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JULY 1981 80p.

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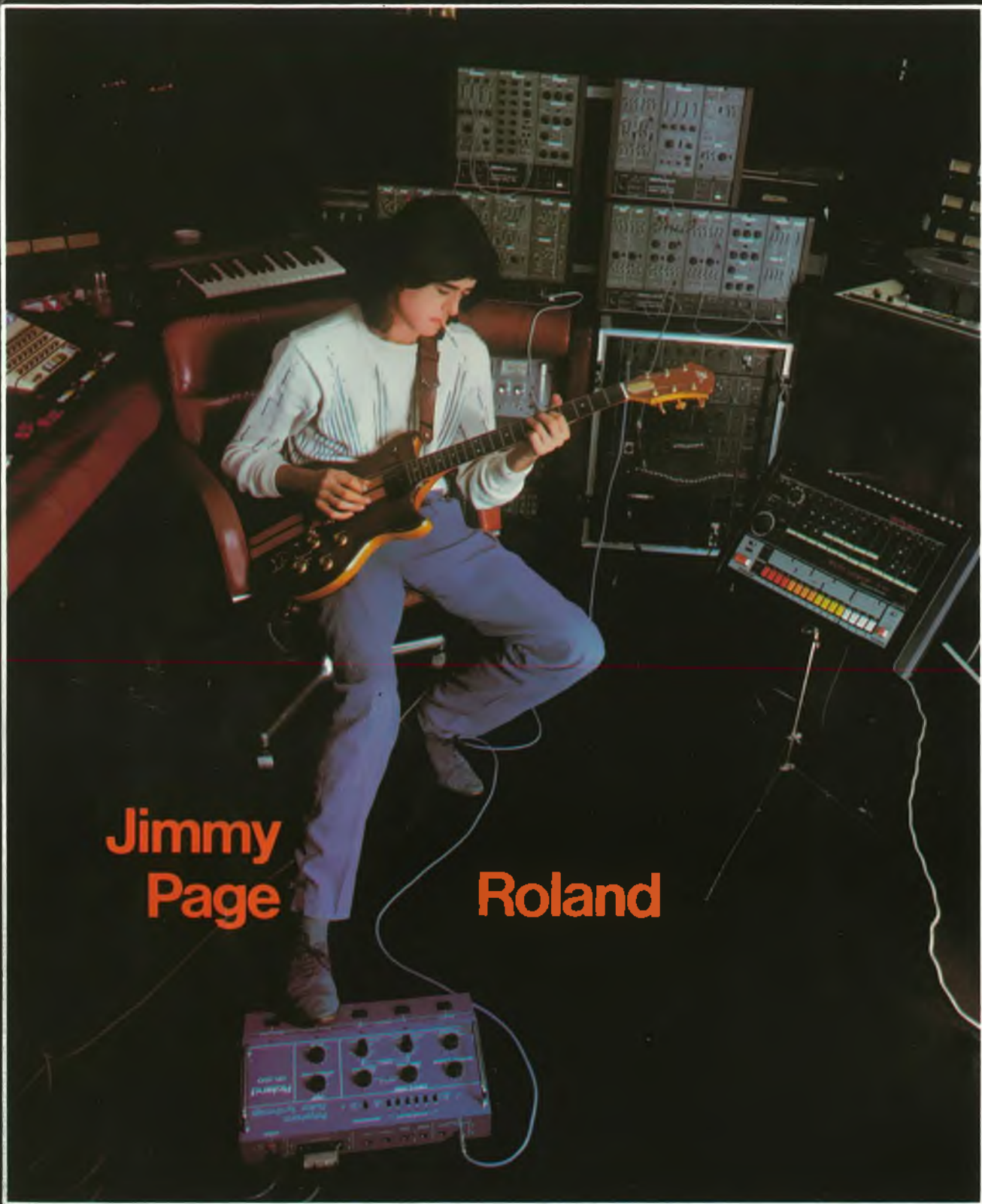
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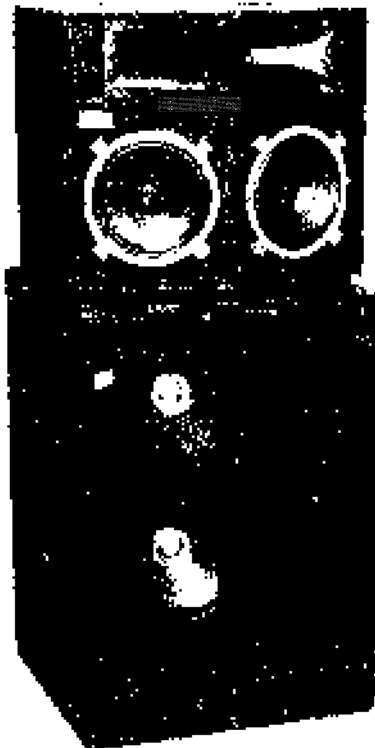
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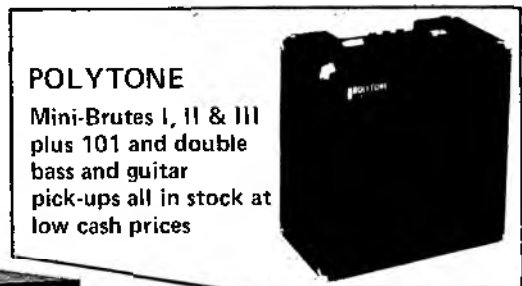
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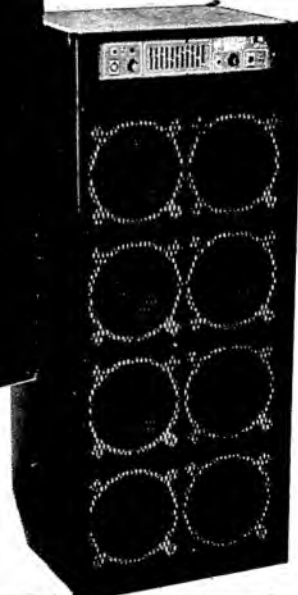
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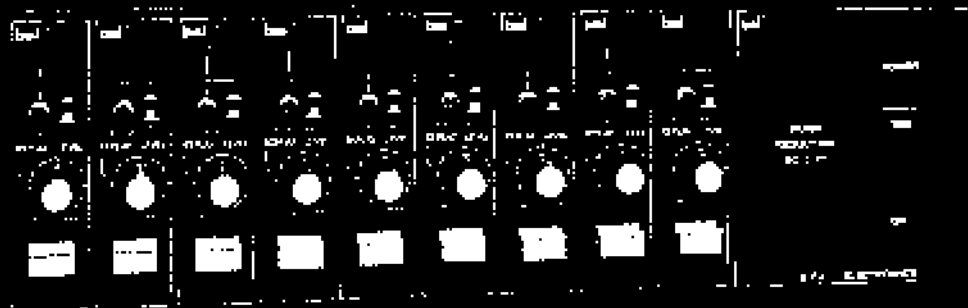
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EDITORIAL

WHY NO VENUE?

Recent stirrings in the super-star bracket from such artists as Bob Dylan, The Pink Floyd and Bruce Springsteen have underlined, yet again, the appalling shortage of even adequately-equipped auditoria in every city in the country. Punters, as usual, have been asked to pay exorbitant prices to hear their chosen artists play venues which at best should be used as Concorde museums. And yet, every time there's a cry for a major purpose-built concert hall, there's a louder response of 'Money'.

But how much money is being spent simply because there is no such purpose-built venue? Imagine, for a moment, a ten thousand seat venue, acoustically variable to take in rock, classical, opera or ballet, with an in-house system-engineered PA rig of anything up to 40K, with amps, mixers, monitors and lighting, and 24 track live recording facilities all thrown in. Now imagine the cost-reduction of staging say, a Grateful Dead gig? No articulated trucks to carry the gear, no army of roadies and hangers-on to put up in hotels: all you'd need is the musicians, their instruments, and an audience. Think on how much money has been spent by huge record corporations to 'underwrite' tours over the last ten years.

The economics become more viable. Sharing such a venue with say, the Promenade concerts which are always over-subscribed for the 6000 seater Albert Hall with its notorious acoustics, or even political party conferences where it would be possible to actually hear what "he said at the Brighton Conference," would greatly increase its chances of enticing funds from big city corporations.

Or would it? Are we prepared only to produce the music, without having somewhere to put it on imaginatively and accurately? As one well-known systems engineer and acoustic consultant has said "Nothing grieves me more than to hear professional musicians sounding awful." Unfortunately, until there's somewhere worthwhile to play, most of them will continue to do so.



Nick Mason Photo: Peter Marbury

This month International Musician takes a small and wary step into the mouth of the Pink Floyd. Rock's last enigma lets its drummer out from behind The Wall to offer a few tidbits of insight into what makes one of the world's most successful, ambitious, and indeed, oldest, bands tick. Turn to page 26 for Nick Mason's thoughts.

Reggae's surviving main-man Peter Tosh adds to the theories of Burning Spear.

Instrument checks are wide and varied as usual — from the conclusion of Ken Dibble's in-depth look at high frequency units, to a homely professional inexpensive synth from Yamaha.

Marshall WORLD

While, of course, it's always pleasing to have our established lines making Marshall music all over the world, it's also good to report on the success of new products from time to time — and the 2000 Series already looks set for a bright future and a healthy career.

We've already received enough orders to keep the factory working flat out for the foreseeable future, and we're confident that the 2000 Series will quickly become one of the real classics in the Marshall range.

Greg Lake, superstar bass player with the sadly defunct ELP is amongst the first who have placed orders for the new amps; Wishbone Ash, currently undergoing a fantastic revival in their long career in the hands of their new producer Simon Gray, have also put their name to the order pad. Old favourites, and contenders for the Loudest Band in the World Award, AC/DC continue their long and successful association with Marshall, while ex-Chicken Shack Stan Webb is yet another convert to the new range. Neil Murray, Whitesnake's bassist, is also changing over to the new Marshall sound.

It's not just the superstars, however, who are joining the queue: we've had requests and orders from up and down the country from a whole host of working musicians who know the facts; Marshall sound works for everyone, and keeps working, even when the others give up. Send the coupon in for full details!

Jim Marshall.

Jim Marshall



Whitesnake are in the vanguard of the great revival in Hard Rock with a capital 'H'. A whole new era of the power chords, the brash and *extravagant*, the loud and driving Heavy Metal Brigade is with us, and Whitesnake are right there in the thick of it. Along with Gillan, Motorhead and AC/DC, Whitesnake have been cruising the charts on both sides of the Atlantic. Their 'Come An' Get It' reached number one in several UK charts during May, and anyone who's been to see their live performances know that "if you come, you're certainly going to get it!"

Whitesnake are yet another successful spin off from possibly the heaviest band ever to have strutted the stages of rock — Deep Purple, a band which has spawned a thousand power chords and a million screaming riffs. Front-man is the amazing David Coverdale: gravel voiced and physically menacing with his flowing dark hair, David's unique vocals have a really hard job to do on stage, and one which says a lot for him and his sound engineer: he has to compete, currently, with two guitar players who always use Marshall, and soon, he'll have to take on the bass player as well!

Whitesnake contains a whole bunch of professional, determined and respected musicians — so even if your bag isn't power chords, it's worth listening to what they play: after all, they have the choice, and they still choose Marshall.

Guitar player Bernie Marsden hits the stage with his Gibson played through a customised Marshall stack and two one hundred watt heads; fellow guitarist Micky Moody — a dab hand with an acoustic when he's relaxing away from

the band's tortuous SPL! — plays a Washburn guitar through yet another specially adapted Marshall stack. He's cautious about saying exactly what's been changed inside the stack, but says that all the parts are still Marshall. Perhaps he's



David Coverdale, competing with Marshall a'int easy!

keen to hang on to his own unique sound!

In the bass department, Neil Murray swaps between an Aria and a Kramer guitar (both of which he's had extensively customised) and is just about to change over to the new Marshall 2000 Series. It seems he couldn't quite get the power

and tone out of his previous set-up, so what can the man do? Nothing, other than change over to Marshall.

Steve Paine, Whitesnake's hard-working Tour Manager, shook his head when asked about Marshall reliability. "Reliability? You can only judge that by how long it takes something to go wrong. The Marshalls don't go wrong, and that's precisely why we use them!" he told Marshall World before hurrying off to continue arrangements for a massive tour which will take in Japan and the United States.

Whitesnake have been playing for some time now — theirs has been success carved out of hard work and professional dedication, two qualities which abound in the Marshall factory.

When Whitesnake take the stage as co-headliners with AC/DC at the massive concert planned for Castle Donnington later this summer, however, they'll realise, looking out over a crowd of tens of thousands, that they've finally made it: and Marshall will be there in the background, content with knowing they've helped.

CARLSBRO SOUND CENTRES — where friendliness costs nothing.

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There are now three Carlsbro Sound Centres — in Mansfield, Nottingham and Sheffield, covering the East and North East Midlands comprehensively, although they reckon their catchment area extends right across the country! While the Mansfield and Nottingham shops are continually hitting the headlines with one promotion or

levels. Twelve drum kits are always on permanent set-up, and the staff all double as consultants, as well as salesmen. The staff in all the Carlsbro Sound Centres are all musicians, who know the local scene, know who's playing what, with whom, and where. A cup of coffee and half an hour PA consultancy is about par for the Carlsbro Sound



another, Sheffield is the place of the moment, for the store moved premises several months ago and is now firmly established in City Road. The City Road store is four shops within a shop, purpose-designed to show all the gear off to its best advantage, while retaining the close atmosphere of your local store. Demonstration facilities abound, and there's a sound-proof booth where anything can be worked out at realistic stage volume

Centre course, and there are five fully qualified engineers in Carlsbro Sound Services to take care of any technical problems whatsoever.

Carlsbro Sound Centres have a long association with Marshall — they've been Marshall specialists for ten years, and still are proud to be the main Marshall franchise holders for the East Midlands. Success, obviously, goes hand in hand with success.

Posters

What have Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Robin Trower, Jeff Beck and Ritchie Blackmore all got in common? Obviously quite a lot — but what concerns us is that all six of them have relied on Marshall to produce their rock solid guitar sound.

International Musician has committed their faces to a Mount Rushmore-like full

colour illustration alongside our exciting new Marshall JCM Lead Series head and stack: readers of Marshall World can obtain full poster size (690mm x 450mm) prints by sending a cheque or Postal Order for only £1.50, made payable to Jim Marshall (Products) Ltd. to: Poster Offer: Jim Marshall (Products) Ltd. First Avenue, Denbigh Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes.

Mike Hill

Mike Hill's career with Marshall goes to prove that loyalty and dedication to a company and its products can and indeed are rewarded by promotion and advancement. Mike probably didn't realise when he came fresh to Marshall as a 'trainee wirer' back in 1971 that within ten years he'd be both a director and responsible for the day to day running of the factory, along with fellow directors Jim Marshall and Ken Bran. Mike studied recording techniques and electronics at college before he took the step into Marshall. From being a trainee wirer, he quickly moved into the Development Department where he rose to become Manager of Electronics and Testing. He used his expert knowledge carefully, checking every piece of equipment as it came through his department.



When he was appointed a director a few years ago, Mike took on special responsibility for Quality Control — an aspect of the company's products which is vitally important. It only takes one mistake to rub out an enviable reputation and it's Mike's job to make sure that mistakes never occur! As well as those responsibilities, Mike especially enjoys the time he spends liaising with the many, many bands

which regularly use Marshall. His experience is highly regarded by many top engineers and musicians, and there's little he likes more than getting involved in an amplification problem and solving it — with Marshall, of course.

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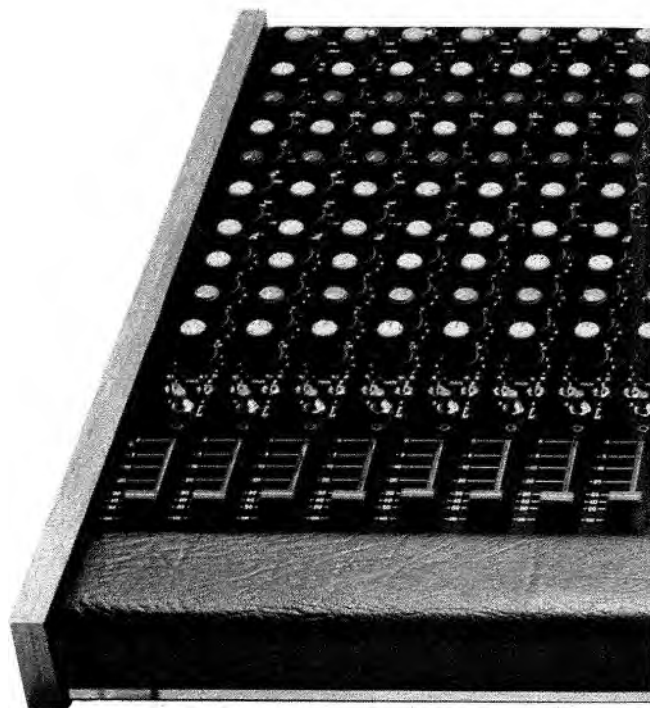
Please credit my A/C B/C No



Sweet Sixteen. The inside story.

What can you do to improve an advanced 16-channel mixing desk that already dominates its field?

That was the challenge taken up by the Studiomaster design team, and is the theme for the inside story of the 16/4. This desk has for some time enjoyed a unique popularity among musicians and small studios requiring a compact, expandable unit with comprehensive equalisation facilities and effects routing. We might have rested on our laurels. Instead, we've



taken advantage of developments in micro-technology to make our standards even higher.

Sixteen-plus

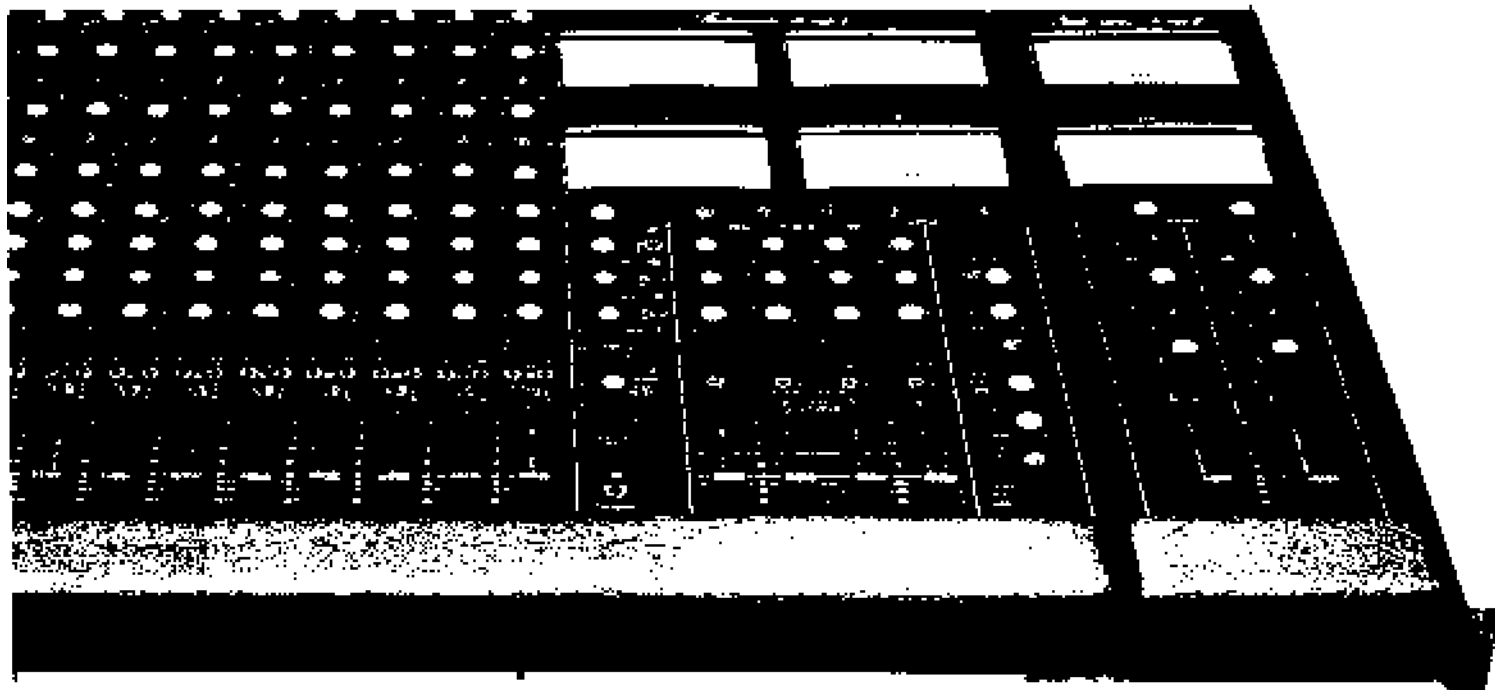
Innovations have been numerous. Particularly impressive is the update completed late last year, in which we re-designed the circuitry for easier maintenance and even greater reliability. With its sophisticated 'third generation' chips giving a

significantly improved performance, the 16/4 anticipates future trends in mixing desk development.

sixteen-going on 32

Our progressive policy of continual updating is made practicable by the inherent versatility of the Studiomaster 16/4. It was one of the desks with which we pioneered 'add-on' technology. The system we perfected permits four-channel modules to be simply and conveniently fitted to extend the

the latest and most exciting chapter in the Studiomaster story. It is now possible to convert this adaptable desk into a 16:4:2 with a new add on module which dramatically improves mixdown capability by providing the means to use the four output channels as sub-groups and mix them into a stereo image. This has obvious advantages for touring use and the desk is further adapted for the stage by provision of a 10dB 'step down' switch to make the appropriate adjustment of meter



input capability of the desk. Each 'add-on' channel has the same equalisation, effects, signal assignment and PFM facilities as the existing channels. And the 16/4 operates perfectly as a high performance, low noise desk even when as many as 32 inputs are employed. The advantages of a desk you can never outgrow are self-evident.

16 into 4 into 2

Straight from our R & D labs,

sensitivity. The two-channel module is screwed on to the right hand side of the desk just as add on input modules can be screwed on to the left. Each channel is provided with level control, the well-known quasi-parametric Studiomaster equalisation system, and its own VU or LED meter.

Look into the Studiomaster 16/4. And find a success story that just keeps on growing.

Studiomaster

Chaul End Lane, Leagrave, Luton, Beds.
Telephone: Luton 570624. Telex: Studio G 825612.

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I know you must get bored with incessant requests for details about bands' equipment, but I am desperately interested in the gear used by Sky. Does this classically orientated group use anything special, which is not in common usage by straight rock bands, to get their fantastic wide range of sounds, or is it just the way they play?

Thanks.

A. Newman.
Sheffield

Bored? We don't get bored with anything here! zzzzzzzz Sky's road manager, the amiable Andy Peacock, is the man with the info:

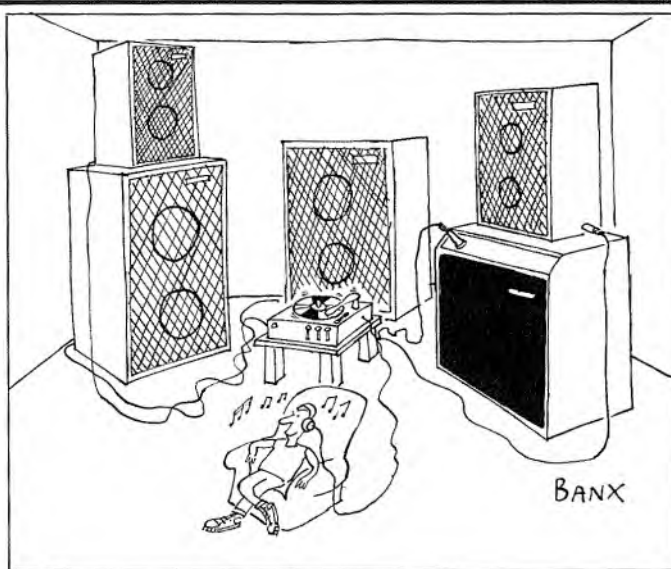
Keyboards: Oberheim OBX-A (interfaced with a harpsichord), an Oberheim OB1 and an OBX, a Hohner Clavinet plus a grand piano. Effects used with these keyboards include an MXR DDL, a Boss Flanger, an MXR 10 band graphic equaliser, and the grand piano is 'C-Duced'.

John Williams plays either an Ovation Classical, or a Gibson Les Paul, without effects, into either a Marshall 100 watt combo, or a Marshall Rock Combo. Kevin Peek also plays an Ovation Classical, and for his electric parts, uses one of his two Gibson LS5's: one has 2 pickups, and the other, three. Effects in use are an MXR Phase 100, MXR 10 band graphic, two Big Muffs, an MXR Compressor and a Korg volume pedal.

Herbie Flowers uses a Fender Jazz Bass through a 100 watt Marshall bass amp and a Marshall 4 x 12 cab. Occasionally he plays a Boosey & Hawkes tuba (that could be the item 'not in common usage by straight rock bands!') and an unidentifiable double bass.

Drums are all by Premier, and there's also a Premier Vibraphone and Marimba. Cymbals are all Zildjian.

There you are Mr Newman. Can we (yawn) return to sleep? ... Edzzzzzz



Dear Sir,

I am a member of a band in Birmingham, and although we have all the enthusiasm in the world, like many other people in the present financial climate, we find ourselves very short of funds. We desperately need a PA system of our own as we have a brass section, and have found none of the hire companies seem able to get a decent mix of the brass sound.

As we cannot afford to buy a complete PA system, we are going to compromise by buying the amps and desk, but making the cabinets ourselves (with the help of a professional joiner). On searching through the book shops and public libraries we cannot find any information

on speaker cabinet design or dimensions.

What we require is a system that will handle approximately 700 watts per channel and give good top response for the brass and good bass and drum reproduction, but at the same time be small enough to store in a house without being too obtrusive!

I hope that you may be able to suggest a book that may help us or maybe suggest some designs yourself.

Yours sincerely,
D. Brown,
Birmingham

I am afraid that your requirements as you state



Sky photo Paul Cox

Letters should be sent to —
International Musician & Recording World.
Grosvenor House, 141/143 Drury Lane, London WC2

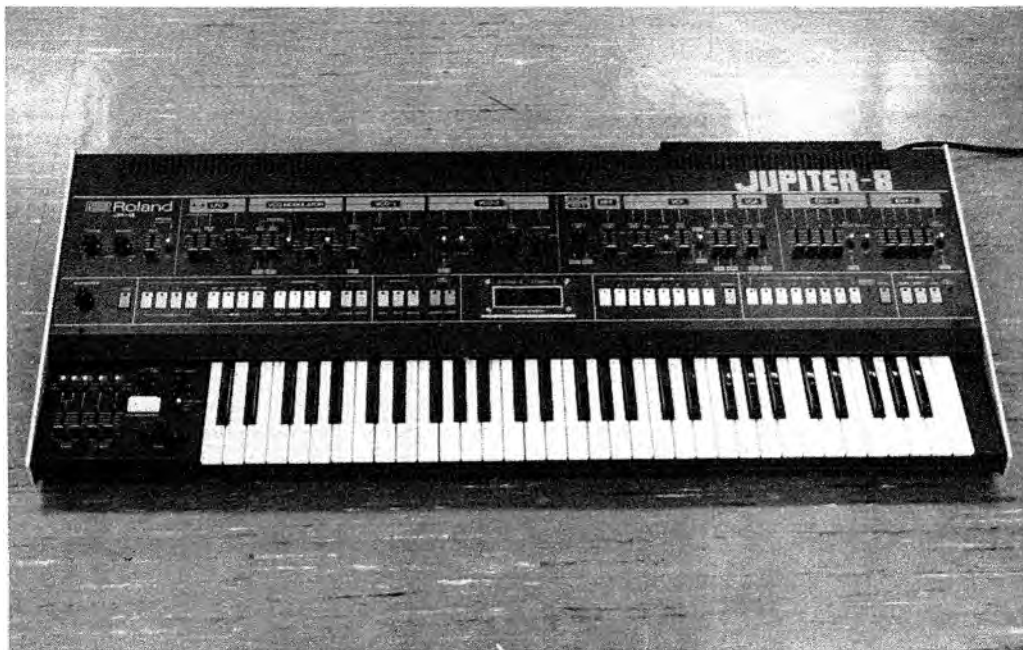
them are not compatible, as if you require good low frequency performance for your drums and bass guitar and good, clean mids for your brass section, you will not be able to store it unobtrusively in your home!

You should be looking at 15" bass speakers at least in large ported or horn type cabinets, 12" midrange and some sort of horn and compression drive unit for the highs. The HH Concert stack is probably as compact as any and their drive units are relatively inexpensive, so it might be a good idea to look at this for some ideas.

How much gear you need I cannot say as I have no idea as to what size of venue you play or how loud you want to be, but I would suggest that you would probably need at least two 1 x 15 bins, one 2 x 12 midrange cabinet and one radial horn with compression drive unit per side. You will be better off going for a three-way active crossover with such a system rather than messing about with one amplifier and passive crossovers. Typical crossover points would be about 400Hz and 1.6kHz dependent upon the actual components used.

As regards books on the design of cabinets, there are hardly any that are concerned with loudspeakers for music applications, although there are several on hi-fi cabinets which give the basic idea. Two American books which may be of help are 'How to Build Speaker Enclosures' by Badmief & Davis and 'How to Design, Build and Test Complete Speaker Systems' by David Weems. Both these are — or were, distributed in the UK by Foulshams of Slough. However, neither of these are exactly basic in content. Why not try writing to some of the manufacturers? Celestion, Fane, Goodmans, RCF, JBL and Electro-Voice all have published plans and cabinet construction information for use with their own drive units.

Roland NEWSLINK



JP-8 another long step forward in synthesis.

The Roland Roadshow

Launched on the 14th July (Bastille day!) the Roland Roadshow is an unprecedented move by a musical instrument distributor to bring new products, entertainment and ideas before the public at large. The show will consist of a unique blend of concert performance and demonstration. Additionally, local musicians will be able to make the acquaintance of new products by playing and handling the equipment themselves.

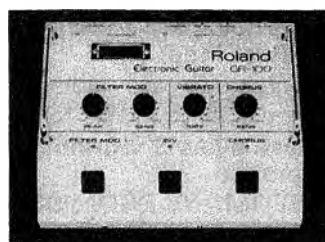
Taking the bold step of initiating our own summer promotion is a response to the fact that the AMI has, through no fault of its own, been obliged to cancel the Olympia Trade Fair. The trade fair has not been vital to Roland as a means of meeting our dealers since we retain close links with them in any case. However it was essential as an annual forum for exchanging ideas with the musicians, letting them handle the full range of equipment, meet the sales team and discuss how Roland could serve their specific musical ideas. Rather than lose this link, we have put together the roadshow package, which is likely to reach even more musicians than the trade shows and to transcend the limitations of an Olympia stand. In addition the show is in association with local retailers to allow prices to be discussed and purchases to be made.

Roland Live

Following his immense success as the star of our Spring touring clinic (in fact a kind of rehearsal for the summer one) multi-talented keyboards man Adrian Lee will be assisting. He will explore

various synthesizer set-ups with an emphasis on the JP-8 — the most exciting polyphonic synthesizer to have been produced in several years.

Backing Adrian up will be head of the Roland UK demonstration team Alan Townsend whose qualifications as a seminar teacher may be put to good use. In addition fretted instruments Manager Dave Green will be putting the famous guitar synthesizers through their paces, including the new Bass Guitar Synthesizer and the GR-100 'electronic guitar' range, which occupies the middle ground between Roland's popular GR-300 and a conventional 'active' guitar. Dave will also demonstrate Washburn guitars, showing a range which encompasses both hard-hitting electrics and



mellow, craftsman made acoustics.

Between them, these

musicians will present a series of programmes whose overall



The GR-100 and GR-202 make guitar synthesis a realistic alternative for even more musicians.

character will be partly decided by the local dealer concerned, since all the shows will be co-sponsored by dealers and they are in the best position to know what their local audience requires. Consequently, each presentation will be a little different. 'And some', say those preparing them 'will be a lot different...'

Roland — The Logical Development

The Roland Roadshow and activities like it are part of the changing role of a distributor whose products are becoming as much a musical way of life as a range of equipment. The lines that will be exhibited at the roadshow are among the finest of their kind taken as individuals, and as an electronic system offer unique scope and creativity. With our



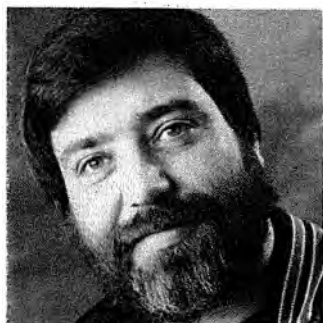
TR-808 rhythm composer.

pioneering work in the musical applications of 'logic' circuitry we have put real time composition within the reach of most serious musicians (for example, the MC-4 retails at about the same price as a good polyphonic synth and the CSQ-600 for a half of that). The results will be far reaching. Visit the Roadshow in your locality, and find out what they mean for you.

Roland Teach-In

Roland has what it takes — but do you know how to use it? This question was recently put to Roland dealers, and in view of the rapid advances in the facilities we are able to offer, it's hardly surprising that the idea of a product seminar met with a favourable reception. Let it not be denied that some interesting music has been created by the trial-and-error school of synthesizer players. But you would be entitled to feel dubious if your local dealer used this time-honoured method to demonstrate a new product.

The seminars are presided over by Alan Townsend, head of the Roland UK demonstration team. As a professional keyboard man, an experienced teacher, a demonstrator and also our 'top man in the field' he is ideally qualified, since he is well known in the trade and sees his 'students' regularly at their own places of work.



Alan offers a style of tuition which is direct, systematic, lively and comprehensive. Classes are restricted where possible to eight applicants who can receive individual attention and participate in using the equipment.

The background to our 'education programme' is recognition that Roland UK has reached such a stature that it is no longer enough just to handle the hardware. Roland equipment is opening up new territory and it is up to us to provide guidelines for exploring that territory. Regrettably, this particular series of seminars cannot be open to the public due to the numbers that would be involved. But Roland's increasing involvement with the community of musicians would obviously be in keeping with some kind of general 'workshop' project, so we are investigating the possibility of organising seminars through our dealers — watch this space for further news.



A friend of the family. Patrick Moraz opted for the Roland family of keyboards because he 'thought that Roland were offering a lot more possibilities than other companies... in terms of a system'. Look out for the Moodies' 'Long Distance Voyager' and listen to Patrick's solo 'Future Memories' for contrasting multi-keyboard work.

ROLAND at NAMM

The Roland stand at the Chicago NAMM show promises to be among the most dynamic there, and the products being exhibited illustrate the consistent development programme which has given the music world practical, highly innovative products from rhythm units to guitar synthesizers, from pedals to microcomposers. Here are just a few samples.

The **TR-808 Rhythm Composer** is distinguished for the amazingly life-like quality of its percussion sounds (particularly difficult ones like tuned drums and cymbals), the ease with which even the most complex time signatures can be programmed, and the vast memory capacity. The most creative and detailed rhythm composition should be well within the working parameters of the TR-808. If you prefer a sophisticated preset rhythm unit the CR-5000 offers immense variety, convenience of operation, and impeccable sound.

The **RM-1200 and RM-1600 B mixing boards** (12 and 16 channels respectively) give clean, low cost mixing with full professional facilities. These include 9-band graphic EQ, LED indicators with Peak/VU select, full monitor patching, Send/Receive jack, High Pass Filter, and 3 buss lines on each channel plus attenuation on each master section.

New Guitar Synths include the **GR-100 Module** which resembles the GR-300 but is a more basic system giving easy control and amazing sustain and tone effects, without VCO pitch modulation. Two new controllers are the **G-505** and the **G-202** which, like our other controllers, are precision made to the highest standards and are quality electric guitars in their own right. Any controller may be interfaced with any synthesizer module and the **US-2** interface allows two GR-100's, two GR-300's, or one GR-300 and one GR-100 to be linked in tandem, and driven by a single controller.

The **VK-09** is a really exciting 61-key budget rock organ with drawbar operation and a choice of the 'traditional' '60's rock organ sound or the brighter effect sometimes preferred today. These tones are mixable, there's vibrato and sustain, percussion with 2nd and 3rd harmonics plus soft volume and fast decay. The price and performance of the **VK-09** will make it first choice for hundreds of small bands.

Boss contribute several new pedals: the **DM-2** compact variable delay gives 20-300 m-secs control, and the **SD-1** Super overdrive gives distortion with real warmth. The popular Boss **GE-6** graphic is replaced by the **GE-7** with one extra band and the **MA-15** stand-mountable 15W micro-monitor is an original design for an extremely versatile product.

The **Cube 40K** has all the features of the popular Cube range of compact, studio quality amplifiers, but is specially designed for keyboard work. Synthesizer, organ, and electronic piano players will find that due to its extra wide frequency handling the 40K gives excellent performance even at the extreme ranges of their instruments. The 100 watt **Cube-100** will also be at NAMM, and in the near future all Cubes will be available with a white finish.

Roland Tape Competition —

The Last Month

A reminder that all entry forms for the fifth Roland International Synthesizer Tape competition must be in Tokyo by 31st August (allow one week for postage). If you haven't already got your entry form, they should now be available from our head offices at 983 Great West Road, Brentford, Middx. The competition is of course open to all synthesizer players irrespective of age, professional/amateur status or type of synthesizer used. What counts is all-round musicianship with an emphasis on originality.

The Bible of Synthesis

Roland have for some time noticed the lack of any comprehensive, freely available and easy-to-read publication introducing the complex but infinitely rewarding subjects of synthesis and electronic music making. Accordingly, we have produced a package to meet this need. The Roland guide is divided into four volumes.

A **Foundation for Electronic Music** (68 pages) provides basics, **Practical Synthesis for Electronic Music** (Vols 1 and 2, 103 and 107 pages) covers all aspects of synthesis and Multichannel Recording (48 pages) is ideal for anyone who has contemplated professional or home studio work. These books are clearly written, fully illustrated, and believed to be the only ones of their kind in the world.

BUZZ



PROFESSIONAL AUDIO BUYERS GUIDE

SIE Publishing has just introduced its new Professional Audio Buyers Guide, which, they claim, is 'the most complete guide to professional audio sound and recording equipment available.' The 240 page book contains details of over 70 manufacturers and thousands of products. Akai, Altec, Anvil Atlas and Audiotronics start a listing that runs right through to Tapco, Tascam, Teac, Telex, Vega and Yamaha.

Each item in the guide has a manufacturer's suggested selling price as well as comparative specification. Could be a useful little book for around here!



Lew Branton

NEW STUDIO FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS

Queniborough, near Leicester, is the location of a brand new professional recording studio for the production of radio commercials, audio-visuals,

discs and demo tapes. The complex houses two air-conditioned studios, is fully equipped for twenty four and sixteen track recording, and has a reasonable array of outboard equipment, according to a recently received release.

Got together by a Leicester businessman and musician Lew Branton, the studio will be known as 'Q' Studios.

"There's not been a major attempt to establish a professional recording studio to this standard in the East Midland. Similar ventures have usually been the work of people who are enthusiasts first, and businessmen second. This means that the ventures are under-capitalised and suffer from a lack of business know-how."

Judging by the man's record — he recently sold out of Branston Petroleum, a 3,000,000 gallon a year business which owns a 60,000 square foot industrial estate on which "Q" Studios are situated, as well as having property interests in Leicester — business acumen is not in short supply!

On the other hand, the man plays clarinet and sax and has accompanied the Four Freshmen, June Christie, Harry Secombe and Susan Maughan, so he knows a bit about music too! It's an unlikely situation for a major studio, we think, but then on the other hand our editor lives not a long way from Queniborough, so it gives him hope!



GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

Award this month for the sickest and least tasteful marketing joke is a life-size cut out figure of Elvis Presley — the late Elvis Presley, that is. According to Dodo Designs (is there a moral in this somewhere??... Ed) 'he is our latest addition to our famous 'Spare Guest' series, the most well known of which is Margaret Thatcher.'

The release goes on: "To have Elvis sitting next to you at dinner is romantic nostalgia." COME OOOON Dodo, to have Elvis sitting next to you at dinner is turgid bad taste! Anyway, for those of you with said accomplishment, the cardboard with photo and bending knees can be bought for around £7 from 9 Macklin Street, Covent Garden, London WC2. All-purpose brown paper bags from British Airways!



ELLA AT CLAPHAM

Ella Fitzgerald has agreed to appear on Saturday, July 25th at the Capital Radio Jazz Festival, which doubtless has pleased the organisers considerably, as well as turning the line-up from impressive to almost legendary. Ella's appearance adds real clout to a bill which already includes Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Herbie Hancock, Lightnin' Hopkins and Dizzy Gillespie.

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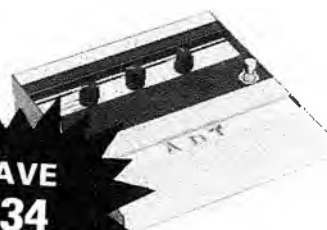
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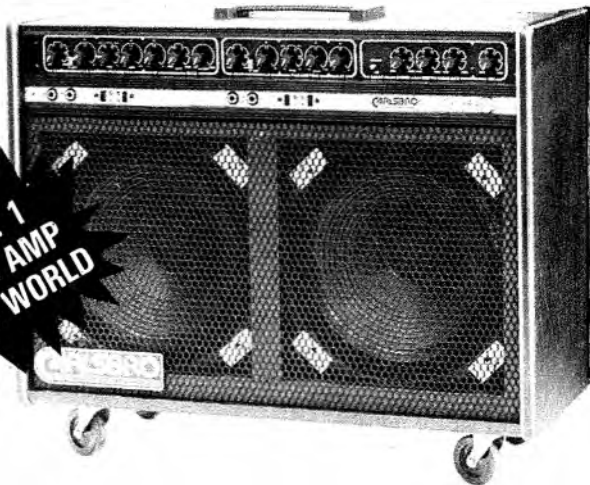
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THE PINK FLOYD DON'T GIVE interviews: they grant them. EMI's press office 'enquires' whether one would be interested in talking to Nick Mason, 'requesting' that one stipulates, in advance, just how long that talk is going to take. One mentions the obligatory 'hour', knowing that if it were going to be possible to really get inside the head of the Floyd it would take a week, and there's no way Mason, or anyone else for that matter, could put up with me for a whole week — ask my wife!

The four beings that make up the corporate image of the Pink Floyd don't talk to the press very often, retaining a personal anonymity rivalling that of their theatrical displays, hiding always behind The Wall. They emerge, blinking somewhat disconcertedly, into the light only when there is something concrete to promote, and then expect the press, which they have ignored, to come running. But, come running we do, because in some instances a nibble is as good as a bite, and it's arrogant to deny readers the opportunity of learning something — no matter how little — about one of the world's most creative and enigmatic forces simply because of some unwritten rule of war between the band and the press.

As it happened, Nick Mason came over eventually as being a pleasant enough millionaire whom even the Floyd's greatest fans would pass in the street without comment, who was quite prepared to pass opinions on the Floyd and their relevance: a throwaway comment at the end of the interview, once the tape recorder was switched off, indicated, however, that he believed he would be misquoted anyway, so what did it matter? Well, it matters to me, and it matters to you to know that the words in quotes, are indeed, quotes!

Nick Mason's solo album, 'Nick Mason's Fictitious Sports' is a radical departure from the style of the Floyd — indeed, no members of the band have contributed to it in any way, and in view of the fact that all the material was written by Carla Bley, and the lead vocals handled by ex-Soft Machinist Robert Wyatt, it could be argued that 'Fictitious Sports' has little to do with Mason either. He did play all the drums, and then retired gracefully to the control room where he co-produced it with Carla.

The press release says the album was 'made fairly quickly', but some eighteen months passed between its recording and its release. Why?

"Because of record company problems in America: it shouldn't have taken so long at all. It just got stuck, and got really boring. I mean, it's pretty boring to live with something that you've finished, and just to have it lying around for a year and every time you hear it you're thinking 'I wish we

NICK MASON

behind the wall

"There aren't any parameters for the interview really, but I shall get very bored if you ask me lengthy questions about our finances, and a bit bored if you just ask about the Pink Floyd and not about my solo album."

Photos Peter Murphy

could change that,' or, 'I wish we'd done it in a different order.': that's the usual thing, you immediately want to change the order around as soon as the cover's been printed!"

Taking the fact that Carla Bley wrote all the songs on the album it's a fair guess to assume that he doesn't write himself: is that something of a burden within the framework of a band like the Floyd?

"Not really: the others all write, and it's a fact of life really. I'm interested in writing: I'd like to be a writer, but I don't feel that I've got a lot of stuff burning inside me that I've got to get out, so in a way it's not a burden because it means at least I'm not a frustrated Floyd composer, so to speak.

"The thing with this record is just that I still like making records, and I wanted to make a record of stuff that I

like by musicians that I like in which I played a hand in putting together."

As 'Fictitious Sports' is such a marked departure from the music the Floyd has been playing for the last fourteen or so years, is it an indication that he may be frustrated with the Floyd's own material?

"I think one doesn't do other things through frustration, but rather because you like to do them. I don't feel that I'd like Pink Floyd to suddenly adopt a rather jazzy style — it's just something I'd like to investigate in another way with some other musicians.

"In a way, one of the good things about the Floyd is that there is actually enough freedom to do other things outside; there isn't a feeling that commitment to the band has to be twenty four hours a day."

And yet it's your first solo project in all those years?



a Robert Wyatt record — which I'm sure a lot of people will see it as — or as a Carla Bley record. I don't care really how it's seen, as long as it was made in a satisfactory way."

As the conversation dried a little I turned back to Nick Mason as a drummer rather than as the producer/ Pink Floyd.

"I use a fairly standard Ludwig kit: I usually use three or maybe four Tom Toms, and a single bass drum now, although I used to use two. The Toms are 12 x 8", 13 x 9", 14 x 14", and 16 x 16", and I don't know what size the bass drum is now; I use a Ludwig Black Beauty snare, Paiste cymbals, Japanese stool (!) and AKG microphones.

"I don't collect drums in a big way — I've got a small Gretsch kit which I use for some recordings,

and I bought some Sonor school drums some time ago which are terrific because you can tune them with one handle. I've tried out various snare drums — I've got some Ludwig, Slingerland and Gretsch snares.

"I'm not a drum expert, but I'm beginning to feel more and more that it's down to the way they're tuned rather than the manufacturer, and that there does seem to be a strange thing with a well-looked after old kit sounding better than a new. It does seem that a lot of the problems of tuning drums and getting them to sound right without rattles is something to do with how they're looked after. If the shells or hoops are in any way distorted, that's when the problems seem to start. I've had quite a few problems with snare drums."

I wondered how closely he was involved with his drums — if, for

example, his only contact with them was playing, for, presumably, the days of setting them up himself are long gone.

"Well, no drum roadie in the world can ever set up a kit exactly right: I tend to fiddle around more with cymbals than drums in terms of getting them in the right place, and trying different things. Paiste have always been very good in terms of sending me different things to try. In a way cymbal fashions change much faster than drum fashions — sizzles and Chinese types, bigger and smaller splashes and so on.

"I think it's slightly unnerving just how much I learned from James Guthrie who was the engineer on The Wall: he spent a lot of time working on the drum sound with me, and he would work at it for much longer than I've ever worked with it before, and got much better results. I was very impressed with the amount of time he did spend, and the different ways he tried to get particular sounds.

"He got a clean, elegant sound — hi-fi."

Heads?

"Remo Ambassadors, usually. I've tried those oil-filled skins and so on, but I feel if the drums are tuned nicely and give a decent tone without rattling, so much else can be done by using the right microphones: if it's not C451's, then it's Neumanns, or something like that; just very careful placing of the microphones to get really good separation is very important. There's always a problem with damping and resonances and so on, and quite often we stuck little bits and pieces over them — but once you've got it right it seems to get better and better all the time, and you can just keep tweaking it. It's a very curious thing really because they (drums) are the last acoustic instrument of rock 'n' roll, but they're ten times more difficult to sort out to give a satisfactory tone."

I remarked that in view of the size of gig the Floyd are now forced to play the drums are hardly just acoustic instruments any more:

"Yes — but I was thinking more of the recording studio situation. But there is a difference between amplifying an acoustic instrument than amplifying direct."

How detached from his own sound on stage does he feel — considering the sheer awesome power of the Floyd's PA, and the cavernous venues in which it has to perform?

"I try and work almost without monitors if I can, and try and rely on the good placement of the rest of the band to get a decent feel of what's going on. If you're confident in the engineer, I don't particularly want to hear what I'm playing: I obviously want to hear enough to know that I'm

"Yes, well, it's partly time, and partly opportunities and ideas. I've done other bits of production for people, and in a way, this is just a development of that."

He accepts that from the outside it can look as if he has simply put his own name, and the kudos that surrounds it, to an album of songs by Carla Bley, but points out that he had more influence than simply being the name to hang it all on. He arranged many of the songs with Carla and feels responsible for eventually producing an album with a much rockier feel to it than she would have produced on her own.

"Solo album is an incorrect title for it really, but it's part of the way that it worked: it was possible for me to finance making the album, and make it as my project, although in lots of ways I'd be just as happy for it to be seen as



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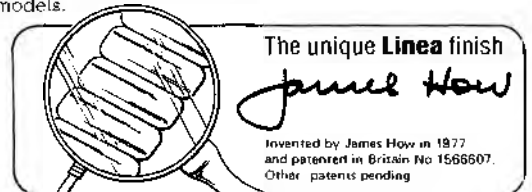
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NICK MASON behind the wall



actually playing and hitting the drums correctly — but I'm not too bothered what it sounds like to me as the sound has been set up correctly out front. I'd rather just make sure that I'm hearing the rest of the music and get on with working with that."

Roger Waters tends to use cans for much of the band's live performances:

"Roger wears cans because it helps him to pitch his voice. I only wear cans on the few bits and pieces where we're working with click tracks — particularly when film is involved. We did a certain amount of recording making a click track first, and then playing on top of that which I'd never done before and always found very difficult: but in fact it was a real breakthrough. I was very impressed with the opportunities you can get by working with pre-recorded stuff. You can really work out very quickly an awful lot of information by

having a click track, and perhaps scoring the thing as well: from both, you can work some very complicated parts very quickly."

It may be a little surprising to learn that Nick Mason has never had any drum training at all, which he now seems to regret.

"I've never had any tutoring at all; I'm entirely self-taught, and it's a real drag, I mean it's not to be recommended. I think that if you can get the right balance of training and self-help, you can get much better results a lot faster. I think with most instruments there is a problem with too much classical training which can be stultifying: certainly it can kill off the

possibilities of improvisation, which it has done for a lot of people. A good basic technique is a much better basis from which to work on an instrument, than self-taught messing about. If I wasn't lazy, which is what it really is, as opposed to busy, which is what I say it is, I think I'd take lessons now and learn how to do it properly: but there's that horror of making a fool of myself and having to start again that contributes to me not doing it!"

Having by now spent some time talking about the solo project, and about his own instruments, I found I was able without too much difficulty to move the conversation on to the Floyd. Echoing earlier enquiries about his involvement, as a non-writer, in *Fictitious Sports*, how does the Floyd 'get it together'? Indeed, how involved is he, or is it merely presented to him as something of a *fait accompli*?

"Well, it's varied a lot over the years: *The Wall* was the ultimate that we've reached in that Roger did present a virtually finished idea. I think, however, that once you start recording, inevitably it changes. However complete it is — but that's the great opportunity really: once you start getting the sound down, new things develop: but it was very complete...

"But I feel about the *Wall*, although I contributed far less than other albums in terms of having a say in production, how it should go, that it benefitted my drumming and the drum sound enormously. I think the playing on the record is far tighter and better, and sounds better, than anything before. I'm actually quite pleased with the way the drumming sounds."

Why is that?

"It's partly engineering, and partly working with click tracks, getting things right, getting the tempo steadier, and getting the actual parts played tighter and better: being able to really score it at times. I actually got round to learning to read drum parts which I'd never done before.

"It's not that Roger presents it in that amount of detail, but rather that once we've decided how it will be, we could sit down and score it. I'm not saying it was actually scored correctly, but then it's always interesting to see how it should be done: but you might want to break it up in many different ways...

"But what I'm saying about scoring it, is that you can actually play something which is really good, and go back, and instead of having to learn it by heart, you can just hear it once, and score it, so you can always re-create it: especially if you have an elaborate thing, like in an eight bar section where each bar has got a fill in it, and you want to try and remember that and get each one right — it's so nice being able to score sections like that."

For a drummer without training, being able to read is something of a rarity. I wondered if, therefore, he had worked out his own scoring language?

"No: Bob Ezrin really started it: he showed me what it should look like and taught me the basics. He then helped to devise schemes where if there was a tricky part he'd re-write it in a different way."

After the recording, as the time came to rehearse the album for live performance, a couple of LA arrangers were used to score the whole piece, including the drums which were scored absolutely properly because, as he says, 'I didn't want to learn music in the same way that I'd taught myself drums'.

Again, I tried the Floyd: there have

NICK MASON behind the wall

been a number of heavy criticisms of the band's decision to virtually — or rather, totally — repeat a set of concerts which were given a year ago. Why?

"Because we want to film it."

Why, I asked, wasn't it filmed last year then?

"Because we're silly-billies! No, really, because we'd anticipated using the shows as rehearsals for the film which would have been shot in a studio situation because we wanted extra light, and a different sort of feel to it all.

"In fact, having played the shows and re-considered the situation, it became plain that we wanted a live atmosphere which we simply couldn't get on the set. So, in view of that, it's really a matter of going back and doing them again in order to shoot them.

"In fact, things we'd thought would be the case — like insufficient lighting

more than a record and more than a show really.

"We still haven't expressed it properly, and there are all sorts of things that filming can do to help, to tell the story properly."

He denied strenuously that he's bored with the music, saying it is a great show to perform which really hangs together: "I think the only frustration would be that we don't play enough, and that's why I'd maybe rather do some more things outside the band — like I'd love to do some live concerts of my album, or something like that. That would be fairly feasible I think, if there's enough interest in it, as Carla comes over fairly frequently."

Feeling it time to take the bit between my teeth, I asked if there was any substance in the substantial rumours currently going the rounds that the Floyd are about to split up?

"Well," Nick replied, with something of a sardonic grin spreading across his features, "they're more than substantial rumours really, as I've heard that these concerts are already being billed as 'Farewell' gigs! It's a bit like reading one's own premature obituary.

"We're extremely evasive about what it really cost, partly because I don't think we really know. All we know is that it costs us a lot more to put on than we made back on it."

— turned out to be wrong, as there are films which can accept lighting levels as they are at the concerts."

Doesn't this decision, however, hold up the logical production of new material, all the same?

"We were going to film in the studio, even if we weren't going to film in Earls Court, so it's the same schedule, more or less."

In spite of this explanation, however, I put it to him that the concerts will maintain the public awareness of the band, without it having to produce more music.

"Ah — I see what you mean," he replied. "I think there'll be some more music written for 'The Wall' for the film score. There isn't any more material yet, anyway.

"O.K., one can say 'yes, it's taking perhaps longer to, not exhaust The Wall, because it's not quite the same as previous things when we've toured it, recorded it, toured it again, and finally got sick of it. I think we still feel there's more development within the Wall; it was designed originally to be

"I think you know a band's on the way out when they start announcing 'World Tours' with, in brackets 'Clean-Up tour'. I just don't think we've reached that point yet. You know, we are a dinosaur of rock 'n' roll in common with maybe one or two others, but we are not yet extinct!"

So, the rumours are not true?!
"There's nothing like a denial from the horse's mouth!"

Given then that the Floyd are to have a future, what are the plans for it?

"What, you mean after the split?! I think that Roger has got some post-Wall (could this become a catch phrase?) plans, but quite honestly I don't know what they are. I think Dave and Rick will do solo albums, and I know Roger's got some solo material, but I don't know what he'll do with it.

"I don't think that it will be anything on a scale grander than the Wall — we'd have to do a chariot race set to music, like in Ben Hur!"

To some people's eyes, Nick Mason has one of the most enviable roles in



rock music: to sit behind the most massive and excellent PA system in the world, presenting some of the world's most impressive and progressive rock theatre and music, in which he has had comparatively little part in writing, just keeping time to the planet's most extravagant rock 'n' roll extravaganza. Inane question coming up: what does it actually feel like?

"Well, it feels very nice, because I think the show works, so the spirit of the musicians playing it is good: I think a band's spirit falls apart when you know you're kicking a dead horse, when you're working a set that you've played a million times before, and you're just not finding anything new in it.

"We used to have terrible scenes about encores, because when we'd finished a couple of hours playing we'd exhausted every number we have the least



interest in playing. You know, "Oh God it drives me crazy to think about it,"...but there's none of that now. It's a pleasure to play, and there's still a lot of interest in playing it correctly, even if there isn't the greatest scope for improvisation. It's great to try and just do the show properly: we think it works, not just as a piece of mad spectacle with a thousand different things happening, but that it all hangs together after a fashion, and makes some sort of sense. Although it's far less free than other things that we've done, that's why it's still a good thing to do."

The Floyd, as an entity, have done a great deal to re-write the rules of rock 'n' roll. I wondered if sometimes he felt that the four members of the band are totally superfluous to what's going on.

"Yes — but that's part of what The Wall is about: the fact that you can be substituted: I think that's one of the fascinations of it. I'm sure someone will do it — even if we don't — that is, to design a show like a play in which you can use different actors to perform a 'thing'. I don't see anything wrong in that, but we haven't yet managed to make that jump."

What is the motivation now for the band? Whether or not they are 'incredibly rich,' very rich, or just rich — comparatively speaking — it's possibly fair to assume that money isn't a prime consideration anymore.

"I think our motivation is still satisfaction with what we're doing. The thing that stops a band is when nothing new turns up, and boredom sets in. I think it's more or less as simple as that." There's a pause here before Nick continues, "You don't look

as if you believe me!" and urges me to ask the question again.

Dutifully, I reply, "What is the motivation? What motivates the band to get on the road? Why do you keep playing?"

"Well, of course, we don't play very much: in the past year we've probably done twenty five shows, which is not a great deal — so it's a novelty! We've invented the three day year!! All I can say really is because it's still fun — that's what makes you want to go out. I mean, if you're successful and think 'God, how boring' it doesn't take long to think of really good reasons to retire immediately.

"The fact that we decided to do the extra shows in Germany indicates this: we all felt that we wanted to play."

As Roger Waters has progressively become the dominant writing partner in the band, I enquired how much licence the others have to change things. Does anybody ever tell Roger that it stinks?!

"Oh yes. To a large extent I think we do have a sort of feeling for how things should go. Roger's very good about criticism: I mean, he hardly ever kills anyone! Quite often people are let off with just a broken leg!

"Dave contributes quite a lot to the arrangement of things once Roger has done the basics. Quite honestly, I think one gets into dangerous ground here because there's nothing like saying who does what to make everyone feel extremely upset. I mean people do get really involved in whose idea a thing originally was, but Dave does contribute a lot to altering things.

"Roger also, decides changes for himself, but obviously things do get modified. The stage show changed dramatically. If you've got something as elaborate as that, ideas contained within it keep showing up which you haven't actually envisaged at the start. For instance, it was clear that the Wall was going to be erected in a particular way, but until you actually see it going up you can't be certain.

"I think Roger's got a very good theatrical sense: we obviously use fairly experienced lighting designers, and technicians who also have a good creative sense for sorting out a lot of the effects."

At what point does the financial burden of actually staging a Floyd gig, which has become bigger and more elaborate in a linear progression over the years, become simply too restrictive?

"Last year," came the reply. "It all went completely out of control. We're extremely evasive about what it really cost, partly because I don't think we really know. All we know is that it costs us a lot more to put on than we made back on it. In theory, the film will recoup some of that, hopefully, and will make me rich as well!"

"You mean you're not already rich?"

"I seem to be single-handedly paying for the National Health at the moment," came the quietly spoken reply. "The thing is, that once you've committed yourself to something like that, you can't back out. You can't say, 'let's go and do Dark Side of the Moon' instead and leave sixteen tons of equipment here. One's too cowardly to make those sensible decisions, so you crash on regardless, and hopefully it all comes out right in the end.

"It's not a touring show: the cost of putting it on makes it prohibitive. I mean, you can do it, and once you've paid for the capital equipment, you'd eventually make money on it, but it's such a hard way of doing it, and it has to be done properly to make it worthwhile. That means three days of set up instead of twenty four hours, and lots of rehearsals. It's a very impractical show, and not something I'd like to repeat in a hurry!"

Despite these comments, Nick said there was no desire to go back and do the small gigs and clubs, because the Floyd aren't a club band — but he did hope there may be more work.

"I think there may always be a difference of opinion between us about how much live work that each of us want to do. I think especially Dave and myself like playing enough to want to go out and do something."

The allotted hour had run out, and there was only time to get some photographs of the man before he disappeared back inside the Floyd protective covering. As it turned out, there was little ordeal for either of us: some of what Nick says must be taken tongue-in-cheek, for there was an atmosphere of relaxed sparring and joking in the interview which maybe doesn't come across on the printed page.

Equally, many of his statements were preceded by careful thought, as if he retained an awareness throughout that the journalist before him was only there to crucify the band's finances and irrelevance. Too many preconceptions abound on both sides of the Floyd's relationship with the media — what there is of it!! — and I suppose that will never be changed. They may be unfashionable, and it may be unfashionable to admit I've seen them more times than any other band (which, in view of the rarity of their appearances, is quite an admittance!) and hopefully will continue to enjoy their development.

Obviously, several hours with Roger Waters would go a long way towards discovering what makes the band tick, and if he would care to use the pages of International Musician for his own monologue, this constitutes an invitation.

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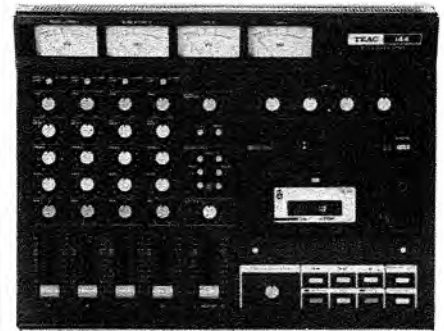


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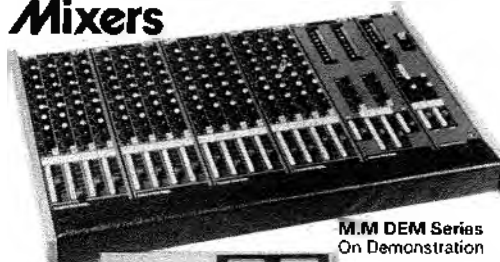
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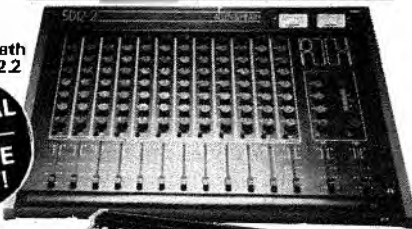
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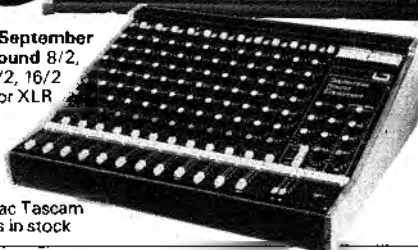
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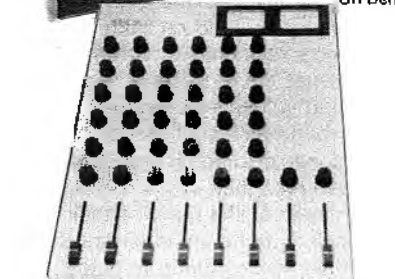
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NAZARETH

CAN FOUR LADS from Scotland find wealth, fame and happiness bashing out chords of Wagnerian proportions in front of drooling heavy metal fans? Certainly, if the foursome adds up to Nazareth and the power chords form brain-damaging but hummable melodies.

Although Nazareth is getting a wee bit sophisticated these days (Jeff Baxter has produced their last two albums, **Malice In Wonderland** and **Fool Circle**; and they've augmented their line-up for a 1981 tour with guitarist Billy Rankin and keyboard player John Locke of Spirit fame), they've found an extraordinary amount of success playing a brand of hard rock that can be considered primitive even when compared to the best of the cro-magnon clique.

The quartet isn't a superstar outfit in the traditional sense of the word. Little girls don't flock to buy open shirted portrait posters and **Rolling Stone** and **People** magazine don't dog their trail. Yet, in their 11 years together, they've sold over 15 million albums and singles and have scored 14 number one records in countries around the world. Composed of Manny Charlton on guitars, Darrell Sweet on drums, Pete Agnew on bass and Dan McCafferty on sandpapery tonsils, the group is still one of the most popular touring bands in existence. Although, over the years, the high-heeled boots and skin-tight pants have given way to a pot belly or two and perhaps even a receding hairline.

Being led from room to room and interview to interview in A&M's New York headquarters in the midst of their first U.S. tour as a six-piece band, Nazareth's four cornerstones find the time to whittle away at their celebrity status with good will and genuine whimsey.

"You can't take all this too seriously," Peter Agnew smiles, slouching in a food laden conference room, "or else you'd go daft."

For Agnew, and all the Nazareth members, the road to rock fame (or infamy) has been one overwhelmed with determination, long hours and general lunacy. "We've always put things in their proper perspective," Agnew shrugs. "Benign accidents have kept us afloat quite a bit."

Coming together in the late sixties as a three piece, Nazareth was officially spawned in 1970, surfacing in 1972 with a debut LP **Nazareth**. "Our recording career started off strangely," Agnew comments. "We were just knocking about playing locally. When we did our first album, it was a case of our having just left our full time jobs and being told to get our asses in the studio. We walked into the place with our mouths hanging open. 'Oh-ho! Look at all the big knobs, mommy!' We were just amazed."

"We hadn't really made up our mind about what we wanted to be musically, either. We were torn between being a heavy rock band or playing the more subtle kind of stuff

we enjoyed listening to. We never actually *listened* to hard rock. We just enjoyed playing it."

The group's first album went all but unnoticed stateside as did their second, more ambitious effort, **Exercises** (1972). "We had a hell of a time making that one," Agnew chuckles. "It was mixed in 22 hours straight. We left the studio and flew to the U.S. for a tour that morning. We didn't know it at the time, but that hectic pace would plague us for years to come."

Touring notwithstanding, the quartet stagnated for close to a year before hooking up with producer Roger Glover, a musician well known for his ear wrenching work with **Deep Purple**, a British heavier-than-thou in terms of deafness. "We changed labels in the States," Agnew relates. "With Roger's album, **Razamanaz** (1973), we went for a heavy rock thing. We immediately became catagorized. For most of the albums after that we riffed ourselves to death."

Razamanaz and its immediate follow up LPs, **Loud 'N' Proud** (1974) and **Rampant** (1974) brought Nazareth into the vanguard of the early 70s' heavy metal movement, a position that bewildered them somewhat. "We had always thought of ourselves as a straight-on rock'n'roll band," Agnew explains. "All of a sudden, most notably in America, it was 'heavy metal this' and 'heavy metal that'. To be frank, I don't think we would have survived all these years if that was true."

"I think we earned our heavy metal reputation from playing so many gigs. I think more people encounter us live than on record. We've never done a lot of press, either, so people don't know about our musical goals. When we play live, we're bloody loud — always have been. If we cause nosebleeds in the first four rows, we know we're reaching the kids. 'Oh, look. We're getting them off. They're bleeding!' I think that, despite the fact that we actually do acoustic numbers in the set, people walk in and see the smoke bombs going off and a four piece band onstage and think 'HEAVY METAL!' In truth, it *is* a heavy metal presentation although the music isn't necessarily of that type."

"We've never been just another head-down, bash-away band," adds singer Dan McCafferty, entering the room. "We got that image from having only three instrumentalists in the band. It's pretty hard to be musically subtle on stage when you only have bass, drums and guitar. You can't really vary the sound all that much."

During the mid-70s, the group embarked on a series of kamikaze

tours that took them all over the world. It was during that period that the group's schizoid musical nature came to the forefront. Playing Mt. St. Helens au go go music live — thus endearing them to the head-slammng heavy metal mavens — they also began making headway in the top forty market with singles such as 'Love Hurts.'

"It was almost like we were two different bands," muses bassist Agnew. "We've never really been a singles band. We never really got a lot of radio airplay of any sort in America. I think that U.S. radio has a certain bland sound that they promote because it sounds good on small speakers. Something that people can listen to and say with authority: 'It's gonna be a hit... you can ignore it!' Our sound was always too harsh — too commanding. Even 'Love Hurts' had a lot of screaming on it. It wasn't exactly played like a ballad.

"The record company began working around our harshness by listening to the new albums and looking for the softest cut to release as a single. Eventually it worked. They *still* do it. I don't know whether that's good or bad because that sort of stuff is not why people come to see us live. We have a professional split personality as a result.

"A few years ago we suddenly had to cope with that split image. We were in Denmark and 'Love Hurts' had been released there as a single. We originally just tossed the song off as a 'B' side. When we arrived for the gig, the promoter came up to us and said 'You'll be doing your big hit, won't you?' We didn't know what he was talking about. 'What big hit?' 'Love Hurts.' It's number one here."

"Jeez. I didn't even know the chords to it. Ten minutes before the show, we were in our dressing room practicing the song. Dan is yelling, 'I can't sing this high! I'll choke on my balls singing this high!' We just looked at him. 'Listen, son. Nobody ever said the job would be easy.' We got on the stage and started to slog our way through it. Thank god it was the number one song because the audience sang it for us. We made a proper mess of it but the people were happy we played it. After it took off in America, we put it in our set. It's been there ever since."

At that point, Nazareth found themselves in a unique position. They were one of the most tour orientated bands around, had a global hit single, a burgeoning following and, oddly enough, were very discontent.

"We thought we were moving on musically but we really weren't,"

McCafferty says. "In the mid 70s we overtoured and overworked ourselves to the point where we couldn't see the woods for the trees. One year, we did 300 gigs. We got so caught up in constant playing that our minds stagnated a wee bit. We didn't know what was going on in the street or the world for that matter. We had to slow down but we didn't know how."

"We were getting to the point where we could have split up," Agnew adds. "We were doing these albums up in Canada with Manny producing and we were all getting pretty dissatisfied. It was Dan who first voiced that opinion. We were doing all these nasty riffy things. 'OK. We've got a backing track down. Now, let's see what vocals we can stick on top of it.'

"Then Dan started writing *complete* songs and it became obvious that he wasn't thinking in terms of riffs anymore. We didn't know how to extricate ourselves from that formula, though.

"By the time we did *No Mean City*,

"We started doing innovative things like practicing, we're no longer looking for the new riff anymore."

we just weren't interested anymore. I don't think I've ever played that one at home — it never struck me as being a record. I used to be able to listen to a Little Feat album straight through; two sides, no problem. That's the effect we wanted on our albums. We just didn't know how to go about getting it. We added Zal Cleminson on guitars and keyboards but he left after two albums.

"We were really frustrated. We were touring 11 months out of the year. We weren't getting the chance to write decent material. You'd come off the road and the next week you'd find yourself in the studio, six weeks to write and record an album. *Expect No Mercy* (1977) was done like that. *Hair of the Dog* (1975) took us nine days. Then, it was back on the road."

By 1979, the group realized that it had to change its hard rock ways in order to survive. Nazareth, the sultans of swagger, were introduced to ex-Steely Dan musician/arranger/producing whiz Jeff "Skunk" Baxter. It was not exactly love at first sight but, somehow, musical ideas clicked.



Photo Adrian Boot



"We were looking for a new sound, a new approach," explains McCafferty. "We wanted an American producer. British bands seem to get more excitement on plastic than American bands do, but Americans get more of a polish. We wanted both elements. Jeff came over to Scotland to see us and we got along well musically. He was very positive about our music.

"We needed to get input from somebody outside of the band. Someone had to encourage us to try new things. Jeff provided what we needed. He'd say, 'Try it. Let's see if it works. If it doesn't, we won't use it. But let's try.' We were 'up' for his suggestions because, after doing three or four albums with Manny producing, we'd gotten too introverted musically."

"Our first sessions with Jeff were pretty traumatic," Agnew elaborates. "Jeff is an excellent arranger and he gets a wonderful sound out of us. We knew after being with him a few days that *Malice In Wonderland* would be different from anything we had ever done before. We used to go into the studio and, after four tries, it was a case of 'get your head down, boys. If we make it to the end of a song... it's a take!'

"With Jeff, we spent two days on the first song. We were stunned. I mean, usually, we'd get five backing tracks down in that time. Jeff is really finicky. A 'workaholic'. But, once you get used to him, it's fine. He'd be taking his sweet time getting one tiny little sound right and we'd be fidgeting in the corner. 'C'mon. It's only rock'n'roll.'

"I actually remember saying to him 'You know, I remember when rock'n'roll used to be fun. This is killing me!' But he's a studio rat, you know? He's in the studio 11 months out of the year and he knows everything. You bring in a song and he'll come up with the best arrangement. We wound up having more freedom with him than we did on our own. By the time we had finished the first album with him we were already looking forward to a second. Our sound had improved that much.

"And the record brought us closer to that cohesive album sound we wanted. There was more of a flow to it. Our previous idea of flow was to move from a song that went YAAAHOOOO!!! to a quiet one and, then, to another that went WAAAAUUUUUGGGGHHHH! It was quite annoying to the ear, I imagine."

Despite 1980 being a soft year in the recording industry, *Malice* sold more records than the group's previous four; marking not only the beginning of a recorded sophistication within the

Nazareth ranks but a personal one as well. "Jeff gave us a lot of confidence," Agnew says. "The musicianship has improved a lot as a result. *We started doing innovative things like practicing.* Jeff taught us to believe in what we could do.

This year, the second Baxter-Nazareth effort, *The Fool Circle*, found the group stretching its style both musically and lyrically. Adding John Locke on keyboards and coming up with a host of wry, apocalyptic tunes concerning World War III and assorted fun stuff, the band, via Agnew, claims "We're no longer looking for the new riff anymore. We've really started applying ourselves in coming up with new songs. The lyrics on this LP meant a lot to us. We're trying to point out how bad the world is in a way that people can understand. When Jeff read Dan's lyrics to all these happy-sounding songs he got really nervous. I think he was waiting for the bombs to go off while we were recording. Even John was surprised and he'd been through Spirit!

As a result of the second Baxter-Naz meeting, the group is trying to alter its image. "We're trying to tone down the image of the million lights and smoke bombs band," Agnew says. "But we can't eliminate it completely because a certain amount of people come to see us just for that. With John and Billy with us on this tour, however, we're a lot more interesting musically. We're going to slowly change and I think we can take our fans along with us."

Today, nine years after their first recording, the lunacy factor is obviously still prevalent in the Nazareth lifestyle. But a newfound sense of musical accomplishment is there as well; a sense of pride that causes Nazareth's membership to positively glow when talking about their craft.

"This is the best band I've been in," McCafferty states. "A lot of Jeff's studio ideas have stuck with us. He's very strict in the studio and, as a result, we're a lot more responsible with it comes to our music. People are finally paying attention to what and how we play."

McCafferty and Agnew are ushered out of the small conference room at A&M for a quick radio interview. "What day is this?" Agnew mutters, obviously enjoying the attention. Nazareth is still loud'n'proud but, for the first time in over a decade, decidedly alive and well, too. "This tour and this record," McCafferty restates, "is a real departure from the Nazareth hard rock image. We're not just a 'bash-around band' anymore."

Ed Naha

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P.A. COLUMN

BAND: Status Quo
VENUE: Wembley Empire
DATE: Tuesday May 26th.
HIRE COMPANY: Highlife Productions/Turbosound

The Venue

I don't know what it is about Wembley, but there seems to be some magic ingredient in the atmosphere that makes people burst into song. Status Quo's opening night was no exception with the result that when the band made their appearance on stage some 45 minutes late, the capacity audience were already warmed up due to their own efforts and raring to go. The atmosphere in that huge auditorium was electric, and the instant Francis Rossi came on stage the whole place erupted as everyone climbed up on to their seats in the hope of getting a better view of the stage, and it was as much as the huge PA rig could do to get the band over the top of the racket.

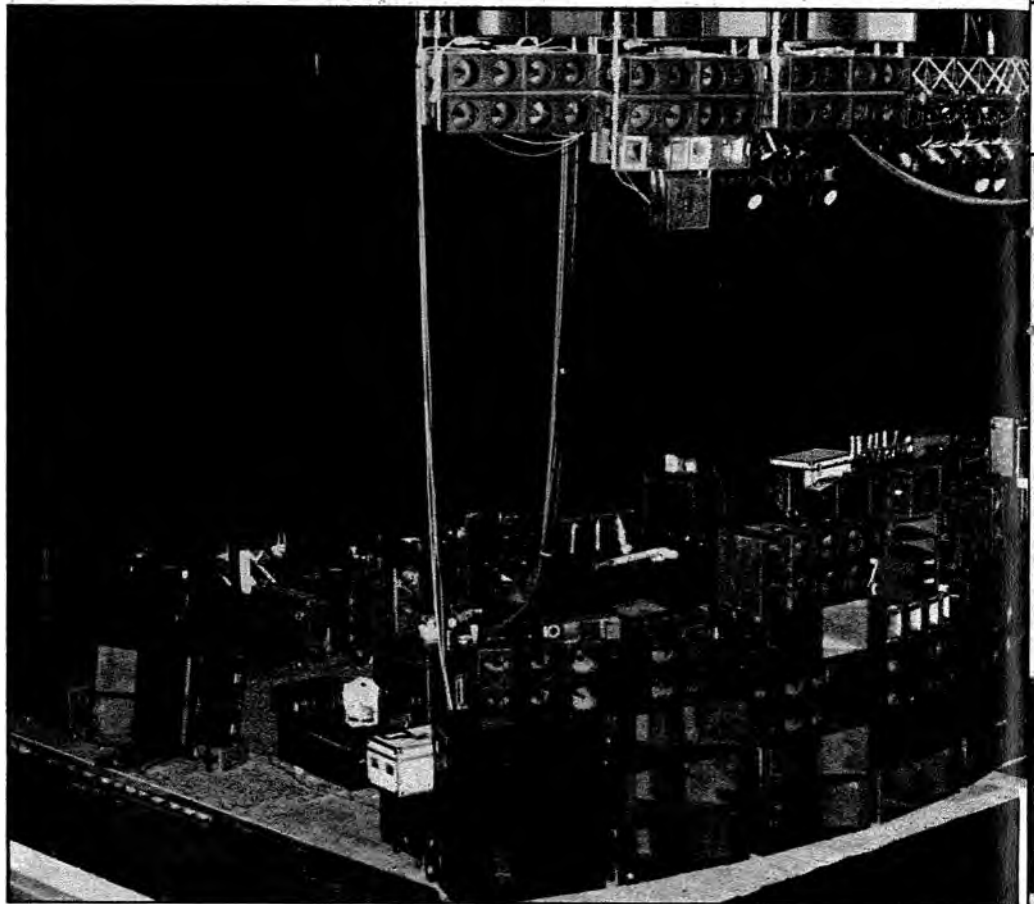
I have obviously witnessed this sort of reception before, but never with such warmth and good nature as at this particular gig. Even though the bars were open from the minute the doors opened at 7 o'clock right through to the last finale at about eleven, and the whole arena was literally crawling with security guards and stewards, there did not seem to be any aggro whatsoever.

Status Quo -- Francis Rossi on lead guitar, Rick Parfit on rhythm guitar, Alan Lancaster on bass and John Gaughan on drums, had added one guest musician to their ranks for this particular tour -- Andy Brown on keyboards.

Instruments and Backline

As with most top bands these days, Francis Rossi and Rick Parfit both had a whole array of guitars, all in various tunings, and tuned up with capos in place where necessary. Francis Rossi's selection comprised mainly Telecasters in various forms, most of which had special anchor bars and Tunamatic bridges, and were fitted with various special pick-ups to achieve certain specific sounds. These included a 1958 green Telecaster used as his main instrument in standard tuning, two more green Tele's, one tuned to D and one to B, and an Ovation Viper used in "What You're Proposin'" only and tuned to G sharp. He also had a Schecter Telecaster in standard tuning as a spare instrument.

These were played through a



modified Colorsound booster pedal feeding a total of ten Vox AC30 combos arranged in a chequerboard pattern throughout the wall of backline amplifiers stacked right across the stage on each side of the drum rostrum. In addition to the Vox's he had a pair of JBL 2397 diffraction horns fed via a high pass filter and a footswitch to emphasise the top end on certain numbers. The ten Vox's were all slaved up to each other so that the control section of one amp fed the power amplifier stages and loudspeakers of the other nine.

Rick Parfit's main guitar seemed to be a white Fender Telecaster fitted with a special high output pick-up and heavy gauge strings in normal tuning and his guitar 'wardrobe' comprised a black Gibson custom-built special in B tuning, a cherry Gibson Les Paul in C, a white Ovation Viper tuned in A, an odd looking re-finished Fender Telecaster in F sharp and a Fender Esquire tuned in B. He also had a beautiful Walnut Schecter Telecaster with a large gold plated scratch plate and all gold-plated fittings, which was tuned to G sharp with only five strings on -- the sixth being left off to provide a sharp treble sound.

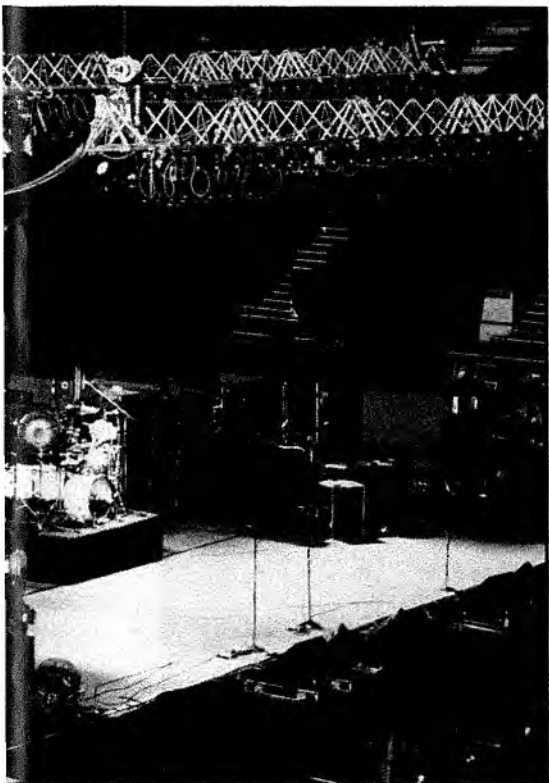
All these were fed via another modified Colorsound booster pedal and an MXR Polyflange to ten more Vox

AC30s arranged right across the backline stack alternately with Rossi's Voxs. In addition to these, Rick had two Marshall 4 x 12 cabinets driven by a Marshall MV100.

Alan Lancaster had a rather neat bass set-up. He played two guitars, a Fender Mustang Bass and a Kramer 350 alloy neck. His amplification system was fairly sophisticated and comprised a Roland Rack driving Roland loudspeaker cabinets.

Inside the rack was a Roland SIP-301 bass pre-amp unit which has a built-in electronic crossover, a Roland SEQ-315 2 x 15 band stereo graphic equaliser and three Roland power amplifiers type SPA-240. Each power amplifier was feeding a pair of loudspeaker cabinets, one on each side of the drum rostrum and incorporated into the backline wall. One amplifier handled low frequencies only and fed this to a pair of Roland 1 x 15 cabinets, one amplifier handled mid and high frequencies via a pair of Roland 2 x 12 cabinets, while the third amp handled full range and fed this through another pair of Roland 1 x 15 cabinets. All good stuff.

John Gaughan's drum kit is by Premier, entirely custom built using 7 ply wooden shells instead of the usual 5-ply and finished in an intense bright yellow. It really is a very impressive



Guest keyboards man Andy Brown played a Yamaha CP70 electric grand piano, a Hammond C3 organ with Leslie cabinet, a Hohner Duo and a Prophet 5 synth. The way in which this lot was mixed and fed out is a little involved.

The Hammond Leslie was positioned backstage out of the way and miked up using an Electro-Voice RE20 on the bass section and a Beyer M160 at the top. The output signal from the mikes was then split three ways to feed the stage keyboards mixer, the monitor desk and the PA desk. The Yamaha C70 was fed through an MXR DDL and a Boss graphic equaliser and then split three ways as for the Leslie. The Hohner Duo was fed through a Boss flanger and an MXR graphic equaliser and then split as for the Leslie, and the Prophet 5 was simply split between the three desks with no effects units.

This arrangement enabled Andy to mix his own sound on stage independently of either the monitor mix or the PA mix, and for this purpose he used a little rack mounted

driver, driven by a BGW 750C power amplifier via a BGW 'model 10' 2-way active crossover operating at 1.2kHz. These were set out with two cabinets in front of Francis Rossi's mike stand, one by Rick's, one by Alan's, and one on each side of the stage used as a side fill. These were supplemented by a couple of 2x12 wedges hidden under the drum rostrum, so I could not identify what components were fitted. The feed to every monitor position was controlled by a Klark Teknik 27 band graphic equaliser and the whole lot fed from the usual Midas 24 channel eight group monitor desk. I must confess that I am surprised that a band like Quo were not using a bigger system than that. Not that there is any virtue in using a big complicated system for its own sake, but the trend in monitors certainly seems to be towards bigger and more sophisticated systems.

P.A.

When Quo set off for their 12 week European tour in early March it was with a complete Highlife system of the type we have reviewed with the Tourists and more recently with the Stranglers. Halfway through the tour it, however, became evident that the Highlife front system was not really up to the demands being made of it and so, at Highlife's own invitation, 20Kw of Turbosound was flown out to cover the gigs in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and Switzerland. For Wembley, this was increased to 40Kw. The system is based on the same concept as that used at Hammersmith Odeon by Stiff Little Fingers on which we reported last year.

The Wembley rig was very large by any comparison, and the whole of that huge arena was covered from the front by two huge stacks sitting on each side of the stage and two smaller stacks suspended from trusses overhead.

The Turbosound system is basically a four-way rig based on a 2x18 folded horn bass cabinet, a 2x10 tube loaded midrange cabinet and a point source high frequency projector -- the high mids and the top end being helped out by means of various conventional radial horns and acoustic lenses. The total system as used at Wembley employed 48 bass horns, 96 turbo midrange cabinets and an assortment of compression driven horns and lenses.

Each main stack on the stage comprised 18 2x18 bins, fitted with custom designed Fane driver units, 36 2x10 Turbo midrange cabinets fitted



Photo Peter Murphy

looking kit and comprises a 24" x 14" single head kick drum with Remo Ambassador skin and Premier 252 pedal; 16" x 14" and 16" x 15" double head floor toms with Remo heads; a 13" x 10" double head mounted tom with Remo skins; 10" x 8" and 12" x 8" double head rack toms again with Remo heads, a 14" x 5" snare and a 25" pedal timpani.

His cymbals were a combination of Paiste and Zildjian and included a Paiste 15" Sound Edge hi-hat; 20" chinese cymbal and 24" gong and Zildjian 16" medium crash; 20" crash-ride; 18" sizzle; 18" crash and 18" crash-ride. The 18" sizzle had an 18" splash inverted over it on the double mount. All stands were Premier Tri-lock.

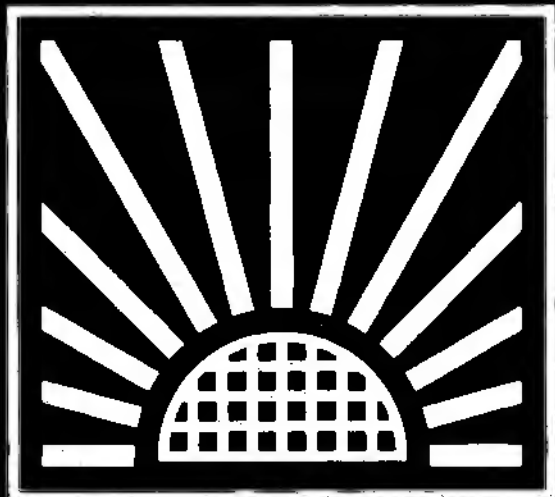
Yamaha PM180 six-channel mixer, feeding two RSD 800B power amplifiers and three Electrovoice Eliminator 1 cabinets. Quite a set-up, and one which had evidently been well thought out because the Electrovoice Eliminators had been carefully orientated so that one cabinet was projecting directly at his ears for each of the three possible seating positions.

Monitors

The monitor system was the standard Highlife system on which we have reported before and which was originally built by Clair Bros. in the States. It comprises a total of six slant-back cabinets fitted with JBL K140 15" drive units, a cut-down JBL 2345 horn flare with JBL 2470 compression

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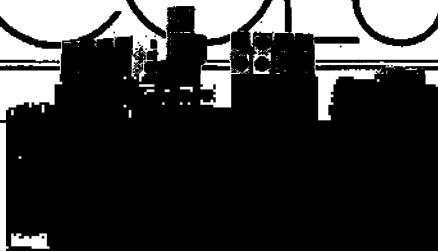
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with either Richard Allan Atlas 10's or custom built Fane 10" drivers; the high mids were handled by a combination of three JBL 2390 crinkle plate lenses and four JBL 2390 horns without the lenses fitted, all with JBL 2482 compression drivers, and the high frequencies were handled by a vertical pile of four Mega radial horns fitted with Emilar EC175 drivers, a pile of four Altec MR902 Mantaray HF units and one of the Turbosound point source HF 'blocks' fitted with four TAD TD-2001 compression drivers. All this was powered by rack upon rack of Turbosound 600 watt single channel 'Fan Amps'.

The flown systems comprised just six bass bins, twelve Turbomids, four JBL 2390/2482 horns and another Turbosound point source HF block, while another similar system was stacked on the sides of the stage to cover the audience seating which carried on down past the stage — like a side-fill stack pointing the wrong way! Part of the Turbosound concept is that the cabinets must be arranged in a horizontal arc formation so that each cabinet is covering its own small sector of the auditorium, and with a large rig, this generally means that the stack is very wide but not that high. The visual impression, with the vertical piles of horns etc standing on top, and with the whole stack silhouetted by the stage lighting, is of a huge black battleship lurking in the wings, awaiting its chance of attack!

The PA desk was again the Midas 32 channel, 8 group stereo model from the Highlife system which we have previously reviewed, and was operated with particular confidence and competence by Nigel Luby — ex sound engineer with Yes. A pair of Klark Tekniks 27 band graphic equalisers and a Lindsay real time spectrum analyser provided room equalisation and a Turbosound 4w active crossover (specially phase and time aligned to the loudspeaker system) provided the final drive to the power amp racks on stage. An Eventide H949 Harmoniser, a Bel Stereo Flanger and a Lexicon 224 digital reverberation system were connected to the desk auxiliary send/return circuits while a Klark Teknik DN22 dual 11-band graphic was on inserts on the CP70 electric grand piano and Vocoder channels, and four dbx 160 stereo limiter/compressors were on inserts into all vocal channels, keyboards and bass guitar.

The microphones used by the band are all personally selected by Nigel Luby, and are carefully positioned and checked personally before the sound

check. All vocal mikes were Shure SM57's, Francis Rossi's AC30's were miked using an AKG D12 in front of one cabinet and a Sennheiser MD421 on another, Rick Parfit's amplifiers were miked with an AKG D12 in front of one of his Marshall 4x12 cabinets and a Shure SM57 on one of his Vox's. The entire Keyboards system was DI'ed with the exception of the Hammond Leslie cabinet as we have already discussed.

The bass system was DI'ed straight from the Roland Rack and cabinets handling the full-range signal. The drum kit employed an Electrovoice RE20 on the kick drum, Sennheiser MD421's on all tom-toms, a Shure SM 58 on the 25" pedal timp; the snare drum had a Beyer MC713 capacitor mike over, and an Electrovoice RE20 under, the Hi-hat and Gong both had Calrec 2056 capacitor mikes and a pair of AKG C451/CK1 capacitor mikes were used as overheads.

Impressions

As you may have gathered from my introduction, I enjoyed this concert very much, and however monotonous Quo's chart successes may be with their continuous 12 bar riffs, they are anything but monotonous on stage. The band launched straight into their opening number with considerable drive and energy and held this pace throughout the two-and-a-quarter hour performance, with the audience almost drowning the band out on the refrains of numbers like "What You're Proposin'" and "Down, Down, Down". At one point, it was more like a Rod Stewart concert than Quo!

The PA system generally coped quite well with the band and produced sound pressure levels of 117dB(A) at about three metres in front of the loudspeaker stacks, 103dB(A) at the mixing desk — which was about half way back on the arena floor, and about 100dB(A) at the back. Due to the arc formation of the stacks, the sound quality was pretty uniform throughout the entire auditorium, and in the tiered seating stands up the sides of the arena, the sound was if anything, better than on the arena floor as these seats, being higher up, were almost level with the axis of the midrange Turbo cabinets and horns.

The only real problem was that the vocals were almost inaudible, and the SPL remained the same whether vocals were present or not. Even on

numbers that I knew, I had difficulty following the lyrics. There are two possible explanations for this state of affairs — either the sound level on stage from the backline equipment, drums and monitors is so high that the vocal microphones are picking up more general stage sound than they are vocals; or else the system is being driven so close to its maximum headroom capability by the instruments that there is just no more power available to get the vocals over the top. I would not like to guess which of these two was the problem in this particular instance, as there certainly was a great deal of level coming directly off the stage from the backline, but also, Wembley is a huge arena providing seating for 10,000 plus and even with 40Kw, running SPL's in excess of 100dB(A) at the rear of the arena with the entire PA projecting from the front takes some doing.

I was very impressed with Nigel Luby at the desk. I have rarely seen such a cool and capable operator or this level of technical competence. He actually knew how to set up the dbx compressors to get the effect he wanted from them and these were frequently adjusted during the performance. Likewise, the Eventide Harmoniser, Lexicon Reverb and Bel Flanger were used with discretion and deliberation to achieve just the effect required. There was no flapping about, no erratic twiddling. Nigel knew exactly what he wanted for every number — and exactly how to get it from the equipment.

Apart from the vocal deficiency, the overall sound was quite good with good drum presence, full bodied and not too harsh guitar and keyboard sounds and a good driving bass. The very top end is particularly noticeable on this system and it was a pleasant surprise to hear the tinkle of cymbals etc with remarkable clarity over most of the arena — this part of the frequency spectrum is usually lost altogether, or at best, is only audible over the front few rows. I seem to remember making a similar observation in respect of the Stiff Little Fingers gig last year, so this is obviously a specific feature of the Turbosound point source high frequency 'blocks'.

Altogether I am quite impressed. I thoroughly enjoyed the concert and overall, apart from the problem with the vocals, the sound was unusually good — not up to Pink Floyd with their big Altec Mantaray rig or 'Queen' with their Clair Bros S4 rig, but nevertheless good.

Ken Dibble

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M Series compiled by Tony Horsman
B.A.Ph.D.

MASTER FADERS

:the last two faders on a stereo mixer used to control the overall levels of the left and right outputs (see **FADER** Part 4, and **CHANNEL FADER** Part 2).

MATCHING

:in electronics, "matching" is used to describe the efficiency with which power is transferred from one device to another. For example, a matching transformer enables a low impedance microphone to drive a high impedance amplifier input; without the transformer, the two would be mismatched and the efficiency with which the microphone signals were utilized would be very low. Less commonly, "matching" refers to the selection of components (e.g. transistors, or speakers) according to particular characteristics. Two matched speakers are often used in high quality stereo systems; in this case they will have been matched for frequency response and efficiency by the manufacturers.

MELLOTRON

:a keyboard instrument employing magnetic tapes as the source of sound. Solo instruments, ensembles or even choirs are used to prepare the tapes. There are several tracks on each tape (one for each type of sound) and there is one tape for each note on the keyboard. The tapes are mounted in a frame and are pulled across playback heads when keys are depressed. The duration of any note is limited to about 15 seconds by the physical length of the tapes. The tape frames can be interchanged to provide a different set of sounds.

MEMORY

:a device which stores information. Some synthesizers now contain semiconductor memories in which the settings of the controls are stored, thus enabling particular sounds to be recreated whenever required. Memories can also for example hold information about the notes played on a keyboard, so that performances can be recreated any number of times simply by reading out the contents of the memory. The size of memory is usually measured in "words" or "bytes", with "K" denoting 1024 (not 1000). For example, a PET computer with 32K of memory contains $32 \times 1024 = 32768$ bytes, each of which is capable of storing one number in the range 0 to 255.

METAL TAPE

:a new type of tape used in cassettes with an even wider dynamic range and potentially higher frequency response than chrome tape. Unlike all other tapes in which the recording medium is a superficial oxide layer coated on a polyester backing, metal tape is uniform throughout. Special bias levels, equalisation characteristics and tape heads are required for metal tapes which should only be used on recorders specifically designed for that purpose.

MICROPROCESSOR

:the heart of the microcomputer in which

numbers are manipulated according to instructions in the programme. The almost incredible reductions in physical size and cost of computers in recent years are entirely due to the development of large-scale integrated circuit technology (see **LSI**, Part 6). A typical microprocessor, such as the Motorola 6800, is enclosed in a 2×5 cm package only 3mm deep and costs less than £5. Usually a microprocessor is surrounded by ancillary chips such as semiconductor memory and special interface devices which allow the processor to communicate with the outside world, musical keyboards, synthesizers and mixers included.

MIXDOWN

:the process of adding together several recorded signals and re-recording the resulting mixes. Adjusting the relative levels of the different channel signals in a mix is a skilled job requiring attentive listening to the individual contributions of each channel. Usually continual adjustments are made to the channel faders (see Part 2) in the course of a mixdown by the recording engineers. In computer-controlled mixdowns, these adjustments can be pre-programmed, so that in the final take the channel fader movements are automated.

MIXER

:an audio mixer is a device which reduces a large number of audio signals from various sources (microphones, keyboards, etc.) to a smaller number, usually four or two, excluding special outputs for effect units. The number of separate inputs which can be handled, apart from effect returns (see Part 3), is equal to the number of "channels". Each channel contains controls for adjusting the frequency spectrum of the signal routed into it, and for adjusting the contributions of that particular channel to the various outputs. Synthesizers contain special mixers which can add together control voltages; these form an integral part of the voltage-controlled modules (eg. VCOs), but in some modular systems these DC mixers are also supplied as physically separate units.

MODULATION

:a change superimposed on an oscillation. The change can take a variety of forms, amplitude modulation and frequency modulation being the most familiar (see Fig. 1). If the oscillation is an audio signal and the modulation is periodic with a frequency of about 8Hz, the tremolo and vibrato effect are produced. However, a modulation does not have to be periodic: for example, in synthesizers an ADSR waveform (which is aperiodic) is commonly used to amplitude modulate an audio signal passing through a voltage-controlled amplifier (see **ADSR**, Part 1).

MODULE

:an electronic unit performing one or more specific functions. Many companies marketing a range of audio products now package the various options as physically similar modules sharing common power supplies in a rack e.g. the modular Moog synthesizer (see **MOOG** below). Modular construction is a common feature of mixers

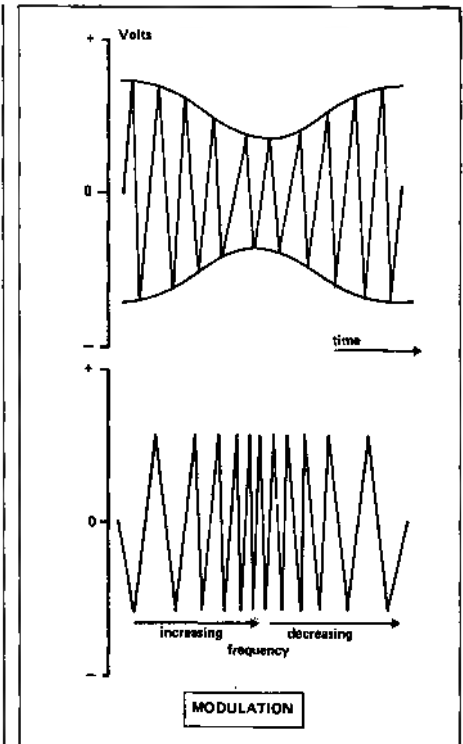


Figure 1

(A) Amplitude modulation (tremolo) and (B) frequency modulation (vibrato).

having two main advantages: specific configurations are easily assembled and spares can be carried so that faulty modules can be quickly replaced.

MONOPHONIC

:a term which refers to keyboard instruments capable of producing only one note at a time. Many synthesizers are monophonic, although some are duophonic, having two VCOs and keyboard modules capable of supplying two independent control voltages. Keyboard instruments capable of producing more than two notes at the same time are said to be "polyphonic" e.g. some Yamaha organ manuals are 7-note polyphonic.

MOOG

:in 1964 Dr Robert Moog developed the first audio devices responsive to control voltages, a voltage-controlled oscillator and voltage-controlled amplifier. These inventions formed the cornerstones of an extremely flexible system for sound synthesis, and in 1966 the first modular Moog synthesizers became commercially available. Voltage control is now almost universally adopted in synthesizer design.

MULTICORE

:a type of cable containing many conductors, each of which is separately insulated and colour-coded so that particular wires are easily identifiable. Multicore cables often have an outer screen surrounding the inner conductors: less commonly the multicore comprises many

USICIANS' A-Z

separate co-axial cables (see CO-AXIAL, Part 2) bound together by the outer insulator.

MULTITRACK

:make a recording in several stages, building up layer by layer until all parts have been recorded. Multitrack tape recorders with 4, 8 or 16 tracks are often used for the purpose but are not essential; two or more conventional recorders can be used to achieve the same end (with much less convenience and more noise!).

N

NAB

:National Association of Broadcasters (U.S.A.) Commonly refers to various tape standards e.g. NAB spools have centre holes 3" in diameter.

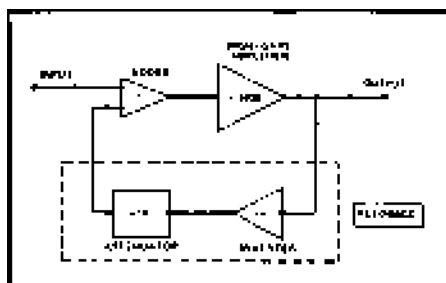


Figure 2

Example of negative feedback round a high-gain amplifier. The amplifier's output is inverted and attenuated before being fed back and added to the input signal. The overall amplification of this circuit is $\times 10$ (i.e. the reciprocal of the attenuation in the feedback loop).

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

:signal from the output of an amplifier or electronic network returned to the input in anti-phase i.e. when the input is going positive, the signal fed back to the input is going negative and vice versa. Negative feedback of the kind shown in Fig. 2 reduces distortion and noise and flattens the frequency response. If the amount of feedback is dependent on signal frequency, the overall frequency response can be shaped, for example to a required equalization characteristic.

NEON

:a rare gas which is completely inert (i.e. it will not combine chemically with other substances). When an electric current is forced through neon, electrons in the neon atoms are excited and red light is emitted. High voltages are needed to make the neon conduct — hence the warning notices on neon signs!

NODES

:places where the amplitude of an oscillation is zero (no displacement). Sound waves in stopped organ pipes have nodes

both ends; at each end the air molecules are prevented from vibrating by solid surfaces. Similarly, vibrating instrument strings have nodes at both ends, at one end being prevented from moving by the bridge and at the other by the fingers or frets.

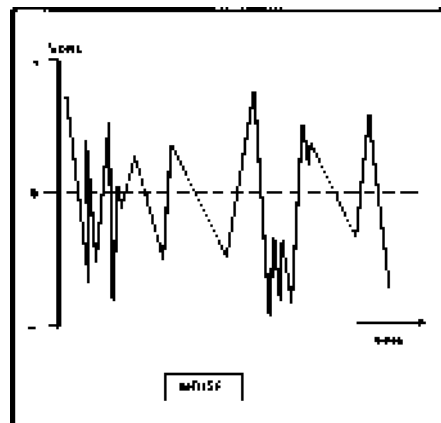


Figure 3

Random voltage waveform of a noise signal.

NOISE

:unwanted sound. Noise is generated in all electronic circuits and is due to random motion of electrons, the resulting tiny random currents and voltages (see Fig. 3) producing the familiar hiss when amplified. Noise generators are used in synthesizers to produce high amplitude noise signals which form the basis of wind, surf, cymbal sounds etc. and can also be added to instrumental sounds to simulate "breathing" effects. White noise, which contains equal amounts of all frequencies, can be "coloured" by filtration, blue noise containing predominantly high frequencies and pink noise low frequencies.

NOISE GATE

:a device which effectively switches off when the average input signal is low, but which passes through unaltered input signals above a particular threshold level (see Fig. 4). The time over which the input is averaged is critical to the operation of these devices. If it is too long, the leading edges of sounds are clipped off; if it is too short, the noise gate will switch off in the course of normal transient low-amplitude sections of the audio-signal. Noise gates do not reduce the amount of noise present in a signal, but merely remove the noise at times when it is most noticeable, i.e. during "silences".

NOISE REDUCTION

:a technique used in signal transmission/reception or recording/replay which effectively reduces noise introduced by the transmitter or recording medium. The most widely used technique for noise reduction is the Dolby B process, now incorporated into all good quality cassette

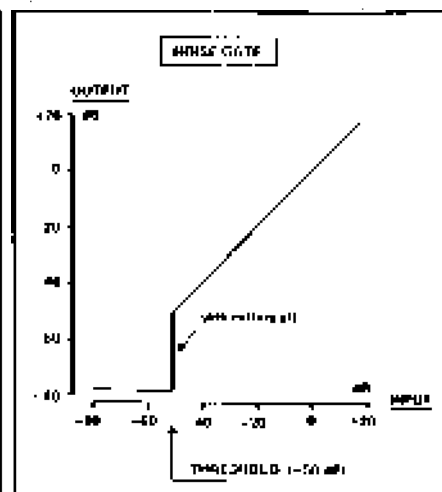


Figure 4

Relationship between steady input and output signal levels for a noise gate with a threshold of -50dB . Below input levels of -50dB , the output of the gate is essentially zero.

recorders. During low level passages, high frequencies are boosted during transmission or recording; the opposite occurs during reception or playback (see DOLBY, Part 3).

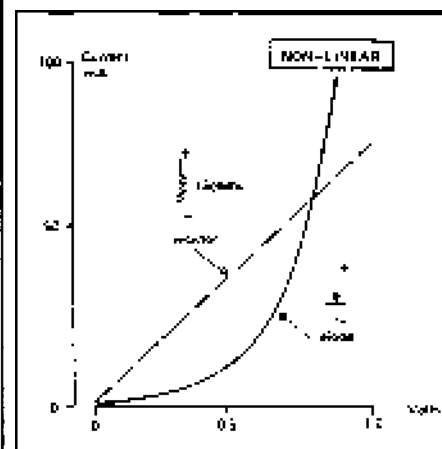


Figure 5

Non-linear relationship between the voltage across a diode and the current flowing through it (solid curve). A diode does not obey Ohm's Law. For comparison, the linear relationship between voltage and current for a resistor obeying Ohm's Law is shown as a dotted line.

NON-LINEAR

:literally "not lying in a straight line", usually referring to electrical characteristics of components or modules which when expressed graphically are curves rather than straight lines. For example, a diode is classed as a non-linear device because the voltage across it and the current passing through it are not proportional to one another (see Fig. 5).



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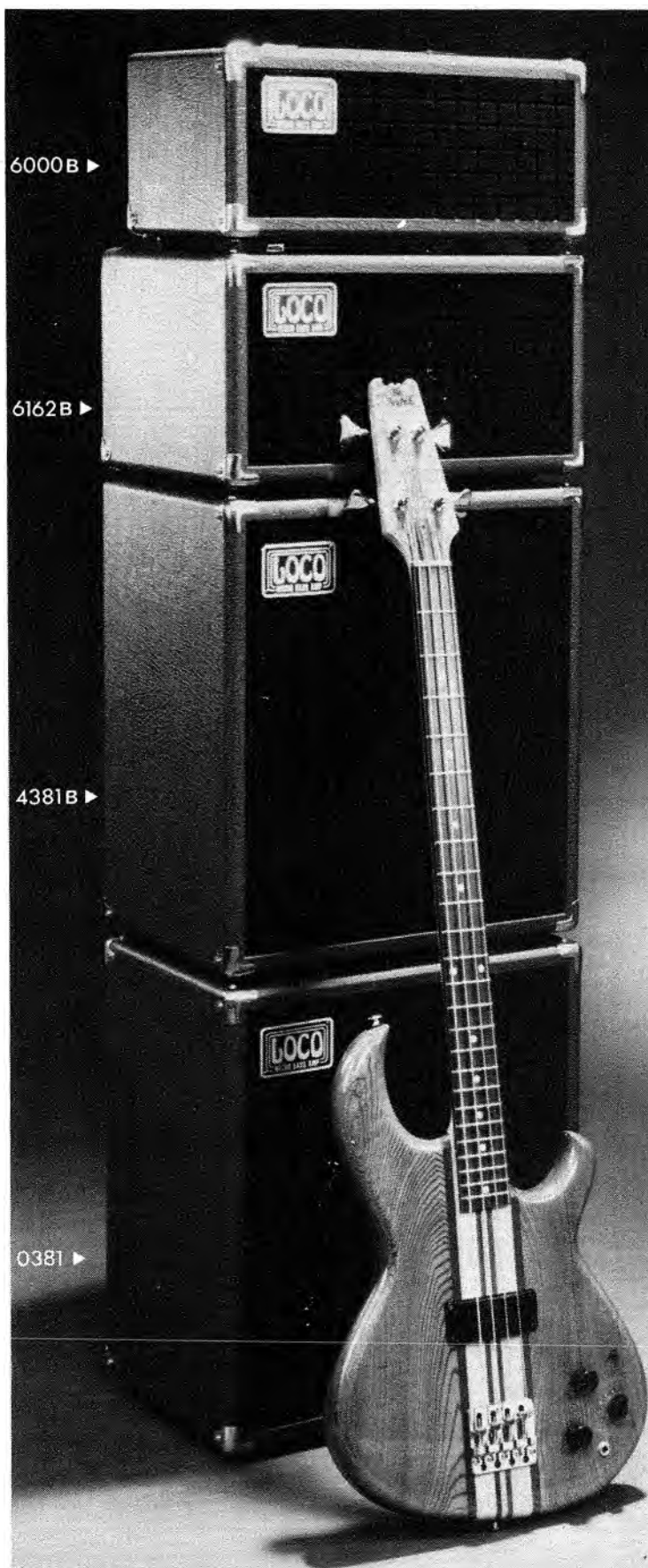
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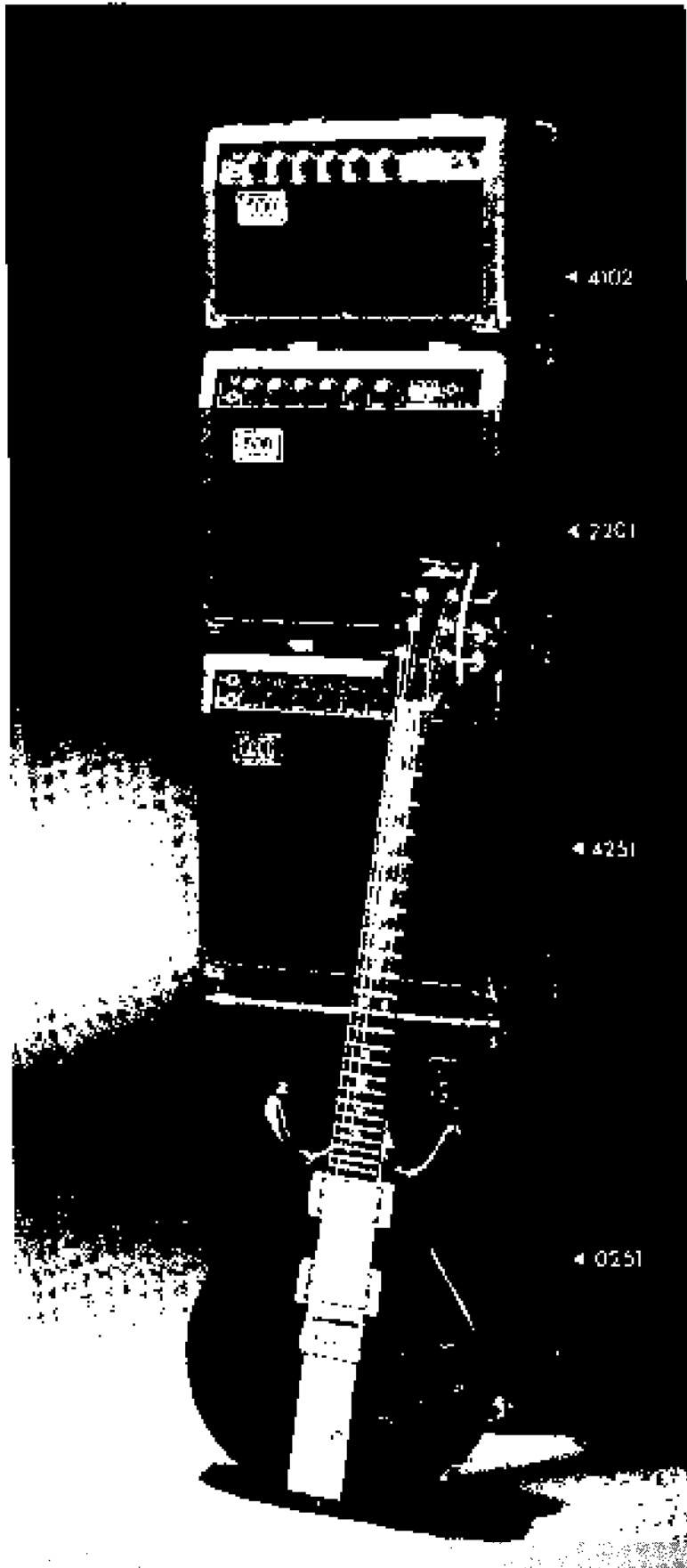
2201 RRP. £126.60 (inc. VAT)
Micro Amp fitted with 20cm (8") speaker, this amplifier produces 20w RMS. 2-way inputs, 2 volume controls, 3-band equalizer, reverb control, line-out jack socket, main-in jack socket and headphone jack socket are provided.
The increase in power from 20w to 30w (40w to 50w in 4102 and 4251) is the result of connecting two 8-ohm speakers in parallel. This changes the impedance loading of the amplifier to 4-ohm. As an added safety measure the power transistors used in the amplifier are well over-rated to easily handle the extra load.

4251 RRP. £155.20 (inc. VAT)
Micro Amp fitted with a high efficiency 25cm (10") speaker of original design which projects a really bright and penetrating sound. The circuit is the same as that used in model 4102. A larger speaker ensures that the technical capabilities of the amplifier are fully used to produce a rich full sound, especially accentuating the lower frequencies. Output power is raised to 50w by connecting external speaker cabinet 0251 which uses a 25cm (10") speaker.
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GANG OF FOUR ARE BACK AGAIN — in Britain at least. Since the celebrated release of their first album *Entertainment* and the accompanying tours through Britain in '79, we haven't heard much about their music and activities. They released *Solid Gold*, their second album, in January this year and set up a British tour with *Bush Tetras* from New York and *Pere Ubu*, the political/intellectual comedians.

Meanwhile, in 1980, they've been touring Europe — Holland twice, Germany twice, France, Belgium and Portugal and the States three times, where they've gained quite a reputation and following. According to them there seemed to be no point in playing Britain during that time before they'd written new songs — a new album. This year they have quite a few plans for tours abroad, Europe and the States again and also Yugoslavia, which they see as a new, exciting challenge.

I met Hugo Burnham, their Drummer and Dave Allen (Bass) two days after their London appearance at the Hammersmith Palais in the offices of EMI where the Gang was giving interviews to journalists from all over Europe (Hugo remarked that EMI didn't really do much for them during the last year, so they made 'a fuss' — which has obviously worked). Dave seemed a bit exhausted from this unusual amount of publicity work, while Hugo was energetic as ever (just watch him drumming!) and so he made most of the comments in this interview.

MUSIC-POLITICS

In Germany the Gang played at a festival called 'Rock Against Junk' last December in Berlin, where they came into direct contact with the streetfights about housing politics and squatting. How do they see the connection between their music and direct political action?

H: "Yes, I think we are fairly often misunderstood, because it's fairly unusual to have a band that is politically committed, or politically active; the Gang of 4 is basically known as a politically active band.

"You know, we are not afraid to put forward our politics, whatever they will be, so a lot of people just latch onto that. In America for instance, we always get approached by really heavy marxists, none of us are particularly Marxist, well Maoist rather. These really heavy Maoists keep coming up and saying 'Wow, Gang of 4,' and we are saying 'Look, we are not Maoist,

we do not like the 'Gang of 4', we don't agree with them'. Ha, but bla bla . . . you know, they don't listen, they are so wound up and intense with what they are thinking, and they don't listen to you. They are so excited, they think they might have a popular form of communication through us. But they misunderstand what we are about."

Gang of 4 has also been involved in the 'Rock Against Racism' movement along with bands like the Tom Robinson Band, Clash . . .

D: "We had a lot to do with that, but I think we were one of the only political groups at one time. I think we stand out on our own, 'The Gang of 4' as a yardstick for a lot of other political groups. You said the Clash, Tom Robinson, you know they had leanings towards leftist politics, especially Tom. We are good friends of his and we slag him off everytime we are interviewed, you know, all the time, with this that and the other.

Actually, we met him on Monday night after the gig, he came backstage, and said 'That was great' and we said, 'No it wasn't', you know, we always differed in our feelings, because he tended to use sort of SWP politics especially, and he's very closely involved in all that, sort of activist Rock'n'Roll. He's into that side of it, that sort of chanting: 'Let's spray things on the walls', 'Let's just be generally what I feel'.

"It's a bit liberal, actually, more than anything. You know, it's easy to spray things on the wall, it's easy to write songs which are very slogany. But it's very difficult to give answers, which is where we fall down, 'cos everyone says 'Ok, you give us this, you give us that, where are the answers?'. But at the same time as we didn't want to sloganise, ram things down people's throats, we never wanted to sort of give ideals that should be taken up. We don't want to say to kids, who buy the album 'this is what you got to do now' and 'do this'. So in a sense, I think, we are one of the most political bands. Lyrically we took it not as slogany, but as trying to put something in, something that is worth writing and singing about. You know, using the platform as positively as possible. But at the same time not try to ram ideas across, because that would be just like any particular party."

You mentioned 'kids' . . .

D: "Oh no, we don't attract kids, we are not populist."

Your music is mainly intellectual . . .



GANG-OF-FOUR

Band C

POP PERSONALITIES

H: "Yes and no, yes, because we don't attract young audiences like Adam and the Ants or . . . well, I mean Adam and the Ants are the best example at the moment, 'cos we are not a Top Twenty band. Our visual image is not very easily identifiable. Adam is a very, very clever bloke. Adam and the Ants has been a musical and social embarrassment for three or four years — appalling musically. But what he's done within three years was building up to his recent so called overnight success. He's been around for a very long time, he's done interviews with every single Fanzine, he's built up a very strong grass roots following. Badges, every punk you've



IF-FOUR

Of Gold

seen in the last 3 or 4 years had 'Adam and the Ants' on the back of their leather jacket.

"That's from practically no record, just from being very different and alternative, and working on that grass roots thing he suddenly hit it. He puts out a record and they are all there already, his audience was already there, they've just been like hiding and waiting, he's really clever. And he's found a brilliant image, whoever actually worked on it, designed it or found it . . . I mean people might say, 'MacLaren', but the 'Bow wow wow' thing has failed, Adam and the Ants has been a great success.

"I think it will be very short lived because it's still that same thing. Someone like Madness for instance are

very clever, because they've got a certain public image, but within that, each video they do for each single, what they dress up in, is different all the time. The little act, the little play they're putting on for each album or single, is a little bit different. Madness I think, will last a lot longer.

"They are just two examples. They are very, very well worked out visual public images, which we don't have, thus we are less attractive to a younger audience. And as we were saying earlier, we are also more difficult for a younger audience, simply to get out to gigs. It's not often you get an Adam and the Ants type gig, so it is a bit special, so one's parents, kids' parents will take them. You know, when I went to see Gary Numan in Manchester, it was kids and parents. It was all very young or old. That was really funny. After the concert it looked like after a school dance, all the parents, waiting to pick up their children. And we'll never get there."

D: "We never had any TV-showing or radio playing, our audience is still mainly built up through playing live. You're not gonna win any kids through playing live. Maybe if you do Top of the Pops, then you might win a younger audience . . ."

H: "For example, Siouxsie has been on TOTP, she's been on Radio One, on Round Table, she's a personality, she's a pop personality, That is very attractive to kids, the Gang of 4 aren't pop personalities. We've got a strong reputation, a strong public image, but we're not pop personalities. None of us will be found doing centre spreads in 'Record Mirror', or on the back of 'Oh, Boy' or 'My Guy', . . ."

THE SHOW

Even though Gang of 4 are certainly not 'pop personalities' with well known faces and image, their show is still typical, exciting and extremely lively. John runs and jumps up and down the stage like a madman; Andy Gill, on the other side will suddenly walk across the stage, seemingly emotionless, with very well worked out movements while playing his powerful guitar riffs. The audience at Hammersmith Palais went along with every movement of their music. The band was still not completely satisfied with the results:

H: "Yeah, people expect us to be serious and dull . . . Yeah, we have a show, and it's very strong. Monday night it was only 70%, it was very good 70%, but not 100%. There were things that were wrong, we weren't giving everything — for one reason or

another it wasn't complete. We weren't pleased with what was going on."

Why was that?

H: "I don't know. Lots of little reasons, which on their own mean nothing, but all added up together, it's probably unimportant to the audience, but it affects the four of us which probably indicates that maybe we're a bit too fussy. I mean, whether we are or not is irrelevant, the fact of the matter is that. . ."

"Without trying to sound arrogant, when the Gang of 4 are good live, we are the best. We are the best Live Band in the world, we are unbeatable. We have done that, last year in London, at the Electric Ballroom or in New York and a number of other gigs, where it's been so good, so incredibly powerful, unbelievably well received and we've come off, feeling like 'AAAAhh', we couldn't have done better. So when we do a good Show, which I think the Hammersmith Palais was a good show, but at the time I was pissed off because we didn't realize our full potential. We didn't go a hundred percent, it was only 70, although it was a very good 70, that sounds like me having a big mouth but I really believe that. I mean, we are good, we are so good, when we are just ordinary, we are still better than a lot of other people but it's not good enough for us. And people say 'Oh, it doesn't matter, the sound out front was good, people really enjoyed it', but I care about the fact that it could have been even better. We all care. Sometimes it's to our detriment, but I think it's a very good thing that we've hung onto that."

'SOLID GOLD'

'Solid Gold' seems fuller, more worked out, maybe softer, slower than the sharp, direct 'Entertainment', but still with the same typical driving, hard beat of the first album and of course the political lyrics, the brandmark of Gang of 4. I think, the songs of the new albums come over much stronger live than on record.

H: "It has always been like that with the Go4. It was very much like that with 'Entertainment', wasn't it?"

Do you like the new album more than the last one?

H: "I don't like it more, I like it for different reasons."

B: "It's good, it could have been better."

H: "It could have been better, but I think that's a good quality. I think, if you reach a stage where you think 'That's it', if you think it can't be

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better, that's possibly the time to stop being that group. I think, it's good that it could be better, because it means the next thing, the next record you do can be a development."

B: "When I said it could have been better, I think that I genuinely believe it wasn't as good as it could have been. I liked it for a long time, but after a while I find it a bit sort of laid back. Because live it's a whole new thing, . . ."

H: "Andrew and I had an argument about that. Well, not an argument, but a dispute. I think any song we've played live is gonna be stronger if we then record it. 70% of 'Solid Gold' hasn't been played live before. You write a song, then, when you play it on a tour, you develop it so much, not consciously changing things, just the actual performance, the feel, develops after 2 or 3 weeks of touring. That is what I think we'd like to do with the third album, which we hope to record later this year. After this week we'll have two weeks before we go to Europe. We'll be writing new songs, trying to write them, anyway. When we get back from Europe, between that point and when we go to America (in June/July) we'll be writing again. When we go to America, we will be playing not only these songs but hopefully a lot of new songs, which, when we come back, we will then record. And I hope that more than half of the third album will by then be well played on the road. Not overplayed, but played enough to feel confident in the performance of it."

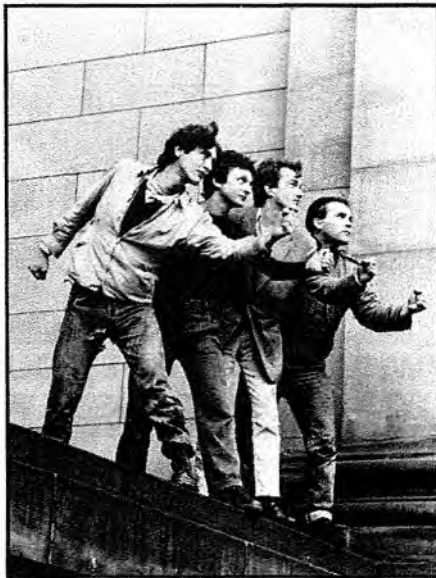
"Quite a lot of 'Solid Gold' happened in the studio, was made up there and then. Only two songs of 'Entertainment' we wrote before we entered the studio, all the other songs we had been playing quite a long time."

You had Jimmy Douglass as your producer, he's an American Disco producer. Why?

H: "We got him in as an engineer, not as a producer. He was co-producer with us, but we got him in to engineer."

Did you choose a kind of more popular sound, because you think your intentions are more easily communicated with that kind of music? What do you think of the 'Pere Ubu' sound for example?

H: "I think Pere Ubu represent a certain 'off the wallness'. They are strange, weird, off the wall or whatever. We are like Pere Ubu, say, but with a more main stream side to us, we are more accessible than Pere Ubu. Charles Shaar Murray, who writes for NME, said, if you draw a line between Dr. Feelgood and Pere Ubu, somewhere there is the Gang of 4, which I think is not an unfair thing to say. There is that lefter feel, sort of off the wall side to us but at the same time we can be quite accessible, because there is a feel that is more straight forward Rock music."



GANG OF FOUR

HEAVY METAL

D: "I personally would use a much heavier band at the other end, you know, Pere Ubu there and Led Zeppelin on the other end, something really heavy, Gang of 4 are a very, very strong Rock band. In some parts it's really heavy, though I'm not saying I want it to be a heavy metal band, we can encompass all that very easily, we just use everything — we bring it in, throw it out and so on — from Pere Ubu to Led Zeppelin."

H: "It's on a sort of funny level, like when we do soundchecks at gigs, sometimes somebody tapes us playing real Heavy Metal jams, I mean it sounds like we are a heavy metal band. We can do it. We don't particularly like Heavy Metal, but it's funny and it's fun."

"I mean, the Go4 doing 'Purple Haze', that's not exactly Heavy Metal, but it's within that range, that end of the spectrum which is there within the whole spectrum of our music."

D: "Although we are better than what they do, Led Zeppelin, I wouldn't say with Pere Ubu, . . . There is no reason why we shouldn't attract people with long hair and denim jackets . . ."

H: "Which we did, the other night. I saw a few down the front — 3 guys with long hair and denim jackets . . . and they knew the words, they were singing along!"

B: "We don't wanna play to a selected bunch of people, I don't want to be played just by John Peel, there is no reason why Tommy Vance shouldn't play our album, it is a very strong album . . ."

that it's just David and Mayack, but all five of them are great, like Alan the synthesizer player, he gives so much to the band in a very quiet and laid back way."

THE TOUR

D: "I think personally, it's the best thing we've ever done, this tour, just on so many levels. Unfortunately the success of a thing like that is often not understood or appreciated by audiences, papers, public or whatever, critics even."

H: "I think the concert was a good night of entertainment like, for instance, Alexis Sell, the comedian, I think it was a good idea to put him on the, ok, it didn't work, but I still think I'm glad we did it. I'm glad we tried it, even though we won't do it again. But it's good to try these things, trying to inject something different instead of just having the normal Rock'n'Roll Gig."

"I was quite keen that we take a DJ on this tour, because often the problem is at gigs, that either the wrong music is played, music you don't like or it's not appropriate. Or no music. I think, if you take a show on the road, if you can afford it — that's the reason why we didn't do it cos we can't afford it — to take the most complete show you can, which means even the bits inbetween the bands. That's why I thought the Clash were always very strong and very good, cos they had their own DJ playing the music that was appropriate."

Some people call your lyrics Marxist . . . ?

H: "Yes and no. Personally, I'm sure that some of my ideas are very much based on Marxist theory, but I don't understand Marxist theory. I don't know enough about the actual theory of Marx, though some of the things I think are very much in line with Marxist theory. But as such, per se, we are not Marxists, we are not Maoists. Generally speaking, well, our politics are leftist politics, but there is no Go4 politic, there is a core of agreement between the four of us."

D: "We are socialists . . ."

H: "Yeah, we are socialists, but individually the four of us have different ideas about things. And that is the strength of our socialism, because . . ."

D: "Two of us are aligned at the moment, but . . ."

H: "But that's changing all the time. Our politics and lyrics are pretty unusual within the sphere of Rock'n'Roll . . ."

D: "It's fair to say with 'Entertainment' that John had felt he was a Marxist, and he was writing a lot of the lyrics, so . . ."

H: "That's an important thing, there is the room for disagreement — discernment rather, different ideas. That's the strength of our socialism. . ."

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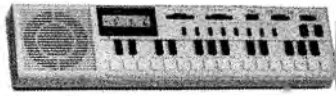


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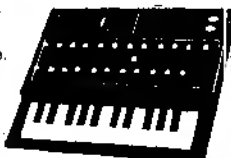


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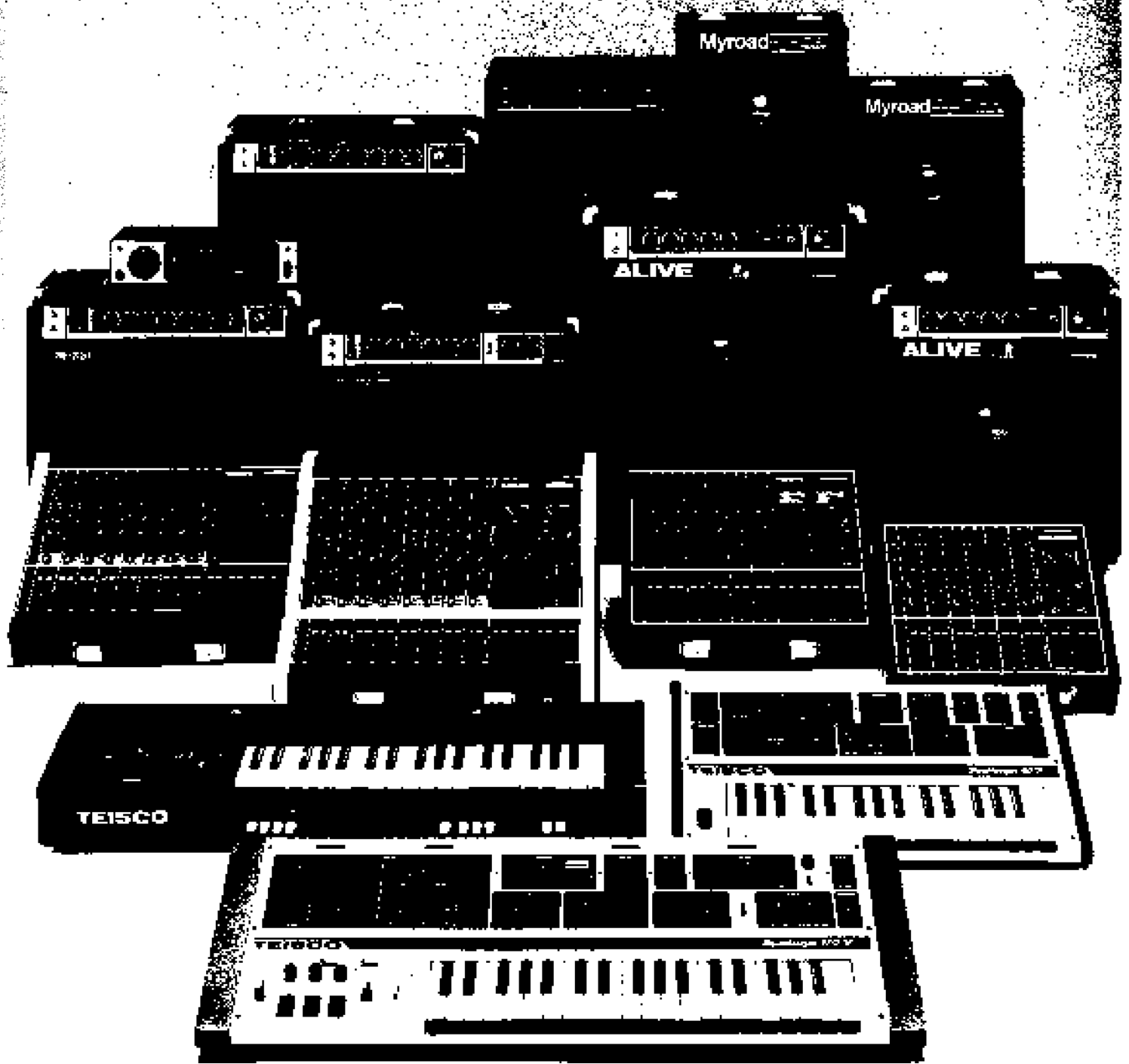
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RICHARD THOMPSON



HIS MANAGER JOE LUSTIG regards Richard Thompson as possibly the greatest living tea expert in English rock and roll. He enquires if I know about Richard giving guitar lessons to Segovia?? Joe Lustig enjoys interviews. Richard is held in very high esteem by his fellow professionals, nothing to do with the tea mind you, mainly due to the fact that they envy his style. In these heady days of fusion music his playing displays an extremely original talent, and a style which is so totally his own. He is his own man, a rare treat for the ears.

The years 1967-1971 were spent in the company of Fairport Convention with whom he toured the U.S.A. twice, in the following 12 months he played with both the late Sandy Denny and Ian Mathews. Since 1972 to the present day Richard has been performing regularly with his wife Linda and has just finished work on the new Dave Swarbrick album. Richard cites as his main influences Irish, Scots and Northumbrian pipe music, Sax and pedal steel players, and glory be, his mum. He loathes interviews but on this occasion he agreed to take his medicine like a man. So welcome to my chat with Richard Thompson, guitar player extraordinaire.

Q. How are your influences reflected in your style?

RICHARD I use an awful lot of hammering on the bends, combined with my flat picking style which incorporates the use of 2nd & 3rd fingers at the same time, I'm able to imitate the sound of swirling pipes on electric guitar.

Q. Do your influences stretch further than the English/Celtic music that you mentioned?

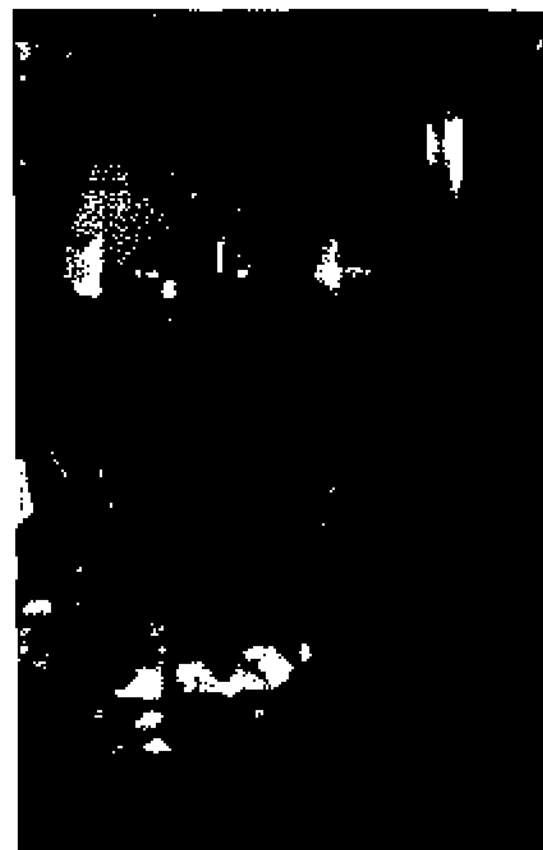
RICHARD Certainly, but I try not to listen to too many electric players,



Top photo Richard and his Fender Strat '57 body '55 neck, below a Martin 00018 (1965)



Photos Mex Kay



electric guitar being my main instrument. Most of my inspiration comes from listening to acoustic guitar players and more especially musicians who play other instruments such as pipe and saxophone.

Going back to when I first started playing, 20 years ago, I listened to whatever was lying around the house. People like Buddy Holly, Les Paul, Scotty Moore and James Burton. James Burton I regard as my main electric influence. Robbie Robertson and the late Mike Bloomfield were among my next set of electric influences, and I mustn't forget Zal Yanovsky of the Lovin' Spoonful who I regard as very important, because he was the first person to successfully combine country and rock music. Leo Kottke is another favourite, so is Ray Nichols. There's an old boy in Nashville who really turns me on, name of Thumbs Carlyle. Now him I would like to see.

Q. Do you like any of the English guitar players?

RICHARD John Martyn and Martin Carthy for sure but mostly I tend to research my roots. It's always been important to me as a musician, to develop my own music. I think all musicians should develop their own music, their own tone and feel. For that reason I keep a tight rein on the effects I use, I start to lose too much tone when I use too many effects.

Q. What effects do you use?

RICHARD Roland delay pedal, Roland Chorus, DMI, and an MXR microamp to clean up the signal.

Q. Where do your preferences lie as far as electric guitars go?

RICHARD Fender because I prefer that Fender bite, even though they are harder to play. My main guitar is my old 2-tone sunburst, maple neck Stratocaster. It has a '57 body and a '55 neck. I picked it up 3 years ago for £200. As far as design goes, the bridge is a mess, the tremolo is pretty bad, and the proximity of the switches is insane: it's no piece of Chippendale! I still can't understand the crazy prices that these old instruments fetch. The pitching on mine is way out when I play a high E, something to do with the magnetic properties of the pickup. I don't think Fender have improved on the guitar since the day they built it,

and I certainly don't like the new ones: they sound Japanese to me. One odd thing about my Strat is that it has no volume control at all, that's been replaced by a tone pot which controls the tone of the treble pickup and gives me master tone as well.

Q. Do you play Gibson guitars?

RICHARD I had a Gibson Les Paul Goldtop which I sold to John Martyn who unfortunately had it stolen. My first serious guitar was in fact an early Gibson ES 175 with PAF's. I no longer have that one. My only other electric is a 1952 maple neck Fender Telecaster.

Q. What do you use for acoustic?

RICHARD A Martin 00018 (1965) which I bought in the States along with my Gibson mandolin. I'd love to own an 8-string dobro... so difficult to find. There are some good acoustics being made in England at the moment, Nigel Thornbury and Fylde for instance.

Q. Amplifier preferences?

RICHARD I hate tranny amps intensely... uugh, horrible. The amp I use in the studio and onstage is an early sixties Fender Deluxe Reverb, also I have a 1956 Fender Deluxe. Not a transistor in sight, I hate them, they should never have been invented.

Q. Have you produced anybody?

RICHARD Yes but I don't really think it's my bag. I'm too enthusiastic to be a good producer. I'm not objective enough. My style tends to be too simple, but then that's the kind of production I like. The early Sam Phillips recordings all had it, they were straight and simple, but they were also exciting and atmospheric.

Q. Do you practise regularly?

RICHARD Not every day. It goes in fits and starts, I have my bursts. I find that I reach plateaux with my playing and then nothing, so I stop practising and start again later.

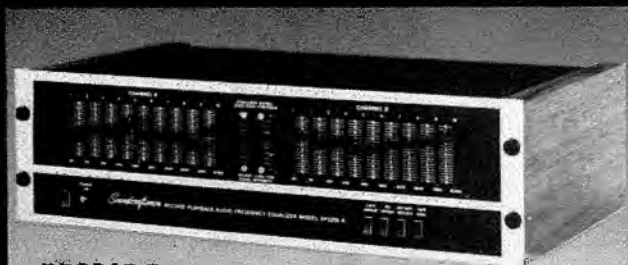
Q. Plans for the future?

RICHARD Only to make tonight's gig. Oh yes, I am looking for the string that lasts forever.

Before he made a bolt for the door, Richard admitted that during no part of the interview had he felt any pain whatsoever. Later that same day, at the gig, I saw Richard deliver what most people only talk about.

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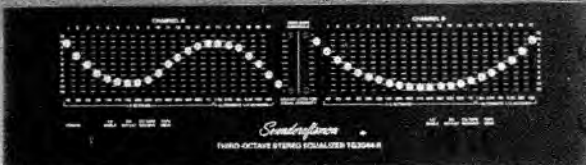
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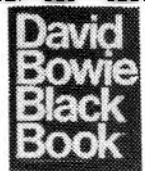


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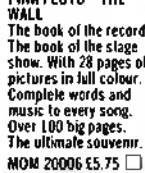
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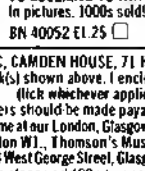
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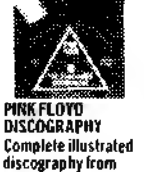
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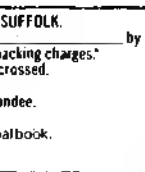
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No restriction to the entry. Anyone, whatever nationality, may enter the contest.

Application

Fill in the Application Form available from Roland (UK) Ltd., 983 Great West Road, Brentford, Middlesex. Send your entry tape to Roland Synthesizer Studio, Tokyo, with the application form. Deadline: August 31, 1981.

Judges

(Japanese) Isao Tomita, Norihiko Wada, Shigenori Kamiya, Frank Becker, and Makoto Moroi. (Overseas) Dr. Robert A. Moog, Oscar Peterson and Ralph Dyck.

Class for Entry

Class A 'Grand Prix'
Prize winners in one of the past contests. Professional musicians acceptable
Class B 'Multi-Recording with Synchro System'
New entrants using Multi-Track Tape recorder or Microcomputer

Class C 'Multi-Recording without Synchro System'

New entrants - Sound on sound works
Class D 'Sound Design'
(For example, when the main sound is drums, effect sound and poem recitation, sound cartoons, image sound, etc., any of these compositions are acceptable except for regular music.)

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Class B, C and D

First Prize - 2 persons each
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Small gifts will be presented in commemoration of their participation, to all entrants.

Final Screening

The final screening will take place on October 31, 1981. The winners will be notified immediately after the screening is completed.

Please Note:

1. Use the application form.
2. Each contestant can enter only one tape. Entry tape should be limited in length within 5 minutes (any tape which goes over 5 minutes limit will be excluded from the screening.) Send your tape together with application form.
3. The content will be limited to synthesizer pieces. It can be presented in the form of music, sound collages, drums and sound effects. Any piece that does not use the synthesizer at all will be excluded from the screening.
4. Any recordings of copyrighted material, such as radio and TV, or movies and records will be excluded. The tape pieces shall be ones which have never been played or presented anywhere else. Also, any entered tape shall not be re-entered in any other contest until this contest ends.
5. The copyright of the winning pieces will belong to Roland Corporation.
6. As a general rule, a recording made through a

microphone will not be accepted. However, if the use of microphone is necessary due to the composition of the piece (e.g. for the use of vocals, narrations, natural sound, the vocoder, special sound effect), write down the reason for using a microphone in the process.

7. The entry tape will not be returned.

8. Please take note of the following points concerning tape to be used for your entry.

Cassettes

The tape speed will be limited to 4.75 (4.8) cm/s. If a noise reduction system is to be used, the Dolby system or dbx should be used.

For approximately 10 seconds, record a 440 Hz sine wave or a signal similar to that at 0 VU (Left and Right channel), and 5 seconds after this signal, record your work.

Write down the name of piece, your full name and whether a noise reduction system is used or not on the cassette tape label.

Open Reels

The speed of tape should be either 19 cm/s or 38 cm/s. If a noise reduction system is to be used, the dbx should be used.

The tape can be recorded in 2 tracks or 4 tracks. However, in case of a 4 track stereo (2 channel) recording tracks 1 and 3 should be used and track 2 and 4 should be empty.

If a quadra-phonics recording is your aim, track 1 should come from the front left speaker, track 2 from the back left speaker, track 3 from the front right speaker and track 4 from the back right speaker.

For approximately 10 seconds a signal close to a sine wave of 1 kHz or 440 Hz should be recorded at 0 VU. Five seconds after this signal, the piece should be recorded.

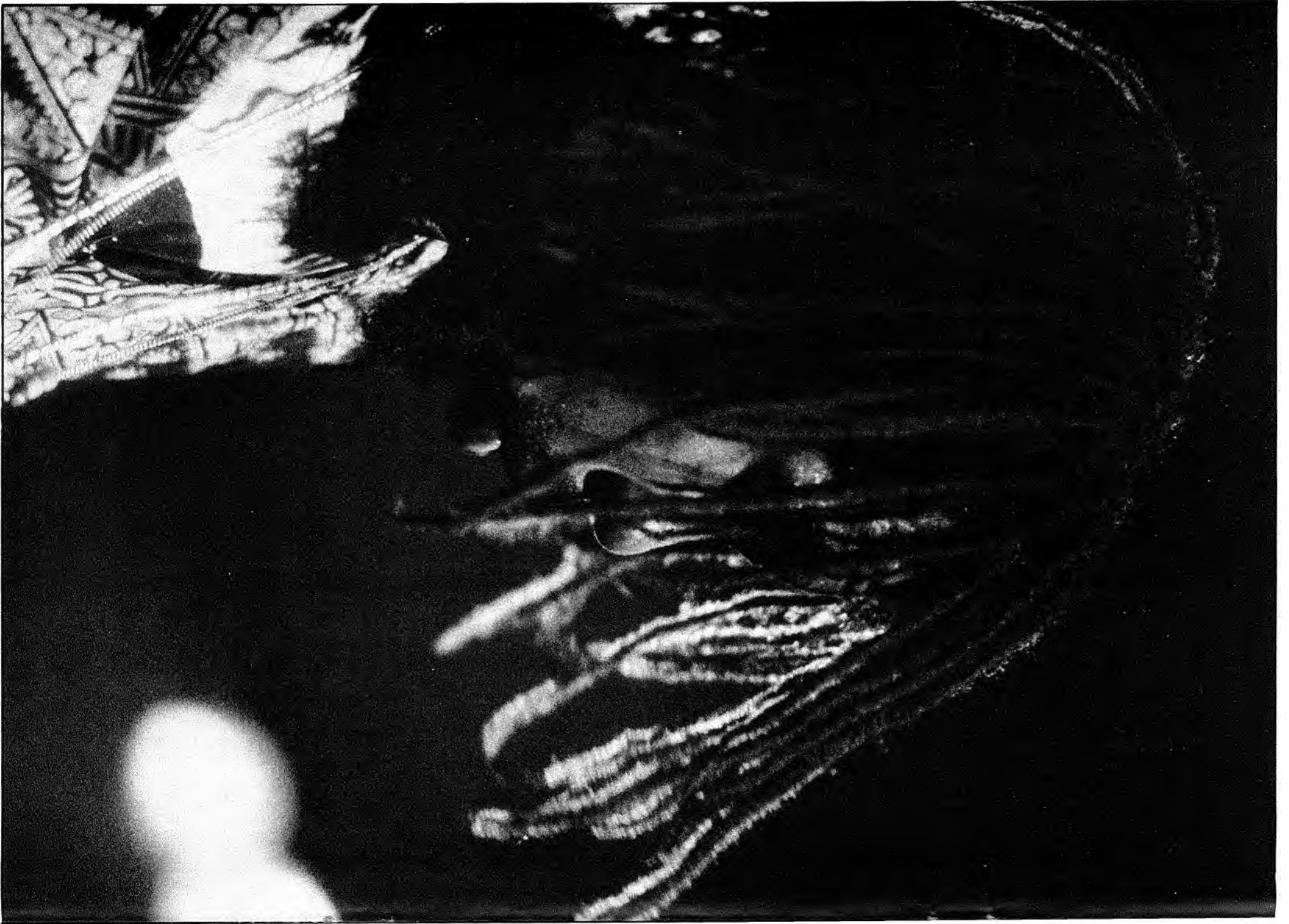
On the label of reel, the name of the piece, your full name, the kind of recording and the tape speed should be written.

Please try to use tape of high quality for both cassette and open reel tape.

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Peter TOSH



PETER TOSH HAS A SELF-MADE reputation as a hardman. "I'm the toughest", "I'm a Stepping Razor... I'm dangerous", his songs proclaim. The other part of his reputation, for wild ranting, derives from Tosh obscuring himself behind a ganja smoke-screen, welders goggles, an impenetrable patois and biblical metaphor, all the better to frustrate foreign journalists. Maybe jet-lag has mellowed him, because I find a friendly and forthright man sprawled across a hotel bed. He speaks with passion and conviction, but his intentions are clearly to communicate not intimidate.

The last time I saw Tosh was almost exactly a year ago, performing at the Reggae Sunsplash concerts in Kingston. At that time the city was at the climax of election-time violence, every night shots could be heard from downtown where the political gangs pursued their vendettas. Back in 1978 the reggae musicians had taken the initiative in the famous Peace Concert. Bob Marley, himself the target of an earlier politically inspired assassination attempt, brought together on stage prime minister Michael Manley, the leader of the opposition and the gangster bosses. Most of the reggae heavyweights performed, including Tosh who blatantly lit up his spliff before the assembled police chiefs and army top brass. The 1980 violence attested to the futility of that event,

and this time Tosh was one of the very few to refer to the murderous situation in downtown Kingston, not far from the Sunsplash arena.

PETER TOSH: Yeh man, the people are sacred, and you can't even blame them, because in Jamaica you have so many death-squad police. At the so-called Peace Concert I made the same stand but verbally more aggressive, talking about the 400 years of colonial shitstem. Members of parliament did not like what I said and so it was arranged for me to die. Well in late 1978 I was totally brutalised by the police force, the Jamaican death-squad, and those police don't brutalise — they kill — but because of the divine power of Rastafari I'm still alive.

PETER MURPHY: But can musicians achieve anything in this situation?

PT: I see the politricks in Jamaica, how deadly and how dangerous it is. I see guns passing through the hands of 15, 13, 12 year old youths to terrorise poor people, to terrorise and kill their own selves. When I see the situation that I have to live in daily, and politicians go around and pretend as if everything is right, then I have to speak out. Because I'm a struggler, born a fighter, been fighting ever since. But I say my weapon in this warfare is music, don't let me put down my music and take up lightning, earthquake and thunder.

PM: So how did you feel at the sight of politicians speaking at Bob Marley's funeral, when paid gun-men had tried to kill him in 1976?

PT: This is politricks, that's what politricks is all about. Many people become victim of the shitstem, which I will not be. There are many forces of evil that try to eliminate me physically but because of the divine power of Rastafari, unless they can eliminate the sun, the breeze and the seas, I will still be here, because righteousness exalt a nation and that is what I represent, seen?

Reggae music derived from the pressures of the ghetto, so what happens to the credibility of those who achieve success by singing about it? Before their international success the original Wailers, Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer, were down there among the suffering, with a smouldering contempt for the system which kept the rich, rich and the poor starving. With his success Marley took

on the pressures of a figure-head and spokesman, to a degree unimaginable in the European and American context — as perhaps the scale of his funeral indicated. Had Tosh taken the other route from militant rude boy to play boy?

PM: Your lyrics reject narcotics and emphasise righteousness, isn't this contradictory with your involvement with the Rolling Stones and the high-society lifestyles they symbolise.

PT: People become contradictory because they don't know what they're contradicting. I can clarify that. I used to work for Island Records, who is Chris Whitewell (Blackwell), and I left Island and I worked with Columbia, which is another white organisation. And as long as you are going to deal with music in the western hemisphere you have to deal with some white organisation. There are a few black organisations where you can be influenced by drugs the same way. But I don't take drugs, and I don't like to experiment on this (he points at his body) because I love this very much.

PM: So the Stones are merely a means to an end, to get your records distributed?

PT: The only time I see the Rolling Stones is when I'm in the studio and when I see the Rolling Stones I always have a draw of herb to give them.

PM: But doesn't success cut you off from your roots?

PT: People will get cut off, depends on who they are. I won't get cut off, because I'm not working for a bulk of material things. If it was for material achievement I'm still unsuccessful. I work to live, and when I work life is my pay: health, strength, wisdom, knowledge, and overstanding, that's my pay, that's my reward. Because I go into deadly and detrimental places to spread the truth.

PM: But doesn't a certain level of material comfort take you away from the pressures of the poor and oppressed?

PT: I can never be taken away, I'm always oppressed because I always represent truth and rights. Whatever material wealth one may achieve in this society as long as you continue to maintain the stand that I do, you're still under pressure.

Tosh's band, Word Sound & Power, are a formidable entity. Built on the solid foundations of Robbie

For the past two years I've been listening to music and exploring people's minds and ears

Shakespeare (bass) and Sly Dunbar (drums), the most sought after rhythm section in Jamaica (and increasingly outside, witness Grace Jones, and Ian Dury recently working with them at Compass Point), they are only equalled by the legendary Barratt brothers of the Wailers. The rest of the band are drawn from the pool of highly studio-seasoned session men whose names appear on innumerable album credits.

PM: You have had two American lead guitarists, first Al Anderson (of the Wailers) and now Darryl Thompson. Why is it that although Jamaica produces superb rhythm sections, there are so few lead guitarists?

PT: It is just that people get more access to instruments in America than in Jamaica. You have many musicians in Jamaica who never get access to instruments because of the shitstem. But we cannot wait until the shitstem is resolved to find a musician. Lead guitarists is not something that Jamaica has a lot of, but we have lots of rhythm guitarists because Jamaican music *is* rhythm.

It is also the reason for the predominance of vocal trios in reggae. They could rehearse in their own backyard, with no instruments, except perhaps an old guitar and a hand drum, and then go to the studio and record with the resident band. The producer owned all the equipment, paid the singers a pittance and the studio band slightly more to retain their services (all dramatically illustrated in the film, *The Harder They Come*). It also accounts for why even today, for all the talented singers in Jamaica there are still relatively few permanent groups, and a few backing bands, usually still based on a studio, capable of going out on tour.

Tosh has a new album out, on the Stones' label, *Wanted Dread & Alive*. The sound is different from his past albums, usually rich layers of clavinet, wah-wah and synth. The sound on Side 1 is stark, Robbie and Sly mixed well forward but barely a solo in sight the whole side through. *Nothing But Love* sounds more like Motown than reggae. The side ends with the appropriately named *Oh Bumbo Klaat*. Side 2 is slightly more ornamented but still far from the full Tosh sound of old.

PM: On your songs with the Wailers, e.g. *400 Years*, and on your later solo albums you built up a distinctive sound, why have you moved away from that on the new album?

PT: Well I'm a diplomat in music, I am a musical architect, and for the past two years (since the release of *Mystic Man* his last album) I've been listening to music and exploring the people's minds and their ears, to try to find out what is attractive to people in music. In this world of fantasy and illusion you have most people listen to music because they want to dance their troubles away, so I try to create music like that, but that will not make me differ in lyrical arrangement or dilute what I'm dealing with. But as an architect of the music I can go here, there or anywhere.

PM: And what about the duet (with Gwen Guthrie) on *Nothing But Love*? It sounds more like Tamla, far from a roots reggae sound.

PT: But it is reggae. If you should strip off all the tops and get down to the basics you should hear toot-chik-it, toot-chik-it... it is there, but as I said, as an architect of the music I can decorate it so that I can hear what I want you to hear.

PM: Where did you record *Wanted Dread & Alive*?

PT: Dynamic Studios in Kingston, and I did the mixing in New York.

PM: There used to be a big argument about whether proper reggae could be recorded outside Jamaica. People couldn't agree about whether it was the humidity, the phasing of the electricity or just the ganja and sweat soaked ambiance, but somehow it wouldn't come right.

PT: Well that's madness. I can record reggae in any studio. But you know some musician head get stagnated, and then you cannot communicate with that reggae inspiration, because it does not travel in the same channels where you find rock and all those kind of freaky music. Reggae music travels in a spiritual channel, you have to put your mind there or you will try to play a reggae and every time you try, some influence come in.

PM: So how do you rate white rock bands' attempts?

PT: Can't work. Apple tree cannot

bear Mango.

PM: The title track is called *Wanted*, in what sense are you wanted? Are you talking about a personal persecution?

PT: It's both the general attitude that society has towards the Rastaman and the attitude towards me as an individual. So I'm always wanted because of the stand that I take as a revolutionary who speaks the truth.

PM: Have you been accused of a shooting as you say in the song?

PT: Not directly, but I've seen many of my brothers.

PM: And are you saying that people have to get guns for self-defence?

PT: Not directly, I'm not saying that, because as a Rastaman you don't have to get gun. Rastaman no fire gun, the Rastaman fire lightning, earthquake (he laughs enigmatically) disease and disaster.

PM: What about the song "Guide Me From My Friends"? Are you suspicious of the people around you?

PT: Not only me. Many people die by their friends. Who know who kill Bob? I don't take drugs and I don't take smoke from anyone who I don't know or who just roll anything in paper and give to me and say "light". I am very curious and suspicious, knowing of what I represent and knowing of how many forces of evil that try to eliminate me for what I do.

PM: Also you sing "Fools Die for lack of wisdom", do you mean that physically?

PT: Literally, both physically and spiritually, because some people's body dies with their spirit and some die separately. They teach us in Sunday school that the wages of sin is death, but after exploring for myself I realise that it's not the wages of sin but the wages of ignorance.

PM: In one of your most famous songs, *Get Up, Stand Up*, co-written with Bob Marley, you reject conventional Christian attitudes and say "if you know what life is worth, you would look for your rights here on earth".

PT: This is my life to live, the gift of Jah is eternal life. Yes man, you have people who have been living for thousands of years, it can be proven in Africa. Yeh man, people who has no age. You see, when you are ignorant you live in age and when you eliminate



ignorance you reach a higher stage, you don't stay in age, because age is the limit of life. Sometimes people kills themselves because of their own weak mind and their own lack of faith in the Father.

PM: With Legalize It you made famous your belief in the medicinal properties of herb. What about the inevitable reaction from the American medical profession that Bob Marley's cancer was caused by smoking herb?

PT: Madness, madness! If Bob had a cancer, men made that cancer and gave it to him, so don't bother blame herb, because that's impossible. It is part of the propoganda. What they are trying to show the public is that Bob was a Rastaman, he smoked herb and had a cancer and died. Believers, those who know the faith and know the truth, know that that is a public mischief.

PM: What are the consequences for reggae music of the loss of the man, after all the pioneering work he did to get it accepted internationally?

PT: Reggae will continue the same road. Bob was doing a work and he reach a stage where he could not go no more, so he fell by the way and is where he is today. But at the same time that does not say that reggae died. He was doing his best, which I do appreciate.

There have been criticisms because he has not joined the fulsome eulogies for his ex-partner in the Wailers, but Peter Tosh and Bob Marley share a consistent attitude to life and death, reflected in their joint authorship of *Get Up, Stand Up*, and much they have said separately since. This isn't to be misinterpreted as callousness on Tosh's part, his grief is something personal: "Well, I said enough, I don't like to talk about the dead right now because death, the memories of death bring back tears, sad feelings."

If, in retrospect, our conversation was concerned largely with violence, persecution, and inevitably the memory, if rarely stated, of Bob Marley's death, Tosh's message is essentially a life-affirming one. His beliefs may seem bizarre, but as I was leaving his room there was a news report on the television about a mother and her two children who had jumped to their deaths from a high-rise block; Tosh could never understand that kind of negativity.

Peter Murphy

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'RABBIT' BUNDRICK

IT MUST FIRST BE UNDERSTOOD that John 'Rabbit' Bundrick is one of the last fun men left in the business we all call Rock'n'Roll. An interview with Rabbit is just not like any other — and this is by no means the first time I've tried! In this case the venue turned out to be an extremely noisy and riotous pub in Soho, and Rabbit was his usual, ebullient self: slightly larger than life, but none the less entertaining for all that.

Rabbit's career in the business has been recorded elsewhere, but there can be few musicians, and surely no keyboard players, who have not turned an ear to his amazing playing, and especially the sounds he extracts from his relationship with the organ. Last time IM spoke to him was at the point at which he'd been invited to link up with the Who — at that time, a tenuous and possibly short term invitation. It is, therefore, to his credit, that he's managed to stay the course: if he were honest with himself, he'd

probably agree that it's pretty surprising as well! Like I said, Rabbit ain't like anyone else! I began, while a furious argument between two drunken Scotsmen developed at the next table, to pick up from that last talk.

"Oh yeah — I broke my hand shortly after that," he shouted, downing a pint of highly acceptable IPA. "I bust it climbing out of a cab. I was taking the piss out of the driver at the time... just jumped out as he was taking a corner. I suppose I could have been run over, but I came out with just a broken hand, so it was all right!"

Which hand was it? I asked, considering that that is a pretty major set-back for any musician, let alone one who had just been requested to back the Who.

"Ah," came the answer in his endearing Texan drawl, "I can't remember. I've broken both hands in the past!"

So, he's still a wild maniac then?

"Ah, yes, just wild maniac stuff. If I get too drunk I can get pretty crazy. I think it stems from boredom, like if I'm stuck in a hotel. I'm not too dangerous, I usually hurt myself, not other people. Hell, what's the good of having a reputation if it's not true, anyway!"

"I bust everything. I used to panic a bit, but now I just put a splint on it myself! You can usually tell if it's a bad break or not, but this one was OK."

Figuring the best way to avert a possible cab ride through Soho with Rabbit leaping drunkenly from the back seat on every corner was to try and pin him to a musical conversation, I asked if he still retained his natural aversion to synthesizers.

"I don't like to use them too much: I regard them as being very subtle instruments for me. I'm aware of what I'm saying, in that I know a hell of a lot of music nowadays is synthesized, but I feel that if I join that, and



become like a synthesizer player... well, there are just so many, like there used to be so many Hammond players, that I'd just get trodden under. But if I sort of tread lightly on synthesizers, and not get too involved in them, then I might find a unique place for them in my music: so that it won't become synthesizer dominated, but synths would be an addition."

I reminded him that in an earlier meeting between us he had said there was no way that he'd play them.

"Well, that was out of pure embarrassment," he replied, "I just didn't know how to work them. I mean I would be embarrassed if I was on a session if somebody was there who knew how to work them but wasn't a keyboard player, and I was a keyboard player but didn't know how to work them — know what I mean? So that was like, pride, or something.

"Now I've figured out that I don't have to be a synthesizer player in order

to work, in order to make music. I can learn a bit about them and use them, rather than let them use me.

"I mean, there's a lot of fantastic stuff coming out at the moment, but anybody's doing all of that. I'd like to have a little bit of uniqueness.

"Basically synthesizers all sound the same: I know manufacturers and that won't agree with me, but to the punter there's little difference between one synth and another. Now me, I'm a little bit simple: my brain isn't capable of totally transferring itself to synthesizers."

Having said that it came as something of a surprise to me to discover that Rabbit has a Prophet synth amongst his keyboard armoury, but then, nothing about Rabbit is that surprising in the end!

"Yeah, I've got a Prophet, and a string machine, and I got me trusty old Yamaha piano, and I got my Hammond. I can't create synthesizer sounds on the Hammond, but I can sort of imitate them: I've got a wah-wah on the Hammond, and create different sounds. It doesn't sound like a synth, but then it doesn't sound like a Hammond either!"

We spent a little time, at the bar, bemoaning the fact that so many manufacturers are trying to emulate the original Hammond sound which Rabbit holds so dear and which is, basically, his playing piece de resistance.

"Ah," he drawled, "they just don't have the SPIT mian!"

He pointed out though that the technical accuracy of those imitations isn't ultimately, that important, that they don't have to imitate, only simulate. "In today's sorts of sounds, that sort of simulation is accurate enough, know what I mean? It's so far away from a Hammond, and yet so far away from other synth sounds that it's a case of most people not knowing the difference."

In view of Pete Townshend's known relationship with synthesizers, and his abounding interest in anything new, I asked if he had been put under any pressure by Pete to get into synths, to expand the Who's live sound.

"Not at all — he's so accustomed to synthesizers himself, anyway — know what I mean — in other words, it's there on the offer. I mean, I think he prefers to do that sort of thing himself. I mean, you can learn synthesizers because we've got plenty of them, but don't worry about it if you don't because it ain't going to cost you your job if you can't play 'em. Like on an album he'll do all the synthesizer parts because his brain is geared for that, so there's no pressure on me whatsoever. I mean almost all the synthesizer parts that I play are like duplications of what he's done already which to me is fine. I mean if he knows what he wants on synthesizers anyway, and plays it and records it — it's no strain for me to pick it up and play it.

"There's an example like on Sister Disco, which like is a sequencer. He told me to go and learn that part, and I had to learn it, but he didn't tell me it was a sequencer and I didn't realise it: that's what I mean about him not putting any pressure on me. He didn't tell me, he just asked if I could learn it! I took it home and stayed up all night and almost tore my pianos up and everything (he means it!): I was thinking 'how the hell does he do that!', 'he's not a keyboard player', and I was trying to do it on one hand. So, I used both hands — by this time it was like eight o'clock in the morning, but I managed it all the same!

"Then, and only then it hit me, like 'he's a crafty bugger!' On the other hand he could have said like it's a sequencer, and you're probably going to have to use two hands to play it!

"It's interesting to have developed that technique. I mean, I was about ready to quit the band, you know: I just couldn't figure it out, but the moment I crossed my hands the sequence started working."

Despite this, Rabbit exudes his enjoyment with playing with the band... "It's a sort of love hate relationship I have: If it wasn't like that then it wouldn't work. If I just loved it, then I'd be suspicious, and if I just hated it, then there wouldn't be any point in keeping the gig. As it is, it's just right!"

What is it about the band that keeps them going?

"They're fighters, see: they're not wimps. They get up there and they fight — it's a real struggle, you know. It's great. I mean, I get such a kick out of playing live with them. Like I feel like I'm part of the audience, but I get a front row seat, and I also get to jam as well — that's the way I look at it. 'Hey, I've got a front row seat, and I also get to play along. It's like a privilege for me! I mean they could have got somebody else, and I could have been in the audience thinking it would be nice to work with them!"

Rabbit has been known to turn in sessions for anybody who asked him, not out of kudos or money, but more simply because the man absolutely loves playing; but he's conscious that his 'membership' of the Who has slightly altered his status, although I, for one, would have thought anybody who played with Free has got enough Status with a capital S anyway.

"I can pick and chose a bit more now," he admitted as the beer level dropped dramatically in a couple of gulps. "If something comes in I can actually decide if I really want to do it."

So a tag of working with the Who has really helped?

"I don't mean it like that. I mean, everybody knows that I'm working with the Who, so if they read that the band is out on the road they won't bother to call me 'cos they know that

'RABBIT'

I'll be working."

He says that he's been working mainly with unknown people, and describes that as being his 'favourite sessions' because there's "a lot of music in unknown sessions, and there's no egos involved".

"I did a session yesterday for some Australians, and it was so relaxed, there was no fighting, no competition, no ego: I just sat down and got appreciated for what I played. For me to do sessions is like a relaxing thing: it's for enjoyment. Instead of going home and jamming all day I can go to a studio and work at it: I find that much more relaxing in a way. The atmosphere helps."

He described the difference in mental pressures between being asked to play as a 'special guest' where there was so much expected, and the pressure considerably greater, than on those where maybe even some of the band had no idea who he was, just the 'session keyboard player'.

Having known Rabbit on and off for a little while, it came easily to ask him if his gig with the Who was, indeed, something of a dream come true.

"Well, musician-wise yes, but fame and fortune, no" came the answer. "You see, coming from Texas like I do, I knew that if I went out to work in the States, I'd just be a number, no uniqueness. I thought, where do I go? But then all the English music was happening in the States, and I felt that English music had more soul, so I thought, I'll go to England. I was sitting there in Texas, knowing that one day I'm going to England. I mean, as soon as I heard Traffic I knew I was going anyway..."

"I mean Steve Winwood's just amazing. Is he all right? I've always loved that guy's playing. He's always going to be all right... He's my main influence really, him and Floyd Kramer."

"It's funny, really, I came over here because I thought it's rough and ready and he's gone to the States, with Traffic and this new album, and got it all smoothed out! He's one person that I try not to listen to too much because the influence is so strong. I think his playing just naturally goes into my blood. In some respects, I don't have any originality — it's just from him and Floyd Kramer and that's about it. Well, maybe Jimmy Smith as well."

It's unusual for an artist to so strongly acknowledge his roots — and refreshing as well, although I'd argue the point, having been influenced myself by Kramer's playing, as well as being reasonably au fait with Winwood's, that they have had as pronounced an effect on Rabbit as he gives them credit for. Reverting the conversation back to the Who, I asked if there were any similarities between

his present gig with them, and his previous big-time seat with Free.

"It is pretty similar really..." he replied, before leaning over for the 'off-button' on the tape recorder which was struggling against the increasing background noises, and wandering off in the general direction of the bar for yet another re-fill. It's not that he was living up to his reputation, rather than he likes his beer, and if that gives him a reputation, then so be it: it won't stop or slow him down!

By the time he'd returned, he'd already changed his thoughts and approach and told a long tale about how long it took him to get official recognition by the Musicians' Union, complaining about the internal bureaucracy — which is something the magazine knows of well, having still had no reply to our invitation to contribute a column. Fortunately for him, however, he managed to resolve his problems, concluding that in the end the MU was able to help him out quite considerably.

Ultimately, he says, that to have come to England and ended up being lucky enough to play with Free and with the Who has been an incredible bonus to his career, and his own personality. "Anybody would want to work with the Who: it takes a lot of brain power. I mean I worked in Crawler and there was no brain power there. There was just a lot of good old boys who didn't really know where they were going. That was no good for me: I want to work with people who are better musicians than me, so I can learn."

"Otherwise you end up being the responsible person, which is a downer for me! But I'd rather someone else takes the blame, or even the credit. You can feed off of people like the Who. Know what I mean?"

Mentioning that, I pointed out that when the Who first hit public (and my own) consciousness with 'Can't Explain' the young Pete Townshend was famous for cracking up his instruments rather than playing them, and yet the passage of time has changed the image, turning him, in the public eye, into a "guitar hero."

"It's sheer work on his part, and sheer respect I think: he's just worked at it. But like for me, I just have to keep it all in perspective, and for me, The Who is right. I have to keep egos totally out of it otherwise I'd be getting problems, but the more I keep putting myself down the better I am."

But, I said, 'you've got a freedom of movement and identity which Roger and Peter can no longer have.'

"I don't know," came the quick reply, "if I was as famous as them I wouldn't want to be like me — know what I mean? I'd rather be looking to people like me: I mean, they aren't bad off, don't let nobody fool them: they're doing all right, and they've got everything in perspective. It's people like me, who are just musicians, who

are in awe, but they're actually looking to me for help; you'd think they don't need any help, and in some respects they don't, but they just respect, and they're giving somebody else the chance, and they're really generous people. I mean, they've got no problems, but they could have got someone just to play: as it is they got someone who can help them, and who they can help. That's real important. It's human. They could get any keyboard player in the world — you got to remember that."

"I stay out of the way: if I'm around too much it reminds them that maybe they need help, musically. That sounds like I've got too high an opinion of myself, but I don't mean it that way. I stay out of the way, and stay like an employee. If they listen to the record, yeah I'm there, but that's better than being around all the time going 'hey hey hey' all the time."

"Some people say I should be bigger, but that's not the point at all."

In all fairness, despite Rabbit's reputation for lunacy, he has joined a band which once possessed possibly rock's greatest extrovert character, and there would be little point in trying to emulate the late and great Keith Moon's personal antics.

"I mean I'm not like that anyway. I mean I'm all right, you know? I've got to play with them, and as long as I stay anonymous I'm all right. I mean, I'm not going to stand up and shout about it, right? I'm there to help musically as a human being, and that's my gig there."

Is there any chance for any personal creativity in the band?

"Again, Tom, that's not the gig. I mean, that's not where it's at. I'm playing keyboards for the Who — that's the gig. If Peter comes to me and says here are the chords, then I write 'em down. I could just go in the studio and not write them out and make mistakes, and all that. But no way, I know what I'm doing, and I want them to know I know what I'm doing. I take this seriously, you know what I mean?"

That may be something of an uncharacteristic statement from Rabbit to finish the interview with, but from the way he said it, he meant it. Reputations, after all, are only for knocking down again, although I find it unlikely that he won't find himself in a bit of light-hearted bother again from time to time. But, it's pleasant to meet a musician who feels happy in a niche carved out for him by someone else, although as this business is so flippant, it could be that another gig'll come his way and he'll be off onto it like a flash. On the other hand, however, it's a hell of a gig to have got, and he seems to know it, but I doubt if anything would ever come before his vast enjoyment of life itself: there's more to it than just rock'n'roll. Like, I'm just waiting to hear when he's coming fishing!

Tom Stock

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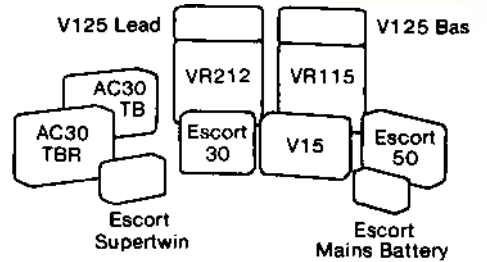
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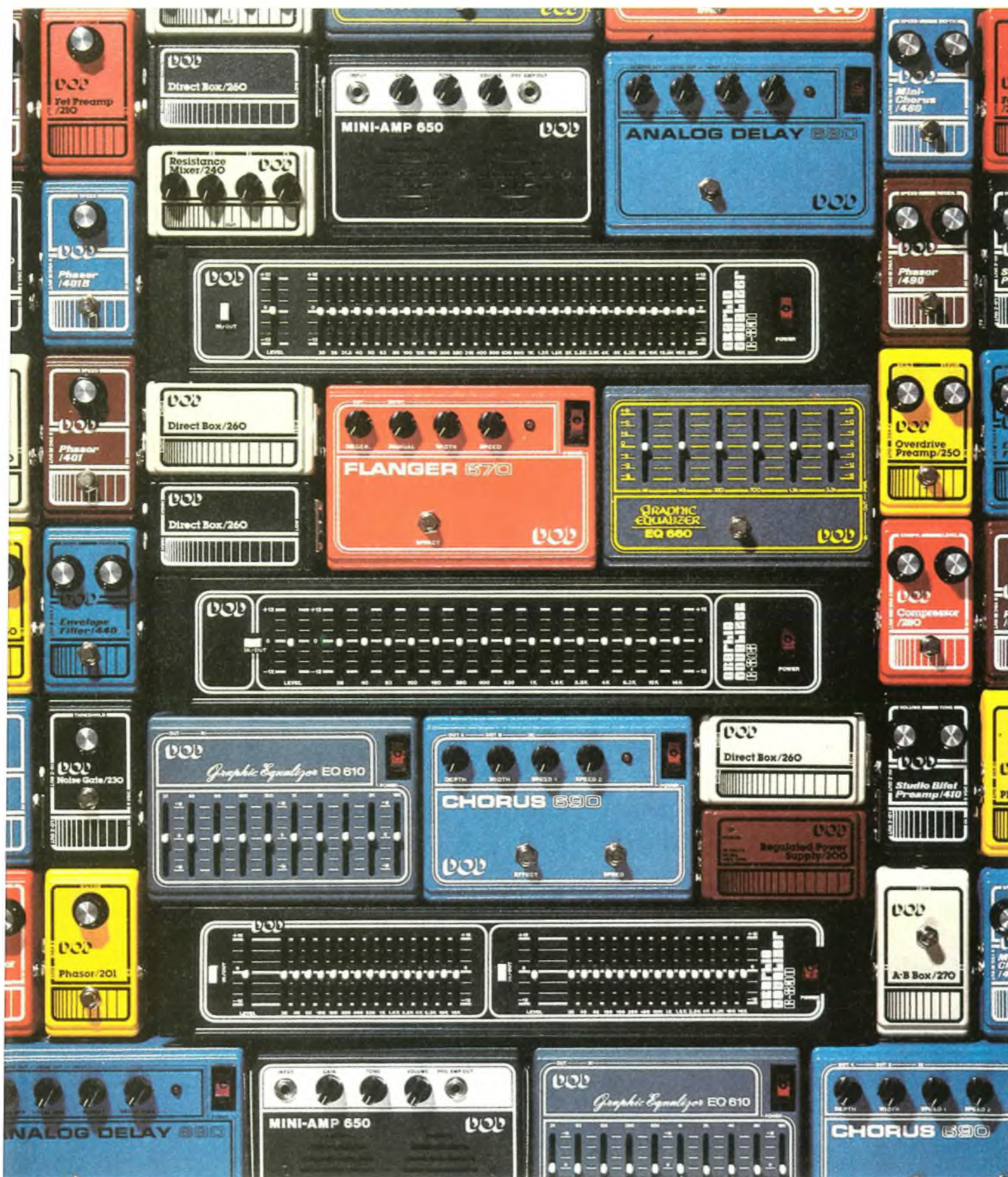
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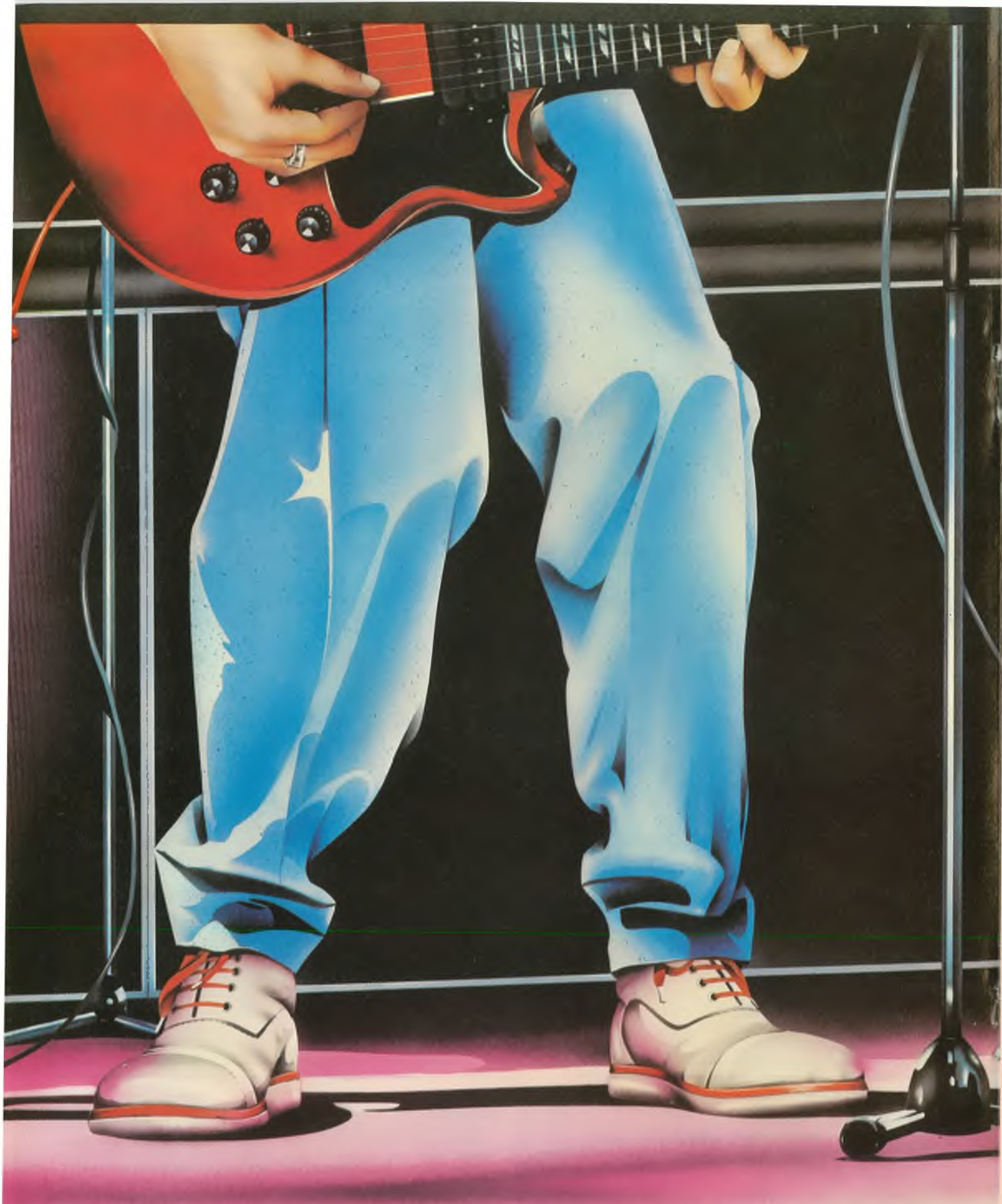
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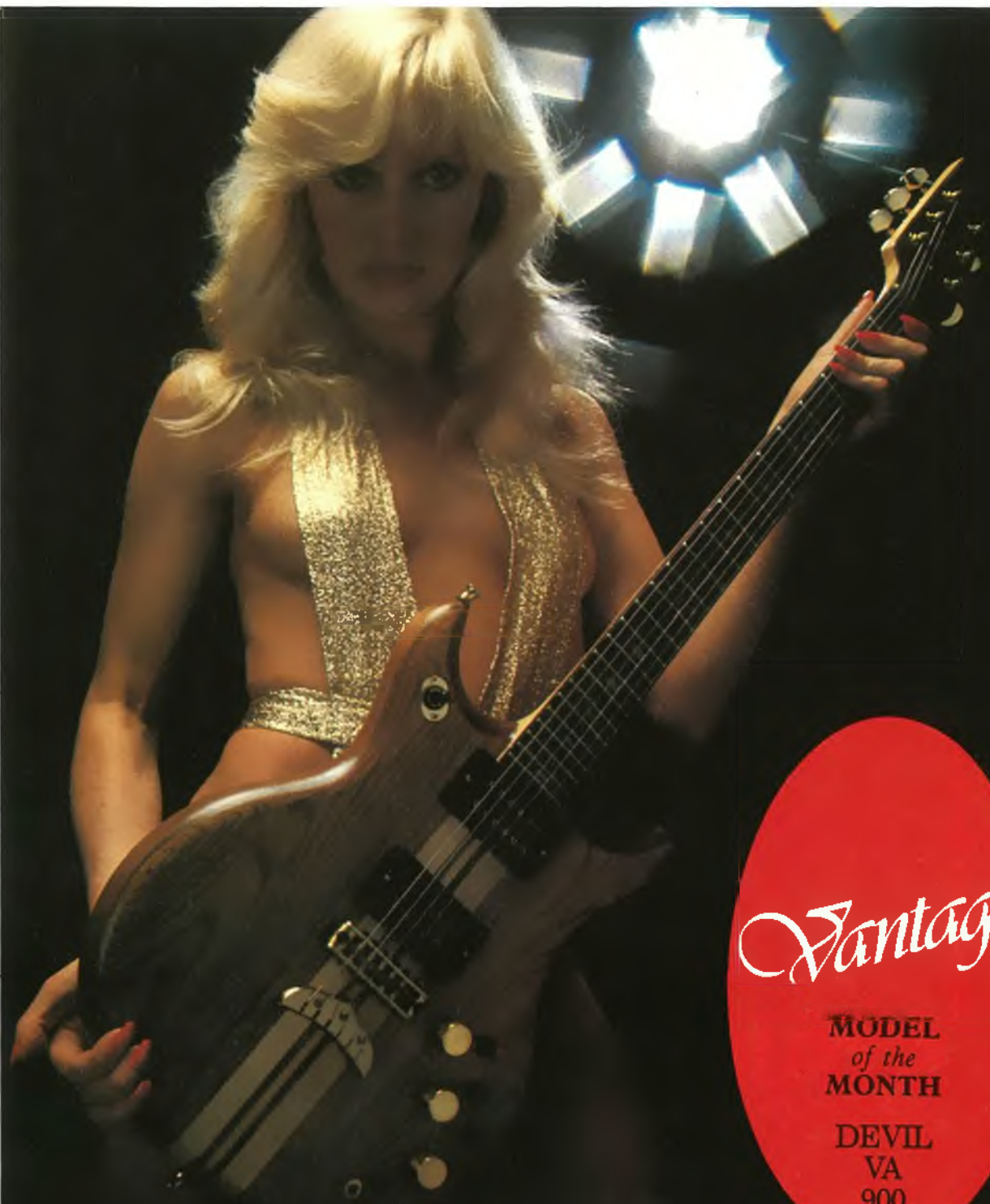
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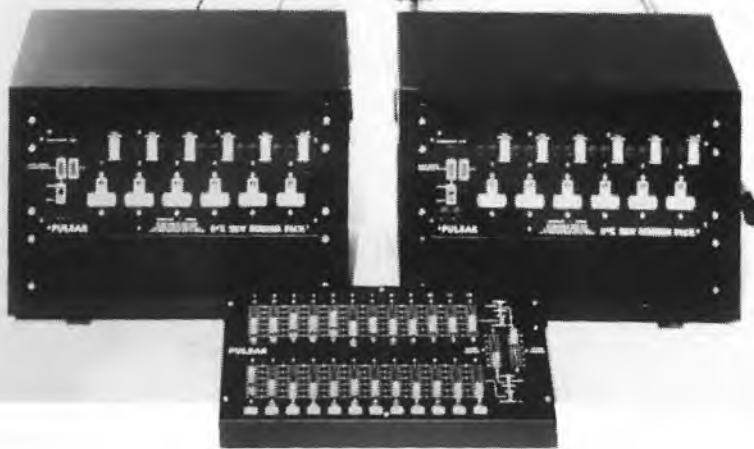
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The Tempocheck is a very handy little gadget which was developed as a natural extension of the metronome (an electronic metronome with pitch references), and has many and varied applications within the musical world. Henry Roberts has had a look at it in the context of a gigging and recording drummer, and any reader with a small amount of imagination will be able to see the possibilities for other musical instruments.

I first came across this handy piece of drummer's equipment a year or so ago, but it wasn't until more recently when I became increasingly involved with rock-steady danceable tempos that I discovered its complete worth.

It has several functions, but for me its main ones are as a 'click track'/tempo finder. For those of you unfamiliar with the first term I'll elucidate. More and more producers these days are insisting for various reasons that the drum track itself doesn't fluctuate throughout the song, and so they want the drummer to play along with a constant pulse. An ordinary metronome *could* work for this but in normal practice, since it simply clicks once, is very stiling to say the least. However if one plays along with a drum machine which invariably plays a whole pattern of clicks (eighth or sixteenth notes with offbeat, etc) this turns out to be not too uncomfortable and with practice can be stimulating since an experienced player can move in and out of time in his fills — bearing in mind of course that by and large this click track, although recorded on one or two tracks, is not normally used on the actual record. The 'click track' system also means that providing it has been retained on tape the (human) player's original drum tracks can be changed or replaced at any time without affecting the parts already played by the other instruments. Of course, I hear you say, this wouldn't do for every musical idiom — but you'd be slightly wrong, because many jazz/rock, rock and pop classics have been created in just this way. So, this machine, by virtue of its twin click channels (each with a different sound characteristic) can be set up as a drum machine; albeit without as much rhythmic sophistication. (Many players dislike the total rhythm of a drum machine since it leaves little if any room for extemporisation). So we



press down button one, turn the dial until eight shows on the digital readout and release the button. We move to button two, depress it, move the dial until four (or two) shows and then also release. We then press the start/volume button and our drum track starts up. All we need to do now is find what tempo we should be playing at and we're ready (once the machine is plugged into the desk) to make a hit record! The aforementioned rotary dial has notes and tempos (numerically and musically descriptive from Grave to Presto) marked on it, so either we can find a tempo by experimentation with this — the screen will tell us exactly which number we picked for future reference or, if the producer decides he likes a particular tempo on a record, this ingenious machine has another press button marked tempo which is red. Now, as we press this button in time to the music the tempo comes up numerically on the digital readout. (I understand that this is actually an average of three beats.) Once ascertained, this tempo can be reproduced on the rotary dial by turning it until the numbers match up — this at first takes a little practice but eventually is simple.

There are other functions available on the machine, one of which would make it an attractive prospect for a band — this is the pitch reference which gives all the different notes by turning the dial. The pitch is based on

A440 and all the chromatic notes are available. A sharp shows up as a vertical dash and a flat as a horizontal one.

There is a further facility many drummers will appreciate which allows the player to hear what five beats sound like played against four or any other number up to 12 (say seven against eight or whatever). I remember in the Progressive Rock days it was important for some reason to be able to play or at least understand these sorts of concepts.

The beauty of Tempocheck's power system is that it is a *rechargeable* battery and simply needs to be plugged in for about 12 hours to completely recharge it. (A flat battery is shown by a dim display and a maximum speed of less than 200 beats per minute).

Finally, the unit has three lights — red, amber and green. The red monitors the downbeat, the amber the main beats, and the green the divisions.

The machine works very well and I'm sure once you had it for a while you could make it do more complex things! 'Tempocheck' retails at £52 which surprised everyone I showed it to. It's an extremely handy tool which up until now has not had too much acceptance except amongst the orchestral fraternity where it is, I understand, a very good seller.

Henry Roberts

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B.P. Do you think it looks good Ted?

T.C. Yes, but it sounds good too and that's more important.

B.P. OK! I'll leave it to you mate.

T.C. Right Barry, don't think I'll bother with the ad though, the gear sells itself anyway.

B.P. See you soon.

T.C. Cheers!

P.S. That's a pint you owe me!

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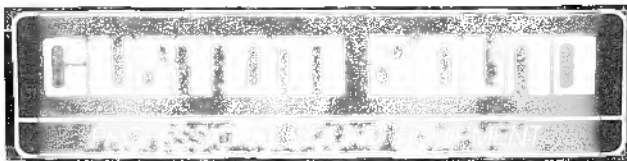
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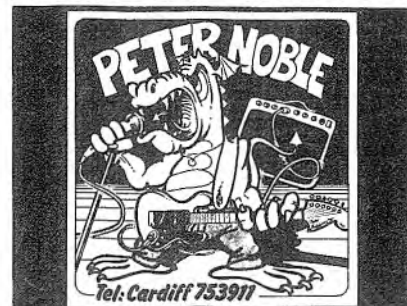


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SPEAKERCHECK

Integrated High Frequency Units — 3

THIS IS THE LAST PART OF THIS series and the products we have included this month bring us right up to date with three 'bullet' type devices which at the time of writing were not even commercially available and which should be just coming off the production lines up there in Bradford and over in Ipswich by the time this article appears in print. I am, of course, referring to the long heralded new arrivals from Fane and Celestion, samples of which have only just scraped into this review by the skin of their teeth for one reason or another. Also, although we did in fact do a review of the JBL 2402 bullet unit some three years ago in an earlier series, we have changed our testing

format quite a bit since then, and as practically every other bullet type device has now been included in this present series, we have re-tested the JBL along with its sister, the 2405 diffraction super tweeter.

In order to provide an 'at-a-glance' comparison between the 14 units submitted for this series, I have tabulated the main results below. It is my view that 'main' results must include sensitivity, useful frequency responses, an approximate guide to polar response characteristics and price. In order to achieve this in table form, it is necessary to round numbers up or down and to generalise and so the figures given in the table do not exactly agree with those given in the

individual reviews.

For example, the frequency response figures given in the table are the makers' recommended minimum crossover frequency as the lower unit, and the upper -6dB point taken from our test results, but rounded off to the nearest whole KHz as the upper limit. Polar response figures are approximated over convenient frequency bands and rounded off to the nearest 10 degrees, but this is quite adequate to provide a basis for selection and is a good indicator of the typical polar behaviour of the unit. Sensitivity figures are given unaltered and prices are rounded off to the nearest whole pound retail, inclusive of VAT. So here goes:—

IM&RW COMPARISON CHART OF HIGH FREQUENCY UNITS AS REVIEWED MAY TO JULY 1981

Model	Sens	Freq. Resp.	Polar Response (HxV)	Price
Motorola KSN1001/A	95dB	4-20KHz	80 conical @ 4KHz nar. to 40 @ 16KHz	£5
Motorola KSN1025/A	94dB	2-20KHz	130 x 200 @ 2KHz nar. to 80 x 50 @ 16KHz	£7
Celestion HF50	102dB	3-15KHz	120 conical @ 4KHz nar. to 30 @ 16KHz	£23
Celestion RTT50	101dB	2-14KHz	80 x 140 @ 2KHz nar. to 40 x 40 @ 16KHz	£25
Fane HF250	106dB	5-15KHz	100 x 70 @ 4KHz nar. to 25 x 25 @ 16KHz	£37
HH HF200	103dB	4-17KHz	102 conical @ 4KHz nar. to 30 @ 16KHz	£42
Coral H100	105dB	7-16KHz	140 conical @ 8KHz nar. to 70 @ 16KHz	£86
EV ST350/A	105dB	4-15KHz	120 x 100 @ 4KHz nar. to 100 x 50 @ 16KHz	£86
JBL 2402	111dB	3-17KHz	90 conical @ 4KHz nar. to 30 @ 16KHz	£92
JBL 2405	109dB	7-21KHz	140 x 80 @ 4KHz nar. to 90 x 20 @ 16KHz	£103
Gauss 1502	107dB	4-20KHz	60 conical @ 4KHz inc. to 107 @ 16KHz	£117
Altec MR902-16HF	110dB	5-15KHz	60 x 50 over operating range	£144
Gollehon 4681	105dB	2-15KHz	70 x 130 @ 2KHz nar. to 60 x 40 @ 16KHz	POA
Gollehon 4690	104dB	2-9KHz	90 x 140 @ 2KHz nar. to 100 x 70 @ 16KHz	POA

I do not propose to make any further comments on comparisons between these units as I think that each individual review has been sufficiently detailed for intending users to make their own informed assessment of suitability for specific applications and within particular budget considerations. In considering these units, however, always bear in mind that a 3dB difference in sensitivity is equivalent to a doubling of power, and

taking the extremes of the sensitivity figures given above as an example, this means that one JBL 2402 will do the work of 32 (Yes, thirty-two!!!) Motorola KSN1025 Piezo units! Put another way, it would take the equivalent of 32 watts into the Piezo unit to produce the same sound pressure level as the JBL will produce with just 1 watt, although in practice, the Piezo device could not in fact produce that much SPL even at

maximum power! On that basis, 32 times £7 comes to £224 — so maybe the JBL is not really all that expensive after all at £92! The other point to watch is the polar responses, and it is often better to employ a much higher crossover frequency than that given by the manufacturers in order to achieve a more uniform polar response characteristic.

SPEAKERCHECK

These two units are of very similar construction and have many design features in common and will therefore be reviewed together. The 2402 is the ubiquitous 'bullet' device used in practically all professional touring sound rigs for the last decade and more and which has of recent years, been the obvious pattern for a number of similar products which have appeared on the market from various manufacturers. The 2405 differs only in that it has a very small 'slot' type diffraction horn in place of the familiar bullet-and-ring arrangement.

Despite their similarity, however, the two devices are intended for different applications. The 2402 'bullet' is a general purpose high frequency projector intended for longer throw applications whereas the 2405 is suitable only for the ultra high frequencies above 7KHz and is intended to provide wide horizontal spread for near-field applications such as in studio monitors etc. Both units are superbly made and finished to the usual JBL standards of engineering and presentation, and because of this and the high sensitivity figures, they are somewhat expensive on the retail market.

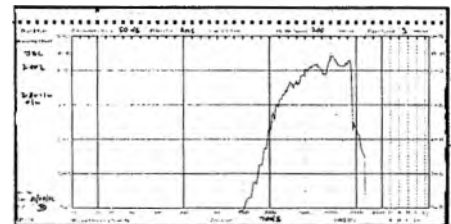
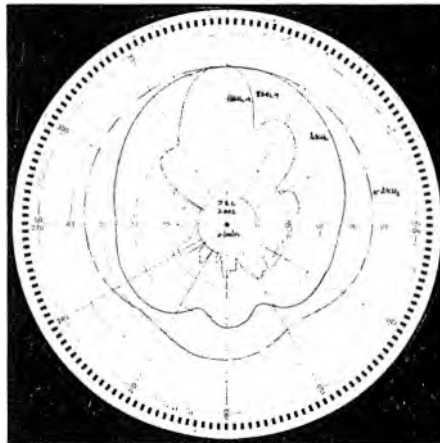
Both units comprise a large Alnico magnetic assembly with an annular ring diaphragm attached to the front face. Both have a central slug attached to the pole piece of the magnet and the central non-radiating part of the diaphragm is anchored by sandwiching between the two, while its outer edge is sandwiched between the faceplate and the base of the outer horn ring. The only differences between the two units are the design of the diaphragm assembly and the design of the horn flare and central slug — the latter two components being superbly machined from a solid aluminium bar. The magnets are finished in the usual JBL grey crackle paint, and with the exception of the 'bullet' of the 2402 which is natural machined aluminium, the various horn components are anodised matt black. Just as a finishing touch, the edge of the magnet faceplate is machined and plated to leave a polished ring between the grey magnet and black horn, giving a very professional overall visual impression. What a shame that most of this will not be seen once the unit has been installed into its cabinet!! Both units are intended to be mounted from inside the cabinet or baffle and have 25mm deep 'noses' protruding

JBL 2402 (USA) Ser. 41689

Price around £92 incl. VAT
Overall Dimensions: 9.9cm dia. x 8.6cm deep
with mtg. flange 9.8mm sq.
Depth behind panel: 6cm overall

Parameter

	Manufacturer's Data	Test Results
Frequency Response:	2.5KHz — 15KHz	3KHz — 17KHz @ -6dB
Sensitivity:	110dB @ 1w @ 1m	111dB @ 1w @ 1m av. 5KHz — 16KHz
THD/SPL:	Not given	3% THD @ 110dB SPL @ 1m
THD/Power:	Not given	8% THD @ 10w RMS sine wave below 10KHz
Rated Power:	20w cont. prog.	Parameter not measured
Impedance:	8 ohm nominal	7-10 ohm over operating range
Resonance:	Not given	Not clearly defined
Recommended c/o Frequency:	2.5KH or higher	4KHz
Polar Response:	40 conical @ 10KHz	90° conical @ 4KHz) included 50° conical @ 8KHz) angle 26° conical @ 16KHz) @ -6dB



forward of the mounting flange so that the baffle cut-out will not interfere with the polar response characteristics.

Performancewise, it can be seen that generally, both units conform to the maker's published specification except that surprisingly, our sensitivity figures are higher than those given in both instances. In fact, the sensitivity figures achieved are very high indeed, being considerably higher than any of the UK made 'bullet' devices. On the 2402, distortion at the higher frequencies was found to rise considerably, but as the 2nd. harmonic of 10KHz is 20KHz, and the 3rd. harmonic is 30KHz, there did not seem much point in taking this into account — hence the 10KHz qualification against the distortion parameter in our results table. In the case of the 2405, unfortunately, this device ceased

working about half way through the distortion vs. power curve and so we are unable to give a distortion figure at its full sine wave power. As it turned out, the trouble was that the voice coil winding had fractured at its junction with the feed-out wire — there were no signs of overheating so the coil itself had not burned out. This is the third time we have had a JBL diaphragm go down in this particular way during testing, so maybe it is an area the manufacturer should take a look at.

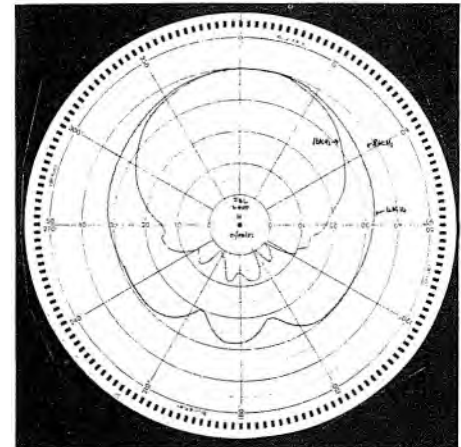
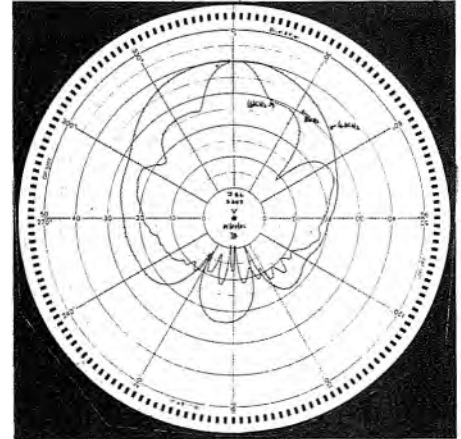
Comparing the polar response figures for the two devices will immediately show that the two different types of horn design are doing exactly what they are intended to do — i.e. a relatively narrow forward beam from the 2402 'bullet' device and a broad horizontal pattern from the 2405 diffraction device. It does, however, seem to be an inherent problem with all 'bullet' type devices that the dispersion angle decreases appreciably towards the upper end of the useful response range, and the 2402 is no exception.

I think that just about sums these

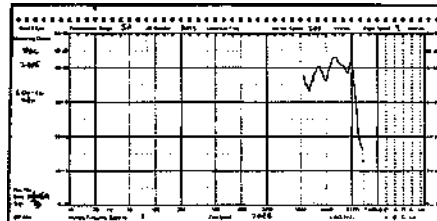
JBL 2405 (USA)
Ser. 105468

Price around £103 incl. VAT
Overall dimensions: 9.9cm dia. x 8.4cm deep
with mtg. flange 9.8mm sq.
Depth behind panel: 6cm overall

Parameter	Manufacturer's Data	Test Results
Frequency Response:	6.5KHz — 21.5KHz	6.5KHz — 21.5KHz @ -6dB
Sensitivity:	105dB @ 1w @ 1m	109dB @ 1w @ 1m av. 7KHz — 20KHz
THD/SPL:	Not given	7% THD @ 110dB SPL @ 1m
THD/Power:	Not given	Parameter not measured — see text
Rated Power:	20w cont. prog.	Parameter not measured
Impedance:	16 ohm nominal	12.5 — 17 ohm over operating range
Resonance:	Not given	Not clearly defined
Recommended c/o Frequency:	7KHz or higher	As stated
Polar Response:	30 V x 90 H @ 16KHz polar plot given for horizontal plane only	80°V x 140°H @ 4KHz) included 44°V x 136°H @ 8KHz) angle 22°V x 86°H @ 16KHz) @ -6dB



units up really. Superbly made and presented, they work well, and generally comply with the maker's specification and are expensive on this side of the Atlantic — the usual JBL story!



This is a brand new high power 'bullet' type high frequency unit which was seen for the first time at the 1981 Frankfurt trade fair and is only now starting to come off the production line in Bradford. It is a true 'bullet' device with an annular diaphragm mounted on the faceplate of a large ceramic magnet assembly and clamped to the pole piece of the magnet by the underside of the bullet shaped central plug. The horn flare is somewhat larger than most devices of this type and is also of a slightly different design in that the sides have been squared off to provide a rectangular aspect to the horn mouth.

The concept is somewhat of a hybrid between the JBL 2402 bullet and 2405 diffraction units also reviewed this month with the objective of increasing the horizontal dispersion. It is intended that the device should be mounted with the flattened sides in the vertical plane. Being that bit larger than its contemporaries, the Fane HF250 also has a different visual appearance in that it can be seen to be

FANE HF250 (UK)

Price around £37 incl. VAT
Overall Dimensions: 10.3cm dia. x 9.3cm deep
with mtg. flange 11.4cm square

Parameter	Manufacturer's Data	Test Results
Frequency Response:	5KHz up	3.2KHz — 15KHz @ -6dB
Sensitivity:	Not given	106dB @ 1w @ 1m av. 3.5KHz — 10KHz
THD/SPL:	Not given	3% THD @ 110dB SPL @ 1m
THD/Power:	Not given	6% THD @ 25w RMS sine wave
Rated Power:	50w (see text)	Parameter not measured
Impedance:	8 ohm	9.5-12 ohm over operating range
Resonance:	Not given	Outside operating range
Recommended c/o Frequency:	5KHz min. @ 18dB/oct	As stated
Polar Response:	Not given	70°V x 96°H @ 4KHz) included 44°V x 52°H @ 8KHz) angle 26°V x 24°H @ 16KHz) @ -6dB

a compression type driver mounted onto a shallow horn flare, whereas most units of this type appear as a completely closed solid cylinder. It's

good to see a little original engineering going on instead of the usual sheep syndrome. It is altogether a nicely made unit and its black sand textured

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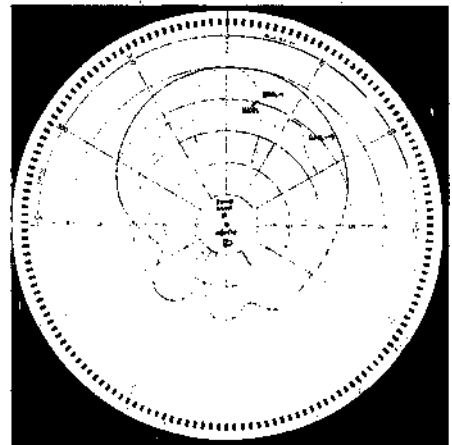
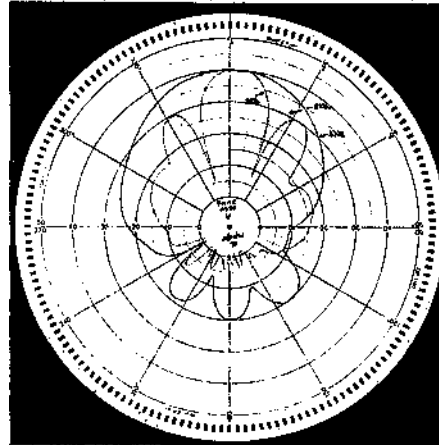


SPEAKERCHECK

finish with machined aluminium bullet plug and face plate give an attractive and business-like appearance.

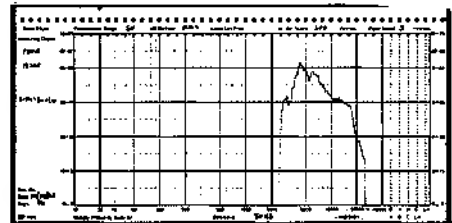
At the time of testing, Fane had not published their full data sheet and so the maker's specs are somewhat sparse I'm afraid. However, they are very specific about its power rating and its minimum crossover frequency. Under no circumstances must the HF250 be operated with a crossover frequency of less than 5KHz and a slope rate of 18dB per octave is recommended. Fane do, in fact, have a suitable high-pass filter available and this is designated HPX/4. When used with a passive filter or crossover, the HF250 is stated as being rated for use with a 250 watt system, while if it is used with an active crossover, then the maximum amplifier power used to feed the HF250 is 50w. RMS. We tested the unit at 25w. RMS sine wave and it seemed quite happy at that level with just 6% distortion, and this would tend to confirm the sort of figures Fane are giving.

Its sensitivity is also very good, being considerably higher than the HH or Celestion bullet devices, and would almost have equalled the amazing figure attained by the JBL if the frequency response did not fall away rapidly after the peak at 4KHz. It is always difficult to arrive at a specific sensitivity figure with a response



characteristic of this type, but I reckon on 106dB as being a fair average assuming a 5KHz crossover frequency. It can be seen that the shaping of the horn mouth has produced its desired effect and that, generally, the dispersion is wider in the horizontal plane than it is in the vertical, although it is interesting to note that at 16KHz there is virtually no difference, and that as with all bullet type devices we have tested — with the sole exception of the Gauss HF20, the beamwidth is narrowing appreciably at the higher frequencies.

Altogether, this is a very useful device at a particularly attractive price,



nicely made and with many useful features. Personally however, I would like to see a more uniform frequency response characteristic even if it meant the sacrifice of a little sensitivity to achieve it — but that is my only reservation.

These are two more absolutely brand new horns which, like the Fane HF250, should just about be coming off the production lines by the time this review appears in print. Both models, although visually quite different, employ an annular ring diaphragm and a central 'bullet' in an attempt to overcome the phase cancellation difficulties usually experienced with conventional dome diaphragms at the higher frequencies. The motor assembly is common to both units and comprises a fairly large ceramic magnet assembly carrying the ring diaphragm and bullet slug on its front face. The entire motor assembly is encased from the ceramic magnet ring up in a plastic barrel housing which opens out to form the horn flare at its front end.

The HF50 has the usual circular horn flare so familiar on drivers of this type, whereas the RTT50 has a rectangular horn flare of relatively large dimensions.

Celestion HF50

(UK)

Price around £23
incl. VAT

Overall dimensions: 9cm dia. x 7.5cm deep
with mtg. flange 11.5cm sq.

Depth behind panel: 5.5cm overall (front mounted)
6cm overall (rear mounted)

Parameter

Manufacturer's Data

Test Results

Frequency Response:

2KHz — 16KHz

1.5KHz — 15KHz @ -6dB

Sensitivity:

102dB @ 1w @ 1m

102dB @ 1w @ 1m av. 2KHz — 15KHz

THD/SPL:

6% 2nd, 1% 3rd @ 50w

3% THD @ 110dB SPL @ 1m

THD/Power:

sine or 118dB SPL

4% THD @ 25w RMS sine wave

Rated Power:

50w amp. rating

Parameter not measured

Impedance:

8 ohm*

8.5-14.5 ohm over operating range

Resonance:

Not given

Outside operating range

Recommended

c/o Frequency:

3KHz @ 18dB/oct.

As stated

Polar Response:

60° conical

124° conical @ 4KHz) included

48° conical @ 8KHz) angle

26° conical @ 16KHz) @ -6dB



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ROLAND: B33 Bass synth	BOSS: RM60 6-2 mixer
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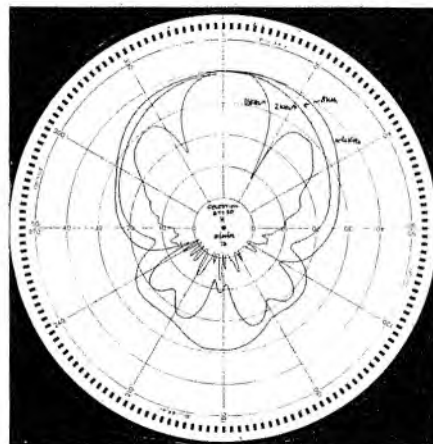
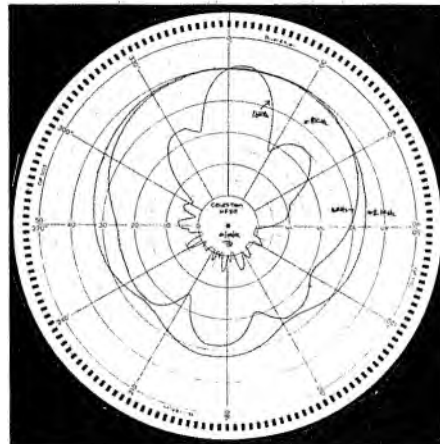
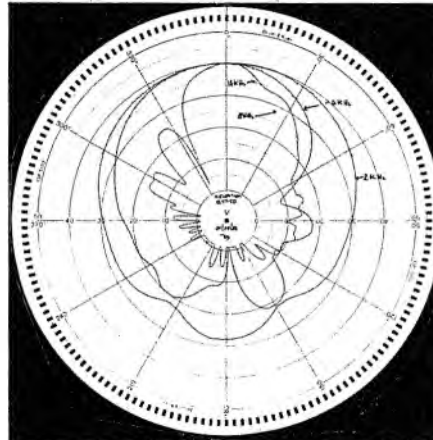
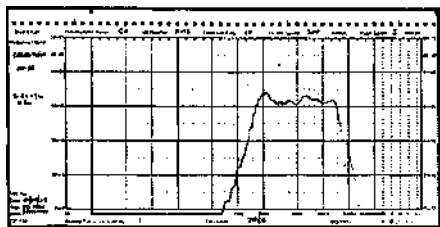
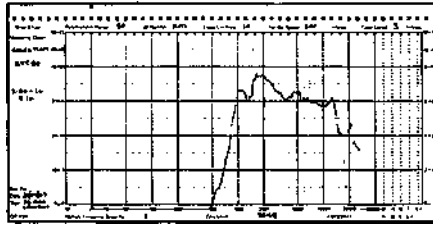
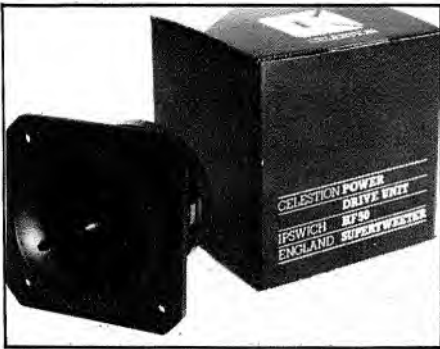
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SPEAKERCHECK



Both horns are very nicely moulded from foamed structural polystyrene and are finished in matt black. The overall standard of manufacture is of a very high order and the units have a very individual and attractive visual aspect which completely belies their absurdly low price. The impression is of a top quality professional product at a price which is actually cheaper than some of the small Japanese horns so often seen these days. But what of their performance?

The HF50 has without doubt, the smoothest and most uniform frequency response curve of any bullet type device yet tested, and the RTT50 is not far behind in this respect, but suffers a fairly broad 5dB peak centred on 2KHz. The trade-off, however, is in sensitivity, and although the two Celestion devices have quite reasonable sensitivity figures of 101 and 102dB — which compares favourably with the HH bullet reviewed last month, the Fane HF250 and both JBL units are considerably higher at between 106dB and 111dB. However, none of these has anything like the uniformity of response of the two Celestion units so you takes your choice it would seem.

Also, the Celestion devices have particularly low distortion figures and a high rated power handling capability of 50w, and even at 50w. sine wave, the distortion on the HF50 did not rise above the 6% figure given in the manufacturer's specification. Both units, however, suffer from the usual problem of diminishing dispersion at the higher frequency bands and as with all these bullet type devices, better dispersion uniformity will be obtained by choosing a higher crossover frequency. In any event, because of the response peak at 2KHz coupled with the very wide vertical dispersion at that frequency, we are recommending a minimum of 3.5KHz for the RTT50, and it is further suggested that 5KHz is the lowest crossover point for the HF50 if polar response is at all an important consideration.

All in all, these are without doubt an excellent pair of units at an unbelievably low price and should give Celestion a noticeable presence in a part of the market from which they have been conspicuously absent for some time now.

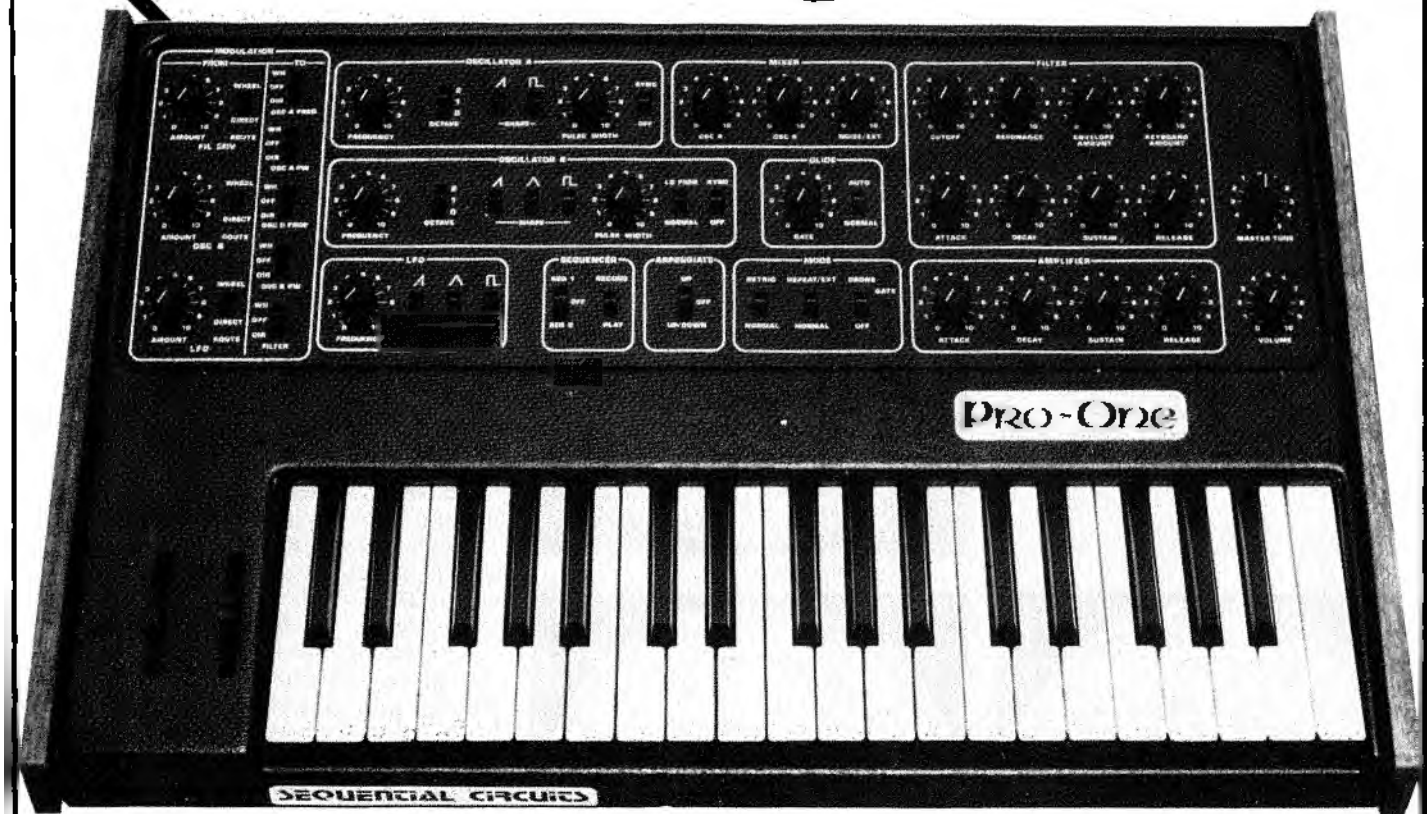
KEN DIBBLE

Celestion RTT50 (UK)

Price around £25 incl. VAT
Overall dimensions: 22cm wide x 11cm high x 14cm deep
Depth behind panel: 12.5cm overall

Parameter	Manufacturer's Data	Test Result
Frequency Response:	1.5KHz — 15KHz	900Hz — 14KHz @ -6dB
Sensitivity:	101dB @ 1w @ 1m	101dB @ 1w @ 1m av. 1KHz — 12KHz
THD/SPL:	7% 2nd, 2% 3rd @ 50w	3% THD @ 110dB SPL @ 1m
THD/Power:	sine or 117dB SPL	6% THD @ 25w RMS sine wave
Rated Power:	50w amp. rating	Parameter not measured
Impedance:	8 ohm*	7.5-15.5 ohm over operating range
Resonance:	Not given	2.3KHz
Recommended c/o Frequency:	2KHz @ 18dB/oct	3.5KHz — see text
Polar Response:	45°V x 70°V unqualified	136°V x 76°H @ 2KHz included 82°V x 100°H @ 4KHz angle 34°V x 72°H @ 8KHz @ -6dB 36°V x 36°H @ 16KHz

Rod Argent's Keyboards



WHY WOULD ANYONE BUILD ANOTHER MONO-SYNTH?

Because it's about time that you stopped putting up with nasally filters, single oscillators, and stripped-down electronics when you buy a low-cost monophonic synthesizer. To put things back in perspective, SCI introduces the Pro-One, a synthesizer that delivers the quality sound and features you want, not just a cheap approximation.

To start with, the Pro-One has the same electronics as its big brothers, the infamous Prophet-5 and the Prophet-10. You get the same sounds with no compromises (front panel looks familiar, neh?). Add pitch and mod wheels, extensive modulation capabilities, a C-to-shining-C 3 octave keyboard, single and multiple triggering modes, repeat and drone switches, and an audio out that can drive stereo headphones.

Enough? Hardly. A built-in digital sequencer with 2 sequences and up to 40 notes storage be-

tween them. An arpeggiator (that can be latched) for up or up/down arpeggios. Complete interfacing facilities including standard 1 V/octave CV in/out, gate in/out (also used for external clock on the sequencer and arpeggiator), an audio input with pre-amp for using microphones, guitars, other keyboards, etc. A special gate generator that automatically obtains gates from the external signal, which can then trigger envelopes, advance the sequencer, etc. A unique "automatic" glide mode that allows selective glide between notes. Also, there is an internal digital interface — something that opens up a new realm in synthesizer/computer connections — especially with home computers.

We could keep going, but you must check out the Pro-One for yourself. Listen to the sound, look at the capabilities. No Compromises!

20 Denmark Street, London WC2. Tel: 01-240 0084

Rod Argent's Keyboards



We are the sole U.K. distributor of all Sequential Circuits products, and are pleased to announce the introduction of the new Prophet 5 and Prophet 10 polyphonic synthesizers.

Additional features to what is already the world's premier keyboard instrument, the Prophet 5, include cassette interface for storage of recorded sounds to enable the user to build libraries of programs. The Prophet can now be programmed with different tuning scales (pythagorean, mean tone, just intonation, etc.) for even more realistic imitative sounds and "beat-free" multi-tracking with other instruments. Also included is a crystal referenced oscillator (accurate to 0.1 HZ) for tuning purposes and complete edit facilities for instant modification of sounds. The Prophet now comes with low-note priority single-triggering in unison mode (just like a minimoog!), and completely re-designed circuitry for improved roadworthiness and faster servicing.

These new features, together with those that have made the

Prophet 5 the synthesizer chosen by nearly every major keyboard player in the industry, make this instrument unsurpassable in every respect.

Now from Sequential Circuits comes the Prophet 10. Like the Prophet 5 it is completely programmable and polyphonic. It has 10 voices, two manuals (for playing two sounds at one time), a polyphonic sequencer with built in computer cassette, multitrack facilities and, of course, the incredible Prophet sound. For more detailed information or demonstrations contact us at our address given below.

Sequential Circuits Prophet 10	£4,600.00
Sequential Circuits Prophet 5	£2,450.00
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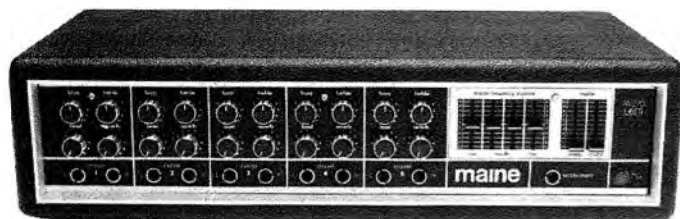


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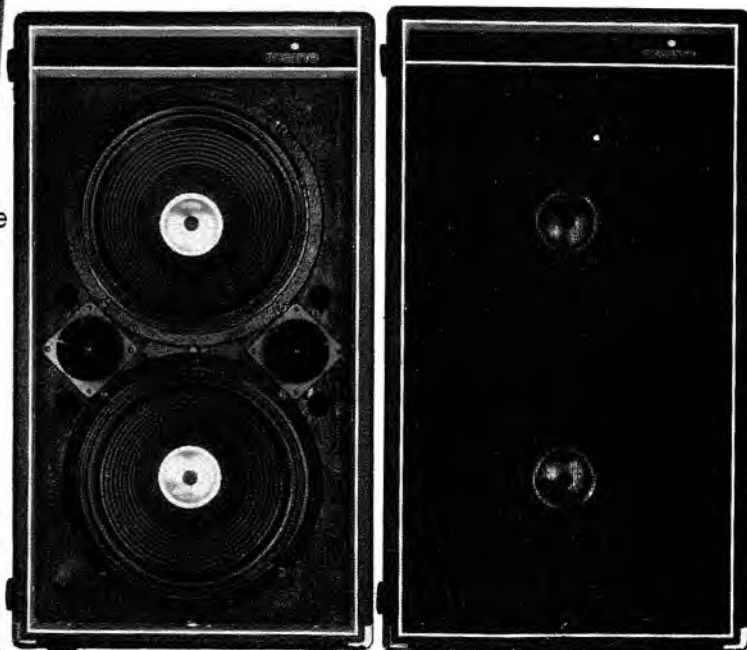


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* All prices include VAT *	



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LA BELLA'S MUSICIAN of NOTE

STEVE WINWOOD

Born: May 12, 1948 in Birmingham, England.

Home: Resides in Gloucestershire, England.

Profession: Musician

Earliest Musical Experience: I began playing the piano at age six.

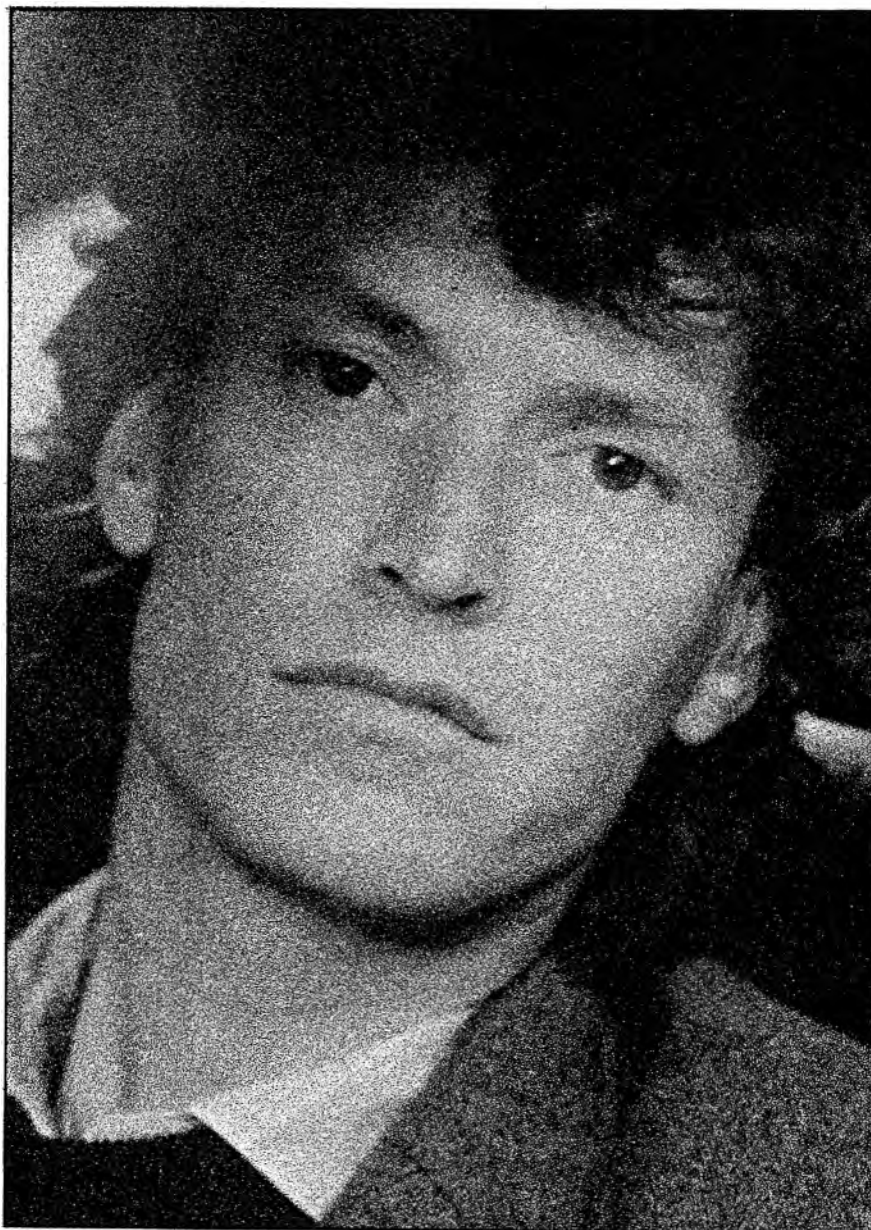
Major Influences: Most good music ever made from *Elgar* to *Little Richard* to *Miles Davis* to *Hank Williams*.

Latest Musical Accomplishment: Making *Arc Of A Diver* on *Island Records*.

Keynotes: I sang with *The Spencer Davis Group*, later formed *Traffic*, spent a brief period with *Blind Faith*, and various work on sessions and joint projects.

On Today's Music: Through all fashions and phases of music certain things remain constant which usually relates to the quality of material and performance. I think in today's music there is still fresh talent who have these qualities.

On Strings: I've been playing mandolin recently and have used *La Bella Strings* exclusively. I also use *La Bella 760RM* on my bass, the *7GPT Phosphor Bronze* on my acoustic, and the medium gauge roundwounds on my electric guitar.



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SOUNDCHECK

OHM Graphic Reverb GR100 combo £299 inc.



ABOUT A YEAR AGO I HAD THE pleasure of reviewing an Ohm graphic bass combo which I thought at the time was excellent value for money. Since then the Ohm range has grown extensively — both in the instrument amplification side and on the PA side. Anyhow back to the matter in hand. The GR100 is essentially a guitar combo with two 12" loudspeaker drivers.

For a 2 x 12" combo the cabinet is quite small measuring just 24" x 19" x 11" and this compactness has been achieved by angling the two drivers so that they point across each other. This does have one or two other advantages in terms of strength but these were probably not the main considerations. The entire cabinet is constructed from 3/4" chipboard as seems to be the norm these days and is covered in a grey vinyl. Rubbing strips wrap around each end section so that corner pieces are not required. Loudspeaker protection is provided by a fine grey silver grille which is mounted on a sub framework pushed into position and located with nylon push-fixings. Speakers are front mounted.

All the electronics are mounted on the front control panel including the

transformer and output devices. In fact heat sinking is provided by an aluminium extrusion which forms the front panel and a lip underneath to mount the electronics on. The extrusion is finned to allow reasonable heat dissipation but I must admit that at first I wondered if the heat sinking was enough.

Because the front panel acts as a heat sink as well as having all the controls, there is no back panel as such so that the back of the combo is devoid of dangling wires and numerous plugs and sockets which is no bad thing. Only a small panel with a speaker output jack and fuse is provided to allow external speakers to be connected up. Only one problem though is that the socket is labelled up as an 8 ohm output and it is a little unclear as to whether this just applies to the external load or to the overall load. On test, however, the amp worked fine into 4 ohms so I assume that the internal impedance is 8 with a minimum of 8 ohms external impedance.

The front panel has the following facilities — input jack with above it an LED indicator for graphic in/out; gain; bass; middle; treble; master gain; reverb level; 6-way graphic; graphic

footswitch (for graphic in/out); pre-amp out jack; and finally a mains on/off rocker neon similar to the Marshall type.

The graphic has the following controls: 125Hz; 250Hz; 500Hz; 1kHz; 2kHz; 4kHz. Each of these controls is a very short travel slider with a click stop centre position.

The front panel itself is very neat with silver on grey markings. The control knobs themselves are quite small but have indentations either side to allow easy adjustment. They are in fact some of the best and easiest knobs to adjust.

I am not sure what difference angling the speakers makes to the overall sound but the cabinet had plenty of bottom end guts. The twin speakers are labelled up with an Ohm sticker so it is difficult to know what the speakers are* — however I can make an educated guess... Whatever they are the bottom and mid range were exceptionally good — not too woolly. The top end whilst being reasonable was not as sparkling as I would have liked. This could be compensated for a little by adjusting the graphic eq.

It is quite evident that a lot of work has been done on the electronics as

the range of adjustment on each control has been carefully worked out. This is evident from the response of the equalisation both before and after the distortion stage.

The standard tone controls — bass; middle; treble all act on the signal from the guitar before it has been distorted whilst the graphic is after the distortion stage. There are now quite a few amps around that use this principle and it allows a lot of different sounds to be achieved. The Mesa-Boogie graphic amps also operate in the same way. With all the tone controls flat the basic sound was a bit dull but was also very warm. There was a distinct lack of top and as mentioned previously this may have been mainly a speaker problem. Even with the treble up high there was not sufficient treble. The only way to increase the top was by using the graphic. With the 2k and 4k controls advanced the sound when undistorted was excellent. The only problem was when the preamp was overdriven a little in that the sound was a bit edgy. Even so, when wound up a little the amp still retained its very warm sound and at highish levels the sustain was good.

I did find that with many guitars the overdrive capability was not as much as I would have liked — with high output guitars it did not matter too much but with the good ol' Strat there was only a hint of distortion. Having said all that the distortion sound itself was very good — soft and progressive. One important point to notice is that only one input jack is provided for any type of guitar. This with really good circuit design, is all that is needed to cope with the wide range of signals instead of high and low gain inputs — other manufacturers please note!

One point that was commented on by one or two musicians was the noise (or background hiss). This did not seem too excessive but on certain settings it was quite noticeable. With no input plugged in the preamp is automatically muted so noise figures are very low. However, with a guitar plugged in and its own volume control turned down the noise was a little on the high side (measured at -60dB from max output).

Ohm have spent some quite considerable time in trying to obtain good noise figures so it is quite possible that on this particular amp an I.C. or transistor had gone noisy — certainly on the graphic bass reviewed

a little while ago the noise figures were really excellent.

I think overall impressions of this combo were favourable. The warm sound produced by the amp makes it ideal for jazz or solo guitar and when played at high level the sustain was good although not excessive. I still think though that with some slightly brighter speakers the sound would have that extra something to pull it well away from the competition.

**They are Ohm speakers, each with a 75w handling capacity. Future models will incorporate 100w speakers... Ed.*

Dave Mann

Test Report

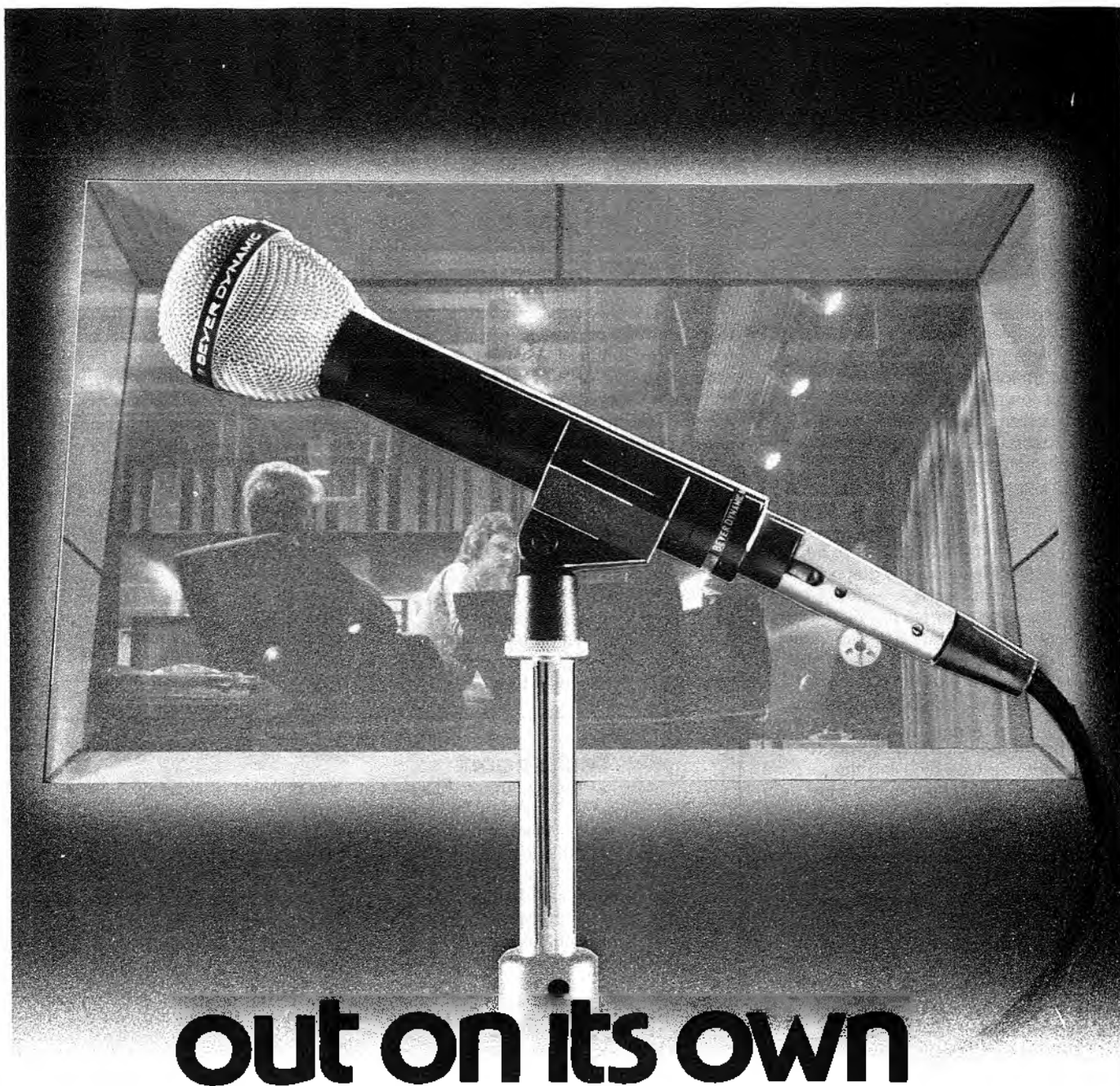
1. Power output. Measure at 1kHz at onset of clipping.
 - 8 ohms — 77.3 watts r.m.s.
 - 4 ohms — 102 watts r.m.s.
2. Input sensitivity @1kHz for full output.
 - 21mV
3. Input overload:
 - In excess of 3 volts r.m.s.
4. Equalisation:

	Range
Bass @ 100Hz	27.2dB
Middle@ 1kHz	14.2dB
Treble @ 4kHz	25dB
Graphic: 125Hz	18dB
250Hz	22.5dB
500Hz	24dB
1kHz	23.2dB
2kHz	20.6dB
4kHz	18dB
5. Noise:
 - Master gain max. — 83dB (from full output)
 - Master and gain max. — 60dB (from full output)

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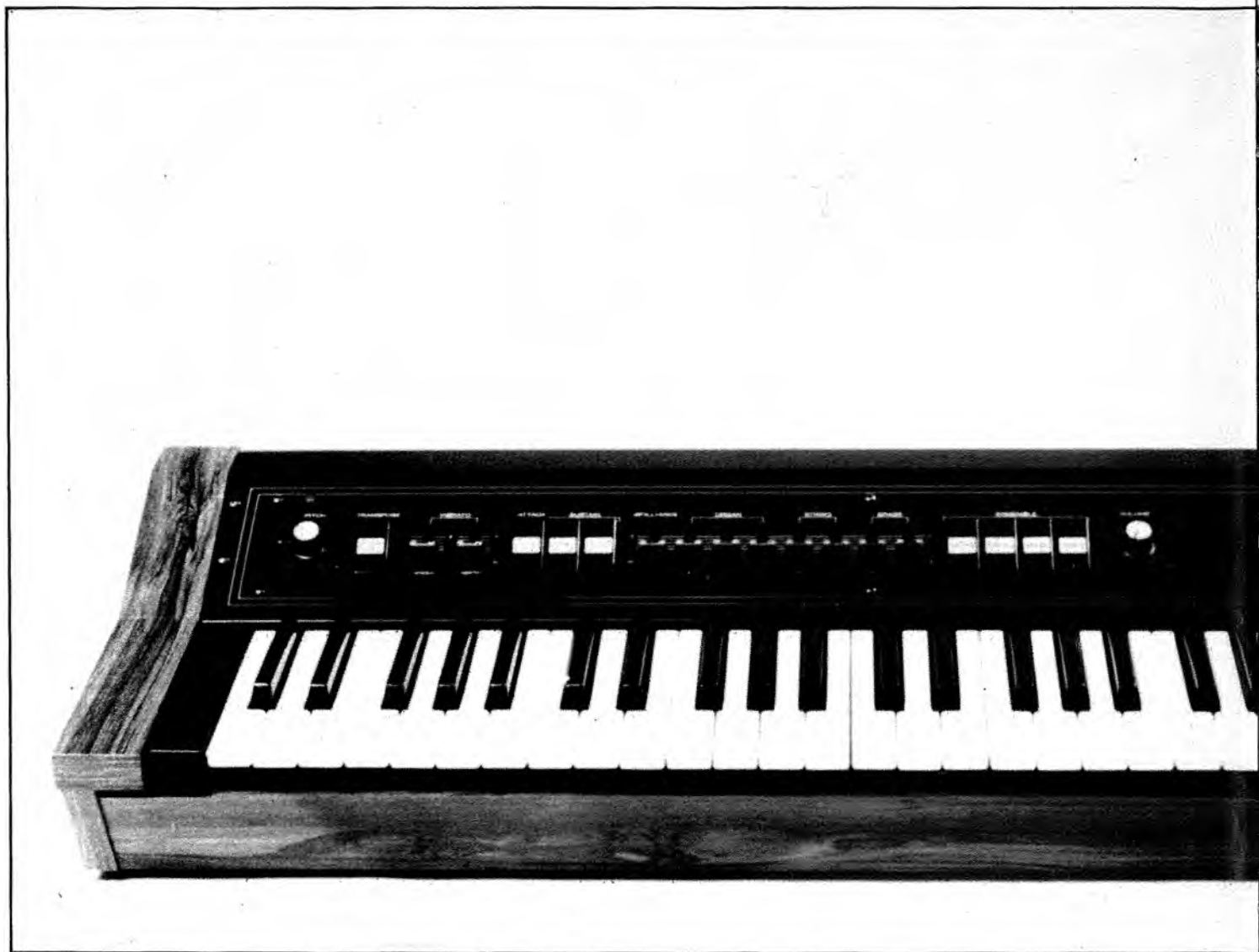
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SYNTHCHECK

YAMAHA SK10 Polyphonic Ensemble £385 inc.



WITH THE NUMBER OF YAMAHA electric grand pianos and CS80 synthesizers currently 'doing the rounds' of the big concerts and regular television spots, it's hardly surprising that there are some who believe that the company only handles the expensive, prestigious end of the keyboard market. To dispel this suggestion, an SK10 has been chosen for this review, representing, as it does, the very bottom end of the relatively new SK range which includes the impressive SK30 reviewed in the April issue of IM.

In common with the other instruments in the SK range, the SK10 combines a combo organ with a brass and string ensemble: others, higher up the range, include programmable polyphonic synths as well. This little

instrument, however, is stripped to the three basic sounds. An organ with three footage controls, a string section with two, and a brass section with, again, two footages. Despite this apparently basic specification, however, the SK10 accounted for itself remarkably well, and in view of the price which Yamaha have put upon it, came through the test with flying colours all round.

CONSTRUCTION

Housed in an attractive wood cabinet (with, again, no protective corners of any kind, a trend which many keyboard manufacturers, unfortunately, seem to be following) the SK10 has a 49 note C to C single keyboard, with all the controls situated

in a sloping panel of black anodised metal with gold/yellow legends.

Reading across the panel from left to right, the controls are as follows: a large rotary giving variable pitch between 438 and 452Hz, although there is a '0' reference point marked; 'transpose' raises the pitch of the whole keyboard by one octave.

Two sliders control the speed and depth of vibrato, and then three large rocker switches handle 'Slow' attack, and two pre-set lengths of sustain, for convenience sake marked Short and Long. A slider control marked 'Brilliance' adds a distinctly crisp treble bite to the overall sound.

Thus the 'effects' are all placed together on the left hand side of the control panel. The remaining controls are all directly related to the sound



itself.

The fader controls for the footages of the organ, string and brass sections are marked on a short scale, 1-10, and require being brought downwards, i.e. towards the player, for them to have any effect. Footages available for the organ are 8', 4' and 2', and 8' and 4' for both the string and the brass sections.

Alongside the tone levers is a block of four rocker switches under the general heading of 'Ensemble'. One each for organ, strings, and brass, and a further switch marked 'speed' which increases the ensemble effect.

The final control on the front panel is for overall volume.

The panel is, as is usual with Yamaha, extremely well laid out and thoughtfully designed: it's surprising

how many manufacturers still ignore the importance of an easy layout: this instrument in particular, in view of its price, will sell to many players who have had no experience of synthesizers before, and thus it needs to be logical, simple and easy to understand. Even as comparatively few functions as those available on the SK10 can be laid out incorrectly.

The rear panel contains two small inset sections: one houses a small on/off switch, the mains cable (permanently attached), the fuse holder, and a voltage selector switch, in this instance marked-off to prevent accidental selection of an incorrect voltage.

The second recessed panel contains just three jack sockets: one for output, one for the optional volume pedal, and one for headphones. Again, therefore, a simple arrangement, although in view of the simplicity it might have been better to have the on/off switch situated on the front panel.

PERFORMANCE

The SK10 turned out to be a smaller, less expensive version of the SK30. While it lacks many of the facilities — obviously at this price — there is no doubt that the sounds available are of the highest standard, and the overall impression one of a well-made, high quality instrument.

Taking each voice in turn, the organ, despite the limitations of only three footages, produced a powerful and satisfying sound. While, obviously, it lacks the subtlety provided by intermediate footages, as well as the depth of a 16', it still is capable of creating a powerful and authoritative voice. The length — or rather the shortness(!) — of the sliders takes some getting used to as considerable variation is available over a comparatively short distance, but once familiarised with this factor there is no subsequent problem.

The string section — again, despite the provision of only two footages — acquires itself admirably, especially — as is usual with strings — when the ensemble effect is introduced on speed '2'. The brass sounds are the least convincing of the three, in their own right, but when mixed with the organ, give extra bite and sharpness to the attack.

As there are no control switches for introducing the three sections, they are, therefore, available all the time at

the touch of a fader. To remove any one section it means fading all of that section's relevant footage controls to their maximum upward position. Although at first acquaintance it was felt that the provision of separate switches would be useful, further playing of the instrument has shown that to get the very best out of the SK10 one must mix the voices as often and as judiciously as possible. Although each section can stand up on its own, it is when mixed that the machine works at its very best.

A couple of voices must be singled out for special mention: the organ footages 4 and 2 both provide beautiful 'wind' instruments in their own right, somewhere around a flute and, at the bottom end of the keyboard, an oboe: simply excellent voices which would, when used with ensemble, provide a convincing woodwind section for any kind of backing. The organ on full mixed with some of the strings also creates a superb sound, giving substance to the organ on its own.

CONCLUSIONS

A remarkable instrument for under £400 is the overall assessment. The SK10 has bared down the essential ingredients of its more expensive stablemates, and combined them to produce a high performance instrument at a low price. There are no 'frills' — at this price? — and if you're looking for them, look further up the range. As a basic string/brass machine and organ it is possibly unsurpassed at this price.

Its packaging suggests also that it may be aimed at the home market — if this is the case, then it would be a useful instrument to have lying about the place, and it also explains the cosmetics which maybe might cause problems on the road. It also explains the on/off switch being situated at the back where little fingers can't get at it! However, these are unimportant considerations. It is often tempting to suggest that instruments should have more facilities — indeed, this reviewer has often been accused of making an art form of it! — but in this instance that comment would be unnecessary. The SK10 sets out to present a simple, well designed, good performance face, and it achieves precisely that. That it achieves it at such a cost is indeed, a bonus.

TS.



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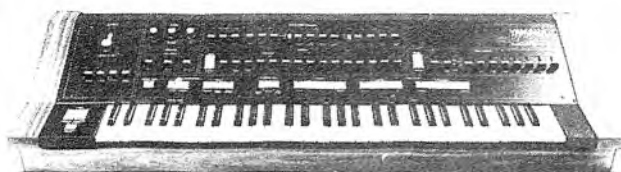
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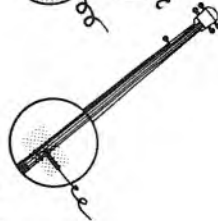
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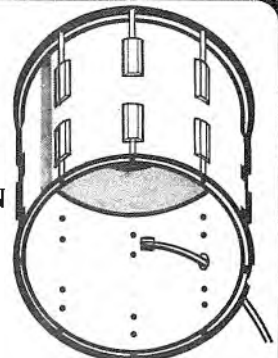
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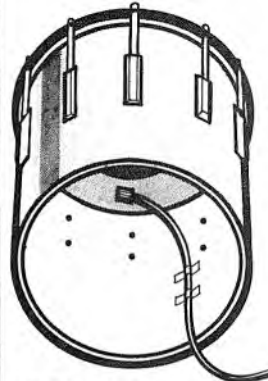
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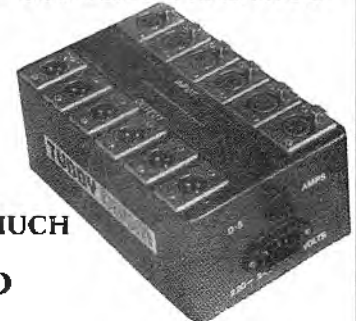
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GUITARCHECK

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IN 1965 CHARLES KAMAN, BOSS of a large aviation corporation, who had more than a passing interest in the guitar, set out to investigate the methods and efficiency of traditional guitar manufacture. He took many instruments, old and new, and thoroughly analysed how they were made and what gave them their sound. Bearing in mind the diminishing natural resources available he set about building prototypes of what, during the 70s, were to become some of the most unusual and special guitars made.

Ovation, as Kaman's firm became, merged old tradition with space-age technology to produce — among others — the now famous bowl-shaped guitars. The guitars have in the past been dismissed as mere gimmicks and as with any major innovator the road to success was not easy. But today the Ovation acoustic/electric range is popularised by many top guitarists and performers. From Paul McCartney to Al diMeola and to the classically based talents of John Williams the Ovation has found a niche and commercial success.

So let's take a close look at what makes an Ovation tick. In this case a Glen Campbell Artist acoustic/electric. Immediately the instrument does not look particularly special. There is no visible pick up or 'bug' cluttering the soundboard and from the front at least it's just another acoustic.

The neck certainly is conventional. A 5-piece mahogany and maple laminate sporting a bound ebony fingerboard with very tasteful shell diamond position markers. The head design indicates a thorough re-design. Important structurally and visually the headstock has a walnut facing and the now familiar carved appearance. The machine heads are 24 carat gold plated jobs with the usual adjustments found on Schallers or Grovers — unsurprisingly they work very well. The neck itself is well shaped — not over thin but certainly comfortable for most styles of playing.

On a guitar of this quality and pedigree I was disappointed with the general set up of the neck. Firstly the standard gauge frets have been left slightly rough around the edges and the neck needed some adjustment before one could really call the action reasonable. To give the guitar a 'fast' action would I believe require far more adjustment than would be acceptable for an instrument of this calibre. Wherever or with whoever the fault



lies the guitarist does not warm to a guitar presented in this fashion.

Moving down to the body which joins the 20 fret neck at the 14th fret, the innovations begin to appear. The front is constructed from Sitka spruce and features the VT8 bracing system. (This basically means the guitar has eight belly braces — Ovation also feature various other bracing systems depending on the type and size of the instrument).

Instead of the soundhole inlay, Ovation have opted for what only can be described as an 'outlay' decoration. This is a raised band an inch wide around the soundhole with a rather fancy black and white inlaid design. Though very well made it looks a bit too fancy in relation to the simple and tasteful overall appearance of the guitar.

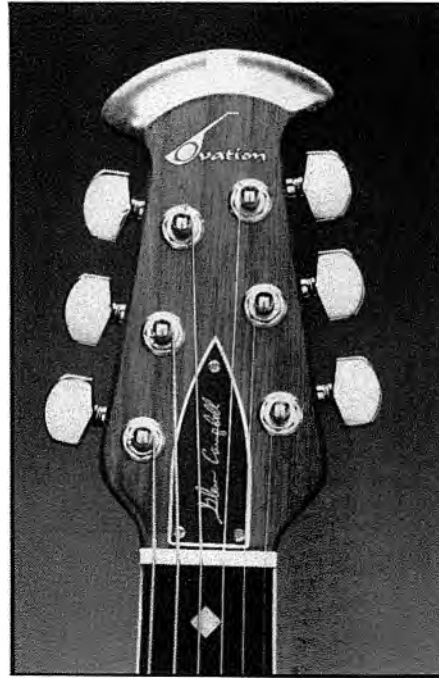
As far as the bridge goes it looks remarkably ordinary. Made from walnut, the strings enter through the back as opposed to the bridge-pin system. But it is the saddle which provides the key to the guitar's unique electric sound (more of this later!). The saddle itself is well made and although it is all one piece, the saddle has been shaped to provide perfect compensation for each string.

For those of you who believe in the traditional ways of guitar making I suggest you find a picture of your favourite hand made acoustic and don't read on, for the back of the Ovation is the real difference with this guitar. The bowl-shaped feature is what Kaman built his whole company on when he set about re-designing the acoustic guitar. To be quite honest you either like it or you don't.

The patented bowl-shaped brown Lyrachord material is basically a fibreglass derivative made up to a thickness of 0.043". Because of the nature of the material and design of the bowl shape it is immensely stronger than wood (although I did not put this to the test!). In doing away with the back bracings and linings the sound is reflected very efficiently back through the soundhole giving the guitar an excellent acoustic projection.

The Electrics

The key to the sophisticated electronics in this guitar lies with the bridge — or should I say *within* the



bridge. Underneath the unassuming saddle are six piezo-electric pick up elements which are sensitive to both the string vibrations *and* the top vibrations. This, Ovation believe, produces the most effective acoustic/electric sound. When the string vibrates the vibrations are converted to a small electrical impulse which is fed to a pre-amp hidden inside the guitar body. This is then fed to an amp or straight to a PA desk via a standard socket output.

The sound is controlled by a knob on the top shoulder of the guitar. It is in fact a tone and volume control in a double knob. The controls are mounted on a concentric potentiometer which allows the volume (in the inner and larger knob) to work independently from the tone (the smaller and outer knob).

Now every internal pre-amp system requires a battery. Usually the battery is placed in the control compartment or somewhere equally obvious. However, on this guitar there is no apparent battery compartment to be found. Access to the battery is actually achieved via the soundhole. The procedure is a bit fiddley though — you have to slacken off the bass strings then loosen an external screw which holds the battery case to the guitar back then remove the old

battery and replace it. Not the simplest of methods but I can't think of any other on this type of guitar.

The Sound

In the electric mode I think the Ovation *really* works. The sound, although obviously not like a true acoustic, comes very close when amplified. The pre-amp has been designed to eliminate a lot of the middle frequencies which can make an amplified acoustic sound very muddy. The Ovation sounds very clear and the tonal range on the actual guitar is very adequate. All in all you've really got the best of both worlds here — a good acoustic sounding guitar with one of the best and most adaptable electric pick up systems on the market today.

Conclusions

Well, in my opinion, at least, this guitar really does its job. It liberates the all acoustic player from squatting in front of a mike, to being able to move freely about the stage and actually being heard above the noise of a rock band. As well as all that, it is not littered with 'bugs' or magnetic pick ups dangling from the soundboard. Yes, quite an achievement.

This Ovation will not be to everyone's taste and the minor points on construction which I have raised may be off putting to some. But for the money the Ovation provides the almost-perfect answer to the problems of amplifying an acoustic and in my opinion is one of the best, if not *the* best on the market today.

Now isn't it time that someone with the talent and insight of Charles Kaman proves me wrong?

D.B.

Dimensions

Scale length: 647mm
 Depth of neck at 1st fret: 21mm
 Depth of neck at 11th fret: 23mm
 Width of neck at nut: 43mm
 Width of neck at 12th fret: 53mm
 String spacing at neck: 35mm
 String spacing at bridge: 55mm



YOU MAY REMEMBER A LITTLE while ago that we had on test a combo simply called "Session" manufactured by a new company in Basingstoke called Axess electronics. The design philosophy behind the combo was no frills — no nonsense in terms of controls and use with a great deal of emphasis placed on the quality of the electronics especially with regard to noise thus supposedly making it ideal for studio work.

The combo itself was all valve with an output (switchable) of 15 or 30 watts, feeding into a single 12" loudspeaker.

Since that time one or two more units have been added to the range

and it is these, in conjunction with the original combo, that we are looking at today.

Three amps were supplied for review, these being the Session 15-30 guitar combo (valve) and two versions of the Session PM-120 guitar monitor amplifiers. Before looking at each in a little more detail I will just run down a few things that these amps have in common.

Essentially from the front the amps look identical in their colour scheme of black and silver. The cabinet is a very sturdy plywood construction covered in black leather cloth. Overall dimensions are 22 1/2" x 16" x 12" although the front of the cabinet

slopes back a little to give a bit of extra projection upwards and to make the amp look a little smaller than it actually is. In fact I quite like the neat appearance which is enhanced by removing all the operational controls from the front of the amp. All that can be seen from the front is the protective black with silver lines speaker grille. Corner protection is provided by chrome corner caps with four soft p.v.c. feet to hold the amp firmly down on stage.

The control panels on the amps are located — traditional Vox fashion — centre top back and a bit more usefully have markings designed to be seen from the front of the amp rather than

SOUNDCHECK

SESSION Amps

the back. A carrying handle is provided on top.

I think a quick look at the guitar combo is in order now although I will not dwell on it as the amp has already been reviewed previously. It is an all-valve combo with switchable 15-30 watts output. This power is quite ably handled by a single Celestion Loudspeaker.

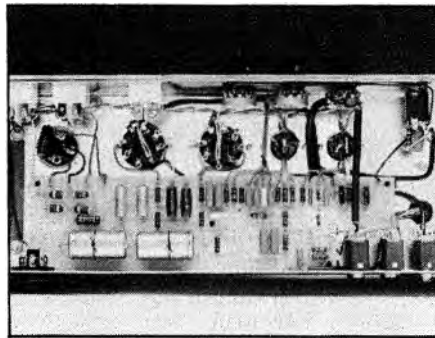
Three rotary controls are provided — volume, treble and mid/bass. I am still not too sure about the mid/bass control in use but that is by the way. One or two extra slide switches are now provided although unfortunately these are not labelled. By a process of trial and error I deduced the function of these. A 3 position switch next to the input jack gives degrees of treble boost except that this operates across the volume control and is completely non-functional when the volume is turned up full. One of the other switches brings the Eq in and out and the other one seems not to do very much at all. In fact trying to measure the combined effect of the switch plus the mid/bass control was extremely difficult.

Various inputs and outputs are located just underneath the chassis at the back. One thing I am not too keen on is that the loudspeaker output jack is just next to the line outputs. Although in normal use this l/s output



jack would not be touched there are occasions when it could be a little awkward.

So much for a quick look at the amp. The other two units supplied are part of what is called a guitar monitor system. Simply these combos are just add-on amp/speaker units to up the output capability of the valve combo or



in fact any other electronics with line outputs.

In basic form a single combo coupled with a single guitar monitor cabinet would just increase the output power and performance. In more complex form several monitors could be run from the one amp or as many bands do these days can cross couple one side of the stage to the other. Anyway before I get too carried away I will look at these units in a bit more detail.

Interestingly both of the monitors supplied use transistor power amps rather than valves. I suppose the thinking here is that for upping output power once the basic sound is determined (by the valve preamp) it is far more economical to use a transistor power amp especially when the output power is far in excess of the standard combo. To be honest a 100 watt valve output stage in this format would require much more cooling than the small vent provided and of course would be considerably heavier.

The two guitar monitors are basically identical with the exception of the type of loudspeaker fitted — one a Celestion, one an Electro-Voice. The chassis for both is quite neat with hefty heat sinking and a toroidal mains transformer to keep hum and noise to a minimum.

The only connection on the back is to the loudspeaker the rest of the controls are on the top front panel.

These are from the left: 2 jacks for line in and line out for looping through between monitors; gain; 2 fuses — for mains and for speaker protection. As on the guitar amp there is a mains on/off rocker neon.

Both amps provided 100 watts of r.m.s. power into their respective speakers. Now although the Celestion is a good speaker in its own right I do like the Electro-Voice drivers very much and most certainly the sound from the EVM series II was superb.

I also like the principle of add on self contained amp/speakers as a very quick and efficient way of either increasing output power or giving better sound coverage or as the name implies better monitoring of other instruments. The monitor can of course be used with any amp mixer or whatever with a slave output and considering the overall size pushed out an extremely high level of acoustic output — I think I have said that before about the EVM drivers in the Mesa Boogie amps.

The power amp driving the EVM unit showed up a bit of crossover distortion which to be honest could not really be noticed and probably could be removed by adjustment.

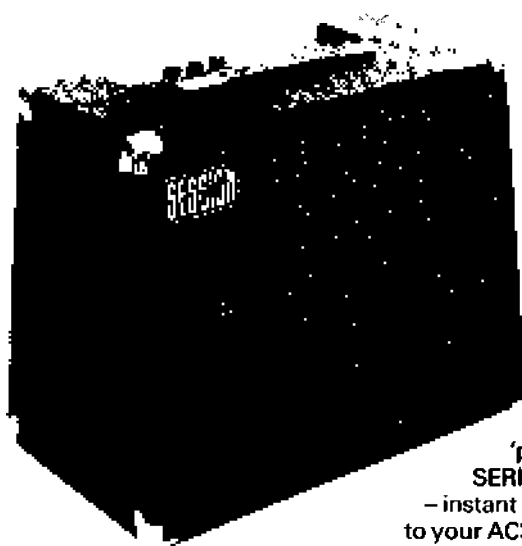
Interestingly the slave output from the combo is derived from the output transformer. This means that any or all of the distortion produced by the guitar amp (specially output stage) is fed to the monitor amp. In practise the sound fed to the monitor amp was really excellent especially when the guitar amp was overdriven substantially. Here the usefulness of having a low power output (15 watts) meant the sound level was determined mainly by the monitor. However it was surprising how much output the guitar amp pushed out on its own.

It is difficult to know quite what to say regarding the overall sound of these two units as to a greater extent the sound is determined by the preamp feeding into the amp. I personally would now like to see a slightly more comprehensive preamp (valve) either as a self contained unit or perhaps built in as a combo. Then I think the full potential of these monitor cabs would be realised. ●

Test Report

1. Power output. Measured at 1kHz into 8 ohms.
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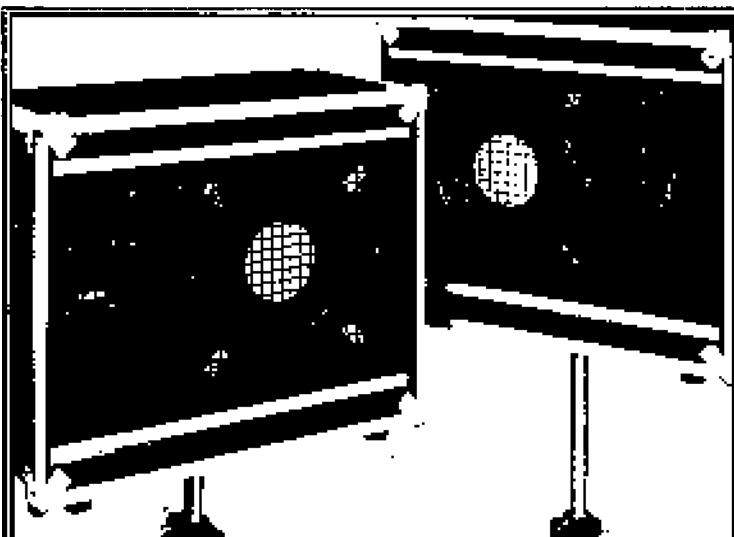
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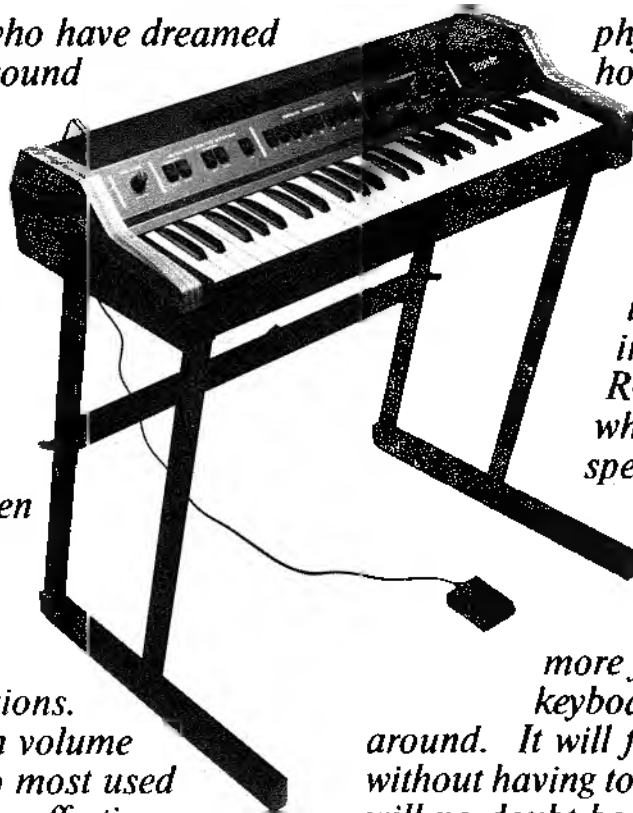
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SOUNDCHECK

T.C. ELECTRONIC Effects Units

THIS REVIEW COVERS SEVEN units manufactured by T.C. Electronic of Denmark and distributed in the UK by Gigsville. They are certainly a new name to me and have apparently only recently been available outside of Denmark which is not a country generally associated with electronic musical equipment. These units are, however, far from basic designs. Whilst they offer no really new sounds, they have a flexibility of adjustment that is rarely found outside of studio gear and almost never in other 'boxes'.

All seven units feature matching design and finish of semi-matt black with all labels and markings in white. Whilst not necessarily looking very exciting, this is a very practical design point as it enables the controls to be read on stage under any coloured lighting. The casing for each unit is a die-cast box of which two sizes are used, determined principally by the number of controls on the front panel. All the units requiring powering have provision for an internal 9v battery as well as 3.5mm mini jack sockets for use with an external power supply. The internal battery is switched on the moment a jack is plugged into the input socket. Internal access is by removing the four screws from the bottom plate. The underside of all units is covered with rubberised foam to prevent them sliding around.

The control knobs used are narrow, tall, collet type fixing, which I have slight reservations about with regard to their vulnerability to damage from rough handling but the answer to this must lie with the user. Also the exact setting of the knobs is difficult to see when standing up or in a playing position so maybe replacement of those smart coloured knob tops with marked ones could be a good idea.

Integrated Preamp

One of the simpler units in the range, it is very useful for making up lost volume if using several other effects units, to boost low level instruments or even overdrive suitable inputs. As well as the volume control the unit has separate treble and bass controls both marked from -10 to +10. These are the shelving type similar to those on a hi-fi amp rather than the peak/dip types and so are better for making up a general lack or excess of treble or bass rather than specific corrections. There is plenty of



gain available with an increase in noise really only being noticeable in the maximum gain position.

Dual Parametric Equaliser

For dealing with specific problem frequencies or to emphasise a certain frequency band, the parametric equaliser is the most flexible and accurate system to use. This unit has two parametric equalisers in the same box with a treble control. The equaliser's frequencies are continuously adjustable over two overlapping ranges of 20Hz to 2kHz on the first equaliser and 100Hz to 10kHz on the second. The Bandwidth or range of frequencies either side of the selected frequency to be affected are adjustable from 0.1 to 1 octave. The control labelled 'Function' is the degree of cut or boost at the selected frequency values and is marked from -16 to ± 16 dB. Additionally the treble control is also ± 16 dB shelving type. The unit has a gain control with ± 12 dB with the 0 position being exactly correct as can be found when the slide switch below is operated to switch the eq in and out.

With all the equalisers in the flat

position there is no audible difference in sound or volume even on battery operation which demonstrates the accuracy with which these units have been adjusted. It takes a while to get the best results from a parametric equaliser but it is certainly extremely useful for dealing with 'nasties'! The unit comes with a leaflet describing various uses and techniques for use with parametric equalisers.

Booster +/Distortion

The facilities offered are similar to those of the Integrated Preamp with several major additions. The Volume control is calibrated from 0 to 6 with unity gain at position 2 so there is plenty in hand. The Bass and Treble controls are both ± 16 dB. The fourth knob is the Distortion control which is switched in by the slide switch just above it. It is not the best sounding distortion effect I've used but was pretty good and comes close to that contradiction 'clean distortion'.

The unit also features a noise suppressor with a threshold control. This quite effectively reduces the noise generated within and before the unit. Sometimes a unit such as this can make matters worse but the effect of

this one was very gentle and the only time that I heard it operating was when set in the maximum position with long sustained notes and even then it only shortened the sustain slightly.

The Bypass control is a robust foot switch that is electronic and therefore doesn't have mechanical click. The LED above the treble control lights when the unit is switched in, if the input jack is inserted. Presumably to preserve battery life, this LED doesn't remain alight but fades after about 20 seconds. Although this is a good idea it does take a little getting used to and to learn to resist the temptation to push the bypass switch again to see if the effect is in or out. There is also provision in the form of a mini jack for an external bypass control. As well as the standard in/out jack sockets, this unit has an XLR socket wired unbalanced and suitable for feeding into a low impedance input.

TC VII Phaser

This is also known as the Emphasisable Peak Phaser and is the simplest phaser made by T.C. Electronics. There are controls for phasing speed – 0.1 to 10 sweeps a second, and a Peak or depth of effect control. The Bypass foot switch is electronic and has no mechanical noise while provision is made for external bypass control, external phasing speed control and an external power supply by mini jack sockets. Aside from the external control features, the TC VII operates well and is similar to the better phasers from their competitors.

TC XII Programmable Phaser

This unit is the most outstanding of the complete range. It offers features not found in my experience before on effects boxes for musicians' use. There are four separate controls for adjusting the phasing characteristics. The Speed control is the same as for the TC VII phaser with 0.1 to 10 sweeps a second. The Function control allows control of the type of phasing from a peak sound, through linear to a notch type. These could also be described as positive and negative phasing with the peak giving the impression of a range of boosted frequencies moving across the sound spectrum, while the notch gives the impression of a moving hole in the frequency spectrum.

Both of these are distinctive sounds at their extreme settings while the middle linear position offers more gentle effects. Particularly unusual is the switchable filter control. A three position toggle switch allows selection of 4, 8 or 12 filters and these in turn give differing intensity and depth of the phasing effect. The Width control varies the width of the phasing sweep from 0 width or no phasing effect at all, to its maximum position which is just short of 'silly noises'.

There are, however, further adjustments in the form of 'programs' which can be inserted into the 'programs' jack socket at the rear of the unit and alter the response of the phaser. The two 'programs' are simply stereo jack plugs with a resistance built into the jack body and each jack identified by its colour coded end. The 'program' jacks alter the operating range of the phaser with the blue jack raising the operating frequency and the red lowering it. Both of these ranges and the standard sound are all effective with guitar but these adjustments will allow optimum results with other instruments with differing sound ranges. Using special cables it is also possible to control the 'problem' input with a suitable foot pedal or even link two units together to synchronise their sweep rates through the 'program' sockets.

The phaser has the standard electronic bypass switch and an LED to illuminate when the effect is first turned on and then fades after approximately five seconds. When the battery is low, this LED flashes as a warning although I did not see this happen during testing as all the batteries were still in good condition after the reviews. The volume with the effect in or out was virtually identical.

One of the outstanding features of the TC XII is its lack of noise. For most practical purposes, the phaser can be assumed to be completely silent during operation and free from the all too common whooshing sound of some units. The amount of control offered makes this an outstanding effects box. There is also another version of this unit known as the TC XII B with all the filters moved one octave down making it more suitable for use with bass instruments.

Protected Power Supply

This is intended for use with the effects units of the range and can

power up to four separate units at 9v 20mA for an input of 220-240v. The unit is short circuit protected and the output sockets are 3.5mm mini jacks while the styling matches the rest of the range. The mains cable is a two core type of approximately two metres and is permanently fixed at the casing end. An LED indicates when the unit is operational.

Remote Switch

T.C. Electronics have even applied some thought to what is usually just a switch-in-a-box. Well this is basically what we have here but with a little bit more. It has three inputs two of which are marked A inputs and are parallel connected via a resistance network. The third input is labelled B. The remaining jack is the output socket. This arrangement allows for a wide number of uses including as a straight on/off switch, to switch between inputs from A and B sockets or to switch between outputs from two A inputs to the B input or vice versa, turning the unit round and switching outputs from a single input such as to left and right PA channels or to different amplifier inputs, bypassing of effects as well as simultaneous or opposite bypassing etc.

In addition, the 'program' jacks of the TC XII phaser may be placed in the A and B inputs to give remote switching capability of the 'programs' if the output of the switch is connected to the 'program' socket on the phaser. The leaflet accompanying the unit details further uses for speed control of the TC VII phaser and the use for switching high powers. All this from a switch, a couple of resistors and a lot of clever thought. As this unit is completely passive and doesn't require batteries it also has the only mechanical footswitch in the range.

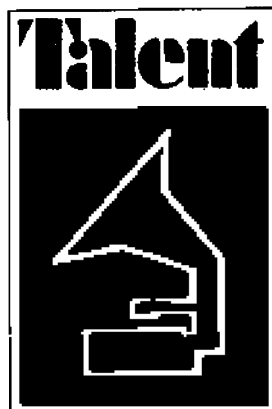
Summary

These pedals are without doubt of a high quality of design, construction and performance and cannot really be faulted on anything other than minor points. I would, however, agree that not all musicians will need or appreciate the facilities offered by say the TC XII Phaser but, for those that do, the range offers a new degree of sophistication in effects units.

Keith Spencer-Allen

Q. What do
Chick Corea,
Keith Jarrett,
Jack De Johnette
and Pat Metheny
have in common?

A.



Talent Studio, Kjølberggt. 29. Oslo 6. Norway.
or write to. PO Box. 2814 Tøyen. Oslo 6. Norway. Telex 17079 talmo n.

STUDIO
DIARY

Just for a change we thought we'd get out and about this month and see what some of the studios around the country have been doing.

Coventry may be boring (as local inhabitants constantly impress on my grey matter) but in spite of or maybe because of this, it has made more than a passing contribution to the music scene. *Horizon's* noticeable debut came with albums from the *Specials*, *Selector* and *Bad Manners*. This month has brought back the irrepressible *Jerry Dammers* who is collaborating on a single with *Rhoda*, ex of the *Bodysnatchers*. Jerry has produced the track and it is now being mixed, in between Jerry answering the phone with joyous greetings of. "This is the home of the hits". Fellow Coventry band, the *Reluctant Stereotypes* have been in to record a single, produced by *Kim Holmes*, which promises to be another kettle of fish altogether from their previous material. The remainder of studio time has caught the *Paul Brooks Band* and *EMF* doing various tracks.

Meanwhile up in **Liverpool**, *Amazon Studios* have been doing their best to keep the customers happy, not least *Wah Heat*, who have been recording an album and a single. *Amazon* has an 8-track studio which the band seem to have become attached to, but at the same time they wanted greater recording facility, so the ever helpful *Amazon* temporarily transformed said studio to a 16-tracker, with the mixing being done in their other 24 track studio. Band member and soul lookalike *Pete Wylie* did the production on the imminent masterpieces. Also in the studio have been *Pink Military* recording an album, and there's been work on singles from *Ellory Bop*, the *Freshies*, *Ann Echo*, *The Moderates* and *Harvest Moon*, which have almost all been self-produced. A change of mood punctuated their diary lately when a nun and twenty or so kids came in to record, well heavens knows what.

Rockfield Studios, over in **Monmouth**, have scored yet another success with *Echo and the Bunnymen*, whose album has just bounded into



Echo and the Bunnymen photo Tom Sheehan

the charts and was recorded there. More recently those fun loving skankers *Bad Manners* have been in to record an album and a single which features a version of the French can-can, with *Roger Lomas* taking production credits. *Cuban Heels* have been laying some album tracks, production care of *Banshee Steve Severin*.

Chipping Norton Studios continue to knock out some good material at their picturesque studio from home. *Duran Duran* recorded both their single and album there, which was engineered and produced by *Colin Thurston*. *Level 42* cut the single "Love Games" here and are still working on an album which is being produced by *Barry Hammond* and *Dick Plant*. Some names from the not too distant re-emerge in the shape of *Lindisfarne* and *Sniff n' the Tears* who are both working on albums. The studio is currently tied up with *Gerry Rafferty* who is laying tracks for a self-produced album. As a postscript they remembered that whirlwind *Vince Hill* blew in to record a double album which took a mere five days to lay down backing and vocal overdubs on some twenty-seven or so tracks.

In the wilds of **Inverness** the *Highland Recording Studio* have been attracting some diverse talent. The *Skids* have been in to record a single with *Bill Nelson* helping out on production, and *Dave Baker* engineering. *Comsat Angels* have cut a new single, produced and engineered by old friend *Peter Wilson*, and *Nazareth* have been doing some overdubs and mixing their single. One time *Uriah Heep* man *David Byron* has also been in to mix an album he cut at the *Old Smithy Studios* in *Worcester*. And I am told the *Mafia* have been in to cut a single (not *the mafia* I hasten to add, this lot have more musical

credentials), which *Allen Gorrie* of *Average White Band* produced, and once again *Dave Baker* engineered.

Smile Studios in **Manchester** have been busy with all manner of quite serious and not quite so serious projects. The now fully equipped 24 track studio gave *Mick Gannon* the dubious opportunity to record a single to honour the *Royal Wedding*, with *Steve Foley* owning up to the production on this already successful little departure. Quite a lot of the studio's time has been taken up by *Jenny Haan* who has been in to record an album, with *Steve* busy again on production. They've also been busy with a host of singles for the *Salford Jets*, *Ritzi*, *Zero Zero* and, gulp, comedian *Bernie Manning* and the *Ramblers* who have been cutting a follow up to "I'm Only A Poor Little Sparrow".

Out in the **Oxfordshire** countryside *The Manor* has been passing the time recording artists of varying degrees of infamy and obscurity. The Italian *Claudio Baglione* has been doing some album tracks, with production by *Jeff Westbury*. The *Skids* dropped in to record some tracks for an album which is now well into mixing. The studio has also been busy mixing tracks from *The Records*, French star *Valeri Le Grange* and *Judie Nylon*. The *Cuban Heels* seem to have been spreading their talent around the country and have been recording further tracks at the *Manor* with *John Leckie*. The *Manor Mobile* has been out and about recording some excellent live dates, amongst them *Leo Sayer* at *Manchester*, *Fats Domino* at *The Hammersmith Odeon*, *The Passions* at *The Venue*, the *Wembley Country Festival*, *XTC* at *The Hammersmith Odeon* and *Glen Campbell* down in *Cornwall*. ●

STUDIO
OF
THE
MONTH

TALENT STUDIOS

Oslo 6 Norway

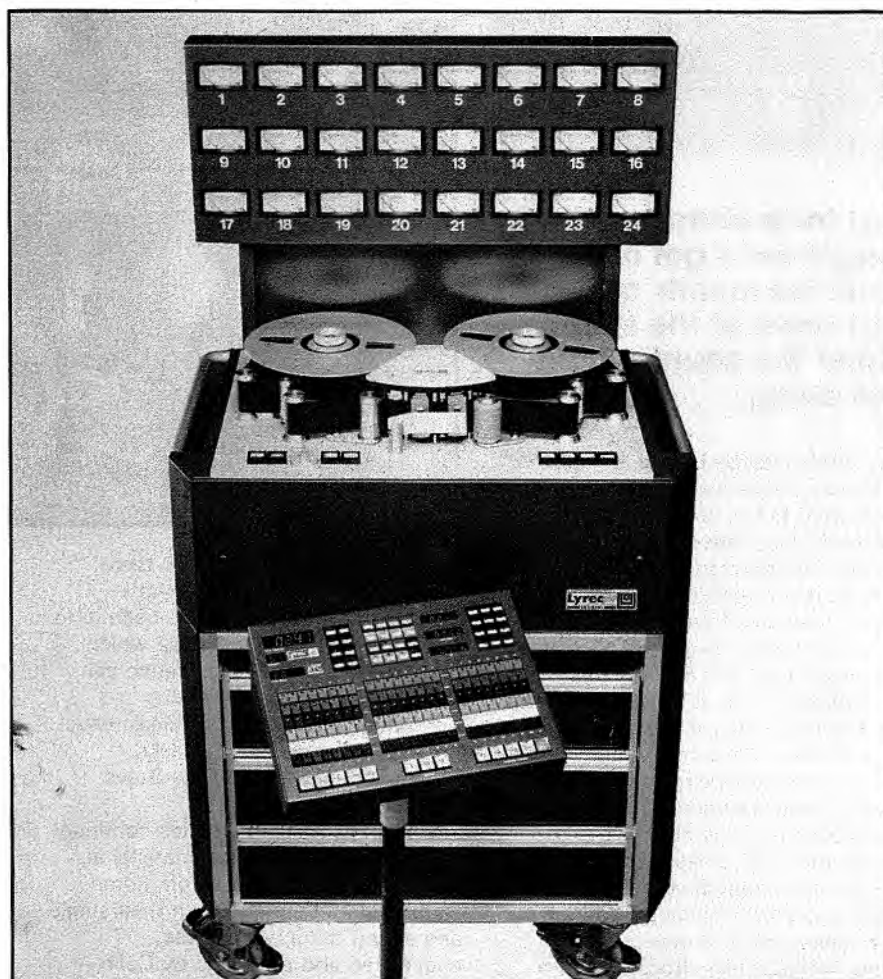
NORWAY MIGHT SEEM AN unlikely, out of the way location for a successful recording studio with an international reputation, but since its launch in Autumn 1975 the Oslo-based Talent Studios has built up an impressive track record which dispels the myth that Norwegians do little else but knit sweaters and jog.

Talent owes much of its renown outside Norway to a close link with Manfred Eicher's ECM record label. From its headquarters in Munich ECM handles the very best in contemporary jazz (eg Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, Jack De Johnette) and has become a byword for perfection, both in presentation and recording quality. Each year ECM record up to a dozen sessions at Talent: proof that the studio is consistently able to meet their very high standards.

A mile or so East of the centre of Oslo, the Talent Studios building has the long low-slung look of an engineering works, which is precisely what it was before Managing Director Rarve Figvaldsen took it over in 1974 and set about converting a vast empty shell into a fully functional studio.

The premises are in fact rented off Oslo City Council by the Talentproduksjon company, which also runs its own record label. As a result all the staff not only are experts on recording matters, but they also have plenty of knowledge about the consumer end of the market.

The day-to-day organisation of the studio is in the capable hands of Petter Hox, Studio Manager at Talent since January 1979. We met in reception, where an old HMV-type phonogram (the Talent Studios motif) stands in ironic contrast to the sophisticated



Some of the equipment in use at Talent Studios

techniques used inside. No language problems: everyone speaks flawless English, which makes life a whole lot easier.

Petter's description of the studio as "The Whale" puzzled me — until I saw the size of the place. The studio area is 270 square metres, in the form of an L-shape fitting round the control room.

The main section is six metres high — clearly designed for large ensemble work, whereas the smaller part of the L has a much lower ceiling. This is where ECM place their musicians as it gives the whole session a much more live feel.

With these two distinct sections, and with the use of screens in the

larger area, Talent is able to cope with a wide variety of musical set-ups from full scale orchestras to solo guitar work — and all directed from the central control room.

Pride of place instrumentally goes to the magnificent Steinway A grand piano: reputedly Keith Jarrett has fallen completely in love with it. The piano produces a pure clarity of sound which is a trademark of the ECM recordings. It is tuned twice a day during sessions to prevent the slightest loss in quality. Other instruments which can be rented per song or per day include another Steinway grand; an Arp Odyssey; organ with Leslie speaker; Fender Rhodes; Fender and Ovation guitars; a drum kit and various Fender, Music Man, London City and Traynor amps.

In keeping with the general feeling of spaciousness, the 60 square metre control room allows a lot of freedom to move around. Windows on two sides give full vision into the studio. Talent have stayed with the same mixing console since the very beginning: a British Helios desk with an Allison 65 K Programmer, 28 input channels with 4 section sweep equalizer and v.c.a. faders, 16 group outputs, 8 D.C. groupers, 24 channel track monitor and six echo or foldback send. The engineering staff have completely modified the original desk, changing to automation and putting in a totally new set of pots. The tape machines used are a Lyrec TR53 24-track, two MCI JH1-10 2-tracks and a couple of Studer A67 2-tracks. Noise reduction is via a Dolby M24 and four Dolby A361.

Additional equipment includes an EMT 140Q quadrophonic echo, a Roland space echo, Eventide harmoniser and instant flanger, Countryman phasers, an Aphex 602B aural exciter, Audio & Design and Urei compressor/limiters and an Inovonics 1/3 octave acoustic analyser. A Lexicon 224 digital reverb can be linked up with EMT plates and there's a superb 70 second delay obtainable on their Lexicon Delta-T digital machine. Petter ran a tape through the system, which sounded perfect, then let it hang for the full seventy seconds — it seemed to stay up for ever.

Downstairs from the studio/control room area there is a relaxation room done out with the usual taste Scandinavians display when it comes to interior design. Talent will provide lunch, and coffee and beer is available from the bar. Here I chatted to Jan Erik Kongshaug who joined Talent at the very beginning as engineer and helped plan the whole system.

With these two distinct sections, and with the use of screens in the larger area, Talent is able to cope with a wide variety of musical set-ups

Although he has now gone freelance in order to spend more time with his family up in Trondheim, he is still intimately connected with the studio: he engineers and produces records for the Talent record label (ranging from classical oboe music to Norwegian folk dance) as well as being the "official" ECM engineer.

He typifies the best of Talent Studios — affable, enthusiastic, modest and multi-talented. Modest: he dismisses American jazz guitarist Pat Metheny's description of him as "the greatest engineer in the world" by saying "typical American bullshit!" And multi-talented: he plays bass in a leading Norwegian jazz-rock band and is able to use his knowledge of performing to add to his engineering expertise.

Jan Erik is rightly proud of Talent Studios. He feels that the studio's acoustics play a major role in creating the crisp clear sound which typifies sessions recorded there. I asked him how they miked up the Steinway to ensure faithful reproduction: normally he uses two Neumanns inside the piano and possibly a couple of ambient mikes. However Jan Erik is starting to experiment with the Crown PSZ and is very excited by its potential, not only for the piano but for other instruments too.

Talent and ECM both have a reputation for working fast. Very fast. An album is usually recorded and mixed down in two or three days, and

that saves a lot of money. Jan Erik still remembers with amazement a duo session with pianist Chick Corea and vibes player Gary Burton. The recording session lasted just four hours: "Chick put some music in front of Gary and... vroom!" The engineers are able to set the levels almost immediately — no messing around for hours while they fiddle with the bass drum sound. Jan Erik, typically, has a different version: "All the musicians play so well, the original sound is so good, I don't need to do anything".

That speed, which according to Jan Erik is normal in Norwegian recording studios anyway, is complemented by the friendly atmosphere. One of the regular ECM musicians, drummer Jon Christensen, stressed that because Talent Studios was "like a big family" it was easy to forget the pressures of recording and that the general air of enthusiasm encourages above-average performances.

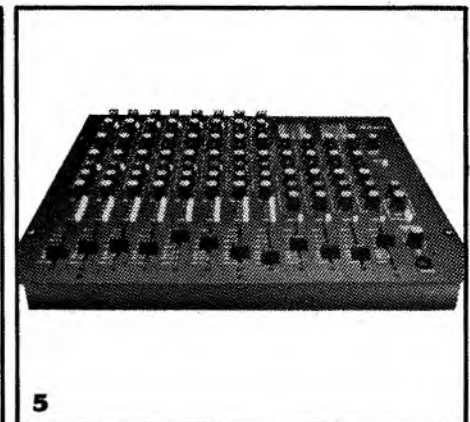
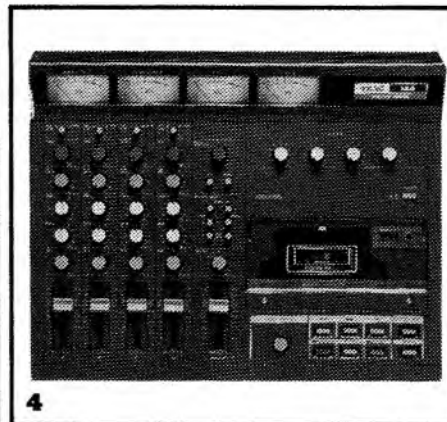
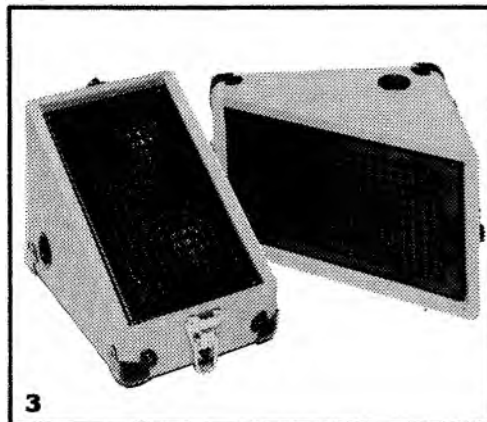
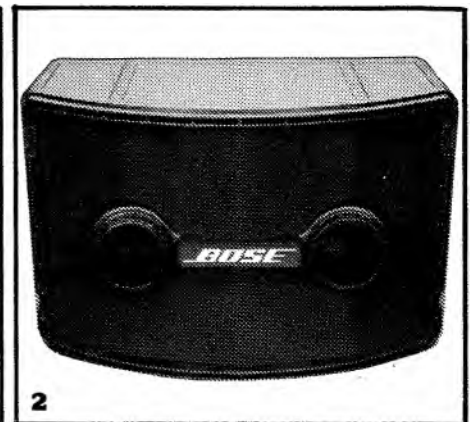
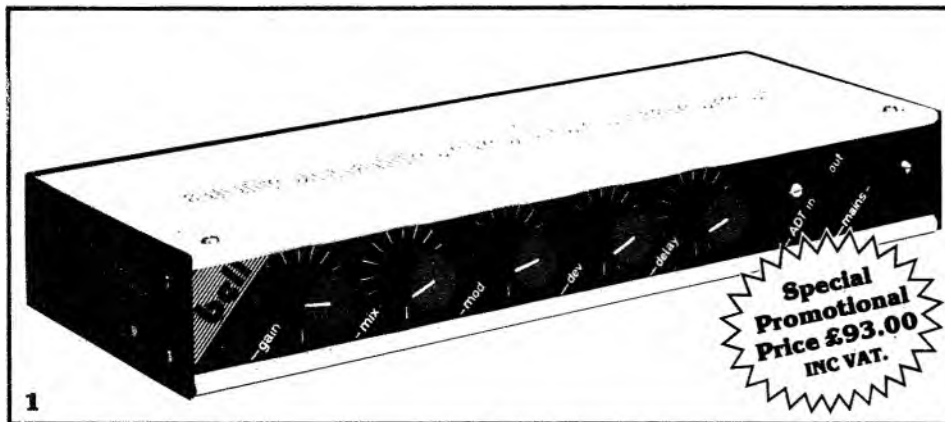
Visiting bands have no trouble gaining access to Talent. For a capital city Oslo is really tiny — no traffic problems — but nevertheless is serviced by the international Fornebu airport. The studio has its own parking lot a short distance from the premises, or there is a backyard for short-term parking. Petter will give advice on hotel accommodation; again as a capital city, Oslo has many hotels to choose from. One small word of advice: prepare for a shock when buying beer. In the centre of Oslo it can cost up to £2 a pint.

Talent Studio's price list is less of a shock. The Pound sterling/Krone exchange rate has been fluctuating recently, but currently the basic rate per hour for 24-track recording and mixdown is £45. Editing and copying in the editing room adds a further £20, and overtime £10-£12 depending on the time of week. As an example of instrument rentals the Steinway A grand costs £8 a song or £25 a day, while an Ovation acoustic would set you back £3 an hour or £8 for the whole day. Percussion instruments are free of charge. The Talent Studios phenomenon continues to grow as they increase their own record production (although this is mainly confined to Scandinavia) and as their fame spreads internationally. Frankly, one of the best advertisements for the studio is to listen to any of the many ECM albums recorded there over the past six years: the professionalism of the recording shows just what can be achieved at Talent. If you would like to contact Talent Studios, ring Petter Hox on Oslo (02) 67 95 40.

Philip Dodd

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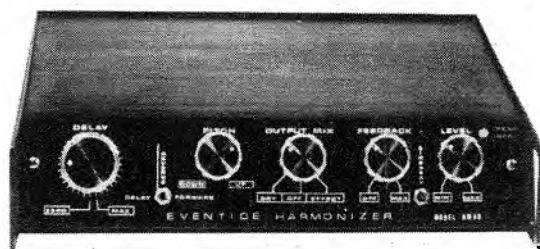
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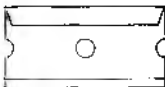


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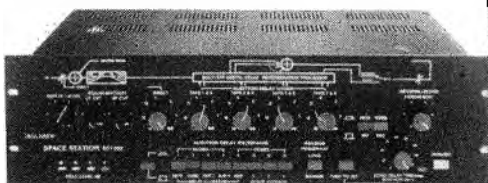


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THE ROLE OF THE PRODUCER

HAVING CARRIED A LONG running series of interviews with some of the best respected producers in the business, Recording World has decided to change tack slightly by changing the emphasis of these interviews. In this, the first of an intermittent series, Gideon Koppel discusses what production actually is, and finds his views at a variance with his interviewee — Muff Winwood, now head of A&R at CBS Records.

The making of a record is a commercialism, a technological development in the marketing of music. Within that industrial framework, recording is a very significant medium in itself. Because of the expense of professional recording studios, most artists are forced to turn to record companies for financial assistance, often in the form of recording contracts: the record companies select their clients on a wide range of different political and economic criteria.

A recording contract commits the artist to record exclusively within the company, and commits the company, in turn, to pay for a limited amount of recording costs: this is obviously only a basic part of what other legalities are contained within the contract. There is not normally any obligation for the record company to actually release the records.

This can lead to interesting acts being 'shelved' by a record company — that is to say, having paid for an artist to record material, the record company decide it is less economically viable to spend money on marketing that material, but better to use it on one of their more established signings.

Financially, the signed act is not that well looked after: a standard recording contract does not involve supporting an artist while he is building up a reputation. The money paid out on recording costs must be recouped before the artist receives any royalties, and finally those royalties are often insubstantial.

Publishing is another contractual bind the signed act has to contend with: the publishing company, on average, receiving some fifty percent of the separate publishing royalties,

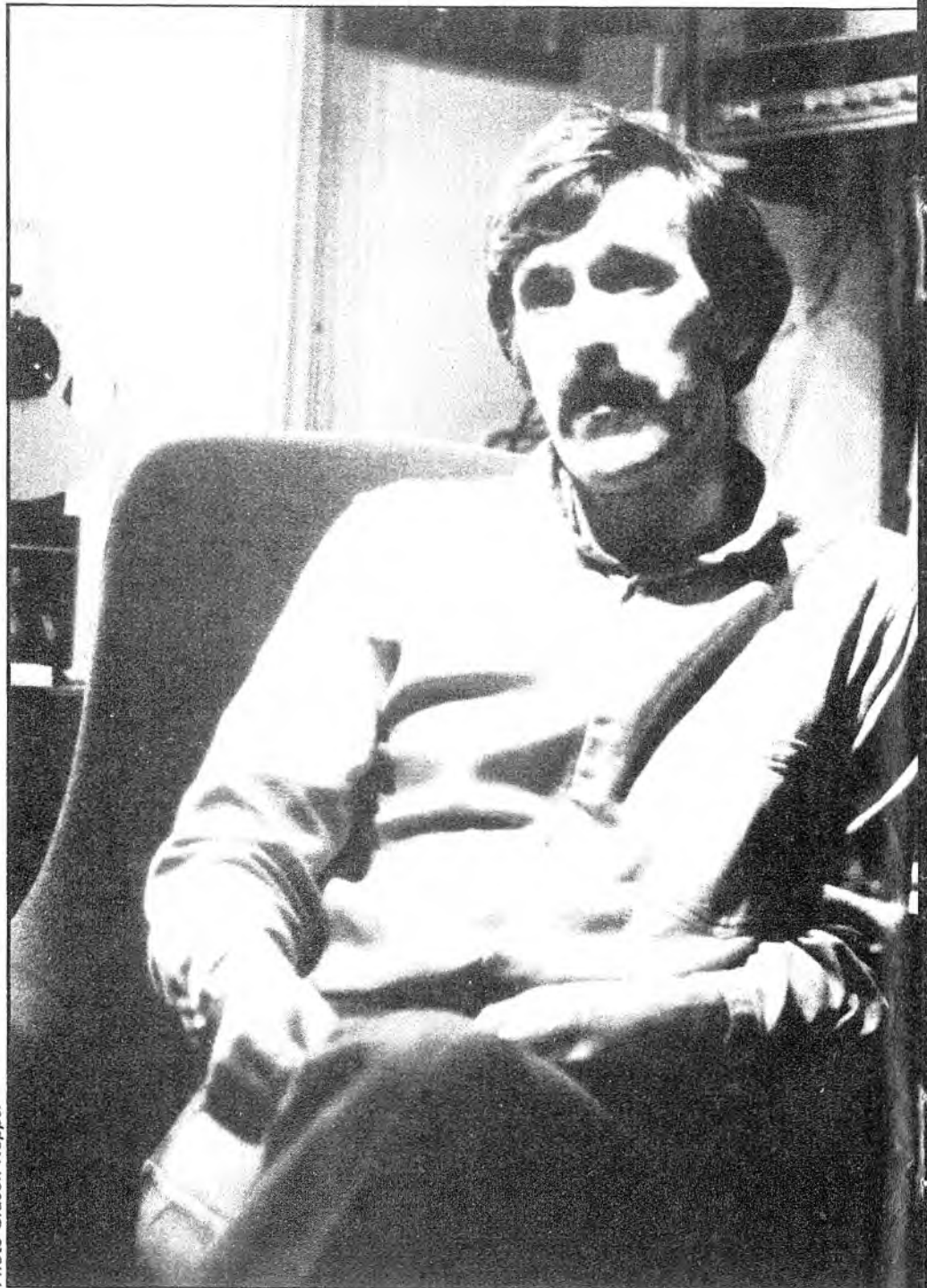


Photo Gideon Koppel

and the songwriter the other half. The issue of teamwork in producing a record is very important. The term 'producing' in the context of record making implies the function of 'The Producer' which is often a major misunderstanding. The production of a record is a joint effort, with the contributions varying according to the individuals involved.

This leaves open the question: "What is Production?" I see record production as a form of adaptation, how to help adapt an artist's music to the medium of recording in order that

it best represents the artist's aspirations. Recording music is taking a living, 'three dimensional' form and transferring and transforming it into an audible image. Given that premise, I see the producer as someone concerned with sounds and sound perspectives, and not someone who, with an objective attitude, manipulates the artist's musical progression to achieve a recording which, in his mind, is saleable.

It is interesting to note that jazz-based music very rarely involves an outside producer: usually, one of the



band's members or an engineer takes the credit. An engineer can use a mixing desk like a musical instrument, sympathetically highlighting the music. Good examples of this kind of sound production are: Dennis MacKay's work on Brand X's 'Unorthodox Behaviours', George Massenburg's production of Earth, Wind and Fire albums, and James Guthrie's production of the Movies' 'Bullets through the Barrier'.

This approach to production is rare, requiring, as it does, an understanding and real interest in music and recording, and not just the desire for

public acclaim and wallets full of money. Some producers with reputations for interesting and inventive productions achieved them by working initially with interesting and inventive artists, receiving the production credit off the back of those artists' talents, while contributing very little themselves. Another method of developing an artificially good reputation for production is by the use of a competent and imaginative engineer.

As the record company is normally the financial support for an artist's recording matters, it follows that they have a great deal of interest in who is chosen as producer.

Thus I made my way to CBS' A&R department to take up the question of a record company's views on production with Muff Winwood, now head of A&R there. Muff — Steve's brother for the uninitiated — was originally the bass player with the Spencer Davis Group in the sixties, before he joined manager Chris Blackwell who was setting up Island Records. As well as being both a musician and a company man, Muff has himself been officially credited as a record producer, with the first Dire Straits album as his best known work.

**Success,
my good friend,
is sales,
not musical quality**

"In '68 eight track recording was still around," he began, "and 16 and 24-track were still to come, and there were a lot of very fast changes in studios then: you could be out of the studio for a fortnight and a whole new method of recording would come in." . . . mmmmmmm . . .

"The producer, in those days and earlier, would have to do the production work prior to making the record: rehearsals had to be conducted such that all the relevant parts came to the front as you played live. Various instruments would be on one track, so the engineer had to mix them then and there. Everything had to get together musically to make the balancing as easy and as effective as possible. That style of recording affected the way a song was arranged — you'd never attempt to make a record like you would today.

"Studios in those days only enabled

you to play rock and roll, very forthright, very direct: the vocal lay over the top, the rhythm section played together to form a driving pattern, and there wasn't a lot of criss-crossing between two guitars."

I pointed out to Muff how he implied the importance of engineering within production:

"As head of A&R I have found the most successful producers don't know about engineering because that is not the essence of the producer."

"But," I asked, "what is success in terms of a record producer?"

"Success," he replied, "my good friend, is sales, not musical quality.

"We know, and I know, that there are certain types of producers that are good for certain types of music, and other producers that aren't. Some are good at making commercial singles, but not albums, and some vice versa. Some producers have a knack for getting good performances out of a group, but are no good at picking songs. . .

"Our job at A&R is to find the band a producer which can give them what they don't already have. Sometimes a producer can walk in and say, 'listen, do that as a single, and here is a song I have — try this.' If he does no more than that for the four weeks he works with them, spending the rest of the time on the telephone, or making the tea even, that might be enough for him to have more than paid his way. How many great, goal-scoring centre forwards work for the full ninety minutes? Very few."

Muff's analogy, however, doesn't work, because all centre forwards would have to train to have the potential for working the full duration of the match.

"A producer's job is a very simple one: he has to deliver to the record company a black piece of plastic. How he does that doesn't bother us as long as what he delivers is saleable, and has quality — commercially and artistically. His style of doing it doesn't matter.

There are some producers who, whenever you go down to the studio, are never there."

Muff expressed quite openly that a lot of 'cowboy' producers function with a measure of 'success' but was disinterested or unable to investigate the more qualitative aspects of record production. I still maintained the notion that record production should be the linkage between two 'mediums' — music and recording. In a future issue of IM&RW I'll report on my search for an opinion that supports my own.

Gideon Koppel

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TEST

PSE Studio Reverb

CONTINUING MY TREK THROUGH the lower cost reverb systems of the world, I come to one of the home grown variety. The PSE reverb also has the distinction of being probably the lowest cost unit that I shall be investigating. The reverberation medium is a spring line with a single input but separate left and right outputs to give a form of 'stereo' reverb. PSE describe the unit as being suitable for studio, live or home applications and at £195 all these uses are certainly financially feasible. PSE are the manufacturing side of the Music Laboratory who are a recording supply company based in London.

The PSE reverb takes the format that we have come to expect from even the cheapest recording equipment — 19 inch rack mounting with all the controls on the front panel which is 3½ inches high and in a brushed finish with a metallic blue colour. The front to back depth excluding the knobs is 7¼ inches.

The controls are very straight forward, being from left to right, input gain, dry signal output and separate controls for left and right reverb levels. To the left of the input gain control there is a small VU meter to indicate input level. This is positioned after the input gain control and with a '0 VU' input to the reverb, the meter reads zero for a setting of the input gain at 3 on a scale of 0-10. The meter is not a

true VU meter but certainly provides a good clear indication of potential overload which with a reverb is quite important as the distortion produced is not always very noticeable particularly when mixing. The reverb does have a lot of gain in hand for use with low level signals and should be able to be matched with most other equipment.

The dry signal output control adjusts the amount of 'straight through' signal appearing in both the output channels. This control is useful where the reverb is used without a mixer or with a mixer that has insufficient facilities to mix the reverb with the main signal on the mixer itself. I certainly prefer to see the separate controls for reverb and dry signal rather than the all too common 'Mix' control which a lot of manufacturers are using where one control balances between reverb and dry signal. The facility of separate left and right output levels is also something which I consider to be a very useful feature such as when used on a solo instrument, the amount of reverb returned to left and right will give the instrument a position in the stereo spread if sufficient is used, or the reverb may be returned principally to the opposite side of the stereo which is also very effective.

The input and output sockets are unbalanced standard jack sockets which are on the front panel as well as being duplicated on the rear. The mains power switch is a toggle type and an indication that power is applied is given by the VU meter illumination. The mains lead is fixed and leaves the rear of the chassis just below the externally mounted fuse holder.

Internal construction is very neat with all wiring secured in looms and kept well away from the high voltage areas. All the electronics are PCB mounted with all IC's on sockets. The mains transformer is placed inside a die-cast box to shield the electronics from any unwanted pickup. The light in the VU meter is just about accessible without dismantling the meter.

The spring assembly itself consists

of two frames of three springs each, placed back to back and mounted side on. This gives a total of six springs, one of the larger arrays certainly in this price range. The complete assembly is then suspended from the chassis by four small springs at each end.

When assessing the performance of a reverb system it has to be said that it is largely a matter of taste as to which type sounds better within comparative price bands but it can also be said that particularly in the lower priced models a higher price does not always mean a proportionately high performance. Bearing these factors in mind what kind of performance could we expect from a modestly priced unit such as the PSE?

Well in some areas I found its performance surprisingly good. The spring assembly suspension effectively isolated the unit from external noise and knocks — the terror of spring line reverb systems — although low frequency noise did create a slight rumble in the system indicating that a little bit of care should be taken with positioning the reverb before using it in high volume surroundings. The response with transient signals was also good although a slight trace of 'pinging' could be heard around the more extreme examples of percussive signals.

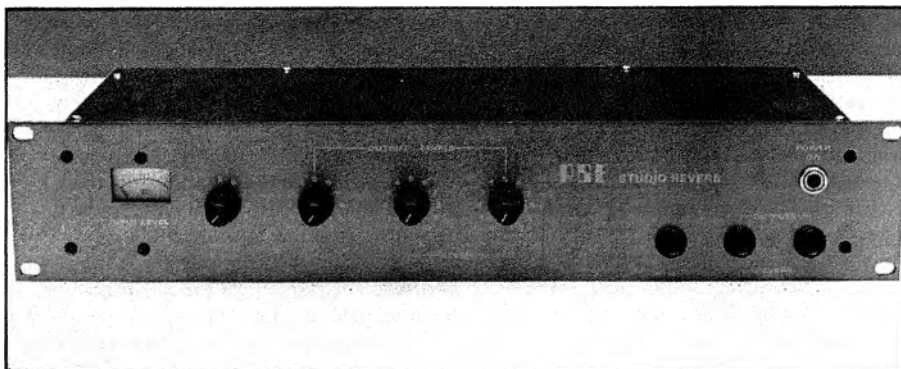
The reverb signal is very smooth in character and when used at low levels behind the dry signal is very effective indeed. With higher levels of reverb mixed with the dry signal the shortcomings of the PSE become more noticeable. The reverberant signal has a lot of low middle frequency energy and while not exactly booming it does muddy the signal.

A large improvement in the results can be achieved if the output can be equalised to remove some of the problem frequencies which may be achieved on a mixing console. If you use large amounts of reverb then tying up one or two equalisers for treating the output of the reverb does not make the PSE quite so cheap.

Summary

At this point we must reflect on the price of the PSE reverb — RRP £209 inc VAT — and say that while it has certain shortcomings they have to be looked at in context — an audio version of the Mini and Rolls syndrome. In terms of value for money the PSE reverb is superb and bearing in mind the problems of all low cost reverb systems, certainly worth giving it a spin as it may fulfil your requirements — if so why pay more?

Keith Spencer-Allen





SOUNDCRAFT SCM 381-16 Multi-Track Recorder

SOUNDCRAFT MAGNETICS ARE AN associated company of Soundcraft Electronics who manufacture mixing consoles such as the Series 800 reviewed in the June issue of IM&RW. The first machines made by Soundcraft were 8 track using the accepted standard of 1" tape. Later a 16 track was added also on 1" tape which was equivalent to the standard being used by Teac in machines such as the A3340 with 4 tracks on ¼" tape. More recently a beefed-up version of this machine has been introduced with several additional features as well as completely standard 2" operation for 16 or 24 track use. The machine under review here though is the SCM 381-16 which is a 16 track 1" machine, although in general layout and operation it is fairly similar to the 2" machines.

One of the reasons behind the development of the 16 track on 1" format was cost, coupled with the development of better quality, high level tapes and improved recording heads. This meant that it became possible to produce reasonable quality recordings with a track width under half that of the accepted professional standard. The major cost savings were in the transport where motors and the capstan technology could be less heavy duty but perhaps more importantly there was a continued saving in the cost of the tape which is half that of 2" tape.

The performance of machines using this standard has continued to improve. Although it does not yet equal that of the full professional standard, it can produce good results if certain operational points are kept in mind. Noise reduction systems can dramatically improve the performance

of this standard but for the purpose of this review we are considering just the straight machine. It should also be remembered that a 24 track recorder operating on 2" tape has only a marginally greater track width than this unit.

The SCM 381-16 is very compact with dimensions of 21 ½" wide, 15 ¾" deep and 20 ¼" high to the top of the head block. To a large degree this compactness in size has been achieved by removing the power supplies and channel controls from the chassis of the machine. The power supply is a rack mounting unit with lights to show the individual outputs are operative for the AC outputs of the feed motor and take up motor as well as the DC output voltages of +5v, +17v, -17v and +24v. Recessed slide switches enable the unit to be operated on 100v, 120v, 220v or 240v mains voltages.

The transport is very simple and uncluttered. The tape spools are held by a substantial retainer that screws into the hub and is tightened until the spool is held firmly. Tape leaving the feed spool passes under a tape tension guide and then on the inside of a flutter roller, an arrangement that somehow looks wrong but seems to function well. The tape then passes through a guide post as it enters the headblock and over two tape lifters that hold the tape away from the heads (except in the play and edit modes). On leaving the headblock via the guide it passes between the capstan and pinch roller, under the grooved motion-sense roller and inside the motion sense wrap arm before passing onto the take up spool. The head screen assembly is a free standing unit which may be removed from the deck simply by pulling it up giving full access for editing and head cleaning etc.

Removing the top cover of the head block exposes the allen key adjustments for azimuth, zenith, height and rotation for each head. The heads are mounted from above onto the headblock which is then fixed to the deck by the two posts which also double as the headblock guides.

The capstan and reel motors mount directly onto the underside of the deck plate which is an accurately machined aluminium ½" plate. Internal access is by releasing the deck catch and simply lifting the front of the deck which is hinged at the rear. This can be done with reels still in place. It is held in position by two friction support arms. The upper panel of the rear of the machine also swings down allowing very easy access to the back of the

deck and all the transport alignment electronics.

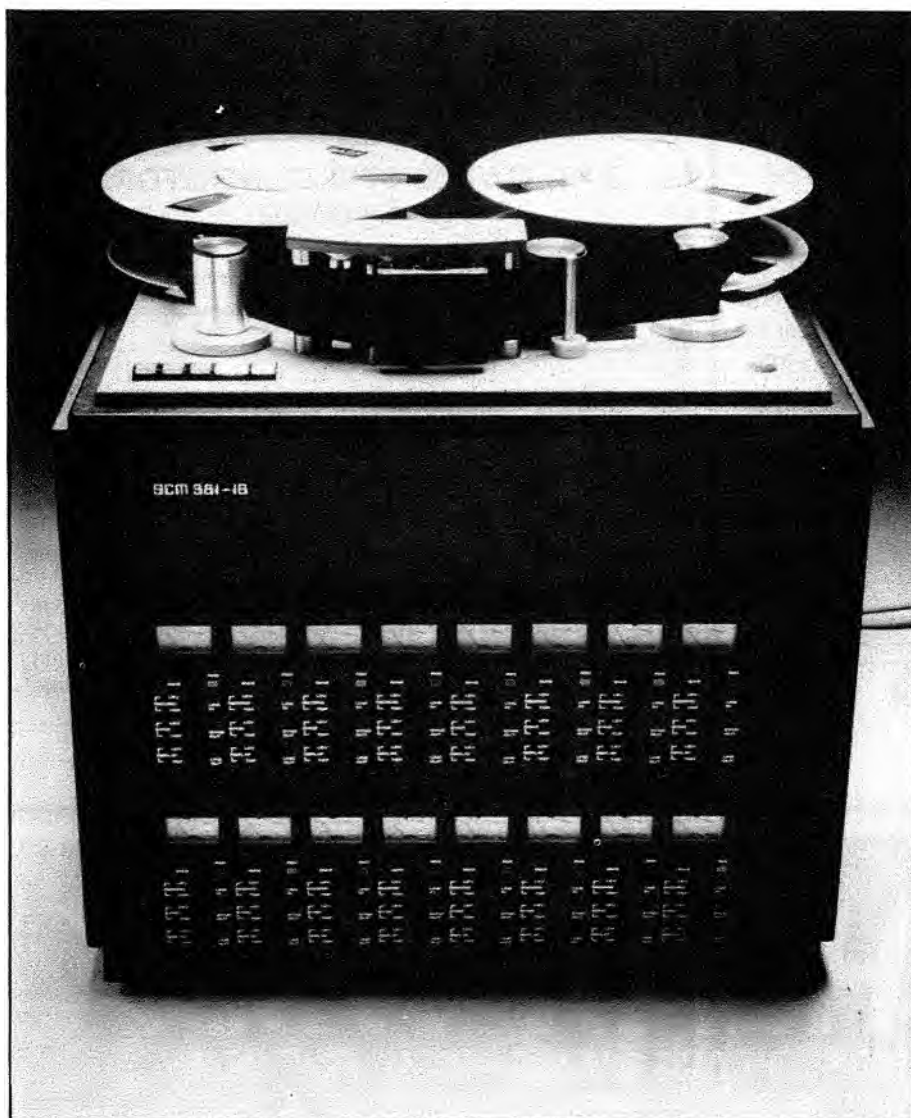
The only controls to appear on the deck are the standard motion controls of fast forward, rewind, play, stop and edit. The edit function can only be entered from stop. It applies tension to the reels and defeats the tape lifters so that the tape can be 'rock and rolled' to find edit points. The edit mode is cancelled by pushing the button again. The controls are fully logic controlled and there are no restrictions on their use.

The tape machine is supplied with only one speed and equalisation, in this case 15 ips NAB, although there are others available to order. There is however a versatile varispeed function on the remote which I will come to shortly. The rewind time for 2,400ft was 90 seconds which is good although rewinding under the search-for-zero mode is much slower taking 150 seconds for the same distance. The wind quality was good.

The remote panel is housed in a free standing cabinet although it may be mounted in another suitable place. All the transport commands except edit are duplicated although they are overridden by the deck controls. There is a digital readout in minutes and seconds with full search-to-zero capability which I found to be very accurate — always within 6" of the zero point which is under half a second in tape time so who's complaining?

The remote channel controls are arranged around an LED matrix with rows for line, sync and replay times sixteen. A master button will link all sixteen channels to the same monitor mode. Individual selection is by pushing, for example, the line button and then the channel select buttons that you want in that mode and so on, with the settings displayed on the LED matrix. A separate row of sixteen ready buttons flash when selected for recording. Dropping into record is by pushing the record button at the same time as the play. Dropping out is by just pushing the record button again or cancelling the ready mode. While in the record mode further channels may be placed in record by simply entering them into the ready mode. The search-to-zero may be set to enter the play mode when zero is reached and this particular machine would also do the potentially dangerous and enter record at zero if selected, although I understand that this is not standard and was set previously on this machine for a special requirement.

The varispeed appears at the far end of the panel and is selected by a large



illuminated button. The separate coarse and fine controls will give a range of +15% to -50%.

The only remaining feature of the remote is the mute defeat. The audio outputs of the machine are muted in the fast wind modes to prevent damage to associated equipment. This can sometimes however make the location of points on the tape difficult if there are no timings on the tape. The mute defeat button does just that, allowing you to hear cues from the tape in the replay mode.

The electronics for the channels are mounted in two 19" racks below the transport. Each module is removable from the frame by unscrewing the top and bottom retaining screw and pulling out. All the electronics are mounted on the single card. Relocating the card into the multiway connector is aided by guide runners. Each module has a VU meter or what appears to be a VU meter which switches with the audio. Soundcraft say that the meter in fact has peak reading characteristics and

should really be used for alignment use only and not used as a recording reference. Other alignment controls include line in level, sync out level, line out level, bias, top and level adjustments for record, sync and replay modes. There is a record light which also flashes when the track is in the ready mode.

The input and output connections are at the rear. This machine has two multiway connectors for the audio, another for the remote connection as well as power supply connection sockets. Additionally there is a separate unbalanced jack socket for line in, line out and sync out for each channel. Very usefully this machine has separate independent sync outputs. I tested the machine with Ampex 406 tape which is probably one of the most likely tapes to be used with this machine. I found the performance all round to be quite satisfactory. I had no complaints about the operation at all and the machine behaved itself very well particularly as

it was not checked out before being put to use, just unpacked and away.

There were two points however. With this standard narrow track width there is often the problem of adjacent tracks breaking through in the sync mode and this can become quite a problem in the case of trying to mix down several tracks to an adjacent track. With 16 tracks and a little forward planning this should not be necessary to do and Soundcraft make this quite clear in their manual. There is a modification that can be made apparently which entails reducing the bandwidth of the separate outputs which then reduces the problems that this procedure causes. The Soundcraft is no worse than other machines of this format and in fact rather better than some others I have used.

The second point is that although drop-ins are silent there is sometimes a very small click on the drop out. There are very few machines which don't make a drop-out noise of some description. This should not present too much of an operational problem to the user but should be borne in mind.

Although the machine did not require an alignment as it remained very stable, I did make some checks on the tolerance to which it was possible to align the machine. I was quite surprised to find that the replay performance was held easily within +0 and -2VU and the sync performance likewise although the hf performance did drop on some modules to -4 which is still creditable. The sync performance is however rather more noisy than the replay mode and Soundcraft recommend the use of sync only where necessary.

The machine comes with a very comprehensive manual detailing use, installation fault finding and servicing, mechanical drawings, circuit diagrams, parts lists and the original factory measurements on the machine.

The SCM 381-16 is certainly a useful little machine and at quite a reasonable price which seems to represent good value for what you get. It's easy to use and interfaces well with the Series 800 but I can see no reason for it not being equally usable with any multitrack desk. Its compact size is another plus, making it easy to transport and my short time of using it suggests that it should be capable of taking the odd light knock. The price of this machine is about a thousand pounds less than the equivalent 2" version so you have to decide whether the extra is justified for a slightly improved performance and full studio compatibility. I'd be quite happy with this one.

K S-A

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DON RANDALL

The Man Behind The Name

IT MIGHT SEEM, SOMETIMES, THAT we concentrate too hard on the products of the industry, to the virtual exclusion of its personalities. So, rather than scrutinising the Randall range of amplifiers — preferring to leave that for a future Soundcheck — we intend taking a look at the man whose name adorns those amplifiers.

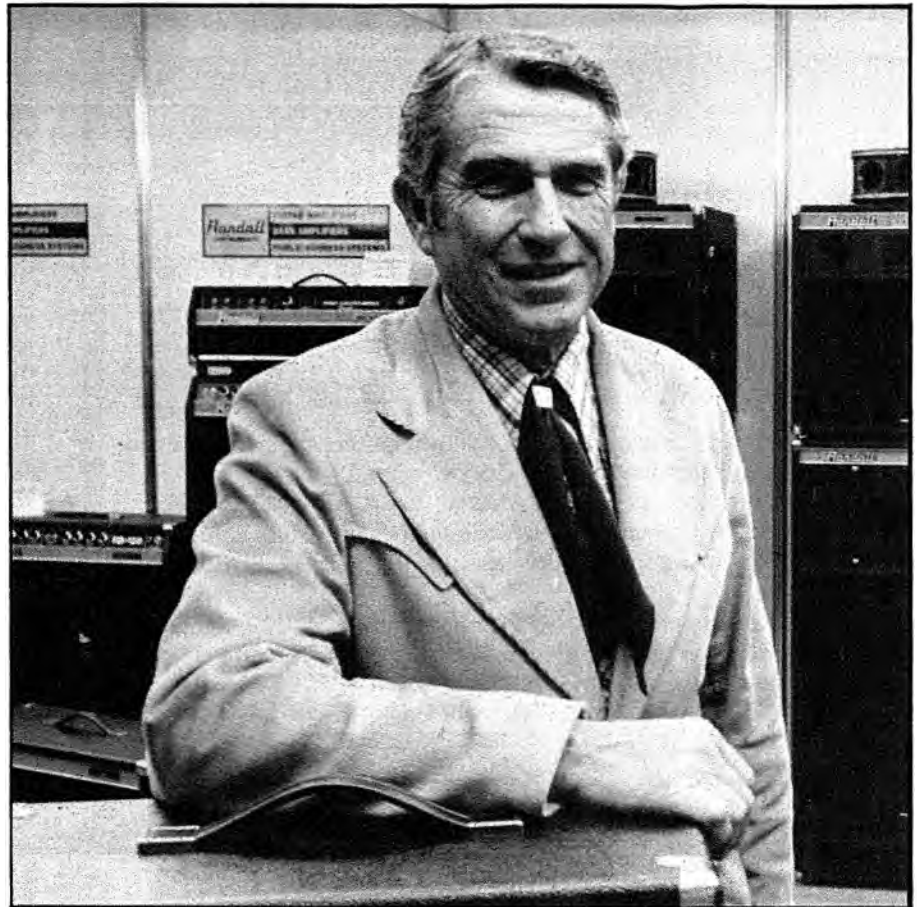
Don Randall is the epitome of the warmly successful American businessman. Craggy, sun-beaten, dressed in an immaculately tailored suit and hand-tooled leather boots, Don Randall wouldn't seem out of place in 'Dallas' — except that he's got more character than the entire Ewing family, friends and enemies.

Dinner with Don, in a French restaurant in the heart of Covent Garden, is an amusing, entertaining and enjoyably informative occasion. But maybe you're thinking, 'Who's this Don Randall?' Don's career has been closely in tune with the development of the musical instrument industry — from Fender guitars, to a seat of power in the gigantic CBS corporation, to a successful electronics company of his own.

If there is one particular moment in his life which shall guarantee his own contribution to rock music, it is the moment which inspired him to name a new guitar the 'Telecaster'.

Don had started his rise through the instrument industry when he became passionately interested in electronics at high school in Santa Ana, California which eventually led to him setting up his own radio repair shop. It was way back then in the '30s that he had the fortuitous meeting.

"I recall that Leo Fender was one of the regular customers," he remembered over dinner. "Leo had a repair shop of his own and I supplied him with parts. We became very close." Shortly afterwards Don joined the military, and found himself as



communications chief for the preflight school outside Santa Ana. "I didn't even have to leave home," he chuckled.

After the war he returned to manage the shop he had owned previously but found that he had more in common with Leo Fender with whom he had re-established contact. He left the radio company to set up Fender Sales to market all Fender products.

"I could see the possibilities in the music business because we had a priority product: it had a name, a distinctive look, and nobody else was selling it!"

Don's marketing skills flourished, while Leo researched, designed and manufactured. Don hit on the name Broadcaster for the new design, but Gretsch had already registered the name: "I got to thinking: television was just coming into its prime then, so I decided: 'what the heck: Telecaster'. And then the stratosphere was one notch above television, so for the next guitar we came up with the name Stratocaster. Our first beginner's amp became Champ, based on the principle that no-one wants to be a beginner.

After you have a few, why, names just kind of fall in line."

The rest of that is now history!

Don has another claim to fame: turning the valves in amplifiers upside down to hang from the top. "That was simple: musicians liked to throw their leads, foot pedals and even their lunches in the back of an open cab, and of course tubes got broke and everything. Seems logical then to hang 'em upside down, out of the way."

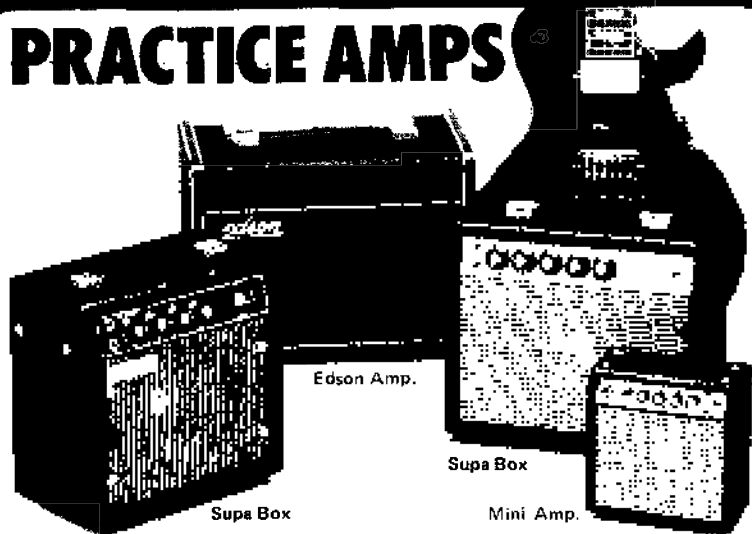
In the mid '50's Don bought a magazine entitled Music Studio News which changed name (again, one of Don Randall's suggestions) to the now legendary 'Fretts' magazine, a precursor to (and, some say, still better than) the contemporary Guitar Player.

Then the multinational CBS Corporation came on the scene. Leo Fender left to pursue his own ideas, but Randall stayed on, for a taste of the real big corporate life. He told tales of the hierarchy within such an organisation which indicated his down-to-earth no-bullshit approach to the industry may not have gone down too well in the hallowed confines of such a

continued page 136

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Normal price £160.00 **SALE PRICE £125.00**

JECI ANALOG ECHO



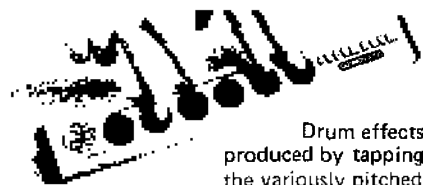
BBD Delay system with delay time of between 30 and 200 m.secs. Reverb unit is the spring type, and can be used separately or with echo. Two inputs, each with volume controls, plus tone, reverb, echo, repeat, and delay.
Normal price £176 **SALE PRICE £140**

DE-1 ECHO



Analogue Echo with BBD delay system, maintenance free use. Balance control gives a variable mixture of Echo and direct sounds. Delay time is 30-200 milliseconds. It produces acoustic echo delay effects.
Normal price £85 **SALE PRICE £75.00**

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DEALER OF THE MONTH

MACARIS Charing Cross Road, London

ONE THING IS CERTAIN AND that is that Macari's will need no introduction to any reader of this magazine. Macari's are one of the longest established music shops in London and over many years has witnessed great changes and growth in the music industry. At one time there were four Macari shops. Three of these, for one reason or another are no longer in existence — the last one, *Macari's Musical Exchange* being demolished early last year to make way for a shopping complex.

The shop at 122 Charing Cross Road retains the old familiar atmosphere with friendly bouncy staff, managed by Joe Macari himself. However, it was Joe's brother and partner Larry to whom IM spoke when we went along one day last month.

The shop's staff are all young and all accomplished musicians, each specialising in certain areas of sales. Gail Thompson, a very chirpy young lady is principally a saxophonist. Having played abroad with various orchestras and currently working in West End shows and doing a certain amount of radio work, Gail is obviously very experienced and knows what she is talking about. She also plays the flute and clarinet, and therefore takes care of the woodwind department.

Guitarist Bill Leisgange — in Larry's opinion "a terrific guitarist, I rate him as one of the best in the country" — supervises guitar sales. Having been raised in Austria, Bill is a fluent speaker of German and comes in very useful with their many German speaking customers. He also works for the BBC World Service broadcasting German rock shows, and is thus well up on the current music scene — an essential requirement for somebody selling instruments to musicians today.

Macari's synthesizer and keyboard specialist is one Guy Philipson who also plays the guitar very well and, incidentally, speaks very good French. Languages are very important in a store like this as they have a lot of international custom, and with French, German and Italian at their finger tips they can't go far wrong. The foreign custom is not just during the summer tourist season as one would imagine, but all the year round. Many customers make the trip to England for the sole purpose of buying musical instruments.

In spite of the recession in the music industry and the loss of the big



Musical Exchange shop Macari's seem to be doing record business at the moment. One of the reasons for this must be their long established reputation for service and quality goods and advice. Overheads are very high as they must be for a big shop in such a central position, but the Macaris think that it is worth every penny to be easily accessible and they welcome all passing trade — they even have off-duty actors dropping in just to have a nose about between rehearsals or what have you. The competition is fierce as they are by no means the only music shop in the city centre and these days the profit margins are the lowest they have ever been in an attempt to offer the cheapest possible prices. To this end they go in for a lot of bulk cash buying and also importing from overseas and selling direct, which means that they can impose the minimum mark up on trade prices.

If you are looking for second hand gear this is the place to go. An enormous percentage of Macari's sales is in used equipment and instruments. Repairs are farmed out to various expert repairers all situated within a quarter of a mile of the shop. Larry explained their thinking on servicing and repairs; if you want a decent repair you are going to have to wait for it. A rush job is by definition a shoddy one, and if you want the best guy to do the repairs you are going to have to wait your turn. It is worth borrowing something to tide you over when you know that your own instrument or amplifier, whatever, is going to be seen to properly. Really difficult electronic repairs may end up going to the company's factory where there are about six engineers of various descriptions hard at work designing new gadgets for the Macaris' manufacturing companies Eurotec and Colorsound. There is a strong link between the manufacturing companies and the shop whereby any new ideas are taken to the shop to be shown to interested customers in order to get valuable feedback about its relevancy and worth. At the moment they are in

the process of developing some new pedals and these will soon find their way to the shop for demonstration, and if the musicians think they could be better, they will be taken back to the factory for a rethink. Larry feels that this is the only way to find out what the guy in the street needs.

Although the shop is big and is full of guitars, keyboards, wind instruments, amplifiers and accessories etc, there is still a problem with storage space and regular visitors to the shop will have realised that there is a very fast turnover of stock resulting in almost daily deliveries from the factory where most of the storage takes place. The only main thing that is missing is a drum section and this is simply because there is not enough room, and it is far better to go without than to try to do something in which you can only half succeed.

Over the years they have been able to witness changing trends in the music world including the increasingly intriguing developments in synthesizer technology with the earliest monophonic synths taking something of a back seat these days. There has also been a great increase in interest in saxes and programmable rhythm units. The guitar industry has also experienced great changes from the days when Fender and Gibson were the only names that could sell. Nowadays with the introduction of quality goods from abroad, especially Japan, the guitar business has exploded into a large intriguing world. There has also been a change in the amp market with bands going for smaller combos, preferring to mike them up with big PA systems. All in all Larry Macari feels that today's musicians are far more discerning than those he sold instruments to in the early days of their business.

So, if you want to visit a shop where the staff can draw on a wealth of experience and expert knowledge, and offer extensive stock and friendly advice, Macari's should be first stop on your list. ●



corporation. Nevertheless, his time there was significant and successful. While with CBS he oversaw the acquisition of Rogers Drums, and Electro Music. Eventually, however, after five hard years Don and CBS came to a mutual agreeable separation. He couldn't stay idle. "Heck," he

grinned, "I asked myself why shouldn't I do what I know best and what I like best?"

The result is Randall Instruments Inc. which now has some 65 plus employees, 300 suppliers, and 750 dealers in 29 countries. He's still in the name game, too, for while he helps to

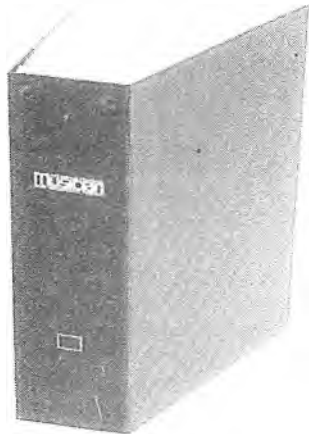
design the amplifiers and PA systems, he hands out the names as well -- the Commander and Switchmaster being recent ones.

Don talks in a mid-Western drawl that punctuates his sentences and emphasises precisely the points he's making. He's a direct and honest man, who has a unique knowledge of the instruments industry. Even now he says, "I have enjoyed immensely all the people with whom I've worked -- competitors, customers, and the people who surrounded me. As far as I am concerned, many of them are my closest friends."

We said at the beginning that perhaps we look too hard at the products of the industry: it seems, however, that if one looks at the man behind this name, one finds a reflection of the products with which he has been associated in a long career in the business. Having met him, it's no surprise to me to find he's every bit as professional and purposeful as his products. Don Randall? -- A pleasure.

TS

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TRADE NEWS



SUNN EQUALISER

A new 10 band graphic equaliser, the 4120, has recently entered the line-up of Sunn's range of amplifiers, cabs and related equipment. The 4120 has two identical channels featuring 15dB cut or boost at ten ISO centre frequencies, a level control with a 40dB range, dual LED level sensing, balanced and unbalanced inputs, and a bypass switch that completely disconnects all electronics from the signal path which allows level matching between the equalised and unequalised signal.

Claimed specifications are high: S/N ratio at -92dB (ref 1vrms), THD less than 0.05% from 20Hz to 20kHz at $+22\text{dBm}$, slew rate greater than 60 volts per microsecond, IMD less than 0.03%, and frequency response $+0-3\text{dB}$ is 2Hz to 200kHz.

FM ACOUSTICS 240 PREAMP

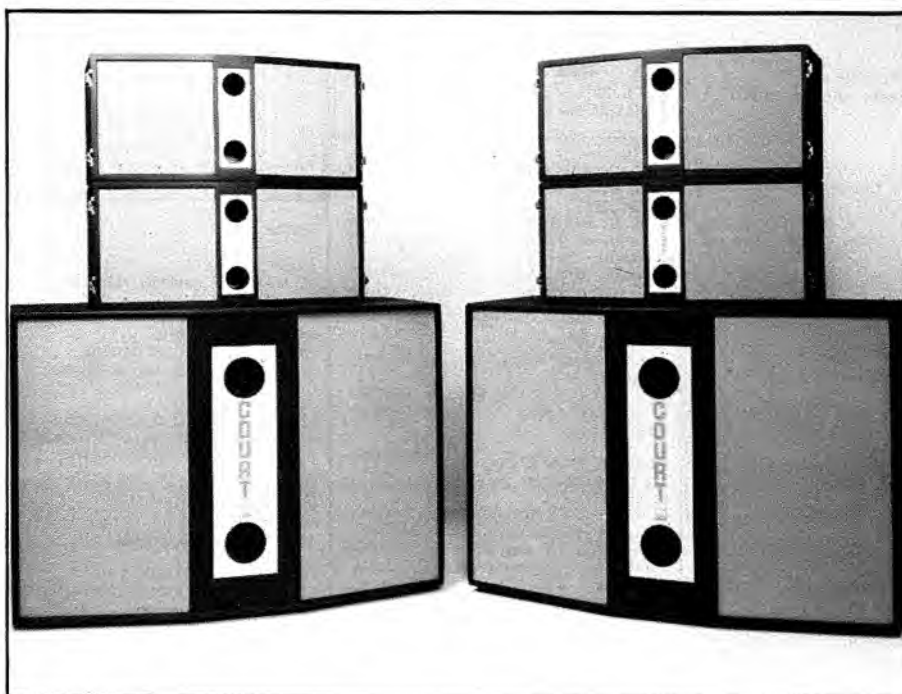
FM Acoustics, based in Switzerland, have introduced a new preamplifier with a mouthfull of a name! To give it its full title, it is the FM 240 Thermo-

Quad-A-Stage Reference Preamplifier. FM say that the name 'Thermo-Quad-A-Stage' indicates that 'new techniques and concepts' have been applied to its design and construction.

There are five single modules of which each is individually adjusted, and includes four thermally connected Class A amplifiers. Each unit is hand-built and 'burnt in' for at least 50 hours before spending another two hours on a shake-table!

Due to the company's extremely time consuming production and selection process, only relatively small quantities of FM products are ever manufactured.

An interesting part of the FM company philosophy — as an aside — is a statement which reads "technicians proved that present means of measuring audio equipment do not necessarily reflect the musical relevance of a product." Also, on the specification sheet for the amp is a rider which reads "Please bear in mind that 'specs' alone will not tell you much about the true value of a product". Interesting, yes? Probably worth further investigation so watch this space!



COMPACT MODULAR PA FROM COURT

The PROFLEX system from Court Acoustics has already made 'secret' moves towards publicity — at least within the business — and although a launch is planned very soon in conjunction with a major 'name' company the system is worthy of a brief mention here: in the not too distant future the magazine will be taking a closer look at the Court operation. Proflex Modular PA systems — of which there are four basic modules — are the culmination of over a decade of involvement and research into the problems of cost effective high quality sound systems. Court have aimed at achieving the twin goals of compact size and maintained high quality performance.

There is insufficient space here to go into any detail — as stated, that will happen in the near future — but IM's editor was treated to a private listening and reports that any band in the market for a compact PA system should hold back a while from taking a final decision.

NEW CONDENSER MICROPHONES FROM SHURE

Shure Electronics have announced the introduction of the SM85 hand-held vocal microphone which, they claim, provides "performance qualities capable of handling the most demanding broadcast, recording and on-stage requirements". The SM85 is said to be especially suitable for applications requiring wide frequency response, low distortion characteristics, very low RF susceptibility, and reliable operation over a wide range of temperature and humidity extremes. The mike features an integral multistage pop filter, a midrange low frequency roll off, and an effective internal shock mount for reduced handling noise.

Shure go on to make some high claims for this new microphone which, judging by past experience of their products, will most likely turn out to be totally verifiable so if Shure could make sure that our consultant Ken Dibble receives a review model we'll gladly check it out. The SM85, supplied with an accessory foam windshield and swivel adaptor, has a nominal list price of £129.20 plus VAT. Further information from Shure Electronics Ltd., Eccleston Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent. Tel: (0622) 59881.

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★ STUDIO GUIDE ★

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Telephone Rickmansworth (Std 09237) 72907

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p/h	per hour	Comp. Mix	Computer Mixing Facility
p/d	per day	d-1	Disc to tape
D	Dolby	Q	Quad
tf	Transfer facilities	OTC	Overtime charge
R-R	Reel to reel	M	Mono
St	Number of Studios	S	Stereo
CP	Copying	fcf	Fully coated film
tba	to be advised	VS	Video Studio
Ka	keyboards available	AC	Accommodation
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SL	Stage Lighting
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Di	Disco
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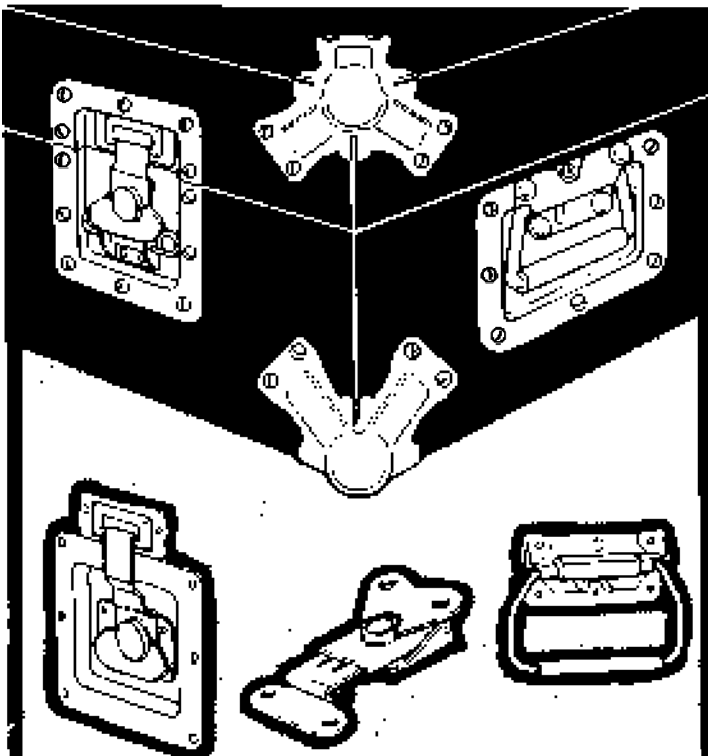
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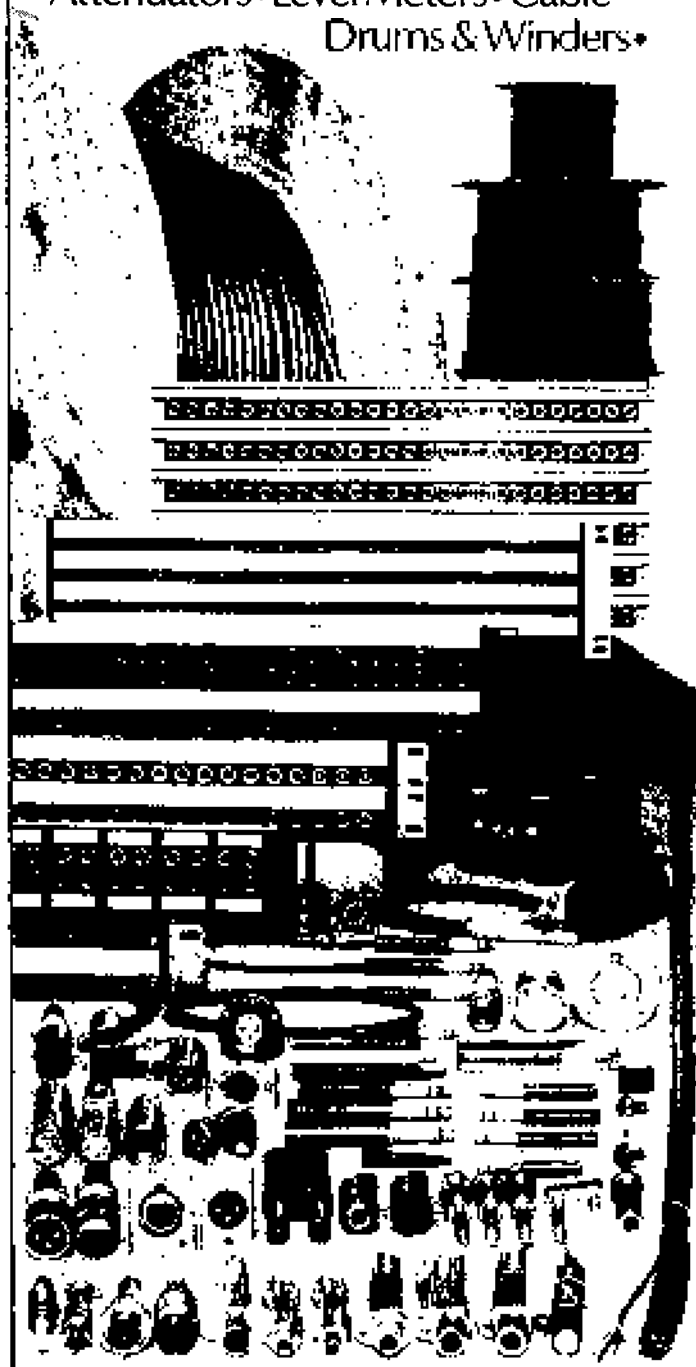
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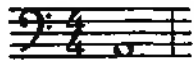
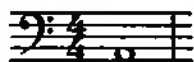
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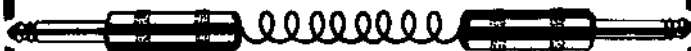
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