith.

Like doing some of our live gigs. We'll make up shit while we're going along. It's risky, but the scary potential of it makes you perform.

You manage to get that across both on record and onstage. Do you have a preference for recording or performing?

They're very different, but I need both of them. If I ain't in the studio for a

week, I would get didgy. And if I ain't toured for so many months, I get didgy. The live show is mad. It's very, very intense now. It's energy. Very punk rock. Very angry. A lot of emotion. I shake my head like it's some voodoo ceremony.

Performing, to me, is just feeling it. I don't dress up to go onstage. I wear *anything* onstage. *I do not give a fuck.* It's got *nothing* to do with anything. I'd perform with a broken leg and a big cast. Don't mean nothing to me. What my bands wears, *I do not give a fuck.* I know you'll get the voodoo when you come to see it. It takes you away, and you get your anger out. I love it. It's dope.

You've been known to keep your back toward the audience throughout your entire show. Why?

'Cause I'm shy. People don't believe that. They think I'm militant or on some "Mr. I-Do-Things-Differently" kick. But I've never ever gone to live concerts; I've always gone to DJ booths. I don't enjoy live concerts. To me, to go see some band run around onstage... unless you're a fan. I'm a musician, and it's hard to be a fan. And I don't want to perform and shake my ass for people. I'm *no one's* dancing monkey. Don't come to *my* show and think I'm going to shake my ass for you.

How would you describe your vocal style?

Wannabe. I wanna be a rapper, I wanna be a singer, I wanna be a punk rocker—and I'm none of these. I'm a frustrated wannabe. But lucky enough, I've got art, so I try, and I think what you hear in my vocals is effort. So it's not good vocals, but it's effort. Like with Martina, I always say, "Don't you sing your ass off. Don't do that shit—vocal acrobatics. I'm not into that [sings in falsetto] *nab nab na-na-nab. Bullshit!* What does that mean? If you've got words and melodies, you should be able to be soft-spoken because you can get it across.

What about the quality of your voice?

Rough. Rough. Funny enough, but girls find it sexy. Weird as fuck. I think what it is is effort, making up for what I haven't got. I can't sing, so you hear me trying, and I think people connect with the effort.

You do have a pretty distinctive timbre. I always thought you ran your voice through a vocoder or purposely distorted it.

It's worse some days. Smoking don't do



Sean Lennon into the sun

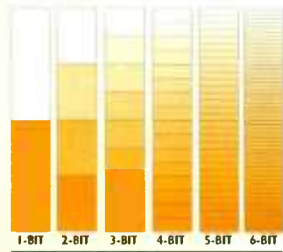
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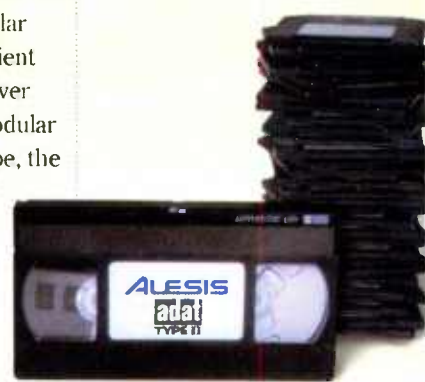
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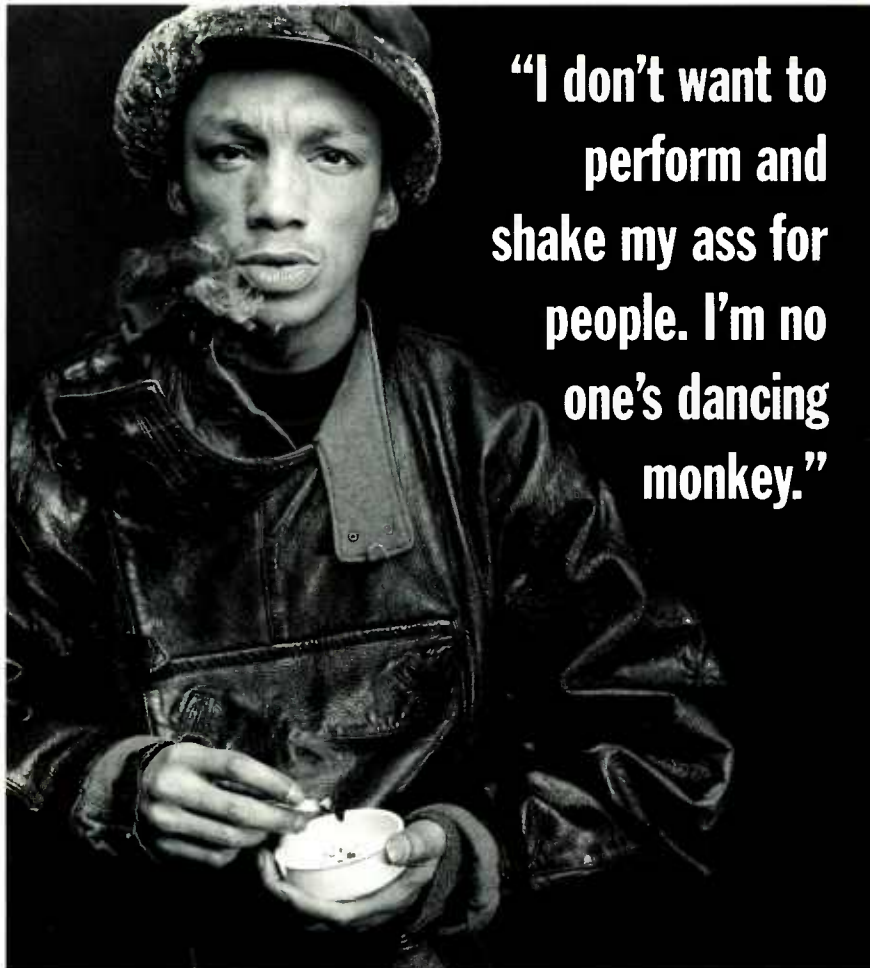
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anything to it, but drinking . . . *awghhh*. That's what's good about this album, because I knew I couldn't come back with the same vocal style again—you know, with the mellow stuff. So it was a challenge. That's why me and Martina work well together. She's somewhere else I'm not, and I'm somewhere else she's not. But we haven't been able to give people a lot of that. People said the best tracks on *Maxinquaye* were when we sang together—but I don't want to give people what they want. So straight away we stopped doing that.

What's mad is that I hear a lot of people doing that shit now. I can remember when [Daddy] G [from Massive Attack] first heard [*Maxinquaye*'s] "Aftermath." G's a good guy, but he's typically arrogant—not as in rude, but he's funny. He said, "Jack, I'm not into the tune, but we should take that vocal style and make it ours." And I'm like, "Fuck you. What do you mean *ours*? If you don't like the tune, you don't want to put it on the album, how can it be *ours*?" So that makes me feel like we started something. And everybody's fucking doing it now. And we can't! I can't make

another album like *Maxinquaye*. I'd love to, but everybody's doing it. I was in London a year after the album came out, and I was walking through a supermarket, and I heard all these adverts that sounded like *Maxinquaye*, and I was like, "Fuck this." In a way, people have chased me from my own music.

Does your image—whether it's right or wrong—as a kind of dark presence in pop music influence the way you actually make music?

It became important on this album. For the first time, I'm thinking "image" because I don't want people to try and say I'm "dark" again. This time I've got bright clothes: I'm the futuristic player, the transvestite player, with all the gold. I've got lipstick on—raw, colorful shit—because I know what they're going to say. They're going to say, "Tricky's come out and he's dark," but the album isn't dark and moody. It's less dark than all of them. [In the past] I wore a wedding dress with guns, so they think that's dark, but it's not. It's like yin and yang. I love the idea of wearing a dress and having guns, or some real B-

boy clothes—hard clothes—with makeup. I love wearing Fred Perry tops—what skinheads used to wear—with a sarong and lipstick. I always loved it. It's like me and Martina's vocals. Getting her to sing the real heavy shit and me being the mellow, weak one. I've always loved reversing things and using the yin and yang of it.

People often perceive a certain street-wise gangster mentality in your songs. How much of that is intentionally planted in the music.

It's all street-wise. When I was fifteen, I used to write shit about shooting people and taking down girls' pants. But then I really got into Prince, and I think all the lyrics got mixed up. I listen to Prince and I want to write something that's beautiful and not hard-core. Some kids just listen to hip-hop or jungle or rock, but I started hearing loads of different stuff, so my lyrics changed. People like Terry Hall talked about their suffering. Bob Marley. Billie Holiday. They changed my world. They'd say, "If I was your girlfriend," and I'd think, "God, if you could say that to somebody. . . ." Can you imagine that? What a thing to say. I wanted to write shit like that, so I think it just changed. It's still street-wise, but it's a different twist.

Do you think of your music as moody?

I make music for my soul, so it's bound to be moody. I'm an emotional player, and I play with emotions—my emotions. People are bound to feel that, so it's bound to be moody. I'd hate to make music you ain't gonna feel. There ain't no point to that. So I'm talking about fucked-up things I've seen on the streets. And it's not only about my life; it's about being around it, the energy, feeling the energy of my friends, how they suffer. So people call it dark. Well, that's just blues. I just make blues.

Would you consider your music hi-tech?

It's quite old-fashioned in some ways, as in it's got real old-fashioned sensibilities. People do think I've got equipment up my ass, but no, I'm a very non-technical person.

So it's more organic than gear-driven?

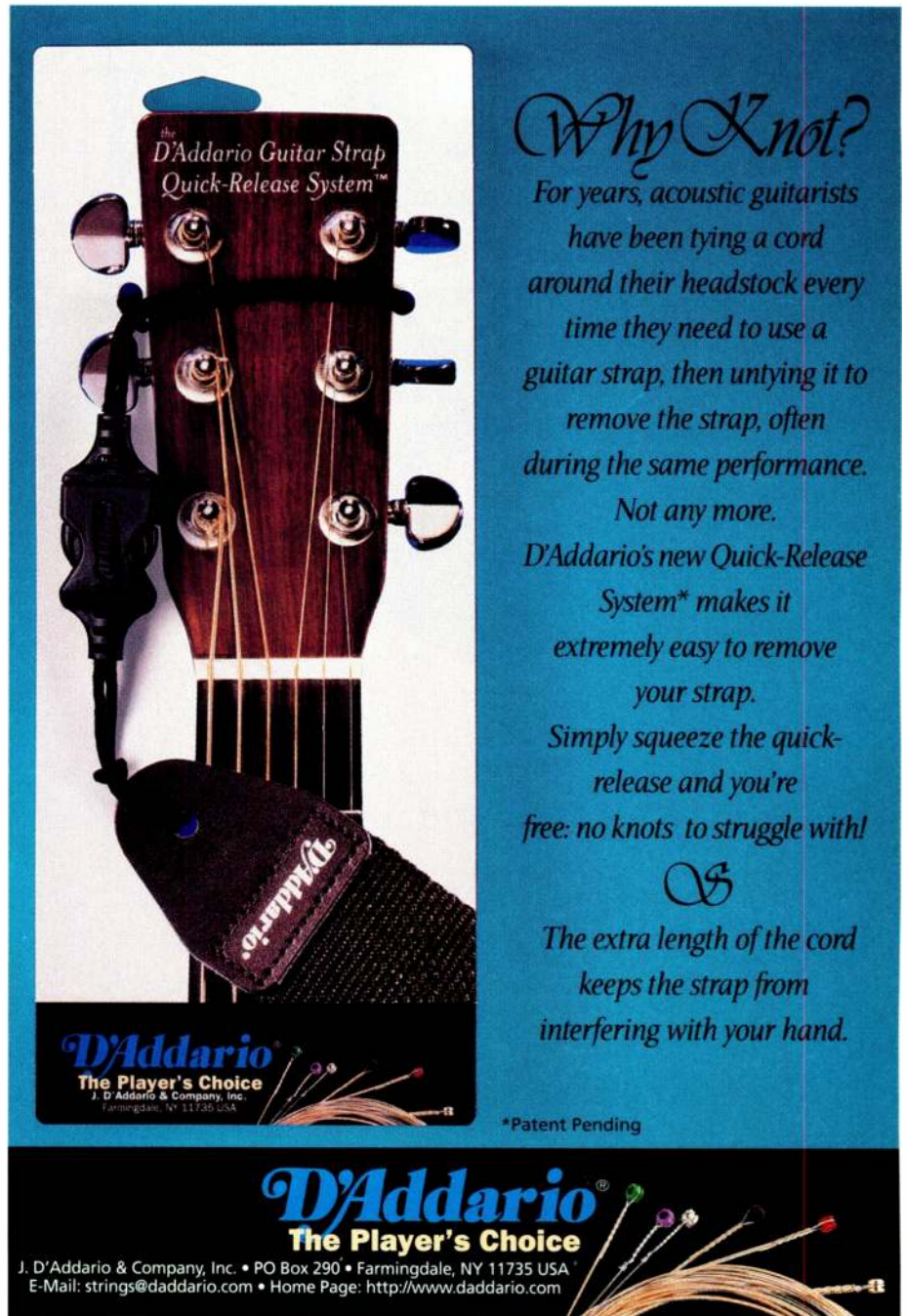
Very. I'm very non-technical I use things to the bare minimum. Like the QY20. You've got two writing modes, and I use the simple four-track mode. You can do hundreds of things on it, but all I can do is make a tune. You could

quantize it, but I don't give a fuck. I don't even do that. I just lay down a drum pattern and three other sounds, and then I take it into the studio, dump it down, and work on it afterwards.

Have you tried working on other workstations than the QY20?

Yeah, but you can't keep up with it, man. You could go on forever. I know people who spend and spend and spend.

Every month something new comes out, but it all achieves the same thing. I don't think equipment makes your music, really. That's not enough to make your music. You've got to have some soul, man. You hear people who use machines, and their music is technically advanced, but there ain't no soul in it. Shit, music without soul? It's no good trying to be technical. If music ain't got soul, it's not music. ☺



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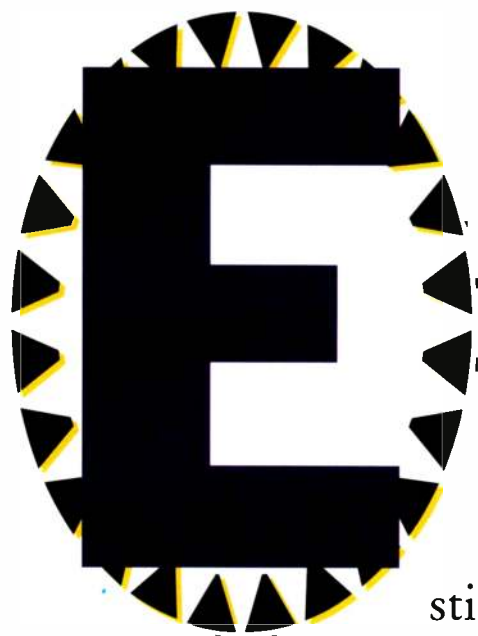
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ON THE **Spot**

**How to Find Work
Writing Music for
TV Commercials**



ven though there aren't many actual jingles on the air anymore, there's still plenty of music

for commercials being produced for TV and radio. And despite Madison Avenue's penchant for utilizing old pop songs, most commercials contain music that was composed on assignment in somebody's home or project studio.

Advances in music technology have really opened up the commercial



music business, with opportunities for anyone with a studio, a high level of composing, arranging, and engineering skills, and a good deal of marketing savvy.

It used to be that the commercial music business was dominated by a relatively small number of music production companies (known as music houses), which mainly produced jingles that featured a big group vocal sound. Around the mid-Eighties, a downturn in the ad business and a rash of agency mergers created a belt-tightening climate that didn't mix well with the high overhead associated with producing jingles. At the same time, the emergence of MIDI and digital sampling made it possible for individual composers to produce high-caliber instrumental tracks in their own studios.

As a result of all this, as well as a general change in pop music tastes, the jingle became passé, and commercials began to feature underscoring, which is instrumental music written to fit the picture. Today, thanks to the fact that broadcast-quality music can now be produced by one person in a home studio, underscoring is where the biggest opportunity lies for the individual composer.

There are essentially three methods by which you can seek commercial composing work: freelance to music houses, a staff gig at a music house, or direct to ad agencies. Let's take a look at each approach.

Going the Freelance Route

In industry parlance, a freelancer is a composer who is subcontracted by an existing music house to compose either a jingle or an underscore. When an ad agency decides it wants a piece of music for a commercial it's developing, it engages one or more music companies to prepare and submit demos of the music. The music houses, in turn, will often hire a number of freelancers to write versions for them to supplement those written by their staff composers. The beauty of being freelance is that your overhead is much lower and you rarely have to deal directly with the agency folks or their clients. Other than shopping your services around to the various houses (see "Shopping Your Reel" at the end of this article), your only job is to write the music.

If you're a freelancer and your version is chosen, you will

generally receive thirty to forty percent of the "creative fee," which is a large lump-sum payment that goes to the music house for writing and producing the tracks. In most cases, your cut will be somewhere between \$2,000 and \$3,500 for a national spot. You will also usually be given a number of "lines" (a.k.a. "slots") on the musician's union contract, which compensates

you for being a player and/or arranger on the commercial.

If it's a jingle and you sang on it (it's customary to allow the composer to sing in the background vocal group), you'll get on the SAG (Screen Actors Guild) or AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) contract, which is much more lucrative than the one for the musician's union. Being on a performance contract means that you not only get a session payment for each line that you're down for, but you can also earn residuals if the spot runs for a long time.

In the major market, a freelancer can also make anywhere from \$125 to \$300 for writing and producing the demo, regardless of whether it wins. Bear in mind that you must negotiate this fee with each music house prior to accepting a job. Although the

demo fee is somewhat of a pittance considering the hours you have to put in, it's nice to get something in your pocket after you bust your butt for two or three days under intense deadline pressure. It can be discouraging because your version is almost always up against three or four others from the music house you're working for, and if there are other houses bidding for the contract as well, your music could end up competing against fourteen or fifteen other demos. For this reason, your goal as a freelancer is to get hired to do as many demos as possible to increase the odds of your music going "final."

Working on Staff

Getting hired to a staff writing position by a music house can be an ideal situation for a composer. Not only will you get plenty of opportunities to hone your craft, you'll also make steady money. It can also be a great way to build up material for the future when you do strike out on your own.

Robbie Kondor of Robbie Kondor Music, a successful New York music house, spent a number of years as a staff composer for another music company and found it to be very beneficial. "It was a wonderful, wonderful experience," he recalls. "Not



Broadcast-quality music can now be produced by one person in a home studio....



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World Radio History

only is it nurturing, but there's a staff there too. When you're freelance, you're on your own for the invoicing, the FedExing, the juggling of schedules—you've got a lot to handle. When you're in-house, people are looking after you."

As you might expect, these kinds of positions aren't easy to come by. Some people get them through knowing people on the inside; some get their start through college internship programs. Without any kind of connection, the only way you'll get on staff is by knocking their socks off with your talent. "If you're great," says Kondor, "you'll get the gig. That's all it takes."

Be Your Own Music House

Because of advances in music technology, it's now possible to produce most of your tracks out of your own studio and still have the option to go to a bigger commercial facility if the need arises. You can also be your own rep (*i.e.*, agent) and pursue work, although if you start to get busy you'll almost certainly need to hire help. You could become quite profitable if you develop steady clients, because your overhead will be relatively low and you'll pocket all of the creative fee as well as getting on any performance contracts.

Unfortunately, this is probably the most difficult road for someone new to the business, because major ad agencies are unlikely to give composers without track records the time of day, much less a major assignment. Only if you have good contacts in the agency business or if you want to pursue lower-paying local spots should you go this route as a newcomer. Keep in mind that it might be your only option if there are few if any music houses to freelance for in your area.

If you do decide to start your own music company, you'll need to present a polished image that shows the agencies that you're a serious player. This means you'll need a company name, a good-sounding demo reel, and professional-looking stationery and labels. It wouldn't hurt to have a website too.

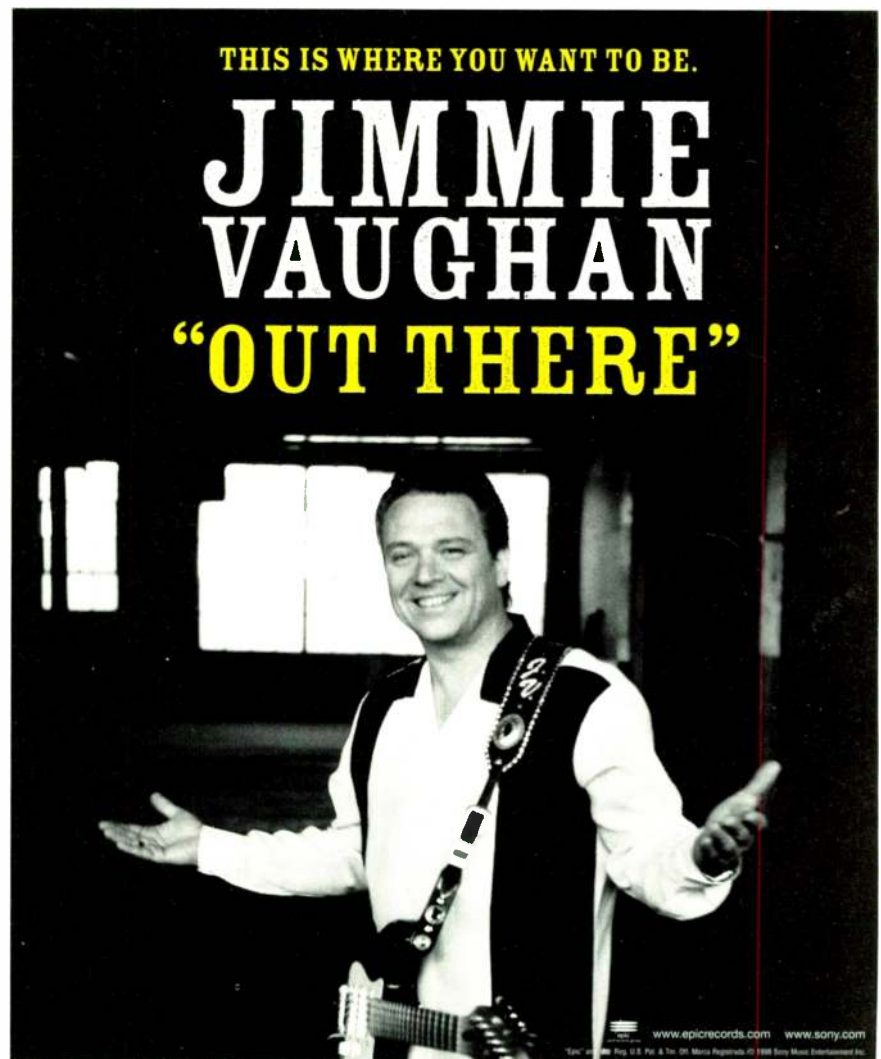
When you do get a job, you'll

probably have to do at least the final session at a commercial studio because unless you have an incredibly nice setup, you can't bring advertising people to your home studio without looking very bush. What's more, you'll have to learn how to deal diplomatically with agency types, which is not always easy. You'll often find that their priorities are at odds with yours, so you'd best develop the fine art

of giving them what they want while maintaining the quality of your music.

Putting Together a Reel

No matter what approach you take, you'll need to put together a reel, which is industry jargon for a demo tape. They



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Locations

come in many forms, but the easiest type to assemble is an audio reel, which should consist of five or six minutes of your best, most kick-ass compositions. If you're trying to get work directly from agencies, you should probably include material from previous spots you've done or pieces that at least sound like they're from commercials, because it's imperative to come off as being experienced at writing ad music.

But if you want to freelance or get a job at a music house, just put your best stuff on the reel, even if it's not from commercials. It may weigh against you that you're not experienced, but if your material demonstrates obvious composing and arranging talent, it's worth including. Doug Hall, creative director of MessHall Music, a busy New York area music house, says, "You have to have really great music on your reel, and it's better if you can use actual spots. But if you can't, it's preferable to present some really cool work rather than to include mediocre commercials you've done."

Whatever you end up using, remember that both agency and music house people tend to get flooded with tapes, so make sure to put your strongest material at the front or it may never get heard. You want to hit them hard and fast, so keep everything short and snappy, with little or no space in between, even if that means editing pieces down from their original length. Try to limit each piece to thirty seconds or less, if possible.

You can send out audio reels on cassette, but it's much better to put them on CD. Not only do CDs look a lot more impressive, but you're assured of at least a reasonable playback

quality. With a cassette, you never know what it will be played back on. "What you don't want is them playing it on their phone machine," says Robbie Kondor. "With a CD, at least the gear is gonna be up to some kind of spec."

For getting underscoring work, it's optimal to have a video reel that can show your ability to score to picture. It should consist of your best scoring examples, edited back to back with the strongest material first. (You'll need to hire the services of a video editing firm to put it together.) If you have no video examples of your work, consider taping some existing spots off the air and scoring them yourself. (We'll have more on how to score in part two next month.) If you do a bang-up job, you can use these spots as a basis for a video reel. This may not sound like a good way to establish a credible demo, but there are successful composers out there who used this very method to put together their first reels.

As a freelancer you can get by with a video reel on VHS, but if you're going direct to agencies you'll need to make some copies on 3/4" (U-Matic) format, which is the industry standard in advertising and much more expensive than VHS to duplicate. Whether your reel is video or audio, you'll need to have labels printed to make them look as professional as possible. You can have a professional printer do it or you can use your laser printer, but make sure they're nicely designed and have your name (or company name) and contact information displayed prominently. Your name should also be on the spine, so that it will be visible in a pile of other tapes or on a shelf.



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Shopping Your Reel

Once you have a reel together, it's time to go out and get some work. Unless you've got some contacts (which is always the best way), you'll have to pound the pavement. Whether you're freelancing or setting up your own music house, a good place to start is a book called the *Shoot Directory for Commercial Production and Post Production*, which is published by BPI Communications. With state-by-state listings of ad agencies and music houses, this book can be quite valuable.

The basic drill is the same, no matter who you're contacting. Start by calling, and try to get the name of the person or persons who hire music. In the case of an agency, this would be people on the creative side, such as producers, creative directors, or even copy writers. If you're calling a music house, ask for the person who hires freelance composers.

If you can't get through to the person you're trying to reach and only get their voice mail, you might be better off not leaving a message (which will probably go unanswered) and instead trying again later, when you might catch them in. Once you do reach your contact, explain succinctly who you are and what you have to offer, and see if you can set up an appointment to come in and play your reel. In most cases they'll decline to meet and ask you to send a copy instead. Nevertheless, it can't hurt to ask.

Although face-to-face meetings tend to be more fruitful, the reality is that you'll be mailing in your reel most of the time. When you do, make sure to include a cover letter that outlines any previous experience, composing strengths, and anything else that will distinguish you from the crowd. About two weeks after you've sent it, follow up with a phone call and ask nicely if they've had a chance to listen. If they didn't, politely ask when would be a good time to get back to them, and make sure that you follow it up. You may have to repeat this process a number of times until they listen. Be careful, however, not to call so often that you become an irritation.

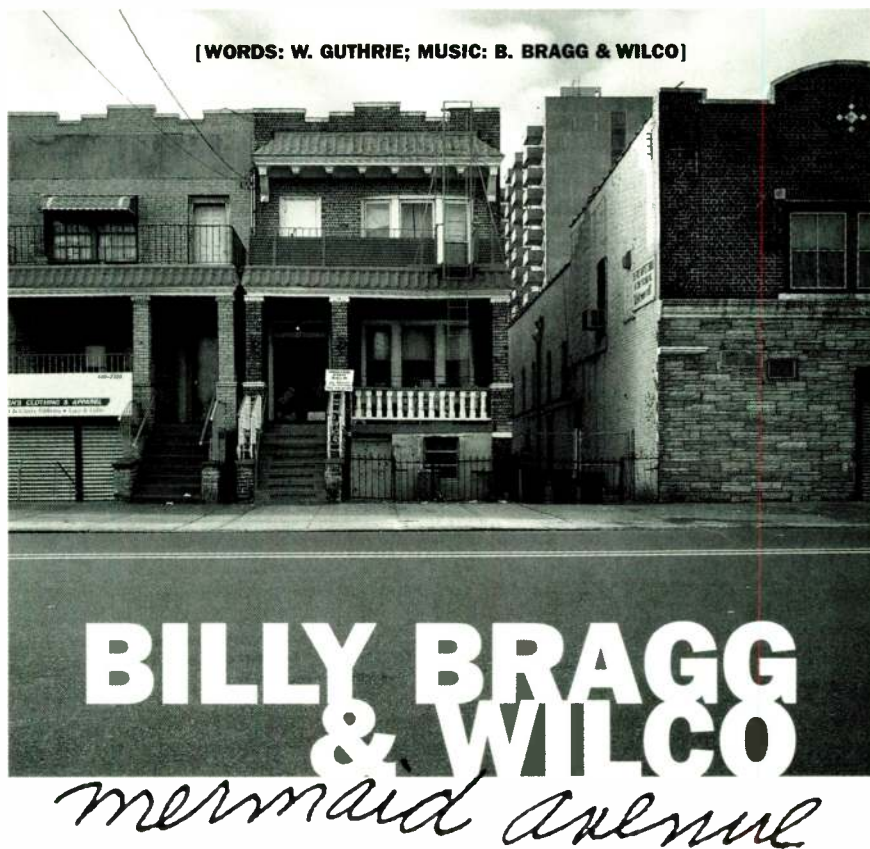
Final Thoughts

This isn't an easy business to break into. You'll probably face a lot of rejection at the beginning. But if you have talent and perseverance, you'll likely come across some people who are willing to give you a shot at something. In next month's issue of

Musician, we'll help get you moving with advice on how to handle a scoring job, how to interact with the people who hire you, and other essential information about the commercial music game.

Contributors: Mike Levine has composed and played on numerous national commercials. Visit his website at www.mikelevine.com.

[WORDS: W. GUTHRIE; MUSIC: B. BRAGG & WILCO]



BILLY BRAGG & WILCO

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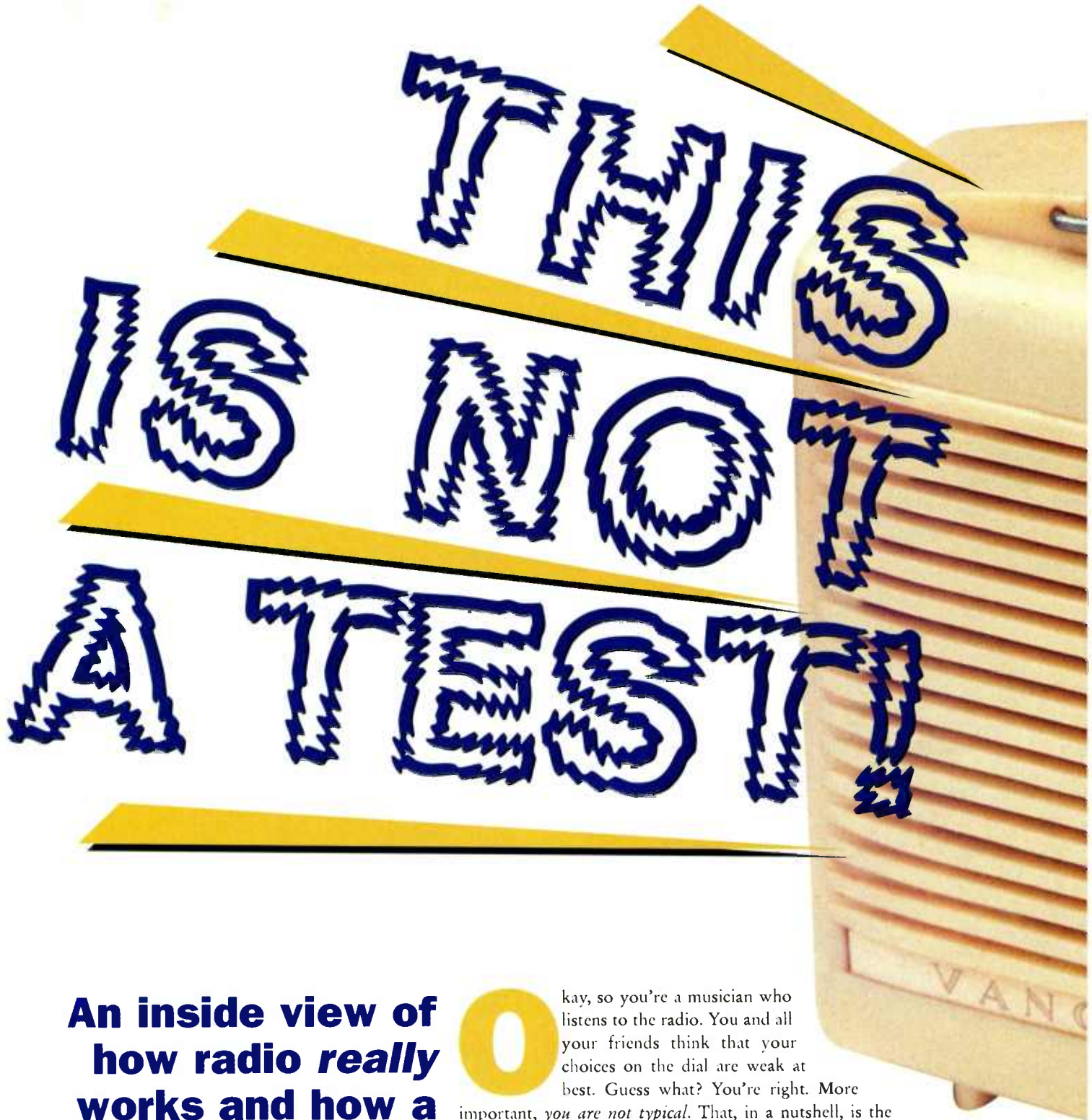
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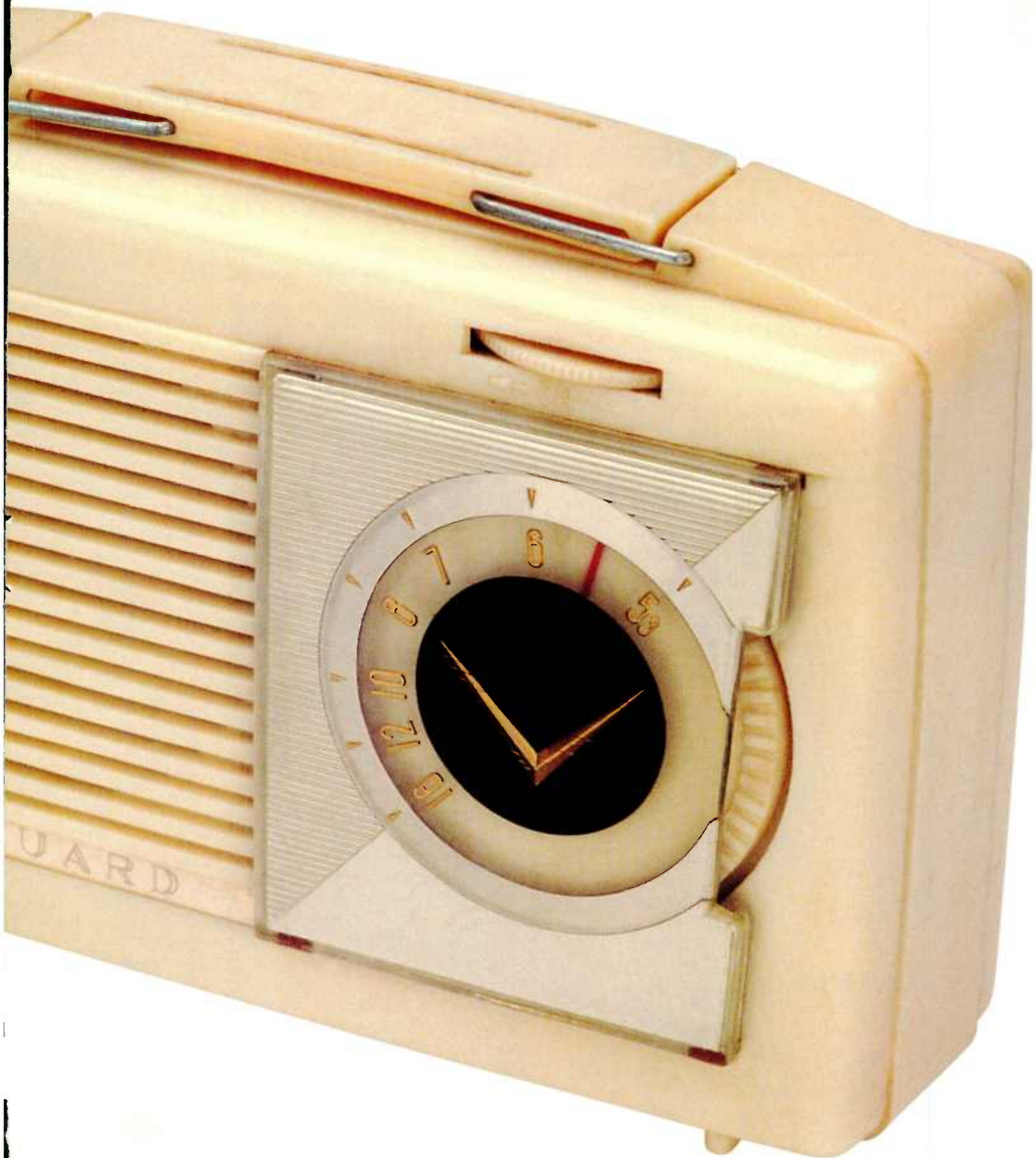
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**An inside view of
how radio *really*
works and how a
band can make
its way through
the programming
minefield.
by John Doe**

Okay, so you're a musician who listens to the radio. You and all your friends think that your choices on the dial are weak at best. Guess what? You're right. More important, *you are not typical*. That, in a nutshell, is the problem with radio.

Performers know how hard it is to really engage an audience's attention, to get them to focus on your music and forget about their conversations, their drinks, their annoyances, and so on. And those are the *paying* customers! Consider how much more tuned-out the herds of passive radio listeners are by comparison. As a program director with more than twenty years of experience in this business, I know that most people don't care about music. They use the radio as a musical source about as passionately as they use a toaster for their muffins. It's an appliance, and when they turn it on they expect it to perform its task in a



A PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S JOB IS NOT TO PLAY GREAT RADIO

—it's to get a small number of people to write in their Arbitron diaries that they listen to his or her station.

predictable fashion. They also expect radio stations to be predictable in their style and presentation.

This is depressing, sure, but knowing how small a portion of the listening audience actually cares about music is essential if you want to understand the business aspects of music. And radio is most definitely a business. *Big* business. Since the most recent round of radio deregulation, a station with a mediocre FM signal in Los Angeles can now sell for more than one hundred million dollars! Even in the small markets, radio stations cost money. With this much money, the owners' interest is monetary, not musical. They want to maximize profits, add value to their properties, and get the best returns for their investors. It's called capitalism. Get used to it.

Commercial radio stations make their money by selling advertising. The advertising rates are determined largely by the station's ratings. The largest provider of ratings in America is a company called Arbitron. (Note the ironic similarity to the word "arbitrary.") Arbitron conducts its surveys by sending a diary to a relatively small random sample of radio listeners, with instructions to fill these diaries with detailed lists of all their radio listening for a week. Although nobody pretends that the results are anything more than an estimate of radio listening patterns, the advertising community does rely on the Arbitron data in buying time from radio stations. *This* is the process that interests radio station owners.

From an owner's perspective, then, a program director's job is not to play great music or create great radio—it's to get a small number of people to write down in their Arbitron diaries that they listen to your station. And don't forget, most of those people *don't care about music*.

Mutating Media

So maybe you're an old fart like me, and you're grumbling to yourself, "It wasn't always like this. In the Sixties, progressive stations like KSAN in San Francisco, WBCN in Boston, WNEW in New York, KMET in Los Angeles, and many others pursued broadcasting excellence by playing a wide variety of adventurous music." Or maybe you delighted to the sounds of alternative radio back in the early Eighties, when it

actually *was* a musical alternative to mainstream rock, not just a brand name for a mass media style. Well, wake up. Things *have* changed—important things like radio usage, and the laws and regulations that govern radio ownership.

In the late Sixties heyday of progressive FM radio, AM was still the dominant broadcast medium. Although from a listening standpoint FM is technically superior, with a wider frequency range and a better signal-to-noise ratio, AM had been on the market longer than FM, which was considered the rather exotic province of classical, jazz, and foreign language programming. Far more people owned AM radios than FM radios. This created incentive for the owners of FM stations to be more open-minded and tolerant of risk in programming. They needed to create a demand for their products. "Free-form" rock radio helped FM station owners accomplish this goal.

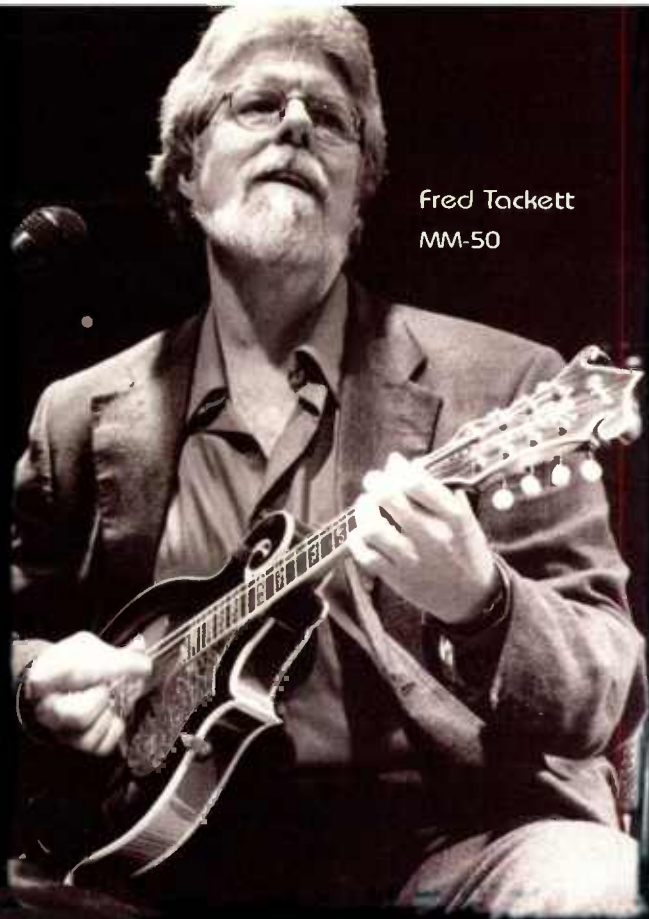
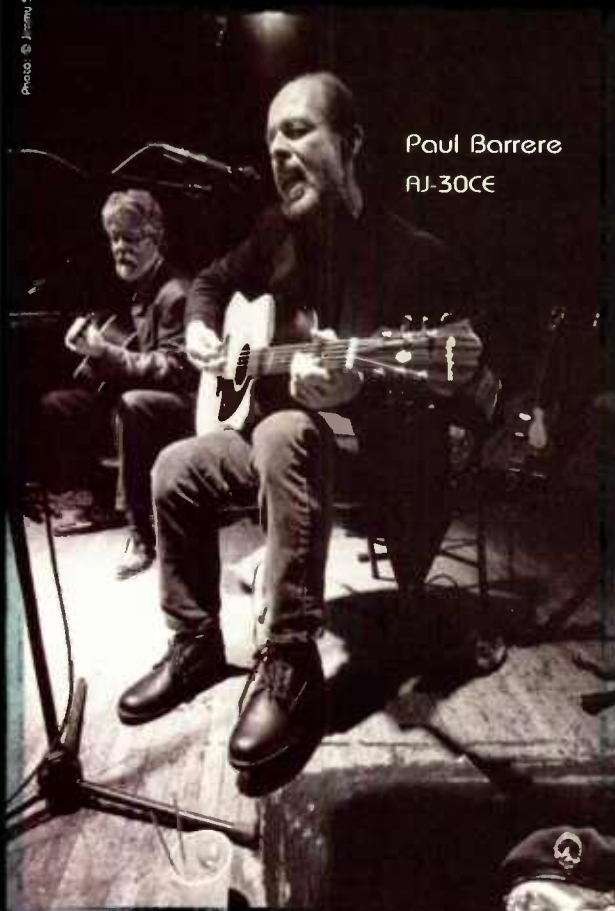
FM listenership surpassed AM listenership in the late Seventies. Unfortunately, progressive radio was on its last legs by then. As FM's popularity rose, so did the price of FM stations and the value of their inventory. Research-oriented programmers who were not emotionally connected with music figured out that if lots of people would listen to a station that played Jimi Hendrix, Ravi Shankar, Led Zeppelin, and Joan Baez, even more would listen to a station that played just Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin.

The sad thing is that these programmers were correct. Their stations kicked ass in the ratings when competing with the looser, less predictable progressive stations. Soon the programmers who had devised this new "Album-Oriented Rock" (AOR) format were sought out by radio station owners and managers for their expertise. Some of these programmers became consultants with lots of client stations that in many cases sounded essentially identical. This style flourished because ratings were strong.

Many musicians soon revolted against the homogenization of the music that was available to them as consumers and their own shrinking access to the airwaves. Punk, new wave, and the DIY (Do It Yourself) movements manifested their anger. Although some of the AOR stations flirted with these styles, it took a new musical medium—MTV—and a huge change in radio regulation to provide these emerging alternative genres

Paul Barrere
AJ-30CE

Fred Tackett
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Much has been written about the MTV revolution and the problems it engendered. Certainly MTV gave a leg up to the new styles, but it is usually overlooked that the Reagan administration's policy of radio deregulation helped to again change the face of the FM dial. In the early Eighties, the so-called "80/90 docket" allowed a whole new group of low-powered FM stations to sign onto the air. The idea was supposedly to make it easier for smaller towns to have their needs served by broadcasters. Instead, most of these new stations were licensed to small towns close to major metropolitan centers, with their signals designed to reach the largest number of potential listeners. After all, that's where the money was.

The economic facts for these new stations were tough. The pool of stations had expanded, but that didn't mean that there were more advertising dollars available. Also, these new stations had limited signals. Their best hope to compete was to create demand through innovative programming. Thus was born niche programming, or narrowcasting. To generate loyalty among a large enough audience to bring in the necessary income, these (and other) stations began "superserving" narrow musical tastes. In addition to the "alternative" format, other successful new formats included "classic rock," the "quiet storm," "new age contemporary," and so on.

Pushing Buttons & Beating Up Choice

These more specific choices in turn altered the way radio is used. Listeners learned to become less tolerant of variety. Today, the average listener within reach of the tuner won't put up with anything less than exactly what they want right now—and who can blame them? They have a lot of choices, so they lack the loyalty to listen through a commercial or a song they don't like. They'd rather create their own variety through their choice of stations.

This makes it tough for a station to even contemplate offering much variety. As a programmer, I'm hesitant to get involved with any format that can't be summed up in one word, like "country" or "oldies." If my station can't consistently fulfill a listener's expectation and become the favored choice for

one of the styles in their range of acceptability, my station's chances are poor. As a music lover, this is as sad to me as it is to you, but I need to eat, and I'd still rather work with music than get a real job.

As a programmer I've tried repeatedly to make some sort of progressive radio work in the face of changing market conditions. I was lucky enough to start my career at a successful "free-form" progressive station, where I could play anything from Black Sabbath to Tibetan bells. Our ratings were great, but time moved on and things changed. Eventually, the station embraced a typical AOR approach.

After leaving that station, I bounced from gig to gig, always looking for a company that was willing to take a chance on adventurous radio. I've done everything from Top 40 to Oldies to Alternative to Classic Rock. All of these formats take a few well-researched songs (from as few as ten to about six hundred) and repeat them endlessly in order to minimize risk and make the mass audience familiar with the music. Recently, I tried to reach a mass audience with the Adult Album Alternative format, but even this relatively safe descendent of true progressive radio doesn't generate acceptable ratings in most markets. The format just isn't what most radio consumers (or Arbitron respondents, at least) want. So these days, like other programmers, instead of working to make great, adventurous radio, I work to get that handful of Arbitron respondents to list my station in their diaries. I do this by conducting music research with sampling systems that duplicate as closely as possible Arbitron's methods of selecting their samples and by working with national consultants who have a broader perspective on marketing and promoting radio stations than I have as a local programmer.

How Did This Crap Get on the Radio?

If you're not aware of the importance of marketing in an act's success, get savvy right here. Major labels dominate airplay because they have the clout to promote their records to radio. They have national and field staffs who call on radio stations to make sure that they have copies of all the releases that the label is trying to get on the air. Naturally, these promotion staffs have



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priorities among the records they're promoting. Labels work very hard to coordinate radio airplay to achieve the largest amount of simultaneous exposure for a song. Lots of exposure translates into a high position on the charts published by various trade publications. High chart positions can make radio programmers more comfortable playing music that is too new to get an accurate

read on via research—after all, if it's working in Cleveland, it must be safe for San Diego! This is the way a promotion staff's work is judged—by chart position, not sales.

Back in the Fifties, labels manipulated airplay and chart positions through "payola," the practice of paying DJs cash to play a record. Eventually Congress restricted this practice; since then, a

station must identify clearly who is paying for a song to be on the air each time that song is played. For years that law pretty much eliminated direct pay-for-play, but with the costs of purchasing a radio station rising far faster than the revenues earned by such stations, some stations are chasing new revenue by accepting cash from labels to play records, and then identifying the sponsors of the airplay as required by the payola laws. This is the hottest topic of debate within today's radio industry: Will pay-for-play cause radio programming to become even more directly affected by the decisions of the major labels, or will the radio audience

**If your music
can be
pigeonholed
with one word,
YOU HAVE
A SHOT
at radio
exposure.**

reject stations whose playlists are clearly bought and sold? Nobody knows, though one thing is clear: Radio station owners will try just about anything to increase their earnings.

What's a Musician to Do?

First, be realistic. If your thing is Afro/Celtic rap with an atonal structure in 11/16, you might not ever be heard on commercial radio. On the other hand, if your music can be pigeonholed with one word, you have a better shot at gaining exposure. This doesn't mean you can't be original; it just means you have to know where you and your music stand.

My advice is to sign with the biggest label you can find that is truly committed to promoting and marketing

Cowboy Junkies > Miles From Our Home

Cowboy Junkies > Miles From Our Home

The New Album Featuring 'Miles From Our Home'
> Produced by John Leckie

All songs mixed by Chris Lord-Alge except 'Good Friday' and 'No Birds Today',
mixed by John Leckie > Management: Peter Leak for The New York End Ltd. © 1998 Geffen Records, Inc. www.geffen.com

GEFFEN

Being able to claim regular rotation on a radio station will definitely

HELP YOU ATTRACT ATTENTION from the majors.

your act—then let them do their job. You may be asked to help in the promotional effort, either by calling radio programmers or by visiting stations for interviews and/or live performances. This can get tedious, but do your best to be (or look) happy to oblige. After all, being in demand is not a bad thing. When

Interscope was promoting the first Wallflowers album, the band must have visited every Adult Album Alternative station in the country. Then they did the same with all the regular Alternative stations. Their efforts were significant in launching the album toward its breakthrough sales figures.

If you're not signed by a major label but you've put out your own CD, you can still promote yourself to radio. Look for a station in your area with a show that features local music of the same general style as yours. Contact the station and find out who is responsible for the show. (Most likely it will *not* be the program



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director.) Cozy up to that person; make sure he or she has a copy of your CD. Put him or her on the guest list as your shows. As you develop a relationship, you can suggest that the station put together a CD that features the best local bands; many stations will do this kind of work to raise money for local charities. Offer to help out any way you can with the project. Once the CD is ready to go, the station

will probably start playing some of its best selections in their regular programming to help in their marketing efforts. It's a lot of work, but being able to claim regular rotation on a radio station will definitely help you attract attention from the majors. The airplay will also help you sell more copies of your own CD, which again will help get the attention of the major labels. Can you say Hootie?

Even if there aren't any local music shows in your area, you can still use radio to your advantage. Find the station whose style most closely matches your musical style. Call their promotions director—these folks are always looking for ways to make the promotions demanded by clients more attractive to listeners. Offer to play for free at some of the station's promotions; this will give you an "in." Develop the relationship, and suggest that the station consider doing a local music show. Offer to help put the show together. Once the station starts to expose local music, even if the show is on Sunday nights at eleven, they'll be more likely to

**Radio's objectives
are not the same
as yours.**

**YOU WORK
TO MAKE
GREAT MUSIC.**

**Radio works to
sell advertising.**

find value in the idea of a local music CD. Now you're getting somewhere!

As you pursue airplay, remember that radio's objectives are not the same as yours. You are working to make great music. Radio is working to sell advertising. As long as you're clear about the nature of the relationship between musicians and radio, you'll be able to find ways to meet their objectives *and* yours. Then, after you've sold more records than God, you too will be able to gleefully bite the hand that fed you, insult your fans, and devote yourself to writing classical music—at least until the next time you come out of retirement. ❧

Contributors: John Doe is the pseudonym of a radio programmer with more than twenty years of broadcast experience in a variety of formats. His favorite artists include Bryan Ferry, Miles Davis, and the Cocteau Twins. Recently he played a Billy Joel disc for a soft rock station.

JASON & THE SCORCHERS

Midnight Roads & Stages Seen

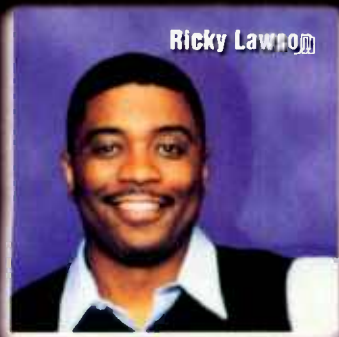
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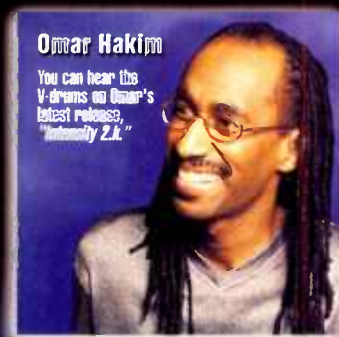
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Photo: Mark Gilliland



MetaSynth Image Synth Palette

a picture is worth a thousand notes

MetaSynth is so unique, it cannot be ignored.

by howard massey

And now, in the inimitable words of John Cleese, for something completely different. So different, in fact, that we need to begin this month's Editor's Pick with a disclaimer: If you're content just bashing away at your guitar, bass, or drum kit—or if you're a keyboard player who never hits the EDIT button—Arboretum Systems' MetaSynth is probably not for you. If you aren't willing to realign your thinking, to redefine your musical instincts at their very core, this \$249 Power Macintosh program will confuse and frustrate rather than delight and inspire. So have we gone mad? Why on earth would be giving a product like this an award??

The answer lies in the first sentence of this review. Very simply, MetaSynth is so unique, so unlike anything else on the planet, it cannot be ignored. It demands that you meet it on its own terms, and it forces you to approach sound in a radically new way. Imagine if there were a piece of software that could automatically generate a painting from a piece of music that you played into it, successfully capturing all the emotional nuances you poured into your creation. No such program exists (not yet, anyway!), but MetaSynth effectively does exactly the opposite, turning your Power Mac into a full-featured synthesizer by providing a wealth of graphics tools and then creating sounds from the images you paint onscreen.

The basic sonic building block in any hardware synthesizer is a

component called an *oscillator*. MetaSynth, being a software synthesizer, has no such components, so its "oscillators" are created with some fancy feats of DSP (digital signal processing). (No extra hardware is required by MetaSynth, but it does support Macintosh sound cards by Digidesign and Korg.) This allows it to work with several different kinds of "building-block" sounds. For example, you can record a sample directly into MetaSynth or load from disk any prerecorded sampled sound that has been saved in Sound Designer II or AIFF format (the two audio file formats commonly used by the Macintosh). A rudimentary sample editing window allows basic operations such as cut/copy/paste, normalize, reverse, and fade-in/fade out, and you can even morph between any two sample files. MetaSynth can also work with a *multisample* (that is, any collection of up to sixteen individual samples, each mapped to a different key range) that has been created in its INSTRUMENTS window. Alternatively, it can use any of three different kinds of noise, or any single-cycle wavetable

(continued on page 64)



(continued from page 63)

wave specified in a window called the WAVE TABLE PALETTE. These include all the standard sine, triangle sawtooth, and square waveshapes you'd find in any self-respecting analog synth, plus a variety of other exotic types; any of these presets can also be severely altered if you so choose. Last but not least, it can use any complex wave created in the PROCEDURAL SYNTH window; this is essentially a two-operator FM (frequency modulation) synthesizer.

Having decided which of these sound sources you wish to use, you would typically move on to MetaSynth's IMAGE SYNTH PALETTE. This is equivalent to an artist's blank canvas, only here it's a black rectangle surrounded by icons of various tools. Although MetaSynth doesn't even look like a Mac program, at least there's one familiar concept here: The horizontal plane represents time, and the vertical plane represents pitch. As you draw across the palette, using one of the brushes selected from the toolbar at the left (which include exotic airbrushes, spray-paint brushes, and multiprong "harmonic" brushes as well as standard pen brushes), you are specifying which notes you want played (there's a display that shows the MIDI note number the mouse is currently positioned over), when you want them played, and for how long a duration. You're not constrained to the standard twelve-notes-per-octave Western scale, either; a separate menu lets you choose from a number of alternate tunings, including whole-tones, major scales, and microtunings—you can even create your own custom scale. The total duration of the sound you are creating can also be specified, ranging from just a few milliseconds to several seconds. (The maximum length depends on the amount of RAM in your Power Mac.)

If you paint in black and white (white representing the notes that are played and black representing the ones that are not), the resultant sound will be in mono. But if you paint in color, the sound will be in stereo, with red representing signals in the left channel, green representing signals in the right channel, and yellow representing signals in the center. (Color blends allow the sound to be panned anywhere in between.) In addition, the brightness of any component in the image represents its loudness. There are tools, brushes, and menu commands that allow you to blur parts of the image, change their left-right contrast (to create more pronounced attacks or decays), combine one image with another in a wide variety of ways, add harmonics, or transpose, repeat, move, emboss, rescale,

or rotate any part of the image. Dozens of pre-drawn ("Preset") images are provided to act as creative fodder, and you can even import in any PICT file of your choosing and then play it. (Ever wonder what a picture of a bowl of cherries sounds like? MetaSynth provides the answer.)

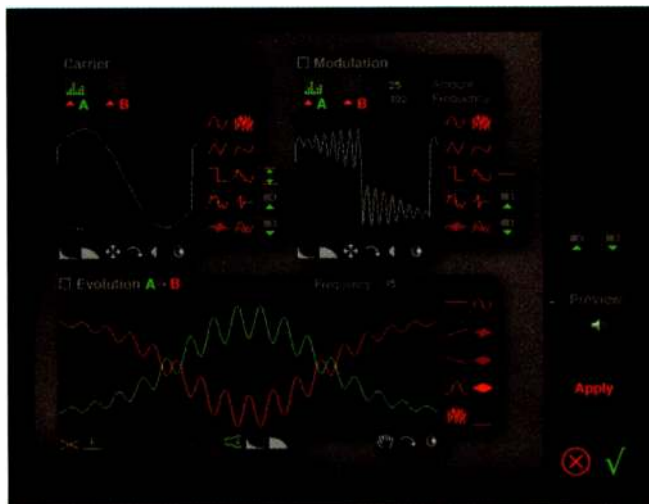
Once you've got your basic sound drawn (sheesh, just writing that is weird!), you may want to pay a visit to MetaSynth's FILTERS

play the sounds you create. The final product that MetaSynth creates from all your machinations is a Sound Designer II file, which can then be imported into any audio editor or sequencer, or downloaded to a sampler. And although you can at any time listen to a low-resolution (8-bit, 22kHz) preview of the sound you're creating, in order to hear the final sound in all its high-res (16-bit, 44.1kHz) glory, you need to "render" it first by clicking on a SYNTHESIZE icon. This can take anywhere from several seconds to several minutes of computing time, depending upon the speed of your Power Mac and how detailed the graphic is. If you don't like the result, you can undo the rendering and try again, but the bottom line is that this is not a real-time process. (On lower-end Power Macs such as the 7100/80 used for this review, the low-res preview can sometimes stutter or otherwise be degraded.)

There's also a price to be paid—even beyond the relatively steep learning curve—for MetaSynth's non-standard, futuristic user interface. Most windows require intense, broad mouse movements, thus necessitating either a massively large mouse pad or a great deal of pick-it-up-and-move-it again motion. Many windows also use the mouse to alter two parameters simultaneously (one assigned to vertical movements and the other assigned to horizontal movements). This in turn places new demands on your manual dexterity, kind of like what happens when you bring home a new graphic-intensive video game or an unfamiliar joystick controller. Worst of all, some functions (most notably envelope-shaping and effects applied in the IMAGE SYNTH PALETTE) can't be undone, meaning that you're screwed if you make a mistake that you can't easily manually reverse—hopefully, this will be addressed in a future release. Last but not least, the owner's manual takes too academic an approach and is woefully short on practical applications—there isn't even a tutorial to get you started. Figure on several days of experimentation before you start getting usable sounds other than by blind luck!

As we said in the beginning of this review, MetaSynth is not for everybody. If you're anti-technology, you'll probably hate it. Even if you're into technology but can only think in terms of standard approaches, you may find it frustrating. But if you have a vivid imagination and a willingness to dive in at the deep end, MetaSynth can yield rewards beyond your wildest dreams.

Special thanks to Todd Souvignier.



MetaSynth Procedural Synth

window, which is essentially a 128-band cut-only equalizer. Here, you get to roll up your virtual sleeves and paint on another palette. This time, however, your brush strokes define which frequencies in the sound are to be heard, and when—the frequencies you don't brush over are removed. If you like, you can first underlay an FFT (Fast Fourier Transform) analysis of the sound, so you can see which frequencies it contains as it unfolds over time. You can also use the analysis of one sound to act as a filter for another—for example, you can apply a filter based on speech to a steady-state musical sound, thus making it seem to "talk." There are dozens of filter Presets provided; many of these are in color, so you can selectively apply different equalizations to the left and right channels. This can result in some very spectacular stereo effects.

The icing on this cake comes in the form of comprehensive independent amplitude and pitch envelopes (each far more adjustable than anything you'd find in a hardware synth) and a variety of effects, including the usual (such as REVERB, ECHO, RE-ECHO, CHORUS, PHASE, FLANGE and PARAMETRIC) and the extremely unusual (such as RESONATOR, INERTIA, GRAIN, STRETCH, and SHUFFLER).

As you might imagine, there's a tradeoff for all this power. First of all, because there's no MIDI support whatsoever, you can't just hook up a MIDI controller and immediately

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- Lyric sheet typed or printed legibly (please include English translation if applicable). Sheets not required for instrumental compositions.
- Check or money order for \$30.00 per song (U.S. currency only) payable to John Lennon Songwriting Contest. If paying by credit card, \$30.00 per song will be charged to your account.

Entries must be postmarked no later than August 31, 1998.

- 1 Each song submitted must be contestant's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously recorded and released through national distribution in any country will be eligible. Songs may have multiple co-writers, but please designate one name only on the application. Contestant may submit as many songs in as many categories as he/she wishes, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, lyric sheet, and entrance fee. One check or money order for multiple entries/categories is permitted. (Entrance fee is non-refundable. JLSC is not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, postage due, stolen, or misappropriated entries.)
- 2 Prizes: Twelve (12) Grand Prize Winners will receive \$2,000 in cash, \$5,000 in Yamaha project studio equipment, and a \$5,000 advance from EMI Music Publishing. One (1) Grand Prize Winner will receive \$20,000 for the "Song of the Year" courtesy of Maxell. Thirty-six (36) Finalists will receive \$1,000. Seventy-two (72) Winners will receive portable CD players.

3 Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters. Employees of JLSC, their families, subsidiaries, and affiliates are not eligible.

- 4 Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges comprised of noted songwriters, producers and music industry professionals. Songs will be judged based upon melody, composition and lyrics (when applicable). The quality of performance and production will not be considered. Prizes will be awarded jointly to all authors of any song; division of prizes is responsibility of winners. Void where prohibited. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply.
- 5 Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility, recording rights, publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation.
- 6 Winners will be determined by January 15, 1999, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned.

I have read and understand the rules of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

Signature _____ Date _____

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1 Rocktron PC Preamp

For those musicians who compose or practice at the computer, the new Rocktron PC preamp (\$329) is a great addition to your set up, allowing you to plug directly into your PC for guitar, bass, or vocals. The necessary cable is provided for connection to your PC's sound card MIC or LINE input. The two channels give you a distortion tone with noise reduction, a clean tone with compression, and a vintage-style spring reverb. The AX input and level control also lets you plug in your CD player, tape machine, or external mixers. This dandy unit also has a full functioning 48-track digital multitrack recording software which features varied effects and MIDI sequencing capabilities. That's a lot of bang for your buck, buddy. ▶ **Rocktron Corporation, 2870 Technology Dr., Rochester Hills, MI 48309; voice 248/853-3055**

2 Voodoo Lab Pedal Power Supply

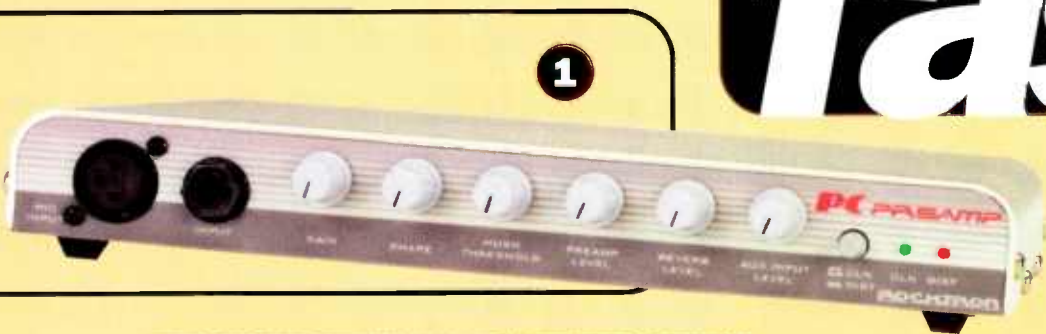
If you are a bassist or guitarist with a fondness for pedals, this may be the thing to keep all your stuff powered up and organized. The Voodoo Lab Pedal Power Supply (\$199) is a universal power supply for your battery operated effects. Providing eight isolated, short circuit protected, regulated and highly filtered 9-volt outputs, this is a great tool for onstage, at practice, or in the studio. With a five-year warranty, supplied cables, and a detachable AC power cord, this unit is a valuable purchase for any touring band. The toroidal power transformer also eliminates annoying hum in your more sensitive (read: cheap) effects. ▶ **Digital Music Corp., 5312-J Derry Ave., Agoura Hills, CA 91301; voice (818)991-3881 email:info@voodoolab.com**

3 Korg N5 Music Synthesizer Keyboard

When searching for a good keyboard, you want the most performance and versatility you can get for your money-and you also want lots of great, usable sounds. Using the same synthesis architecture as in more expensive Korg models, the new N5 (\$1,099) has got it all. It features a whopping 1,710 sounds, including 39 built-in drumkits and both GM, GS, and XG tone maps. Hey, if you can't get the sound you want with this puppy, you're too darn picky anyway. There's also a very hip arpeggiator, an unusually large multi-color graphic display, and a whole bunch of dedicated front-panel buttons. It all adds up to a great package, equally well-suited for the home studio or for live performance. ▶ **Korg USA, 316 South Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747-3201; voice (516)333-9100**

fast

for



MUSICIAN

World Radio History

4 UFIP Bionic Splash Cymbal Series

UFIP has upgraded their Bionic Cymbals from "experimental product" to a series all their own. "This doesn't happen hastily at UFIP," says the Italian cymbal maker's spokesperson. With their advanced dual metal combination of polishing and pre-aging (lathing is the more common technique), UFIP offers 10", 11", and 12" splashes and 18 and 20-inch chinas, as well as rides, crashes, and hi-hats. Distinctive for a warm yet penetrating sound, these cymbals are compatible with both conservative and experimental drum set ups. ▶ *UFIP c/o Drum Workshop, Inc., 101 Bernoulli Circle, auxiliary, CA 93030; voice (805)485-6999.*

5 Vox V830 Distortion Booster Pedal

Vox is famous for defining guitar sounds with their pedals (the legendary Wah Wah) and amps (the AC30) from the Sixties. The Vox V830 distortion booster pedal (\$120) continues this tradition with a cool retro design that gives a great vintage guitar distortion sound with smooth, fat tone and high gain. Able to boom lower than Barry White on codeine and screech higher than a bunny caught in a combine, this classic pedal is a good thing to have around when you want your guitar lick to really get noticed. The unit is 9-volt powered and AC adaptable and it's fifty-hours-long battery life can keep your bad-ass tone going, and going, and going... ▶ *Vox, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747-3201; voice (516)333-9100*

6 Hamer Artist Ultimate Guitar

Once, maybe twice in your life, you'll buy a really beautiful, well-crafted guitar that you won't even let your best friend play and would never leave on stage after the last song to let the stagehand put away. Hamer's Artist Ultimate Guitar (\$5,000 with black & brown alligator hardshell case) is such a beast. Beautiful to look at and beautiful to play, this cognac-colored mahogany and maple guitar features Seymour Duncan Ultimate hand wound humbucking pickups, hand-wired with oxygen-free Monster Cable. A 12' hi-resolution Monster Cable cord is also included. The neck is made of three piece stressed mahogany with a dovetail joint, an ebony fingerboard with ivoroid binding and mother-of-pearl inlays, and a bone nut. An investment, yes, and with a limited production, probably a wise one. ▶ *Kaman Music Corporation, 20 Old Windsor Rd., Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507; voice (860)509-8888*

ward



FIRST TAKE Frank Filipetti

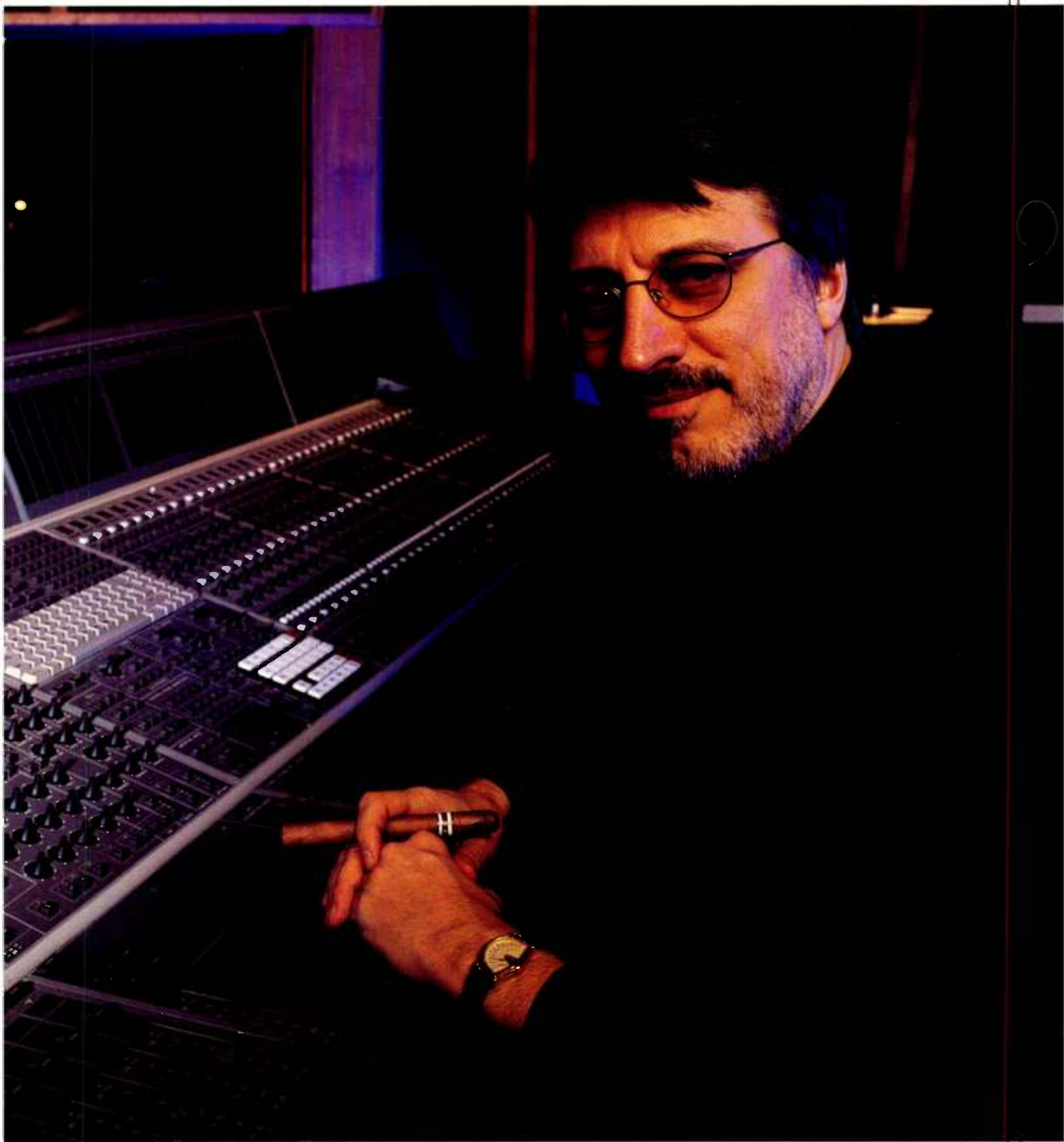
how to cut a grammy-winning album in a makeshift studio

Frank Filipetti is, in his own words, "jazzed." And who wouldn't be, after winning two Grammys (Pop Album of the Year and Best Engineered Album of the Year) for an endeavor—James Taylor's *Hourglass*—that was recorded largely on project studio equipment and started life as preproduction rehearsal tapes? Either the guy is very, very lucky or he's very, very good—and insiders know that the latter is the case. It's no coincidence that his résumé includes not only Taylor but Carly Simon, Barbra Streisand, Mariah Carey, and many other pop icons.

by **howard massey**

Filipetti grabbed some time between sessions at New York's famed Right Track studios to chat with us about *Hourglass* and to





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share his unique approach towards recording. The man clearly loves his work; his enthusiasm is positively contagious. "This is probably the most exciting period for a musician that I can ever remember," he asserts. "You have keyboards that will let you emulate any sound under the sun, and you've got home recording equipment that is the equal of anything you'd find in any studio in the world five years ago. It's just remarkable that for a very small investment, the best gear is now available to anyone."

The making of *Hourglass* was nothing if not unusual. "James Taylor called and said, 'I'd like you to come up to Martha's Vineyard to record,'" Filipetti recalls. "So I said, okay, I'll put together a package. I called Neve and asked if we could get a baby Capricorn [digital console] up there, and I spec'd out a bunch of mics and preamps. Then I called James and told him what I had assembled. His reaction was, 'No, wait a minute. There's gonna be a lot of woodshedding, a lot of rehearsal work putting things together. I don't want to be worrying about the technology; I just want something really simple. If we get something, great—and if we don't, so what?'"

"So I went up there with only a Yamaha 02R, three TASCAM DA-88s, and some of my own microphones. The only things we rented were some cables and mic stands—no external A/Ds, no external preamps. The concept was, we're going to record a preproduction rehearsal of the band and see what happens. We started setup the first day at ten in the morning; by two in the afternoon, we were tracking. Here we are in Martha's Vineyard, and I'm looking out a big picture window at the ocean with a big fireplace over here and James Taylor is singing over there, and I'm thinking, this is too cool!"

"Then when we finally got the stuff back to New York and listened to it, we said, jeez, this really sounds good—this is a record! We did a few overdubs here and in L.A., but all the basic tracking—drums, guitars, James' vocals—was done on the 02R and the three DA-88s."

WEBSITE EXCLUSIVE!

To read more of Howard Massey's interview with Frank Filipetti, visit Musician Online at www.musicianmag.com.

Which isn't to say there weren't some technical problems to overcome. As Filipetti points out, "We weren't in a recording studio, we were in a home, so we had to do the same things you would do in any home studio. The first thing was to deal with the sound of the environment. I don't care how tight you mic, sooner or later aspects of the room sound are going to become apparent. So you need to decide what you're going to use and what you need to get rid of. In our case, there was a bedroom off the hallway with glass doors, and that became a perfect vocal booth for James."

Vocal booths, of course, demand special kinds of treatments. "You've got to be careful that the sound of the vocal booth doesn't color things too much. You're looking to create a tight but warm environment—not brittle, not hard, and not totally dead. Also, in James' case, because he plays acoustic guitar at the same time he's singing, you don't want too many reflections off the walls, since you're trying to get most of the guitar out of the vocal mic and most of the vocal out of the guitar mic. In the end, we just put some blankets and curtains up on the walls."

Creating a drum booth was another challenge. "Because the drums were in an open living room area, we had to put up a fake wall. We made two 4'x8' wood frames that held soundboard (3/4" drywall) covered with Sonex. Then we put a 4'x8' Plexiglas sheet on top so Carlos [Vega, the drummer on *Hourglass*] could see out, and hung a blanket between the frames for a makeshift doorway. Sure, if you listened to James' vocal mic, you heard some drums—but you do in big studios too. The main thing was to know ahead of time what we were looking for."

That, and a healthy sense of the absurd. "You need to always be prepared to improvise, to say, nah, that's not working out, let's try something else. Ascertain what it is you're trying to accomplish, and try to think of the simplest way to do it." Case in point: the miking of Taylor's acoustic guitar. "Because James is a performer, the guitar is always moving around. I started with our typical miking: a Schoeps up around the third or fourth fret from the soundhole, as close as I could get it without being in the way. But he'd move too much, especially from one

take to the next, so it just wasn't working. I ended up taking an ATM-35—a small condenser mic that I usually use on toms—and I clipped it onto a Popsicle stick and taped the stick to James' guitar. So now we had a microphone that moved with his guitar, which allowed me to have a consistent guitar sound.

"In the end," Filipetti continues, "it's always about the performance, not the sound. I'm fastidious in that I want everything to sound right, but you've got to go with the great performance over the great sound." What kind of fairy dust can you sprinkle over a great take that doesn't sound so hot? "Well, you obviously want to start by using effects; a good reverb is so important. If a track has big swings in level, you can ride the fader and then print the result to another track of the tape." But Filipetti also warns about keeping a perspective. "There are lots of records that sound like shit, but they move me. Yes, you can dissect a sound and say, jeez, I wish this were better, I wish that were better. But in the end, if the band captured the essence of the music and the singer captured the emotional impact, it just doesn't matter. There are very few people who walk out of a record store humming the drum sound!"

Filipetti is a big fan of digital recording. "But," he warns, "you need to understand the medium that you're working with. On a digital system, everything has to be recorded as hot as possible—otherwise, you're only using some and not all of the available bits. Don't be afraid of those red lights. If it sounds okay, then it's fine. You can record a transient sound like a drum hit much hotter than you can record a steady-state tone like a vocal, and it will sound fine, no matter what the lights tell you."

He adds, "You also need to understand that the most difficult part of the process is the conversion from analog to digital and digital to analog; that's when most of the information is lost. So once I make that jump to a digital format, it's the last time I want to do a conversion. The next time it should go back to analog is in your home, when you

listen to the digital CD through your analog speakers." For this reason, Filipetti recommends applying analog processing (such as EQ, compression, or limiting—never gating) during the recording process, not during mixing. "Especially compression," he adds, "because it gives you more level to tape, which means you're using more bits." Filipetti generally prefers to use minimal processing during recording in order to provide maximum flexibility during mixing, though he points out that, because *Hourglass* was an experiment, "I actually used the EQ and compressors and limiters on the O2R while recording, just to see what

"In the end, it's always about the performance, not the sound."

they sounded like. I didn't think we were going to get an album out of this!"

Filipetti places rather more emphasis on the microphone than the mic preamp. "It's worth investing in at least one really good microphone, and there are lots of good vocal mics out there at a reasonable price, like the Audio-Technica 4050 or some of the new under-\$1,000 tube microphones. For a lot of the other stuff, a couple of [Shure] SM57s will work. They're still ubiquitous in every studio in the world, used on everything from toms to guitars to pianos—and they're only eighty bucks each. But I used the O2R's onboard preamps for *Hourglass*; if I had used expensive outboard ones instead, I don't think anybody would have noticed a major difference."

Through the years, Filipetti has developed a uniquely holistic approach to recording. "If you were to boil down the essence of everything I do to one word, it would be *synergy*. Everything has to work with everything else; nothing sits in a vacuum. I

think the SOLO button is the worst button you can use. There is no point to listening to a sound by itself, other than for some technical reason. I know engineers who do all their EQing, reverbs, and effects with the SOLO on. What's that supposed to mean? Granted, I did that too when I first started engineering, but very quickly I realized that it has nothing to do with the *songs*. If you start mixing by just working on the drums, yeah, you can get this incredible drum sound—on its own. But when you add everything else, it may not sound good at all.

"I begin mixing by setting up a rough—usually dry—then I start adding what I think is the vocal space. It's all about the vocals; the drums have to work around the vocal, not vice-versa. Once I've got that, I start bringing in the other instruments; this may take half an hour or so. Lastly, I'll focus on the sound of the individual instruments and do my tweaking, always listening to them in relation to the overall mix.

"Mix automation is a wonderful thing. Before, when you mixed an album, you had to mix individual songs, one at a time. And you didn't move on to the next song until you finished the previous one, 'cause it took so damn long to set up the board for each mix, and it never came back precisely the same. I am now mixing *albums*. I'll come in and get a rough mix on eight songs in a single day, get a vibe on the entire album. Then the next day I come in, recall those mixes, and, one after another, tweak them and refine them. Not only am I refining the songs as I go along, I'm also hearing the album as a whole: I'm hearing one song after another, instead of being tuned into just one track. I'm not only hearing the drums in relation to the bass and the vocal, I'm hearing song A in relation to song B and song C."

Filipetti concludes, "Fifteen years ago, to record an album in somebody's house took some real doing. Now, as long as you have good ears and the patience to do it right, you can come up with great stuff. Today's technology makes it possible for anybody who ever picked up a guitar to put their dream down on tape."

making tracks on tour

For guitar wiz Neil Zaza, Fostex's DMT-8vL is the key to writing on the road.

by e. d. menasché

Like many a player rolling along the path to success, high-octane guitarist Neil Zaza spends a lot of time away from the friendly and familiar confines of his Cleveland area home studio while performing, giving clinics, and tracking record sessions with people like Stewart Copeland and Dweezil Zappa. Unfortunately, life as a road warrior leaves little time for composing new material. "Any traveling musician will have the predicament of having to write tunes for the next record," Zaza admits. His solution? "I took a Fostex DMT-8vL on the road for our last North American tour. I used it to compose and demo all the stuff for the new record, *Staring at the Sun* [Nuerra Records]. I worked in the back of the bus, in dressing rooms, at sound check. . . . It's funny—I can relate every tune on the record to a different city."

For Zaza, the ultra-portable DMT-8vL offers the perfect balance between high-tech power and convenient operation, mating a 16-bit, 44.1kHz digital eight-track disk-based recorder with an eight-channel analog mixer in a package not much bigger than your average four-track cassette. Each channel has its own 1/4" unbalanced input, fader, pan pot, separate assignable monitor pot (with pan), two-band EQ, and pair of aux sends for effects. The first two channels also offer built-in microphone preamps. The DMT-8vL can record up to four tracks at a time and can synchronize with other gear via MIDI Time Code, MIDI

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Clock, and MIDI Machine Control.

"On the road," Zaza explains, "I'll set my DMT-8vL up with a Mac Powerbook running Mark of the Unicorn Performer 5.5 sequencing software, a Yamaha RY10 drum machine (the smallest one they make), a Peavey Envoy 110 practice amp, a guitar, a bass, and a mic. And that's all I need to get the idea down."

Because the DMT-8vL responds to MIDI Machine Control, Zaza can take advantage of Performer's extensive locator features, using the program to augment the DMT-8vL's six programmable auto-locate points without diminishing the DMT-8vL's organic, tape recorder-like vibe. "I get the best of both worlds by combining Performer with the DMT-8vL," he explains. "Computer-based recorders let you do things like punch in, but you have to pre-program the punch points, and that sometimes feels unnatural. The Fostex lets you punch in in real time with a footswitch, which I prefer because it lets me concentrate on performing, not programming."

Though his demos aren't elaborate, Zaza takes advantage of the DMT-8vL's digital editing power to enhance his arrangements. "The cut-and-paste features are real nice for demoing because you can come back to a tune a day or two later and copy parts, move them around, or even fly in whole new sections."

The DMT-8vL simplifies the sometimes tedious task of selecting audio for editing. "One of the real nice things is the way you can select audio on the fly as you listen to the track. It's sort of like punching in and out. You just push a button where you want the edit to start and where you want it to end. There's also a scrub feature, which is real cool for finding precise spots. Also, I can audition exactly what's on the clipboard and fine-tune my edits, either manually by re-performing the move, or by adjusting the numbers with the jog/shuttle wheel. The DMT-8vL can keep track of the time in bars and beats, real time, or SMPTE time. I prefer SMPTE because it gives the most detailed breakdown of where you are at any given moment."

Any number of tracks can be added at the same time, and parts from one track can be copied to another. "It's a powerful creative tool," Zaza says. "You can listen to different arrangements, and if you don't like the results there's always the UNDO button."

With a demo arrangement in place, Zaza mixes to DAT in the analog domain and backs up the digital audio data (also to DAT) via the DMT-8vL's optical S/PDIF digital outputs.

For Zaza, the DMT-8vL is more than a convenient sketchpad—it's part of an integrated approach to recording which combines several different media: ADAT, Performer, Digidesign's Pro Tools, and the DMT-8vL's big brother, the D-90 "stand-alone" hard disk recorder. "It's kind of convoluted," he admits. "But it works well for me because I record with different people all over the place, and this way I can take stuff from another studio and work on it at home. For example, I would send my demos to [keyboardist/co-producer] Timothy M. Bradford, who would spice up the raw arrangements a bit. We would then dump a scratch track of keyboards, drums, and click to ADAT, so I have a master ADAT I can take to any studio for additional tracking. On this record, I was fortunate enough to work with [bassist] Stu Hamm, who plays with Joe Satriani, and also [drummer] Steve Smith and [bassist] Ross Valory. Journey's rhythm section. I took our basic scratch tracks to Steve Smith's house, recorded his and Ross' parts, brought the results home, and transferred it all back into the Fostex D-90, where I record all my guitar parts."

Because the DMT-8vL uses the same file format as the D-90, Zaza can keep some of the better elements of his demos for use on the final recording. "It's nice to actually demo on the same medium you're recording on," he says. "Everybody gets the 'demo-itis' thing, where you cut the greatest solo on the demo, and when you go to duplicate it later something's just not right. But since the DMT-8vL and the D-90 use the same file format and I back up my demos onto DAT, I can load the original solo into the D-90 without loss of sound quality."

Though the technically savvy Zaza occasionally chooses a computer for "hard-core" digital editing, he maintains that stand-alone recorders like the DMT-8vL and D-90 let him keep the music flowing without compromises in sound quality or creative power. "When I'm writing, I don't want to worry about the technology, about using a mouse or finding a SMPTE time. I just want to get the idea down. The DMT-8vL is the perfect marriage between high tech and low tech." ☺

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get on the funkfo

Envelope filters for the bass.

by steven wishnia

Kwok. Skee-ermt. Oo-qua-qua-oo-wah. This was the sonic trance invoked by Jimi Hendrix and his wah-wah voodoo in the Seventies, and the result was broad-sweeping, as musicians from Stevie Wonder to Miles Davis swaddled their licks in electronic funky-chicken squawks.

For bass players, the key source of squawk was the automatic trigger of an envelope filter. From Bootsy

Collins' "We need the bump/Give up the funk" riff on Parliament's "Tear the Roof Off the Sucker" to Ike & Tina Turner's "Sexy Ida," envelope filters like the Mu-tron III, Electro-Harmonix Doctor Q, and Seamount Funk Machine sharpened rhythms and intensified timbres. If the groove grail of Bootsy and Larry Graham were worshipped with anything close to the reverence that rock guitar heroes receive, different shades of envelope filtering might be discussed with the same Talmudic analytical devotion as the varieties of distortion, with onomatopoeic coinages like "skronky" and "quocky" to match "buttery" and "chainsaw."

Technologically, the envelope filter is the closest the average guitar stompbox comes to a synthesizer, falling somewhere between a wah-wah pedal and the voltage-controlled filter of an analog synth. The intensity of the effect is determined by

your attack (i.e., dynamics) instead of the position of the pedal or the synth preset. The louder you play—stereotypical slap-and-pop finger playing brings out the most signal—the higher the voltage and the more extreme the sweep across the tonal spectrum: It goes up first, then pulls back slowly as the note dies down. (Some units, especially the more expensive ones, have a down-drive option.) But on most units, you can get an effect even from gently stroking the strings if you set the sensitivity right; a lot depends on dynamics, what the other instruments are doing, and speaker size.

What does this mean for you, the ever-ravenous consumer of new sounds and toys? Of the units most suitable for bass, you basically have a choice between clean-sweep automatic wahs or ballooning electronic-garage excess, in both the mass-market and boutique price ranges. DOD has just come out with the teal-colored FX-25C Envelope Filter (\$99.95), which replaces the old FX-25B. The main change is the addition of a BLEND knob to mix the dry and filtered signals. This is a welcome improvement, as effects



Electro-Harmonix's Q-Tron

ot!



▲
Boss' AW-2

like envelope filtering and distortion—where most of the sonic action is in the overtone spectrum—tend to squelch the low end when used on a bass.

The 25C is at its most distinctive when it's set to lower sensitivity and deeper range. This gives massive, heavy bass tones that evoke the unearthly, percussive implied notes of hip-hop kick drums and jungle bass. The effect is strongest when you play softly, thus avoiding the full filter sweep. Set on high sensitivity and range, the 25C offers a thinner, more traditional funk wah sound.

Ibanez's AW-5 Auto Wah (\$99.95) is primarily intended for guitarists; its frequency range starts somewhere around 300-400Hz, which is already well into the midrange of the

bass, meaning the effect won't begin until you're playing the upper frets on the bass neck. Ultimately, this means that the AW-5 steps on the low end a lot, but bassists might be able to use in the way some guitarists will leave a wah-wah pedal set high doing baritone-guitar imitations on the D and G strings. I had fun using its boingy, splurky tone for a low-fi blooze-electronic hybrid, hammering out a riff halfway between "Hoochie Coochie Man" and "Whole Lotta Rosie."

Boss' AW-2 Auto Wah (\$149.50) leans toward the cleaner side. This is a very subtle pedal except when pushed hard on extreme settings. With four controls—SENSITIVITY, EFFECT DEPTH, MANUAL (sweep range), and RATE (sweep)—it's also reasonably versatile; if you turn the SENSITIVITY all the way down and the DEPTH up, you get a wah based on internal modulation instead of picking dynamics.

To my ears, this pedal's funk wah is more euphonious than the 25C's, but it cuts the low end enough to be a problem in, say, a three-piece alterna-rock situation with dense rhythm guitar parts. Setting a medium-slow rate and maximum depth yields a booming wah, while the maximum rate gives fluttery aftertones.

(continued on page 78)

For a bit more money, you get more efflorescent versions of the two philosophies of wah: the immaculate syncopation of **HAZ Laboratories's** Mu-tron III+—a modified reissue of the old Mu-tron III—and the over-the-top excess of **Electro-Harmonix's** Q-Tron (\$249). Both units give you a range of options, such as low-pass, band-pass, and high-pass filters, high and low ranges, and up and down drives.

The wall-wart-powered Q-Tron is squarely in the Electro-Harmonix tradition of psychedelic excess. All but the softest picking and weakest pickups will light up the overload indicator, but the sonic rewards are great if you're into it. This unit puts out absolutely titanic bass sounds, especially on the DOWN-DRIVE setting; it sounds like you're playing on small suspension-bridge cables. If you want to stay more on the ground and in the groove, the Q-Tron also has a MIX setting, which lets you blend dry and effected signals. For extraterrestrial tones, more extreme settings produce extremely long sustain, with the wavery aftertones of an overloaded analog

synth filter. Depending on how you use them, these can be either wonderfully primitive garage electronica or a cheesy gimmick; for me, they sounded great with a mid-tempo trip-hop track.

HAZ's Mu-tron III+ is a distinctly different animal from the original Mu-tron, though it replicates its appearance and basic features. For one, it uses solid-state electronics to generate the sweep, instead of a photocell like its predecessor. The reason, explains HAZ owner Henry Zajac, is that the photocell was inconsistent and unstable, tending to drift over time. (Is that why my 1981-vintage Mu-tron doesn't sound so hot anymore?)

The new version is significantly tamer, but much more consistent. Unlike the original, you don't have to crank the gain to meter-pinning



Ibanez's AW-5

or speaker-frying levels to get a strong effect. The dry and wet signals have similar volumes. It comes preset for guitar, but has internal dip switches that can be reset to optimize bass response—a tweaking option that can make light-years' worth of difference in tastiness.

With DRIVE set in the up position and LOW-PASS FILTER (the main viable setting for bass) engaged, the new Mu-tron delivers a clean, pointy, "quocky" sound that's perfect for impeccably syncopated funk. The low end isn't as awe-inspiring as the Q-Tron's, but it is definitely deep enough for a James Brown bass line. For more bizarre tones, setting the DRIVE on down and the filter on BAND-PASS OR HIGH-PASS yielded freaky blurps, all sweep, and no root.

Several playing techniques can enhance your use of an envelope filter. One, recommended by Bill Laswell, is to not pick hard enough to open the filter all the way; this produces a bassier sound. Another is to separate the dry and wah-wah signals, either with a blend knob or two separate amps. Speaker size also matters: An 8" practice amp should be able to put out an acceptable amount of bass if you're using a clean sound, but it'll curl up and die trying to reproduce an envelope-filter subharmonic tone. In contrast, a 15" speaker gives all kinds of poetic overtones.

It also helps to know when your music will be served by the device's dynamics. One of the reasons, aside from timbre, that envelope filters are used primarily in funk is that intermittent rhythm guitar leaves enough space for their effects, their rises, bleeps, and falls, to be heard, while dense rock chording buries them.

The quasi-synth aspect is also well worth exploring. Most "bass synths" I've played don't do much that an octave divider/envelope filter/distortion effects chain couldn't do, and the stomp boxes are likely to track better. If you want to combine live bass dynamics with electronica sonorities, check them out.

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Over the past few months, our national panel of music judges carefully listened to each and every BUB submission. The field of thousands has now been narrowed to a talented and diverse crop of artists and bands. This list is the second installment of semifinalists, and all entries from group 1 and group 2 will now move on for more careful scrutiny by respected industry insiders. Congratulations, and good luck to all semifinalists...

Group 2

GROOVENWORKS, MA
TWO TON SHOE, MA
SPARROW'S POINT, CA
TWO UNIQUE, DC
UNCLE FONDLE, MA
CHET ARTHUR, TX
McRHEA, ONT
THE JELLYBRICKS, PA
TEN O'CLOCK IN IJUNEAU, VA
HOPPER, IL
DAX, CA
THE EXCENTRICS, NY
CRAZEE "ACOUSTIPUNK MARK," MI
BRIAN JOSEPH, CA
THE McKENZIES, IA
APRIL LARAGY, NY
SUGAR FREEK, MN
AMELIA'S DREAM, NY
DER STEMS, TX
BETH QUIST, CO
SUPERNAUT, MA
COOKING WITH ELVIS, WA
VAMPNESS, NY
SHIVERHEAD, WI
IDLE, MD
TOM FOOLERY, IL
BERNADETTE McCALLJON, NY
BIKINI CONTEST, NY
DREY BEY AND THE DAY AFTER, CA

LORI-ANN LATREMOUILLE, BC
ONE, MA
KATARA, BC
MAGONIA, MA
ROOTLOCK, MA
BIGFOOT AND THE PREHISTORIC DOGS, CO
ORCHID ROOM, NJ
GREAZY MEAL, MN
BREATHE UNDERWATER, BC
DRIVIN' MISS CRAZY, GA
THE RENOVATORS, NE
LUCKYMARTIN, NY
FIST, PA
SAINT JAMES, MS
SECRET AGENT ARE, NJ
HOLLIS CHAPEL, TN
THE BRILLIANT MISTAKES, NY
EDDIE BUSH, SC
MOS EISLEY, WI
HIGH KINGS, MA
THE BLENDILLS, NY
THE SOBER PLAID, OH
STAR, OH
IMPULSE RIDE, GA
LIFE ON MARS, FL
FLIPSIDE DEN, TX
ASTROGLIDE, DC
MICHELLE PENN, GA
ROMEO, PA

BLUE ROSE, MI
VIOLIN ROAD, RI
LOVER MI LOU, IL
ANTIDOTE, AL
SOLOMON, WI
THE PINWHEELS, WI
OSMOSIS, OH
TOM ROBINSON, NY
SPIT THE WINKLE, CA
ASTRO CHICKEN, NY
BAMBU, IA
LIFE IN GENERAL, NC
KARO NEWHOUSE BAND, MI
SHAM SUNDRA, NY
SOMEBODY'S SISTER, MA
THE ACCIDENTS, NY
AMANDA'S WAITING, NY
VERONA LOVE, WI
YONTZ SUCRE, VA
FEREMZIK, PA
RIN, NY
EZZ, CA
PAT BALDER, MN
THE BARRYS, VA
CIVILIANS, MI
THE MUSEUM, NY
JOE LEE KING, NY
ZYZZYVA, CT

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Patty Griffin

Flaming Red
(A&M)

Not every solo acoustic artist can adapt to singing with a band. Phrasing, tempo, arrangements: There are a dozen hurdles that can trip the singer who's used to setting her own pace. But on *Flaming Red*, Patty Griffin makes that leap and delivers one powerful album in the process.

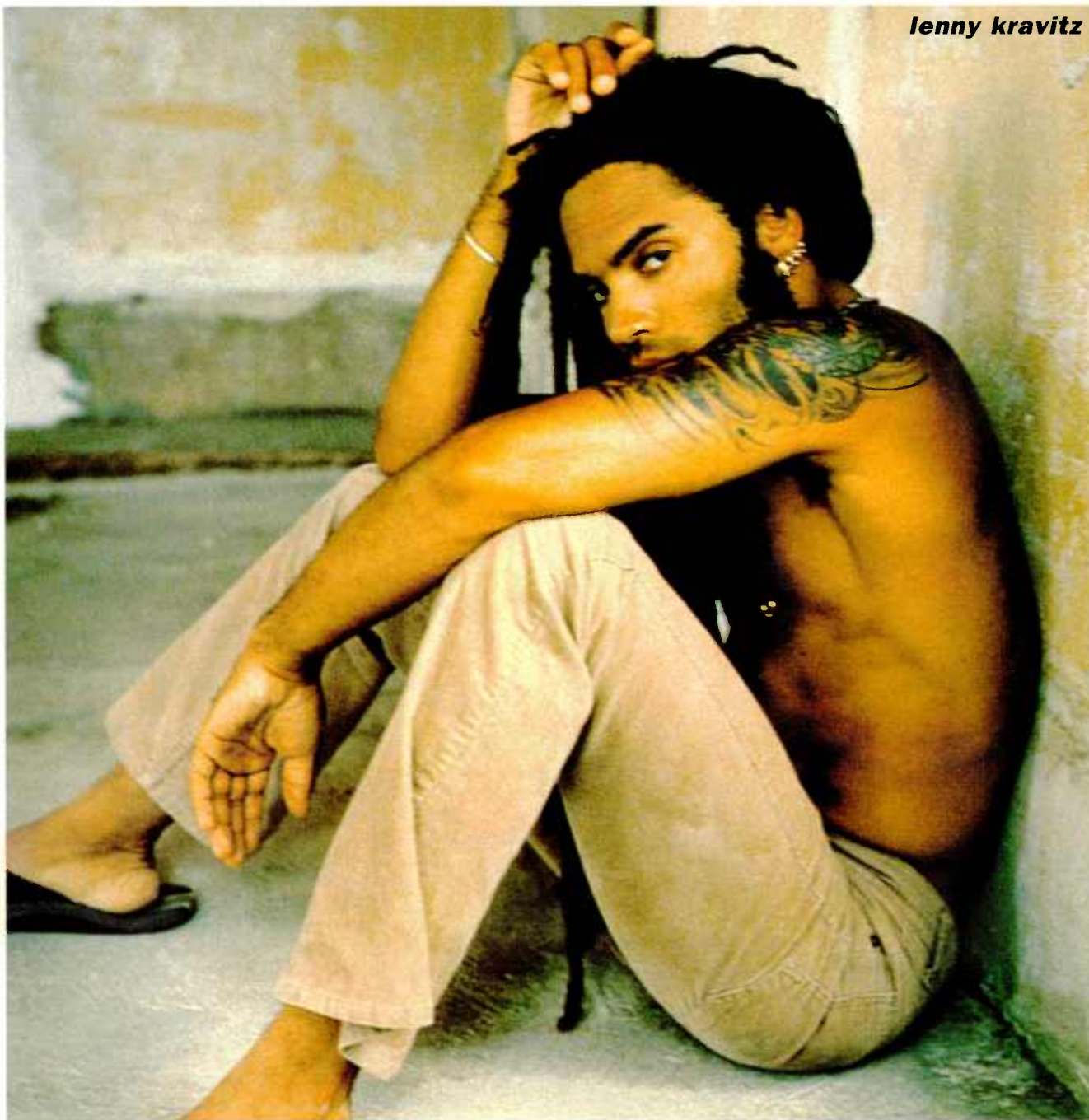
As producer, Iodine guitarist Jay Joyce was an ideal partner on this adventure. His ideas embrace Griffin's voice while also encouraging her to stretch. Considering the delicacy of her unaccompanied performance on her 1996 debut *Living with Ghosts*, *Flaming Red* is nearly as much a tribute to Joyce's ears and instincts as it is a triumph for Griffin. "I was worried about my performances," Griffin admits, "since I was unfamiliar with working with bands. Jay helped me a lot with that—and, just as important, he made me feel comfortable about saying, 'I don't like that.'"

Basic tracks were recorded at Joyce's home studio in Nashville. To prepare, he studied *Living with Ghosts* and spent eight months cutting demos with Griffin for the new album. ("He got friends to come in for free," she smiles. "It got a little more official as the budget started coming in.") The approach varied with each song: Sometimes Griffin laid down the basic vocal and acoustic guitar to a click or drum loop. But "Goodbye" began with two acoustic guitars, a bass, a *djembe*, and a hand drum laying down a medium-tempo groove with the players gathered in a circle. One song, "Big Daddy," was actually built on an odd, seductive fragment Joyce had recorded during an Iodine rehearsal years before; Griffin took it home and came back the next morning with words and melody, which she cut—like almost all her vocals on *Flaming Red*—in one take.

Then there were the inspired accidents, like the one that gave birth to the decadent jazz feel of "Go Now." "When Patty brought that in, it was a standard like Willie Nelson would write," Joyce says. "I had a drum sequence I wanted to try on it, but I called up a vibe sound instead of drums, and it started going *clonk, clank, clonk, clank*. A lot of things like

records

lenny kravitz



that happened—things that were actually mistakes, but we learned to live with them and eventually decided we couldn't live without them."

It takes a strong song to turn accidents into bits of inspiration, and Griffin supplies the goods. Her writing is economical but compelling, with solid changes and melodies which her singing helps make memorable. Throughout the album she pushes her voice to extremes, from languid intimacy to the climactic. Tori Amos-like wail at the end of "Wiggley Fingers." For Joyce, working with these tracks was something like a jeweler's labor with a rare, rough diamond.

"My hardest job was to get the right kind of vocal sound on her at my house," he says, "because her dynamics would go from a whisper to a scream. Most of it was done straight-ahead on a Neumann U67; luckily, I have Neve 1064 mic pres that make everything sound nice and warm. I also ran her vocal a lot into a [Lexicon] PCM-70, which is like an infinite reverb; it lets you grab any note and stretch it out as long as you want until you ride it down with the fader."

Prickly with vocal and guitar hooks, sleek with Roland JV-1080 and MC-303 textures, *Flaming Red* is an earfeast of contrasting textures. Yet the track

that sonically stands out is the primitive "Peter Pan." The muffled solo piano, out of tune and tinny with age, and Griffin's reflective, low-key delivery take us into a dark room, threaded with cobwebs and wistful regrets. It was, in fact, recorded on the old upright in the singer's house, where she had written the tune the night before. "I was flying blind," Joyce admits. "I had one mic for her piano and her voice, six inches from her mouth—it was a Gene Lawson L47, made here in Nashville. That experience taught me that necessity really is the mother of invention. If you don't have it all at the touch of a button, you're going to come up with

something more interesting by using your noggin."

As for Griffin, the lesson of *Flaming Red* is that every format harbors its own potential for inspiration. "When you record with other musicians, the songs aren't necessarily created just by the acoustic guitar," she says. "It's more direct when you're doing solo, but the grooves of other musicians encourage you to let the arrangements provide the feeling."

As musicians, we can take the hint from Griffin and Joyce and let our imaginations point the way past the gear, through the contributions of our colleagues, and back toward ourselves.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Lenny Kravitz

5 (Virgin)

For the last nine years, the name Lenny Kravitz and the term "retro purist" have been interchangeable. Based on the evidence of his four previous albums, which have looked stubbornly backwards for their sonic and stylistic cues, it'd be hard to dispute that the man's basic credo is something along the lines of "all analog, all tube, all the time." So how can it be that the latest addition to the Kravitz catalog was recorded not to two-inch analog tape but to *hard disk*? Please, Lenny, what happened?

"I guess I'm rebelling," Kravitz says with a chuckle. "After working in the same format for so long, I wanted to try something new. And with [Digidesign] Pro Tools, it's so easy to access things and move things around. I didn't use it in the past because I didn't like the way it sounded, but now it's at a point where I can deal with the way it sounds. People are saying I've gone digital, but all the sounds are still analog and the board's analog. The only thing you're missing is hiss, so any noise that's on there is something that I wanted on there. It was cool to start off with a silent palette."

How does the new, high-tech Kravitz sound? Not so different from the old Kravitz, actually, though maybe a tad clearer and more clinical. As in the past, he handles the lion's share of instruments and vocals, with the notable exception of "Straight Cold Player," a loose jam featuring Lenny's road band and some clever quoting from Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance." Elsewhere, a trio of female backing vocalists and a solid horn section liven up a few tracks. Besides two songs with drum programming, there's little here that sounds at all post-1980, and the obligatory references, from Hendrix to Prince, are all present and accounted for.

5's hottest moments come at the beginning, with three brilliantly crafted, groove-happy tunes ("Live," "Super Soul Fighter," and "I Belong to You") that pay conspicuous tribute to the spirits of, among others, Sly Stone and Curtis Mayfield. After that, gears shift and we're launched into the pulsating machinescape of "Black Velveteen," which Kravitz says was intended to sound like "a cross between a Giorgio Moroder/Donna

Summer thing and Kiss' "I Was Made for Loving You." Though undeniably catchy, the song suffers from what is a common malady here: It keeps going and going for no apparent reason. The rest of the album is marred by similarly overlong, repetitious numbers, though there are a few bright spots, particularly the nasty guitar solo on "Take Time" and the ultra-funky "It's Your Life," driven by a frisky Hohner Clavinet line run through an envelope filter pedal. (Kravitz doesn't remember the model, but describes it as "purple"

Liquid Soul

Make Some Noise (Ark 21)

If Liquid Soul wasn't so likable, their crafty blend of styles would seem way too calculated. But it's hard to muster serious complaints about *Make Some Noise*, the irresistible second album from this exuberant Chicago collective, which cheerfully blends funk, big-band jazz, salsa, hip-hop, pop, and rock without missing a beat. Fronted by a swell (and loud!) three-piece horn section, the band is the brainchild of sax



liquid soul

and "not a Mu-Tron.")

Despite its bold foray into new technological territory and the presence of several excellent songs, 5 doesn't quite stand up with Lenny Kravitz's best work. Maybe next time he should make more use of what most people like best about Pro Tools: its editing capabilities.

—Mac Randall

enthusiast Mars Williams, whose résumé includes gigs with everyone from John Zorn to the Psychedelic Furs. This time, he's out to please the crowd, and he succeeds gloriously.

The group pays homage to the gods of airplay on "I Want You to Want Me" (not the Cheap Trick song), a sultry interlude that features guest singer Trine Rein. But the real story lies

elsewhere, in the way Williams, trumpeter Ron Haynes, and trombonist John Janowiak cram maximum blowing into loosely structured tracks without surrendering to self-indulgence. While tunes such as "Ricky's Hat" and "My Three S.O.B.s" are more riffs than full-fledged compositions, the solos often dazzle: Madly stuffing ideas into these concise songs, most under five minutes, Williams and company suggest thrill-crazed crusaders caught up in a

game of beat the clock, desperate to share their passions before the buzzer.

That sense of distilling onstage elements for the studio, where 160-bar solos won't fly, gives *Make Some Noise* its edge. (Even the bonafide live tracks don't run overlong.) As producer, Williams understood the need to adapt the band's freewheeling vibe to a more restricted setting without sacrificing energy. "I'd record the rhythm section together live in the studio, sometimes with

just me playing along as a guide track," he notes. "Then I might cut the horns playing together to keep the live feel going, and sometimes I'd put them on top of my original guide track, doubling my sax to enhance the sound."

Engineer Rick Barnes says he wanted to "get a lot of definition" when cutting the horns. "Each horn had its own mic, and we also hung a room mic above for ambience. I'm fond of either a Microtech mic or the new AKG C12 for saxes, the AKG C414 for the trumpet, and the Electro-Voice RE20 for trombone. Depending on the tune, the room mic was either a Shure stereo mic, a Crown SASS-P MK2, or a C12. Having nice preamps and precompressors also made a big difference in terms of warmth; I was going through either Telefunken or Neve mic pres, then I'd go into an ADL or Summit Audio compressor."

Some ingredients in the eclectic musical recipe—specifically, hip-hop—are clearly less important than others. Following a glimpse of Dizzy Gillespie's "Salt Peanuts," highlighted by nimble scatting from Kurt Elling, rapper Dirty M.F. acquits himself in capable, though unremarkable, fashion on the leisurely "Chocolate Covered Nut." Likewise, samples of old-school stalwarts Kurtis Blow and Run-DMC are ear-catching yet nonessential.

"Make Some Noise sizzles when Liquid Soul strikes a balance between the material and the players' raw power, for example on the sunny, Latin-flavored "Yankee Girl" and the galloping "No Cents," where beefy brass licks and a snippet of James Brown's "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" spark comparisons with the Godfather's great horn outfit of yore. The immortal JB's also haunt the wonderfully caffeinated "Threadin' the Needle," with Williams' lusty outbursts recalling Maceo Parker and the chicken-scratch guitar of Tommy Sanchez (Liquid Soul's secret weapon) echoing Jimmy Nolen.

Williams has no problem with such comparisons, observing, "the JB's were a fiery, nonstop, kick-ass, in-your-face band that moved people. I hope we can have the same effect."

That's a tall order, but on *Make Some Noise* Liquid Soul gets the job done more often than not. Assuming they had half as much fun as the grooves suggest, the sessions must have been one cool party.

—Jon Young

Mitchell Froom

Dopamine (Atlantic)

After years of producing other artists' hits, Mitchell Froom takes his turn in the spotlight with this debut album. It's a quick appearance, though; the whole thing runs less than half an hour, and the longest of the ten cuts runs to less than three-and-a-half minutes. Despite this, and the fact that the material was recorded sporadically over a three-year period, Froom's ironic, literate vision ties it together into what might qualify as ambient music for lounge lizards with short attention spans.

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Golden Smog

MORE THAN A SIDELINE

Having a day job is a mixed blessing: It helps you pay the rent, but it cuts into the time you'd like to spend writing, recording, and especially going on the road. Things get even more complicated when your day job involves playing with a successful band. What happens when you want to tackle a sideline project with some full-time players who also want a break from their normal musical routine?

That's the question being asked last spring by members of Golden Smog, a former tongue-in-cheek all-star cover band that has developed into a serious artistic endeavor. Its roster reads like a hip radio playlist, with participants including members of Wilco, the Jayhawks, Big Star, Soul Asylum, and Run Westy Run. With all the success these folks enjoy in their main gigs, why muddy up their calendars with a side project at all?

"Golden Smog has always been weird to me," says Wilco guitarist and singer Jeff Tweedy. "I recorded the Smog record *Down By the Old Main Stream* before Wilco's *AM* ever came out, and I wasn't exactly sure how Wilco would be received after Uncle Tupelo broke up. It was a real release for me to play with other people on this project. I'd played with the same guys for twelve years, from high school on. In this setup, you don't come in imposing your preconceptions of what it's supposed to be, so you always take something new away from it. Anything you do musically contributes to everything you do musically from that point on, especially if you love it."

There's also the element of establishing personal and professional relationships you can build on in the future. As Jayhawks singer/guitarist Gary Louris puts it, "Some guys go on hunting trips or golf outings or do something to show that they love each other without actually having to talk about it. This is our way of doing that." Jayhawks bassist Marc Perlman, who's also in Golden Smog, emphasizes that the outside work helps clear the slate for his main band: "We were working on 'Until you Came Along,' which was originally a Jayhawks song, and the more we played it, the more we realized it was more suited for Golden Smog." Echoes Louris, "A certain kind of song fits Golden Smog. You need everybody's input

and involvement. You do it fairly quickly, and it's a magical thing. If you're trying to be too in control and detailed, it's probably something you should do with your own band."

The six current members of this somewhat revolving-door operation are holed up at Ardent Studios in Memphis, Tennessee. Their newest member is Big Star drummer Jody Stephens, who also manages Ardent. "Jody's pretty much why we're here in Memphis,"



Greg Louris, third from right: "This is kind of a buddy band. That's what people like about it."

states Paulson, whose work as producer for Golden Smog he describes as "part marriage counselor, part administrator."

There's an undeniable personal dimension at work at this session. Toward the end of the night, Stephens approaches Louris and somewhat shyly hands him a sheet of paper with his lyrics for "Whisper," the song they've started working on. Louris and the rest of the group take to these words immediately, and as the track comes together, with Stephens singing a harmony part, a warm vibe fills the room. Clearly, for everyone in the studio, this is more than just a sideline exercise.

"It's a lot more serious," insists Perlman. "It's a weird dimension between being a side project and your main source for making music, kind of like bigamy: You spend most of your time with one wife, but you're married to someone else as well."—Maureen Herman

mitchell from



From achieves this by a combination of exotic instrumentation, accessible hooks, and irregular chord changes. Middle Eastern flavors animate much of the record, as a parade of guest vocalists passes by, though very little of what they deliver really showcases their individual talents. Instead, each performer—Los Lobos' David Hidalgo, Cibo Matto's Miho Hatori, M. Doughty of Soul Coughing, Sheryl Crow, Lisa Germano, Mark Eitzel, Froom's wife Suzanne Vega, and the others—melts into the Froomish mood.

"That's just how they dealt with the material," the producer shrugs. "I was hoping that this would

be an arranger's record in the tradition of guys like Henry Mancini, who have studied music. This sort of project would normally be done today by people who just put loops and samples together; this has a bit more composition and depth to it."

The arranger reference is crucial. There are plenty of odd devices thrown into his mix, with Froom on such creaky keyboards as a Chamberlin and a Harmonium, and even an ancient optical disk drive machine called an Optigon, all extracted from his collection. But when he uses more mainstream stuff, the parts he writes are deadly effective: On "Wave," which

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evokes Danny Elfman's twisted *Pee Wee's Playhouse* scores, he hauls in four strings to play a total of four bars, yet that brief episode is written and placed to perfection. Froom's rule is: maximum mileage from minimum gestures.

Rule number two: The truth is in the details. The howling racket on "Monkey Mind" is interrupted once by a solo bossa-nova guitar break. Anarchy? Not at all: Steve Donnelly's rhythm actually duplicates the beat laid down by the drums on the louder parts, so we get contrast and continuity at the same time. Ron Sexmith's languid vocal on "Overcast" seems pinched through a megaphone. In fact, he sang through a funky little mic someone noticed in the studio, attached to a prehistoric low-budget reel-to-reel recorder. The whirling Arabian rhythm of "Tastes Good" sounds like it was cut live, but it was actually two loops—a shuffle on a tabla and a straight beat on shaker, kick, and snare—tied together by Jerry Marotta's half-time drum overdub.

Then there was "Fruta Prohibida," which ten musicians recorded live through one Neumann KU 100 mic—except for Mark Feldman's violin part. "I said, 'Okay, Mark, this is in A minor. Now, play as if you're working for tips in a restaurant, showing off in gypsy style. Take your shoes off, walk around the mic, and play—but don't listen to the track.' So that's what he did. It was one take, and it was amazing." The same can be said for the spirit of *Dopamine*, and the music it engendered.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Pimp Daddy Nash

Private Leftfield Downtempo Fuzz
(World Domination)

London. Paris. New York. Orlando.... Orlando? Not all plunderphonica comes from the world's vast urban megalopolises. Residing in sunny Florida, 31-year-old Pimp Daddy Nash rescues old records and gear from a Salvation Army store, which apparently has been overlooked by the sample-hungry masses. *Private Leftfield Downtempo Fuzz* resounds with Radio Shack MG1 Moog and ARP 2600 synths, a Wurlitzer Select-A-Rhythm drum machine, and esoteric spoken-word records sampled from a renovated 1956 Zenith console stereo.

"I took me an hour to fix the Zenith," recalls the Pimp. "Then once I dropped the needle, I heard that static and laid back on the couch and watched the glow of the tubes."

Other records sampled here include *F.L.I.G.H.T. Final* (a Christian record that describes the soul's final trip to eternity), 1962's *How to Talk Hip* (featuring Geetz Romo), and *Dr. Murray Banks Speaks on the Drama of Sex*, all manipulated on Ensoniq ASR10 and ASRX samplers, a Power Mac, and a Mackie SR24 board.

But far from a spot-the-sample approach, Pimp uses his geographical outpost to cross stylistic boundaries into a sparse, streamlined trip-hop persona. Jump jazz lurks in more than a



pimp daddy nash

few tunes, as in the skip-hopping "Jump, Jive, and Wail" and the rambling "Shakin' Down Crooked I." "Chick Packin' Stack Back" recalls Detroit techno by way of a hypnotic interstate drive, while "The Sixty Nine Affair" suggests an episode from *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*; the simmering "La Femme C'est Mysterie" merges the sultry ambience of France's DJ Cam with what must be an Erroll Garner piano solo.

Pimp Daddy Nash is cool like Iceberg Slim and Clark Kent, yet as silly as Daffy Duck. Listen up, and you'll hear those worlds collide.

—Ken Micallef

Jimmie Vaughan

Out There (Epic)

Jimmie Vaughan's second album is like muddy topsoil—a combination of essential elements that, in just the right proportion, help beautiful things grow. The Texas fret-burner's *Out There*

captures his blossoming as a solo artist via back-to-basics songs about women and automobiles, which double as metaphors for the spiritual and artistic journey he's been on since achieving sobriety and losing his brother, Stevie Ray. They are cloaked in the familiar trappings of rippling blues guitars and shuffle beats, soul grooves, and vocal arrangements that tap the celestial richness of doo-wop's glory days. Those are Vaughan's musical first loves—and in the drive of his top-flight band, superb six-stringing, and harmonies that couch most of his exuberant choruses, Vaughan never compromises his faithfulness.

He also keeps faith with us. Jimmie Vaughan is the guy who made the original Thunderbirds so Fabulous, the guitarist who matched Stevie Ray's stone virtuosity on the Vaughan Brothers' *Family Style* album. When he makes a recording, we expect damn good guitar playing, and here Vaughan comes out slaying from the git-go, placing one- and two-note phrases between his

vocal lines on the Niles Rodgers-penned opener "Like a King" with the precision of a bricklayer. His spiky-toned Stratocaster spreads prickly heat on "Motorhead Baby," one of the first tunes Johnny "Guitar" Watson cut in the fifties. He purrs a warm vibrato, using his Strat's bridge pickup and a funky Silvertone amp, to make like B. B. King on "Positively Meant to Be." And when he settles down with his no-name wooden

archtop acoustic from the Twenties to pinch out the crying, walking one-man instrumental blues "Little Son Big Son," he admits to conceiving it as a tribute to Little Son Jackson, Sun Ra, the sun, the Son of God, the notion we're all sons of a "creator," and Vaughan's own place in the world as a son and father (whew!). In any event, the depth and simplicity of his performance recalls the Buddhist notion that the universe's

secrets can be found in a single blade of grass.

And Vaughan's still searching. "You know the little RCA dog?" he asks. "Well, that's where I'm at, with my ear cocked up and listening. Freedom and honesty are where it's at for me. I'm discovering things."

One discovery is just how far he can go with basic tools. All of *Out There* was done with the yellow Strat he's played for twenty years and a new Tex-Mex model, both stock. His amps were an old Tweed Fender with a single 12" speaker, a "little bitty" Fifties Silvertone "that looks like a table or a radio," a small Matchless, and a Kendrick. Each is a little bigger than a six-pack cooler. "I used no gizmos," he says. "The Tex-Mex has a bit more wind on the treble pickup, and that's it. I do set my action up a little higher than most people with Fenders, to get more of the sound of the string. That's how I get my tone."

That, and playing his notes with the slow beauty of dripping amber. But Vaughan hopes listeners will take note of his lyrics too, which he says frequently detail more than earthly relationships. "You can love a woman or the world or God or whatever," he says. "I admit more than people might think in my lyrics." Confession, apparently, is good for the soul.

—Ted Drozdowski



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Rocket from the Crypt

RFTC (Interscope)

Producer Kevin Shirley had a tough task in front of him. Going into the *RFTC* sessions with slobbery slab-rockers Rocket from the Crypt, he swore to himself that he would "capture the energy of a band that plays like Rocket does and make a kickass record." A worthy ambition of nigh impossible feat, given the group's rabid, party-on-wheels live rep: Once you've heard its strange punk/soul/rockabilly hybrid in concert, no timid studio recording will suffice. The secret, Shirley decided, was that there is no secret. As he'd previously done with Aerosmith and the Black Crowes, he concentrated on sorting out all sonic problems in preproduction. "And by the time we came to the studio, everyone was playing great, so I just put 'em in there and they played and played and played. Then I took all of their best performances and chopped 'em together. All of it is live."

The ploy worked. *RFTC* is as beautifully muddy and sloppily pell-mell as a Rocket gig, and the louder you crank the volume, the more like a show it feels. In "Break It Up," for instance, one gravelly guitar riff stutters in, picks up a cool perambulating pace, then collides with a wall of horns and Bowser-big Fiftiesish backing vocals, all the while keeping Crypt crooner Speedo shouldered atop the mix. In other places—"I Know" and "Dick on a Dog"—the mix threatens to drown Speedo, which only makes him angrier, makes him struggle more valiantly to be heard.

The best card up Rocket's frayed sleeve is its

lunkheaded sense of humor. It doesn't take itself—or any of the *RFTC* proceedings—too seriously. "Back in the State" is a burly, hairy-chested ode to being, well, back in California. But Speedo howls every lyric like his life depended on it, all the way up to a tribal "hey-hah, hey-hah" chant on the chorus. In fact, the cut is so wildly non-cerebral it sounds like the musicians were several sheets to the beer-swilling wind when they tracked it. Tank up at the tap, raise a glass to Shirley's success, and enjoy the show.

—Tom Lanham

enjoy the biggest hit of their career: a re-release of "Time of the Season"—or that, thirty years later, *Odyssey* would be accorded the classic status of *Sgt. Pepper* and *Pet Sounds* in some circles and remain influential (ask Eric Matthews and the Sneetches, among others) among a younger generation of musicians.

Still, in this era of box-set mania, you can't help but be a little suspicious when a band that put out only two albums turns up with a four-CD retrospective—plus a reissue of *Odyssey* in mono and stereo with outtakes. There are grounds for

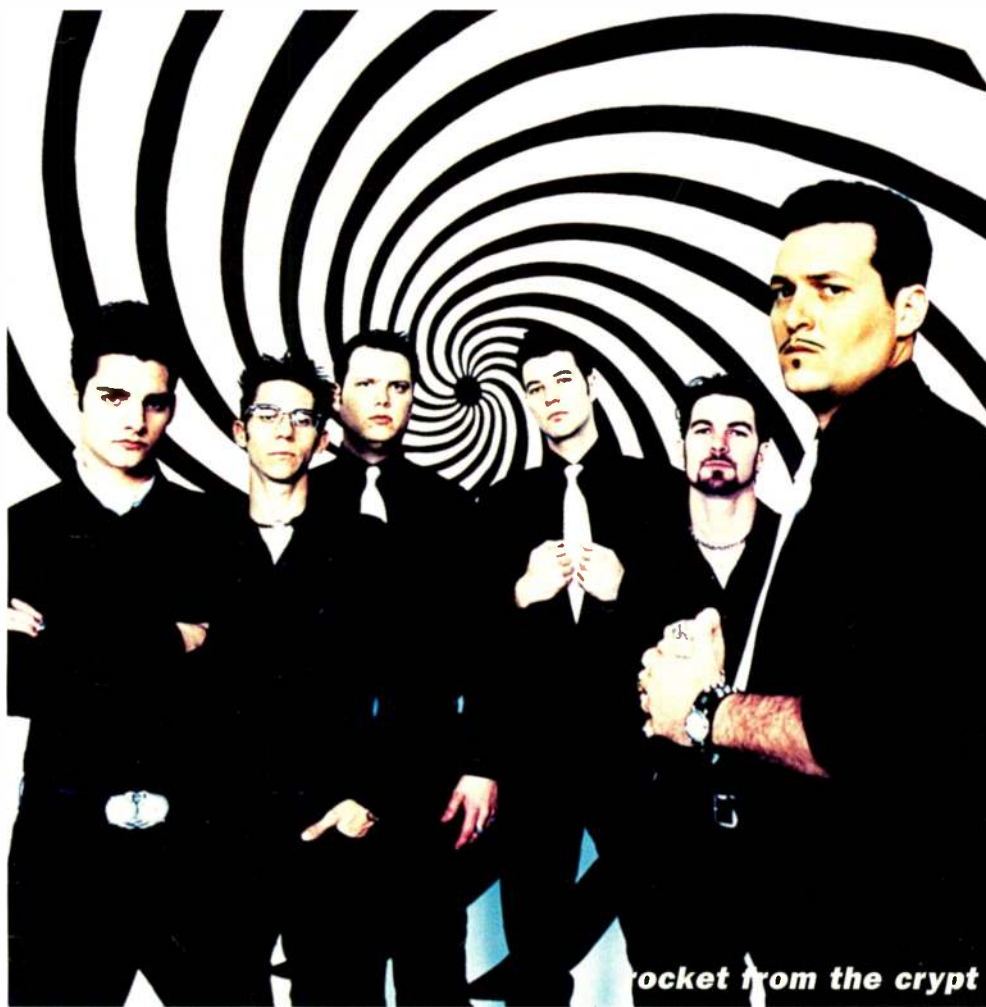
instrumentation throughout their catalog was Sixties simple: Ludwig drums, Hohner Mark I Pianet (with sticky action), Fender Precision bass, and Gretsch and Rickenbacker guitars; though the group recorded originally through a tiny amp called the Watkins Dominator—great name!—by the time they cut their most memorable material they'd moved up to Vox AC-30s like everyone else. The album was entirely recorded on four tracks, with bass, drums, and guitar crammed onto one track; the resulting mono mixes, while warm-sounding, won't impress anyone but Zombie zealots.

There's better news on disc one of the box set *Zombie Heaven*, which makes an excellent case for putting the Zombies at the front of the ridiculously over-achieving class of '64, along with the Kinks, the Stones, the Who, the Animals, and the Fabs. Most of their early original work is knock-out quality, as the songwriting of Rod Argent and Chris White, along with Colin Blunstone's vocals, create a moody, introspective, and frequently minor-key feel that's more sophisticated and in many ways more distinctive than the work of their peers—in short, it's a hefty slice of British Invasion heaven.

Disc two starts with a stereo version of *Odyssey and Oracle* (excepting a mono "This Will Be Our Year"), which doesn't seem to differ much from the single CD stereo version, and continues with *The Lost Album*—actually a pastiche of post-*Odyssey* tracks recorded at the behest of their U.S. label once "Time of the Season" became a big hit, along with older, unfinished tracks overdubbed into serviceable shape. The remaining discs cover rare and unissued material and BBC performances.

All in all, it's surprising how good this stuff is. It makes you wonder what might have been if the band had been able to stay together longer—according to White, they parted on good terms and still stay in touch. White and Rod Argent went on to work in the band Argent, where, at Argent's suggestion, they agreed to split all the songwriting credits, even though they wrote songs separately. As Argent had composed most of the Zombies' A-sides and thus reaped a bigger share of the publishing royalties, this struck White as a gracious proposal—at which point he promptly wrote the mega-hit "Hold Your Head Up" and had to pony up half the receipts to Rod. All part of life's rich bouquet. . . .

—Thurston Kelp



The Zombies

Zombie Heaven (BigBeat)

Odyssey & Oracle: 10th Anniversary Edition (BigBeat)

Perhaps the group most frequently overlooked in modern evaluations of the British pop explosion of the Sixties is the Zombies, no doubt because of their brief five-year tenure. Their declining fortunes toward the end gave them little reason to suspect that two years after the release of their second—and last—album, *Odyssey and Oracle*, they would

those suspicions: Though *Odyssey* is full of interesting tunes and fresh ideas, such as the extensive use of Mellotron and the guitar run through a Leslie speaker on "Beechwood Park," it's also a grab-bag of Sixties affectations and pretensions that often undermines otherwise focused songwriting and inventive arranging. Still, if its charms are modest when compared to the milestone albums of the era, the Zombies certainly got their money's worth out of their tiny (£2,300) budget.

According to guitarist Chris White, the



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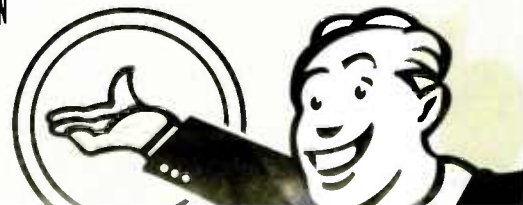
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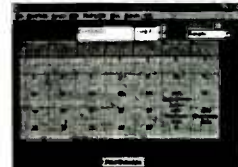
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product index

Here's our product guide which lists the equipment and page number where the players talk about the gear they use. Feel free to call or fax the manufacturers listed below for specific information on what the best players play.

AKAI, 7010 Soquel Dr., Aptos, CA, 95003, (800) 433-5627: S2800 sampler, S3200XL sampler, **26**; MPC2000 sequencer, **3S**

AKG, 1449 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN, 37217, (615) 399-2199: microphones, **26**; C12 microphone, C414, **84**

ALESIS, 3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90016, (310) 558-4530: XTC digital reverb, **26**; ADAT, **3S**

ARBORETUM SYSTEMS, 595 Smith St., Farmingdale, NY, 11735, (516) 391-5400: MetaSynth, **63**

ATARI, 1196 Borregas Ave., Sunnydale, CA, 94089, 408-745-2000: 1040 STE computer, **26**

AUDIO-TECHNICA, 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH, 44224, (216) 686-2600: 4050 vocal microphone, **71**

BELLARI, 5143 S Main St, Salt Lake City, UT, 84107, (801)263-9053: dual tube compressor/limiter, **26**

BOSS, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: AW-2 Auto Wah, **77**

CROWN INT'L, 1718 W Mishwaka Rd., Elkhart, IN, 46517, (219) 294-8000: SASS-P MK2 microphone, C12 microphone, **84**

DBX, 8760 S Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT, 84070, (801) 568-7660: 263X de-esser, 120XP Subharmonic Synthesizer, **26**

DIGIDESIGN, 1360 Willow Rd., Ste. 101, Menlo Park, CA, 94025, (800) 333-2137: Pro Tools software, **83**

DOD ELECTRONICS, 8760 S. Sandy Parkway, Sandy, UT, 84070, (800) 999-9363: FX-25B, **76**

DOLBY LABS, 100 Portrero Ave., San Francisco, CA, 94103-4813, (415) 558-0200: Spectral Processor, **26**

DRAWNER, Charlotte St., Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England, WF1 1UH, 44 019 24378669: Dual Gate DS 201, **26**

E-MU, 1600 Green Hills Rd., Scotts Valley, CA, 95066, (408) 438-1921: Proteus 1 digital sound module, **26**; Planet Phat, **3S**

ELECTRO-HARMONIX/SOVTEK, 20 Cooper Square, 4th Floor, New York, NY, 10003, (212) 529-0466: Vocoder, **26**; Q-Tron, **78**

ELECTRO-VOICE, 600 Cecil St., Buchanan, MI, 49107, (800) 234-6831: microphone, **26**; RE20 microphone, **84**

ENSONIQ, 155 Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern, PA, 19355, (610) 647-3630: ASR10 sampler, ASRX sampler, **87**

FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, 7975 N Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ, 85258, (602) 596-9690: Stratocaster, Electric XII twelve-string, Vibrolux amp, **26**

FOSTEX, 15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA, 90650, (562) 7FO-STEX: DMT-8vL, **72**; D-90, **74**

FURMAN SOUND, 30 Rich St., Greenbrae, CA, 94904, (415) 927-1225: AR-1215 voltage regulator, **3S**

GRETSCH, P.O. Box 2468, Savannah, GA, 31402, (912) 748-1101: Synchronomatic acoustic guitar, Chet Atkins Country Gentleman, Exclusive Electromatic amp, **26**

HAMER GUITARS, 20 Old Windsor Rd., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT, 6002, (860) 509-8891: Artist Ultimate Guitar, **67**

IBANEZ, 1726 Winchester Rd, Bensalem, PA, 19020, (215) 638-8670: AW-5 Auto Wah, **77**

KORG, 316 S Service Rd., Melville, NY, 11747-3201, (516) 333-9100: X5 keyboard, **3S**

LEXICON, 3 Oak Park Rd, Bedford, MA, 01730-1441, (617) 280-0300: FX multiple processor, **26**; MPX1 digital effects processor, **3S**; PCM-70, **82**

LUDWIG & MUSSER INDUSTRIES, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, IN, 46515, (219) 522-1675: drum set, **26**

MACKIE DESIGNS, 16220 Wood-Red Rd. NE, Woodinville, WA, 98072, (800) 258-6883: SR24 board, **87**

MARK OF THE UNICORN, 1280 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA, 2138, (617) 576-2760: Performer 5.5 software, **74**

MARTIN, 510 Sycamore St., P.O. Box 329, Nazareth, PA, 18064, (800) 345-3103: PEQ 500 EQ, **26**

NEUMANN USA, 6 Vista Drive, Old Lyme, CT, 6371, (203) 434-5220, U-47: KM85 microphones, **2S**; U67 microphone, **82**; KU 100 mic, **87**

ONBERHEIM, 2230 Livingston St., Oakland, CA, 94606, (800) 279-4346: DPX-1 sampler, SEM synth expander, Digital Sequencer, **26**

OVATION INSTRUMENTS, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT, 06002-0507, (860) 243-7941: Bass Station, **26**

PEAVEY ELECTRONICS, 711 A St., Meridian, MS, 39301, (601) 483-5365: Envoy 110 practice amp, **74**

ROCKTRON, 2870 Technology Dr., Rochester Hills, MI, 48309, (800) 263-ROCK: PC Preamp, **66**

ROLAND, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: SDE-3000 digital delay, **26**; JV-1080, MC-303, **82**

SENNHEISER, 1 Enterprise Dr, Old Lyme, CT, 6371, (860) 434-9190: HD265 headphones, **3S**

SHURE BROTHERS, 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL, 60202, (800) 257-4873: microphones, **26**; Beta 58A microphone, **3S**; stereo mic, **84**; SM57 microphone, **71**

SONY ELECTRONICS, 3 Paragon Dr., Montvale, NJ, 7645, (201) 930-1000: 60ES Super DAT, **26**

SOUNDCRAFT, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA, 91329, (818) 894-8850: Spirit Rack Pack, **3S**

SUMMIT AUDIO, PO Box 1678, Los Gatos, CA, 95031, (408)395-2448: compressor, **84**

TASCAM, 7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA, 90640, (213) 726-0303: DA-30MK DAT machine, **26**; DA-30 MKII DAT player, CD-401 MKII CD player, 122 MKII cassette recorder, **3S**; DA-88, **70**

UREI, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA, 91329, (818) 894-8850: 1176 LN peak limiter, **26**

VOODOO LAB/DMC, 5312-J Derry Ave., Agoura Hills, CA, 91301, (818) 991-3881: Pedal Power Supply, **66**

VOX, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY, 11747-3201, (516)333-9100: V830 distortion booster pedal, **67**

YAMAHA, 6600 Orangethorpe Blvd., Buena Park, CA, 90622, (714) 522-9011: SPS90 effects processor, **26**; QY20 workstation, **3S**; RY10 drum machine, **74**; 02R, **70**

From Beer to Eternity

A lesson in learning from bad breaks on the road.

One morning in October '97, after about six months on tour as keyboardist and backup singer with 7mary3, I woke up to a tumultuous stretch of highway, roughly two hours from our destination of Knoxville. Standing in the front lounge of the bus, I had to hold onto the seats to keep my balance. Suddenly the fridge door swung open, and four or five beer bottles smashed onto the floor beside me. The bus rocked, and I fell forward into the shards of glass, which punctured my right palm between my middle finger and thumb and left my forefinger immobile. Luckily, our drummer Giti has a degree in sports medicine, and he bandaged me up tight.

After arriving in Knoxville I immediately headed to a hospital. The diagnosis was not good: I had likely severed a tendon to my right pointer finger, which would require major surgery and up to twelve weeks (!) of rehab. On top of that I had to figure out what to do about the show! Fortunately, the guys in the band were tremendously supportive. They even suggested that I perform most of the songs left-handed. I tried it on a soundcheck, and everyone said it would fly. We only ended up cutting two or three songs from the set, for which others were rotated in.

I connected with a hand specialist in Cincinnati on our next day off. He told me I had two severed tendons and recommended hand surgery ASAP. I said, "How's tomorrow?" and got an appointment for nine in the morning. With the band scheduled to leave for Georgia after the show that night, their manager offered to pay for my hotel room on

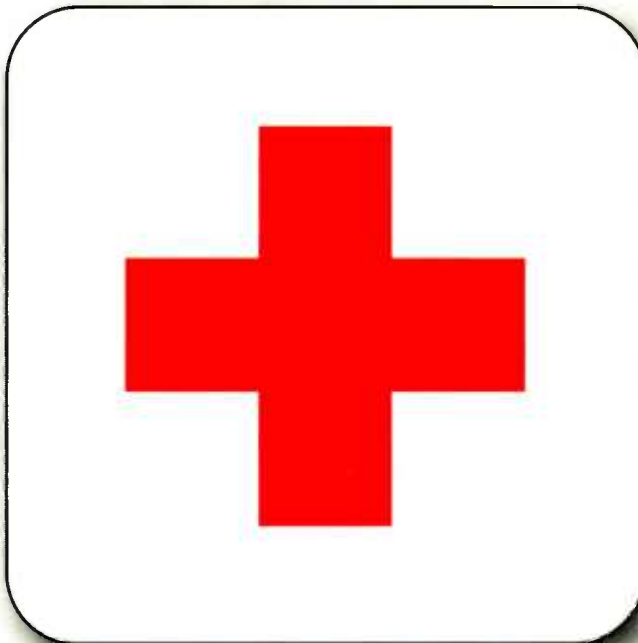
Wednesday and a flight to Georgia on Thursday. As there is no official worker's comp for most touring situations, the band also said it would take care of any medical bills my insurance wouldn't cover.

The operation was a success, and the following morning I flew to

Georgia. Over the next few weeks I had checkups in Rochester, NY, and Washington, DC. I had to begin rehab, but without the benefit of a therapist to guide me, I got a printed sheet of directions and did it myself, every day on the road. The stitches came out in Miami, roughly four weeks after the operation. By Thanksgiving I was integrating a finger or two. By mid-December I could finally play the songs we had cut from the list two months earlier, and by New Year's Eve I felt close to 100 percent.

The lesson is that attitude can make all the difference in healing. Also, I found that by using the time to work on my left-hand chords, I found that when I integrated my right hand again there was more versatility in my playing and more discretion in my right-hand phrasing. And I spent a lot more time just listening, which is always beneficial. My advice is to be prepared for anything—you *cannot* beat good health insurance!—but when the worst happens, make the best out of it, and you'll find you can often come out ahead.—**Robbie Gennet**

Contributors: Robbie Gennet's solo album, *The Dream*, is available from Niggle's Music at rgband@aol.com.



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