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The Sugarcubes - queening it with Regina

## INTERVIEWS

- FAITH NO MORE** 14  
Judging by their recent success and the release of their new album, *The Real Thing*, Faith No More show that they *still* care a lot...
- BILL NELSON** 22  
Cocteau groupie, musician extraordinaire, and warlock, Nelson is *one* man we can rely on never to conform
- BRUCE FOREST** 32  
The American master of the mix, Bruce Forest talks about how it feels being a wanted man
- THE BLUE NILE** 50  
After a five year absence from the music scene, the three lovable Glaswegians return wearing *Hats*
- KATE BUSH** 58  
Kate is back and better than ever. Here she discusses her songwriting and her extraordinary new LP, *The Sensual World*

## FEATURES

- RATTLE & HUM** 20  
Customising your guitar: part four - this month: Truss Rod Tweaking and Troublesome Frets
- XMAS XCITERS** 30  
A stockingful of prezzie ideas for the other player in your life...
- PROJECT X** 36  
Soldering Irons at the ready: our new build-it-yourself series kicks off with an easy-to-make MIDI thru box
- JINGLES** 42  
A good jingle can make more money than a number one record. We find out how...
- FEELERS** 99  
Billy takes a look at some vintage and rare guitars in Earl's Court
- MUSICAL MICRO** 101  
Loads of micro bytes to get your teeth into, courtesy of the Personal Computer Show...



Soundtanks - Heavy Metal heavy artillery

## REGULARS

- BUZZ** 6  
Thomas Mapfumo in Zimbabwe, Les Negresses Vertes in Paris, The Creatures on Spain and more. It's why we're called International Musician!
- PA COLUMN: TACKHEAD** 26  
The band's Big Drummer Boy, Keith LeBlanc, dain' his own unaccompanied thang at The Powerhaus
- BEATROUTE: THE THE** 28  
Checking out the gear of The Beat(en) Generators
- FRETWORK** 54  
This month, Improvisation Pt II - get those fingers flying!
- TALKBACK** 156  
With *both* Rages now in the asylum, welcome to our new letters page. We think you'll like it.
- NEWS** 158  
If no news is good news, why is ours so wonderful?
- REFERENCE GUIDE** 160  
Your friend in the business



Win a £500 CD player! Details, p.40



Korg in a kan: the M3R

# TESTS

- GODIN GUITAR** 106  
Designed by LR Baggs, it's a tele-semi style acoustic. For those who want the best of both worlds?
- ROLAND PAD 5** 110  
Roland's cheapest MIDI drum pads yet
- GRETSCH DRUMS** 112  
A classic marque available again - the beat goes on
- MUSIC MANIAC SUSTAINIAC** 117  
Infinite sustain for your guitar - hell for your neighbors!
- KORG M3R & REI** 120  
MT sounds on the cheap? Well, sort of
- SESSIONETTE AMPS** 125  
A classic reborn? We check out the Sessionette 90
- WAL MB4 MIDI BASS SYSTEM** 128  
The first bass controller that really works - try it, you'll like it
- IBANEZ EFFECTS** 133  
The Soundtank Range: any effect you want, so long as it's distortion six times over...
- KAWAI K4** 134  
A 16-bit keyboard that offers a low price, high quality alternative to the current crop of mega synths
- SGE - fx to the n<sup>th</sup> degree**



# RECORDING WORLD

- SAMPLES** 139  
THE latest on who's doin' wot, where, and why
- STUDIO OF THE MONTH** 141  
Trotting down the Tottenham Court Road to Tape One
- MUSICSOFT MIDIMAN** 143  
MIDI-to-tape interface that turns your Woolies deck into a sequencer...
- PRODUCERS: SHEL TALMY** 144  
The mastermind behind hits for The Who, back in the limelight now with The Fuzztones
- ART SGE** 146  
Based on the Multiverb, it's a 19" rack with a staggering nine effects at once
- TRACKRECORD: THE SUGARCUBES** 150  
The strange story behind the sweet one's hit, Regina
- STUDIOMASTER IDP1** 153  
Just how smart is this intelligent dynamics processor?
- HOMETAPING: DRUG FREE AMERICA** 154  
Band addicted to home demos shack!

# LISTINGS

CLASSIFIED	164
GUITAR GUIDE	166
DEALER GUIDE	167
STUDIO GUIDE	171
READER'S CLASSIFIED	175

# CONTENTS



Northern & Shell Plc.

The Northern & Shell Building  
P.O. Box 381, Mill Harbour, London E14 9TW  
Telephone: (01) 987 5090  
Telex: 24676 (NORSHL G)  
Fax: (01) 987 2160

*Chairman*  
Richard Desmond  
*Managing Director*  
Philip Bailey  
*Commercial Director*  
Martin Elice  
*Publisher*  
Joe Salama  
*Editorial Director*  
Paul Ashford

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*Assistant Editor:* Matt Wallis  
*Features Editor:* Philip Bradley  
*Production Editor:* Theresa Fowler  
*Technical Consultant:* James Bannard

## CONSULTANTS

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*Photographer:* George Bodnar  
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*Group Production Manager:* Jim Hilley  
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## ACCOUNTS

*Finance Director:* Barry Foxon  
*Credit Manager:* Alex McDwyer  
*Credit Controller:* Kim Hawkey

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## ● TUBE AMP BOOK II

Everything you never knew about classic tube amps: how a valve works, a brief history of all the major amp manufacturers from Fender to Musicman, a good section on lesser known British amps like Park and Orange, even circuit diagrams and mods for most models. One for the enthusiast. £10.99 from Scott Cooper on: (09073) 74902

DB

## ● GREEN ISSUES

Despite packing out venues throughout Europe, selling records by the thousand and receiving major media attention, being in a band isn't all it's cracked up to be. That is, according to **LES NEGRESSES VERTES** (a.k.a. *The Green Black Women*), who have spent much of their time touring Europe with their unique blend of Parisianesque accordion and Afro-Arabic rhythms to enormous critical and public acclaim.

"It is not really as simple as that," claims guitarist Stephan. "Les Negresses Vertes is a very expensive band. At the moment we are recording and working with a manager, and a publisher, and that costs a lot of money. We are also beginning, which makes everything more expensive. There are a lot of us and a lot of mouths to feed. Much money is spent on travel."

But that's not all. Their choice of mainly acoustic instruments also causes problems:

"Yes" agrees Stephan "To produce acoustic instruments in a studio everything needs to be of good quality. It takes longer to set up the mikes either in the studio or live, but it's better than playing with synthesizers."

So, why play in Les Negresses Vertes? "Ah," chuckles Stephan in his gruff French accent, "playing on stage is so exciting. We love playing in England because the audience gets so involved. That's the good side of this band."



PB

*Rhythm King have three copies of the Black-green ones' first album, Mlaly, waiting for you: just drop an envelope, marked "MLAH", to IM at our usual address. The early birds get the worms!*

## ● LIPSMACKING

Fans of American trash guitars like the fab Danelectros are doubtless aware of the cool "LIPSTICK TUBE" PICKUPS that those instruments used. The originals were basic by today's standards, the coil roughly wound around a magnet, wrapped in insulating tape then stuffed into chromed cases bought from a make-up industry supplier. These were chromed, and along with the P90 and PAF, another pickup legend was created!

Now Chandler have resurrected the "Lipstick Tube" pickup, upgraded the specs, but retained the texture of the 50's originals. £195 for three or £69 each from Dixies: (0484) 512601.

DB

# influences

THE SONGS THAT MADE THEM DO IT



## ● THIS MONTH: JOHN CALE

### 1 DEBUSSY

Not so much an influence, as I shy away from that. He just wrote some beautiful pieces.

### 2 MAHLER

I find his work very moving.

### 3 ELO - EARLIEST ALBUM

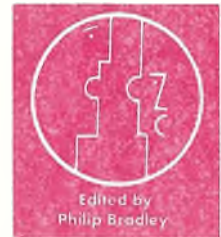
They hit the nail right on the head. It was a very exciting way of mixing Classical and Rock 'n' Roll.

John Cale's new album *Words For The Dying* is out now on Land Records





# BUZZ



## ● BUT IS IT ART ?

**VIRGIN VISION'S VIDEOLAS** - the first four in the shops now - aim to combine music and video in a new way.

The £9.99 stereo hi-fi VHS tapes have some big names behind them, the biggest being **Godley and Creme** (actually the biggest is **Zbigniew Rybczynski**, but you know what we mean) **G & C's Mondo Video** is a virtuoso display of editing, with cut-up music matched by the monochrome visuals of dance duo **Taboo**, **Stakker's** mind-bending **Eurotechno** is 25 minutes of psychedelic computer imagery set to **HUMANOID's** acid music. Watch it and freak. **Stacey Peralta's Attack** disappoints; tired skateboard footage with extracts from **Tim BOMB THE BASS Simonon's** album. And then there's **The Fourth Dimension**, by video artist **Zbigniew Rybczynski**. A day in the life of an artistically undraped couple set to New Age sounds, it's closest in spirit to what Videola is all about. A mixed bag, but full marks to Virgin for daring to be different...

## ● LA ESPANA BOOMERANGA

**THE CREATURES (SIOUXIE AND BUDGIE'S ALTER EGOS)** are back, after a six-year layoff, with the brilliant album *Boomerang* - recorded with Mike Hedges and a mobile recording studio in an 11th century convent in Spain...

"We didn't want to do proper demos, just get down the essence of some songs and ideas that we had...out in the country and out of London," says Budgie.

So Budgie and pals piled into a car and drove around Spain "with a half-cooked idea we were going to find somewhere idyllic" to record. They ended up in La Penuela and fell in love with the convent straight away, even though there were Housemartins nesting in the rooms, and they encountered a bit of a technical problem early on...

"We were looking for the power point," says Budgie. "We found it eventually, but nowhere to rig up a mains sy... box. We

asked 'where's the earth?' And the owners of the convent said there is no earth. So they knocked an iron spike into the ground, and told us that if we watered it everyday, it would get rusty and we'd be fine." Thus was *Boomerang* born.

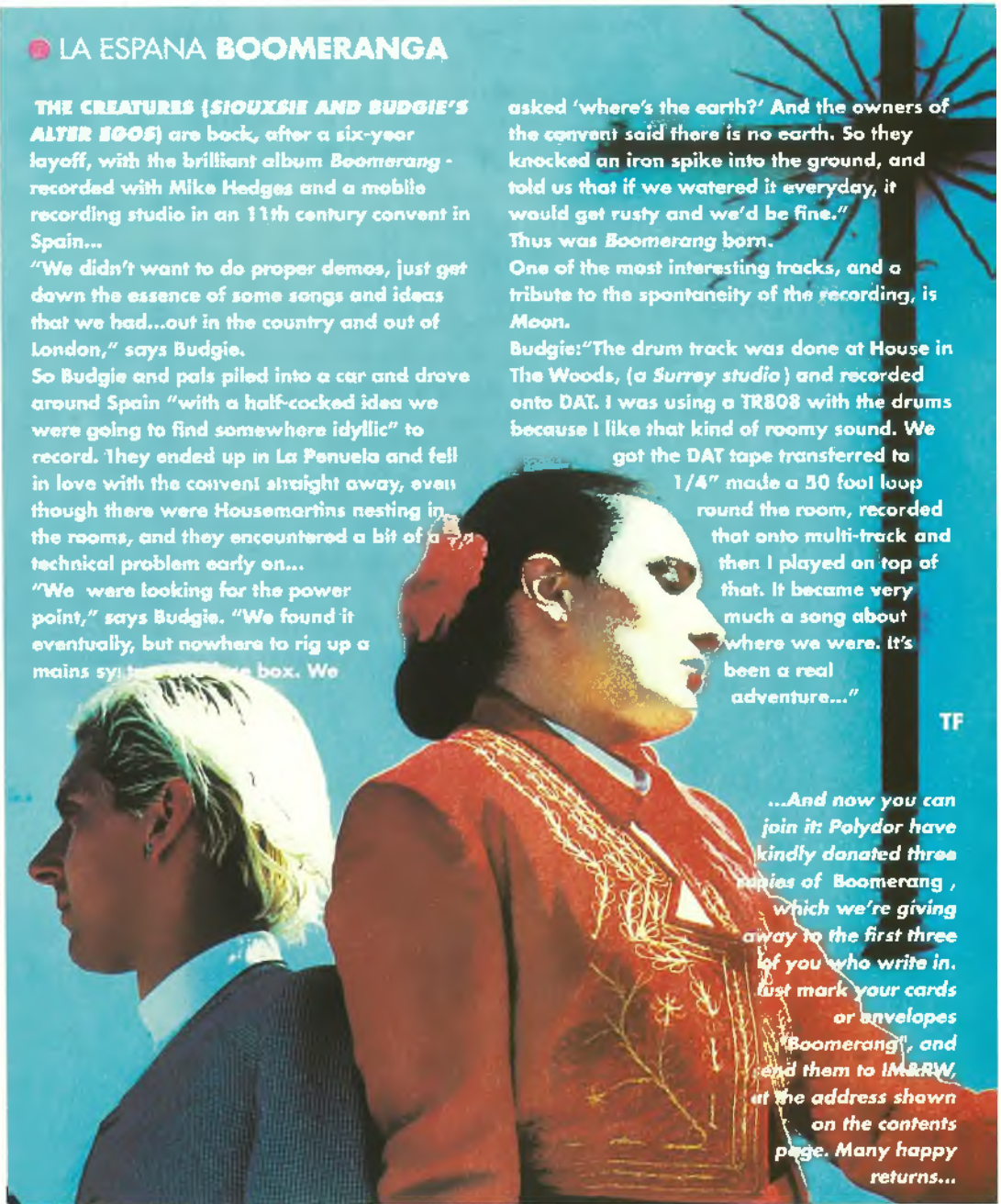
One of the most interesting tracks, and a tribute to the spontaneity of the recording, is *Moon*.

Budgie: "The drum track was done at House in The Woods, (a Surrey studio) and recorded onto DAT. I was using a TR808 with the drums because I like that kind of roomy sound. We got the DAT tape transferred to

1/4" made a 50 foot loop round the room, recorded that onto multi-track and then I played on top of that. It became very much a song about where we were. It's been a real adventure..."

TF

...And now you can join in: Polydor have kindly donated three copies of *Boomerang*, which we're giving away to the first three of you who write in. Just mark your cards or envelopes "Boomerang", and send them to IM&RW, at the address shown on the contents page. Many happy returns...



## ● TOM THUMB

Waiting for **THOMAS MAPPUMO** to come off stage in the seediest Harare taverna that is Queens was out of the ordinary. As my friends waved goodbye, tired of the long wait and the pickpockets, I went forth, tenner down me undies, to meet the man.

In the early 70s Thomas began to build his sound - in particular his guitar - around the music of the Mbira (*Thumb Harp*).

◀ Traditionally used for accompaniment to story-telling, the Mbira is a pentatonic instrument which is both melodic and percussive. One of Mapfumo's musicians and great friends, Jonah Sithole, developed a guitar sound so faithful to Mbira that it is recognised as a great technical achievement alone. Working with the cannily named HALILUYA CHICKEN RUN BAND, they challenged the domination (at that time) of the South African Semanje-Manje sound to create a national character for Zimbabwean music. Current Zimbabwean throbs like THE FOUR BROTHERS and THE BHUNDU BOYS quickly followed suit.

Sitting on an uncomfortable apres-gig hotel bed in Zimbabwe recently with Thomas Mapfumo, I asked if he'd heard the Mbuya album by Zimbabwe's primo Mbirist, Stella Chisweshe? "No, she's quite a good Mbira player but she doesn't impress me. There are a lot of good Mbira players here." At this there is much shaking of his finely turned dreadlocks, "and I cannot compare with some of the legends - people who can really play this type of music." Nuff said.

Check out razor sharp guitar licks, barbed wire brass lines and hypnotic Mbira when Mapfumo and The Blacks Unlimited play the Town & Country Club on Nov 17th. Mapfumo has recently signed to Island records subsidiary Mango, and a new album is expected to be released sometime this month.

SP

## ● SOUND ADVICE

Ever get annoyed with the inadequacy of your local library's music department? If you need access to old recordings of music or interviews (or, indeed, sound effects), the British Library's National Sound Archive in Kensington is the place to go.

The Archive houses over 35,000 hours of recorded tape, taken from recordings going back into the last century (from the sound of Ancient Tribal rituals to the sound on the inside of a WW1 tank!), and now offers a good selection of both commercial and promotional music videos, which should get bigger as more and more of you deposit copies of your own videos there. There is also an extensive library of books and periodicals dealing with recorded music, although the British Library's newspaper section in Colindale has a better collection of the latter (Tel. 01-323 7353 for details).

The Archive operates purely on a reference basis for the most part, but copies of certain recordings can be made subject to copyright clearance. If you want to listen to a tape or watch a video, it's best to ring and make an appointment first,



but you can use the library 'unannounced'. The National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AS. Tel. 01-589 6603. Open Monday to Friday 10-5, late opening Thursday till 9pm. Nearest tube: South Kensington (follow the signs for the Science Museum).

ZB

## ● A QUICK PICK

These days, it's really a bit of a bummer if a lead guitar player can't quite put in the required number of notes per second.

While Yngwie rules the lands of the licks, he who's lead lags is lost! But don't smash your axe yet - help is at hand in the form of the Stylus Pick. It's a plectrum with a conical tip at the business end, designed to reduce the resistance of the pick moving over a string. It comes with its' own instruction manual (including exercise tips) and surprise, surprise, it actually works! Once you suss out how to hold it and start rattling off a few Uli Roths, it's quite noticeable how much freer, and hence faster, the Stylus pick feels compared to an ordinary pick. It's not really designed for strumming, but who needs poxy chords when adoring fans tumble at your feet to the sound of another blistering solo?

DA







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- 2 Load one sample into two locations, and offset one loop point for instant flange effects.
- 3 Or shift the start point of one, for short delay effects.
- 4 Or detune one against the other, for a thicker sound...
- 5 To cut 'mickey mousing', take the highest-pitched sample possible - shifts down sound better, and save memory.
- 6 If your sampler stores programs separate from samples (Akai S700, Mirage) a short release can turn a reverbed snare into a gated, reverbed snare; a bass pull into a pop; two sounds for one!
- 7 If your sampler has envelope shaping (i.e. Roland), when taking synth sounds, go for the simplest full on/full off sample, and add the shape after, avoiding giveaway variable sampled envelopes as you pitch-shift.
- 8 Sample at different bandwidths, and see how low you can go... Speech could be as low as 4kHz. You'll lose top-end noise, and get a BUGGLES-ish 'telephone' effect as well.
- 9 To run a sampled break beat in time with a sequencer, put a trigger on the first beat of a short sequence loop. The sampled break will retrigger too soon, or too late, so start shifting up or down one note every loop. When it gets close, 'microtune'. With patience, your break should sync perfectly to the sequence.
- 10 Avoid the obvious: if you must use them, lifts from unknown tracks at least make your piece that much more distinctive - and if they're obscure enough, you might not even get sued!

DM

## ● THE CAN CANNED

Can were undoubtedly one of the most influential European bands of the Seventies. Imagine, then, the joy of Krautrock fans as Mute Records release no fewer than eight back-catalogue Can titles on CD for the first time.

Licensed from Spoon Records, the eight titles catalogue the career of

keyboardist Irmin Schmidt, drummer Jacki Liebezeit, bassist Holger Czukay, guitarist Michael Karoli, and vocalists Michael Moony and Damo Suzuki, starting from Can's first recording (*Delay 1968, Monster Movie*) and going up to 1974 (*Soon Over Babaluma*).

Can's sound blended Rock, Jazz, Blues, Stockhausen-style avant-garde and ethnic influences. They also exploited early studio technology in such a way that it's sometimes impossible to tell who is playing what; Liebezeit's metronomic drumming can sound like a sequencer, Schmidt's primitive keyboards like guitars; amazingly, they never used synthesizers until the very end of their career.

Can had the benefit of their own recording studio in a castle (!), and much of their work is semi-improvised, psychedelic jamming. Some pieces like the wonderful 14-minute *Mother Sky* (from *Soundtracks*) seem to go on forever; others, like *Dizzy Dizzy* from *Soon Over Babaluma* or *Sing Swan Song* from *Ege Bamyasi* are almost conventional Rock-Pop, and indeed the band had some chart success in Germany. Though some of the more experimental pieces (like the 18-minute *Aumgn* from *Tago Mago*) are "difficult listening", Can's music doesn't sound dated because they invented styles rather than followed them. While the most enjoyable album is the lyrical *Future Days*, the best introduction is probably the compilation *Cannibalism I*. The good news is that the remaining Can albums, including *Unlimited Edition*, *Cannibalism II* and *III*; and the titles which have already appeared on CD on Virgin; *Landed*, *Flow Motion*, *Saw Delight* and *Can*, are also due for release through Spoon later in the year.

CJ



## ● GENERA CONVENTION



Evans have very recently come up with a revolutionary series of heads called 'Genera'. The concept was evidently born out of an approach by Noble & Cooley to try to persuade Evans to make an extremely dry head for their highly responsive single-ply drums. What the Evans guys did was to take one of their normal heads and put an extremely thin (200 gauge) 1" ring of snare head-type material underneath it which is held fast inside its' aluminium hoop. This ring isn't fixed to the head, it simply touches it gently. (It actually does what the latest generation of batter head damping rings do on top, but a little more subtly.) Their sound is bright but with a low fundamental and what could be described as a built-in decay. Genera heads sell for £15.29. More info: FCN, (0732) 366421.

BH

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# VOX

IM/12/89

● HIGH TECH

**F**ancy a PhD in hustling? An HNC in liggering? Most managers, agents, producers and record company personnel learn on the job, but that could change if an idea pioneered by Handsworth Tech in

Birmingham takes off! The college runs courses in music business management, with 60 hours of tuition over 3 weeks, covering the history of the music industry, record companies, publishing, management, performance and mechanical copyrights and media, and including visits to industry organisations and talks from professionals.

"The original idea came from the manager of a local Reggae band, who was also involved in a Community Programme music workshop," says co-ordinator Simon Woods, formerly manager of UB40, "Handsworth Tech told us they were interested, if there was any demand. We are usually over-subscribed!

"We're negotiating at the moment for a nationally-recognised certificate. It's a practical, down-to-earth, hands-on course, not academically-based theory. It's aimed at people with no particular qualifications. It's about people in a dynamic industry, and we have positive input from record companies, the BPI and so on.

"I believe training is vitally important in any industry. I realise I was lucky when I began managing UB40. I knew nothing when I set up our own record and publishing company, and the band was still successful. Our course is designed to inform people who may already be operating in the business. It has been an eye opener for me too! We're not saying 'this is how you manage a band', we are just giving people the basic facts so that they can develop their own creativity."

Handsworth is also hoping to offer evening classes, one day seminars and later, an Open Learning course for non-locals, though nothing has yet been finalised. More details of the Foundation and Advanced courses from Handsworth College, The Council House, Soho Road, Birmingham B21 9DP.

JE



● R8 WINNER

He came, he saw and he took away a rather spiffing Fostex R8 eight track and a mixing desk.

Scott Manning the happy winner of the Harman UK and IM&RW competition couldn't believe his luck when we told him the good news.

"I jumped up and down and screamed a lot, it's great."

Scott was presented with his prizes at Gig Sounds' impressive new shop in Mitcham Lane, Streatham, by Bob Goleniowski (Harman Pro Sales Manager), Tony Besgrove (Harman Area Sales Manager), Mark Perrins (Harman Pro Product Manager), Eric Lindsey (GigSounds Director), Scott's friend and myself (I'm the good looking one on the left).

Well done Scott old man.

MW



● DEMO CHAMBER



Greetings, scarfification fans. This month we begin by peeling back the skin grafts on THE TWIST, a five-piece from Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

Twist's stock in trade is vivacious, spiky pop, but it's the argument in noise carried on by its two most prominent members that compels. Sleeve-mounted influences are the order of the day here, with the guitarist, despite a perfectly adequate line in killer riffs, clearly taking his Scottish origins far too seriously, opting every other phrase for that cringe-making hoots-man skirl we have BIG COUNTRY to blame for. Fortunately, the vocalist, a star in the making if I ever heard one, wins the argument hands down, going with teeth and claws after the bratty wit of a PETE SHELLEY, or even a Saint JULIAN COPE. "I'm a saint," he dares to declaim on the third track, *The King's New Clothes*, and you know what? I'm inclined to believe him...

It's obviously North-Of-The Border week, because the next burnt offering on the altar of taste is another bunch of jock straps - a Glaswegian four piece this time, called THE SUPERNATURALS. Unfortunately for them, they've succumbed to that peculiarly Scottish disease of believing yourself American 'funky dudes'. Symptoms include a snare so weak it sounds like a cat sneezing, irritatingly well-behaved rhythm guitar; a fake version of Mick Jagger's fake American accent; and a knowledge of American geography which sees our vocalist hero travelling from Memphis to Tennessee. "My soul is white, but my heroes are black," he says, which at least explains his dilemma.

Does the world need another Hipsway? Did it need the first one? I don't think so. rine Supernaturals? Not a ghost of a chance.

"I'm a lecturer, though I've been a truck driver, a computer programmer, a mental health worker, and a software consultant," says NICK HOLMES, a man with more chin and less neck than is currently judged fashionable, going by the photo he included with the CV that stands in for his press release.

Somewhere along the line the modest Mr. Holmes took it into his head that he's a musician too, going for *thirtysomething* clever-clever tales of mid-life crises in an identikit DIRE STRAITS style. Seamlessly done, admittedly, a future in winebars awaits. A final question, Mr. Holmes. Does the phrase "Jack of all trades" mean anything to you? Let's go out on a high. They're called JOJO NAMOZA and they're - different. Edgy. Warped. Percussive. Out there somewhere between TALKING HEADS and PERE UBU. I think the singer likes David Byrne a lot, but then, who doesn't? Better when they steer clear of meaningfulness (*earnest political lyrics are so 80s, aren't they darling?*), they may not set the world alight but with a warble, a whammy bar and some weirdness they could make a good night out.

● Contacts: *The Twist*: (0592) 267359/*The Supernaturals*: (041) 942 6606/*Nick Holmes*: (061) 434 3323/*Jojo Namozar*: (0734) 65645. Send your demos to Madame Sid c/o: The Northern & Shell Bldg, Mill Harbour, London E14 9 TW. Sorry, no returns.

● Contributors to this month's BUZZ: ● David Anthony, Philip Bradley, Zoe Bremner, Dave Burrluck, Jill Eckersley, Theresa Fowler, Chris Jenkins, David Mander, Simon Payne, Matt Wallis.

# a quirk of **FAITH**

*On the verge of stardom, American rock band, Faith No More, sacked their singer/lyricist. "You gotta have Faith," they tell Trudi Miller*

**YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO FAITH NO MORE:** they're not afraid to take chances.

After five years of struggle and an indie LP, the California quintet finally captured the ears of the public in 1987 with the cult-hit *We Care A Lot* (from their *Slash* debut *Introduce Yourself*), which reached 43 on the British charts. Suddenly the Faiths were splashed across the covers of British music mags, heading toward the upper regions of U.S. dance charts, and touring to packed clubs across the UK and Europe.

"*We Care A Lot* was all over the walls in London," remembers bassist Bill Gould. "It was really exciting."

So, with the formula for success firmly in place, what did they do?

Unceremoniously eject the centrepiece of the band, lead singer Chuck Mosely.

Not without cause, mind you. From all accounts, the tension between Mosely and his bandmates had reached explosive levels - a situation gleefully exploited by journalists, who got a lot of mileage out of the band's increasingly bitter conflicts and personality clashes. Clearly something had to give. And that something was Mosely. But surely it was a risk? Weren't you afraid of a David Lee Roth situation?

"It was a little scary at first," Bill admits. "It's a bold step to

take for a band that's as established as we were at that point. I mean, to kick out the singer? Especially in Europe, he was the focal point of the band. But for everyone's peace of mind, we just had to do it. It came down to the point where all of us being comfortable was the priority, rather than what other people were going to think."

"If we hadn't the band would have broken up," adds drummer Mike Bordin.

With the relief of Mosely's departure, the remaining members found their creativity renewed. "It was like a burden off our backs. We all suddenly started writing songs," says Mike. But, as was their habit, they wrote *only* the music - Mosely had been their lyricist.

Enter Mike Patton, a long-haired, fresh-faced 21-year-old with a high-pitched vocal (in contrast to Mosely's gravelly, grungy bass) that ranges from tenderly expressive to sneering and needle-sharp. Mike P. joined FAITH NO MORE and found a band that had been together for five years, with a full set of songs ready for their next album. An intimidating prospect for a newcomer, to say the least.

But Mike was undaunted. He just shrugged his shoulders, sat down, and wrote a bracing set of lyrics - poetic, menacing, loving, sinister - that fit the band's sound perfectly.

"Roddy (Bottum, keyboardist) had written some lyrics on the ▶





# BLACK FIRE

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last record." explains Mike B, "And he was ready to jump in. But then Mike came along."

Roddy admits, "I was so impressed with little Mike's contribution that I just backed off, put my hands up in surrender, and said, 'Mike, take it away!'"

The audience response to the new singer has been positive so far with one exception. "Our first show in San Francisco, someone sent a note backstage that said 'Get rid of this jock! Where's the old guy?'" Billy remembers.

"We found out who wrote it too. We know where he lives," adds Mike B.

"But otherwise, all the response has been great. I haven't talked to anyone who doesn't like him better," says Gould.

## For The Record

The chemistry was in place; now all that remained was to translate it into vinyl - not an easy task when you're dealing with a group as diverse as Faith No More. For a start, each member comes from a different background. Guitarist Jim Martin started out with VICIOUS HATRED, a Metal band featuring the late Cliff Burton, METALLICA's original bassist. Mike Bordin studied Reggae and African rhythms. Bill Gould grew up listening to Hardcore Punk, the SEX PISTOLS and THE GERMS. Mike Patton used to head a Funk act. And Roddy Bottom spent 10 years training as a classical pianist.

The resulting sound is a murky stew full of hard Rock and Metal, hearty chunks of rap, and liberal dashes of dance music, with bits of Funk, Punk, New Wave and Psychedelia stirred in.

Recording such complex music so that all the nuances shine through clearly has been a problem for Faith No More. But they feel they've achieved it on their current album. All the members agree that *The Real Thing* far surpasses their last disc, *Introduce Yourself*.

"The vocals were way too up front on the last record," opines Mike B. "The music was drowned out. There were four different tracks of vocals going through the music, where maybe there should have been time to let the music play, you know, and not have vocals all the time. It didn't have our sound, really, it was more diffused. This record has a sharper, pointed sound; I think it sounds more like us."

It should sound more like them, since the band members took an active hand in the recording process, and worked hard to come up with creative arrangements. *Zombie Eaters*, for example, starts out as a haunting ballad, with only strings, a quiet guitar, and Mike Patton's gentle, whispering vocal. Halfway through, however, it explodes into a grandiose Heavy Metal opera. *Epic*, a Beastie Boys-style Rap, segues into a classical piano nocturne. At every turn, the band seem to have put a lot of thought into the way the songs should be played.

Mike B. agrees. "These songs were ready to go. We did all the arranging ourselves and pre-produced everything. We pretty much just set it up the way we wanted it, as far as the songs went. The record company wasn't really breathing down our necks at all, or saying, 'Give us this kind of material'. So we decided whatever was going to happen, it was going to be the way we wanted it."

What about producer Matt Wallace? Did he have any strong ideas about how to record the songs?

"He just helped us bring out our ideas, really. He tried a couple

of strong ideas and we just kind of slapped him around and said 'shut up,'" jokes Roddy.

But down to specifics. Anything on the album you're especially pleased with?

"Yeah, the guitar sound particularly," says Bill immediately. "On the last record, it was our first time with a decent budget. We were kind of intimidated - we didn't really know what you spend that kind of money on. This time, we knew what to do. We set aside a day and a half just for guitar. Mike placement had a hell of a lot to do with the sound we wanted to get. It took a long time of moving mikes around - I think we ended up using like 17 mikes. But Jim got a sound he was satisfied with, which is essential. I don't think the guitar sound on the last record was quite up to par."

## Hi Energy

The energy level is also quite high on this record. There's a raw, unleashed feel to it. The secret?

"We did a lot of my vocals live, over the bass and drum track," says Mike P.

"Yeah, we did the bass and drums live too. It was more real that way," says Mike B.

"We're not the kind of thing to do the drum track, and then the bass track - that's not the way we operate," explains Bill. "Cause

**"There's no problem just touring and playing, as long as we have a place to come back to. Maybe some food."**



we're a live band, and the songs are really made to be played live. Even if they fluctuate a little bit, it has more of a groove to it."

That said, the Faiths aren't averse to a little technological assistance.

"The Aphex Aural Exciter came in really handy with a lot of tones and stuff," says Bill. "It made things right up front. We didn't have to mess around with the treble. We also used an SSL fully automated board. I think it was G series. It's a big computer, and it saved all the tones, which is really cool, because we could just load the mix onto a disc, and if we wanted to come back five days later, we could just load the mix in and it would set the board to exactly the tones that we had had. You didn't have to start from scratch all over again."

"And you can really fine tune it to get just the right mood," adds Mike B. "So it saved a lot of days of recording," continues Bill. "And it wasn't even that much more expensive to use the studio as it would have been on a really good 24-track board."

What about the drum sounds on the record?

"We used a Wendell sampler for some drum sounds, some kickin' snare. We used some snare drums from Heart. Just a little bit though!" Billy hastens to add. "It's a really full processed sound - you just put a little bit in, and it kind of colours everything."

And you, Roddy? What was the keyboard situation?

"We had an EMAX, so I used a lot of samples," says Roddy. "I

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used a lot of string sounds, some really good violin stuff. We used a Hammond organ in the studio too. And a Yamaha piano, a MIDI grand piano."

"That was really intense," remembers Mike B. "It could drive other things."

"The thing about recording is not so much when you get sounds and tones you want," emphasises Bill. "The real important thing to learn is to give each instrument enough space where you can hear it. It isn't always the way it's mixed; it's the way it's played, so that they each have their own little breathing room, to separate it. That's more of a secret to good recording than just mixing everything together and hoping somehow that's the way it comes out."

## Future Faith

With the release of *The Real Thing*, Faith No More are finally beginning to get some press attention in their native America. Recently they did a series of U.S. club dates before joining Metallica on the California leg of their ...*And Justice For All* tour. Looking toward the future, Roddy hopes to "keep doing the same thing, but on a much huger scale."

Bill is more laid back, saying, "I here's no problem just touring and playing, as long as we have a place to come back to. Maybe some food."

But no matter what the future holds, the band want to keep their sound distinctive. "I think our chemistry is why we're so unique - we all fit in around each other," says Bill. "We all contribute equally to the songs, so we all have our own little space that we play in. That's why we can play the different kind of music we do, because no matter what, we still have our own little mark on it. I can't see people trying to imitate us or copy us, because it's such an individualized sound. We could be playing jazz, but it'll still sound like us."

Trudi Miller

## ● WE PLAY A LOT



**JIM MARTIN (guitarist):** I have five guitars; three electric, all Gibsons; two Flying Vs; and a Les Paul. Then I have two acoustics - one's a Patrician Harmony, very old, and the other's an Alhambra, a Spanish-made classical guitar. Which do I use the most? One of the Flying Vs. It's a f\*\*king great guitar. I've had it for at least 10 years; it sounds really 'grunty' - that's the only way I can describe it. I also like the way it feels - very light, and slim and streamlined. I've played the Les Paul, and it's real big and heavy and gets in the way of itself. I'd have to manoeuvre my body around it to play it! So I use the Gibson mostly, and have the others as backups.



**BILL GOULD (bassist):** I use an Aria Pro II, an Integra. The one with active electronics. I used to have a Gibson Grabber, and it was smashed to pieces - the electronics were just hanging down while I was playing. It was ridiculous. So I had to get a new bass. Cliff Burton of Metallica was being sponsored by Aria, and about four years ago he introduced me to the guy who was handling that, right about the time our first record came out. They had a factory right in L.A., so I went and met the guy and tried the bass. It's the best bass I've ever played for my style. You can hit with it, you can slap with it, and it's got the most unique sound - real metallic and deep. People come up and ask how I got the sound on the record, and it's really just the sound of *that bass!* The thing's just holding together by string, but I use it live and in the studio - it's really my one and only. I did get an Ibanez STGR about two months ago; it plays good for slapping, but it just doesn't have that Aria sound.



**RODDY BOTTUM (keyboardist):** I use an Emulator EMAX. I've used it for about two years. Before that I was using an Oberheim OBXA. Now all my sounds are prerecorded and stored on floppy discs. I use a lot of violin and horns. Emulator was like the first sampling keyboard that was made commercially available. Maybe three or four years after they made the Emulators, they made this affordable one. I checked it out, and it had great sounds, and it's really easy to use. Sometimes in the studio we add other stuff, like we used a MIDI piano at one point, and a Hammond organ. But mostly it's just the EMAX. I got a second one a month ago, which is way better, because it takes 25 seconds to change one of the discs. When we were doing it live, we had to work our set around a 25-second gap where I couldn't play, because I had to change discs. Now with two I just switch back and forth. It has a lot of neat features, too, like an eight-track sequencer. I can record stuff and play it over that, all in the privacy of my own home. Will I add more equipment? I'm not sure - it depends on who gives me free stuff!



**MIKE BORDIN (drummer):** I use Yamaha drums with Birch shells - they're very light, and they have a distinctive sound, as opposed to a Maple drum or a composite drum or a metal or a plastic drum. The drums themselves are very large and deep, so they have a low, thick, powerful sound. And I tune them low as well. Because of that, I like to keep the snare drum very, very highly tuned, so it's like a counterpoint, the low and the high. The snare cuts through real well; I use Zildjian cymbals, because I like the sound, and because they're less breakable than other cymbals.

My setup? I have a 6" by 14" snare drum, Maple; or sometimes brass. A 13" by 13" rack tom; a 14" by 16" rack tom; a 16" by 18" floor tom; and a 16" by 16" bass drum. I use extra heavy high hats; a 19" Zildjian China Boy cymbal; an 18" K Zildjian dark crash ride cymbal; a 22" Z Zildjian light power ride, which is virtually unbreakable, - although I've broken one already! - an 18" K Zildjian medium crash; and an 18" K Zildjian dark crash. I like the K Zildjians because they have a kind of 'green' tone to them, a little overtone.

The drum heads are coated Remo Emperors on the toms, coated Pinstripes on the snare, and a clear Pinstripe on the bass. The drumsticks are Vic Furth American Classic Rock. I turn them around backwards and strip all the varnish off them for extra grip - a little trick.

I've been using Yamaha drums for seven years. I used to use a brand called Camco, which were real fancy Maple studio drums. Camco, which is now called DW. But I was breaking them, so I decided to go with something a little more current.

# 4

## DAVE BURRLUCK SHOWS US HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF A CHEAP GUITAR

### ● TRUSS ROD TWEAKING AND TROUBLESOME FRETS



**T**he Korean guitar I selected as the 'test bed' instrument for this series is in my opinion quite typical of cheap guitars with fingerboard problems. Having attempted to set a reasonable action in last month's Rattle & Hum, I found a few places high up on the fingerboard where there were isolated buzzes and even a choked note where the string wouldn't sound at all if played on that fret.

The first thing to do is to find out exactly where the problems are on your fingerboard. If there is a fret buzz at the 12th fret, for example, it will mean that either the 12th fret is lower than the other frets or the thirteenth is too high. With a little experience you'll be able to tell the difference between a slight buzz - caused by new strings for example - or a real problem fret that buzzes quite dramatically. Don't forget always test for buzzes through your amp.

Having worked out which fret or frets are the problem slacken off your strings and lay the guitar in front of you on a firm table. With a piece of masking tape tie the strings under the neck and away from the fingerboard.

The guitar's truss rod provides stiffness but more importantly adjustment capability to the neck. Don't be afraid of the truss rod, but on the other hand never tighten it more than a quarter to a half turn at a time.

The truss rod access point on my Korean guitar is behind the nut. Before having a closer look at the problem frets, use an allen key (typically 5mm) to slacken off the truss rod nut. With the guitar laid in front of you and the headstock on your left to unscrew the truss rod turn the allen key away from you.

Now with a 6" steel straight edge you can take a closer look at your troublesome frets. Lay the rule parallel to the neck edges over the frets and with a back light you should be able to see if there are any frets that don't touch the rule. Alternatively, by holding the rule at either end you can feel if there's a high fret, as the rule will rock over the offending fret. Do this all over the fingerboard and make a note of any high or low frets.

### HIGH FRETS

**A** fret may be high because it has sprung out of its slot. Ideally the fret should be removed and the tang tapped with the sharp end of a cross peen or pin hammer and the fret replaced. This is quite a tricky job, so it's perhaps best left to a repairman at this stage. However, a little drop of super glue under the fret which can then be pushed down with the tip of a screwdriver will hold the fret in place - the heat from a soldering iron is enough to remove it at a later stage if necessary. By the way, it is really important to follow the safety guidelines when using any super glues!

On my Korean example the higher frets were the problem. They were very uneven yet each one seemed well fitted. In this case a light fret dressing is the best answer. For this you'll need at least an

8" India sharpening stone (approx £10) or similar sized smooth cut hand/mill file (approx £5), a small three corner knife taper needle file (£2-£3), two sheets of wet and dry paper (a few pence a sheet) and some steel wool (approx £2.50 per lb). Not a vast outlay, the stone is of course useful for any DIY work even if you never plan to maintain your guitar in the future. However, you might consider leaving this process to a repairman if you've had no practical experience before. A full set-up will cost around £25-£35 depending on who does it, and if there's a guarantee on the work. However you may be able just to ask for your frets to be levelled which should be a lot cheaper, around about £15

### GUITAR OVERHAUL

If you have a Maple fingerboard it's a good idea to tape over it with masking tape obviously leaving only the frets showing. In all honesty it's not a bad idea to do this on any fingerboard as it'll stop oil and any abrasion marks getting in the board. Smear a little 3-in-1 oil on the fine side of the stone and slowly run it over the



Stoning the frets - note masking tape protecting fretboard



Profiling the fret with a knife-taper needle file

offending part of the board with up and down strokes parallel to the edge of the fingerboard. I've always used a sharpening stone for this job although the smooth file mentioned is recommended by numerous repairmen and is a cheaper option.

A smooth cut file is a lot coarser than a fine stone - be careful. After four or five strokes wipe off the oil and investigate the frets. Each of the uneven frets needs to have been 'scraped' by the stone. Check with the straight edge to see if the uneven frets are now level. If not, repeat the process. Because the fingerboard and consequently the frets are curved you must be careful to run over all the board and not just in the middle or along one edge.

With the frets level we need to re-polish and re-profile the frets. Oil the stone again and this time run it carefully across the frets, with light strokes. You'll feel when the fret is smooth - the stone moves freely. Obviously the stone only covers a few of the frets at a time so move it up the neck overlapping each pass, and once again only use the minimum amount of 'scrapes' to do the job.

Now you should have flat frets but also fret tops that have sharp edges. To re-profile the frets you can use a fret file available from either Jim Dunlop or Touchstone Tonewoods, but the problem is matching the radius of the file to the type of fret wire that's been used. For general use you'll get a lot of mileage out of a knife taper needle file. Ideally the edges of these files need to be slightly ground so that they don't cut into the face of the fingerboard. If you haven't got someone who can do this for you, use the edge, not the face of the sharpening stone to remove sharp edges of the file. I've used a slim taper needle file with great success prepared in this manner - it's a cheap way of producing a near professional result.



A final polish with steel wool

### HERE'S THE RUB

Each side of the fret must be filed to remove the sharp edge that the stoning has created. Run the file at approximately a 45 degree angle along the length of each fret until you have removed the edge and the fret has a more domed section. Then use 400 and the finer 600 grit wet and dry paper to polish each fret again - rubbing along the length of each fret, not up and down the length of the fingerboard. Finally a rub with fine grade (00 is easily available) steel wool will produce a very professional shine.

The secret to fret polishing is to go through the grades of abrasive. It's no good going from the stone to the wire wool - you won't remove all the scratches. You must work from the coarse abrasive to the fine - 400, 600 and then even 1200 grit (if you can get it) wet and dry paper, then the steel wool. And if you have the

patience for a really smooth polish that'll make string bending very, very smooth, use a metal polish like Solvol Autosol from any motor spares shop. Of course you'll also need a large tub of elbow grease!

I recommend you use just the 400, 600 and steel wool to start with as you may well have missed a fret so you'll have to go through the process all over again. Before you start polishing, double check the frets are level this extra caution could save you a lot of time later.

### TRUSS ROD ADJUSTMENTS

Every neck, when under tension, needs a little forward or concave bend which is called relief. In principle a straight neck would, with a low action, give fret buzz in the lower positions while a neck with too much forward bow gives buzz in the higher positions. To measure the relief of the neck place a capo at the first fret, hold down the 'G' string around the 13th fret and you should see a small gap around the 6th or 7th fret between the string and the top of the fret. On a modern Korean guitar with .009" gauge strings the gap should be around .012" or twelve thousandths of an inch, which you can measure with a feeler gauge. Of course every guitar is different and relief depends upon string gauge, consequent tension plus action height not to mention how hard you hit the string.

A practical way to determine your neck's relief is to play a little harder than usual, thereby forcing a buzz. If you experience buzzing on most strings when playing on the lower 1st fret positions, it could mean there isn't enough relief, whereas if you experience buzzing on the higher frets it could mean there is too much relief. If the strings buzz on all frets you can raise the action - likewise if you can't get a buzz, lower the action. Isolated fret buzzing means you still have a high fret problem.

Back to our guitar. Re-tighten the truss rod to the point where it only just begins to feel tight. Tune the guitar to pitch, set your action and check the relief. You'll probably find you have too much relief, so tighten the rod a quarter turn and leave it overnight. Some necks take a little time to respond, others are more immediate. Having left the instrument tuned to pitch, re-check the relief and if necessary give it another quarter turn.

### SETTING INTONATION

The last part of your set-up is put on some new strings and set your intonation. Compare the 12th fret harmonic on each string with the same note fretted at the twelfth fret. If the fretted note is flat move the saddle forward (*fret-flat-forward*), if the fretted note is sharp move the saddle away from the neck. On Strat type bridges and the common 'L' saddle shaped Korean trem turning the screw that connects the saddle to the bridge will achieve your intonation adjustment. A lot of guitars with Floyd Rose type saddles are a little more involved, but that's another installment!

The techniques explained here are tricky to execute, so if you don't feel confident go to a professional. On the other hand you have to start somewhere! With a few of your rattles cured next month we'll look at what way be causing the hums.

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Dave Burrluck

**NEXT MONTH: CHOOSING  
A NEW PICKUP**

BILL NELSON

*15 years on, Britain's first new wave guitar hero - former BE BOP DELUXE prophet, Bill Nelson - has*

# the noise of art

*retreated to the independence of his own record label. Macgregor Mathers spoke to one of our most respected musicians about new releases, his TV and film work, and maybe the odd surprise...*

**HOME FOR BILL NELSON IS A LARGE REDBRICK** farmhouse set in a couple of acres of Yorkshire's East Riding. The house is filled with bric a brac; pictures, framed drawings by Jean Cocteau and souvenirs of BEBOP DELUXE's seven year career. There's plenty to delight the eye, from 50's Dan Dare albums and seedsmans clocks to swords, wands, cups and pentacles - the tools of ritual invocation. Bill is a serious student of the occult.

There's a collection of E-Bows and triple-decker two-tone platform shoes and an extensive occult library - greatly reduced when Bill moved from a massive 17th Century manor into the present grade II listed building.

BE BOP DELUXE appeared in the early to mid 70s, sandwiched between BOWIE and STEVE HARLEY in those curious years that preceded Punk. In retrospect, their work is actually more alien than many of the punk bands whose music - reappraised from a late-80s perspective - was about as radical as Pub Rock. Nelson's work seemed to fuse parallel preoccupations with classic guitars and High Art - specifically, the ability of the European tradition to comment wryly on itself through a process of fracture and dislocation.

As a result of the Punk-inspired guitar hero holocaust and a series of disputes with EMI, Nelson split BE BOP DELUXE and formed an experimental combo called RED NOISE. This proved too lateral for the public at large, so he decided to form his own label and strike out on his own as a solo composer/instrumentalist.

## At Home With Cocteau

Bill named his fledgling record label after French art hero Jean Cocteau (*director of classic films such as Beauty And The Beast and*

*Les Enfants Terrible* ). A first album, recorded in a local church hall with Abbey Road graduate John Leckie, nearly spawned a hit single - *Do You Dream In Colour* - which failed only because of the usual indie distribution problems. Liverpoolian rockers A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS were signed, only to be snapped up by a major following the success of the Cocteau single. The independent experience.

From this point on, the label shifted its perspective, turning its back on the mainstream once and for all. Since when Bill's output has been prodigious both in scale and quality. Collaborations have involved a range of people from the YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA to the Yorkshire Actors Company. The last two years have also seen work on film soundtracks like *Dream Demon*, and TV theme and incidental music for shows such as *Brond*, *Right to Reply* and *Lucky Sunil*. EMI have recently issued the Be Bop back catalogue on CD, and Cocteau have countered with *Duplex*, a ten year retrospective divided into one vocal and one instrumental LP. Prolific or what?

"I think any musician who can't turn out an album per month is messing about," says Bill uncompromisingly. "At one time I was taking on so much that it got a bit out of hand. The old house cost so much to run - I was working just to keep it going and ignoring my family. To give you an idea of last year's workload...I did commercials for American Express in the States, a big job filmed in Buddhist temples in the far East - very exotic for AmEx! - a Toyota commercial, Goblin vacuum cleaners, the movie *Dream Demon* for Palace pictures, a documentary on the sculptor Henry Moore, *Map of Dreams*, *Lucky Sunil*, the TV series *Brond* and others, all for TV. It's my job. You don't expect an undertaker to take three months to embalm a body!"

A 1983 deal with CBS enabled Bill to upgrade his home studio into the present setup, which is housed in a large attic room atop his

**"I think any musician who can't turn out an album per month is messing about."**



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2020-2021  
2022-2023

DAN ARMSTRONG . AMPEG



# A NEW AGE - A NEW CONCEPT

It is now over ten years since TASCAM gave the world – cassette multi track recording with the introduction of the 144 PORTASTUDIO.

Since that time TASCAM's commitment to the musician has resulted in the development of the outstanding MINISTUDIO and PORTASTUDIO ranges, staying in front of the increasing sophistication of multi-track cassette recording.

Although there have been times when digital sequencers and synthesizers have threatened to completely overshadow multi-track recording, the warmth and vitality of acoustic sound has never lost its appeal.

The current trend in music production shows a demand to combine the best elements of digital and acoustic origination.

This need requires a wholly new approach to Multi-Track Recording.

The new age MTR must be capable of synchronisation and control via MIDI; provide sound quality & editing control versatility that is as close as possible to that of digital equipment and provide a greater number of mixer channels to handle an increased range of analogue and digital sources.

TASCAM have created such a machine – a totally new concept in recording – the MIDISTUDIO.

The unique eight track TASCAM MIDISTUDIO 688 which along with its little brother – the 4 track MIDISTUDIO 644 – gives the recordist access to a level of versatility and control unprecedented in cassette multi-track recording.

The 688 features a 10 channel mixer

section which gives access to a total of 20 inputs via a special on-line multi-function Dual Mix System.

The DMS can function as a monitor mixer, auxiliary input channels or as a stereo effect mix/send system.

A powerful MIDI tape synchronizer is built-in enabling modern MIDI-based sequencers to lock to tape from any point within a recording. The totally new TASCAM Scene Display is a comprehensive graphic display of all mute, input and assignment configurations. Up to 99 different scenes can be stored in the internal memory for instant recall via the panel controls or from external MIDI patch change.

Channel muting can also be controlled in real time via MIDI note information. The 644 and 688 MIDISTUDIOS are directly compatible with the TASCAM MTS-1000 MIDIIZER giving the capability of synchronising to other tape and video recorders.

Both MIDISTUDIOS share many of the advanced transport features first introduced on the TASCAM 238, including gapless auto punch in/out, 3 point auto locate and the unique shuttle control.

TEAC as a company has a 35 year long history of innovation in the fields of audio, video and digital recording, not forgetting our expertise in computer disc drive manufacture. This vast store of knowledge puts us in a unique position to respond to the changing requirements of the audio industry.

The MIDISTUDIOS represent the first step into a new age of recording – for as we have discovered in the past – the future belongs to those who seek it.

**TASCAM**  
the right track



into the present setup, which is housed in a large attic room atop his house. Known as the Echo Observatory, it's a classic loft conversion number, providing a large workspace and views across the beautifully bleak Yorkshire countryside.

"It's based round a Fostex B16. I use it with an Allen Heath and Brennel desk (32:8 ). There's also a rack of mixed goods; Fostex compressor/limiter, Yamaha SPX90, an old MXR O1 Reverb unit, A Marshall Time Modulator - the sort of thing you see in studios but never see used. It's good on drums, kind of like a flanger only it alters the note itself rather than creating a halo around the note. The drum machine is an Akai/Linn MPC60. I did have a Sequential Circuits Studio 440 but they went bust, making it hard to repair. I've sampled a lot of its' sounds. Monitoring is Tannoy Little Reds and David 6000's: this room is a lot deader than my old studio so I



Mr Nelson in the Echo Observatory

need to drive them quite hard. The basic keyboards are a DX7, an Emax and a CS-70M, which I like because you can get your hands onto the knobs and not rely on pre-programmes."

"I hired in an Emulator for the *Dream Demon* film music, and kept it on for the *Henry Moore* documentary. That was lovely to work on. It was filmed at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park over a period of a year, so there's seasonal and weather variations, very little dialogue and incredibly fluid camera work - Steadi-cam. Wonderful to work on. *Dream Demon* was a lot more work: constant revisions - seven different versions."

## BeBop Till You Drop

It was always easy to see technical virtuosity in Bill's work with Be Bop Deluxe, but the thing that really distinguished the band, and has been a hallmark of Nelson's work since, is his obsession with continental artists like Cocteau. It's perhaps this influence that has lead Nelson to shun the orthodox, and be always there ready with a spanner to throw into the works when things get too predictable.

"Yeah. I was a painter, and still do a lot of photography. Be Bop Deluxe came up through a certain period, remember...early ROXY, BOWIE. We were drawing on more than just music. Pop Art was happening when I was young. And that European tradition of fracturing slightly in order to comment on the subject.

"If we could have got rid of the R&B influence totally then maybe we would have...But it kept coming back, the roots of R&B wouldn't let go. It's a wonder any of it worked!!"

Be Bop Deluxe started off as a guitar-based band. In fact Bill Nelson was hailed as one of the "new" generation of guitar heroes. By the release of their final album, *Revolt Into Style*, however, all the guitar histrionics had been ditched. They were replaced by an angular, fiercely modern electronic vision that gave short shrift to

traditional guitar technique. Does Bill still consider himself to be a guitarist, first and foremost?

"Yeah. There was that trilogy of guitar albums, *Axe Victim*, *Fuuzurama* and *Sunburst Finish*. Now I only play keyboards in darkened rooms! My first heroes were guitar players, DUANE EDDY, HANK MARVIN... I saw THE SHADOWS in Wakefield and was stunned. You know, teenage thrills! Tweed amps, blue mohair suits, Jet Harris - you could feel the bass through your feet.

"After that I got into Jazz players; BARNEY KESSELL, WES MONTGOMERY. I was perhaps over-impressed by technique. Then I got into Blues from Jazz. ALBERT KING. PETER GREEN was a sublime player. And JEFF BECK, for that combination of technique and flash."

The nearest Nelson ever got to the singles charts was with the pair of Be Bop singles, *Maid In Heaven* and *Ship In The Night*, which came out just prior to the reappraisals brought on by Punk. The guitar sound that characterised these records was an immensely fluid, spiralling lushness, reminiscent of a singing Les Paul, though in fact he was generally using Yamahas. Almost 15 years on, the sound has changed, but the choice of instruments remains the same.

"As far as solids go, I still use two SG-type Yamahas. I also have a beautiful blonde semi-acoustic Guild which I'm saving for me old age; it's called an X500. There are also two Ovation Glen Campbell acoustics - a six string and a twelve string - for that 'Wichita Lineman' sound. What else? A Cliff Wood fretless acoustic bass which sounds like an upright, various sitars...."

Bill was also known as one of the first guitarists to really experiment with that peculiar 70s invention which goes in and out of fashion yearly, the E-Bow. Listen to *October Man* on the new Duplex set. At one point, everything he did involved the E-Bow!

"Yeah, I got it into my head that I couldn't touch a guitar without one - they work on acoustics as well you know - but now I'm back to using a pick. I do love that fluid, slightly oriental sound you get, like Hendrix's run on *May This Be Love*. You can do that with your fingers if the volume's high enough, but you don't get those harmonics that the E-Bow gives. If you play, say, an open G string, then hit the harmonic on the 5th fret, move up to the 12th and fret the note, then you can play a melody, go on up, and it sounds ridiculously un-guitar-like.

"It definitely comes back for the next session. Greg went out of business for a while, I was the only person buying E-Bows! - the old silver type - then Stuart Adamson used one when I produced THE SKIDS, and Frapp got one...Next time I landed in Los Angeles Greg was there with the new matt black E-Bow, saying 'I'm back in business, thanks for putting the word around!'"

## Enfant Terrible

Following his work on *Dream Demon* and the *Henry Moore* documentary, Bill retreated back to his first instrument for a short while. He wrote a sequence of guitar-based songs which he describes as "very personal" in content - "they could fill four albums"! And while it's unlikely that we'll be seeing four Nelson albums in the immediate future, there are some extraordinary plans to do the one thing we all thought the man would never consider.

"I've plans to do an album and tour with a large band, called, believe it or not, Be Bop Deluxe. I'd avoided this for years...but now Reeves Gabrel (*guitarist with Bowie's TIN MACHINE*) has offered to play. So has Harold Budd. I'd like to get David Sylvian to sing, and Sakamoto if possible. Of course the whole thing will be governed by money. I'd like an acoustic drummer and an electronic kit, three keyboards, second guitar, three backing singers...it'd be a great noise!"

MacGregor Mathers



**BAND:** TACKHEAD SOUND SYSTEM

**VENUE:** POWERHAUS, ISLINGTON

**DATE:** AUGUST 9, 1989

**PA:** IN HOUSE

**P**ut your ale down on the table, and take a stroll over to the jukebox. Take your last hard-earned 50p, put it in the slot and select your favourite songs from the Sixties. Notice as those golden sounds once again crank out of the rusty speakers, how the conversation changes and people around you start exclaiming things like, "Gosh, just listen to that distinctive snare sound!" and the barman stops polishing glasses for a second to comment, "Don't hear many bass drums recorded like that these days!"

Yes, thanks to the vogue of extended dance mixes, people have become more and more conscious of drum sounds. There were a few turning points in the process - the drum fill in PHIL COLLINS' *In The Air Tonight*, BOWIE's *Let's Dance* and ART OF NOISE's drastic sound in *Close to the Edit*. Now there's a large interest in music that completely bypasses the vocals and the guitar solos and cuts straight to the beat and the atmosphere created around it. The Tackhead Sound System is a good example of this; a separate entity from the band TACKHEAD, it's the group's drummer, Keith LeBlanc, playing on his own and triggering a vast assortment of wild and wonderful sounds from his Akai S900.

### Keith LeBlanc

If you're an avid reader of sleeve notes, Keith's name may be familiar to you. You may remember the cut up Hip Hop hit single *Malcolm X* from a few years back: that was all his work. He's also played on a vast array of other people's records, ranging from AFRIKA BAMBAATA and JOHNNY LYDON to MARK STEWART AND THE MAFIA. But he does Tackhead just because he loves it.

"I've always been interested in gadgets and things, and started playing live triggered sounds about two years ago," he says in the dressing room of Islington's Powerhaus, prior to the gig. "I make a lot of the drum samples myself in the studio - they're often made up of several different sounds. The other noises and effects come from anywhere."

Keith plays a Pearl drum kit which includes five tom toms, with one of the three floor toms to the left of the hi hat position. There is a Pearl double beater for the bass drum, so he has a second shut hi hat over to his right, which is used when both feet are otherwise engaged. There are two Simmons pads incorporated into the kit, the whole lot mounted on a frame. All the cymbals are Zildjian and all of them are miked with tiny ZMC1 system microphones fixed to the stands underneath the bell, completely doing away with the need for overhead mikes. The drum mikes on

this occasion were supplied by the venue - a cross section of the usual names - but each drum also has a Hotspot pickup attached to it in order to trigger the samples.

### TecHead

At the Powerhaus, Keith's Akai S900 was just to one side of the kit, within easy reach from the drum stool. The sounds were changed by hand, usually between numbers, but occasionally Keith would call up something different while it was all happening in a section where only bass drums were required. In the rack with the sampler was an Oberheim DMX drum machine which was used for a click track and as part of the full FOH (*front of house*) sound.

So what do you think of drum machines, Keith? Do you reckon they're doing you out of a job?

"They're interesting instruments. I don't really lose work because of them - I'm often called in just to programme," he explains. "People want the input of a drummer's feel and ideas even when using a machine. For live, though, they greatly decrease the possibility of improvisation."

The Oberheim and Akai sounds went through a Yamaha MV802 eight channel mixer, also in the rack, and through a Trace Elliot E-Pass 400 amplifier - especially good for drum amplification - and then to two Trace Elliot speaker cabs for stereo monitors on either side behind the drum stool. In a line with these cabs were three regular drum fills for the rest of the drums; two Martin LE400s, each containing a 15" Martin 400 bass speaker and a Martin compression driver for top end, and an 'old faithful' drum fill housing two unknown 12" speakers. The mixing desk supplying



Le men on le mixer



**LeBlanc on le drums**

**Pix: Simon Camper**

these bins was a SoundCraft 24:6 console, dishing out three monitor mixes - two in stereo for the LE400s and one general one for the 2x12".

## The New System

The Powerhaus had recently been fitted out with a new PA similar to the one in its' sister venue, the Mean Fiddler. Rob Allen is one of the in-house Powerhaus sound engineers and he ran through the specifications of the new setup.

"It's a five-way system with the top end crossing over to hi mid passively at 5kHz, the rest crossing over actively at 2kHz hi mid to lo mid, 200Hz lo mid to bass and 60Hz bass to sub bass."

The sub bass speakers are built in below the stage; a 2x18" Martin cab on either side. The rest of the PA is at stage level and all mounted in one cabinet on each side. In each there are three JBL 15" bass speakers, two JBL 12" lo mids, a JBL 4" for hi mid and two JBL HF bullets. Amplification for the system is provided by four HH 900 amps and the crossovers are BSS-made.

The main FOH mixing console is a SoundCraft 500 series 24:8:2 desk and next to it in the outboard rack is a Court GE60 30-band dual graphic equaliser for equalisation of the overall sound. Adjustment of the GE60 was done when the system was installed using pink noise and a spectrum analyser, so the levels on it are pretty permanently fixed and not to be adjusted by the various engineers working there.

Tonight's sound man is the legendary Adrian Sherwood and he clearly contributes a great deal to the overall sound picture - this is creative mixing. Which is why Sherwood gets a mention along with Keith LeBlanc on the poster outside. Before the show, Keith gave him a set list and a list of echo delay times for each song.

These were programmed into one of the two Yamaha SPX90 IIs which reside in the outboard rack, so that as each song comes and goes Adrian is prepared for it. The other SPX90 II was set for various reverb sounds to be applied in a dub-wises fashion along with the delays as the performance progresses.

## Rock On-U

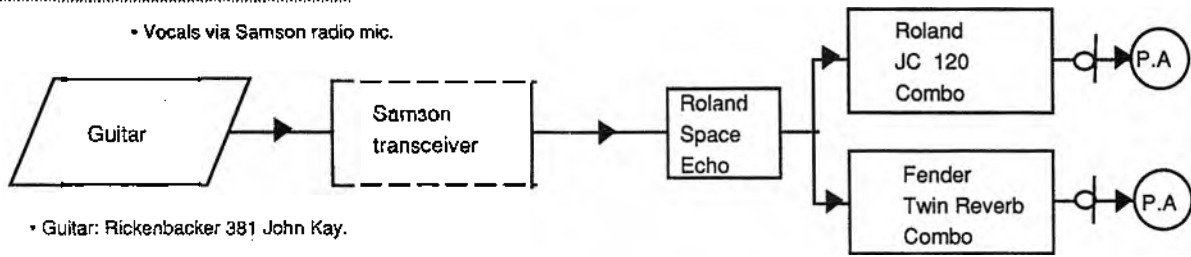
The Tackhead record label, On-U Sounds, provided the disco and went down a storm with the packed crowd so by the time Keith came on stage and started into his set, the place was extremely hot and sweaty. The Tackhead rhythms range from light super-tight JAMES BROWN-like Funk stuff to massive sounding Reggae beats via more Hip-Hop influenced rhythms - all very dancey stuff and played with a kind of effortless power. Keith's got quite an 'American' technique, ie. totally awesome and only very occasionally going over the top with the big tom tom fills.

But even though there is just a lone drummer on stage this is in no way a 40 minute drum solo; it's the amazing overall sound that we're after - the weird dislocation of some ancient American TV commentator sampled up over an atomic beat box while a giant vacuum cleaner malfunctions. Maybe you should get Keith LeBlanc's imminent solo album *Stranger that Fiction* to find out exactly what it's like.

The sound of the PA was great - clear but very gutsy in the bass end and really loud even with a million bodies packed in. The bass drum had a machine-like click with all the power of a good live drum. And, as the barman remarked while polishing a glass or two, it was most effective.

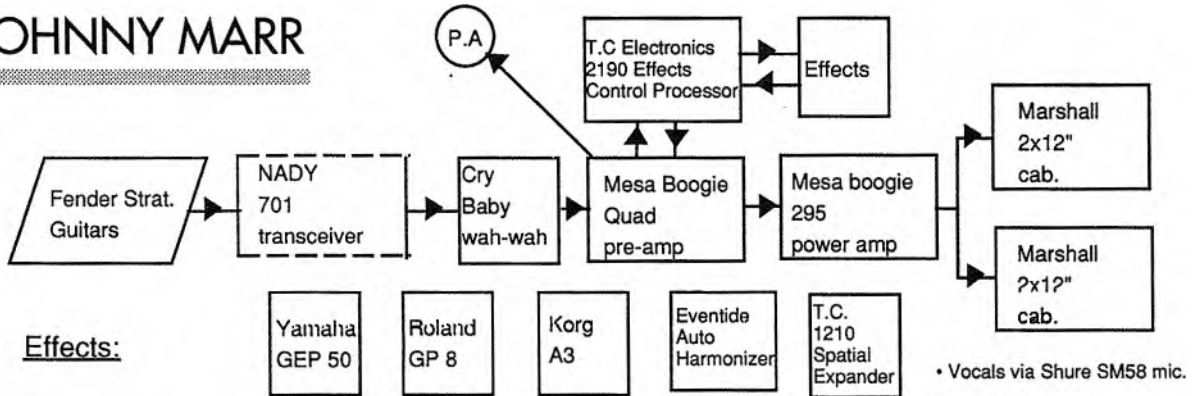
*David Anthony*

# MATT JOHNSON



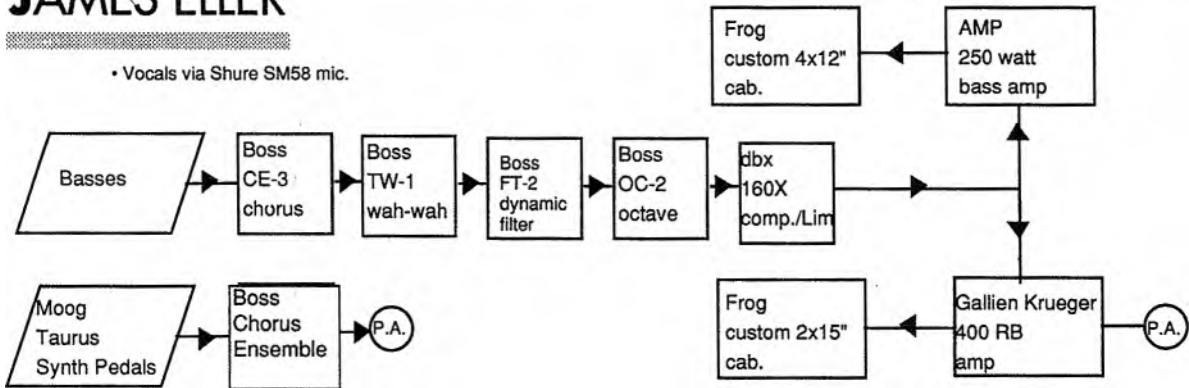
Unlike anyone else in the band (bar Melanie Redmond), a rig that will still go into a Ford Escort. Neat.

# JOHNNY MARR



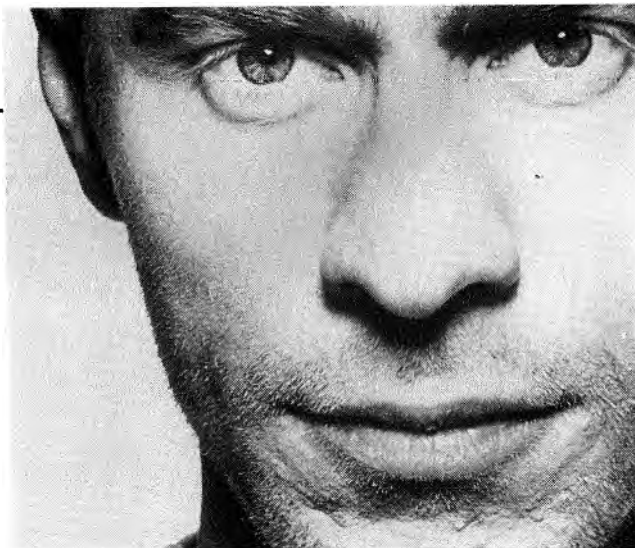
Stack it, rack it, and get those beastly effects clear out of the way Harmonizer? Spatial Expander? No distortion pedal in sight? And I though Marr was rock 'n' roll!

# JAMES ELLER



Whereas guitar players seem to be stacking everything neatly in racks, bass players still tend to like the electronics under their feet, which is why the BOSS range of foot pedals isn't likely to die. Why, James even has an 'antique' Chorus Ensemble up there too.





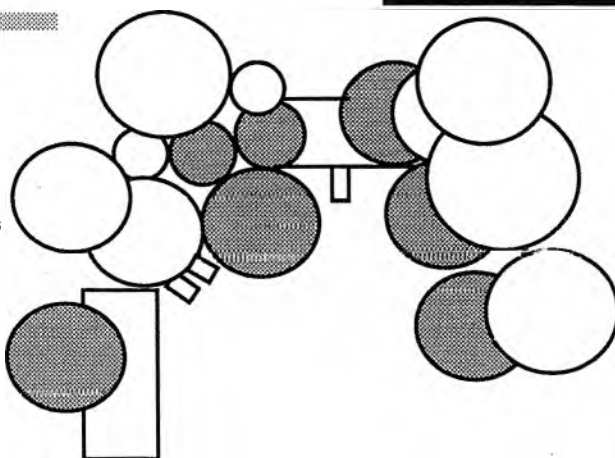
# THE THE

- LABEL - EPIC
- ALBUMS - SOUL MINING, INFECTED, MIND BOMB
- RECOMMENDED LISTENING - THIS IS THE DAY FROM SOUL MINING, SWEET BIRD OF TRUTH FROM INFECTED, THE BEAT(EN) GENERATION FROM MIND BOMB

## DAVID PALMER

### Drums: Pearl:

- 22" bass drum
- 8", 10", 12" toms
- 14", 16" floor toms
- 2 Ludwig 14"x5.5" snares
- DW 5000 double pedal
- Roland PAD 80 Octopad II
- Akai S1000 Sampler



### Cymbals: Sabian:

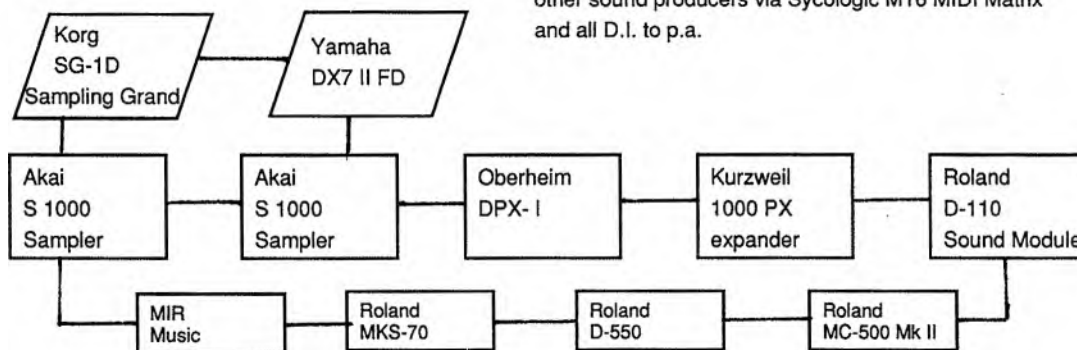
- 14" crash
- 14" hi-hats
- 6" splash
- 16" crash
- 6" splash
- 12" hi-hats (closed)
- 18" crash
- 20" ride
- 18" China

[Akai sampler triggered from Octopad and also from kick, both snares and rack toms via C-ducer contact mics and Akai ME 35T MIDI/Audio trigger]

You can 'beef-up' an acoustic kit all you like, but there's still nothing like the sound of a stick coming down hard on a piece of stretched skin from a drum roadie's arse - although a Remo head will do at a pinch.

## DAVE COLLARD

- SG-ID and DX7 keyboards MIDI-linked to all the other sound producers via Sycologic M16 MIDI Matrix and all D.I. to p.a.



Thank God for MIDI! Sounds good, but you can't rock it and stick knives in a hard disk drive like Emerson did with his Hammond, in the days when the only place you'd find an expander was a gym.

## MELANIE REDMOND

- Backing vocals via Shure SM58 mic. Wot, no rack?

For the butter-fingered of both strings and skins percussion, a can of DeWaxer or Plectra (£3.99 from Barnes & Mullins) could be a lifesaver. Based on the stuff that stops toupees blowing off in the wind (!) these sticky substances are designed to let you keep a grip on things. Hmmm... (01-275 4631)



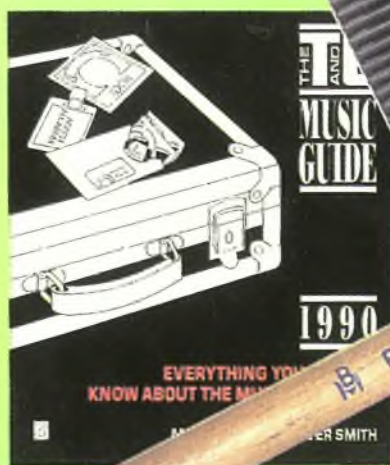
# XMAS XCITERS

*Tickers, plum puddings, crackers and - pruzzies! Here's TM's own helpful Xmas list, to be left casually on the ice of your loved ones...*



Feel up with post-gradual drum with The Drummer (with the first revision) slip a little tape to the old hand. Illustrate the amazing drum music, showing you how to beat a groove. 160 hand-drawn notes, for players of any instrument. From £29.99 (01-251 6131)

The ultimate Xmas Present - The Year & Quarter Club Music Guide 1990 is a priceless collection of ten years on the list of Dr. M., and a range of brilliant vintage record samples, vinyls, film, tracks, the works. £6.99 from Penguin



Crystal clear - Be true to your strings and cymbals can just head and onlook. A couple of quids from your drum store, or FREE from Zildjian (0753-819031) while old works last.



Cut that ringing with Remo's - two sizes of instant head damper for just £5. From Remo (01-202 1199)



...And another bright idea from MIDI Music: coloured MIDI leads. An end to wondering which one's plugged into what. 10 glowing colours, in lengths ranging from 1 metre (£2.95) to 10 metres (£7.95)



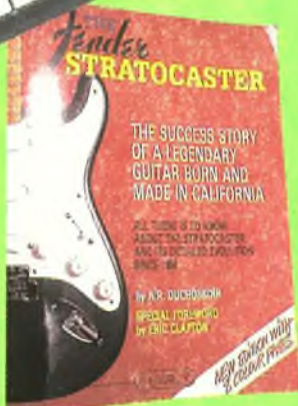
Forget Porsche keyrings - these mini-drumsticks say you're a rockin' guy or gal for just £1.49. Barnes & Mullins (01-275 4631)

Here's a goodie from Zildjian. The Drummers Survival Kit (£7.20) is full of the thingummies you never think about until you really need 'em: cymbal felts and spacers, washers, snare cord for emergency repairs, even a slick pad for the bass drum. Beat that! (0733-859931)



Here's a real one for synth-freaks - self-loading patch discs, for the Atari ST, the D50, M1, D10, ESQ-1 and practically everything else. Whop the disc in and presto - 100 new sounds, no ads needed. £20-30 each; also available in cassette form for tape-load machines, from MIDI Music (0793-887108)

Jingalanga Queen's Speech with a real keyboard - amazingly, Casio's dinky little SA1, with submini keys, and 2-note polyphony will only set you back just £29.95 (01-450 9131). Even more amazingly, Yamaha's PS520 offers 8 FM voices, for the princely sum of just £19.99 (0908-371771). Perfect for tour bus inspiration later in the year...



Nothing Like A Good Book Dept: Guitar freaks everywhere will go a bundle on The Fender Stratocaster, by A. R. Duchossois (£8.95, an import). The ultimate history of everyone's fave axa. We got ours from Chandlers, (01-940-5874).

Now play the guitar - Original Heroes (£7.95) is a lick-by-lick guide to the great man's style; or for four-string thrummers, how about Appetite For Destruction, an easy-tab guide to the bottom end of Guns 'n' Roses for £9.95 - just two titles from IMP's impressive list. (01-557 6131)

Also featured: Maxima chrome strings, from Brazenrock



The humble plectrum. So many to choose from, so little expense involved.

Example: the 25p Jim Dunlop (01-372 6668) Fur Pick uses a rubber band to scoot out of the way when you finger pick; their chunky, thick Stubby Picks make hanging on to the damn things that much easier for novice Malmsteens (40p), or for a bright, cutting sound, try a brass Hor Licks pick (£1.85 pair - a luxury item!) - Our illustrated model is ideal for the Goth guitarist in your life: the £6.50 Ducan from Brazenrock (01-969 3619) is made from bone. Helps give your sound 'a drier edge', it says here. And no jokes about having a bone to pick with us, alright?



Ry Cooder watch out. This heavy brass slide is perfect for that Paris, Texas feel. Just £6.75 from A&W Ltd (01-372 6668)

Brilliant idea of the century from MCM. Their £19.95 Cord Control Kit bundles messy cabling into one neat plastic pipe. Leads can be removed easily, and the whole lot can be tagged onto your keyboard stands, etcetera for semi-permanent installation. Looks well hi-tech too... (01-724 4104)



These days the locking-tram whammy barred axeperson has to lug a large toolbox around with them just to change a string. Unless they have the Gumool, a Swiss Army penknife-style multitool with Allen keys, screwdrivers, and sundry other appliances. £15.95 from Hohner (0221-887333)

Photos: Eric Korman/Red-Dove Studios; Chris Jankovics; Jim Berkowitz; Toad 66

# FOREST

# fire

**Bruce**  
*Forest has*  
*remixed*

*singles for many of the biggest names in the business. Tony Horkins finds out how*

**BRUCE FOREST, LIKE MANY AMERICANS, KNOWS HOW TO** talk. Barely inside the front door, I'm being talked at a million miles a minute about technology.

"People who say they don't really like the sound of digital are people who are scared of technology."

Bruce Forest is not scared of technology.

He isn't scared of much. The first half of his professional life was spent playing records in New York clubs as a DJ, and now he's in the studio re-mixing them. Taking the multitrack recordings of major stars like MADONNA, ROBERT PALMER and STEVE WINWOOD back into the studio, and making them into almost completely different records. You don't muck with masters if you're scared.

The art of re-mixing is still a relatively new one. Bruce dates it back to the late seventies when a DJ called Tom Molton was asked if he could do a better version of *Love Is The Message* by MFSB.

"It was basically hundreds of edits in different parts, which is how re-mixing came about. But re-mixing isn't separated from mixing in the first place. A lot of the times, for instance like what I'm doing now, it's the first mix of a record."

And the first mix Bruce was working on in the incredibly hi-tech surroundings of Sarm West's mixing suite, was the new TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY single, *This Side Of Love*. Not bad for a former club DJ.

"People realised that club DJs, which is what every re-mixer has been, were very close to people. We were playing to 1000, 1500 people every night and getting immediate reactions. Radio DJs only get reactions through letters and phone calls, and what their programme directors tell them is happening. So we *know* what it is that makes what type of person dance."

Which still makes it a long stretch between playing the right records and making them. How do you learn to actually use the equipment?

"I don't want to sound pretentious, but there are about four people who do this that actually sit at a desk and do their mixes themselves, and I'm one of them. Most people sit at the back on the couch, and say 'I want it to sound like this, drop the drums out here, do this, do that'. I was never comfortable doing that. I enjoy sitting at the desk.

"I've always been a bit of a gadget head, and the way I did it was

to start bringing equipment to the club - samplers, drum machines, etc. So I had a basic idea of how to lay things over the track. The first mix I ever did was in 1983 for Chris Blackwell on an album by Paul Haig, and he put me in front of an SSL and I was interested enough to ask the engineer what all the buttons did. I wanted to learn to do it myself because I didn't want people sitting around - so it was by force of necessity. I had to learn how to use it. If I don't learn something new after I've done a mix, I feel disappointed with myself."

While working in the UK, Bruce has had plenty of opportunity to learn about new pieces of equipment. Contrary to popular belief, New York is *not* where the most innovative re-mixing is going on. According to Bruce it's right here in Blighty.

"Over here they start out kids right away. DMC (*Disco Mix Club*) manages me over here, and they get kids who are DJs, give them a record and tell them to re-mix it. They send these kids in with no knowledge whatsoever and they do what they like, and now these kids have developed with technology light years beyond what I know. If they handed me a record to re-mix it, I'd say 'Where's the multitrack, where's my big desk, where's my engineer, where's my lounge, my chef? I don't know how to work like this. There is a greater love of mixing here than there is in the US. The studios are better, they're more homey, better equipped, they don't break down, the assistants are better, the engineers are better - everything's better."

## Good Technology

Good equipment is high on Bruce's list of priorities, and again he's adamant that Britain is leading the field.

"I found this amazing piece of equipment when I visited the APRS show in London that I'm using now. It's called the DAR Soundstation Two. It's got to be the most user-friendly, amazing digital editor I've ever seen. I've just been raving about it to all my friends in the US. The limitations of working on half inch are that you always have to cut tape. This thing, you press a few buttons and you've edited it.

"And some of the sequencing aids you've got, like the SRC Cat, which is a SMPTE reader that reads time code off tape and reads out



a MIDI click - I've never seen that before I came here. All we use is SPX80s. The Akai S1000 sampler - almost non-existent in the US. We're still using S900s and S950s and they're nowhere near as versatile. It's stereo, has better resolution, has better disc editing, the samples sound better, it has a visual editor built into it. It's brilliant."

And things have to be brilliant if Bruce is to get the right type of sound for his records. Which in his case, is aggressive.

"I don't like wimpy ballads and mellow soul grooves. It's okay, and I've done them, but my idea of a great record is something that's so aggressive it blows you across the room."

And how exactly do you get a record to blow you across the room?

"My favourite trick is very aggressive live drum sounds. There are two drums machines that people live on, over here and in the US, and that's the Roland 808 and 909. They are, in my opinion, synthesizers. I don't think everything deserves these machines. I prefer to take five or six different drums, combine them and have a totally different hybrid. Then throw it on tape with a lot of tape compression. Everything has its own frequency, and the trick of having the record blow you across the room is knowing which frequencies do that.

"I like very low frequencies, which is why I always have a frequency analyser in the room, which shows me what frequencies are being boosted and where. In a club your sub woofers are giving you 20 to 50Hz, which you don't even hear in the studio. So a lot of people, when they're mixing on little NS10s or something, it's just a matter of luck if they happen to get the right frequencies because they can't even hear them. I like to see them. I don't even have to listen, I can just watch the analyser.

"It's easy to make a record that sounds like every other house record around. As soon as something of mine sounds like that I say no. I've tried to be cutting edge about everything I do, by sounding aggressive. And that's the way I make records."

And here's just a few of the 250 and more that he's done...



**Terence Trent D'Arby:** "I gained a lot of respect for Terence mixing this track."

**Soul II Soul:** "It's just samples over a beat."



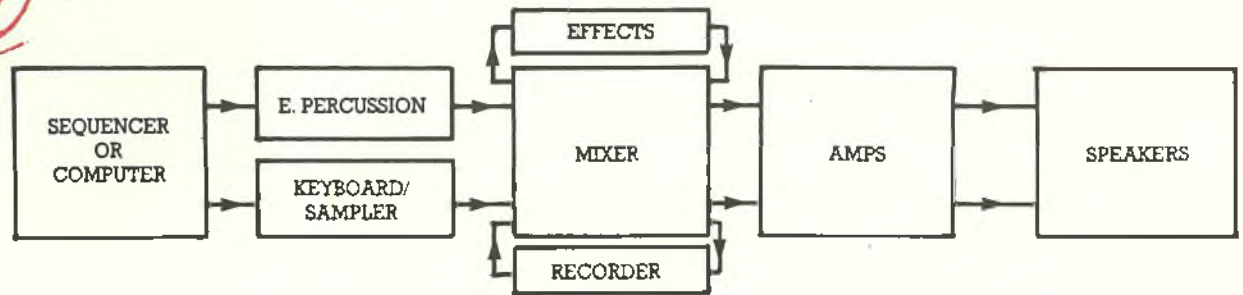
"People realised that club DJs were very close to people."

**ABC:** "Originally it was slower, so I pitched it up about 2%."



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◀ "I'm always looking for new sounds. On the new **FUZZBOX** record, **SELF**, we sampled Trevor's (Horn, owner of Sarm West) bathroom using a big serving spoon, and the sounds are so metallic that I had to wear ear plugs while we were sampling. We sampled the mirror, the toilet, the sink...but the best sound was the top of the hand drier and the nozzle of the hand drier. The mirror we used too, and it came out great.

"The track was originally produced by Andrew Richards and it was flawless. QUEEN's Brian May is playing guitar all over it, and it was one of these tracks that stops and starts. They wanted me to make it urban, so I added new drums and bass, took the guitars off the 12", but kept them on the 7". I made a whole new rhythm track and had drums continuous throughout the whole thing.

"I think we only kept a couple things on that - the pads and the vocals. Everything else was overdubs. It was all originally done on a Fairlight. The vocals were real nice on the multitrack - well recorded, in key - real nice."

"When I went to work on **ABC'S THE REAL THING** it had already been done. Originally it was slower, so I pitched it up by about 2%. I added 18 tracks of overdubs; strings, which is rare for me, live congas, a 909 fill pattern and Chicago drums, which are the kick and snare together doing the pattern, and then doubling that pattern every other bar. We put a new bass line down which was much more powerful using the MiniMoog, which to this day I haven't found anything better. I put a piano track down and a vibe solo. I had Martin Fry do a couple of vocal things that really worked out well, and there were groans and things buried on the multitrack which were great."

"I don't want to talk about the **SOUL II SOUL BACK TO LIFE** track too much. They handed me the record and asked me to re-mix it. I thought I was getting the multitrack, but I got vinyl. They wanted a different version of it, but I thought it was perfect - if it ain't broken, why fix it? So I took some drums that I had on a DAT at 120bpm, time stretched the vocals to 120, and I did a house track to it. So it's just samples over a track. They loved it, but they wanted something different, so Paul Decane got it to remix. So the final mix that came out was really his work, but my name's on the sleeve because they were already printed."

"I recently did the **BROS** track, **TOO MUCH**, which was a really interesting track. It's a Rock 'n' Roll track at 156 bpm, and I did the 12". None of us really liked the track, but I felt something was in it. I didn't know what to do with it, but while I'm rewinding the tape I find the previous track is the same song at 118 bpm. So I remix them both and float one into the other. We did overdubs on both, then mixed the first track and floated in onto a couple of empty tracks on the multitrack, did a cross fade on the multi then mixed the second track. So the 12" is 13 minutes long that starts off mellow and evolves into this Rock track.

"There were actually real drums on the second track, and we triggered samples from them to make them beefier. They were real nice, - just well played. And the vocals were flawless. Matt Goss is so much better than people give him credit for. I don't think there were any drop-ins on this track. Matt and Luke are very talented."

"**THIS SIDE OF LOVE** is going to be the first **TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY** single. I believe that Terence is playing everything on it, apart from maybe just one guitar part. But he played all the drums, percussion, he produced it, played keyboards, everything. And it's really good musicianship. Some of the drumming's loose, but it's good drumming, and it sounds nice. He plays this really chintzy tack piano (a piano with thumb tacks driven into the felt), which is totally and completely out of tune. Usually the best tack pianos have cracked bodies, so that when you tune them they actually go out of shape. I gained a lot of respect for him mixing this track."

"I was really blown away when I came to mix **THINKING ABOUT YOU** by **WHITNEY HOUSTON**. We did a new bass line on it, a bunch of new drums on it...at this point I'd only been mixing two years and I learned a lot about Pop records from it."

"I was offered **WALK THE DINOSAUR** from **WAS NOT WAS** and I thought it was awful at first - I really didn't like it. But we worked on it really hard, but I didn't think it would do as well as it did. We changed a few things, like the bass line, but Don and David are so talented that you can't fault what they do. I thought the next song, *Boy's Gone Crazy*, was better but it didn't do anything. Show's what my opinion's about..."

"One of the favourite things I ever did was **DIDN'T MEAN TO TURN YOU ON** by **ROBERT PALMER**. First I did a couple of overdubs, the main ones being the congas and the bass line, and this quirky guitar line. One conga overdub and suddenly the track's moving really well. Put the guitars on and the bass, one day mix and done. A huge hit."



Bruce Forest at his beloved D A R Soundstation Two

"I did the mix of **EVERYBODY** that's on **MADONNA'S** *You Can Dance* album. I had one day, so we put the track up and did a whole new drum track for it, did some percussion for it, and a new bass line. It had real drums on it so I just triggered some new drums off a sampler. I didn't even bother getting a click track going because I didn't have any spare tracks - it was recorded on 24-track. The vocals were okay, but not as good as what she's doing now."

"**STEVIE WINWOOD'S ROLL WITH IT** was a flawlessly produced track. Immediately I thought it was very happening. We wanted it to sound Motown, so we put that guitar hit on the snare drum that makes a record instantly Motown. Then we did live hand claps, made his vocals sound a bit better, but there wasn't much to do because it was so good. We did one really cool mix, which I call *Stevie Testifies*, where I loaded a whole load of reverb on it, floated it out into the room and put a mike into it and recorded it directly into the DAT player. I wanted it to sound like Stevie doing a test vocal of it, and it really did."

There are, of course, absolutely loads of other artists that Bruce Forest has had the opportunity to dissect in the studio too. In a way it's strange that the man should get so close to the artists and their work, yet never even get the opportunity to meet them, let alone work with them. Is mixing a lonely job?

"Yes, very. I have very few friends, and those I have are in the business. There are a lot of people out there who don't like you because you're doing better than they are, or they don't like you because you work weird hours. I've been here in England eight weeks and I've only met studio personnel, the people from DMC...and you."

Poor guy.

✍

Tony Horkins



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## ● MIDI THRU BOX

**M**ega electronic music systems used to be something of a rarity, presumably because of the 'mega-pounds' it took to buy one! In these days of low cost MIDI expanders, though, large electronic music systems seem to be quite

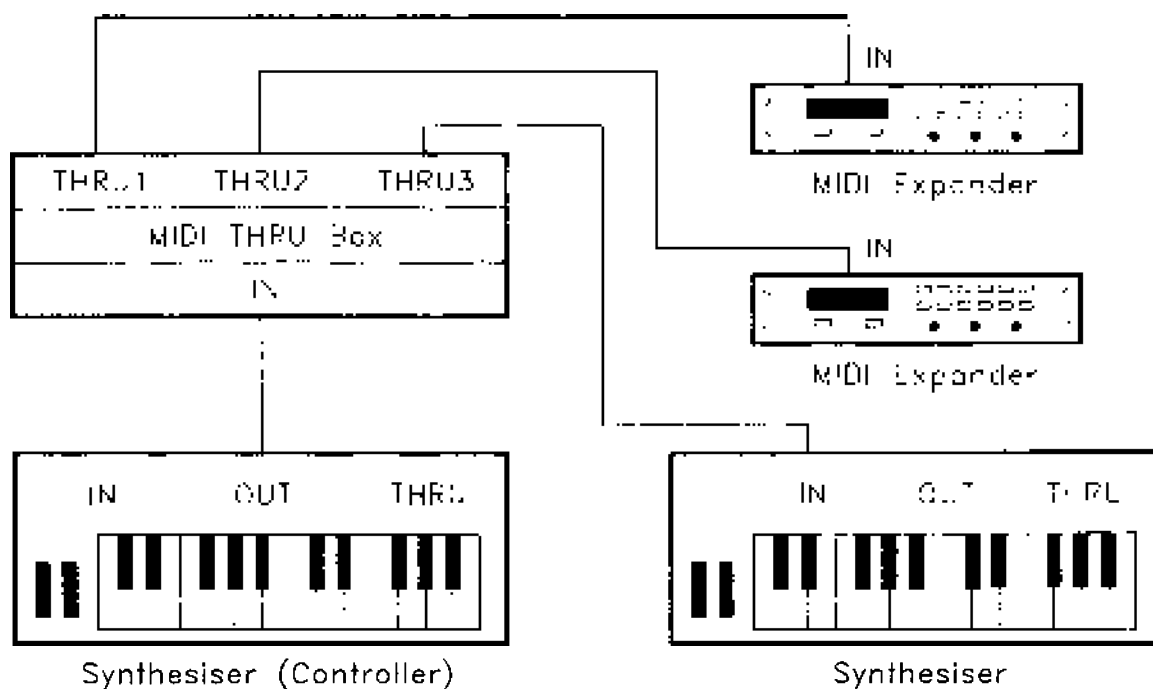
commonplace. You add a sample player here, a MIDI controlled effects unit there, and before too long you have 19" rack-mount boxes practically stacked to the ceiling. The resultant MIDI system may have the sort of capabilities you could have only dreamt about a few years

ago, but even with just a few MIDI units there can be cabling difficulties to sort out.

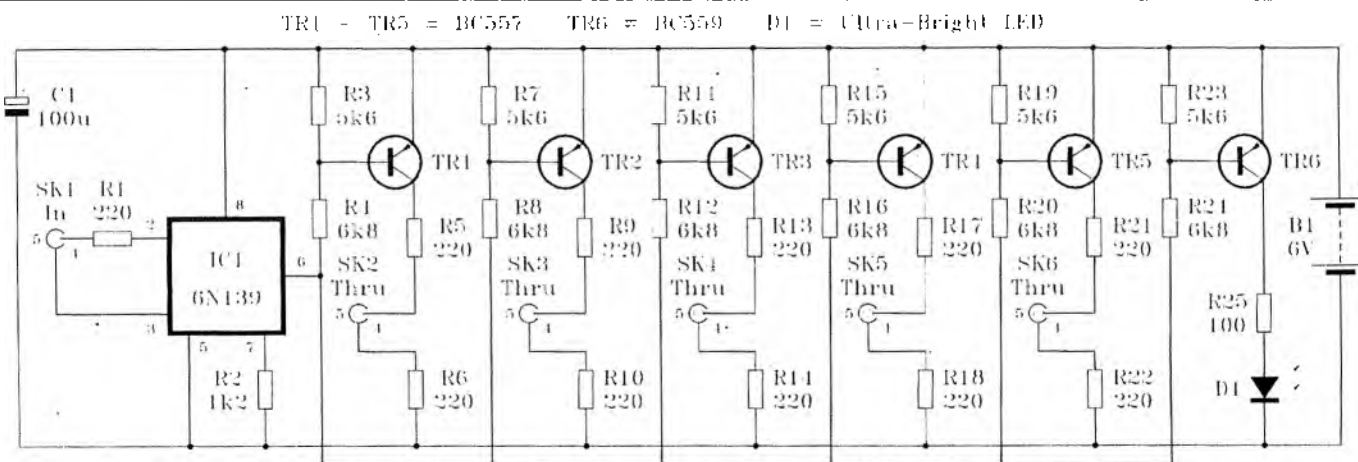
The ideal solution is a sophisticated MIDI patchbay that enables you to connect anything in the system to anything else in the setup at the flick of a switch, or possibly even

under MIDI control.

Although highly desirable, such units are fairly expensive, and you could quite reasonably take the view that the money could be better spent on improving the system in other ways. On the other hand, you need to have everything in the



**Fig 1. The star method of connection using a MIDI THRU box**



**Fig 2. The MIDI THRU Box circuit diagram. Further output stages can be added if desired**

system wired up correctly if it is going to reach its' full potential.

## Thru and Thru

The most simple form of MIDI interconnection is the 'chain' variety, where the OUT socket of the controller connects to the IN socket of the first device. The THRU output of the first unit then connects to the IN socket of the second device and this method of THRU to IN connection is carried on from one unit to the next, until all the equipment has been connected into the system. This method has the advantage of needing no add-ons at all, but it has its' limitations. The main one is that not all equipment is equipped with MIDI THRU sockets.

If one unit lacks a THRU output, simply use this as the last unit in the chain of connection, and there is no problem. If two or more units lack this facility, then the chain method of connection is a non-starter. Fortunately, most items of modern MIDI equipment are endowed with a THRU socket. A further problem is that of so-called MIDI delays. This term is perhaps a bit misleading, since it infers that units well down the connection chain will be noticeably out of synchronisation with those near the

controller. In fact the delay from a MIDI IN to a THRU is so short as to be no real problem in this respect. The problem is more one of a cumulative degrading of the waveform, or 'smearing' as it is usually termed.

In a severe case this could lead to devices being unable to decode the MIDI signal with 100% accuracy, and obvious consequences on the apparent quality of performances.

A third problem with the chain system is simply that it can be awkward to slightly rewire the system if the need should arise from time to time. Pull the plug on one device and you might actually be cutting the signal to two or three others as well.

The simple and inexpensive solution to these problems is a MIDI THRU box. This is a device which has a MIDI IN plus a number of MIDI THRU outputs. Any signal fed to the input of the THRU box from the controlling device, and feed each of the THRU outputs to an input on the other items of equipment in the system. A typical setup using a THRU box in this star method of connection is depicted in Figure 1. Problems with MIDI delays are avoided since each device receives a signal that has only

gone through one trip from an IN socket to a THRU type. Any lack of THRU sockets on equipment in the system is irrelevant - they are not needed anyway. Any quick rewiring of the system is relatively straightforward due to the simplicity of the basic scheme of things.

## Putting It Together

The circuit of Figure 2 is for a MIDI THRU box that provides five THRU sockets, but can easily be adapted to have as many as you want (*within reason*). At the input there is the usual opto-isolator (IC1). This is not really essential with a battery powered THRU box, where the isolation it provides is unlikely to be of any consequence. However, MIDI outputs are designed to drive this type of input stage, and this is a good way of ensuring full compatibility with any MIDI controlling device.

The 6N139 used for IC1 is a high quality device which can operate comfortably at the relatively high MIDI baud rate of 31250 baud. It has plenty of gain, and could directly drive several MIDI outputs. However, here it drives each output via a simple common emitter transistor switch (TR1 to TR5). This loads the output of IC1 only lightly, and a large number

of output stages could be used if desired. I have only tested the unit with up to eight output circuits, but in theory at any rate, IC1 should be well able to drive twenty or thirty of them!

TR6 is used to drive a L.E.D. indicator (D1) rather than a THRU socket. D1 will visibly flash when a MIDI input signal is present, which is useful when trying to locate problems if things are not behaving quite as expected (*not exactly an unknown phenomena with today's multi-everything instruments*).

Although D1 is driven at quite a high current, the nature of a MIDI signal is such that it will be switched off for a proportion of the time. The use of a high brightness or ultrabright LED is therefore recommended. The current drain from the battery is largely dependent on the amount of MIDI data fed through the unit, and the number of THRU outputs in use. It is unlikely to average more than a few milliamps though, and four HP7 size cells should have an extremely long operating life. The standby current consumption is so low as to be negligible. You can fit an on/off switch if you like, but it will not make any difference to the battery life.

Construction of the unit should present no problems. A suitable stripboard layout is ▶

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shown in Figure 3, together with the wiring to the six sockets. In theory, pin 2 (the middle one) on the IN socket should be left unconnected, with this pin on each THRU socket being connected to the negative supply rail of the unit.

In practice, with a small battery powered unit of this type, this could leave the leads at the outputs radiating a certain amount of radio frequency interference. The alternative shown in Figure 3 is to wire all six pin 2s together. This should avoid any interference problems, and although there is no electrical isolation through the unit, this should not matter. The inputs driven by the unit should provide all the isolation that is required. A board having 41 holes by 17 copper strips is required. This is not a standard size, and it must be cut down from a larger piece using a hacksaw. The board should fit easily into virtually any small

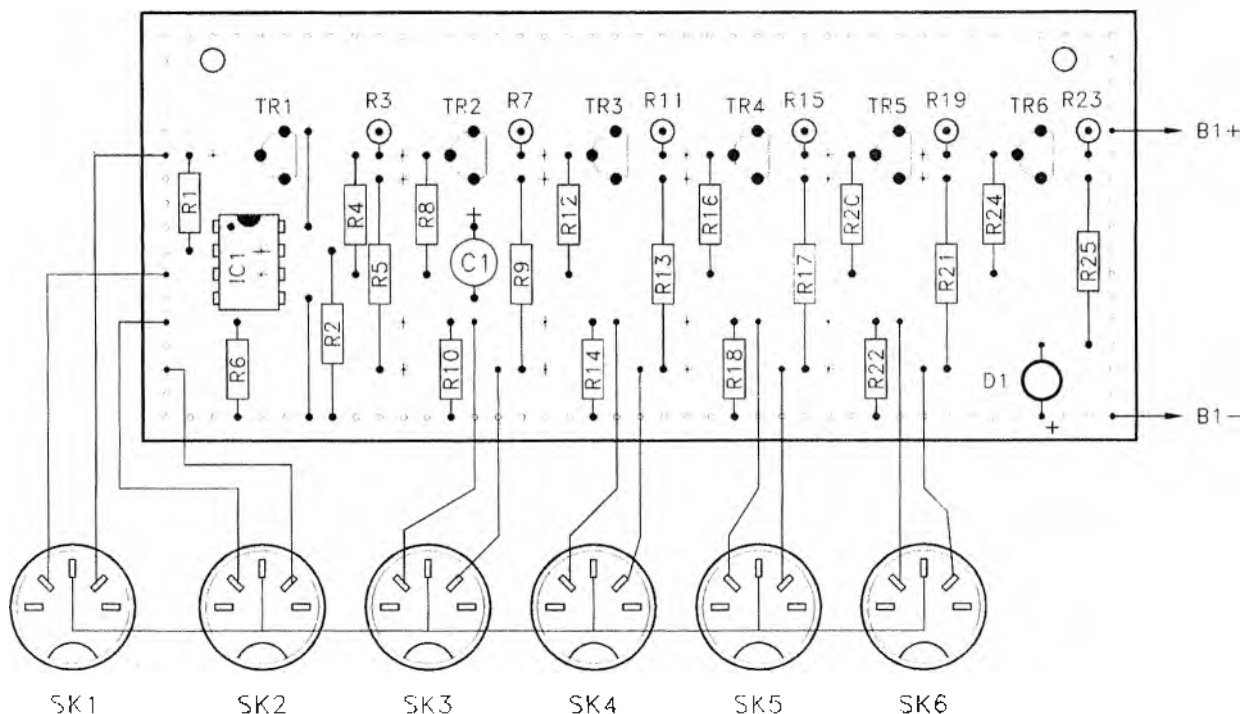
plastic box, but remember to choose one that will leave plenty of space for the sockets and the battery. Plastic holders for four HP7 size cells are readily available, and connections to these are made via ordinary PP3 size battery clips. In Figure 3 D1 is shown as being mounted on the board, but this will probably have to be mounted off-board in a panel holder, and wired to the board via a piece of twin insulated lead. The cathode (+) lead of most LEDs is indicated by that lead being the shorter of the two. If in doubt, connect it either way round, and if it doesn't work swap over the connections.

R. A. Penfold

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## ● PARTS LIST

- R1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22 220R
- R2 1k2
- R3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23 5k6
- R4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24 6k8
- R25 100R
- C1 100u 10V radial elect Ic1
- 6N139
- opto isolator
- TR1, 2, 3, 4, 5 BC557
- TR6 BC559
- D1 Ultra-bright LED
- SK1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 5 way DIN socket
- B1 6 volt (4 x HP7 in plastic holder)
- Battery clip (pp3 type)
- Stripboard 41 holes by 17 strips case



**Fig 3. The MIDI THRU Box stripboard layout and wiring. This requires a board having 41 holes by 17 copper strips.**

# Win This £500 Denon DCD -1500 CD Player In Our Mega Poll:

## The International Musician Reader's Poll 1989



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Simply fill in the voting form below, as completely as possible (if you don't want to cut your IM up, photocopies are fine), and bung it in the post to: Reader's Poll 89, International Musician, PO Box 381, Mill Harbour, London E14 9TW. All entries must arrive by 30th November. Your verdict of The Gear Of The Year 1989, plus the lucky winner of our draw will appear in the February 1990 issue.

### Gear Of The Year

There seems to be a never-ending stream of new instruments coming out and 1989 was no exception, but which one was *your* fave? It might have been a classic axe, a high tech sampler, or even a wonderful bit of new software. Whatever your musical bent, there must have been one thing that stood out from the crowd...

- Guitar.....
- Bass.....
- Drums/Drum Machine .....
- Home Recording/FXs .....
- Software .....
- Amp .....
- Synth/Sampler .....
- Bargain Of The Year .....

### Musicians Of The Year

Metal Mutha or Brosette - who did it for you in 1989? As the great Marti Caine would say: Press your buttons... NOW!!!

- Crooner.....
- Axe Person .....

- Bass Thing .....
- Skin Basher .....
- Ivory Tickler .....
- DJ/Mixer .....
- (and we don't mean Bruno Brooks)

### Sounds Of The Year

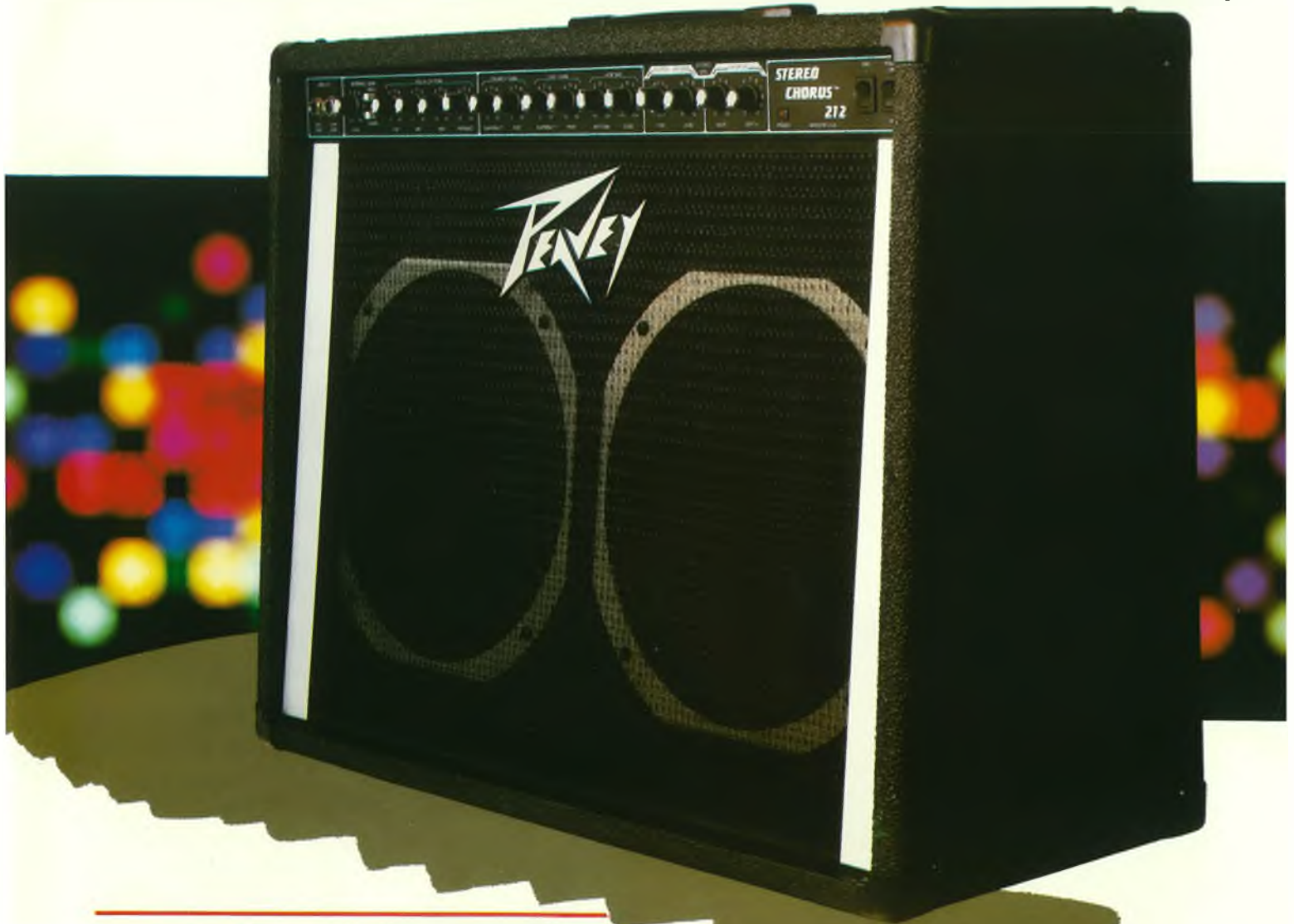
So much for the individual categories: this is the big one. What was your hands down, absolute knee trembling fave rave of the year? Cast your votes for the person or band that you think contributed most to the quality of life over the last year. Remember: your votes could make opportunity knock for the winner. And we mean that most sincerely, folks...

- LP .....
- Single .....
- Band of the year .....
- Newcomer(s) .....
- NAME.....
- DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO.....



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*Jim Betteridge finds*

*there's more to*

*writing jingles*

*than meets the ears*

JINGLES

## HOW TO GET AHEAD IN **ADVERTISING**

**A** LONG WITH THE TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOSION HAS come a media explosion. More magazines, more papers and of particular relevance here, more commercial radio and television channels. There are currently 49 independent radio stations in Britain, 20 of which broadcast two services on split channels, eg Capital Radio and Capital Gold. In addition the government has granted franchises to 21 further independent local stations throughout Britain, many of which should be operational by the end of the year, and on top of that it seems that there are to be two or three more national commercial radio networks in the near future (*write to the IBA for details - see address below*).

Though it's a bit up in the air at the moment, similar levels of expansion are possible in television with a new five-channel BSB satellite about to be launched, a new 16-channel Astra satellite for next year plus the suggestion from the government that a nationwide network of independent local television stations should be set up using MMDS (Microwave Multi-point Distribution System) sometime in the future. The atmospheres going to be buzzing with information.

And how do commercial broadcasters survive financially? Advertising. The great majority of radio and television ads today have some form of musical component. Though 'music for advertising' is perhaps a more fitting title for the more orchestrated works, the term 'jingle' is generally used to refer to all types of music in advertising. Though it doesn't carry the status of Pop/Rock legend, the job of jingle writer is a much sought after one. For every new jingle there are dozens of competent would-be jingle writers, so if you're serious about being among the successful few, you need to know what you're doing. So let's take a look at the various issues involved...

Will more stations mean more adverts resulting in more jingles? I put the question to Simon Wylie, marketing manager for THE TELEVISION REGISTER, an organisation set up to monitor all forms of advertising:

"Such a substantial increase in radio stations is bound to result in the production of more commercials. However, budgets for local advertising campaigns are obviously relatively limited and so local radio stations will quite often offer their clients their own in-house production facilities at a very reasonable rate. Of course, that's also where independent one-person operations have the advantage over large jingle organisations in that they can work more cheaply. The future television market is rather less clear, but there were actually less commercials made in 1988 than there were in 1987, so it's probably less promising for the newly starting jingle writer.

New stations will also need station idents and intro music for all their various programmes.

Though not strictly 'jingles', most jingle writers will also consider these areas of musical composition as part of the possible market.

### What Jingles Can Offer You Creatively

There's a lot of snobbery - or is it just jealousy - among musicians who don't write jingles concerning the 'quick buck' mentality of the industry. The better jingle writers, however, are very skilled and take their craft very seriously. Moral issues aside, the fact is that the actual creative process can be very rewarding. Peter Christopherson, once of THROBBING GRISTLE and now of similarly non-commercially motivated band, COIL, is also a jingle writer with Pan Am and Nissan among his credits:

**Alan Price: "It's about presentation and persistence. You can't just spend fifty quid on putting out a few hand written cassettes and business cards, and expect to get a response."**



"It's a game, I think people nowadays understand that. The viewer gets to be entertained and the company gets to present their product in its best light. I certainly remember classic adverts with a sense of enjoyment rather than exploitation.

"Creatively, having just 30 or 40 seconds in which to encapsulate your ideas in a memorable way can be very challenging. It's actually often more spontaneous and exciting than doing an album where you spend so much time in the studio and get so close to the music that you can't really hear it anymore."

Alan Price, well known for his musical contributions to stage, screen and charts, is also an accomplished jingle writer claiming the likes of Smarties, Volkswagen and Philishave as his own:

"There's something about working with picture and getting all the cues to sync-up exactly that's very satisfying. You've got to find a good hook, and all that, but it's also got to work exactly with the visuals."

**SUE BIGGS: "You have to develop an intuitive understanding of how music and visuals work together. Music is only one part of the creative process, and if you lose sight of the 'whole' your masterpiece will never see the light of day. Be aware of the pitch and timbre of the voice-over and sound effects that will be added later, and how they blend with your track; and check instrumental balance - for example, an oboe and strings mix will sound great at full volume in the studio, but dubbed under dialogue the oboe will be far too prominent."**

amount is difficult to pin down because not only does it depend on whether it's radio or TV but also on the total revenue received by the station broadcasting. A one minute airing on Capital Radio, for instance, will bring in about £2.00, and pro rata for a 30 second or 15 second commercial. Network television rates are considerably higher. In isolation the amounts seem modest, but many really successful jingles can go on playing for years, though the visuals or voice-over may change, and the final totals can be very worthwhile.

John Altman of major jingle company, Jeff Wayne Music: "As a song writer, there's so much time that passes between you finishing a song, finding a publisher, finding an act, getting it recorded and released and promoted, etc, etc. It's very chancey and can take literally years. With jingles it's very quick. You write it on Monday and on Friday it's on the television, and it might run for weeks,

months or years. If you do a lot of work the cumulative financial effect can be comparable to being a successful songwriter. There's probably more work involved, but it's a lot more direct."

## The Skills You Need

'A good hook', 'memorable'...the 30 second jingle might be seen as a condensed form of the three minute single. Are the skills basically the same? Ronnie Bond, of jingle company, Ronnie Bond Music, is master of the catchy tune. In addition to the famous Bran Flakes ditty, 'Tasty, tasty, very very tasty', he's also penned such legends as, 'Only the crumbliest, flakiest chocolate', 'I could do with a D', 'Scream for cream', and more recently, the raunchy Rock'n'Roll track for the one minute Budweiser ad. So is a jingle the ultimate form of Pop song? Ronnie Bond:

"The ability to write a good hook is obviously important to both Pop songs and jingles, but with a jingle you've got less time.

With 'Tasty, tasty' for instance, I had to pack a verse, chorus, verse, ▶

## Money

Whilst it can be a fun process, a significant motivation for most jingle writers is money. As far as the composer is concerned there are two main sources of remuneration. The Creative Fee is what you're payed for writing the music and can range from perhaps £250 for an unknown writing a short radio jingle to £1,500 for a really established TV composer. As far as the advertising agency and client are concerned, that's generally a one to three year buy-out, and no further payment will be expected; although if the commercial is shown overseas there will generally be an extra fee arranged. On top of that there's the PRS (Performing Rights Society) payments, which relate to the number of airings your music is given. The exact

## ● STEVE LEVINE



Steve Levine, more famous for his role as record producer, is also now increasingly involved in the writing of music for

film and television and jingles, including Sanatogen, British Steel and Tudor Crisps:

**THE DIFFERENCE:** "Probably the only difference between a jingle writer and most song writers in bands is the ability to write to order. But generally, the skills are similar to those of anyone writing to suit a given artist; you have to continually bear in mind the style and effect you're trying to create.

**PROFESSIONALISM:** "When recording a jingle you're able to work with absolutely professional musicians and singers who might spend eight hours a day, five days a week in front of a microphone. They can work under any circumstances, with any headphone balance, etc. Most Rock singers would fall apart if faced by a control room full of advertising executives in red rimmed glasses (laughs). Actually, I've been very lucky with my clients so far, but it can very easily happen.

**THE NEED FOR NEWNESS:** "Just as with making records, it's often still the maverick ideas that are best, but the need to get the job done safely tends to inhibit things. The record industry's also getting more like that. There are some great jingles about, though, and I'm certainly trying with what I do to bring in some freshness wherever possible."

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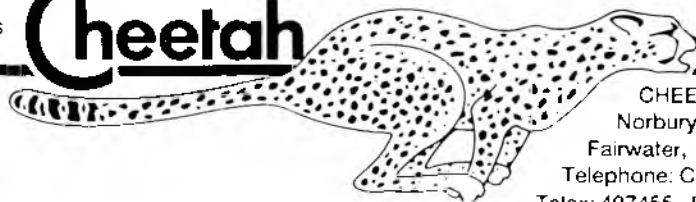
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chorus format into 30 seconds.

"You've also got far less time to write and record too, and there's a bit of luck involved really, that the phonecall catches you in a moment of inspiration.

Sue Biggs is a successful composer and classical guitarist with many big jingles to her credit. She also owns her own jingle company. Sue echoes the need for speed:

"The shortest time I've ever had to do a jingle was four hours from start to finish. I was phoned by an agency at 1pm for a rush job, the brief was taken over the phone and a 30 second piece was

● JOHN ALTMAN



John Altman is the busiest writer on the books of Jeff Wayne Music. He's been writing jingles for over 11 years and has written or arranged over 2,000 including those for British Airways, Leeds Liquid Gold and the British Steel flotation. In addition he has innumerable arranger/composer credits for television and film music and major Pop/Rock artists including VAN MORRISON, ALISON MOYET, GEORGE MICHAEL and SIMPLE MINDS:

**Communication and diplomacy:** "You have to be able to communicate clearly in non-musical terms. Compared with film, television or record work, the number of people involved is much greater - producers, directors, animators, editors, account executives, the client's representative - you might have 20 people in the control room, and nobody has, or wants to take, total responsibility. There's one company who make it their annual outing. They all turn up with bottles of champagne to have fun and make lots of noise. They all know who you are, but you probably don't know most of them, so you can end up taking advice from someone who turns out to be the runner from the editing facility! It can get clamorous if you're not careful.

**Speed and non-attachment:** "You can't be precious about what you've written. You have to go into a session prepared to change every single thing without becoming despondent. If they say they don't like something, that's what they're there for and you have to be able to come up with an alternative instantly, which can be tricky. A good example is the Paul Masson non-alcoholic wine commercial with Paula Yates and Oliver Reed. The music grinds to a halt in the middle when he realises there's no alcohol in it. I'd scored it all out to fit the visual cues, and then the client thought it needed to be at a slightly faster tempo. So I had to re-write that section on the spot so it would still be the right duration whilst maintaining the musical sense."

composed for a 10-piece brass section. Parts were copied, musicians and studio were booked, and the whole thing was recorded and mixed with the 1/4" master arriving on the agency's desk by 5pm that day."

So how can you prepare for such demands? Sue Biggs:

"Try giving yourself a few minutes to write a new melody for lyrics from an existing commercial and, if possible, record an arrangement of it. Also just try writing short musical hooks between three and 10 notes in length. Keep them up tempo, and make sure they're singable and easy to remember.

You have to be on call virtually 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You might get a call late one evening asking you to be at a briefing early the next morning. At the meeting you have to make sense of what can sometimes be very vague directives from the client or agency, then write the music, arrange all the musicians and the recording session, and produce a finished track two days later. And at any point they may re-edit the picture or something, and ask for changes to be made. There are so many people involved, all with their own inputs, you really have to be very patient and understanding."

There are also other more technical skills that come with experience. Working in sync with picture requires a good understanding of the different formats of SMPTE/EBU time code used with film and video, how to work out bars, bars and tempos related to time code timings, etc. It's all elementary maths, but if you don't understand such things you would undoubtedly be better off initially working with, or consulting, someone who does.

The Jingle Company and the Advertising Agency



**Ronnie Bond: "It still amazes me that a jingle that took two hours to write can run for 10 years."**

The jingle company is a production company set up to write, record and produce music for radio and television commercials. This is not to be confused with an advertising agency who's job it is to conceive and co-ordinate an entire advertising campaign over all media. If dealing with a large national campaign

for a major client, the campaign budget might be hundreds of thousands of pounds, including the purchase of the air time and space in mags and papers, etc. Thus they are strongly moved to deal with competent, reliable professionals only, and when looking to arrange the musical component of their campaign tend to go to established production companies whom they know can deliver. I asked Lisa Gould, a producer at the Abbot Mead Vickers agency if they were ever open to individual musicians:

"Generally we'll contact a music production company simply because we know who we're dealing with and that they're reliable. Very occasionally we might possibly see people who call up if they're offering just what we need at that moment; as usual it's really a matter of being the right person, in the right place at the right time."

Ronnie Bond: "It's so competitive these days, I really think the best way in is with an established jingle company. You have to start

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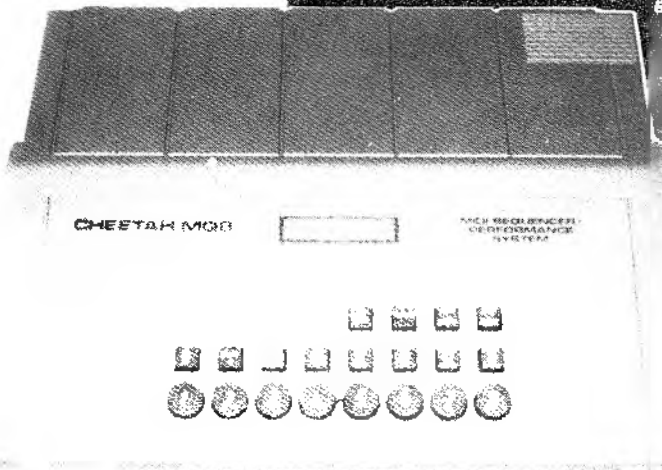


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off offering to do any small jobs, possibly for not much money, and that way you get to learn the ropes and establish that you can do the job. It does actually take a while to really get to grips with the whole process. It's more than just being able to write a good tune.

There's also the sea of contractual arrangements, and if you're thinking of going it alone you're strongly advised to contact SPAM (Society of Producers of Advertising Music), membership of which costs £40 a year (see details below). The general consensus, though, seems to be that, unless you're already musically established elsewhere, or have substantial financial backing, working through a production company is the best route forward.

### Getting Into A Jingle Company

In the same way that a budding Rock'n'Roll star might be advised to send demo tapes to record company A&R departments, so the would-be jingle writer can send a package to jingle production company. Such companies will be successful because they already have a strong team of composers working with them and, just like A&R men, they are inundated with tapes. Simon Klausman of major jingle company Air Edel:

"We have 18 very good composers on our books right now, but two or three of them do the majority of the work. We reckon to do around 35 sessions a month in a reasonably busy period and so, although we're always open to hearing from new talent, there's clearly a limit to the number of composers we can properly support. So until someone leaves, we're not able to take on anyone new.

Again, it's not only musical ability that's required. Veronique Jones of Jeff Wayne Music:

"A tape has to show that the person is musically and technically competent. It's not an absolute rule, but if you're starting out in this business you really need to have your own recording facilities; probably 16-track or more. It makes things so much quicker and easier and of course less expensive if the composer can produce the demo and perhaps the final product without having to hire a studio. Of course, if we need a string section or a big live drum sound, that's different, but for synth-based music, a well-equipped home studio with picture sync facilities is a great asset.

When it comes down to it, there's no great mystique about the way to success in the jingle business. In the words of Alan Price, "It's just like any other industry really, you've got to have a positive attitude and you've got to punt and keep punting.

### Jingle Courses

Much of the information offered here I gained from attending a five-day course entitled *Composing and Producing Music For TV and Radio Commercials*, held at Gateway School of Recording and Music Technology and taught by Sue Biggs. Sue was brilliant and I'd like to thank her specially for her help in putting this article together. My thanks also to the Gateway staff. The course was also excellent and hard work, covering all the processes involved in creating a jingle track, including the creative, technical and contractual aspects needed to help deal confidentially with the whole jingle process. We wrote and recorded five jingles during the week's course, four of which were to picture. As a 'starter pack' for the would-be jingle writer I can highly recommend it.

The Biggs/Gateway collaboration was a one-off, but both parties do intend to run their own respective jingle writing courses in the future. Anyone interested should make contact via the numbers given below.

### ● General Information

IBA (for list of new local radio stations):

70 Brompton Rd, London SW3 1EY

SPAM (Society of Producers of Advertising Music): Aston House, Blackheath, Nr Guildford, Surrey GU4 8RD. Tel (0483) 898097

### ● Trade directory for lists of jingle companies, etc:

The Creative Review: Tel 01-439 4222

Campaign list: Tel 01-402 4200

The PRS (Performing Rights Society) for details of payments: 29-33 Berners St, London W1P 4AA.

MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society): 01-769-4400

Gateway School of Recording and Music Technology:

Tel 01-549 0014

Sue Biggs Music: Tel (09274) 28812

Jim Betteridge

### ● 10 Qualities of a Successful Jingle Writer:

Can you...?

- Work to a tight brief
- Work quickly and calmly under great pressure
- Communicate effectively about music with non-musicians
- Get your message across in 30 seconds
- Be endlessly patient with changing demands (possibly having had no sleep for 36 hours)
- Work under the eyes of up to 20 other involved people
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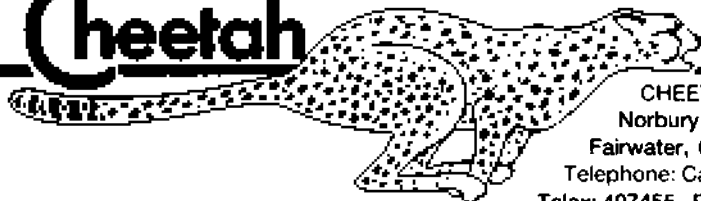
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THE BLUE NILE

*The Blue Nile have produced their*

*second album, Hats.*

● *Ten Gallon Tale: Philip Bradley*

● *Lens Cap: Bodnar*

## HAT TRICKS

**A**S THE OLD SAYING GOES, YOU HAVE your whole life to produce your first album and it's the second that causes all the trouble. It's a saying that could almost provide an alibi for Robert Bell (usually bass), Paul Buchanan (mainly voice) and Paul Moore (often keyboards), collectively known as The Blue Nile. For after the initial relaxed approach to recording their debut album in about six months, The Blue Nile retreated into the realms of anonymity for their second: from start to finish it took almost exactly five years for it to be completed.

During this time, the band spent an awful lot of time writing, discarding, and writing some more. Indeed, well over one hundred songs were written. Bearing in mind only seven actually make it on to the album, even making the final selection became something of a feat in itself.

However, The Blue Nile have always been somewhat unusual. In 1981, an initially nameless trio began recording in Castlesound Studios, Edinburgh. Unlike the majority of their peers, they did not send off hundreds of demos to all the major record companies. Instead, more by luck than judgement, a studio engineer, impressed with their abilities, took a tape of those sessions to his former employees, RSO records. RSO liked it, and the first Blue Nile single, *I Love This Life* was released later that year. Sadly, the record company fell into financial difficulties, the single failed to receive the proper promotion, and The Blue Nile again found themselves out on their own. Undeterred, the band returned to Castlesound to record more

material. Purely by chance, Linn Products (well known for their high quality Hi-Fi systems) were developing a new splicing machine and they wanted to experiment with some pre-recorded tapes. They contacted Castlesound Studios who obligingly sent them a batch. Amongst these reels of tapes were the initial sounds of The Blue Nile and a week or so later, Linn Products rang up The Blue Nile and offered them a deal.

On completing their debut album, the band were shocked to find so much interest being turned their way. The longer they left recording a follow up, the more the rumours spread. Each year, it seemed, we were told in some paper or another that the band had finally completed the long awaited follow up. There were stories that The Blue Nile had spent over a million pounds recording a half finished album.

Through no fault of their own, Robert Bell, Paul Buchanan and Paul Moore were becoming cult heroes, shrouded in mystery. Even Malcolm McClaren, with all his media expertise, couldn't have counted on pulling off a stunt like this. Half a decade after they first came to our attention, The Blue Nile still hold the media attention they so thoroughly deserve in a way few conventional bands could claim. In the week I visited them, they were about to be visited by *Cut*, *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Q* - and the odd Hi Fi mag.

### If The Cap Fits, Wear It

In the front room of Robert Bell's sparse but spacious flat, ►



Paul Moore attempts to diffuse some of the aura surrounding this long awaited follow up.

"We'd been working on the first album for five months before we started recording, so we didn't just take five weeks to record. But we didn't spend five years in the studio; we had a lot of time where we were waiting to use the studio. We had let another band in for a limited amount of time to finish their release, and of course they didn't get it finished in time, so we were left with time on our hands hanging round waiting to use the studio. We spent about two years actually in the studio."

Paul Buchanan nods his head in agreement and adds: "The music corresponds to something in our imagination and we share that emotionally. Part of the reason why we have taken so long over producing another record is that we became a little - conscious - of what we were doing. Usually that's an emotional decision that we make together."

Paul Moore again: "It wasn't that we thought we'd done anything out of the ordinary, but after a while people started to ring us up and say 'how's it going?' and 'what's the next one going to be like?'"

Almost immediately after the band's debut *A Walk Across The Rooftops* was released, they were greeted with a barrage of positive criticism. Some papers had even attached the dangerous word 'genius' to the album's first semi-hit *Tinsel Town In The Rain*. Naturally, this constant attention began to take its toll on the writing capabilities of Paul Buchanan.

"After the first record, I was too watchful for ideas beginning and so I would seize upon them...I really didn't have any resonance of ideas to work on. I felt it was difficult to breathe musically...the first two years after the first record I became over aware...as soon as I picked the guitar up. Before that, when I picked up the guitar it was a labour of love, it still is but it was difficult to get that feeling back. That's another part of the reason why there's been a gap between records, because we didn't wanna put something out that didn't seem honest...I just hope we've done our best."

### Thinking Caps

As well as emotional problems associated with unexpected success, the next five years would also find the band coming to terms with a number of practical difficulties that needed to be overcome if they were to ever bring out another record.

From the very start of their career, The Blue Nile have always relied on their own skills for management. At the first this wasn't a problem. However, as soon as the band began to make headway, there were increasingly more areas to watch over, more problems to solve. Robert Bell takes up the story.

"We were suddenly very aware that we could end up with a big debt if we didn't watch out. We view things on a very small scale and try to keep ourselves independent of the record company if we can." He takes a pause for air and continues. "The advantages of managing yourself are that you know *exactly* what is happening. All the decisions go through you. The disadvantages are obvious too: the time that takes to work out all problems. Being in this band isn't about just roaming around the studio, we have to take care of our own finances (including shelling out of their own pocket for air/train fares for journalists to interview them in Scotland - PB). We are not a big band so we have to be careful what our money is spent on. We spent a year after the first record trying to sort out some

kind of licensing deal through Virgin. We've had lots of offers and there are lots of businessmen who would represent us, but until we find someone who can really represent our interests, then we'll continue to do it ourselves."

The Blue Nile have, to date, shifted around 50,000 units of their debut album. From across the other side of Robert Bell's sparsely decorated flat, Paul Moore wrestles the problems associated with five years of unassisted financial survival. Whilst he does so, my eyes scan the flat for clues. A small Walkman sits behind a canvass backed chair, just outside the small cluster of seats in the centre of the room. There are a few tapes scattered on a shelf above and, in the diagonally opposite corner, a small bookshelf clutches a modest selection of hardbacks. This is not a flat built on wealth, rather a flat built on necessity.

Eventually, Paul Moore breaks the silence he has instigated.

"We're just reasonably frugal."

But surely...

"Well, we did do a bit of other work. We were commissioned by the BBC to write the soundtrack for *Govan Ghost Story* (which was screened earlier this year) and we did the theme music to *Half Way To Paradise*. With the BBC we found that they worked to even more ridiculous schedules than we did..."

"It was all instrumental music... It was really enjoyable to do because it took the pressure off us to think about a new record and it gave us some money on which to live on."

It's an area we would definitely like to explore more in the future."

### Hats Off

Vocalist, but by no means chief spokesman Paul Buchanan, lights up another cigarette and the conversation turns to the current album, *Hats*. Like its' predecessor, there is a strong lyrical affinity with the morning/night and the relationship to love. Why?

"I genuinely don't know...", he laughs, "I hadn't realised it. I suppose it's because I like mornings very much and I like night - I just like the glimmer. I think it's an imagery that isn't always addressing the same situation. It's just evocative and reflective. The nights and mornings are very good times to think about things. The air is much clearer and there is not so much going on in the streets. The idea of love comes about, I suppose, because it's so important to everyone in the world. People need to be loved." He sighs.

"To be honest, none of us analyse the music too much. We just try to write something that means something to people. We are as surprised at what comes out as everyone. All I know is that once it's ready we all seem to agree. I'm not saying we've got on really well every day for the past five years, but we are very close."

"I feel uncomfortable about being considered the songwriter. I mean, I might come up with the initial idea but, I would never have performed these songs if it wasn't for Robert and Paul. I mean...I can take them an idea and they will work on it...I trust them so much."

If the next few years hold anything in store for The Blue Nile, it will undoubtedly be as much a surprise to the band as to their loyal and ever increasing audience. The Blue Nile are their own audience to their own music.

Philip Bradley

*Hats* is available on Virgin Records. Cat. No. LKH2

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# IMPROVISATION

## -Pt. 2

*John Perry puts into practice the theory behind good soloing*

Last month we looked at some general principles concerning improvising. In this issue I'd like to try out a few practical examples, especially in the kinds of chord progressions which reoccur throughout every type of Rock, be it, Pop, Thrash, Nouveau Punk, Goth or C & W, there remain some pretty similar repeated patterns - so even if the example I give cites a NEIL YOUNG tune, you'll more than likely find that there's a GUNS 'N' ROSES song which utilises the same progression.

Just before we start lunging into some playing, it's worth recapping a few basics; ideas which should allow you to feel comfortable as you experiment. Whether you're playing with some musicians, with a record or with your multi-tracked self, the single most important factor is your tone.

We're not talking here about massive 48 track digital quality, just a sound from your amp or in the cans that is pleasing to you, and inspiring to try out ideas. Perhaps the most important element is sustain. A good fat tone will cover any fluffs at the same time flattering your fingerwork. Any other effects - chorus, echo etc. - won't do a lot of harm either, the point

is to feel that you have some support. I remember my earliest attempts playing through a small amp with a Strat were desperate; the tone was just too weak to give me the confidence I needed. It wasn't till I got a Les Paul that sustained my lead notes into infinity that things started to happen.

Next point. If you make a fluff (*in practise*) repeat it. Don't shy away but look at whatever happened and see if any part of it

going up where first time you went down. Think of your phrasing as question & answer.

State a phrase of say 2 or 4 bar length, pause, then answer it so each step of your solo bears some relation to its predecessor.

Last point. Enjoy it!

### Young Guns Go For It

Throughout Neil Young's career he's recorded long (*sometimes 11 minute*) guitar

*Sand, Hurricane*, or any of the dozens of others which use the I min - VIth sequence - in other words from A minor - F, or D min - B flat, or E min - C etc.

If you can get hold of it - it's not deleted - the best LP to get is *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*. For the young player wishing to stretch out on lead guitar this is perfect 'cos it sounds great yet in no time you'll be able to play along with it. The (*long, long*) guitar breaks are all built up from the simplest ingredients as we'll see.

Back to the I-VI chord progression: let's take A minor to F. One bar on each. Amin 2,3,4, F 2,3,4 and so on. Which scale shall we use to improvise a simple solo over that?

Fig. 1 is the simple Blues scale in A (*That's* A, C, D, E, G, A). This will work well enough, but it would work over almost anything in A minor and it would be better to play something that takes account of the F chord. We could do with something a bit modal, so why not take the Blues scale but add an F or better still

an F and a B so the scale now runs A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A - this is sounding modal and a lot more interesting to play over, in fact it's the Aeolian mode. Figs. 2&3 show some positions - in A - to play this scale. Play it over

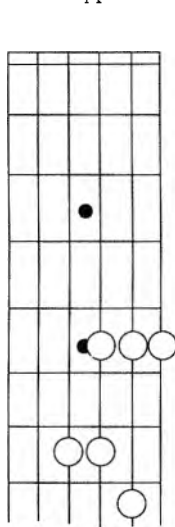


FIG 1

**Blues Scale in A**

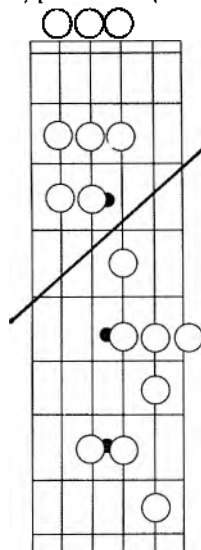


FIG 2

**Two positions for Aeolian Mode**

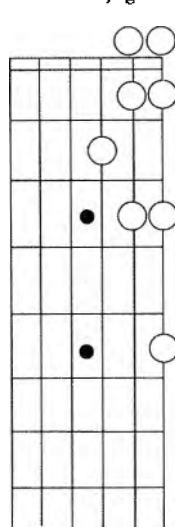


FIG 3

**Aeolian Mode**

is useful. The best ideas come from unplanned errors.

You don't need to play an endless stream of new notes when improvising. You can play a short phrase then repeat it - perhaps just altering the end by

solos which while by no stretch could be called competent are nonetheless interesting - especially to the novice since he works with very simple ingredients.

Listen to *Cowgirl In The*



Neil Young: Master of the simple solo

◀ the Amin - F sequence and hear the change in mood that occurs, versus the Blues scale.

Try sliding down the scale in octaves - Wes Montgomery style - Fig.4 shows a convenient way to finger parallel octaves.

Another Neil Young song which is ideal for extended

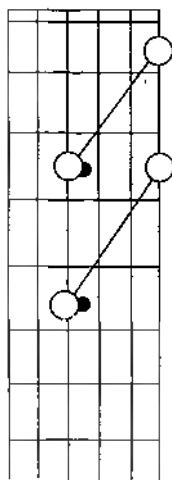


FIG 4

**Wes Montgomery's octaves**

blowing is *Down By The River*. The break is played over the verse structure which is E min 7 to A 7. Fig.5 shows an alternative bar-chord shape for this. This one's perfect for stage 1 guitarists. The break is made up of very simple variations on a theme. Once he's established a short phrase he plays it over and over with tiny variants. Let's look at a few. The first consists of simply playing the octave E on the top string in a sort of 'morse code' rhythm - think of that beat from THE SUPREMES' *You Keep Me Hanging On*.

In formal notation that looks like ♪♪♪♪♪♪♪♪♪♪

Next he varies it by playing one bar of E and D - adding the note D on the 2nd string (15th fret). These two notes are played together - giving a pleasingly rough sound when distorted, then sliding the D down a semitone to C sharp. You keep the morse code rhythm going and play E and D against the E min 7 chord and E and C sharp against the A7 chord (C sharp

and E being the 3rd and 5th notes of the A chord.)

All dead simple but very effective with a good tone.

Too many inexperienced guitarists ignore the lowest, open stringed notes on the guitar in their dash to get up to the high screaming notes.

### Work Me Up Before You Go Go

A solo will sound far more dramatic if you build up to the high notes. Try using the notes shown in Fig. 7 over the *Down by The River* chords.

Your tone can vary from a sort of Duane Eddy twang to a hard, distorted Hendrix sound - either will sound good.

The scale shown in Fig.7 is a Blues scale with many of the semitones between notes joined up so it actually runs; E, F#, G, A, A#, B, D, D#, E. Extend this same scale into other octaves - try it between E at the 9th fret 3rd string and the octave E on the 1st string.

You'll find that Em7 to A7 is a useful sequence for improvising.

The next idea I want to look at is a little more complex to describe - in practise, though, it's not at all hard to play. It works on the idea that the Pentatonic scale in any key is identical to the Blues scale in its relative minor. Don't be put off; this simply means that the Pentatonic (*major*) scale in C uses the same notes as the A Blues scale. The C Pentatonic shown in Fig.8 - C, D, E, G, A, C - uses the same note as the blues - scale ie A, C, D, E, G, A. Get the idea? Compare Fig.8 with Fig.1. and look at Fig.8. If you play down the scale starting at the A on the 1st string, then extend the scale by one note to the A at the 7th fret 4th string, you've got the A blues scale.

This gives room for a lot of manoeuvres - too many to cover this month, though I should mention that Jimi Hendrix's *Little Wing* is perhaps the most beautiful example of what can be done.

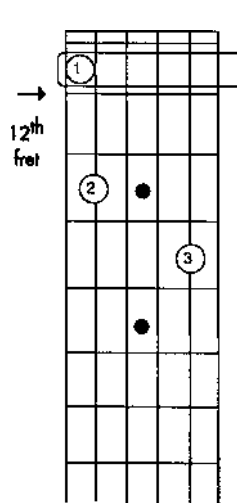


FIG 5

**Em7 bar chord**

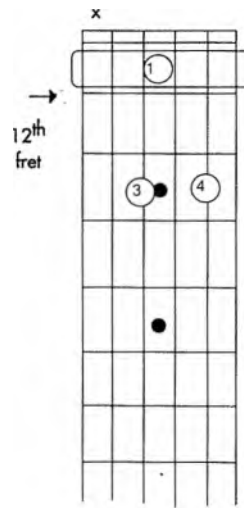


FIG 6

**A7 bar chord**

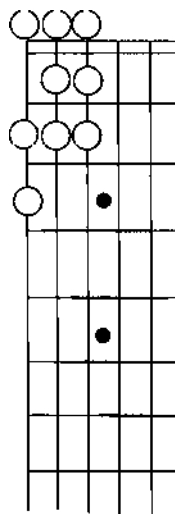


FIG 7

**Blues Scale**

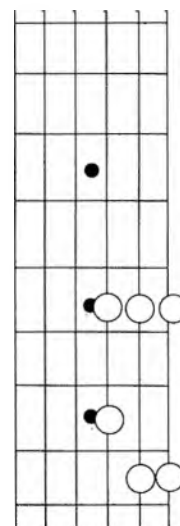


FIG 8

**Pentatonic Scale**

Try flipping between the two scales over the following sequences.

C-A min. Simple. Now try C - Amin - D min - G. There are loads more sequences that will work, you have to get used to hearing the way the two scales interlock.

As a final example, we'll take a well known phrase which comes from Country music originally, but via Hendrix has entered the Rock vocabulary. The Notes run D-E A, G, E, D, C. Play it the position shown in Fig.8 as follows.

Play D on the 3rd string and bend it up to the E - use the 3rd

finger. With the 1st finger snap the top string with the 1st finger for the A, G-E is played with the 4th and 1st fingers, on the 2nd string by sounding the 8th fret and pulling off to sound the 5th fret. D and C are played normally on the 3rd string.


Played with some elan this will sound very Country, boosted by tone it'll Rock out pleasingly. Next month we'll look at *Little Wing* and some other songs where this is used.

John Perry





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KATE BUSH

*Tony Horkins delves deep into  
the private  
life of Kate Bush to discuss her  
new cut, The Sensual World*

**S**ITTING COMFORTABLY IN THE HIGH TECH surround of Abbey Road studios, Kate Bush, that most English of English roses, is trying to define exactly what English music really is.

"I think lyrically there's a lot that defines English music, and I suppose a certain approach to sounds," she considers emotively. "There are very definite American approaches to sound - guitar sounds, approaches to songs, the Fender Rhodes; as soon as you hear that it's America. But to actually define 'English'... We don't have a very strong tradition in music specifically, like African, or American."

Which may go some way to explain why her new album, *The Sensual World*, is so mixed in its influences and so far removed from anything we may immediately consider to be English. A swirling mass of eastern European rhythms, Bulgarian singing, Irish fiddling and that unique vocal and lyrical quality that belongs only to Kate Bush. But then Kate Bush isn't the type to be influenced by day time radio; not for her hours spent tuned in to the inane ramblings of Gary Davies and co.

"I don't spend much time listening to radio, and when I do it tends to be Radio 4. I guess we spend so much time listening to music in a very sensitised way, in recreational terms, that you need relief for the ears. I tend to listen to more when I just finish an album, rather than during, which is stupid.

"A good example of this is that when I finished the last album, I heard this Bulgarian music. (*Les Voix de Bulgare*, the extraordinary close-harmony choir whose two *Les Mystere* albums were surprise hits for 4AD). I thought 'Shit, I wish I'd have heard this while I was working on the album.' I think it was good in one way because I had a lot of time to think about the possibility of doing something with them. The thing that would worry me a bit is that if you like something you are influenced by it, and I'd probably try and connect to other people's music of that time. It takes me such a long time to make an album that it would be drastically out of date."

This is, perhaps, something of an understatement. It's been nearly four years since we had the opportunity to discuss her then current album, *Hounds Of Love*. Surely she hasn't been working on *Sensual World* since then?

"I was saying to Del (*Palmer - boyfriend/ bass player/ programmer/ mixer*) that I think my tapes wouldn't know what to do if they weren't left sitting around for years. I think they'd have a nervous breakdown - they go through a fermenting process. Like wine, or something. I don't do anything to the songs, I just sit and let the tapes mature.

"I think in real terms it's been about two and half years, and it's been done in bits. We started and then took quite a few months off to do a few things at home, and also it was the only way I could

what katie



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cope with this album - to keep taking breaks. It's quite an intense process - especially Del and I working together so isolated. We had to take a lot of breaks to think about stuff. A lot of time with this album was spent thinking. Not actually doing, but just thinking."

## Home is where the Art is

As with *Hounds Of Love*, *The Sensual World* was recorded mainly in Kate's home studio, with orchestral parts added at Abbey Road, Irish extras in Windmill Lane, Dublin, and the Bulgarian women recorded at Angel studios. The result is as diverse as it is interesting, and on first listening much more complex than her other albums.

"Some of them are really bizarre - I worry about my sanity sometimes, really. All of the tracks have taken such completely different processes."

Including the opening title track, also the first single, which didn't quite end up as Kate imagined it initially would.

"Now that was a really complicated process for a track to come together. It started off with a song - no words. I'd had this idea for about two years to use the words from Molly Blooms' speech at the end of *Ulysses*, which I think is the most superb piece

of writing ever, to a piece of music. So Del had done a Fairlight pattern, and I'd done a DX riff over the top of it, and I was listening to it at home, and the words fitted absolutely perfectly. I thought, God this is just ridiculous, just how well it's come together.

"We then approached the relevant people for permission to use the lyrics, and they just would not let me use them. No way. I tried everything. So I thought if we're really getting nowhere with this, let's take a different approach to the song. I heard this piece of music which a fan sent in about two years earlier, and we put the tune in the choruses in place of what we had. So that went in, and all the lyrics I had to change.

"To try and keep the sense of the original words, but something that would be original, I came up with this idea of Molly Bloom stepping out of this speech into the real world. And in the book she's such a sensual woman - womanly, very physical, it just seemed that she would be completely taken by the fact that this 2D character could actually go around touching. So that's what it turned into. The fact that they didn't let me use the lyrics turned the song into something very different. It was such a complicated process, and really quite painful to actually let go."

The Fairlight still plays a large part in the music making process for Kate, even though many others may have abandoned it for more contemporary, and cheaper, sampling sources.

"I think it's a very good instrument still. It's just one of those things. Everyone I know is the same; we pull out the Fairlight, and they go, 'Oh no...', because you sit there for hours going 'bleep bleep bleep', and everything sounds rubbish. Eventually you do find sounds that really work. I think the whole process of sampling instruments is becoming very boring, wading through sounds..."

And she further proves her reluctance to purchase This Year's Model by raving about a recently acquired DX7.

"I was very impressed. Initially I thought I'd just use it for ideas, but we've used it quite a lot on the album. We blend it in with other stuff, and hopefully it doesn't sound too like a DX7. I use mainly pre-sets. I think it's amazing how different you can make pre-sets sound if you treat them differently and bung another sound with them. It takes on quite a different character."

**"This is the big problem with songwriting - it's this blank page. You can start anywhere."**



One of the first tracks she wrote for the album was *Love and Anger*. Again, the track didn't exactly write itself.

"I couldn't get the lyrics. They were one of the last things to do. I just couldn't find out what the song was about, though the tune was there. The first verse was always there, and that was the problem, because I'd already set some form of direction, but I couldn't follow through. I didn't know what I wanted to say at all. I guess I was just trying to make a song that was comforting, up tempo, and about how when things get really bad, it's alright really - 'Don't worry old bean. Someone will come and help you out.'

"The song started with a piano, and Del put a straight rhythm down. Then we got the drummer, and it stayed like that for at least a year and a half. Then I thought maybe it could be okay, so we got Dave Gilmour in. This is actually one of the more difficult songs - everyone I asked to try and play something on this track had problems. It was one of those awful tracks where either everything would sound ordinary, really MOR, or people just couldn't come to terms with it. They'd ask me what it was about, but I didn't know

because I hadn't written the lyrics. Dave was great - I think he gave me a bit of a foothold there, really. At least there was a guitar that made some sense. And John (Giblin) putting the bass on - that was very important. He was

one of the few people brave enough to say that he actually liked the song."

Do you give your musicians quite a free hand?

"When I don't know what's happening, yes. But that song was just so bizarre. In some ways it's a very ordinary structure compared to the other songs. I think putting the Valiha on was very important. It's a beautiful sounding instrument - it looks a bit like a Zither, and it's from Madagascar. It sounds like sunshine - it has this really happy, bubbly sound. I think that really helped to give the song a different perspective. It's a very straightforward treatment - drums, bass, guitar, piano - and I think for me it's one of the more straightforward songs on the album. A chirpy little number."

## Misty Business

The next track, *The Fog*, finds Kate once again exploring atmosphere and emotion through music; like a lot of her material, the motivations and expressions behind the lyric and the way the track is recorded are inseparable. One very clearly dictates the other.

"That started at the Fairlight. We got these big chords of strings, and put this line over the top, and then I got this idea of these words - slipping into the fog. I thought wouldn't it be interesting to sort of really visualize that in a piece of music, with all these strings coming in that would actually be the fog. So I wrote a bit of music that went on the front of what I'd done, and extended it backwards with this bit on the front that was very simple and straightforward, but then went into the big orchestral bit, to get the sense of fog coming in.

"Then we put a drummer on, and Nigel Kennedy, the violinist, came in and replaced the Fairlight violin, which changed the nature of it. He's great to work with - such a great musician. The times we work together we sort of write together. I'll say something like, 'what about doing something a bit like Vaughan Williams?', and he'll know the whole repertoire, and he'll pick something, and maybe I'll change something. By doing that we came up with this different musical section that hadn't been on the Fairlight.

"So when I got all this down it seemed to make sense storywise. This new section became like a flashback area. And then I got the

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◀ lyrics together about slipping into the fog, and relationships, trying to let go of people.

"It sounded great with the Fairlight holding it together, but it just didn't have the sense of dimension I wanted. So we got hold of Michael Kamen, who orchestrated some of the last album, and we said we wanted this bit here with waves, and flashbacks. He's really into this because he's always writing music for films, and he loves the idea of visual imagery. So we put his orchestra in on top of the Fairlight.

"Again a very complicated process, and he was actually the last thing to go on. I don't know how anything comes out as one song, because sometimes it's such a bizarre process. It does seem to work together somehow."

## Stepping Out

However, some come quicker than others, like track four, one of my personal favourites, *Reaching Out*.

"That was really quick, really straightforward. A walk in the park did that one for me. I really needed one more song to kind of lift the album. I was a bit worried that it was all sort of dark and down. I'd been getting into walks at that time, and just came back and sat at the piano and wrote it, words and all.

"I had this lovely conversation with someone around the time I was about to start writing it. They were talking about this star that exploded. I thought it was such fantastic imagery. The song was taking the whole idea of how we cling onto things that change - we're always trying to not let things change. I thought it was such a lovely image of people reaching up for a star, and this star explodes. Where's it go? It seemed to sum it all up really.

"We did a really straightforward treatment on the track; did the piano to a clicktrack, got Charlie Morgan (Elton John's drummer) to come in and do the drums, Del did the bass, and Michael Nyman came in to do the strings. I told him it had to have a sense of uplifting, and I really like his stuff - the rawness of his strings. It's a bit like a fuzzbox touch - quite 'punk'. I find that very attractive - he wrote it very quickly. I was very pleased."

Kate's always used a wide variety of musicians on her records, but drummer Stuart Elliott seems to have been there from the beginning, even though he sometimes shares the drum stool with Charlie Morgan.

"He's the only one that's worked on every album - he's lovely to work with. I think it's good to keep that long term relationship. He's so easy to work with because he knows what I'm like. Occasionally I even ask him to use cymbals on a track now! He's been through that whole stage where I just couldn't handle cymbals or hi hats. Now that I'm actually using them again he can't cope.

"I always found them something that we used too much. I felt they were leant on too much. It held the music down in such a specific way. They're very marked. Not using them is just a way of opening up the music, I think. I learnt a lot from it. It's always been, 'this is the drum kit, so let's use it.' I always found that extraordinary. But I think now that I've taken that break from it, I see it very differently."

Even though both Stuart and Charlie get to contribute on most tracks, *The Sensual World* features more programmed drums than

earlier recordings.

"We replace a lot, but there's a lot that's still there. We used the Fairlight for the drums this time, and because the quality was so much better we could keep them all. It's just the last album, with the Linn patterns, they had to be much more disguised because they sounded like a Linn machine. We had much more finished drum tracks to work with - that caused some problems. They were so good that I didn't want to get in and replace them at an early stage like on the last album. I had to be quite brutal and get drummers to just get in there and throw bits of the Fairlight away, just to give it different levels. On the next track, *Heads We're Dancing*, it was all based around the Fairlight pattern that Del did, which is the basis of the whole song. The only thing I think we replaced was the snare."

Why bother?

"Because I think it gives it a human feel, even though he's got to stay in with the machine. There's still a certain amount of movement, and there's all this human energy. I even believe that the sounds a drummer makes can be part of the track - they all make sounds, sing along while they're playing, grunting...It puts air in there. It's nice to get someone else's input as well.

"I like to use real musicians - it's so exciting. Machines are great, but you get such great feedback from people when they think they're working on something intimate. Things you'd never think of. Like Mick Karn's bass on *Heads We're Dancing* puts such a different feel to the song. I was really impressed with Mick - his energy. He's very distinctive - so many people admire him because he stays in that unorthodox area, he doesn't come into the commercial world - he just does his thing."

Not a totally different position to her own.

"I suppose so, but I take an awfully long time to do it. What I admire about people like Mick is the way they travel from one

environment to the other, but keep themselves intact. For me, I'm so used to being in my own studio now, that if I'm put in another one I actually get so nervous. I suppose it's finding a balance.

When I did work in commercial studios all that time, I did find it very uncomfortable, because there was so much pressure, and so many distractions. I love working at home so much - though it does leave me quite vulnerable when I go outside."

Sentiments which must have inspired the next track, *Deeper Understanding*.

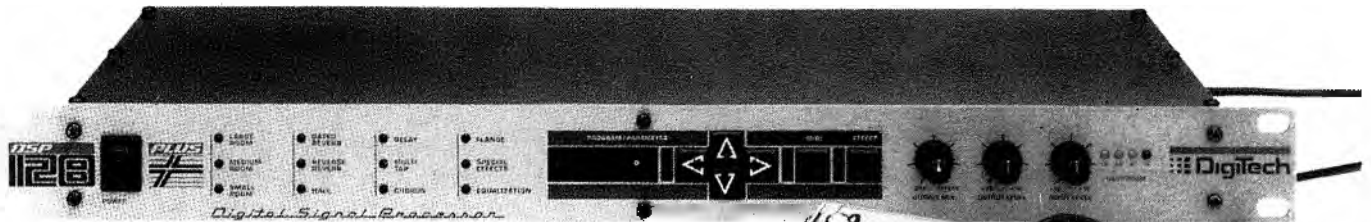
"It's about someone being trapped in the city, in isolation at work, where they just spend all the time with this computer, actually really developing a relationship with it. Which a lot of people seem to do - they talk to it. So the idea is in sending off this programme for the lonely lost; they put it in and this sci-fi being comes out and says 'I know you're lost, but I'm here to help you, we love you.' This person doesn't have human contact anymore, he's just kind of addicted to the machine. I suppose in subject matter terms I really do see it visually.

"So I had this thing and started to write it on the Yamaha piano at home - one of the old CP90s, which is still great. I asked Del for a rhythm, and he put down this very mechanical rhythm on Fairlight. I put DX7 over the top, John Giblin did the most beautiful bass - though it took a while. It always does when I work with John - the main problem is that he just makes me laugh so much."

**"I don't do anything to the songs, I just sit and let them mature"**



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◀ *Deeper Understanding* is also the first track to feature The Trio Bulgarka.

"That song was sort of finished when I got involved with the Bulgarian singers. I just thought of all the people to represent a being that exudes divine love, it had to be the Bulgarian singers. The idea was to put them in the chorus where the computer was singing, so that they'd have this ethereal sound."

Track seven, *Between A Man And a Woman*, gets a simpler treatment.

"That was, let's get a groove going at the piano, and a pretty straightforward Fairlight pattern. Then we got the drummer in, and I thought that maybe it was taking on a slightly Sixties feel - not that it is. So we got Alan (*Murphy, LEVEL 42 guitarist*) in to play guitar - who unfortunately wasn't credited - a printing error. He played some smashing guitar. Then I wanted to work with the cellist again, because I think the cello is such a beautiful instrument. I find it very male and female - not one or the other. He's actually the only player that I've ever written out music for. They're lucky if they get chord charts normally.

"We were just playing around with a groove. We actually had a second verse that was similar to the first, and I thought it was really boring. I hated it, so it sat around for about six months. So I took it into a completely different section which worked much better. Just having that little bit on the front worked much better. Quite often I have to put things aside and think about them if they just haven't worked. If you leave a little time, it's surprising how often you can come back and turn it into something."

## The Write Stuff

Inevitably, some of them are set aside for good.

"On this album I probably wrote more than I have in ages, but some of them really weren't up to much. They needed so much work to get them into shape. It's just not worth the effort. And you tire of it really quickly. You hear it three or four times and think it's so boring. I think something's got to have a personality, almost. It doesn't take much. Maybe just a little bit that you think works, and then you develop the whole thing from there."

One track that made it for further developing was *Never Be Mine*.

"I wanted a sort of eastern sounding rhythm. I wrote it first on the piano, though the words were completely different, except for the choruses. I did it on the piano to a Fairlight rhythm that Del programmed - I think that maybe because of the quality of the sounds, it was harder for Del to come up with the patterns. And I was more strict - he found it much harder. I think the pattern in *Heads We're Dancing* is really good - really unusual, the best he came up with. But *Never Be Mine* was kind of tabla based. We got Eberhard (*Weber*) over to play bass and he played on the whole song. When we were trying to piece it together later we kept saying it just doesn't feel right, so we just took the bass out and had it in these two sections. You hardly notice it going out at all. I think the song has a very light feel about it, which helps the whole imagery. The Uilleann pipes have a very light feel, and the piano is light...I think it's a nice contrast when the bass suddenly come in.

"The piano on this is an upright Bernstein that has a really nice sound - I think it has to do with proportions for us. We did have a big piano and it's a small room, and it didn't record well. The small piano sounds much bigger."

How do you decide if a track's going to feature acoustic or electric piano?

"If I write the song on piano in the studio, chances are that's how it will be. If I write at home on the electric piano, or the synth, it's probably going to be a synth track. I was getting worried at one point

## KATE'S PLACE

Nestling in the grounds of her parents' house is Kate's studio. Not much has changed since we last visited, though there has been one major investment.

"We now have an SSL. It's an expensive board, but not the most expensive, and it's very versatile. It has a good sound, and all those facilities. For the money the Soundcraft was great, but the SSL is much more efficient to work with. On the last album we spent a lot of time working around the desk, and on this one it was just working around me."

"We're still using two A80s - we work on 48-track all the time, though it drives people crazy. When you get outside people in, you can see their impatience with the machines. We use them with the Lynx, though we used to have a Q-Lok. I'm not sure there's that much in it, but I think the Lynx is a bit quicker. It would be even better if we had 800s. The A80s seem a bit archaic now.

"With outboard, I love the Quantec. It has a crystalline quality to it, very distinctive. I use it on instruments sometimes, but particularly vocals. We've got two Lexicons - the 224 and the 224X. We hire stuff in when we mix - outboard eqs, like a couple of old Pulsecs, they have a really warm sound - warmer than the SSL eq.

"We master analogue half inch. A lot of noise, but I still prefer working analogue. At this point we've found it wise not to change machines mid-stream.

"Monitoring is on AR18s, and we did get some Gold Spot Tannays, they're quite useful for some things, though generally we stick to the 18s, and Auratones. We don't use big speakers. We had some but they sounded awful.

"As we have a Fairlight, it tends to negate us getting in other sampling gear. We're pretty well covered with the Fairlight and the DX7 for keyboards, and the quality of the Fairlight is much better, though so difficult to use. Everyone says that. I used to programme it myself, but since the new software... I can't keep up. They keep changing it as soon as I learn to programme it.

"Sometimes we're happier just flying in the half inch, the old fashioned technique. There's something about it - I quite like the purist approach. Like tape delay - you can't get that same sound. It doesn't have the same presence, it has a wispy quality. With tape delay it's lovely.

"I guess I'm just a sucker for analogue sounds."

that so many of the songs are all based around the piano. On *Howards Of Love* "I got away from that, and most of the songs are based around the Fairlight, which gave them different flavours.

Having used the Bulgarian singers to slot into existing tracks on the album, with *Rocket's Tail* she wrote the song specifically for them.

## A Rocket's Tale

"It was a vehicle to get their voices on a track in as dominant a way as possible. So I put this down with a DX7 choir sound so it had this kind of vocal feel. Then we got a drummer in and got this big Rock 'n' Roll thing going. Then I got some friends in to hear what it would sound like with big block vocals singing behind my voice, and although they were English people that sing completely differently, it still gave me a sense of vocal intensity. So these two friends must have spent all day trying to sing like Bulgarians. But it was so useful, because there were so many things I immediately understood we couldn't do, and lots of things it felt like we could do.

"So we took it to Bulgaria and started working with this arranger. ▶

## KATE &amp; THE BULGARIANS

"They work so hard!" says Kate: "When we went out there we worked from nine in the morning to 11 at night. They'll sing all day and always stand in the same order; you'd think that the soloist would stand in the middle, but she stands at one end. They run Yanka, Eva, Stoyanka - and it spells 'yes'..."

"...We didn't mike them individually. We took advice from Joe Boyd, who's worked with them, and he suggested a single ambient mike...It's incredible the quality when the three of them are singing - you can almost hear the air cracking. The harmonic distortion is so exciting. One of the songs they do I just cry - there's very little music that hits me deeply enough to make me cry."

Dorka Hristova is conductor of the Women's Choir of the Bulgaria Broadcasting Service, conducting some of the most beautiful female voices in the world - including The Trio Bulgarka:

"It is quite different from Bel Canto singing in the West. It is straight and natural. Very direct with great tension. The sound comes from the epiglottis, with the resonance mainly here in the breast and not in the forehead. That is why the women in our choir are...not fatter, but have fuller breasts!"

But it isn't just the style of singing that makes the music so unusual:

"Well, the harmonies are different. Bulgarian Folk is characterised with one voice singing, then two voices - Diatonic - and sometimes, three voice singing, Triphonic. Diaphony is typical for the Sophia region. One is a drone and the other voice makes the melody. These are at second intervals and include quarter notes as well as semitones. Western harmonies are based on 3rds...This type of singing cannot be taught in the colleges; it comes from inside the person. So, it is a kind of mystery to us as well."



## SUGGESTED LISTENING:

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*Trio Bulgarka : The Trio Bulgarka (Hannibal)*

*Les Mystere Des Voix Bulgares : Records 1 & 2 (4AD)*

◀ I told him what I wanted, and he just went off and said 'what about this?' and they were great. He kept giving me all these things to chose from, and we worked so well together. It was so good that we decided to hold the drum kit - it was originally starting much earlier in the song. Then we let Dave Gilmour rip on it, so we'd have this really extreme change from just vocals to this hopefully big Rock 'n' Roll kit, with bass, and guitar solos."

The last track on the album, though not on the CD and cassette, is *This Woman's Work*, which again started life on the piano.

"That was a really easy song to put together; all that was added to the piano was a bit of Fairlight, a bit of backing vocals, and a tiny amount of orchestra - about four or five bars. But the difference it makes is extraordinary.

"That song's really all to do with John Hughes, the American film director, who'd just made this film called *She's Having A Baby*. He wanted a song for this scene in the hospital that's very powerful where the father is expecting to go in there with her, and the nurse comes out and says the baby's in a breach position. He's sitting in the waiting room, thinking about their relationship, and I think it's at the point where he actually grows up. He's sitting there and he's not a little boy anymore - he's got this big responsibility. You can see he's sitting there thinking of all these great times they've had together, and that possibly she could die with the baby. I wrote the song to the film - one of the quickest things I've ever written. The imagery was so strong. I really enjoyed being asked to do it.

"I think this is the big problem with songwriting - it's this blank page. You can start anywhere. There's too much to choose from, and I think technology in studios is doing the same to people. There's so much to choose from, so much information, that you're not working

within restrictions that actually help you to form a direction. I'm sure that for me, doing this, it was quick and easy because the song had to be about that. It couldn't be about anything else. I think that helps tremendously."

## Extra-Ordinary

CD and cassette buyers get one extra track for their money, *Walk Straight Down The Middle*.

"That song was definitely the quickest I've ever recorded anything. We'd given ourselves a specific day to cut it, so I had to do it fast. The backing track I'd originally recorded ages ago. At the time I wasn't happy with the lyrics, and I felt the song needed more developing. When we came back to hear it again, both Del and myself were really impressed with the sounds and how together the song sounded; previously we thought it had been rubbish.

"I wrote the lyrics, recorded the vocals, backing vocals and synth overdubs in one day, which is totally unheard of for me. The next day we did some more overdubs, and then mixed. I'm glad it was tagged on. We made the gap longer, so that you could get a sense that the album was finished, it sounds okay, but I don't think it holds the same depths that the other tracks do."

How did it feel without the hours of agonising?

"Terrible. I couldn't cope. I couldn't sit and anguish over my lyrics. It was very difficult. But I think it's alright, some nice sounds, nothing special. The whole thing is just an album, that's what I keep telling myself.

"Just an album."

Tony Horkins

10TH ANNIVERSARY DECEMBER 1989

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**FEATURES**

- **Gael's Talk** .....8  
Ciannad's music is steeped in their Gaelic tradition. Keyboard player Ian Parker tells his story.
- **YES IT'S ABWH** ..... 14  
Julian Colbeck, 2nd keyboards on the *Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe* tour talks to Rick Wakeman about keyboard set-ups.
- **NEVER MIND THE BOTTLES HERE'S THE BOOZE BROTHERS** .....22  
You've never heard a band like it.
- **READER'S SURVEY** .....30

**EQUIPMENT**

- **PRODUCT NEWS AND INFORMATION**.....11  
  - DAC-80D 80W Amp
  - M-120 Line Mixer
  - PA-200 and PA-400 Stereo Mixers
  - S-770 Sampling Module
  - PAD-5 Handy Pad
  - R-5 Human Rhythm Composer
  - RA-50 Real-Time Arranger
- **PLAYING THE GAMES** .....17  
Courtesy of the CM sound modules, computer games now have real power behind them.
- **OLD MASTERS** .....20  
In celebration of *Newslink's* anniversary, Simon Trask and Tim Goodyer take a look at some old Roland favourites: the TR-808, TR-909 and Jupiter 8.
- **BEYOND BASIC SYNTHESIS PART 1** .....24  
Revelations of the mysteries of electronic synthesis continue in this new series by David Marshall.

**REGULAR FEATURES**

- **LINKLINES** .....4
- **A TENTH ANNIVERSARY LOOK AT NEWSLINK'S HISTORY** .....4
- **ROLAND NEWS** .....6
- **MAIL-LINK** .....26  
Roland and Boss merchandising and special offers.
- **INPUT** .....28  
Your letters and queries answered by Roland product specialist Chris Simpson.

# LINK LINES

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY

**N**ewslink's 10th Anniversary is the perfect excuse for what the trendy arts programmes call 'a retrospective'. This issue could easily have been called *Past Present*.

The past 10 years of *Newslink* itself are recalled on this page. To help us with the present (and the next 10 years) please could you take the trouble to complete and send in the survey on page 30. As well as giving you the opportunity of receiving *Newslink* free through the post (if you aren't already on our mailing list) it will help us to ensure that *Newslink* contains the items you want to read.



On the facing page you'll find a brief look at how the current product range developed. On pages 20 and 21, Tim Goodyer and Simon Trask examine the Jupiter 8 Polysynth and the TR-808 and TR-909 Rhythm Composers in greater depth. This Old Masters feature will be a regular part of future *Newslinks*.

This is not at the expense of the present, which is present in the form of the usual product pages plus the very latest moves in computer games technology - only this time it's a case of 'the Byter bli' as music invades the micro.

*Past Present* is the title of Clannad's latest album, but it could apply equally to our other featured band - Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman and Howe (or ABWH) - who, as members of Yes, have been around at least as long as Roland.

The Booze Brothers, a name band insofar as they have a name, neatly bridge the past and present. The line-up of the band includes John Laird, who only joined Roland this year, as well two members - Dave 'Duck' Pond (the alter-ego of Sales Manager Dave Green) and Alan Townsend - who have been around as long as *Newslink*.

Finally, as the present incumbent, I get the chance to thank the previous editors for their unfailing help and support. Being a former editor of *Newslink*, incidentally, seems to have its compensations - Brian Nunnery, who started the magazine, is Managing Director of Roland UK. But that's got nothing on what Alan Townsend (pictured overleaf) is getting up to ...

GEZ KAHAN

## NEWSLINK HISTORY



*Newslink* began as a black and white supplement in *International Musician and Recording World*. Prior to that there had been the occasional *BJ News* (Brodr Jorgensen being the Danish company who originally distributed Roland in Europe).

The size of the early issues varied from two to a maximum of 12 pages - dependent largely upon how much time other pressing tasks allowed the editor to spend on producing *Newslink*.

In August 1985 the present format began to take shape. *Newslink* became a regular 16 page supplement in *IM&RW*, with additional 'run-on' copies for Roland distribution through a mailing list, by dealers and at exhibi-

tions. The front and back covers were in colour, but the inside was still in black and white.

From this time *Newslink* began to assume its familiar character. Although the design has changed since then, the make-up of contents is essentially the same - regular sections include the Linklines editorial, News, New Products and Input. Each issue also contains interviews with Roland users, and articles explaining how to use the equipment in practical situations.

The first 32 page, full colour *Newslink* didn't appear until Spring 1988; the current layout and design (by Steve Rumney of publishers Northern and Shell) was introduced in Autumn 1989.

Advertisement Feature

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CLASS OF '83

Most Personnel Managers would give their eye teeth for a better than 80% staff retention rate over a period of 10 years, not to mention an almost tenfold increase in the number of their full-time employees.

When *Newslink* was first published in 1979, Roland instruments were distributed in the UK via Brodr Jorgensen, who handled, in addition to synths, rhythm units and effects, everything from Audio-Technica mics to Autoharps (remember those?). Of the then eight-and-a-half strong workforce, seven are still at Roland today. In other words only one

(a service engineer) and a half (a part-time secretary) of those people has left the company.

The remaining seven (Brian Nunnery, Fred Mead, Ken Stoddart, Larry Cummings, Dave Green, Alan Townsend and Neil Ward) have seen the company grow at an amazing rate, starting in 1981 with the formation of Roland (UK) Ltd as dedicated distributors of Roland equipment for the UK and Eire. By 1983 (see picture), the staff had doubled to 17. In 1988 the premises were moved to their present location, after 11 years on the opposite side of the Great West Road in Brentford; and at the time of going to press there are 83 employees, and another move seems to be on the cards.

PRODUCT RANGE AND PRODUCT CHANGE

Before *Newslink*, there were Compu-Rhythms, there were SH Synths, there were G/GR Guitar Synths, there were MC sequencers, and there was the Roland chorus. 10 years into *Newslink's* life, digital technology and the micro-processor have caused a revolution - in price, in power and in portability.

Compu-Rhythms preceded the TR-808 (July '81) and the first generally affordable Rhythm Composer - the TR-606 Drumatrix - announced in *Newslink* in November of that year.

Exactly one year later came the last of the SH line - the monophonic SH-101. The world of the synth player was changing fast; already the JP-4 (from 1980), with 4-voice polyphony and 8 memories, had given way to the Jupiter 8 (in 1981); now the first Junos and JXs were just emerging.

Guitarists had to wait for their big breakthrough until 1987. Before then there had been plenty of Roland Guitar Synth systems, but it was the GM-70/GK-1 combination which finally let them access the newest sounds from the standard electric guitar of their choice.

Advances in micro-processing, allied with MC-8 and MC-4 technology, produced the low cost MC-202 sequencer/synth in 1983. But that year MIDI arrived, and with it the ability to link several different makes of keyboard in one system. The MSQ-700 (Feb '84) was fine as a MIDI multitrack sequencer, but what was really needed was

the composer's equivalent of a word processor. The answer (announced in *Newslink* of Summer 1986) was the MC-500 Micro Composer.

Meanwhile, other techniques and technologies were developed: mother keyboards like the MKB-1000 (*Newslink* '84 - along with the rack-mountable MKS-80 Super Jupiter module) and realistic pianos like the SA Synthesis RD-1000 (Spring '86); SMPTE controllers (the SBX-80 appeared first in the March '85 issue) and MIDI percussion controllers (the PAD-8 Octapad in April '85).

Sampling came relatively late - the S-10 wasn't featured until the Summer '86 edition, and, incredible though it may seem, true multi-timbrality only arrived (and then as part of a home piano set-up) with the MT-32 in Autumn '87.

Throughout all this the Boss and Roland effects lines were steadily growing - from the CE-1 Chorus and the RE Space Echo series, through the introduction of the Micro-Rack system, the SDE-2000 (May '82), and the SRV-2000 (June '85) to the multi-effect DEP-5 (Autumn '86), GP-8 (Spring '87) and ME-5 (Spring '88).

Today there are R-8s, there are D-50s, there are GR-50s, and there are MC-500 MkIIs. There are U-20s, there are W-30s, there are A-80s and there are S-770s. And there is the Roland chorus.

10 years from now? Who knows, there could be anything - but it's a safe bet that there will still be the Roland chorus.

# NEWS



PHOTO: ODILE NOEL

## GR TURNS MISS INTO HIT

*Cats* may not have the hippest image, but there's no doubt that shows are a vital part of the working musician's economy. The boom, from *Joseph and Hair* through to *Starlight and Phantom*, has not only brought more musos into London's theatres but has caused an influx of technology. Along with dazzling stage sets and lighting displays, the modern musical can have as many as four synthesizer rigs in the pit plus the regulation MIDI percussion set-up in the pots and pans department.

Latest in the line is *Miss Saigon* at Drury Lane. It was written by Claude-Michel Schoenberg and Alain Boublil, who were responsible for *Les Miserables*, and its pre-opening bookings topped £4m. Naturally the Eastern theme extends to the soundtrack; the problem facing musician Ian Laws (who also played in *Les Miz*) was how to produce a convincing oriental feel from the most Western of instruments – the electric guitar. His solution is the GR-50 Guitar Synthesis System.

Those who manage to fight through the pre-bookings and the tourists, and actually get to see *Miss Saigon*, will hear the authentic sound of the Koto and the Shamisen; those who can't make the show can get a sneak preview at their local Roland Main Dealer.



## THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

Barry Norman said 'Elvira is outstanding ... well two bits of her, anyway'. Alan Townsend knew he might be sticking his neck out but couldn't resist cuddling up to the Vampirella-like figure at the press launch of Horrorsoft's latest game, *Elvira 'Mistress of the Dark'*.

It's a horror (rather than adventure) game, for use on STs, Amigas, or PCs and compatibles, which challenges the player to outwit the forces of evil and save the world. Like all the best games these days, it has a full MIDI soundtrack written for the CM-32L Computer Sound Module. And, given the satanic theme, who could be better qualified to compose the music than ex-Black Sabbath Keyboard player Jezz Woodroffe.

Elvira, a well-known figure in America, where she hosts the weekly *Movie Macabre* TV show, is the creation of the voluptuous Cassandra Peterson. It was when she was in England promoting both *Elvira* the game and the major comedy-horror movie of the same name that Roland's Marketing Manager fell under her spell.

The only noticeable change in Alan is a stronger-than-usual aversion to garlic and a ban on mirrors in the office. No change in his routine, though - he's still working nights and sleeping days.



# CAN YOU HELP?

Music certainly would appear to be the best therapy. The last issue of Newslink featured Andy Stronach, who, after a severe accident, is rebuilding his career as a musician and programmer with the help of the Manpower Services Commission, an occupational therapist and various items of Roland gear.

Along similar lines, though this time with a broader base, is the venture of Paul Monaghan and Roy Cramer. Both started out as musicians in the '60s, and have been working together for about 10 years. Paul has been wheelchair-bound since the age of six - Roy, though not handicapped himself, has worked with the disabled for many years and has a disabled daughter.

The plan is to form a charity - currently they are wrestling with registration documentation required by the Charity Commissioners - to help disabled musicians. On offer will be a teaching, advisory and studio facility - the studio, possibly upgrading to a mobile in the future, will obviously be designed with particular attention to wheelchair access etc. One of the first objectives is for Paul and Roy to go on courses to help them develop into the teachers, advisors and engineers that their project needs.

And just to prove that there is some justice in the world: *Melody Maker* ran a competition during the recent British Music Fair, the prize being a home recording set-up worth over £2,500. Equipment included a Portastudio, effects unit, headphones, mics and a Roland R-5 Human Rhythm Composer. Which was the first name out of the hat? Paul Monaghan. *Melody Maker's* technical editor Tony Horkins says he has never heard such an ecstatic reaction when ringing to notify a prize-winner.

Anybody interested in finding out further details, or particularly those who can offer help, expertise or advice should contact Roy Cramer, Flat 2, Little Chelsea House, 17 Edith Grove, London SW10. Tel: 01-351 5469.



PHOTO: ODILE NOEL

## EXTRA! EXTRA!

The software library for use with Roland products is growing apace. There are new cards for the R-8 and the E-series Intelligent Synthesizers, as well as a newly released CD for the CD-5 CD ROM system.

Each of the three new sound library ROM cards for the R-8 Human Rhythm Composer contains 26 sounds. SN-R8-04 (*Electronic*) comprises electronic drums and percussion, including the sound of the ever-popular TR-808. SN-R8-05 (*Jazz*) ranges from riveted ride cymbals and a jazz-tuned kit to softer sounds like brushed snare drums. SN-R8-06 (*Ethnic Percussion*) covers a wide variety of Asian and African percussion, including tabla and baya, a Japanese hand drum, and the huge mat-suri taiko festival drums. Each card retails for £39.

Both additions to the range of Style Cards for the E-series (£45 each) have a distinctly oriental feel. TN-SC1-08 deals with Enka, one of Japan's most popular musical genres (the equivalent of Blues or Country in the USA). TN-SC1-09, *Japanese Pops*, is a collection of simply-arranged 8-beat and Disco patterns.

The optional CD for Roland's CD-5 CD ROM System was compiled by Optical Media in the States. *The Universe of Sound* (cat. no. USV-1) contains 2500 high quality sample tones, split into three groups - Musical Instruments, Percussion and Sound FX. It is priced at £299.



# GAEL'S TALK

## CLANNAD'S KEYS



**Clannad keyboard player, Ian Parker, has been a top recording musician for 10 years. Anthony O'Grady finds out what it is like playing on a record-breaking tour and discovers his instrumental and musical likes and dislikes**

Clannad's particular brand of Folk music is distinctly Irish. It's no surprise to find that amongst those who have fallen under the spell of their music is a young Irishman called Paul Hewson, more popularly known as Bono Vox of U2. In fact at the end of each show during their recent record-breaking US tour, U2 used Clannad's *Harry's Game* as their play-out music.

"They're doing something that is innovative and it inspired us," says Bono. "There's a timelessness to their sound in an era when

the hands of the clock are sweeping by so fast."

And U2's respect for Clannad goes further than merely playing a CD for the audience to walk out to after a gig - Bono became part of that timelessness when he sang a duet with Maire Ni Bhraonain on their hit single *In A Lifetime*, from the 1986 album *Macalla*. The song is also featured on Clannad's *Past Present* compilation which is currently moving towards double platinum status with sales of over 600,000.

Yet the band's evocative, atmospheric music does not solely appeal to those with Irish blood in their veins. Their work has a refreshing clarity and unhurried agelessness in sharp contrast to the busy go-getter atmosphere of the '80s. It's probably this calmness amid the technological high energy of modern music that has won them fans

not only in Eire but throughout the world.

Although the effect on the listener might be to turn time back to an innocent age of flutes and harps, Clannad's music is not entirely shrouded in the mists of antiquity. True, on stage Pól O'Braonain blows into a variety of flutes and whistles. True, Ciaran O'Braonain handles the acoustic double-bass while Marie plays harp and, true, Noel and Pádraig O'Dugain pick up a different folk guitar or mandolin nearly every song. For all that, Clannad's sound owes much to no less than three electronic keyboards set-ups; and just about every piece of gear there bears the Roland logo.

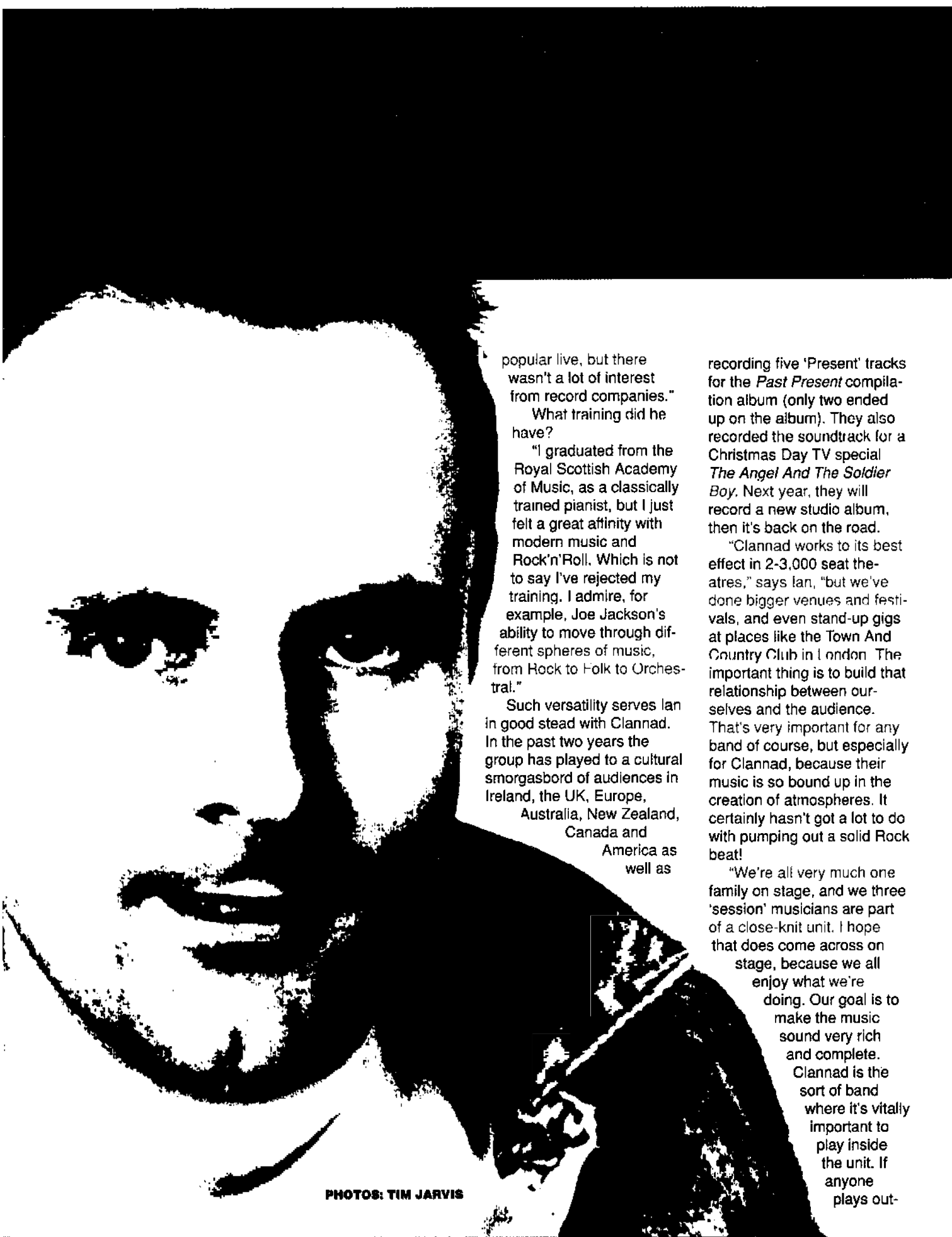
Clannad is Gaelic for family. The group's musical roots extend backwards and sideways from their home of Gweedore on the West Coast of Ireland through parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles in an intricate maze that would confuse the most diligent researcher. On stage and in the studio their extended family includes sax player Mel Collins (from England), drummer Arran Ahmun (Wales) and, from Scotland, keyboard player Ian Parker.

"My first music was Folk and Electric Folk," says Parker, who hails from

Irvine, 20 miles down the coast from Glasgow. "That sort of music is definitely a West Scotland tradition, and it's the starting point for a lot of people, including Billy Connolly and Gerry Rafferty, who you might remember were once a Folk duo called the Humblebums. In Scotland, Folk is as much a tradition as in Ireland. So when the opportunity came to join Clannad, it seemed quite a natural step for me."

Parker is no stranger to the studio. A recognised session player, his recording history dates back ten years to Tom Robinson's *TRB-2* album, produced by Todd Rundgren. And he's been constantly touring and working on musical ventures since then.

Immediately before Clannad, Ian had his own band, The Killer B's. "We toured throughout England and Europe and were



popular live, but there wasn't a lot of interest from record companies."

What training did he have?

"I graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music, as a classically trained pianist, but I just felt a great affinity with modern music and Rock'n'Roll. Which is not to say I've rejected my training. I admire, for example, Joe Jackson's ability to move through different spheres of music, from Rock to Folk to Orchestral."

Such versatility serves Ian in good stead with Clannad. In the past two years the group has played to a cultural smorgasbord of audiences in Ireland, the UK, Europe,

Australia, New Zealand, Canada and America as well as

recording five 'Present' tracks for the *Past Present* compilation album (only two ended up on the album). They also recorded the soundtrack for a Christmas Day TV special *The Angel And The Soldier Boy*. Next year, they will record a new studio album, then it's back on the road.

"Clannad works to its best effect in 2-3,000 seat theatres," says Ian, "but we've done bigger venues and festivals, and even stand-up gigs at places like the Town And Country Club in London. The important thing is to build that relationship between ourselves and the audience. That's very important for any band of course, but especially for Clannad, because their music is so bound up in the creation of atmospheres. It certainly hasn't got a lot to do with pumping out a solid Rock beat!

"We're all very much one family on stage, and we three 'session' musicians are part of a close-knit unit. I hope that does come across on stage, because we all enjoy what we're doing. Our goal is to make the music sound very rich and complete. Clannad is the sort of band where it's vitally important to play inside the unit. If anyone plays out-

PHOTOS: TIM JARVIS

# GAELS TALK cont

side, the music doesn't gel. There are so many instruments on stage and so many changes of gear, it's a bit like playing with a mini-orchestra. Everything has to be played very subtly; everyone has to have implicit trust that everyone else is aware of what they're doing."

On stage, and in the studio, Clannad trust Roland to produce the richness of sound so necessary for the textural atmosphere of the music.



"We have three keyboard set-ups on stage," says Ian. "I use an MC-500 for sequencing, a D-50 keyboard, an S-330 sampler and a DEP-5.

"And I'd like more, please! I'd like to get a D-550 because the sounds are so rich and big. Textural sounds are so integral to Clannad's music.

"I've found the MC-500 excellent for stage. It's the best sequencer I've ever worked with – so easy to use and so reliable. It never lets you down.

"The S-330 is also great

because of its tremendous capacity. Mind, without an external screen hooked up to the RGB output, it can be a bit fiddly to program at times. Its really wide variety of editing facilities is a great advantage; I do recommend an external monitor to display the full menu of options, though, for quick editing."

Roland's role in Clannad's sound doesn't stop at Parker's rig either.

Pol's set-up includes a D-50, a D-550 and a DEP-5. Ciaran has a JX-8P MIDI'd to a D-50 while Arran's kit includes the Octapad II MIDI percussion unit.

"Clannad have a high regard for Roland," says Ian, "they've been using Roland gear for seven or eight years now, updating constantly."

Ian's experience with Roland is more recent. In fact it dates from

when he joined Clannad nearly two years ago. "I find Roland is indispensable now. I've become so used to the richness of sound, and ease of use."

Many players become hooked on one brand of musical instruments simply because, after working through one manufacturer's set of manuals, they're damned if they'll ever subject themselves to that torture again. Ian found no such problems when switching to Roland.

"The extra controllers for the D-50 make programming a breeze. It's much easier to use than any comparable keyboard. The same goes for the JX-8P."

One of the few non-Roland pieces of gear in Ian's set-up is an Akai MX-73 mother keyboard. Had he not considered the A-80 or A-50?

"I quite simply haven't had time to check them out yet. It's one of the things I'll do when I get a break from touring."

In the meantime, on the road with Clannad, he utilises what spare time he has juggling down, revising and storing music ideas and demos.

"My favourite composing instrument is the D-50. The sounds are so big and textural; and by combining them on multitrack you can quickly build up a demo that's of such good quality, it sounds like a master!

"Sometimes you just run out of space to use the number of great sounds at your disposal! Especially when you start combining D-50 pad sounds with sampled sounds on the S-330, where the percussion and reed sounds, for instance, are excellent.

"The MC-500 is a great tool for putting down ideas very quickly. It's particularly useful when you have limited time to work – say an afternoon in a hotel room, while you're on tour. I'll take the MC-500 and just one keyboard to my room and get quite a lot done in a few hours."

While on the road with

Clannad it seems Ian Parker has not forsaken his own career ambitions.

"I'm working on two projects right now," he explains. "Closest to my heart is my solo album on which I'm working with Clannad's keyboard technician, Alan Pollard. That's something I've been waiting to do for a long, long time. It's a representation of the broad spectrum of music that has interested and influenced me, from rock and folk, to atmospheric and quite intricate instrumental pieces.

"I hope to have that project finished by the end of the year, and to be seeing record companies with it. I feel very confident that I will get a deal for the album. Basically, I think the musical quality is there."

Ian's other project is the soundtrack for a documentary on Glasgow for Jacobite Films, to be shown during the *Glasgow City of Culture Festival* in 1990.

"Glasgow is a very culturally orientated major city. The old sharpie/razor gang street image disappeared many years ago. To complete that project I'll have to spend some time in Glasgow, soaking up atmospheres. I want the music to encompass the city's blend of tradition and hi-tech, its past and its present."

*Past and Present*: a blend of tradition and hi-tech. It could almost be a description of Clannad.

# ROLAND PRODUCTS

## 80W COMBO JOINS DAC AMP RANGE



Since production of Roland DAC amps moved from Japan to Taiwan, resulting in considerably reduced prices, the popularity of the range has gone through the roof, helping to establish it as a high quality yet distinctly affordable name in backline. Now the choice is even wider following the introduction of the DAC-80D.

Delivering a full 80W RMS through its single 12" speaker, the £399 DAC-80D offers twin-channel versatility, three gain stages on the lead channel for pro-quality valve-like overdrives, a 3-band EQ plus Presence, and an on-board digital reverb/delay. Three modes (Hall, Room and Spring reverbs), as well as a separate delay mode, are controlled by Level and Time to allow a wide variety of reverb, decay and delay settings.

High and low gain input match the output level of any guitar; also included are footswitch sockets for channel selection and reverb and an FX loop whose Pre-Out can be used as a line out for direct recording. DAC-80D: high quality, high performance.

## M-120 LINE MIXER



Last year, recognising that today's multi-output digital instrument systems are most efficiently handled by compact rackmountable mixers with plenty of inputs, Roland introduced the M-160 and M-240 Line Mixers. These have quickly gained acceptance by musicians both for home and professional studio recording, and for live use.

Now, extending the appeal of the M-series to an even wider market, Roland have released the 1u rackmount M-120.

Extremely compact, thanks to the use of dual concentric controls and the latest micro-components, the M-120 has 12 input channels all featuring stereo outputs with both phone jack and

balanced XLR connectors, two effects sends, and panpot. Two master stereo returns are also provided.

Other facilities include separate volume controls for monitor and master output, and Monitor Mix In jacks which allow specific sounds (for example a tempo click) to be routed through the Monitor Out and phones jacks without being sent through the Master Out. 7-segment LED meters enable precise control of master output signals. The M-120 retails for £369 rrp.

## THE POWER IN MIXERS



For sheer convenience in straightforward PA sound reinforcement - whether for small bands and discos or sub-mixing and so on - there's still nothing to beat the good old console-type powered mixer. Bringing the breed bang up to date are two new stereo mixers from Roland, the PA-200 and PA-400, developed from the company's long-time favourites, the PA-150 and 250.

The 8-channel PA-200 and 10-channel PA-400 deliver 2 x 100W and 2 x 200W respectively (into 4 ohms) and can be bridged for running in mono at 200W and 400W. Both have excellent low-noise running, and two of each mixer's channels are stereo, allowing up to three audio sources (eg CD player or cassette deck) to be connected simultaneously to each channel. This allows easy switching between multiple devices - a great facility for disco jocks.

All the other channels are equipped with 1/4" phone and XLR input jacks (with a 20dB pad that matches mic or line levels from -50dBm to +10dBm), and feature a 3-band EQ with parametric midrange. Each channel contains two effect sends and a

Monitor Send for pre-fade routing, and the master section incorporates a switchable 9-band Graphic EQ. There's on-board digital reverb too - a 3-mode type (Room, Hall and Plate) which can also operate as a delay on certain settings.

Both mixers have channel peak indicators, 7-segment master peak level meters and a pre-Master Fader peak indicator; and in addition to the Master Out and Rec Out jacks there are Sub outputs for monitoring or linking the mixers to additional power amps for high-power applications. The PA-200 retails for £1250 rrp; the PA-400 for £1450 rrp.

# ROLAND PRODUCTS

## RA-50 - INTELLIGENT SYNTHESIS IN A BOX



Roland's new RA-50 Real-Time Arranger is a desk-top style unit that combines the high quality sounds of LA synthesis with the same Intelligent Arranger as found on the acclaimed E-20 Intelligent Synthesizer. In fact, priced at £685 rrp, it is very much like an E-20 in a box, but with a much fuller MIDI specification.

The Intelligent Arranger features 32 musical styles, Chord Intelligence, Intro/Ending, Song Composer and Break facilities, and the RA-50's enhanced MIDI spec enables all these Auto Arranger functions to be controlled externally as well as, of course, on-board. 32-voice polyphonic, the RA-50 boasts 128 instantly accessible preset tones ranging from realistic acoustic instruments to the latest digital sounds, and there are 30 drum and percussion sounds that can also be played manually from an external MIDI keyboard.

Additional facilities include an 8-mode on-board digital reverb; three rear-panel jack sockets that are assignable to such functions as Arranger Start/Stop, Fill-in and Break; and two selectable split points to enable external keyboards not having Key Split functions to be split into upper and lower sections - each playing different tones.

It will accept all the E-20's optional Style Cards, and applications span everything from home entertainment (particularly when combined in an ISM system with one of Roland's HP digital pianos), to partnering a sequencer or computer-based system for pro-quality live and studio use.

Roland

NEW  
LINK

# S-770



## SAMPLE THIS

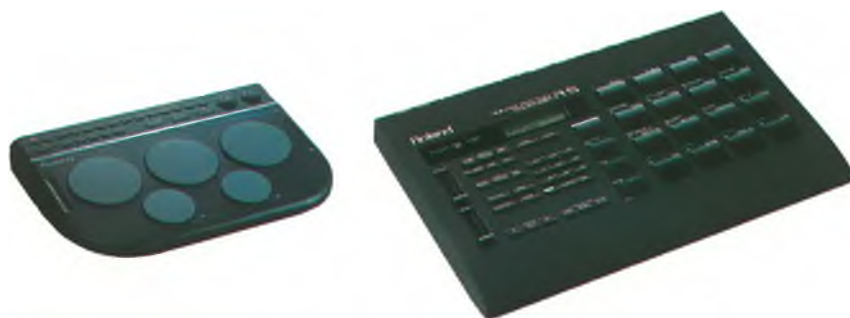
In the world of professional sampling, Roland rack-samplers - most notably the S-550 - are widely respected, not least because of Roland's proprietary Differential Interpolation sample processing, superior waveform data processing and, quite simply, excellent operational versatility.

Building on the success of the S-550 is Roland's new flagship sampling module, the S-770, retailing for £4965 rrp. A 24-voice, 6-part multi-timbral module, the S-770 provides 16-bit sampling at 48kHz, 44.1kHz or 24kHz, uses 24-bit playback processing and incorporates a 20-bit D/A converter. Its 2Mbyte RAM memory is expandable to 16Mbyte, which accommodates 90 seconds of stereo sampling at the top 48kHz sampling rate.

An important feature of the S-770 is that separate TVFs and TVAs are dedicated to each of the unit's 24 voices, and independent

parameters are available when using each of the synthesizer parts and rhythm part. This not only enhances sound creation possibilities but makes it practicable, for instance, to set optimised parameters for the rhythm part to speed up the response of voices. Sounds filtered by the TVAs can be resampled digitally without undergoing any D/A conversion, thus eliminating any sound deterioration whatsoever.

For rapid access to, and storage of, large amounts of waveform data, the S-770 has a built-in 40Mbyte hard disk system; it also has a SCSI interface for linking external hard disks, CD-ROM players or optical disk units. Digital inputs and outputs are incorporated, and, like the S-550, the S-770 can be connected to a CRT monitor for enhanced on-screen, mouse controlled editing and is compatible with the RC-100 Remote Controller. All S-550 sound library disks are compatible and may be converted for use on the S-770.



### PAD-5 HANDY PAD

The PAD-5, at only £159 rrp, is an inexpensive yet versatile way of generating or programming rhythm patterns via MIDI. Lightweight and compact enough to hold in the hand, the 9V battery powered PAD-5 has five large pads for stick or fingertip triggering, and incorporates 14 preset rhythm patterns each with different Intros, Fill-ins and Variations.

When connected to a suitable MIDI percussion sound source or keyboard the PAD-5 is equally useful for playing live rhythm sounds, triggering preset patterns and accompanying them on the pads, or for programming a rhythm part direct onto a sequencer.

Linked to Roland sound sources like the MT-32, D-20 or E-20, setting up the PAD-5 is instantaneous. This is because the MIDI note numbers of the PAD-5's rhythm patterns correspond with those of the sound sources, thus eliminating the need to spend time matching them up. Another useful feature is an Auto Power-Off function that switches off the PAD-5 automatically when not in use, so conserving battery power.

### R-5 HUMAN RHYTHM COMPOSER

The R-5, developed from the highly acclaimed R-8, brings Roland's unique 'human feel' creativity within the reach of all serious drum machine users.

Retaining all the R-8's essential human feel functions like decay, nuance and pitch, the R-5 - with 16 velocity sensitive key pads - provides 68 internal and 26 copy instrument sounds (all 16-bit and derived either direct from the R-8 or its ROM library). It also offers 32 preset and 100 programmable patterns with a total memory capacity of 99 bars per pattern (2,600 notes). A cassette interface is provided for data storage, and the machine syncs both to tape and MIDI.

Up to eight Human Feel patches can be selected for each pattern; 6 songs can be stored - along with data for tempo and tempo change, level and level change, pattern, repeat and label; and the R-5 quantises to 1/96th note in both real and step time. Four multi-output jacks plus stereo outputs provide true studio versatility for routing and processing individual sounds.

The R-5, with all these built in facilities is available now for only £425 rrp.

# YES IT'S A B



**Julian Colbeck, journalist and musician extraordinaire is playing 2nd keyboards on the Anderson, Wakeman, Bruford, Howe World Tour. He and Rick Wakeman somehow managed to take time out to put down on paper what their rigs consist of and why**

**YOU** can be a Metal freak, a Folkie, pure Pop fan, or New Age aficionado; you can be 15 or 50, but the chances are, if asked to name the most famous rock keyboard player from the past 20 years that a high proportion of you will say Rick Wakeman.

Whether you like his characteristically fast, furious, and florid style or not, Rick Wakeman has influenced (even if it was in how you definitely did not want to sound) almost every keyboard player who's followed in his (pardon the pun) wake.

So how does one feel, embarking on a world tour with the newly (re)formed Anderson, Wakeman, Bruford, Howe (previously better known, collectively as Yes, of course), as second keyboardist? Exhilarated, apprehensive, intrigued, all rolled into one I guess.

I'd not met the man back in the '70s when he was all capes and multi-platinum albums, touring the world with a cast of thousands. So I don't know if the genial, gentle giant I just met is the new Rick or whether he's always been this way.

One thing I do know, however, is that today's Rick Wakeman is far more eclectic in his choice of equipment. In the old days his rig comprised, almost without exception, Korg keyboards, with just the odd Moog and Hammond thrown in for good measure.

Rick still uses such gear, but wisely feels that restricting oneself to one or two companies' products is to miss out on an awful lot of excellent products these days.

How, I wondered, as we sat in one of the rabbit warren of dressing rooms backstage at the curiously named Pine Knob amphitheatre outside Detroit, had Roland keyboards first come to his attention in a big way?

"I was doing a TV show in Spain a few years ago. Normally what happens with these things is that I send a list of what equipment I need to the TV company, they procure it, and that's that. Anyway, I got over there only to be told by the TV people that they couldn't get all the equipment I'd asked for. In fact they weren't able to get any of the equipment I'd asked for. What they'd got were three instruments that shall remain nameless but which, to put it kindly, I'm not particularly fond of, and a couple of really old and outdated synths. And, they said, there's a Roland D-50.

"At the time I knew little about the instrument except that my bass player, David Paton, who also works with Elton John and Alan Parsons, rated it very highly. Anyway, I had four hours before the show to get to grips with the instrument so I just shut myself away in the dressing room with a pair of headphones on and my love affair with the D-50 began. It knocked me out.

"And of course once you've found an instrument that's as appealing as that you start looking around to see what else the company makes. I think a flagship product is vital for a company. It doesn't have to be the



# W W W H



most expensive item on the menu, either. Just a product that makes everyone sit up and take notice.

"Subsequently, when it came to putting together a system for the ABWH tour, there were many areas in which Roland gear was the obvious first choice."

One I'd already figured out was in the area of MIDI master keyboards, since I personally needed a flexible keyboard with a large memory that could cope with the extensive amount of zoning and general patch management I knew I'd be needing. To me the job was perfectly suited to the A-50. Rick thought so too, only he was also looking for flexibility in terms of keyboard action.

"I like to have both synth and piano type actions on stage. I must say I like the feeling of having a large chunk of machinery in front of me and a proper piano touch. I've always found it difficult to accept even the best acoustic piano sounds without the feel to go with it.

"Similarly, it's very difficult to play synth type solos on a weighted action keyboard."

Inevitably, then, both A-50 and A-80 were wheeled into the picture. "The A-80 is superb for all the piano, piano-string/choir sounds I use, while the A-50 is in charge of the big synth sounds."

But we're talking about Rick Wakeman here. There's no way he was going to be allowed to go on stage with just two keyboards. "Yes, I'm afraid you do become a victim of your own past. People do expect to see me surrounded by racks full of keyboards, and me performing all kinds of acrobatics running around playing them."

JC on the other hand, is not hamstrung by the same expectations, and managed to get away with just an A-50 on top as the basis for 99% of the work. The fact that I have a DX7II and Juno-60 to one side is almost incidental.

Way over on the other side of the stage, in what the road crew have dubbed Fort Wakeman (the Roger Dean designed series of perspex panels that shield the rig), it's keyboard city - individually less bulky than on Rick's '70s shows, maybe, but just as visually impressive in total.

During rehearsals at Nomis in London and Lititz, Pennsylvania in America, I'd been vaguely aware of what Rick was using and how the set-up appeared to be growing daily. But, frankly, I'd had more than enough on my plate - sounds, parts, arrangements - to pay too much attention to the fine detail. In other words, what I'd feared would be a rather stilted 'Well I have to ask you these questions although I already know the answers' conversation for the purposes of this article turned into more of an 'Oh, is that what you're using' type of chat. Much better.

Most direct in my sight line, is Rick's Hammond C3. "I wasn't going to bring it but a vote from the band insisted that I did. It's the model I had customised by Greg Hockman, Bob Moog's right hand man who went on to form Systech. He built a little phasing unit into it which is quite superb combined with the regular vibrato settings."

More's the point, it allows Rick to get away without having to wrestle with the sound engineer's nightmare: the Leslie cabinet.

The Hammond is really only featured in a couple of numbers - *The Order of the Universe*, from the new album, and on *Close to the Edge*, though, interestingly, not on the mega Church Organ section where the effect is better re-created by both of us using every conceivable organ patch we can lay our hands on - flat out!

Before we come on to detailing the rest of the set-up it's worth noting *how* the set-up is set up. Partly for the visuals but mainly because the complexity of the music so dictates, Rick's keyboards are arranged

# A B W H CONT.

in a number of individual MIDI systems, even though they're all ultimately controlled by a Sycologic M-16. So the A-50 will just control two or three modules in his rack, the A-80 another two or three, and so on.

Indeed the A-50 next to the Hammond controls a D-550, a TX802, and an M1r. On top is a V-50 that controls a Cheetah MS6 and a MIDI'd MiniMoog. Next to these comes the A-80, which triggers a U-110, P-330, and an S1000, and on top of that is Rick's D-50 which, basically, he uses by itself although it is connected to an CMT10 to add a bit of spice. Moving along is an M1 triggering an Oberheim Matrix-1000, topped by an Ensoniq VFX.

Back in the rack are two of the new Roland mixers - one with EQ, one without - along with various effects units and the Sycologic. And I reckon there must be at least 30 pedals scattered about all over the floor.

Pedals (along with finger control) represent the main areas of flexibility. Rick is not a great fan of synth-type performance features like wheels and after-touch, or even zoning. "I've never been madly keen on splitting sounds. Frankly I prefer to play another keyboard. I also find it difficult to play just a right hand part without the left. Sometimes if that's what's needed I'll turn the volume off on another keyboard and keep on playing."

But then Rick was classically trained as a pianist. Today's keyboardists can sometimes feel no more than keyboard operators - turning sounds on and off, triggering samples, noodling about with the odd riff - as opposed to being players of a musical instrument.

It was partly as a reaction to

this that the decision was taken, as rehearsals began, not to use any form of sequencing on this tour.

"I use sequencers in the studio because it really allows me to go for a performance. In the old days you'd be playing a solo and it would be going really well and then you'd get to within 15 bars of the end and feel you'd have to play safe to preserve the take. Now I can play with total confidence that anything I don't like can then be edited afterwards. Sequencers enable me to play without fear in the studio and that's great. But too many bands rely on them entirely. Not only do they use them as safety nets but now they've got the tightrope only three inches off the ground!

"Sequencers have enabled technicians, producers, to play and produce music. There's nothing wrong with that in itself but it has tended to prevent regular musicians from getting near the studio. They may have helped the elder statesman but I worry they may have hurt the younger player.

"In a way today's scene is similar to the '70s. The '60s had seen band after band 'appear' on records that had, in fact, been totally recorded by session musicians." (And Rick should know; at one time he was keyboard player on 21 out of the top 40 singles).

"Eventually the real musicians got fed up with the situa-

tion and started making records of their own. Today I sense people are getting fed up with over-use of machines - the modern equivalent of session musicians if you like - and want to hear some player personality again."

Sampling is another facet of modern keyboard playing that is frequently accused of removing individuality. Rick advises cau-

sounds. I think that's where sampling needs to go in the future, and not just be used to mimic the sounds of traditional instruments.

"It's difficult, I know, because the sounds on today's instruments are so good that people don't feel they have to create sounds of their own. But perhaps because of this keyboard players

are losing their personality. In the '90s I can't see sounds getting 'better' as such; so maybe players should start to develop their own special sounds and stick to them, concentrating on how those sounds can be used - ie concentrating on what they play."

In instrument terms, Rick sees the areas that need developing as being those that help performance. "I mean I'd love to see an 88-note D-50. Even though I know you can create the effect with an A-80 and a module it's not

quite the same. I'd also love to see some sort of external visual display for instruments. I know the Roland system works for the S-series samplers but I mean for a whole set-up of instruments. When you have a rack full of equipment, or want to know whether certain pedals are on, off, half on, whatever. One central screen full of information relating to such things would be brilliant."

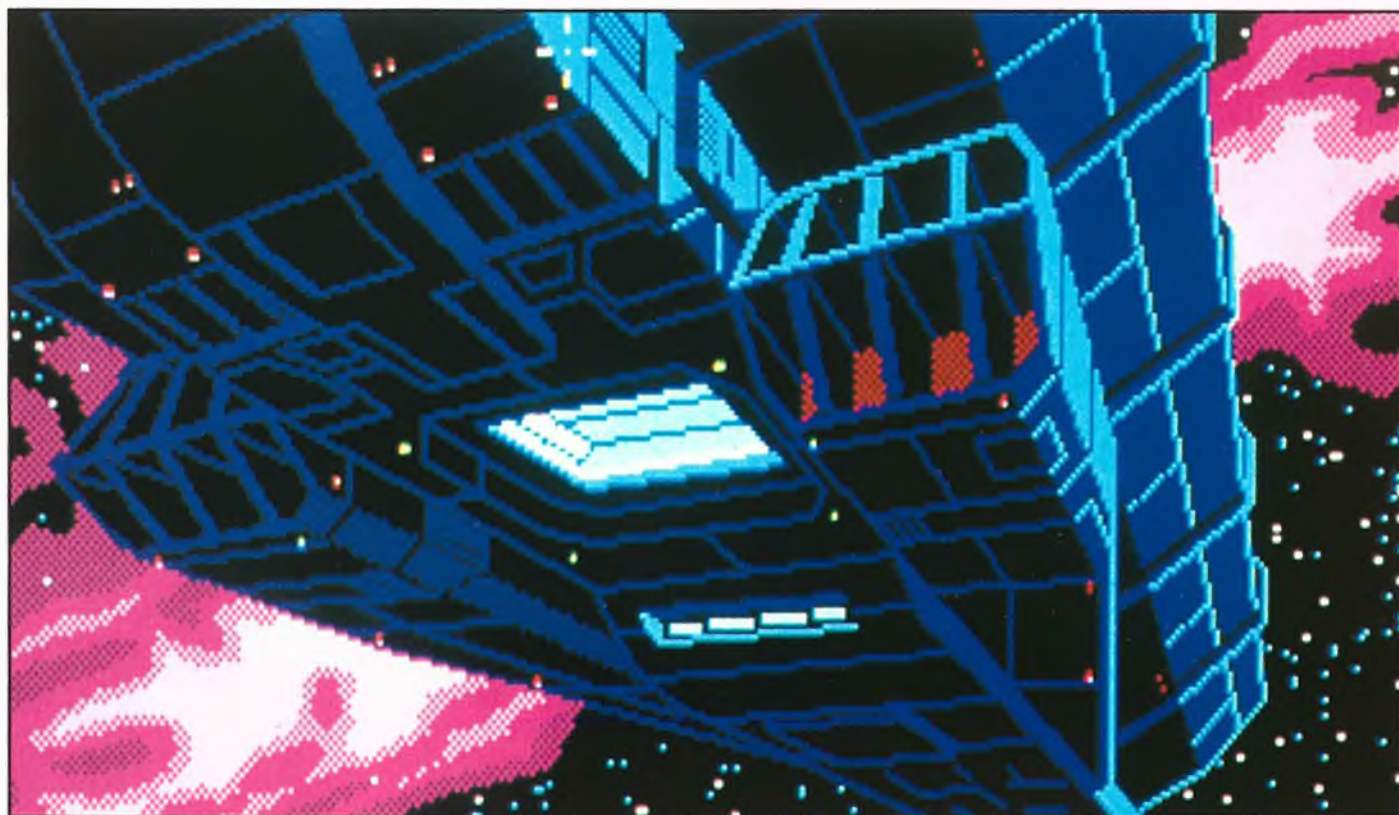


**RICK'S RACK**

and again draws an interesting parallel between the current situation of massed acoustic instrument sample libraries (or rather the obsession for them) and the early days of the Moog when all people wanted to hear from this new wonder toy was brass and string sounds. Make it sound like a ..... was the eternal request.

In the end, of course, people began to experiment with synthesis and create totally new

# PLAYING THE GAMES



**Roland herald the dawn of realistic soundtracks for computer games with their Computer Music Sound Modules. No longer do you have to put up with strange bleeps and squeaks as you wend your way through complex and mysterious games. Now you can immerse yourself totally as the music lures you into its spell. Andy Allen explains**

It may seem strange that one of the most popular stands at the British Music Fair this year was showing a selection of computer games. It may seem even stranger that the company showing them was one of the world's major musical instrument manufacturers. Those who actually visited Roland's Desktop Music stand, showing the new CM series of Computer Music sound modules and peripherals, will have seen the light. We have entered the age of the computer-game soundtrack.

For as long as they've been around computer-game programmers have been striving for ways of making their games more realistic, improving the graphics and visuals of their products to awesome standards, while the writers have been inventing more and more intricate and elaborate plots.



CM-32L



LAPC-1

# PLAYING THE GAMES

But the sound capabilities of most computers have been limited to a few metallic bleeps and squeaks - hardly a realistic sound for those piloting a major spaceship on its way to saving the Galaxy.

To be fair, many have tried to liven up the sound with sampled sound-effects or music, but these take up huge amounts of memory and processing power that are much better used for handling graphics or controlling the game itself.

This is where Roland step in. The Roland MT-32 was a phenomenal success, and established an almost standard format. This was an inexpensive multi-timbral synth unit with a set of drum and percussion voices, played via MIDI from a keyboard or sequencer, with a high quality stereo audio output. With so many MT-32s already sold it was a natural step for leading adventure games manufacturer Sierra to send their soundtracks over MIDI to drive an MT-32.

MIDI manipulation takes very little processing or memory, and can therefore be provided without affecting the game play at all. MIDI also has the advantage of being a standard, so that it can be used with the many different types of computers for which the games are released, all of which

have inexpensive MIDI interfaces available. The three most common computers are the IBM PC and compatibles; the Atari ST - by far the most popular computer for music purposes as it already has MIDI sockets fitted; and the Commodore Amiga.

Addressing the growing interest in computer music Roland have launched a new range of musical equipment designed specifically for computer users. In this range is the CM-32L. Almost identical to, and fully compatible with, the MT-32, it also includes extra sound effect voices. Any music prepared for an MT-32, (including the Sierra games soundtracks), will work with it in exactly the same way. Packaged in a box designed to sit conveniently under a computer monitor, even coloured cream to match, the only front panel control is for master volume; further parameters can easily be controlled from the computer via MIDI.

For those using an IBM/PC compatible computer there is a new card. Plugging straight into one of the PC expansion slots it provides, internally, a CM-32L plus MIDI interface. This card is the LAPC-1, and operates in exactly the same way as the straight MIDI interface, (the MPU-IMC), connected to a CM-32L

module, but without the clutter of an external box.

The games themselves come under the general heading Adventure Games. Unlike the popular 'shoot-em-up' scenario, an adventure game places the player in a situation in which it is his intellect and cunning, mixed with just a dash of luck, that will carry him through, solving puzzles, getting in and out of tricky situations, and travelling ever closer to the goal of the adventure.

An adventure game requires more brain than brawn, more thinking than quick reflexes on the joystick; it works on the problem/reward principle: a problem drives you crazy for a while, until you solve it, and then you receive the reward, ie the satisfaction of getting one step further on in the game, with a different problem to pit your wits against. Because of this the lure of the adventure game is far longer lasting, while just as addictive as the faster, arcade style game.

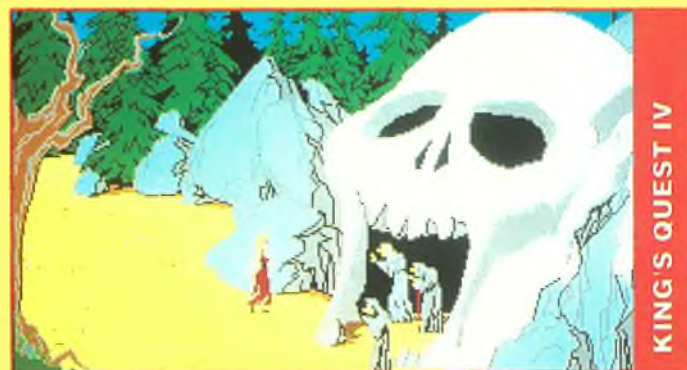
The graphics are truly awe-inspiring. As you travel through the scenarios the display is similar to a film; dialogue interaction is also simple to get the hang of.

You direct your character to go places, inspect things, pick up items, even barter for goods in shops and stores. Of course as

you become more experienced with adventure games they will become easier, but certainly no less interesting or enjoyable. With each new adventure the inventiveness and originality of the writers is taken many steps further, and off you go again into another absorbing adventure. Just like Indiana Jones, except you don't have to get out of your armchair for the trip.

These games do not just use the standard synthesizer voices for their soundtracks; they are much more inventive than that. The CM-32L voices can be edited via MIDI, and Sierra make the most of this facility. The programmers have spent a lot of time designing custom sounds - for the music and sound effects - making them of the highest quality, fitting the scenarios perfectly.

Of course, for those who don't yet have a CM-32L, the standard beeps and plinks of the internal sounds are still available. Once the CM-32L soundtracks have been experienced, however, it's obvious how much difference a good quality soundtrack makes. Just like a film, the music sets the mood, the sound effects make the actions on screen all the more real, and, especially because adventure games are interactive, the whole effect draws you into



another world. Indeed, sitting in a darkened room with a large colour screen and a good stereo system you really are there in the game. Even in the rushing, distracting atmosphere of the BMF Show the sound modules were impressive enough for one ardent Sierra games player, hearing the soundtracks to his favourite games for the first time, to say positively, pointing to the sound module, "THAT is what I am getting for my birthday".

One of the first of these games to catch the imagination of the 'boys' at Roland UK was called *Leisure Suit Larry*. In this adventure you are Larry Laffer, an aging, bachelor, lounge lizard, and have to work your way around sleazy bars, chatting up dodgy looking women, and avoid being pulverized by their large boyfriends. As you can imagine most of them found this game came quite naturally.

*King's Quest IV* is a more traditional type of adventure game, in which the player takes on the role of Rosella, a beautiful princess, who has to search far and wide, facing fierce legendary creatures and evil foes to find the one item that will save her father, the King, from certain death. The game features a long intro sequence to

help you get into the character role, and includes over 40 minutes of original soundtrack music, composed by William Goldstein, (responsible for the soundtrack music to the *Fame* TV Series, amongst many others).

*Police Quest II* is set in the present time, where an arch criminal, Bains, has escaped from the prison you sent him to in *Police Quest I*, murdering a prison guard and kidnapping your girlfriend into the bargain. You are Detective Lytton, and - using your many detective skills, including scuba diving, bomb disposal, forensics, and, if all else fails, shooting people - you have to track down the killer and protect the lives of yourself and many innocent people.

The most popular adventure game however is definitely *Space Quest III*. This is a journey through the universe, from the inside of a robot garbage collecting ship, to the headquarters of Scumsoft, to rescue two software writers who are being forced to churn out pulpy arcade games, stopping on the way to buy a burger from the Monolith Fly-Thru Burger Restaurant (although not for too long as an interstellar cop is on your tail for the heinous crime of vending machine fraud).

The imagination that has gone into producing the countless scenarios encountered during the game is exceptional, and the dry, sarcastic humour displayed throughout makes it extremely enjoyable to play. I haven't yet mentioned the soundtrack that runs throughout the whole adventure, but, as you'd expect, it is up to the very high standard of the rest of the game, being an original composition by Bob Siebenberg, the drummer with rock band Supertramp, no less.

It doesn't stop there. The number of releases is growing, all of them supported by MIDI soundtracks; sequels to already popular titles *Space Quest IV* and *Leisure Suit Larry III*, futuristic *Police Quest* type games *Manhunter II San Francisco* and *Codename Iceman*, and the more traditional adventures, *Hero's Quest* and *Conquests of Camelot*. Sierra have even produced an arcade style 'shoot-em-up', soon to be available, called *Silpheed* (music again by Bob Siebenberg).

Other games manufacturers are also taking compatibility with the CM-32L very seriously. Companies such as Tynesoft (see *News*) and Electronic Arts are already working on new games with built-in soundtracks.

The possibilities are almost endless. While dedicated games enthusiasts may be satisfied with the CM-32L, computer users with a bent for composition or production will be working on their Desktop Music Systems. As well as the sound modules, the range has mixing desk facilities (the CF-10 Digital Fader), a touch entry 'Keyboard without Keys' (the CN-20 Music Entry Pad) and even an Auto-Arranger - the CA-30.

Together with a software-based sequencer the computer musician has a ready made music production facility. The need for high quality soundtracks within games of course opens up new horizons for music writers, just as the TV/Video boom generated a need for a vast amount of audio/visual soundtracks.

The sheer competitiveness of the games software market ensures a high standard of music, and the high turnover of titles means that a lot of work opportunities will be generated. This can only be good news for aspiring computer musicians and composers, with an ever widening market for music produced on and for the equipment they already use.



POLICE QUEST II



SILPHEED

# OLD MASTERS

The changing face of fashion has once again gone full circle: analogue is back to stay. Tim Goodyer takes a fond look at the Roland Jupiter 8

**M**ake no mistake, analogue is back in fashion. While the big-league synth manufacturers invest hundreds of thousands in exploring the possibilities of the latest technological breakthroughs, streetwise musicians from London to LA and back are investing their time and musical energy in '70s tech and '70s sounds to make '80s music. The machines they are using are classic synths along the lines of the Moog Minimoog, and a host of old Rolands - from the fashionable TB-303 Bassline to the powerful Jupiter 8 poly.

Costing something around three grand when it was first introduced, the Jupiter 8 belonged to the same exclusive club as the Prophet 5, DBXa and Memorymoog. To the professional it was a powerful and reliable workhorse, capable of producing everything from transparent string pads to the ultimate bass. To the rest of us, it was the stuff of dreams.

Today, three grand's worth of classic synth technology changes hands for between five and eight hundred pounds - what you might call a bargain. And it still sounds every bit as good. Of course you won't find an original Jupiter 8 speaking MIDI, but the Jupiter 8A

came fitted with Roland's DCB (Digital Communications Bus) which, with the MD-8 MIDI/DCB converter made it MIDI conversant. Alternatively, you can opt for a MIDI conversion (such as the one by Groove Electronics). Either way it will work happily in today's MIDI set-ups.

What makes the Jupiter 8 useful in 1989? Well, it could be the fact that it uses two completely independent oscillators for each of its eight voices; it could be that it has switchable -12dB/-24dB/octave filtering; or it could be that the oscillators can be sync'd together for those uniquely dirty analogue

split or layer. Apart from this, the full power of the Jupiter 8 can be used for each. You can simply put up two sounds to play together - either off the instrument's own keyboard or over MIDI on separate channels - or you can overlay two of the patches to create even more rich and elaborate sounds. Inside its sleek but weighty casing are two voicing boards. Each of these is a fully-fledged synthesizer in its own right and each one is capable of delivering

feedback at a different pitch to the original note can be easily built up.

Then there's the Jupiter's arpeggiator. It may sound quaint in these days of 99-track MIDI software sequencers, but an arpeggiator like this can still offer inspiration and add life to your music. Here again, the power of the synthesis system comes into its own, because the arpeggiator can be run on any patch across the full octave range, while leaving you free to play an independent patch against it.

With the 'integrated' MIDI retrofit, the instrument gains a new lease of life. Where the original Roland spec gave you the options of modulating the oscillator pitch and the filter cutoff from the LFO, a good retrofit will also allow you to modify PWM level, the oscillator mix, the tuning of Osc 2, filter resonance or even the filter LFO modulation from a MIDI controller. You can also introduce the Jupiter to the concept of velocity sensitivity - a rarity in its heyday. And, of course, the Jupiter's patches can be dumped as System Exclusive data - a vast improvement on the original tape dump. Quite an update.

We're dealing with a classic analogue polysynth. Not the 'classic' status that keeps old cars in garages until the sun shines - this sort of classic is for use today, and tomorrow, and the next day...



sounds. It could be, but to think so would be doing the machine a great injustice.

First of all, the Jupiter allows you to split and layer sounds. There's always a catch, and this instrument's is that the eight-note polyphony is reduced to four notes for each half of the

anything you can cram into the 64 onboard memory locations. In other words, there are no irritating shortcuts such as being reduced to one oscillator per voice or only being able to play over a limited note range.

And there's another advantage to the Jupiter 8's flexibility - if two sounds are layered, the system can be treated as a four-oscillator, two-filter per voice wavelength synth. Each patch can be used to form half of the sound completely independently of the other. In this way anything from convincing Simmons electronic drum patches to guitar patches that degenerate into

Roland's TR-808 and TR-909 drum machines reigned supreme in the history of '80s Dance music. Simon Trask looks at the technology which became a legend in its own time

**T**he unexpected return to prominence of Roland's TB 303 Bassline last year as *the Acid machine* highlighted the relationship between technology and dance music. In fact, the two have gone hand in hand ever since Kraftwerk, Yellow Magic Orchestra and British synthpop acts like Gary Numan, Depeche Mode and the Human League built their music around technology in the late '70s and early '80s. Technology has been integral to the creation of '80s dance music in its many and varied forms.

But if it would be hard to imagine Hip Hop and House music without the technology of synths, sequencers, drum machines and samplers, then also it would be hard to imagine technology without dance music. The DIY ethic has always been an integral part of dance music, encouraging budding young musicians to buy a cheap drum machine, synth or sampler and get involved.

The catalyst for the combination of technology and dance was, logically enough, the drum machine. Among these machines are two which reign supreme in the history of '80s dance music: Roland's TR-808 and TR-909. The 808 was immortalised on vinyl by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force's electro classic *Planet Rock*, which was recorded

in New York in April '82. Ever since then the 808's hard, electronic sound has been synonymous with Hip Hop.

In fact, dance music has always revelled in the electronic nature of technology. Arthur Baker, co-producer on the *Planet Rock* session, recalls that the 808 was used because "It was the only drum machine which sounded like a drum machine". Detroit Techno artist Juan Atkins also feels that the 808's electronic feel is its real strength: "The 808 and 909 are classics. The 808 has a real techno feel. Everything on that drum machine has an

the 808 has made its mark in '80s Soul music, notably in the light, breezy productions of Nick Martinelli for such artists as Loose Ends and, more recently, Donna Allen. The 808's plinky cowbell sound, as exemplified in Martinelli's productions, was for a while synonymous with the sound of Soul.

Meanwhile, down in Miami, Florida, a whole electro-influenced style of music known as Miami Bass has been built around the unique bass boom of the 808's

bass drum with its decay turned all the



electronic feel, it's not like digitally-sampled real drums". And

Tim Simenon, aka Bomb the Bass, confirms that "When I want robotic sounds I'll turn to the 808 and 909".

The 808 proved it was as essential as ever to dance music when it underpinned the Def Jam sound of Run DMC, LL Cool J and the Beastie Boys - three of the most popular and successful dance music acts in the world. But, alongside its use in hardcore Hip Hop,

the 808 has made its mark in '80s Soul music, notably in the light, breezy productions of Nick Martinelli for such artists as Loose Ends and, more recently, Donna Allen. The 808's plinky cowbell sound, as exemplified in Martinelli's productions, was for a while synonymous with the sound of Soul. Meanwhile, down in Miami, Florida, a whole electro-influenced style of music known as Miami Bass has been built around the unique bass boom of the 808's

way up. Miami is a good place to sell your 808 (not that you'd want to, of course), with second-hand machines fetching as much as \$2000, a reflection of the musical value placed on them. Purists declare that only the 808, not sampled 808 sounds, can produce the necessary energy to create the bass boom so central to the Miami Bass sound. Detroit Techno artist Kevin Saunderson, one half of the massively successful Inner City, who uses a combination of 808, 909 and 727 drum machines, also insists that the original machines can never be replaced by samples.

While the 808 has proved essential to Electro and Hip Hop,

its successor the TR-909 has, if anything, proved even more influential as the adopted drum machine of Chicago House music, arguably the most profoundly influential dance music of the late '80s. In fact, the 909 was not only in on the very birth of House music in 1985, it acted as a catalyst for its development. Around '84/85, Detroit Techno artists Juan Atkins and Derrick May began using an 808 to play rhythms between records when they were DJing at parties. But it was when May sold a 909 to Chicago House music's founding father Frankie Knuckles that the stage was set for the birth of House music. Knuckles started using the 909 together with Boss' DSD-3 sampling footpedal live at Chicago club The Powerplant, where he DJ'd regularly. It

wasn't long before Chip E made a record called *Like This*, and from then on everyone who was anyone on the Chicago dance scene was making his own House record, passing that one TR-909 along from DJ to DJ. Meanwhile, back in Detroit both the 808 and the 909, but above all the 909, have provided the foundation of that city's Techno music.

More recently, Saunderson and May have each added a Roland R-8 Human Rhythm Composer to their respective arrays of Roland drum machines, demonstrating that it's not only the old technology they go for. But one thing's clear: between them the 808 and the 909 occupy a central place in the history of '80s dance music.

# NEVER MIND THE BOTTLES....



## **This extraordinary band recently gave their all at a Hammersmith Gig. Gez Kahan was there and has lived to tell the story of a once in a lifetime experience**

**ONLY** the biggest bands get a recording deal after just four gigs, headline Hammersmith on their fifth gig and find themselves playing Wembley supported by Nik Kershaw and Elton John. It might sound like a dream come true, but in fact it reads like a dream come true; what it sounds like is another matter entirely.

The Booze Brothers may not be a household name, but they are one of the biggest bands around today - at Hammersmith, for example, there were no less than 13 people on stage at the same time. As Brian Hanrahan, of the BBC, might have put it: "I counted them all out - but it didn't sound as if anybody counted them in."

Although the Booze Brothers, with one exception, all have day jobs, and although the band has a bank account, they could never be described as a semi-pro outfit. That would be an injustice, and Newslink could end up being sued by every semi-pro band from Brentford to Bangalore.

The 9 to 5 jobs all come via Roland - if any jobs at Roland could ever be considered less than a full-time lifestyle - and the bank account, set-up for the purchase of band T-shirts etc, is currently £28.40 overdrawn. Nevertheless the realities are there - the impending CD release (Catalogue No. BB 00001), the Hammersmith gig (alright, it was Le Palais for a private party rather than the Odeon) and the Wembley gig (OK, they admit it, it was another back-stage party).

The Booze Brothers sprang to life, or rather a sort of semi-comatose zombie-like existence, as a result of a chance remark to Roland sales manager Dave 'Duck' Pond.

"I was asked if I had a band. My normal reaction if I'm asked if I have any commodity is to say 'Yes, do you want to buy it?' and then to set about trying to find whatever it is that I've just sold. On this occasion I was slightly distracted and I thought the question was 'Do you have a bass?' This wouldn't have been too bad - either I would have sold my bass or the misunderstanding would have been cleared up - except that the person who asked me was rather hard of hearing and thought I said 'Yes, do you want to book it?' Next thing I knew I had a gig. So the natural thing to do was to set about finding some musicians. It turned out to be a bit more difficult than I'd thought so eventually we formed the Booze Brothers. Luckily, as I've mentioned, the guy who booked us was rather hard of hearing."

Many people have remarked upon the coincidence of the name. It sounds very similar to The Blues Brothers. Is there any connection?

"Surprisingly, neither band is a collection of brothers - unlike the Osmonds or the Jacksons - but both bands do take their name from the most important element in their music. Naturally there is a certain crossover in repertoire: we do quite a lot of Blues Brothers numbers in our set, though so far they haven't learnt any of ours - there again I'm not sure if we have."

Dave is strangely reticent when quizzed on whether he models himself on the Blues Brothers' Donald 'Duck' Dunne.

"Both of us have beards, although I've recently shaved mine off. Also both of us own a bass guitar and have the middle name 'Duck'."

Getting the band together must have caused some headaches.

"Was that meant to be sarcastic? Oh, sorry, I see what you mean. Yes, it was quite tricky. Auditions were considered, but rejected on the grounds that an audition can be very intimidating to someone who's never played before. Also because of the qualifications for membership, the main one of which was wanting to be in the band, we couldn't afford to be too choosy."

In an age of electronic music and digital technology, it's quite refreshing to find a band which sets store by the old fashioned virtues,



# HERE'S THE BOOZE BROTHERS



like playing together. *Most* Booze Brothers performances come into that category.

"We do use a lot of digital gear, but there are very strict rules. For example, our keyboard player, Sister Marguerite Abbott of the Habit, uses a Rhodes MK-80 and a Roland D-50, but the D-50 can only be used for Hammond-style organ parts. There's a complete block on synth brass because we have a brass section. However the brass section does include synth brass - as well as Alan 'Mr Flatulous Lips' Townsend on trumpet and John 'John' Laird on trombone, Jed 'The Horn' Allen uses a Casio digital horn to play sampled and synth brass from the Roland U-20 and D-20."

How about the guitarists?

"'Guitar George' Thorn, who knows all the chords (to *Sweet Home Chicago* - in E), uses the GS-6 Guitar System. It gives a really meaty stack sound without having to cart all that gear about. In fact practically everything goes DI'd into the PA, which is a TOA rig fed by Roland sub-mixers. Tony 'He ain't heavy, he's our Booze Brother' Hicks, when he's not gigging with The Hollies, naturally uses his GP-16 Effects Board. To the audience it might *sound* like a totally non-digital band, but there is quite a lot of technology on stage. The only thing there's a complete block on is the use of electronic tuners, but nobody ever seems to notice that - at least nobody in the band does."

Although Roland is famous for Rhythm Units, MIDI percussion and Digital Drums, 'Big' Mac McErlane plays a standard acoustic kit.

"Mac does use an Octapad II, but he prefers its natural acoustic sound. To be honest it doesn't cut through too well on stage because we've had such problems trying to mic it up."

Were there logistical problems with setting up and rehearsing such a large band?

"On the gear side we've had a lot of help from Roland - help from Dave 'Why do I get all the bum jobs' Marshall with roading and from Dave 'See what I mean' Marshall with mixing and from Dave 'Look, it's

happened again' Marshall with the lights. Other members of staff have been very supportive - some of them have given up their free evenings to stand-in when the audience has failed to turn up. In fact you could say we owe it all to Roland.

"We do, of course, rehearse. It's been known for several of the band all to turn up for the same rehearsal at once, but generally it's easier to work in small sections, hoping that everyone learns the same arrangement. The backing vocalists Gail 'Force' Nunney, Denise 'Burt' Reynolds and Karen 'Banana Woman' Bateman often get things together separately, before getting it together, together, together with lead vocalist Drew 'McMcMc' McCulloch. It helps to retain on-stage spontaneity when nobody's quite sure what's going to happen next.

"Repertoire is chosen by three unwritten rules: how many chords (maximum five for one number), lyrics (maximum eight letters per word and each line must contain one of 'Yeh', 'Oh', 'Baby' or 'Love') and brass section ranges - that any trumpet line should also be playable (in its correct octave) by the trombone."

Who does the arrangements?

"We all work out our individual bits, fit them together and modify them on the basis of who forgets what. But there's no denying that as a rule the band is tight."

The Booze Brothers certainly know where they're heading. Future dates include *Cafe Mama's* in Richmond and *Tootsies* in Chiswick, both as paying dinner guests (another drain on the bank account) and the latest rumour suggests they could soon be appearing on Sky TV's *Search for a Star*.

'Big' Mac McErlane commented: "As long as they tell us where to search, we're happy to help them look for one". But isn't it a talent show? "Talent? Us? Sorry, mate, you must have the wrong band.

"You see, it's an unwritten rule ..."

# BEYOND BASIC SYNTHESIS

## PART 1

Of Newslink's Synthesizer Course by David Marshall

Following on from the Basic Synthesis series, David Marshall delves even deeper into the mysteries of electronic sound



Newslink's two-part introduction to analogue synthesis - *Basic Synthesis* - concentrated on the basic elements of sound synthesis. The model was a monophonic system using a single oscillator. *Beyond Basic Synthesis* covers some of the historical developments from this starting point; greater complexity of sound; polyphonic synthesizers and the rise of digital technology; and the introduction of preset and programmable synths.

### Complex waveforms

The basic waveform can be modified in pitch (via the keyboard), in harmonic content (via the Filter

section and Resonance or Emphasis control) and in amplitude or volume. Further alteration can be introduced via an Envelope Generator (which alters any or all of these elements with respect to time) and by use of controls such as Pitch Bend etc.

To create more complex tones, multiple oscillator systems can be used, the signals from these oscillators being mixed together in a straightforward audio mixer before passing on to the filter and amplifier banks for further treatment. Other variations to the basic waveform include modulation of Pitch, Amplifier, Filter and Pulse Width by additional 'Low Frequency'

Oscillators, to produce Vibrato, Tremolo, Wah-Wah and Chorus effects.

More extreme variations are possible when multi-oscillator synthesizers modulate the waveform through interaction. The most commonly used method is Ring Modulation.

A simple Ring Modulator involves two input frequencies provided by two oscillators, and a single output. The Ring Modulator (RM) provides a 'sum and difference' compound of the two inputs. For example if the two oscillators are producing frequencies of 440Hz (A4) and 660Hz (E5) then the output of the RM will produce frequencies of  $660 - 440 = 220\text{Hz}$  (A3) and  $660 + 440 = 1100\text{Hz}$  (C#6). The output should not include the original frequencies.

In this example the difference (220Hz) provides the fundamental tone while the sum (1100Hz) is an overtone equivalent to the 5th Harmonic; both frequencies lie within a harmonic series and the result does not sound particularly electronic. By varying the input frequencies non-harmonic relationships can be achieved. The aural effect of this is to produce bell-like and metallic effects, and this was the main usage of Ring Modulation in early synthesis.

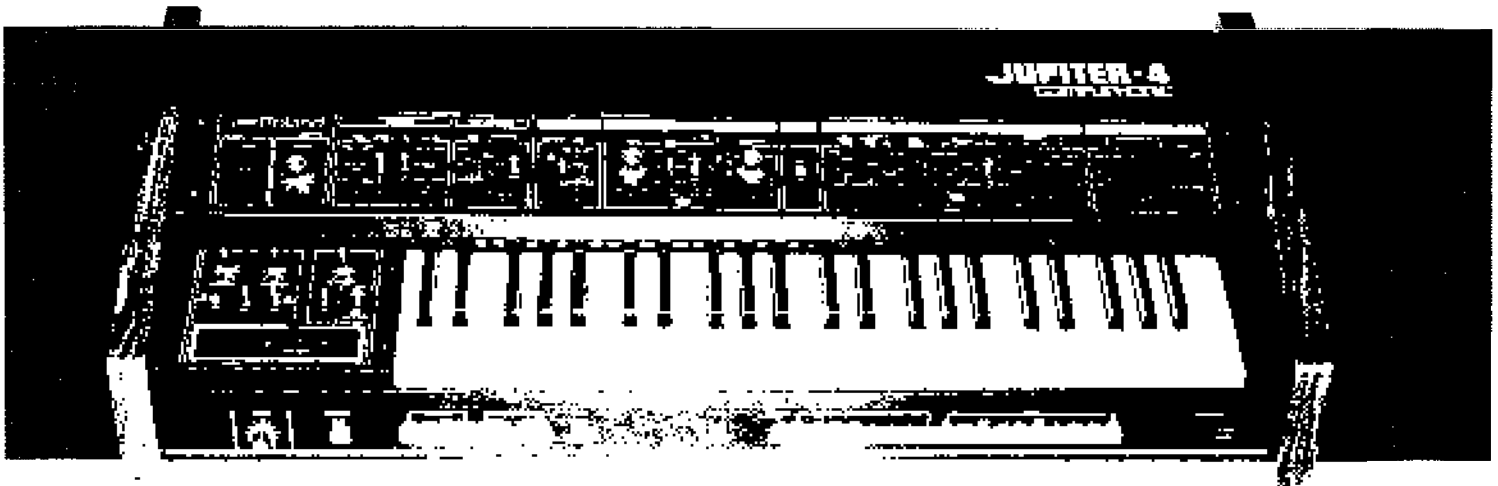
For more outrageous effects the input signals can also be complex tones rather than simple sine waves. With the rise in popularity of metallic sounds in the last few years Ring Modulation, which lost its appeal for a while and disappeared as an option on many synths, is making a comeback (eg Roland's LA Synthesis method).

### Early polyphony

Early synthesizers, such as the MiniMoog, the ARP Odyssey and the Roland SH-101, were monophonic, that is, they could only play one note at a time, like a flute or a human voice. To increase the number of notes available at one time, and so produce chords, requires additional instruments. Classical composers write for flute sections or choirs, naturally incurring the expense of extra manpower; the same applies to synthesizers. Although only one keyboard and one player is required, a polyphonic analogue synthesizer needs an extra Oscillator, Filter and Amplifier for each additional note of polyphony. Early polyphonic synthesizers, such as the Roland Jupiter 4 and the PolyMoog Synth, limited the number of available polyphonic notes to four, six or eight to keep costs relatively low; even so they were luxury items. When more notes are played than can be handled by the instrument, systems like First Note and Last Note Priority operate - the names referring to the method by which a synthesizer decides which notes to sound when the number of keys depressed exceeds its polyphony.

### Digital oscillators

Analogue 'Voltage Controlled Oscillators' (VCOs) have some fundamental problems. They are liable to drift out of tune, requiring periodic retuning by an engineer; temporary tuning drift is caused by temperature fluctuations - synthesizers with VCOs must be switched on well before



a gig (especially in an open-air venue) in order for them to be in tune by the time it starts. Space is also a constraint. Analogue circuitry is relatively bulky and a polyphonic synthesizer requires several voice modules - the result is an increase in size and weight.

With the advent of cheaper digital technology, and the miniaturisation made possible by the micro-processor, the Digital Oscillator was developed. As well as giving tuning stability, it is much more space-effective. Its biggest advantage, however, is in cost. Using DCOs (Digitally Controlled Oscillators) a 6-voice polyphonic synthesizer can be produced for a price similar to that for a twin VCO model. DCOs are found on synths such as Roland Junos and JXs and the Korg Poly 61.

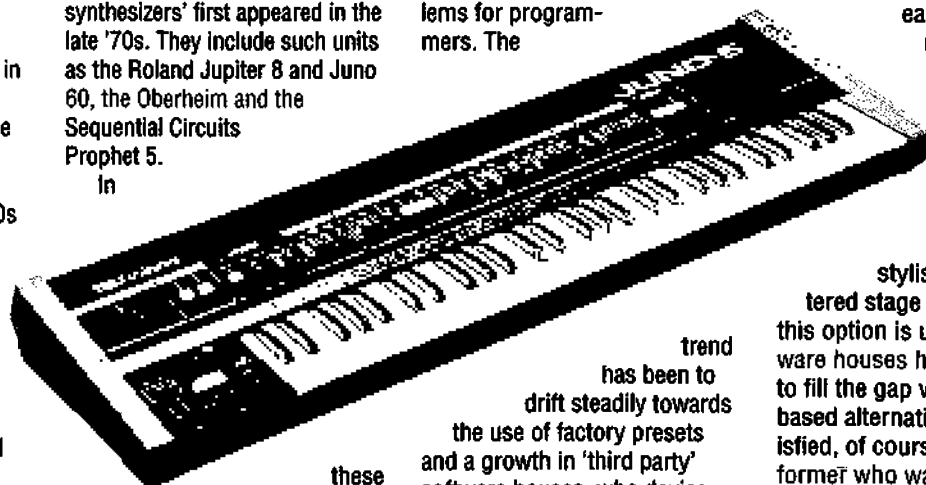
### Programmability

Look at a synthesizer today and compare it with a unit from the '60s or '70s and the most striking physical change is the reduction in the number of front panel controls. Early synthesizers, as well as being mostly monophonic and analogue, were also known as 'fully variables'. Each parameter of the sound (cut-off point, envelope etc) had a separate slider or switch control, allowing the front panel setting to control the sound directly. This gave the user precise and instant access to sound editing. However, to select another sound could mean changing the entire panel setting - making this system difficult for live use. Instruments that used this system included the Roland SH-

101 and Juno 6, the MiniMoog and the Yamaha CS-01.

A step forward for the performer came with pre-set machines. These could call up factory preset sounds (usually imitations of acoustic instruments) at the touch of a button. With the advance in micro-processors came the technology to create a cost-effective fully variable machine with a user memory. These 'programmable synthesizers' first appeared in the late '70s. They include such units as the Roland Jupiter 8 and Juno 60, the Oberheim and the Sequential Circuits Prophet 5.

In



these synthesizers, when the 'write' button is pressed the processor scans the front panel controls making a note of the settings and storing these in the designated memory location. The user can then recall at the push of a button or two any collection of panel settings. An interesting 'half-way house' is the Yamaha CS-80. Its 'memory' consists of four small panels, each a reproduction in miniature of the main control panel. Four sounds can therefore be stored by setting these mini panels to the desired values.

With all modern synthesizers

the micro-processor rules supreme. Gone are the one slider per parameter panels. Now all parameters are controlled by a handful of sliders. The values of each parameter are shown on an LCD or LED display and they can be stepped through using cursor keys. While this makes the instrument more attractive (its clean lines uncluttered by knobs and sliders) it causes undeniable problems for programmers. The

trend has been to drift steadily towards the use of factory presets and a growth in 'third party' software houses, who devise and market alternative sounds to be accessed via RAM or ROM card slots on the synths.

It is a constant source of complaint (especially from those who have grown up with analogue synthesis) that players seem not to program their own sounds any more - in fact a new breed of 'synthesizer programmer' has sprung up to design sounds for busy session musicians.

Naturally there are two sides to the argument. Any manufacturer will point out that costs of digital synthesizers are as low as they are only

because of the reduction in the numbers of knobs and sliders. Compare the weight of a 61-note synth from the '70s with one from the late '80s and you will realise another advantage of controls being software- as opposed to hardware based.

One solution to this problem may be in add-on optional 'knobs and sliders' units for easier programming; the performer can customise and store sounds before a gig and

still have a stylish and uncluttered stage set-up. Where this option is unavailable, software houses have been quick to fill the gap with computer-based alternatives. Never satisfied, of course, is the performer who wants the latest, cheapest and most convenient technology plus comprehensive real-time editing.

So far these articles have been almost totally concerned with Analogue or Analogue/Digital Subtractive Synthesis. *Beyond Basic Synthesis Part 2*, in your next edition of *Roland Newslink*, will examine some different forms of synthesis, and explain how, combined with the principles of analogue subtractive synthesis already discussed, they have resulted in the current generation of synthesizers.

Roland

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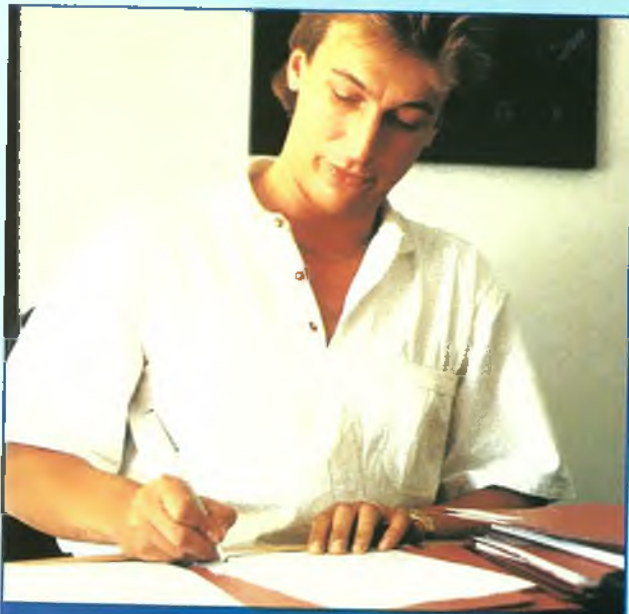


BOSS...CREATIVE MUSIC TECHNOLOGIE





# INPUT



Chris Simpson, one of the Roland Product Specialists, looks at a selection of readers' letters.

If you wish to contribute a problem, or even a solution or idea, write to Chris at:

**INPUT, Roland (UK) Ltd, West Cross Centre, Brentford, Middx TW8 9EZ**

Dear Input,  
I have just purchased a second-hand MKS-20 Piano Module to add to my rack, which consists of a D-110, U-110 and TX7. I just have two quick questions: firstly, is it still possible to get hold of a manual? and secondly, is it possible to turn Program Change Receive off on the MKS-20, as every time I send a change to my D-110 etc, the MKS-20 follows?  
Yours faithfully,  
Debbie Lewis, Oxford

Dear Debbie,  
To secure an MKS-20 manual, all it takes is a cheque for £5 made out to Roland (UK) Ltd and directed to Doreen Morson in the Customer Support Department. With regard to the second problem, if you power up the unit whilst holding down the VOICE SELECTOR 1 button it will no longer receive Program Changes 0-63. Hope this solves your problem!  
**CS**



Dear Chris,  
Moving into a new apartment I decided to dump all of my D-50 sounds onto a CD-ROM and store them on a hard drive. However, no matter what I do, the memory always shows MIDI Communication Error when I try and dump back into the keyboard. Do I need new software or something?  
Yours,  
Steven Myeroff  
Whitehall



Dear Stuart,  
This problem is usually generated by one of two operational errors: firstly please ensure that the data on the sequencer and the D-50 are on the same MIDI channels, and secondly make sure that you keep the DATA TRANSFER button depressed throughout the procedure until you have pressed ENTER. If you release the button before pressing BULK LOAD you will receive the 'MIDI Communication Error' message.  
**CS**

T

# Roland NEWS LINK

Dear Chris,  
I recently bought a U-20 keyboard and am delighted with the way it sounds.  
However, I don't think that I am getting the best possible results out of it, simply because I don't know how to use it fully yet. Do you run any courses for music clubs like myself to go on please?  
Yours,  
Rik (Lewes)  
Evelyn (Lewes)

Dear Rik,  
At present, the only courses we run at Roland are for our dealers, in order that they can have a greater insight into a product before it hits the sales floor.  
However, we are investigating the possibility of teaching sessions under the supervision of Roland Product Specialists. In the meantime, I can put you in touch with suitable organisations or individuals if you give me a ring. CS

Dear Input,  
I have owned my W-30 for about a month, and am amazed at what is possible with just one keyboard. My only problem is that when I try to use the 2nd virtual keyboard, notes are cutting out. Is this a fault with my keyboards?  
Best regards,  
Vivien Carnegie  
Surrey



Dear Vivien,  
No! your problem is easily solved. The system disk which you are using is Ver 1.01. A new version, 1.04, will cure your problem and can be supplied for the price of a disk from your local dealer. CS

Dear Chris,  
Is it possible to have the R-6 (Drum Machine monitor) to have a colour LCD? We are having problems, when the lights are dimmed on stage, making some of the information on the display.  
Yours sincerely,  
Peter Kester  
Newport

Dear Peter,  
This is the first time that we have received this request. Our Engineers are looking into the logistics of such a modification and we will let you know the result of our findings. CS



# NEWSLINK SURVEY

1

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- Direct by Post
- Within International Musician and Recording World
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- From a friend/fellow musician

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2

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Others (please specify)

Please list any areas of gear/music/information you feel we don't cover adequately

4

## ANY OTHER COMMENTS

5

## PLEASE HELP US BY FILLING IN THESE DETAILS

**Age** 14 or under  15 to 18  19 to 24  25 to 34  34 or over

Which of the following are your main instruments/musical skills?  
 Group Keyboards/Synths  Home Keyboards  Guitar  Bass   
 Kit Drums/Percussion  Computer Music Systems  Brass/Woodwind  Vocals

Other (please specify)

Do you currently play in a band? Yes/No

What is your musician status?

Do you do any home recording? Yes/No

Amateur

Semi-Professional

Full-Time Professional

Would you like to use *Newslink* as a notice board for swapping sounds/technical information, for advertising Roland equipment and services and to act as a 'musicians meeting place' ?

Yes/No

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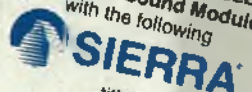
The best sounds in the universe - now available in any universe you care to imagine. Roland, a world leader in synthesizers, have put their expertise into a computer sound module - the **CM-32L** - to interface with Ataris, Amigas and PCs. Using this module, several adventure games, including Sierra's 'Space Quest III' and 'King's Quest IV' can have professionally-scored soundtracks to match their superb graphics.

Inside the CM-32L is a digital sound processor equivalent to the internal workings of eight powerful synthesizers plus a complete drum and percussion section. Allied to your computer, and the know-how of top Hollywood composers, it becomes an entire orchestra, with 128 different voices ranging from classical Trumpets and Strings through Shakuhachis, Kotos and Water Bells to amazing synth sounds like Fantasy and Atmosphere. Add to that 33 stereo sound effects from Door Slams and Thunderstorms to Police Sirens and Helicopters.

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IM12/89

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# Roland

# VINTAGE AND RARE GUITARS

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FEELERS ON THE  
DEALERS



**E**arl's Court is one of the biggest and most impersonal parts of London. Everyone you meet is a stranger, every step you take is danger. The community spirit has long since been buried underneath the piles of concrete that we call big business.

Curiously a mere five minutes away from the tube, on Kenway Road, you will come across one of the most friendly guitar shops you'll ever find. It's not just yer average shop, oh no. Vintage and Rare Guitars is a shop specialising in, not surprisingly, vintage and rare guitars and amps.

Once you are in the door, you will be greeted by what on first appearances seems to be a mini museum complete with your own personal tour guide, a well-versed, lightly bearded bloke with a Yorkshire accent. As you glide effortlessly around the first floor you will be greeted by a number of signed guitars from the stars including Robert Smith's of THE CURE. Sadly, these beautiful rarities are not for the likes of you and me, they are merely gifts from satisfied and presumably pretty wealthy customers. A vintage juke box dresses one wall, whilst a chaise-lounge guards the entrance to a large basement.

Down in the basement are around 70-100 guitars of varying price and quality. A £3000 Gretsch White Falcon nestles snugly between a herd of Gibson whilst a troupe of Stratocasters look on. The whole place is literally infested with beautifully maintained guitars, some of which the likes you may never have seen before.

The man from Yorkshire rubbed his light-ashed beard into shape and left me to meander. He had thoughtfully set up a Fender amp in one corner so I could pick up a guitar at will. I jammed a few Telecasters, including one Fender Thinline Semi-acoustic which, I was reliably informed by my leather jacketed friend, was dated around 1974.

A couple of minutes later he returned clutching a mug of piping hot tea, just for me. Now this was stylish. I was under no

pressure to buy and I was underground.

After chatting about the virtues of Thinline, I was again allowed to pick and chose guitars. Each guitar I chose earned me a potted history of everything down to the pickups. And, each guitar I chose was beautifully set up and almost all of them were in tune straight off the stand! The shop itself has its own handyman who checks all the guitars before they go on sale. It's a place to feel totally relaxed.

According to the Yorkshire

man, the guitars are also available for hire. A good deal of business is to be found in hiring out the most street cred axe for the vain pop star who just knows he's gonna look real good with that Gretsch Country Gentlemen.

Vintage and Rare Guitars is a shop well worth visiting. The friendly atmosphere is backed up by good solid quality guitars. This is not a place to rip you off. Go there and enjoy.

*Billy Punter*



## HOW THE DEALER FARED

RATINGS OUT OF TEN

- **STOCK: 9**  
Interesting, unusual, exceptional
- **Shop Layout: 9**  
Easy access, unusual design features
- **Product Knowledge: 9**  
Well-versed in the history of the guitar
- **Quality Of Advice: 9**  
A difficult one, since the majority of the customers will be collectors and already know what they want
- **BEST BUY:**  
Everything here is of good quality and value, so it's up to you!
- **Overall Star Rating (Out Of Five)** ★★★★★

## MUSIC ON THE CARDS?

We live in a world run increasingly on "plastic" money, with practically every major high street store offering its own in-store credit card.

It is now possible to make major purchases up to a preset credit limit and arrange to pay the money back over a convenient period.

Until now nothing like this has existed for the humble musician. But now we have Musicard, a revolutionary card that enables you to shop, not just at one music store, but at any participating music store, nationwide, which is a member of the MRA, the Music Retailer's Association.

Remember, most store cards limit you to a particular chain, Musicard lets you shop at any of the nation's participating dealers.

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Obtaining a Musicard couldn't be easier. If you are over 18 just pop in to your local MRA music store and ask for the application form. You decide how much you pay back per

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# SHOW STOPPERS

This month Chris Jenkins reports

from the Personal Computer

Show, the biggest annual UK

bash for the leisure and

business computing market



**A**s has become the regular practice, music technology companies were clustered together into a "Music Village". This year there was also a live performance stage where software demos took place in front of an enthusiastic audience. Atari took the opportunity to make great play of their sponsorship deal with JULIA FORDHAM, who, wonderful though

she is, doesn't spring to mind as being at the cutting edge of computer technology. Perhaps there's some truth in the rumour that PETER GABRIEL was asked, but backed out.

## In The Village

Apart from Evenlode Soundworks, who appeared with Cubase in Atari's own "village",

most of the familiar music specialists made an appearance in the music village, the largest showing being from Roland with the new CM-series LA sound chip add-ons for the PC, ST and Amiga. On the software front, though, it was largely a matter of updates rather than brand new products.

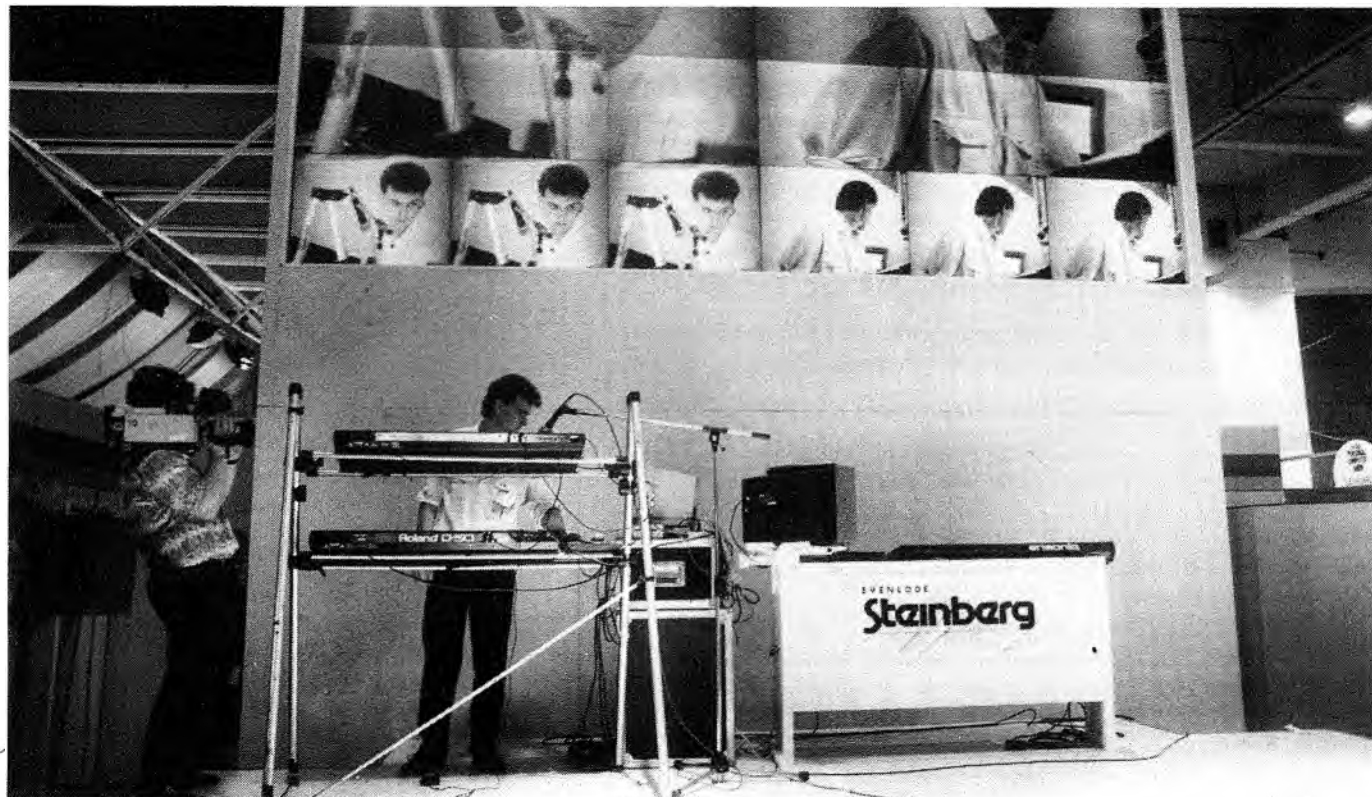
Two great bits of news from The Digital Muse, creators of the ST sequencer Virtuoso. Firstly, an update for Virtuoso itself.

Version 1.1 has lots of new features including optional graphic slider control of many parameter settings; an Unlock feature allows you to scroll the Grid Edit display independently as the music plays; recording in Arrange mode; and chase Back, a feature which searches for events such as program changes and sustained notes taking place before the point where you drop

into Play in the middle of a sequence.

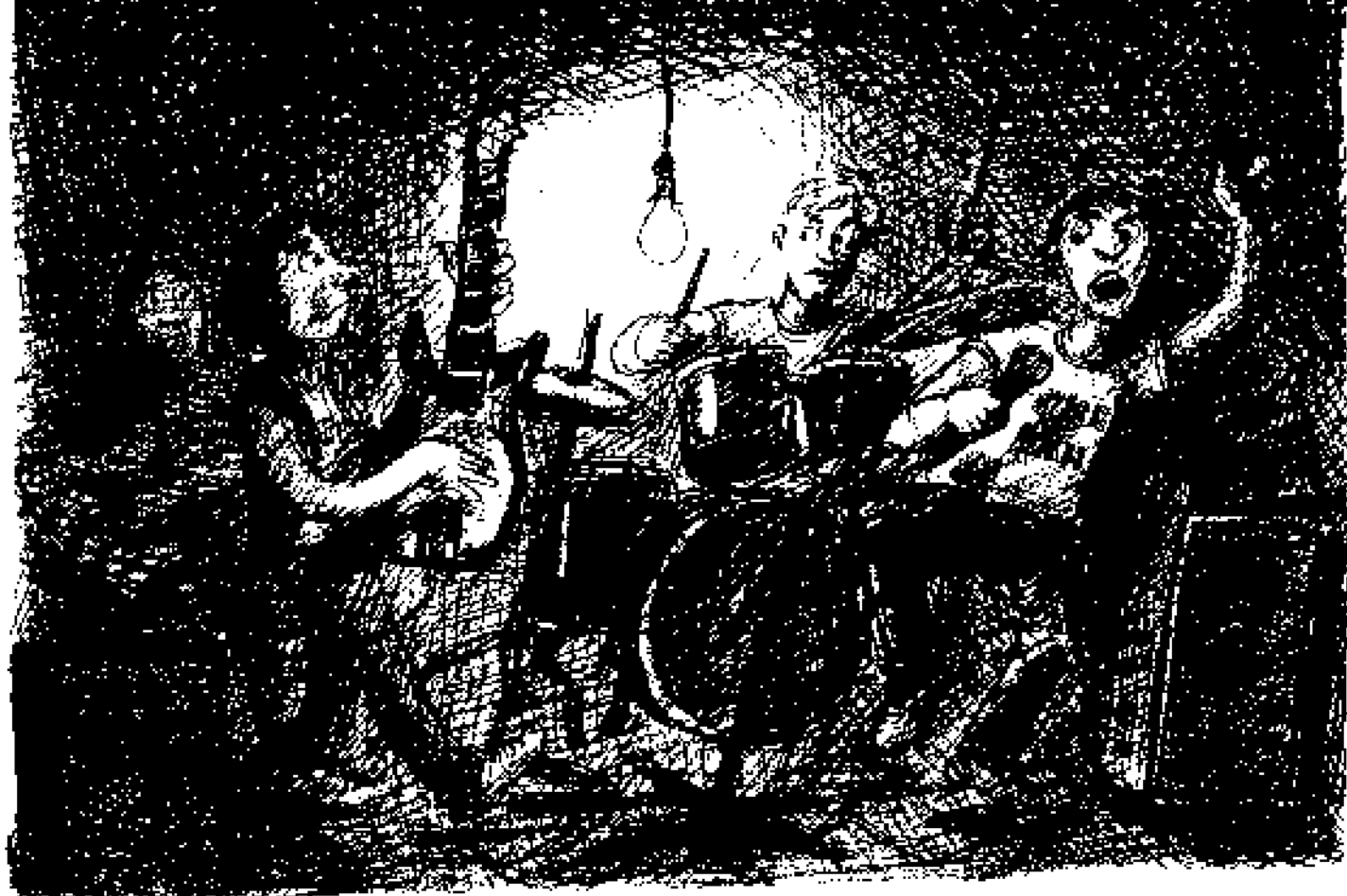
Even better news, there's shortly to be an SMPTE option for Virtuoso; for £199 you'll get a small hardware unit which allows you to synchronise Virtuoso with all SMPTE standards. It even has an audio trigger which, like the Human Touch add-on for C-Lab's Creator, lets you sync sequences to a clicktrack on tape, a bassdrum, fingersnaps, whatever you want. There's also a hardware MIDI port expander, with four INs and four OUTs on the way.

As if that wasn't enough, there's also an entry-level version of Virtuoso, a 32-track sequencer named Prodigy. Featuring many of the same graphic editing functions, but with cut-down synth parameter facilities, Prodigy will cost £129.95 and, get this, if you want to upgrade to Virtuoso you get a full refund



Software demos on the music stage at the Personal Computer Show

# A GIG?



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Updates too from Hollis, whose ST sequencer Trackman and editing accessory MIDIMan we have looked at recently. The latest updates include real-time fader control of synth velocity, but there's also a major enhancement. Trackman II, on the way.

This has a myriad of helpful new features such as improved note capacity; a MIDI activity indicator; MIDI clicks from the metronome; Track Sheet, a 'scribble strip' for details of instruments and settings which can be pulled up with the mouse button while selecting a track; blank sequences inheriting parameters from the last track used, and alternative numbering formats for patch change messages.

You'll also be able to perform practically any operation without stopping the sequencer; you can even use the UNDO function while playing, to compare an edited version with an original, and format disks, load or save while playing.

Some novelties from MCMXCIX, who launched several new products from Dr.T, the most unusual of which is T.I.G.E.R. - The Interactive Graphic Editor.

Dr T's popular sequencer, KCS, isn't renowned for its graphic displays; now you can load any music file from KCS (or any other MIDI File compatible sequencer) into T.I.G.E.R. and use its unique graphic editing system.

T.I.G.E.R. runs on the ST in colour or mono (Amiga version forthcoming), and it's compatible with MPE, Dr. T's Multi Program Environment. T.I.G.E.R. uses a piano-roll style display to show up to three tracks of music data simultaneously. The clever bit is that while the duration is shown by the horizontal length of the graphic, the velocity is shown by a vertical 'stem', T.I.G.E.R. costs £129.00.

Also new from MCM, Dr. T's X-OR. We've previewed this £249

generic patch editor for the ST before; using a continuously updated library of 'profiles', it allows you to edit, randomize and sort patches for practically any popular synthesizer. It reads files from all existing Caged Artist patch editors, and even lets you write your own instrument profiles using the Profile Editor.

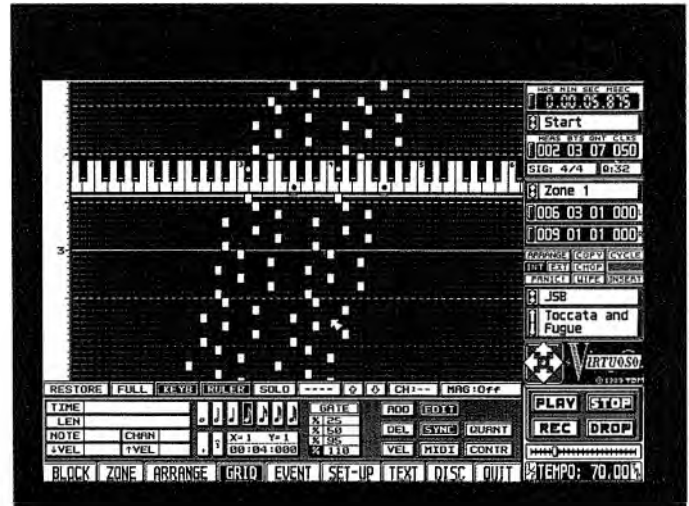
Also on the way, an entry-level sequencer for the Amiga featuring some of the facilities of T.I.G.E.R. and the existing sequencer M.R.S. at about £60; patch editors for the E-mu Proteus and Korg M1 from Caged Artist; and an inexpensive cut-down Apprentice version of the scorewriting program Copyist.

## Hybrid Arts

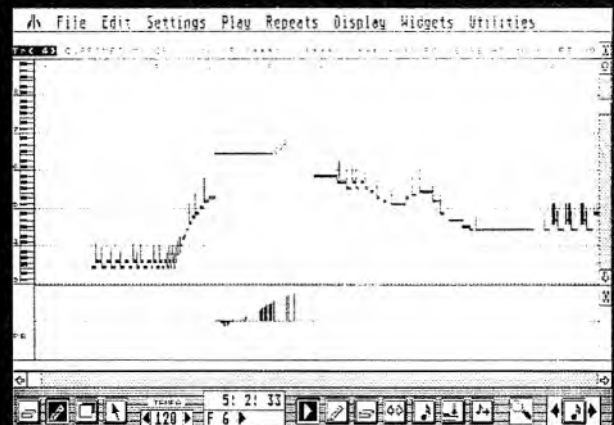
Speaking of the Proteus, Hybrid Arts previewed Protozoa, an ST patch editor for E-Mu's new baby. Featuring fully interactive graphics and patch randomization, Protozoa lets you work on up to six Proteuses simultaneously. Counting Steinbergs, there are now three Proteus editors available, but no-one seems to be able to get hold of a Proteus to use them on. Ho-hum...

The big news from Hybrid Arts, though, is the latest update to the SMPTE Track sequencer. This is such a large-scale update that for the first time users are going to be charged, £75, but this does include a 100-page update to the manual. Most of the enhancements are intended to improve speed of use. You can now scroll any value displayed on screen with the pointer; define key macros for often-used command sequences; jump more easily from one edit function page to another; set SMPTE times 'on the fly', and unmix sequences into separate notes (so that you could for instance separate out the different instruments of a drum part, and retune one instrument without disturbing the others).

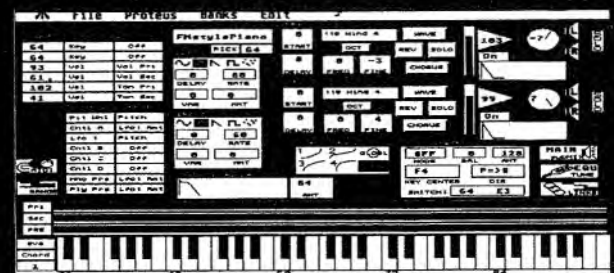
Other useful features include a Help page, a damaged data



DiT's T.I.G.E.R. ATARI ST, Launched at the Personal Computer Show



VIRTUOSO GRAPHIC EDIT PAGE



INTERVAL MUSIC SYSTEMS PROTOZOA EDIT RESET SCREEN



◀ recovery routine, and the ability to program 'sets' with definable pauses between songs.

Swindon-based distributor MIDI Music was showing System Design Associates' ProMIDI Studio on the PC. This impressive sequencing system features direct-to-hard-disk recording, and apparently STEVE LIPSON has just used one to record the MIDI data from a three-hour Simple Minds gig. At £399 including a special

interface, this is a system we'll have to look at in more detail in the future. MIDI Music also has a new range of Voice Crystal cartridges for the Ensoniq VFX - £59 for ROMs and £99 for RAMS. With voices created by the original VFX programmers, these look like something special. Look out too for a new £25 sampling CD with an excellent range of percussion, and modern synth sounds from the Roland

D50, Kawai K1 and Korg M1!

There won't be another Personal Computer Show; the split between leisure and business markets has become so wide that two separate shows will probably be arranged next year, and music software companies will have to choose to exhibit at one or the other.

Oddly enough, this PC show was more interesting than the BMF from a software point of

view, so perhaps that's not a bad way to bow out.

*Chris Jenkins*

**Digital Muse: 01-586 3445**  
**Hollis Research c/o First**  
**Rate, 0481 23169**  
**MIDI Music: 0793 882108**  
**Hybrid Arts: 01-883 1335**  
**MCMXCIX: 01-724 4104**

## LETTER FROM AMERICA

The Boston MacWorld Expo, held till the 12th August this year, was the place to hear about all the latest developments in Macintosh Software and Hardware, especially for musical applications. Opcode, DigiDesign, and Coda software all had stands, and there were many other representatives from other companies involved with music or recording on the Mac.

The big news was what Apple Chief Executive Officer John Sculley referred to as DESKTOP MEDIA: a coming-together of all the various types of media, including text, animation, still and moving pictures, dialogue and music (perhaps via Midi) on the Mac. A big 'hit' at the show was MacroMind Director, an animation program which allows you to sequence animations, pictures, text, and graphics, with synchronised dialogue, sound effects, and music, either using digitally recorded sounds stored as Macintosh Resources for reproduction from the Mac, or by triggering Midi sequences controlling synthesizers and samplers.

Sounds are recorded onto the Mac using an 8-bit device such as Farallon's MacRecorder, or using the new 16-bit Sound Tools system from DigiDesign, which uses a Sound Accelerator card in a Mac II or SE to reproduce and process the 44.1kHz recordings. This system may have either an analogue input unit, the AD In, or a digital In/Out unit, called the DAT I/O. The digital unit is particularly interesting, because it supports just about all the most useful digital interface formats, allowing the user to transfer audio from DAT, CD, or Sony/Mitsubishi Digital Tape Recorder formats - you can edit your DAT tapes, or your Sony/Mitsubishi Digital stereo masters, using non-destructive editing on your Macintosh. The controlling software is a new version of DigiDesign's popular sample editing software, now called Sound Designer II. This software not only allows you to record audio direct to hard disk and process and edit it on the Mac, but will also allow you to transfer sounds from virtually any sampler on the market into the Mac for editing and processing, and back again.

Apple Computers have just made available new standard Midi routines for program developers to use. The Midi Manager routines allow the user to make internal software connections between programs which use these. The Midi Driver routines are standard routines for Midi input and output. DigiDesign's Sound Tools uses these Midi routines already. Opcode's new Vision sequencer will use them in the next software revision, and I am sure most other Midi programs will follow. Talking about Vision, this has to be the 'hottest' sequencer program available for the Mac at present. Everyone at the show was saying that it was overtaking Performer as the most popular Mac sequencer to date. Vision features both note list and graphical editing windows. On-screen Midi faders to let you mix your synth level using Midi Volume messages. Then there are Generated Sequences for algorithmic composition, controller and patch change chasing subsequences for people who like to compose in sections, and much, much more!

Coda software were showing their 'blockbuster' music scoring, sequencing, and printing program, Finale. Programs like Finale are aimed solidly at professional music composers or publishers, and have price tags and learning curves too steep for the average user. In recognition of this, Coda have just released an easier to use, and cheaper to buy, scaled-down version of Finale, called Music Prose. This featured guitar chord boxes, as well as an automatic feature to name your keyboard chords: very easy to use.

All these sophisticated new products are making the Macintosh a much more attractive 'buy' for musical work, and Apple also announced significant price cuts on Macintosh products, which will make the Mac much more comparable in price to the Atari and IBM-compatible models. I anticipate that we will see many more people using Macs in the Music Industry in future!

*Mike Collins*



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**K4** RESOLUTION  
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...it's not because of its drum-section...  
...it's not because of its built-in multi-effects...  
...it's not because of its handling...  
...it's not because of its price...  
...it's because of its **Sound!**  
...and that's it!

**KAWAI**  
Sounds Real

# GODIN L R BAGGS ●

RRP: £699 (including case)

first saw this guitar at Frankfurt '89 and despite Sonor's

bold claim of "we should have them within the month", it's taken until now to actually get hold of one! While that in itself isn't too unusual, the guitar most certainly is.

Robert Godin is a French Canadian. He is not a guitar designer but a wood dealer and production manufacturer. He has produced timber parts for many American and Canadian made guitar lines but it is only recently that he has started manufacturing his own instruments. I am told he presently owns five factories in Canada that produce guitars under his own name as well as the Seagull and Norman acoustics which were seen recently at the BME.

So although this guitar bears the Godin name it was not designed by Robert Godin himself. This was the task of his in-house designers and a man named L R Baggs, who is renowned for his soundhole-mounting acoustic pickup. At present this model is available with either a Rosewood or Maple fingerboard in black, white or turquoise finishes. A natural finished, all-Mahogany version is available as is a cherry sunburst - both slightly more expensive at £713. Three Godin basses will soon be available in a solid body Precision bass style with either the Zeta bridge pickup system, the Canadian Evans pickups or a combination of both.

## Construction

Well, it looks like a Telecaster. My sample was finished in black with a white binding around the top edge and a generous bottom edge radius. It is an acoustic guitar - at least 80% hollow - there is no centre solid section and the back and

sides are made from Canadian Limewood while the front is solid Spruce. Internally the back has three transverse braces and what appears to be a central join. The top features specially-designed fan strutting by Lloyd Baggs. Peering through the small hole under the control plate you can feel three struts that fan out from the bridge and there's definitely a cross brace.

Apparently this fan strutting is tuned, and not all of it is in contact with the Spruce top, which accounts for the volume and surprisingly rich acoustic response from what is a very small bodied acoustic. Unfortunately no more precise information was available, so exactly what L R Baggs' 'innovative top bracing' looks like remains a mystery.

Exactly how the body is constructed is unclear too. The back is certainly quite thick at 7mm and the generous back edge radius means that the sides are quite full too, suggesting that the hollow area is routed from one or two pieces of timber.

A Maple neck with Rosewood fingerboard is screwed to the body via the usual four screws and chrome neck plate arrangement. What is an improvement is that the heel on the body has been slightly angled to improve comfortable access to the top frets. It's a full 25" Fender scale length with 22 2.5mm frets - the last one sits on a slight fingerboard overhang - each with a low oval section. There's no fancy inlay work on the fingerboard, just simple pearloid dots on both face and side of the board. It's a pretty comfortable neck shape, a shallow oval section which feels really fast and would definitely be in place on any solid body. The overall quality of the neck timbers is very high too; there's a bold grain and lovely deep fleck in the Maple, and the Rosewood is very dark and quite close-grained.

With the whole guitar being

styled after a Telecaster, it's no surprise to see that the headstock apes the Fender design, though it's actually a little wider than a Telecaster head. The Godin logo is a bold white with black outline. The overall finish on the neck is clear satin except for the face of the headstock which is left gloss - quite unusual attention to detail even on a guitar of this price. The truss rod adjustment point is at the end of the neck (*there are no pickups to get in the way*), definitely the best place for it.

A standard acoustic bridge, made from what appears to be Ebony, is fitted with six cream plastic bridge pins and a single piece plastic saddle. There is no facility for any kind of height or intonation adjustment, which I think is a mistake.

At the other end are a set of nickel-plated Schaller M6 mini's. I don't think I've come across nickel plated Schallers of this type before and it does give a more vintage and original looking peg. The action is extremely good, and even with those two old-fashioned string trees to hitch up the strings, tuning stability is fine. I'd prefer to see graphite trees myself - while it is necessary to get a good behind-the-nut angle, you may as well either use a roller tree or a synthetic low friction one. The same goes for the nut, which is white plastic and reasonably well cut, but a graphite nut or similar would be a more professional touch.

## Where's The Pickup?

The pickup fitted here has three Piezo electric elements, each separately amplified, placed under the saddle. These signals are then summed and pass to a three band graphic EQ and master volume control - all slider types - placed on an aluminium cover plate on the upper bout. All the electronics are fixed to the cover plate which makes things very neat - the battery

also fits in the same compartment. I'd prefer to see bolts and brass inserts used to fix the cover plate - they won't strip their threads as a simple screw in wood can do. Failing that, a separate flip top battery compartment would be an ideal solution.

## Sounds And Playability

Due to its hollow body the Godin is a very light guitar and consequently when it's strapped on it's top heavy. I found it took a little while to get used to this un-balance. It seemed more comfortable sitting down, but in either position you have to balance the guitar either with your left hand or your right forearm resting on the guitar's body. Not ideal.

I mentioned that there is no facility to adjust the action or intonation on the guitar. The action was a little on the high side and while this would be a simple job to correct on an electric (*so long as there were no uneven frets and the neck had the right amount of relief*), here, as with an acoustic, you have to file the saddle lower. Another option, courtesy of the bolt-on neck design, is to alter the angle of the neck. Unfortunately, it's probably a job for your repairman either way unless you really know what you're doing. Likewise, the intonation is slightly out, especially on the 'G' string, which means a simple 12th fret E major chord is audibly out of tune. Of course, unless each part of the saddle is compensated so that each string plays in tune, the guitar will never stand a chance of being 'in tune'. Even so, if different strings are fitted intonation will change anyway, so with a non-adjustable saddle such as this the best you can hope for is a 'partially in tune' compromise. This is the same with thousands of acoustic guitars, but the fact that this instrument seems designed to have the performance of a solid body



Sparkling top end, and  
a tight bottom (oo-erl)

 GUITARCHECK

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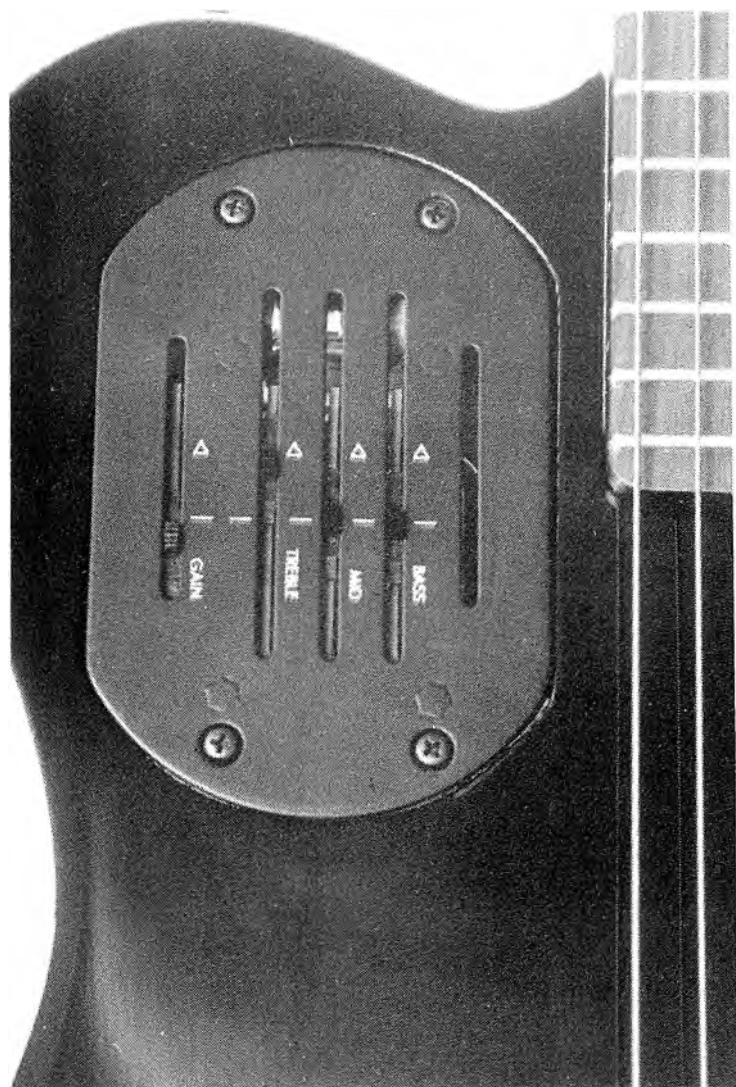


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#### Three band EQ and master volume on the upper bout

◀ electric leaves me feeling unhappy about this bridge.

However, strumming the Godin acoustically we have a reasonably loud tone; quite middly but with a nice sparkling top end and a tight bottom. It's plenty loud enough to practice and sing along with, but without disturbing the neighbours. Plugged into a standard guitar amp and with the guitar's EQ set 'flat', we have a pretty even, balanced tone, quite bright but not what you'd call 'hard'. Above all it has a natural acoustic sound with a full mid range, although it's obviously limited by the frequency response of the guitar amp.

Listening to the guitar through a desk I was even more impressed. Firstly, I could appreciate the broad sound the guitar has. It's both bright and warm at the same time - a really lovely tone. It does sound acoustic but not like an acoustic

(if you know what I mean). If anything, it sounds a little too perfect when listening through a desk; almost like a sampled and treated acoustic guitar would. One other thing I noticed was the very even string response, which was much more like an electric than most of the acoustic and acoustic electrics I've played.

The three EQ bands initially offer a wide range of sounds. They don't seem interactive, so boosting the low fader retains the top-end sparkle. However, one might question the positioning of these frequency centres. For example, reducing the 10kHz knocks off the high top but still leaves the guitar very acoustic-sounding. Without a master tone control or perhaps a low pass filter, there's no way you can get a warm jazzier tone from the guitar. You can of course boost the middle and bass tones but if it's a

mellow old tone you want from the instrument you'll be disappointed unless you access your amp controls. Likewise, in distortion settings the crisp Godin sound doesn't produce a warm smooth distortion. There again, if I want to have an electric tone wouldn't I just use a solid body electric?

It may look like a Telecaster but when amplified it certainly sounds very acoustic and the three band EQ can be used to shape some very usable and subtly different acoustic tones. Of course adding compression, chorus and delays makes it very sweet too, but I'd leave your distortion boxes in the gig bag. I can't see the point of ruining such a good tone. Without a soundhole, the instrument is far less prone to feedback, so you can crank up your amp quite loud. However the louder your amp is the more noticeable are the microphonics - it's not too bad on that score at reasonable levels, but you need to be sensible.

#### Conclusions

On paper, what the Godin seems to offer is an acoustic tone (*when amplified*) but with the feel and performance of a solid body guitar. In practice it falls a little short on both counts and could perhaps more accurately be described as giving a sound with a very acoustic character. It has the appearance of a solid body electric without the weight, but is also missing some of the refinements.

In the end, rather than trying to pigeon-hole it, I would suggest you play it. If you want to incorporate an acoustic tone into your playing, but you want to retain your Rock'n'Roll image, this could be the one for you.

Dave Burrluck

**Further information:**  
**SONOR UK.**  
**Tel: (0225) 330089**

GUITAR CHECK

# RHYTHMCHECK ROLAND PAD 5 ●

RRP: £159

**R**oland launched the first-ever MIDI drumpads in 1986, when

MIDI was still young, and not everyone had quite cottoned on to why you might want to play a drum machine manually - after all, the whole point of drum machines was that they played themselves, wasn't it?

Needless to say, the original Octopad proved a great success, not only with drummers who wanted to add MIDI triggered sounds to a kit, but also with the swelling ranks of sequencer/recorderists who wanted to inject feel into their drum programming.

Despite competition from the likes of the ill-fated Simmons Portakit, the Octopad, and its more-flexible, bigger-memory follow-on, the Pad 80, have continued to be the choice of percussion-minded pros. With a pro price to match. (£540 for the Pad 80.)

## Small Is Beautiful

Yamaha's £79.95 DD5 (reviewed September ish) offered the budget minded their first real chance to get into play-it-yourself MIDI percussion, in the form of a neat, portable black box, comprising four small MIDI pads, and a preset PCM-sampled beat-box, in a package originally aimed at the home organ market. Needless to say, Roland weren't to take this lying down...

The Pad 5 Handypad lives up to its name. Equipped with a single rear-panel MIDI Out, powered by six penlight batteries, this curvaceous wedge of grey plastic is about the weight and size of a Yellow Pages, a natural fit for your fists.

The underside is scalloped, to rest comfortably on your thighs while you play it. These atypical un-Roland curves come courtesy of Space Logic Design, a British

company who are the first outside of Japan to be asked to design a Roland product.

They are also responsible for neat touches like the built-in cable clips on the back of the unit, to stop the MIDI lead getting yanked out accidentally.

If beating your thighs isn't your thing, rubber feet allow you to use the Handypad on any flat surface. Sadly though, and unlike its big brother the Pad 80, there is no way of mounting the Handypad on a conventional drum stand - an omission which must surely limit the units' use as far as drummers looking for a cheap way to add MIDI pads to acoustic kits are concerned.

The Pad 5 has, guess what, five velocity-sensitive pads (to

the Yamaha's four), comprising three 3" and two 2" discs of hard rubber. Very hard rubber.

## Crash Pads

Nobody could mistake the response of the Pad 5s surfaces for the bounce and give of a real head, or even for the harder but still cushioned thud of a Pad 8/80. In fact, playing the Pad 5 with sticks for extended periods could see a return of that early-drumpad ailment 'Simmons' wrist', as the lack of 'give' transmits vibrations back up into your hands.

Nevertheless, playing with sticks offers by far the best dynamic response and expressiveness from the unit, with even the small pads prove surprisingly

'hittable'

You may, however, prefer to play the pads by hand instead, conga style; a knob top right of the unit allows you to alter the pad response between Hand and Stick respectively, and although the resulting dynamic response is not as realistic or predicatable, being able to trigger huge drum sounds with as much ease as fingertip drumming on a table top opens up rhythmic possibilities more conventional two-fisted skin bashing would be hard pushed to emulate.

## On The Button

The Pad 5 uses Roland's usual MIDI rhythm default channel - 10 - to output all its info, and



The Handypad uses MIDI rhythm default channel 10 to output all its info

this cannot be reassigned. No problem if you're using a sequencer, because you can usually re-channelize the data, but this could present difficulties for some live users. Nor does the Pad 5 output Start/Stop and clock data to other devices, so you can't use it as a master clock for drum machines or sequencers.

Along the top of the unit you will find a row of 14 home-organ style preset pattern selectors (i.e. *Rock, Bossanova, etc*) together with Variation and Intro / Fill In Keys, a Start / Stop key, and a Tempo knob (range 40 - 240bpm ).

Significantly, the patterns are just that. Unlike the DD5 the Pad 5 had no on-board voices of

its own. Instead, the two-bar Patterns and one-bar Intros and Fills output MIDI info to external devices. If these are Roland drum machines, MT32s, D110s etcetera, then the drum voice 'maps' will correspond, and all you have to do to hear them with the correct voices is hook the Pad 5 up and hit Start.

### Pre-sets

The preset patterns themselves are very 'home organ' in their rigidity and fixed dynamics, so the provision of five Pad Cancel buttons, allowing you to drop voices out of a Pattern, and play those voices 'live' along with the rhythm, is most welcome. By holding down the relevant Rhythm Select key and turning the Sensitivity knob, you can mix the volume of the preset pattern against the live input from the pads.

If however you want to use the presets to trigger another make of drum machine, a sampler, or a synth, you may have to reassign the Pad 5s' instrument MIDI Note Numbers....

### In Use

No-one is going to buy the Pad 5 for its' onboard rhythms - the reason to have it is to trigger MIDI gadgets from the pads, and so the time will come, even if you're using Roland gear, that you'll want to reassign the MIDI note numbers of those pads.

Five different Pad Assignments are always available, shared appropriately across the 14 presets - so the Latin Patterns call up Hi Conga Open, Muted, and Low Conga, plus Hi and Lo Agogo bell onto the pads; the Rock'n'Roll patterns opt for Bass, Snare, Hi Hat, and Cymbals; and Rap substitutes two of the cymbals for Clap and a Cowbell. These assignments can be used with or without the pattern running, and so provides a quick way of hauling up the voices you'll

most often want to trigger.

Setting up your own assignments is easy - Hold down Pad Assign, select a Pattern, hit a pad, and listen to the voice it triggers. In this mode, each Pattern button addresses five note numbers, so 8 Beat, the first button in the row, covers numbers 25-29, whilst Waltz, the last, loops around 90-94. Each press on the button will step the note number up one, and if you overshoot, you can just loop round or stop back and get it again.

Alternatively, you can step up by hitting the pad, which will (eventually) step through the whole available range, from number 25 to 94. Once you get the hang of it, it's easy to pick the Pattern Button closest to the number you need, and within a couple of key presses, call the voice you're after onto the pad you want. Hitting Pad Assign again returns you to play mode. Brilliant.

Now the bad news. These assignments last only as long as the Pad 5 is on. Switch it off, and you have to start from scratch next time. Add to this the fact that the Pad 5 has an automatic battery save which turns the unit off after 10 minutes inactivity and you have the makings of a lot of frustration, particular for live users.

### And finally

The Pad Five is almost a great idea. If you could mount it on a stand; if you could save at least one five-pad assignment...But you can't. It's almost twice the price of it's only rival, hasn't got any onboard voices, and doesn't even come with a free pair of drum sticks (the DD5 does.) That's a lot to set against the value of one extra MIDI pad.

Tony Reed

Roland: 01-586 4578



# GRETSCH DRUMS ●

## RRP: TBA

# G

retsch have a long history, dating from 1883 Brooklyn, where

Friedrich Gretsch, a German who fled to America to avoid joining the army, began making drums and banjos...

By the end of the Second World War, Gretsch, now a large company under the control of another Fred Gretsch (the third!) had stopped making drums for other companies, and launched their own brand.

### Revolutionaries

The kit as we know it didn't then exist - bass drums, for example, were huge, betraying marching band origins. But when Gretsch asked busy New York players what they wanted, they called for smaller, portable basses, and kits they could set up easily.

Gretsch responded by inventing the 20" bass drum, with tom holders and cymbal arms mounted on its' shell, telescopic spurs, and internal dampers. In 1947 they did a double bass drum set for Louie Bellson, and later developed an adjustable bass muffler. The Fifties saw them coming up with a then-radical kit: single-headed toms and bass, as popularised by Chico Hamilton...

In 1968 the Gretsch name passed out of the family's control, and it wasn't until 1979 that this pioneering company was finally brought back into the fold by, guess what, another Fred Gretsch.

After a long period of patchy distribution, Gretsch are available here again through a large company, Percussion Plus. Purists will be glad to note that little has changed.

Originally, Gretsch shells were made, like other companies', from three-ply wood bent under pressure, and fitted with

reinforcement rings to keep the shape. However, by joining the plies in three places they did away with those 'glue rings', and the Gretsch shell as we know it was born. By the early '50s they had the six-ply shell, which wasn't much thicker but had staggered joins, and is still so much part of the Gretsch sound.

Like other quality manufacturers, Gretsch make shells under-size so that neither the head collar nor the hoop touches them, and messes up the vibrations. They'd used die-cast hoops on snares before the war, and when it ended they began to fit them to the toms too. By the '50s, the hardware was chrome-plated too, while rivals were still using duller nickel-plating.

### That Was Then...

I'm often asked to date Gretsch drums but without seeing them, it ain't easy. The round badge was used until '71, and replaced by the octagonal badge which said 'That Great Gretsch Sound'; this was superseded by an almost identical one in 1979 which replaced that inscription with 'Drum Makers Since 1883'. A square badge appeared in 1980 which had two logos, one inverted, and this is in use today. To make things more interesting, they fitted the octagon again for a few months in 1981 although this time, the Gretsch logo was changed from the style which appeared on the guitars for the one on the bass heads used since the Sixties.

### ...And This Is Now

The kit I saw was a 'Power' set (2" deeper shells) consisting of a 22 x 16 bass drum and 13 x 11, 14 x 12, and 18 x 16" toms. No prizes for spotting that this *doesn't* include a snare. Gretsch will happily supply one from their extensive range.

**THE BASS DRUM:** Gretsch basses range from 18" in diameter

up to 24", but I tried a more manageable 22 x 16. Its' shell, like all Gretsch shells, is made from six plies of Maple with a 45 degree bearing edge extending from the inside out. (Other companies use a shorter 45 degree bevel on the outside.) Gretsch go to great lengths to ensure the bearing edge is flat. It passes the 'air test', where by pressing the heads you can hear the air being gently forced out of the holes.

The drum has 20 distinctive 'fluted bullet' nutboxes. The claws are pressed steel which bend comfortably around the six-ply Maple hoops. Gretsch no longer fit timp-handled tensioners to their bass drums, instead they use ordinary square-headed bolts more in keeping with the image of streamlined modern sets.

The cast receiver block for the tom holder is slightly forward of centre, but since this is an extra-long drum it puts it in a good position for ease of play. You can order your drum *without* a receiver block should you be considering the best acoustic option: the RIMS system, with toms on a rack or floor stand.

The set I saw had toms mounted in the usual way. The receiver block was bolted to the shell, a piece of felt isolating it and protecting the finish. A large T-screw is tapped into the block, and Gretsch fit a wear-resisting piece of metal around it so the end doesn't eat into the down tube of the tom holder. The space formed acts as a keyway for the drum-keyed memory clamp, which fixes position and height of the holder.

Blocks like the tom holders' are bolted to the shell and T-screws tapped into them, to fix the length of the tubular spurs. The end of each spur has a rubber crutch tip. If removed, this exposes a spike. These spurs, substantial enough to stabilise the drum, could do with more raking to add 'digging' potential. Another gripe is the lack of a

pad to protect the beautifully stained and lacquered hoops from damage from the foot-pedal jaws.

**THE TOMS:** the company make regular and Power mounted toms from 6 to 16" in diameter, and floor toms with 14, 16, and 18" head sizes. The pair I saw were powerised, and measured 13 x 11 and 14 x 12. The smaller drum had a total of 12 nut boxes and square headed tensioners while the middle tom had 16.

Gretsch have long specialised in offering 'in-square' floor toms (with shell depths a couple of inches less than their diameters), and I feel this does make a difference to the audibility of the drum, stopping it from being quite so round and giving more edge. The floor tom I played was one of these shorties and even though it was 18" in diameter, it had a controllable sound. Because of its' extreme size, it was fitted with twenty nutboxes. The toms have Gretsch's celebrated cast hoops, and they contribute greatly to their overall sound.

All three were fitted with the same cast holder blocks to attach the smaller toms to the arms of the bass drum holder, or, in the case of the floor tom, to locate and arrest three massive, single-bent legs. Each end of the casting has a slot around the locating hole to take the tongue of a memory clamp. To make sure the rods don't slip inside their holders, Gretsch knurl them. No internal dampers were fitted.

**SNARE DRUMS(S):** Gretsch snares have never sold particularly well. Like their guitars, they don't sound like anything other than a Gretsch. You either love them or you don't, and this is no doubt the reason why the new importers are pushing tom and bass sets instead.

I played Gretsch's deepest snare, with an 8" Maple shell, as well as their top-of-the-range, polished Brass drum which





**A view from the back**

unusually has a 6" shell.

The wood-shell drum has 20 bullet nut boxes and the usual cast hoops, with a pair of small plastic strips joined to the snares. The shell itself has the same bearing edges as the other Maple drums except for the fact that the bottom edge has a couple of finely graduated 4" scallops cut out to allow the snares to touch the head. This rebate moves the

ends of the snares higher, so that their middle is closer to the head.

Gretsch used several different snare mechanisms over the years but the 'Lightning' one they're fitting now has been around for almost 20 years. It switches the snares off by moving away from the shell, an action much copied by the Orientals. It's made from three hinged cast pieces. The backplate is screwed to the shell,

and the on/off lever is swivel-joined to it. The front-plate, which contains the integral screw-operated jaws is in turn joined to the lever. So by pushing the lever towards the shell, the three pieces lock together like a double jack-knife. This mechanism is not adjustable. Instead, they make the jaws on the cast 'butt' end vertically moveable so you can fine-tune snare pressure by way of a large knurled thumb-screw.

This drum is interesting in that, not only does it have two normal airholes opposite one another, it also has a *father* pair of smaller holes just up from the bottom edge of the shell, one above each snare bed, presumably because of its' extreme depth, the response and sound of this drum is improved by 'porting' it more than usual.

The Brass-shelled snare drum I saw is made from a sheet of brass bent to shape and brazed with flanges which are rolled over at more or less 45°. ▶



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◀ Surprisingly this drum is fitted with one of Gretsch's old adjustable internal dampers.

These are unique in that they have double pads, linked, roughly three inches apart, with a massive control knob set on the outside of the shell. I'm not convinced these are valid any more - not in modern music.

Those cast rims I mentioned do contribute to the sound, and frankly may cause it to become more contained than you want. If you change them for the triple-flanged, pressed steel variety, you'll notice the tone will open out a lot and some of the 'zunk' will be taken away, leaving a crisper sound. Still, as I said, there are those who are besotted with Gretsch snares.

**THE HEADS:** Gretsch drums come factory-fitted with Remo heads. (In fact, Remo has been making Gretsch's 'Permatone' heads, since they stopped fitting calf skins. There have always been guys who would not fit Remo heads to their drums, preferring to wait for the Gretsch head which they felt to be infinitely superior. In fact only the logo is different!)

**THE ACCESSORIES:** Gretsch have stands and pedals to go with the sets. These are Japanese, and pretty massive. The snare stand reminds me of a Trak model. It has a basket-type holder with large rubber sheathed arms to grip the drum. A capstan-nut runs on a cast centre thread to lock them in place. The playing angle adjustment uses a cast ratchet tilter and locks with a large T-screw. The tripod base has double-braced legs with big rubber feet, and the struts themselves, which join the ends of the legs to the centre, are slotted to make it easier to fold them. The height adjustment boss on this, and all other stands has a wear-resisting nylon insert with a L-shaped screw to squash it around the tube inside.

Gretsch fit drum-key operated memory locks to all their stands, not only to maintain height, but also position, by way of a small tongue which locates in a groove in the boss.

The hi-hat stand has the same legs and bosses with a cast sandblasted frame below, which contains a single spring-less screw spur. There's a two-piece

cast footplate, which joins to the centre-pull mechanism via a metal strap and has a toe stop. Pedal action is adjustable via a compression spring which is held inside a metal chamber fixed to the hi-hat's bottom tube. A knurled screw 'cap' is fixed to the top of this chamber, which, as you tighten it compresses the spring and stiffens the action and vice versa.

The tubes, which aren't exactly gargantuan, have a medium sized bottom cymbal cup with felt and metal washers, and a positive turned top cymbal clutch, which, with its felts and metal screw-washers, is much like the ones other Japanese companies use.

The Techware cymbal stands really are the biggest I've seen. If playing your cymbals caused them to fall over I reckon you'd be entitled to get your money back. We're talking HEAVY!

They make two different sorts which both share the same large three-legged bases and first two extra-long sections. However there's a ratchet at the top of the second stage which either locates an aluminium clamp for the boom arm, or alternatively a third short stage with a cymbal tilter which effectively creates either a straight stand, or one which by being adjusted at the first ratchet will boldly go where others can't. The boom is telescopic, with a large counterweight at one end, and for my money is well over the top.

Gretsch have been making their 'Floating Action' bass drum pedal for as long as I can remember. It's been much copied but is still, like Ludwig's Speed King and Premier's 250, a pedal which works well and feels great in spite of being neither over-sophisticated nor massive.

It's always been a twin post model with a simple jaw system to clamp it to the bass drum hoop, but this latest version has a couple of screw spurs tapped into its cast frame to help stop the drum from moving. It has a two-piece cast footplate and the pedal I saw had been turned over to Drum Workshop to be fitted with their chain drive mechanism.

This comprises a bicycle-type cog which fits to the pedal's hexagonal axle around which a

small chain fits before attaching itself to the footplate. It uses an adjustable expansion spring joined to a moveable cam which makes it a very smooth pedal.

Gretsch's tom holder (optional - would-be RIMS users can have undrilled shells) fits to a floor stand and consists uniquely of two totally separate ratchet-based L-shaped carriers which can fit snugly together to sit two toms side by side as in a normal bass drum mounted set-up, or moved apart with one L-arm inverted to allow a small tom and floor tom to share the same stand. The ratchets inside the holder are sprung with a large locking screw which arrests vertical and horizontal swivel at the same time, and the units are each held in the required position(s) on the tubular stand by a couple of drum key operated screws. The beauty of the system is that you could use just one of these clamps to mount a single tom to a cymbal stand.

## The Finish

Percussion Plus are bringing in five finishes at the moment to test the water: Red, Burnt Orange and Maple lacquers; and the usual Black and White plastics. If you wanted to order something else, you'd no doubt be able to.

## The Sounds

The most important thing about Gretsch drums has always been the sound - and it still is. They sing clearly just like they always did; their sound still has the distinctive trace of woodiness; and the drums respond just as they always did. So far no British prices are available, but they obviously aren't going to be cheap. (The drums I saw with the brass snare and no fittings to mount them at all, other than tom legs, cost \$2285 in America). If you like their clean contained sound and their no-nonsense image, Gretsch drums really are worth investing in.

Bob Henrit

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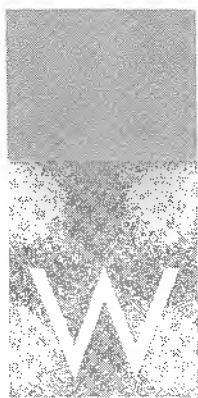
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IM1288

# MANIAC MUSIC SUSTAINIAC GA-1 ●

RRP: £165



When I tested the original Sustainiac I was pretty impressed with the sounds it made, but not with the price (£289). It used a transducer which attached to a large magnet on the back of the headstock. The guitar's signal was looped to the transducer by a powerful amp which rested on the floor. This simulated the feedback loop and quite crudely shook the neck of the guitar with the re-looped signal, causing the strings to continue to vibrate and creating feedback and sustain at any amp level.

The GA-1 is the latest system from Maniac Music which is being fitted as standard on the Hamer Chapperal (or in fact any Hamer guitar at an addition cost of around £150). It's also offered as a retro fit - you can fit it to any guitar with only a small amount of alteration.

In each package you get one transducer (virtually identical to a Seymour Duncan Hot Rails pickup but with the addition of an extra metal 'shunt plate' along one side) and the odd-shaped circuitboard which takes up a space of 70x53mm, plus battery clips and two different stereo jack plugs.

Mounted on the circuitboard are the two GA-1 control switches which means that you can't add the circuitboard into your existing control cavity as you could if the switches were on wires floating from the circuitboard. This is the major drawback of the system - you will have to rout a hole in your guitar to take this circuitboard and the two nine-volt PP3 batteries to power it.

In practice, a hole for the circuitboard could be placed next to your existing control cavity while the batteries could be placed in your existing cavity, wrapped in foam rubber. Either way, unless you have wood-working experience, it's a job for a repairman. Likewise with the

soldering; it's not tricky, but more complex than fitting a pickup.

Unlike the original mains-powered Sustainiac, the GA-1 runs on batteries. It seems they have a life of around 15 hours, which is similar to the Kramer Sustainier.

## Fitting The GA-1

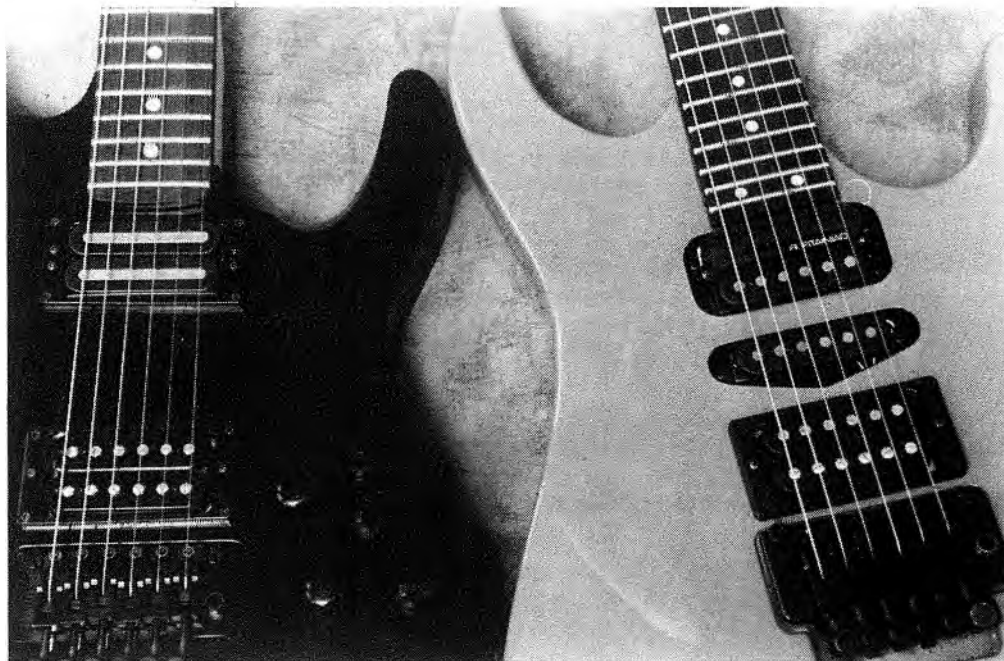
The fitting instructions are thorough, although fitting the

professional. Even if you do have a four conductor pickup, unless you remove the outer covering tape you possibly won't be able to see which wires go where. Maniac Music offer to check and modify the pickup for you, but I'd imagine that your local repair person could just as easily check it for you. Apparently neither of these last two 'magnetic' orientated procedures are totally necessary, but if they aren't correct, the GA-1 will not be

but the pickup tested and maybe rewired before any fitting can take place. A new cover plate also needs to be made if the circuitboard is rear-mounted.

## Sounds

The original Sustainiac was more expensive, less convenient, and a far more expressive tool, whereas the GA-1 is a lot less hassle to use, with just two switches and no trailing wires



**The GA-1: immediate feedback for the on-the-ball Rocker**

GA-1 involves a few, rather tricky, operations. It is stressed how important the bridge pickup is to the function of the GA-1. It must be a medium to hot output humbucker with its' south coil (typically the coil with a row of adjustable pole pieces) placed right next to the bridge. You then need to find the plus and minus leads from the north and south coils for which you'll need a non-digital voltmeter and a screwdriver. I suggest you use a pickup with four conductors plus screen output - if you only have a humbucker with two or three conductors plus screen, the chances are you'll have to modify it. Once again, if you don't know what you're doing leave it to a

working at its' full potential.

Having managed to install the GA-1 (despite the labelling on one pickup placement diagram which contradicts the text!) the alignment and check out guidelines leave a lot to be desired. It's necessary to tweak the two internal trim pots - touch sensitivity and string vibration - yet neither is identified. You literally have to experiment to find out which one does what! Take care - Maniac Music say installation will take between 15 minutes and four hours 'depending on the skill and experience of the installer'. I think the latter would be closer for most repair people, as the guitar not only has to be routed,

and floor pedals to worry about. The first switch provides the on/off function while the second, called a Harmonic Select, gives three choices of feedback modes; Fundamental, Mixed, Harmonic.

In use, the GA-1 proves very effective. In Fundamental mode it feeds back and sustains the same pitch that you're playing. It is not as such polyphonic. What you hear initially are the dominant notes in a chord being re-vibrated which slowly turns into a single note as the vibrations build. This can give quite a 'accidental' feel to the resulting chords whereas with single notes it's pretty easy to feedback exactly what you want. If with your right hand you damp

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◀ five strings and just fret one, it's possible to get a very clean 'infinite sustain' tone similar to THE EDGE's sound on *The Joshua Tree*. But be warned, you'll have to become very dexterous with your damping to get that kind of specific control for long sustained phrases.

In the Harmonic position, a higher frequency harmonic is fed back, simulating the kind of tuneful feedback high level playing can produce. The Mixed position offers fundamental and upper harmonics, one which slowly becomes dominant and sustains the longest.

## Limitations

The actual control of the GA-1 is what I found a bit restricting. When you switch it on, it automatically switches to the bridge pickup, thus you can't sustain on the warmer middle or neck pickups, as you could on the earlier model. Secondly, as soon as you go into sustain mode the feedback chain will start, whereas on the earlier model you had a footswitch to activate the sustain. I found this a more convenient system, as it leaves your hands free to play. Also, you could punch in as much feedback as you require. You can do that by flicking the switch but that may mean careful forethought as to exactly where you want the PCB to be mounted. The original Sustainiac also had power level and sensitivity controls, which allowed you to alter how quickly the feedback started. Here it's a preset speed.

However, it's fun to play with. Using the trem with the Sustainiac previously produced wonderful eerie siren-like wails and special effects. I would guess the GA-1 is aimed more at the Rock player who wants immediate feedback, with portability, for stage use. The old system was usable live, yet it was a little restricting if you had to do the occasional dance routine!

## Hamer versus Kramer

As well as checking out the retro-fit GA-1, I also took a look at one on a Hamer Chapperal guitar which retails at £1100. The features are identical to those described above. The only

competitor to the Hamer is the Kramer Floyd Rose Sustainer which is only available with a guitar and not as a retro-fit (it's similarly priced at £1070). IM has already reviewed the Kramer Sustainer in June '89.

To briefly recap, the Kramer features what seems to be a similar system: a three-position pickup selector offers Neck Pickup, Bridge Pickup or Bridge Pickup and Sustainer, a Fundamental sustain select and two modes of Harmonic sustain, but no Fundamental and Harmonic Mixed. A big difference is the sustain intensity control, which directly effects the speed of the sustain after the plucked note and also seems to increase the richness of the sustain.

When it came down to it, both instruments performed superbly and both are very well built. The Kramer has a more raunchy sound, while the Hamer is smooth and sophisticated. In each Fundamental mode, both instruments produced feedback in a pretty similar manner. Kramer's sustain intensity gave a different tone to the sustain but it got lost a little on more typical distorted, compressed and sustained lead tones. It was in the harmonic modes that things were noticeably different. The Hamer's mixed mode made possible smooth sustained notes that sometimes tipped into the upper harmonics - to my ears this sounded very natural and I found it easy to control the sustain. With the same high-level amp sound, the Kramer in the central harmonic mode became a little uncontrollable and harder to generate smooth sustain. Likewise, in the even more Sensitive mode, it simulated fairly random feedback as soon as any rogue notes were left undamped.

The Hamer's sustain takes slightly longer to produce than the Kramer's, even with the latter's sustain intensity fully down. Bringing in the intensity speeds up the following feedback - it's good to have this flexibility. Certainly, using the sustain intensity is crucial to creating the right type and amount of feedback. There's quite a bit of high-frequency hiss generated on both the guitars when the sustain is triggered: Hamer's is a

little more intrusive, as the hiss is slightly higher in frequency, although there is an extra buzz that is present in the sound as the Kramer begins to sustain.

As a final note, the Kramer has an LED indicator to let you know when the batteries fall below a certain point - an excellent idea. There's also an on/off switch for the sustainer. The daft thing is that if you forget to switch off that last switch and leave the guitar in Sustain mode it will happily sustain away until the batteries run down. The Hamer, and most other guitars with on board electronics, has a simple cut out that switches off the batteries when the jack lead is removed. This on/off switch on the Kramer also means that if you switch the sustainer in while you're on the bridge pickup you'll hear an almighty clonk from your stack. Nasty!

## Conclusions

Correctly fitted and adjusted, the GA-1 will give you a pretty fine 'sustaining' guitar for a comparatively low price. For some £800 more, you can choose the Hamer or Kramer. I don't think one is better than the other, but I hope I've illustrated some differences in the performance of the guitars. Irrespective of the sustain devices, the guitars feel and sound different, and that will obviously be a factor for choosing between them.

I think it's a shame that both the Hamer and Kramer sustaining guitars are so expensive. The actual components could be fitted on a basic, well-made Far Eastern guitar and probably retail between £500 and £600. However, of the two systems, the Sustainiac is the simplest, both in terms of controls and, in my opinion, use. The trade-off is that the Kramer is perhaps a bit more expressive if you have the ability to control it!

*Dave Burrluck*

**Further info: GA-1: Dixies Music, Tel: (0484) 512610; Hamer: Washburn UK, Tel: (0462) 896262; Kramer: Scott Cooper Mkg, Tel: (09073) 74902**

Thanks to Music Village in Romford for the loan of the Kramer Sustainer.

## KORG M3R & RE1 ●

RRP: £899 & £275

The M3R could roughly be seen as an M1R with a few bits missing. For instance there's only one oscillator per voice, as opposed to two and it has no onboard sequencer. Much of the other M1 magic is present, however.

It's hard to find anyone who doesn't find the M1/M1R aurally impressive. It's a far easier task to find a whole pile of impover-

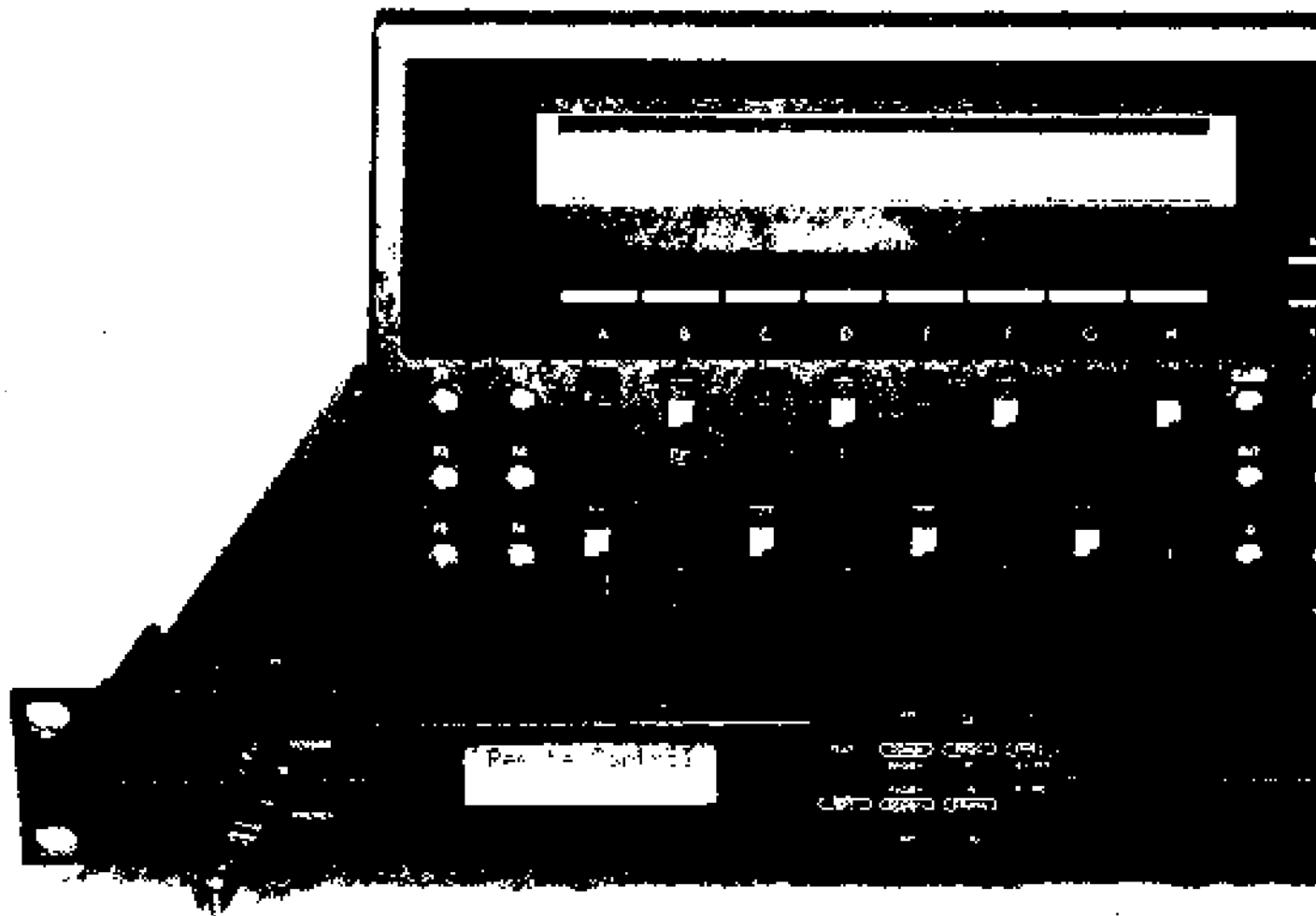
ished musicians who can't afford one. Though obviously still a substantial wedge, £899 is modest compared with the £1,575 required for the original M1 (with keyboard) and, more relevantly, the £1,340 asked for the M1R (rackmount). So, assuming that for the £441 difference you're prepared to lose the sequencer (which no one ever claimed to be stunningly good in the first place), what else are you forced to give up in practical terms?

Or, what *don't* you get? The most obvious thing is the aforementioned oscillator. Here you only have one, which means you can't layer two sounds to create a voice without actually stacking sounds up and so reducing polyphony. There is also only 75% of the M1/M1R's internal PCM sample memory. These are obviously losses, but they're not the end of the world, and the sounds are still very good.

As with the M1R there are two slots to take optional cards,

one for PCM data containing new samples and the other for Program/Combination cards (ROM or RAM) for new configurations of existing sounds. The PCM cards are identical to those for the M1R but, because of the lack of one oscillator, the Program/Combination cards aren't. However, those nice chaps at Korg are currently programming single oscillator versions of all the favourite ROM sounds, soon to be available.

Another point to note is that



Less is more?



the M1R can have its memory expanded to offer twice the number of Program / Combination memories and twice the PCM sample capacity, as per the upmarket T1/2/3. In fact soon it will only be supplied in this form at a price in the region of £1,800. With the larger memory it will be known as the ExM1R. Existing M1R owners, and possibly M1 owners, will be able to buy a simply-fitted expansion board, the price of which is guessed to be around £499,

although there are no official figures. The M3R memory, on the other hand, isn't expandable.

### Why RE1?

A further significant difference with the M3R is the front panel. It's only a 1U unit, as opposed to the 2U M1R, and apart from the headphone output level knob, the card slots, the mains switch and a rather small 2x16 character backlit

LCD display, its front panel has just eight square buttons by which to access and edit all the various parameters. Everything is possible from here, but certainly not easy. Hence, we are given the option of the RE-1 remote editor which offers basically the same set of controls found on the M1/M1R, plus eight sliders: there's a 40x2 backlit LCD display beneath which are eight soft buttons, A to H. There are also six 'F' buttons via which to access the main sections of concern, plus Page buttons to nudge up and down through the various pages in each main section. As each page appears the soft buttons are used to select one of eight or less specific parameters appearing on the bottom row of the display. In the case of the M1/M1R the value of the selected parameter is then changed via either a pair of nudge buttons or a 10-key numeric pad. With the RE-1, each of the eight buttons has a slider permanently assigned to whatever value sits above it in the display. The value of the most recently addressed parameter flashes in the display to remind you what you're doing, and it is this parameter that the nudge buttons are assigned to at any given time. I would say that if you have any serious interest in altering the sounds on the M3R you'll want to go for the RE1. The beauty is, of course, that you can get the basic synth with all its sounds and add the RE1 when you've amassed the necessary £275 extra. This brings the total to £1,174, which is still a considerable saving on the M1R.

If you're not familiar with the M1 *et al* and don't know what the fuss is about, I should quickly brief you on the basic of the M3R. Its internal ROM holds a wide variety of sampled sounds including 45 drum/percussion voices and 89 other sounds ranging from real instruments, through weird and



SYNTHCHECK

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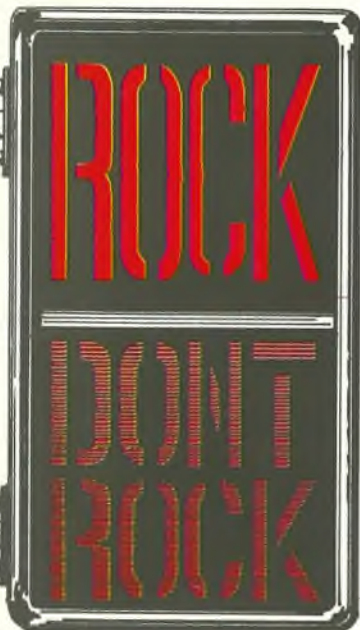
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◀ wonderful synthetic sounds to samples from Korg's own DWGS synthesiser range. These are the basic building blocks for voices, and very formidable they are, too. Just like standard oscillators on a synth, these sounds can be processed in various ways to sculpt the final voicings: there are separate five-stage envelopes for amplitude, pitch and filter, fully variable LFO's for pitch and filter and most of these can be modulated by key velocity and/or pressure. Via the RE1 it's all very quick and easy, offering all the facilities most of us want, without being mind bogglingly complicated.

The M3R is 16-note polyphonic and can be eight-part multitimbral making it very useful as a writing/recording tool with a sequencer. Up to eight sounds can also be split and/or layered across the keyboard, and it is this combining of sounds into Combinations (of which there are 100 in the M3R's internal memory) that creates such full, deep timbres.

## The Onboard Effects

One of the great bonuses with this range of Korg instruments is that they have two, sophisticated, stereo digital effects units onboard. Each unit is capable of various forms of programmable Reverb, Early Reflections, Delays, Chorus, Flanging, Phasing, Tremelo, Equalisation, Harmonic Excitation, Overdrive/Distortion, Rotary Speaker and eight two-effect combinations of the same, allowing them to be used as four mono effects units. Though most

of the samples are strong on their own, the power and flexibility of these effects makes them extraordinary. Also, in addition to the standard left and right outputs, there are outputs three and four, and in multitimbral mode the various voices together with the two or four effects can be assigned individually to, or panned between these four outputs. This means that you can not only create stereo pictures from your various multitimbral parts, but you can decide which of them are to be subject to the effects.

So, the effects units are in place in all their normal glory, but here we come to another limitation of the M3R: on the M1/M1R you can store a specific effects arrangement with each Program and Combination. Thus, when you select a sound it is automatically accompanied by the appropriate effect. This is not possible with the M3R because there's only one global effects memory unless you use Sys Ex dumps. For me this is a significant drawback, especially for live or sequenced work where you need instant access to complete sounds/effects set-ups.

## Conclusion

If you're mostly interested in the factory presets and are prepared to accept the difficult editing situation, the M3R offers a lot of M1 character for a relatively modest sum. If you want to edit freely you'll need the RE1, and then even so the combined price is quite reasonable at £1,174.

If you're in the market for an

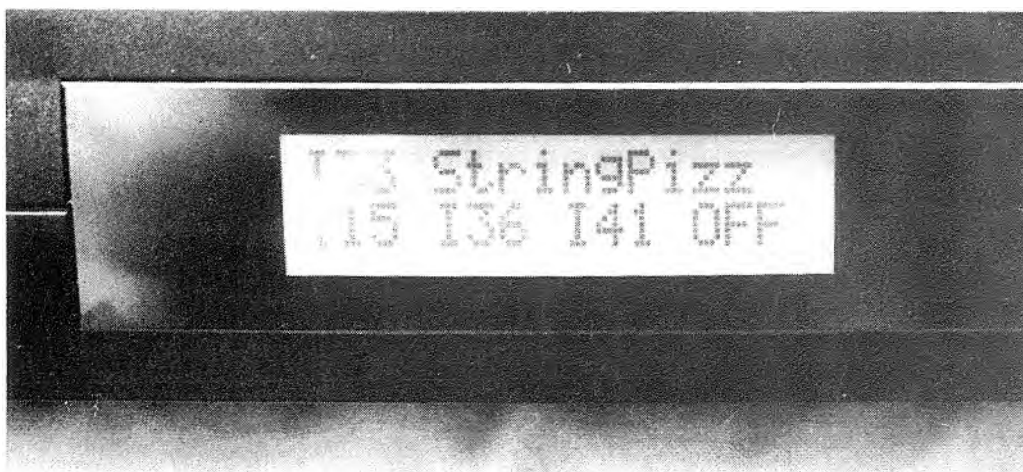
expander around this price, you will presumably also be looking at the Roland U110 and the E-mu Proteus. One thing to note is that these alternatives offer 31 and 32-note polyphony, respectively, compared to the M3R's 16. In the case of the U110, its rather high noise level tends to put me off (although Roland seem to have sorted that out on later models of the same lineage, such as the excellent U20). What perhaps gives the M3R its edge is the subjective power of its sounds greatly aided by its superb onboard effects. The U110 has only chorus and tremelo and the Proteus has none. To replace these effects with outside units would cost many hundreds of pounds.

The main drawbacks with the M3R as compared to its more expensive stable mate, the M1R, is that it only has a single oscillator per voice, individual effects settings can't be stored with each Program and Combination and it has only 75% of the internal memory and can't be expanded.

As usual, there are many pros and cons. I'm pretty sure that if you buy an M3R you'll soon wish you had an M1R. But then, if you don't have the £1,575 (soon to be £1,800) and that option isn't currently open to you, the M3R is also a fine sounding instrument.

*Jim Betteridge*

**Rose Morris : 01 - 267 5151**



Front panel edit possible - but not easy

SOUND CHECK

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# SESSION SESSIONETTE SG90/112 ●

RRP: £395

**S**ession first appeared at the start of the '80s with the 15/30 valve combo. The valve range expanded until the Sessionette 75 was launched, with the slogan "the amp you designed": certainly the 75 fitted the needs of the musician short of space, transport and cash!

Six years on, the Sessionette was re-launched at this year's BMF along with a range of guitar and bass amps originally designed by Stewart Ward's company, Axxess Electronics Ltd.

Following the collapse of that company in Autumn '88, Tony Morris stepped in and brought the assets, product names and rights to make Axxess under the new name Axxession. Next year's Frankfurt will see the launch of new products to complement the Sessionette, Duette and Rockette. Precisely what they will be remains secret, but they did let on that Session amplification will be catering for more than just the Rock 'n' Roll market.

## Appearance

In 1989 the Sessionette is offered in eight formats from the luxury Mahogany-enclosed, flightcased "The Session" at £795, to the rack mount version at £225. A head version is available plus the five combos in 1 x 12", 2 x 10", 2 x 12", 4 x 10" and 1 x 15" with horn at £495. I've owned a Sessionette 75 since their launch, so I took the opportunity to compare old and new.

I was originally drawn to the Sessionette because of its compactness. Without the luxury of van or roadie I wanted something that could fit in the back of a car and was easy to carry along with a guitar. The original Sessionette 75 fitted the bill and although Axxession have changed some of the design, it retains its' original dimensions - 437mm wide x 390mm high, 215mm

deep at the top and 248mm deep at the base. Mind you, the textured black vinyl of the original is now a grey, slightly furry material which doesn't have the original's macho attitude! However, it is a much more durable covering - less resistant to scuffing, staining and cigarette burns. The speaker grill is better - plain black instead of the 75's square patterned silver on black weave.

The new amps have the same chromed metal corners and generally seem just as sturdy. On closer inspection, the ply construction is well done - none of the fixing points are stapled to the main cab as they were on the original 75s. It weighs around 33lbs - no change from the original - but it's a lot lighter than an all-tube combo.

A heavy-duty handle is placed on the top of the cabinet and while I wouldn't like to carry

it too far, the amp is definitely portable. The Sessionette has all solid state circuitry, as opposed to the early Session valve combos that Axxess initially produced. It's a neat design and although Axxession have changed the internal design somewhat, basic layout and features are the same.

## Bi-Polar vs MOS-FET

The Sessionette is a single input, twin channel - clean and distorted - amp with a power output of 90 watts (125 watts when used with an external speaker) and spring reverb. The 90 has a new design of MOS-FET power amp and to handle the extra power, a Celestion G12-100 speaker is fitted.

Also changed "to give you the sounds of the late Eighties" is the pre-amp stage along with improvements to the "protection

circuits to make Session amps even more reliable than before".

Reliable is a subjective word. My Sessionette has been through two power modules, a new speaker and thorough overall of the rear mounted jack sockets to stop them cutting the amps output mid-song.

Originally a Bi-Polar power amp module was used which meant if it went wrong, the whole thing had to be replaced. Axxess then changed to a MOS-FET design which allowed access to the circuit board and components so that maintenance was possible. Finally they reverted back to an improved version of the original Bi-polar block. Axxession have continued the change by reverting to a MOS-FET with all the components easily accessed.

The amp is neatly designed - all the electronics, with the exception of the transformer and reverb, are mounted to the pressed metal plate at the back of the amp easily accessed by four bolts. The power on/off, input and eight rotary controls sit at the top of this plate while the five 1/4" jack sockets and footswitch din socket, plus the pre-amp output level control all sit at the back of the amp. A removable kettle-style plug lead is a new feature along with an extra rear-mounted fuse but with those exceptions, visually at least, the layout remains the same.

Starting at the top left of the control layout, we have the Reverb control - actually an Accutronics spring reverb made in the USA. Next is the main EQ stage bass, middle and treble which provide subtle tone variations. Channel B is the clean one and Gain B takes care of that channel's volume. Below that is a three position rocker switch offering either Channel A, B or a mixture of the two. The last three rotary controls affect the 'dirty' channel. The filter acts much like a tone control offering dark and soft or



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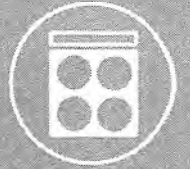
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AMP CHECK

◀ bright and hard colours to the distortion. Gain 2 is the post-gain and Gain 1 is the pre-gain which dictates the amount of distortion. Below these controls is another rocker switch, two-way, offering EQ In or EQ Set.

This is quite crucial to the amp, especially if you're using it in a dual-channel mode. With EQ In, you can use the bass, middle and treble EQ to affect the distortion. With the EQ Set, a pre-set EQ is applied. In both modes, the distortion Filter still functions.

In dual mode, it's unlikely that the same EQ setting will be applicable for both clean and dirty sounds so the EQ Set becomes useful allowing the clean sound to be EQ'd independently.

Axess originally provided a footswitch to operate the channel switching and reverb on/off. It didn't allow channel mixing, which limited the use of the amp.

A little while before the demise of the company, they produced a three switch footswitch allowing the channels to be mixed. Not only is the footswitch made from a rigid black moulded plastic, it's exclusive to Session and has a proper base grip so that it doesn't slide over the floor as the early one did. If you have an old Sessionette, you can upgrade to the new footswitch for a very reasonable sum of £35.

At the back of the amp are interconnection jacks for extension speaker, headphones, effects send and return and monitor level output - handy for plugging direct to PA although it's only the pre-amp signal and not the full amp tone. These facilities are now common, but when the Sessionette was introduced they were luxuries on a cheap combo. However, the original 1/4" jacks were low quality and on occasions could go open circuit and cut the output of the amp. I'm assured that the quality of the present jacks is much higher.

### Sounds

As far as the clean sound goes, the new Sessionette 90 has a crispness to the tone that was lacking from the older designs. It's still got a lot of top end, yet

the low end of the response is good, giving overall tone a lot of body. In distortion mode I found the tone to be less tight than on the earlier model, but with a similar wide range of tones available. Generally it's a thick ballsy sound, simply achieved.

The extra thickness that the pre-set EQ Set switch offers is especially good on Strat-type single-coil equipped guitars.

You can get good mild overdrive tones as well as heavily distorted ones, though I'm sure there are guitarists who may actually require more distortion than is featured here (*Marshall are already catering for this type of sound with their new High Gain amps*).

### Reverb

Initially I thought the reverb to be very different on the two Sessionettes, but Axession assure me that they both use the same spring reverb.

On closer listening, the newer amp has a slighter shorter decay that also seems to be quite bold right after the note is played.

On the older model, while the character is similar, the reverb sounds smoother with a longer decay and perhaps a slightly sweeter tone.

### If I Ruled The World

There is one omission from the Sessionette and numerous other twin channel amps that has caused me endless frustration.

If you're using the clean channel for a rhythm part, then want to kick in the dirty channel for a lead break, getting the volume balance and boost is a tricky business. You may have achieved this balance during soundcheck before the live engineer perhaps compliments your sound, but then asks if you can just turn it down. Having spent ages getting the right balance, it's a pain reducing three controls and trying to achieve the balance again!

I've spoken to Tony Morris and Axession MD, Jim Wilmer, and was given the stock answer that it's not possible. I think it's a shame; the Rockman XP-100 manages it, and while I appreciate that it's three times as

expensive, I do feel it's a worthy improvement that could be made on the amp.

### Conclusions

Actually I feel a bit miffed. The Sessionette 90 sounds better than mine, certainly on the clean channel which I use most. The overdrive could be tighter with perhaps more distortion, but it's a thick valve-like tone. I liked the look of the older amps - a duffle coat may be warmer than a leather jacket but...

The thing that I like most is the subtle improvements made since 1983 by Axess, now Axession. It's something to consider when you buy a new amp, especially in the cheaper end of the market. At least the Sessionette has proved its' worth - it's not a classic amp, but it offers sturdy construction and good easily accessible sounds in a neat package.

Dave Burrluck

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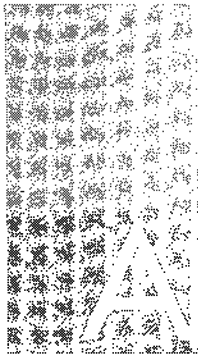
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# WAL MB4 MIDI BASS SYSTEM ●

RRP: £1,700 + VAT

As a guitar and bass player with an interest in synths and samplers, I've tried out most of the guitar synths and guitar controllers that have come on to the market over the last 10 years or so, although none have impressed me enough to warrant actually buying one. This may change however, now that I've tried the new Wal MB4 MIDI bass system. In order to fully appreciate how this differs from anything else currently available it's worth taking a quick look at the way guitar synths usually operate.

In general, there are two main principles involved - the cheaper and more common variety operates on a Pitch-To-MIDI system, with a special pickup and interface unit attached to an otherwise standard guitar.

The advantages with this setup are that you can mix synths with your usual guitar sound for a rich, layered effect and also that you can play the guitar pretty much as normal - harmonics, hammer-on and all - and the synth will follow on behind.

Unfortunately, following on behind is the big disadvantage of this system, since it does just that. In order to recognise which notes are being played, the converter literally has to count this number of vibrations per second of each string to calculate the frequency and thus the note being played. Of course it doesn't have to wait a whole second to work this out, but it does take a noticeable amount of time to do the conversion, especially on the lower, slower notes, hence those tracking delays which everyone complains about.

In order to combat this tracking problem, companies like Synthaxe, Stepp and, most recently, Yamaha took a different approach, discarded the standard guitar and came up with 'MIDI controllers'. Although bearing a

vague resemblance to a guitar, these systems are completely electronic in operation, with circuitry in the necks to sense which fret is being held and more in the bridge to determine which string is being played. Neither system makes any natural sound beyond the flat rattle of the untuned strings, but the tracking of the notes played is excellent and very fast. Their complexity makes them expensive though, and both the Synthaxe and Stepp models are no longer in production.

It would seem then, that there is a sizeable chunk of the market waiting for someone who can bring out a MIDI controller based on a standard guitar that tracks quickly and accurately. An electronics whiz from Australia called Steve Chick thinks so too, and has produced a system for the bass guitar which combines the fret-sensing principle behind the Stepp and Synthaxe with a real bass. After talking to various bass manufacturers he eventually struck a deal with Pete Stevens at Electric Wood Ltd. and the result is the Wal MB4 MIDI Bass System.

The MB4 comes in three parts - a Wal bass with the extra bits built in, a rack-mounting interface box, and a pedalboard with three footswitches mounted on it. The bass is connected to the interface unit via a fifteen-core cable and multipin 'D' connectors, while five-pin XLR connectors and cable join the interface unit and pedalboard.

The bass itself is a four-string model, but using Wal's five-string bodyshape with the long upper horn and a twenty-four fret neck, rather than the smaller Custom design. The example I tried out was fairly typical example of Wal craftsmanship - gorgeous, in other words.

Standard features included are the heavy-duty Schaller S4S machines and string-tree, twin Wal humbuckers and active electronics, with a slightly

modified version of the solid Wal bridge and tailpiece unit.

The only visible extras are an extra 'Quad' pickup mounted between the bridge humbucker and the bridge itself and a rather ugly black plastic box containing the additional MB4 circuitry and multi-pin socket which is mounted on the back of the guitar, underneath the bridge.

## Brain In The Neck

On closer inspection you can see that each fret has been divided into four sections, each section electrically insulated from its neighbour by a tiny piece of plastic. The bridge has had the same treatment to the baseplate that the saddles rest upon, but what isn't normally visible is the wiring inside the neck. Four channels have been routed out along the length of the neck, one underneath each string, to house a string of small resistors connected one between each fret. These resistor and fret looms are wired up in advance on a jig and then inserted into the pre-cut neck, which means that a normal Ebony or Rosewood fretboard can't be used, so Wal have instead covered the gaps between the frets with a textured black plastic material. This feels very similar to wood and presents no playing problems.

The idea behind all this wiring is that an electrical circuit is created from the bridge along the string to the fret being held and back up the neck through the resistors. Thus, as you move towards the nut, the more resistors are included in the circuit and the lower the final voltage, which means that the interface box has a simple, and virtually instantaneous voltage-to-MIDI conversion to do, rather than time-consuming frequency counting, usually even more of a problem with lower frequency bass notes. The Quad pickup next to the bridge tells the system which string is being plucked and

how hard, again simply by the voltage produced in that particular section of the four-way pickup, while notes played on an open string are recognised by a trigger from the Quad pickup when there is no completed circuit at the neck.

The interface box is a 1U rack-mount and the front panel sports pots for Sensitivity and Velocity, three-position switches labelled Style and Octave, plus Dynamics On/Off, Mono/Poly mode selection, Power On/Off switches and MIDI and Power LEDs. There are also two connectors; a fifteen-pin 'D' for guitar input and a standard jack labelled Audio Out, which carries the natural bass sound.

## Control Zone

The first thing I discovered about the MB4 when I actually tried to get a tune out of it was that this is definitely not a 'pick-up-and-play' system. Careful setting-up of the controls and an accurate playing technique are all important here, but the eventual results are very impressive and well worth the time it takes to get to grips with this system.

The two most important controls are the three-position Style switch and the Sensitivity knob. Styles A and B offer two present responses suitable for finger-style or plectrum playing techniques respectively, although the MB4 works in a similar fashion at both settings: the note is determined by the fret held, but not triggered until a signal from that strings quarter of the Quad pickup exceeds the threshold level set with the Sensitivity knob. This all sounds fairly obvious, but in practice it is all too easy to get false triggers at first by plucking a string fractionally before you actually fret the note or by bumping the neighbouring strings with the right hand. This is because the MB4 responds as if you are playing an open string and is where careful setting of the



THE  
MIDI  
REVOLUTION

sensitivity comes in. The front panel control is only an overall adjustment, but the individual balance between the strings can also be set to match your own style courtesy of four small presets concealed in the box on the back of the bass.

More help is at hand in the shape of the Mono/Poly switch, which should not be confused with the MIDI functions of that name, but determines whether the MB4 will accept more than one note at a time.

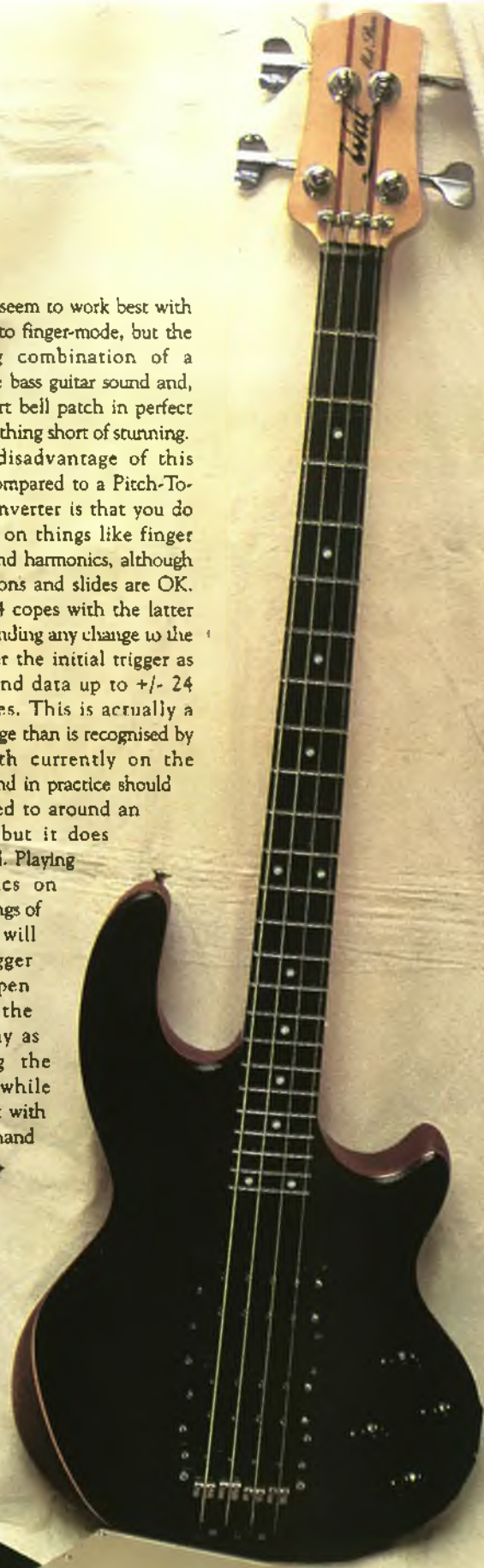
In mono mode, the MB4 only transmits the last note played as MIDI information, which is a great help on fast runs. With the Dynamics switch set to Off, all the MIDI notes transmitted are preset to a velocity level set by the front panel Velocity control, which can really even-up your sound.

With Dynamics switched ON, the MB4 transmits velocity data proportional to the strength of the signal from the Quad pickup, but not exceeding the level set at the Velocity knob.

I realise that all this sounds a little user-unfriendly at first and it's true that it does take a while to get used to the way the MB4 works, but it's all well worth it in the end: you can play as fast as you like without any noticeable MIDI delays. Slap styles can require a bit more fiddling with the sensitivity control

and they seem to work best with Style set to finger-mode, but the resulting combination of a percussive bass guitar sound and, say a short bell patch in perfect sync is nothing short of stunning.

The disadvantage of this system compared to a Pitch-To-MIDI converter is that you do miss out on things like finger vibrato and harmonics, although hammer-ons and slides are OK. The MB4 copes with the latter two by sending any change to the note after the initial trigger as pitch-bend data up to +/- 24 semitones. This is actually a wider range than is recognised by any synth currently on the market and in practice should be limited to around an octave, but it does work well. Playing harmonics on open strings of the bass will only trigger the open note in the same way as plucking the string while muting it with the left hand does. ▶



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Dean Howard - TPau  
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Ron Roberts - TPau  
Washburn EA30  
Woodstock Standard



Model	Top	Back & sides	Neck	Finger board	Pickup & EQ
EA20 Woodstock Standard	Spruce	Mahogany	Mahogany	Rosewood	3200, EQ300 3-band, active, eq 15
EA30 Woodstock Standard*	Spruce	Flame Maple	Mahogany	Rosewood	as above
EA40 Woodstock Artist*	Arched Spruce	Birds Eye Maple	Mahogany	Rosewood	as above
EA50 Forum Thinline	Arched Spruce	Maple	Mahogany	Rosewood	as above
EA44 Monterey	Solid Spruce	Deep Flame Maple	Mahogany	Polished Ebonized Rosewood	as above
EA45 Tanglewood	Solid Spruce	Deep Flame Maple Full Body	Mahogany	Polished Ebonized Rosewood	as above
D12CE Dreadnought*	Spruce	Mahogany	Mahogany	Rosewood	3200, EQ100
SBF24 Mirage Solid Body*	Spruce	Solid hard woods	Rock Maple	Rosewood	3200, EQ200 with mid boost
SBS20 Solid Body Acoustic	Spruce	Solid hard woods	Maple	Rosewood	3200, EQ200 with mid boost

\* - also available as 12 string

whereas finger vibrato achieves nothing at all as far as the MB4 is concerned - but in my opinion these are small problems that are far outweighed by the advantages of this system.

If you wish to add modulation to the synth sound, then this is controlled by the Mod footswitch, which will add a preset amount while depressed (equivalent to around the centre position on an average keyboard modulation wheel). This amount isn't adjustable unfortunately, but most modern synths allow a mod range to be edited as part of a program. Next to the Mod footswitch on the pedalboard is Hold which, while pressed, will sustain the last note played on any particular string until that string is triggered again. This function can be assigned to any or all of the strings and enables you to play sustained low notes, for example, while soloing on the higher strings. Alternatively you could sustain a four-fingered chord while moving the left hand into position for the next one. Very useful.

Mounted slightly away from the other two pedals is one labelled Patch. This allows you to change between different synth programs in a similar way to the facility offered on the Casio MIDI guitars. While this pedal is pressed, the first sixteen frets on each string correspond to patch numbers: ranging from 1 at the first fret on the G string, to 64 at the sixteenth fret on the E string.

## Style Talk

I've already mentioned that you can play as fast as you like using the MB4, but for real speed freaks there is always mode C on the Style switch. This is Tap mode and at this setting the



### Bass connects to interface via D plug

MB4 disregards the Quad pickup and triggers every time a note is fretted, which makes all those Tony Levin Stick bass runs possible. Being something of a closet Heavy Rocker in my spare time, I will admit to having a great deal of fun with this mode producing versions of two-handed Eddie Van Halen guitar solos on a Clavi sound, but speed isn't everything and more importantly this mode offers a non keys-playing bassist the capability to effectively play sampled drumfills or keyboard chords from the bass.

As far as the MIDI spec of this system is concerned, there are a couple more limitations to bear in mind. At the Mono setting, the MB4 transmits data on channel 1 only, while Poly splits the four strings across channels 1 to 4, and this is not adjustable. But despite the lack of any of the more sophisticated memory options available on the Japanese competition and the fact that at the moment the MB4 certainly appears rather on the 'home-made' side, I must stress again that these are all minor considerations when you remember that this is the first bass controller to really work.

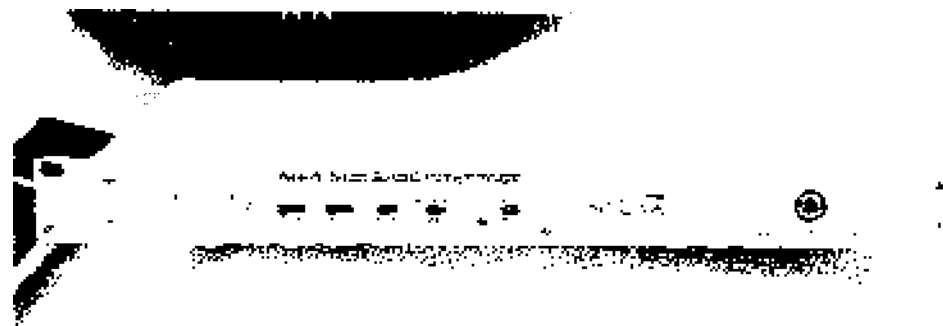
As you must have guessed by now, I am absolutely knocked out

by the potential of the MB4, since I see it as a potential life-saver to those bass players ousted by the current fashion for synth basslines.

Ask any music shop owner how many bass guitars he's sold lately compared to MIDI sequencers and modules and you'll get a depressing answer. Although, during the time I spent at the Electric Wood factory trying the MB4, I heard a very impressive piano tune complete with full drum backing and brass stabs that had been created on a Roland MC500 sequencer controlled solely from a bass. I am convinced that, coupled with a suitable synth or sampler, the MB4 should enable a bassist to match anything a keyboard player can come up with, but with the added advantages of the expression possible on a stringed instrument. Try it for yourself and I guarantee that you'll be convinced, too.

## Bass

**The MB4 is available from Electric Wood Ltd.  
Contact: Pete Stevens on (0494) 442925.**



Careful control setup is all important

# IBANEZ SOUNDTANK PEDALS ●

RRP: £35

you just can't rely on the Japanese these days. I mean, Ibanez have a slice of the guitar market that is pretty enviable and a list of users and endorsees that runs like the A-Z of modern guitaring. Along with 'quality' and 'innovation' though, 'expensive' can be applied to their products so it was a surprise to see them launch a new effects range, not a radical multi-effects as some were hoping for but an entry level range - Soundtank.

At £35 a piece the Soundtank pedals cut, virtually by half, the price of the standard Ibanez effects but the choice is limited. The Soundtank range offers just six pedals. All distortion!

Each Soundtank pedal is made from a light metal alloy casting with separate metal 'flap' switch. The coloured plastic nameplate doubles as the battery cover - simply pull it off to change battery. Each unit has three domed plastic control knobs - level, tone and distortion - and a simple in/out quarter inch jack socket placed sensibly at the top of the pedal along with a 9volt adapted mains power input.

With the exception of the gaudy name plate the domed design of the pedal is definitely unusual and almost harks back to a Fifties American design - give it a chrome plate and a better logo and you'd have Yuppies queuing a mile for them, and probably a design award or two! Aesthetics aside though the design is functional and appears very sturdy.

The six pedals - Powerlead, Trashmetal, Crunchyrhythm, 60's Fuzz, Classicmetal and Modernfusion - attempt to offer varying distortion tones yet the grouping is perhaps open to debate; what does a Modern Fusion player sound like, and is it something you'd admit to being? Still, at least they've given them a name and somehow the term 'thrash metal' when applied to a pedal

does conjure up a sound picture that a mere catalogue number wouldn't.

To get a reference point on the sound I thought I'd start with the Classicmetal 'designed to recreate British hard rock in the '70's - high power stack sound'. Typically such statements rarely ring true. To be more accurate, the Classicmetal delivers a high gain fuzzy tone with a hard upper middle emphasis giving plenty of attack and bite. At full distortion it's the kind of sound that's a real

Consequently at full distortion it's not quite as chaotic sounding as the Classicmetal. Here the tone control works in a more conventional way adding or cutting treble which at its extreme setting is really ear piercing. Used in conjunction with a compressor it's a great little modern rhythm metal tone and used alone it's a tight, rather nasty sound.

I liked the Modernfusion pedal as it is really the only one in the bunch that acknowledges that distortion is used outside of heavy

the Classicmetal sound but with a softer character. Its smoothness makes it very much more versatile than early fuzz boxes I remember, though not from the 60's! There's a reasonable amount of distortion here and the tone acts as a treble cut and boost.

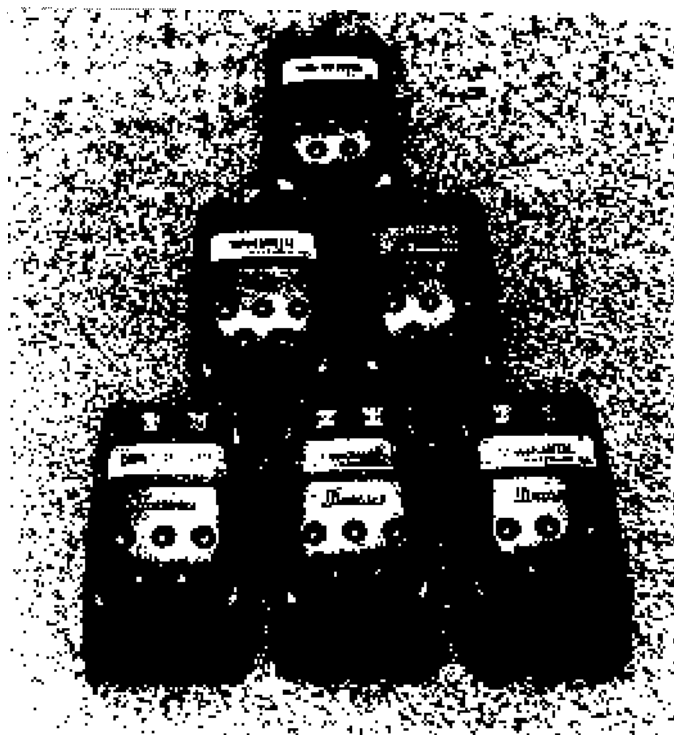
The last two pedals don't take a style of sound for their name but seek to provide distortion for the lead or rhythm player. Crunchyrhythm gives a tight modern sound slightly softer than the Thrashmetal but less flappy than the Classicmetal. It has quite a bright sound although the tone control offers wide variation, and for once I'd agree with the pedal's name. Likewise the Powerlead offers a ballsy lead tone not dissimilar in character to the Classicmetal, with a slightly softer tone perhaps but less synthetic than the 60's fuzz. Certainly it has a bass boost for a tone control enabling you to give body to a thin lead tone.

## Conclusions

All the pedals sounded good and avoid the thin characterless tones of many cheaper distortion boxes. It's also quite surprising how different in character they are - you'll be quite spoilt for choice! None perhaps are in the class of the more expensive tube pre-amp pedals but I wouldn't let that put you off. If you're short of funds I'm sure one of these pedals will satisfy your sonic desires.

For once cheap doesn't mean low quality, and for a change these pedals don't look or aim to sound like Boss effects. While they appear very strong the actual control knobs could be a bit vulnerable and they're too easily removed for my liking. Also the units put out a fair bit of hiss which reminds you of their price. But I still can't find a major fault; they're fun effects with a serious sound.

Dave Burrluck  
Cougar Audio Technology,  
Tel: (0732) 770872.



### Fun Fx with a serious sound

metal favourite today and it sounded best from the middle upwards. You can achieve some convincing sounds with less distortion - in fact even with the control fully anti-clockwise you get a good rasping tone. Speaking of tone, the actual tone control is unusual in that it acts like a lower middle boost so with the control full up the tone sounds warmer. Fully off or anti-clockwise the control reduces the same range of frequencies producing a thinner tone.

By comparison the Thrashmetal has a tighter distortion, slightly darker in colour.

This one has a warm tone, perhaps even dull, yet again the tone control works in an individual way by cutting and boosting, what sounds like, an upper middle range. This adds not so much top end but a certain hardness to the sound. It hasn't got the great amount of distortion of the Classicmetal and consequently apes an earlier, pre-spandex, sound before master volumes and really high levels affected the guitar. Despite the name this pedal sounds good with a warm sounding PAF equipped guitar - tone is the word.

The 60's fuzz is quite close to

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KUDOS MIXERS

## KAWAI K4 & K4R ●

RRP: £895 & £695

**F**or those who can't manage to afford the 16-bit might of a Roland D50 or Korg M1 the eight-bit Kawai K1 and its' derivatives have offered a relatively inexpensive means of securing a wide range of those bigger-than-life sounds. Now, with the 16-bit K4 and K4R (rackmount version), Kawai have joined the senior league. The prices, however, still look unusually competitive.

### The Prologue

Before going further, a quick recap on what we've seen so far: First came the K1 at £695: eight-bit (floating point), 16-note polyphonic, eight-part multitimbral; quite impressive sounds; but no filtering or onboard effects.

Based on that there's the K1R rackmount expander, for £435, and the K1M module non-rackmount version, for only £395. These are unquestionably high value for anyone on a tight budget.

Then came the K1-II (reviewed in the November issue of *IM&RW*) which is basically a K1 with some basic, preset onboard effects and extra drum sounds, but still no filtering, for £695. Still definitely a lot for your money, but certainly not up to the likes of the M1 in terms of quality. Surprisingly, there are so far no expander versions of the K1-II.

Although the K4 is an entirely new instrument with a new 16-bit heart and newly sampled 16-bit sounds, it is in principal very similar to its junior stable mates: its internal ROM contains 256 waves which are the building blocks of all its sounds. 160 of these are PCM samples, including separate attack and sustain portions of various

instruments, the remaining 96 being resynthesised sounds referred to by Kawai as Digital Cyclic waveforms, not dissimilar to the Variable Memory waves found in the K1/K1-II. Up to four waves can be combined with individual envelopes and delays to make a sound, and a total of 32 waves can be played simultaneously resulting, for example, in

16-note polyphony with two waves per sound (often the case). The K4 also includes 16 onboard, programmable digital effects including various types of reverb, delay, chorus and overdrive. The K4R has no onboard effects but has the advantage of eight independent outputs.

A major addition on the K4 is that of filters for which



...it's got onboard effects





It's (mostly) 16-bit...

adjustable parameters include cut off frequency, resonance, velocity depth, pressure depth, keyboard scaling depth and LFO modulation - pretty comprehensive, and they seem to work well enough. The envelope is a full ADSR.

On the subject of the LFO it has four shapes; triangle, square, sawtooth and random; has adjustable speed, delay, depth and pressure depth; and can be applied with individual settings to the DCO and/or the DCF.

### Sound Quality

The quality of the sounds is undoubtedly superior to those of

the K1 and derivatives. It should be noted for the record that in fact not all of them are 16-bit. Kawai have used 16-bit resolution where they consider its' benefits will be most noticed and used the eight-bit system for less critical sounds - the details of when and where are not available. This comes under the heading of memory management and theoretically allows optimum use of available space. Running through the presets there are certainly some interesting, different and powerful sounds, although in the replication of some of the real acoustic instruments the level of quality and impact is not as high as either the M1 or the

E-Mu Proteus.

Having said that, we must add the thoroughly sobering perspective of price. The Korg M1 is £1,575 and even the Korg M3R rackmount, a junior version of the M1R, is £899 and £1,124 with its rather necessary RE1 editor. The Proteus rackmount is £899 and has no onboard effects. Compare that to £895 and £695 for the K4 and K4R respectively, and you'll see that, although they are in a way similarly targeted instruments, there is a very significant price gap. If you have £900 to spend and you need a keyboard (as opposed to an expander) with onboard effects, the fact is there's nothing else



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that offers this range and quality at the price.

The K4 is eight-part multitimbral, either via MIDI over separate channels or via the keyboard using any combinations of splits and layers. A Velocity Switch facility can also be used to switch between two sounds according to how hard you hit the keys - thumbed bass going to pulled bass would be a common application. The internal memory contains 64 Single sounds and 64 Multi patches, ie. combinations of sounds as outlined above. A card slot on the rear panel will take RAM cards for further storage of your own edited ideas, or future ROM cards with further factory inventions. The basic 756 main waveforms and 61 drum/percussion samples, however, are fixed, as opposed to the M1-type system where extra optional PCM cards are offered with actual new samples.

## Superior Drums

The Drum Section can be considered as a ninth multitimbral part, largely independent of the main voice section. It contains 61 excellent drum and percussion sounds that go way beyond those of the K1-II. Any two of these 61 sources can be assigned to a single key and each source can be individually adjusted in various ways: volume, decay, tuning up or down an octave and Submix Channel assignment - which I'll explain in a minute. Overall Drum Section adjustments include general volume, MIDI Channel and velocity depth.

## Effects

Of the 16 available types of effect, one to nine are single effects ie. Reverb, Gate Reverb, Delay; and 10 to 16 are dual effects ie. Overdrive/Flange, Chorus/Pan Delay. Each effect type has three variables, so Reverb offers - pre-delay, decay time/gate time and tone; Normal Delay has feedback, tone, and delay; Pan Delay, feedback, L/R Delay, and tone; Chorus - width, feedback, and rate. The dual effects each have two variables plus an Effect 1/2

balance: Overdrive/Flange - drive, flange; Overdrive/Normal Delay - drive, delay time; Overdrive/Reverb - drive, reverb type; Normal Delay/Delay - delay time one, delay time two; Normal Delay/Pan Delay - delay one, delay two; Chorus/Normal Delay - chorus, delay.

Clearly, even the single effects aren't highly programmable, and each effect in the dual types is simply chosen from one of seven presets, with no actual adjustment available.

The K4's internal memory can store 32 Effects Patches, each using variations on one of the 16 types available, and the plug-in RAM card can store a further 32.

Only one of these 32 patches can be selected at any one time, but each part of a Multi Patch or Drum Patch can be given a more individual access to it, once again, via the Submix section.

This Submix section, to which I keep alluding, can be seen as a simple onboard 8:2 mixer with channels labelled A to H. Each channel has a Pan and two Effects Send controls by which to address the internal effects. If you're using a single effect, only Send One is operative. Through this mixer are sent all the parts of a Multi Patch and all the 61 parts of a Drum Patch - obviously more than one part can be sent through any given channel. The point is that you have eight different pan and effects set ups through which to pass any sound in order to create the stereo picture you want. In the case of the K4R, which has no effects, there 32 Output Patches

which allow the various parts to be assigned to different combinations of the eight available outputs.

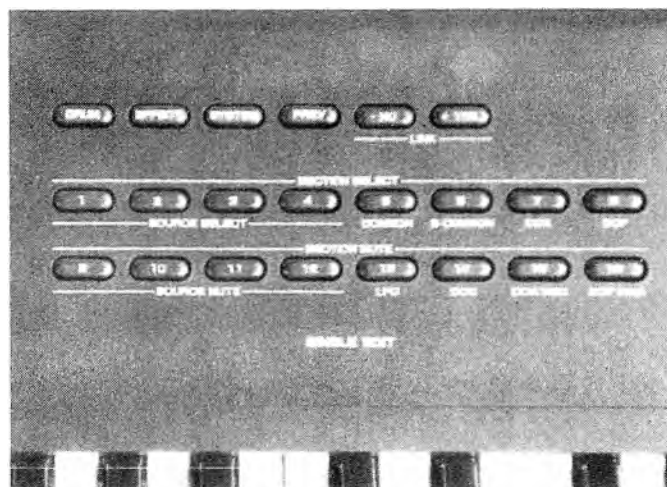
This is a good compromise between having just a single global effect which has to be changed manually and independently of the sound presets called up, and the other more expensive option of each preset having its own individual pan/effects assignment. It's worth noting here that the M3R has only a global effects setting - and of course the Proteus has none.

## Conclusion

The final conclusion has to be that, once again, Kawai are offering a great deal for the money. The review model was a pre-production unit and the rather disturbing level of noise associated with the effects is said to be eradicated on the final production instruments. Taking this as read, I can say that the general level of voices and effects is good and very useable for a wide variety of applications. The degree and ease of editing is also quite reasonable, and sometimes very good. If you have the money (£1,575), there's no doubt that an M1 is the superior machine. But if you haven't, the K4 will do you very well indeed - and in fact without Kawai, there'd be very little option at all. Perhaps we should all write them a thank you letter.

*Jim Betteridge*

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Aria SB1000 Bass	£325
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TOA MIX 100 Mix/Amp	£250
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Pross PPS100 Mix/Amp	£165
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Roland S10 Sampler	£399
Akai X7000 Keyboard Sampler	£199
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Case C2000	£425
Case CP53000 Piano	£279
Korg Poly 900 MM11	£148
Yamaha DSP2000	£299
Roland SH101 Aco	£75
Cheerish Keyboards	(phone)
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Yamaha EMT10	£149
Chaetan MS6 Expander	£199
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Box RPS10 Pitch Shifter	£120
Yamaha EME1 Dig Rev	£85
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Boss BR90 BCH Mixer	£85
Tascam M08 Mixer	£149
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# SAMPLES



The Lego Christmas campaign will include a picture of a charming Lego re-construction of a certain **MICHAEL JACKSON**. Mr Jackson's model will be accompanied by the rather cheeky caption "It's amazing what you can make out of plastic these days"!!! Sadly, the advert will only appear in carefully selected areas of the trade press.



**A&M** look set to be swallowed by the conglomerate mass we know to be **POLYGRAM**. Apparently, the deal was agreed in principle earlier this month, and all that needs to be done is to add signature to paper. Will the Monopolies & Mergers committee step in to stop the growing trend of big majors buying up small labels, and now, it seems other big labels? Watch this space...

One time Band member and now solo artist in his own right, **ROBBIE ROBERTSON**, is, at this very moment working on a new album in Los Angeles. **PET SHOP BOYS** producer, Stephen Hague, has been drafted in to produce and the release date is scheduled by Geffen records for sometime next spring. Hague has also been working on a solo LP with **JIMI SOMERVILLE**.

**MARTYN PHILLIPS** is busy working on a remix of Zimbabwean **BHUNDU BOYS** music at Sam Therapy. A single looks set to be released as a result of these sessions.

**RY COODER** returns to the fold with yet another instrumental film soundtrack. Johnny Handsome stars **MICKEY ROURKE** in a kind of eighties update of the ever popular Beauty and the Beast story. The soundtrack will feature Cooder playing keyboards, accordion, fiddle and of course guitar, along with **JIM KELTNER** on drums and **STEVE DOUGLAS** on sax.

Contenders for **THE BLUE NILE** "It's Good To Be Back Award", It's Immaterial, have now apparently finished that difficult second album. A press officer for their record company, Siren, told IM to expect a product at the beginning of next year.

**BILLY OCEAN** has won the 'Songwriter of the Year' award at the ASCAP pop awards dinner. Amongst the titles given a special mention were Colour Of Love and the classic Ocean funkier, *Get Out Of My Dreams And Into My Car*. Over 200 members of the music industry attended the dinner including the incredibly famous **PHIL COLLINS**, **NEIL TENNANT**, **SIMON CLIMIE**, and the not so incredibly famous but equally as hungry **Mike Batt** (ex-**WOMBLE**), **Zak Starkey** (son of ex-**BEATLE** Ringo), **HOWARD JONES** (remember me?) and **BOB MITCHELL** (**CHEAP TRICK**). Highlight of the evening was a medley of hit songs (*Inc Hound Dog, Loving You and Jailhouse Rock*) performed by the original writers **JERRY LIEBER** and **MIKE STOLLER**. If only we'd been there...

**LITTLE RICHARD'S** life story is soon to be made into a film. As yet, it is not known who is to play the great man but the Producers seat will be taken up by one **EDDIE MURPHY**.

Photo by Bradley

One of the greatest Rock'n'Roll performers in the world, **JERRY LEE LEWIS**, is believed to have debts of around \$3 million. According to reports, he had previously refused to allow a Court Trustee to visit his *Mississippi* home, however now that official bankruptcy proceedings have been set in motion Lewis has relented and now looks, as they say in the business, to be in deep shit.

The US Supreme Court have ordered 25 year old **JEFF TURNER** to keep a distance of at least 200 yards between him and teen-angel (???) **TIFFANY**, the star he has been pestering for months!

**NOV 18 - NOV 19 '89**

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# TAPE ONE STUDIOS

29/30 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 1HG Tel: 01 580 0444

## STUDIO OF THE MONTH

**S**ituated off London's Tottenham Court Road, Tape One has, since the late Seventies, established a reputation as the country's premier post production house. Originally opened in 1975 as a speech recording studio, by partners Bill Foster and Barry Ainsworth, a sideline in cassette copying for the record companies quickly became the more profitable activity. In 1977 they opened a cutting room and the following year moved into a single floor of their current address. Tape One now occupies all five floors of the building, having expanded to incorporate four digital audio mastering studios, two cutting rooms and two analogue to digital transfer rooms.

The post production, or CD pre mastering suite as it is now called, is that last stop before a master tape becomes product and is pressed up. It is the point at which any final editing is carried out and tracks are assembled into desired running orders for CD, vinyl and cassette.

Corrective eq'ing may be required because a tape may have been mixed in a studio with defective monitoring, or where different mixes have been done in different studios or on different days by different engineers, resulting in 'jumps' in the overall sound between one track and the next.

As the last point of reference, before a record is cut and the CD mastered, the choice of pre mastering suite is as important as the choice of recording studio and a producer worth his points will usually supervise the process in a facility of his choice.

The advent of digital audio made new demands of the post production process and Tape One moved into the field at an early stage.

"In 1982 we purchased a Sony 1610 digital recorder and an edi-

tor and began producing digital tapes for CD production in Japan," explains Foster. "By 1983 we were producing tapes for the first European CD plants. However with any digital recording which we had to re-req at the editing stage, we had to reconvert it to analogue in order to do so and then reconvert it back into digital (making something of a nonsense of the DDD symbol on the CD). We knew that Neve were developing the DSP digital console for the BBC, so we asked them to make a smaller one for our purposes.

We took delivery of the desk in 1984, becoming the first studio in the world able to process digital audio recordings digitally on a commercial basis."

Technology has moved on swiftly since then and Tape One's top flight Digital Suite II took delivery of an AMS AudioFile hard disk editing system, based on computer style Winchester disk drives, and the new improved Neve DTC-1 digital console.

The possibilities that the system offers are seemingly limitless. Any section of music can be played and replayed any number of times and linked to any other, or even instantly deleted. A selection of takes can be transferred onto the AudioFile, just as they have been mixed down, and all the internal editing done within each tape. The system also allows for more than one set of data to be read simultaneously so that it is possible to compile con-

tinuous program material.

Tape One matched up their AudioFile to Neve's much improved DTC-1 console, enabling complicated mixes to be achieved under time code control.

"The DTC-1 was developed in close collaboration with Sterling, Master Disk in New York, and

the main frame for the AudioFile and the Sony 1630 and DMR-4000 U-matic machines, is housed in the air conditioned machine room. Digital machinery does not like temperatures in excess of 65 degrees and the tape machines make too much noise when operating to be placed in the control room.

Digital Suite 1 was designed by Tom Hidley, and is equipped with stunningly accurate Kinoshita vertical monitors. With the advent of CD-V and the immanent arrival of digital stereo TV and satellite broadcasting, CD-V pre mastering equipment has been installed to interface with the AudioFile and DTC-1. The studio is already in line for a further upgrade, awaiting the arrival of AMS's own newly developed LOGIC-1 12 input all digital console, designed to connect directly to the AudioFile.

"All the faders are fully automated and the console is linked to the same central processor, rather than operating two separate systems.

LOGIC-1 will make our digital facilities unrivalled anywhere in the in the world."

None of this technological wizardry comes cheap of course and the £120 an hour rate reflects the £1/4 million already invested in Digit-1 - £70,000 of it in the AudioFile system alone. But if the technology is complex, the principal is simplicity itself: "If you bring a digital tape in, it stays within the digital domain all the way through" - until you play the CD.

Keith Grant



Mission control

ourselves, taking account of our requirements and experience with the old desk. Specifying a digital desk in 1982 was very much a shot in the dark, and the console was very much an analogue desk done digitally. We were not aware of all the extra that comes with such a system."

With the DTC-1 changes in eq, levels and cross fades can all be achieved automatically with information from the AudioFile's time code. The consoles control room profile is something of a deception being only the control panel for what is actually a main frame computer which along with

It's a pity that more retailers don't copy our ideas (instead of just our ads), free courses with packages, faulty goods replaced and money refunded are all part of a service to which customers are entitled. It is a shame that more retailers do not realise this.

By the way, have you noticed how some shops are incapable of giving you a price on the telephone? (Frustrating, huh?) Next time a shop respond with "How much have you been quoted already?" say "Why - are you too thick to think of a price yourself?" They'll soon learn!

### NEW STOCK

Whilst we do not pretend to carry EVERY item from EVERY manufacturer, (as some shops seem to - ever tried putting it to the test?), all new equipment is tested in our of our three working studios, and if we like it, our buying power can usually ensure that we have it in stock at all times (even when your local dealer might have run dry!). In addition, if we recommend an item, we will REFUND YOUR MONEY if you do not agree with us.

In fact we are the largest pro audio dealers in Britain for Alesis, Korg, Drawmer, Casio, Fostex, Seck, Yamaha, TOA, Tascam, Studiomaster, Allen & Heath, C-Labs and a good many more! (Last year we sold nearly 600 new 8 + 16 track packages and around 200 s/h machines!) It's always worth ringing us for a quote on new equipment and if you're still unconvinced, ask yourself why we became the biggest in such a short time (or better still ask the rest!)

If you are bewildered by the vast amount of multitrack recording products currently on offer, Thatched Cottage fax packs should make the job of choosing the right equipment that much easier. There are 5 in the series; P.A. - Portastudios - 8 Track - Financial advice and MIDI. To obtain any of our fax packs just phone or write.

### Concert Grand Piano - £173 + VAT

The Korg P3 sampled piano module is widely acclaimed as one of the most realistic, full spec grand piano modules on the market today. With full MIDI spec and switchable octaves. In addition to the Steinway and Bechstein grand pianos, extra sound cards are available (e.g. orchestra, with super brass, strings, flutes, limps etc.) making it one of the most versatile samplers (as opposed to P.C.M) sound sources on the market today. It was good value at nearly £500 when it was introduced; because of a once only purchase we are able to offer it at the unbelievable price of only £199 inc VAT. Whatever your MIDI keyboard set-up we reckon that another grand piano will never go amiss. Give us a call!



When it comes to new equipment you may have noticed that we don't say phone for the best deal, POA, or "lowest price guarantee" (Ha! Ha! if the prices are so great why don't they just print them and amaze us all). Our bulk buying policy can usually guarantee that a telephone call to us will not be wasted and in any case we can throw in those "hidden" extras - cables with multitracks, patchbays with desks. (By the way, next time a dealer "guarantees" the lowest price and then can't deliver, try reporting them to the local Office of Fair Trading - it will teach them not to waste your time!)

To be honest though, if you spend all afternoon on the telephone the chances are you might find someone somewhere who will undercut us by a pound or two. The difference at THATCHED COTTAGE is if your E16 breaks down on a Sunday morning or your Drum Machine blows up on a Bank Holiday Monday you CAN ring us, we'll be here and we WILL do something about it - 365 days a year. Have you ever needed help and advice outside shop hours? If you are serious about your music you will know that it is quality of service that makes the difference and at THATCHED COTTAGE it's only a phone call away!

### ALLEN & HEATH SABER 16 & 24 TRACK CONSOLES

This year's APRS A&H launched a revolutionary new professional mixing console - the SABER offering the quality of a Sound-craft and the durability of a TAC. It has comprehensive MIDI facilities and many features as standard offered only as options by other manufacturers. Full fader automation and 24 track version now available.

Demand has been so great every month we sell the entire UK production run in advance. If you're considering spending around £5,000 on a high quality multi-track console then you owe it to yourself to check out what has become possibly the largest selling console of its kind in Britain. Give us a call and we will send full details and arrange a demonstration.

### THATCHED COTTAGE RECORDING SCHOOL

In response to popular demand we now run a one week recording course, designed specifically for those of you who feel they can make a go of running a professional 8, 16 or 24 Track Studio. The emphasis will be largely on the practical side and topics covered are finance, premises, running a recording session and hints and tips on every aspect of recording. Class sizes are limited to eight at a time and guest speakers will cover relevant areas. The price is just £200 for the week, including accommodation. Interested? Telephone or write and we'll tell you more. We also run "arranging courses" useful for samplers, call for details.

### SANSUI WS-XI

By now you have probably heard about the brand new recording workstation from Sansui. 6 tracks, a full feature mixer, built-in effects and even a stereo mastering machine make it the most versatile single unit on the market today. If you don't like wires this is the recorder for you!

At Thatched Cottage for a limited period we will be GIVING AWAY an Axxeman, Bassman or a Korg P3 piano module with each Sansui to provide a complete recording/writing package. At £1126 - VAT it might be all you'll ever need! The phone lines are open.

THE SECOND ISSUE OF OUR FULL COLOUR QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FULL OF PRODUCT NEWS RECORDING ARTICLES AND DETAILS OF OUR BARGAINS IS NOW AVAILABLE. WRITE OR TELEPHONE FOR YOUR FREE COPY.



Dealers constantly complain about our secondhand and ex-demo list - it seems they are losing too many customers!

Being by far the largest supplier of 8 + 16 track equipment in Britain, we've decided we can afford to give away a few secrets! We simply tell customers that if any new equipment they purchase breaks down in the first two months we won't fix it, we will REPLACE it!

Result! Yet another customer who KNOWS they can rely on Thatched Cottage, and a secondhand list full of the latest gear, factory repaired, in mint condition with a full guarantee.

Simple? We didn't become the biggest without being the best!  
By the way, when it comes to s/h gear we care what we part-exchange. We only accept equipment which is in first class condition - after all, when you buy from us its our guarantee you are relying on!

### SOME SECONDHAND AND EX-DEMO BARGAINS

Seck 12.8.2 Mixer, Mint	£750
Seck 18.8.2 Mixer (Black)	£885
Drawmer DS201 Dual Gates	£245
Nomad Axxeman	£195
32 Way Patchbays (new)	£30
Fostex B16 (With Guarantee)	£2,250
XRI X300 SMPTE Generator	£199
Aphelex Type C Exciter	£199
Tascam MSR16 1/2" 16 Track	£3250
Dynabrix 16.8 inc flight case	£569
Fostex 450 8 Track Desk	£499
Akai S950	£999
Tascam ATR 60 1/2" 2 track inc. trolley	£299
Yamaha WX7 wind controller	£199
Fostex EB large reel 8 track	£1499
Kawai K3 rack synth expander	£199
Casio FZ10M rack sampler (new)	£899
Tascam MX80 8 channel mobile amp	£799
Yamaha MT100 4 track	£199
Yamaha V50	£750
Korg MP	£875
Fostex 4030 synchroniser	£99
Fostex 4035 controller (for above)	£375
Sony F1 digital mastering	£399
Fostex E16 (secondhand with new heads, full guarantee)	£2750
Apple Computer plus Greengate sampling software	£299
Qlumber Pro 24 (new)	£199
Steinberg Masterzone (new)	£150
Steinberg DMP7 software (runs up to 4 units)	£99
Fostex 200 (demo)	£499
Fostex E22 (1" centre timecode) Demo	£99
Fostex E2 (1/2" centre timecode)	£199
Beyer MC740 the ultimate condenser mic (new)	£649
Drawmer LX20 compressor gate	£199
Allen & Heath 24-16 System 9	£1399
PRD Genus 1 98.92 Impassional	£1200
Allen & Heath Saber large frame 24 16.24, as new	£999
Teac 3340 4-track	£399
Allen & Heath Sigma 32 24 24 (full automation) fitted	£15,000
RSD Stehman 17.8.2	£850
RSD Series 2 361.6/2	£3500
Fostex 160 (Demo)	£299
Alesis HR16 (Secondhand) Mint	£250
Akai S1000 + 2 meg expansion (full guarantee)	£2250
Alesis Midverb 2 (S/H)	£105

We have a certain number of ex-demo Fostex E16s available all in mint condition with boxes - Give us a call! (All prices include VAT.)

### SPECIAL OFFERS (ALL NEW)

Nomad Axxeman - the Ultimate Guitar Processor	CRAZY PRICE £199 + VAT
BASSMAN - the Ultimate Bass Processor	CRAZY PRICE £199 + VAT
Seck 18.2 desk (exclusive to us)	£649 + VAT
Tannoy DC100 monitors (per pair)	£150 + VAT
Yamaha TX16W 16 voice sampler with full library (new)	£799 + VAT
Fostex X30 Portastudio plus Fostex MN15 4.2 mixer including compressors - the best value budget unit around (full price)	£199 + VAT
Fostex 450 - Rolls Royce of Portastudios inc full 8 track mixing desk RRP £2125 Our Price	£725 + VAT
Memory expansion boards for AKAI S1000 (2 meg)	£260 + VAT
We usually have large stocks of used + demonstration machines, call us for our comprehensive list	

### THATCHED COTTAGE SERVICE

At our fully equipped in-house service centre we can service all types of equipment (e.g. 8-16 tracks; Every reputable audio dealer should have one on site (don't let anyone tell you any different). Believe it or not, some retailers actually sell complex electronic equipment from their front room or garage (nothing wrong with that of course - we all had to start somewhere - when you are successful though, your outgrow it pretty quickly!) It does though tend to suggest a lack of back up facilities. So if your multitrack needs a service or the heads looking, at give us a call before its too late.

For those of you who are seriously considering starting a commercial studio we've come up with three packages, each containing everything you will need for your first paying session, from the Multi-track Machine right through to DI Boxes and Cables. The price of the 8 Track System is £4,300 + VAT, the 16 Track is £7,800 + VAT and the 24 Track is £15,750 + VAT. At Thatched Cottage we proved it could be done, and we have helped many new studios to open and start making money - our experience could help you. Give me a ring and have a chat - what have you got to lose? Plus: FREE Thatched Cottage Recording School Course to package buyers!!

### THATCHED COTTAGE PRIVILEGED CHARGE CARD

In our efforts to make life easier for our customers we have launched our own credit card!

Like Access and Barclaycard, our Privileged Charge Card allows instant credit up to £1000 and some VERY special discounts.

For larger purchases we have arranged a unique loan/lease scheme for amounts up to £25,000.

Full details of all our new financial services (including equipment insurance) are contained in our new Financial Fax Packs - Give us a call.

### NEW PRODUCTS

CASIO DA2 - brand new updated DAT. Still only £649 + VAT inc. free rack kit + RSD PROLINE 16:8:16 plus MIDI muting. TASCAM 1 24 track - revolutionary at just over £7000 + VAT + DIGIDESIGN SOUND TOOLS HARD DISK RECORDING - call for demonstration + KORG M3 their brilliant new expander + YAMAHA F X500 + TASCAM 644 and 688 PORTASTUDIOS + ART SGCE guitar processor + BEL BOE 2400ES 24 seconds (stereo) Delay/Sampler RRP £3000 £699 +

# MUSICSOFT MIDIMAN ●

RRP: £189

**E**very now and then we hear news of a product which seems completely pointless - until you really think about it. Who, for instance, would want to store MIDI data on cassette tape?

The Musicsoft MIDIMan is a MIDI-to-tape interface which allows you to do just that. Not all of us can afford computers, or freestanding MIDI disk recorders; and not all of us want to use a sequencer live, even if we have one. So maybe it does make some sense to be able to store MIDI performance data on tape, and to be able to replay it from a straightforward cassette player.

MIDIMan is a box about 6x4". On the top it has MIDI IN and OUT, and 1/4"-jack tape in/out sockets. On the front are six DIP switches, Tape and MIDI activity indicator LEDs, and a Write button.

Operation is very straightforward. Say you have created a multi-channel epic on your computer, but you don't want to take it on stage. Plug the MIDI OUT of the sequencer into the MIDI IN of MIDIMan; connect the MIDIMan Tape Out to your cassette deck; hit Write, start the tape and run the sequencer. All the MIDI data will be stored on the cassette, and by reversing the link-ups you can replay the performance from tape into your synths. Because you're taping individual bits of MIDI data - not a 'song file' - you can fast forward and rewind to any point in the performance you like; but if at any stage the Tape light flickers during replay, you know you have

problems with the tape signal. Since MIDI data is digital and has a bandwidth much greater than a conventional audio signal, the MIDIMan has to perform two processes, D-to-A conversion and Frequency Shift Keying.

As you might expect, the process isn't perfect, especially since MIDIMan has a relatively small data buffer. On playback, although you won't actually lose any MIDI notes, the more MIDI data you try to transmit, the more chance there is of delays occurring. Specifically, big chords tend to 'arpeggiate' slightly as tiny delays creep in between notes. Slam a huge orchestral arrangement full of pitch bend, patch changes and aftertouch, on all 16 MIDI channels, through MIDIMan, and you'll get complete chaos on replay, but the MIDIMan's DIP switches allow you to select various options which can improve the accuracy of the process.

A clock switch filters MIDI Clock info which takes up a lot of the tape bandwidth.

If you need MIDIMan to drive a sequencer or drum machine on playback, it's quite capable of recording MIDI START, STOP, CONTINUE and timing information, though it won't support MIDI Song

Position Pointers. In this way MIDIMan can also act as a dumb sync box, synchronising tracks from a sequencer to multi-track tape, so long as you're prepared to start each 'take' from the beginning of the track.

The Aftertouch Filter removes all aftertouch information from the MIDI information. Since some synths produce huge amounts of aftertouch data, if you don't need it this can again reduce arpeggiation considerably.

As a final aid to accuracy, MIDIMan has two priority MIDI channels, 10, for drums, and 1, for whatever else you consider most important. Any data on these channels will be processed first; all the other channels receive equal priority, but if you are happy to transmit on only one channel, you can route all information through channel 1, 2, or 10. The manual's advice to avoid the arpeggiation of large chords by altering the timing of individual notes seems a little unrealistic; after all, you're not going to want to alter your music just to suit MIDIMan.

Better results can be achieved by selecting High Band Width.

This allows MIDI data to be encoded at a greater rate, with

reduced arpeggiation; you can only use this successfully with good quality cassette decks, ideally with metal tape. I tried MIDIMan with a variety of tape decks, and in Low Band Width you can even get away with using a decent Walkman, but data must be replayed at the band width at which it was recorded. You should never use noise reduction, which distorts the digital signal.

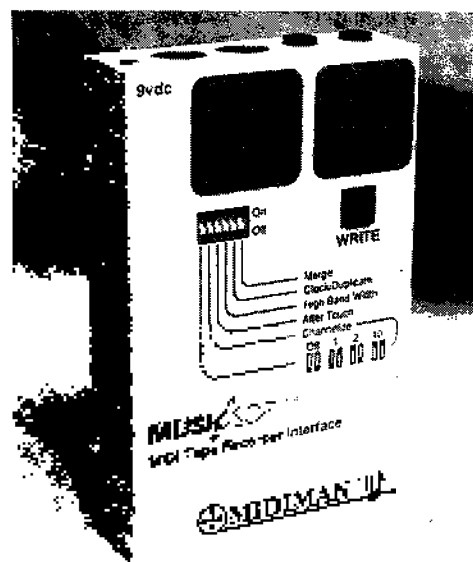
There are also a couple of options to consider while replaying data. If the Merge DIP switch is ON, you can play 'live' keyboard tracks at the same time as MIDIMan is transmitting performance data. This allows you to solo over a pre-recorded backing track, which seems an ideal arrangement. Alternatively, you could record acoustic music on three tracks of a portastudio, and have MIDI data on your fourth track to drive your synths live.

A backup function allows you to duplicate your MIDI data tapes digitally by running them through MIDIMan into another cassette deck. This is obviously more accurate than an audio copy.

MIDIMan will also record MIDI system exclusive information such as patch dumps, but since it can only cope with up to 2000 bytes (which is hardly enough to do anything useful), this facility is of limited use.

MIDIMan gives the impression of being a product which might have been a little more powerful but not without making it so expensive that it would be pointless. With the £299 Eika CR99 MIDI disk recorder being the only viable alternative, MIDIMan is worth checking out.

Chris Jenkins



MIDIMan: a little box with a big difference

Radius Marketing - (0256) 477222

the PRODUCERS

# SHEL TALMY



*Chas de Whalley*

*gets to grips with the man behind*

*the sound of the '60s*



## **IF YOU ASK ME, THE GUITAR TUNER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT**

development in recording technology over the last 20 years. Honestly, the hours I used to spend waiting for them to tune their bleeding guitars... I could have trekked to Bristol and back in the time!"

Welcome back Shel Talmy, almost 20 years in retirement but still a legend, and one of handful of record producers who can genuinely claim to have changed the shape of Rock'n'Roll.

Beatlemania was in full scream when 21-year-old Talmy arrived in the UK from Los Angeles in 1963. But the coining of the phrase 'Swinging London' had to wait until he and nobody else had finished working on a brace of singles by THE KINKS and THE WHO which not only defined an era but ripped the charts apart with a sound which was altogether something new and different to the sometimes self-conscious R'n'B pastiches hitherto served up by THE STONES and THE BEATLES. *You Really Got Me*, *Tired Of Waiting*, *Sunny Afternoon*, *Waterloo Sunset*, *I Can't Explain*, *Substitute* and the epochal *My Generation* were all Shel

Talmy productions. Any one of those classics would merit Talmy an entry in Pop music history. But taken all together, they have assured him his place in Rock mythology.

"Over the years, I've been told I invented Heavy Metal with The Kinks and that The Who and I were the fathers of Punk. I don't go with any of it. I think what we did was far more melodic. The funny thing is that both HM and Punk started as rebellions against the kind of Rock and Pop I helped evolve in the '60s. Punk's way of rebelling was to play badly, sing worse and perform by spitting on people. Whatever turns you on, I suppose. I can link that with Thrash Metal today, which I find equally appalling."

Shel Talmy's assessment of HM, Punk and the cultures which spawned them may be slightly adrift but when he talks about melody he's right on the button. The middle '60s represented a golden age in British songwriting and Talmy's proteges Pete Townshend and Ray Davies were among its new aristocracy, offering a combination of words and music which captured the lifestyle and the aspirations of the teenage sub-culture which The Beatles and The Stones had called into being. But the power behind the throne lay in Shel Talmy's pioneering production techniques.

## The Engine Room

"I'd trained in Los Angeles with an English engineer called Phil Yeend. He was very innovative and experimented with separation and microphone placement and so on. I came over to London ready to continue developing those ideas to find it was virgin territory over here.

"There were virtually no young engineers, only older guys who were very conservative. And techniques like double-tracking vocals were unheard of. That was something I'd been doing as a matter of course at home to fill out the sound and paper over the cracks. I had presented myself to the business over here as a producer but I frequently found I had to have 'discussions' with engineers and jump in and do the job myself!"

"All those recordings were made on three and four track machines. Which meant that our margin for error was virtually non-existent and our options were severely limited. We had to work very hard to get a rhythmic arrangement of the song which didn't just *feel* right but had the right kind of length with the beginning and the middle and the end in the right places. Then we'd have to work up a live balance and capture a performance of the rhythm section, that is the drums, bass, rhythm guitar and possibly piano, which would all have to go down on one track, remembering there would be no second





chances to change anything later on. The lead guitar and any backing vocals would go down on track two, the lead vocals on the third and anything else we might need on the fourth if we had it.

"Bouncing was very difficult. You couldn't guarantee it would work and when it did it couldn't be on adjacent tracks because you'd get high frequency leak-through. Sometimes we'd go to a second 4-track machine, recording a mix of the first four tracks while adding a new live track. Which would inevitably mean the loss of a sound generation. So we couldn't be half as complicated as we wanted to because the equipment simply wouldn't allow it.

"And don't forget we were working very quickly. In those days it was the thing to go into the studio for a three hour session and come out with three songs. If you couldn't do that you were lousy. So it became a point of pride with everybody to a great job in the shortest possible time. Nowadays it's the opposite.

Shel Talmy was particularly excited by the London sound of loud chunky guitars. Pete Townshend and The Kinks' Dave Davies were masters of the art, and under Talmy's direction they cut vinyl which shifted more air than was then thought possible.

"They played loudly in the studio which they were only able to do because I was able to get the separation, which in turn was of prime importance in order to preserve the integrity of the sound. Which was the reason for playing loud to begin with! Although we were recording on four track machines, the desk at IBC, where I did most of The Who's tracks, had 36 inputs so we were able to mike instruments and the room comprehensively. And creatively too. I remember miking the strings on Dave Davies' Telecaster for *You Really Got Me* so that I could get the click as he hit them.

"I always tried to pile as much level onto tape as possible, which didn't please the engineers too much. But the equation was obvious. More level, less hiss. I worked out a little trick. I would buss a sub-mix of the instruments I wanted onto one channel of the board and then push so much of it through the limiter you could hear the limiter pumping away.

"I'd run the same sub-mix up another channel bypassing the limiter and then combine the two so that the limited one was just underneath the unlimited one and was constantly pushing the apparent level up. As a result we were able to push +5 and +6 on tape quite regularly without distorting. The beauty of it was that there were no real peaks or valleys in the signal which meant I achieved a constant high level on my master mixes which made them not too tricky to cut. Therefore it's been pointed out to me since that the records I made were louder than most which were being made in those day."

### The Sound Of The '60s

AS THE SIXTIES EASED OFF SO DID SHEL TALMY. THE last half of the decade had seen him still astride the singles charts with MANFRED MANN, AMEN CORNER and THE EASYBEATS. He even made inroads into the newly-important album market, albeit with PENTANGLE, a Folk 'supergroup' which numbered stand-up bass supremo Danny Thompson as well as master guitarists Bert Jansch and John Renbourn among its members.

But the hunger was gone and Talmy, who was suffering from hereditary condition which led to a serious deterioration in his eyesight, moved into the world of book publishing, novel writing and computer technology. In the late Seventies he made a brief and wholly unsatisfactory foray back into the studio at the invitation of then-Stiff boss Jake Riviera to work with THE DAMNED. But otherwise there's been nothing but radio silence.

Until the release a couple of months ago of THE FUZZTONES In

Heat LP on Beggars'. Fans of West Coast American Garage bands will be well aware of the particularly psychedelic experience which is a Fuzztones record. Take THE YARDBIRDS' *Heartful Of Soul*, cut it with IRON BUTTERFLY's *Inna Gadda Da Vida* and sweeten it with some VANILLA FUDGE and you should get a taste of what Shel Talmy has distilled from lead Fuzztone Rudi Protrudi's weird 'n' warped imagination.

"Rudi is '60s oriented. But that wasn't why I got involved. I can't make '60s records any more. The equipment's not the same, the times aren't the same, I'm not the same. It was his songs which attracted me. They're very tongue-in-cheek and they make comments on life I think are very funny. So we made a record that may be '60s-influenced but with I hope a '90s sound because we used up-to-date technology. I've made a point of keeping up with all that. It's wonderful to be able to varispeed by turning a knob rather than sticking tape round the capstan. And all the reverbs and delays you can get at the flick of a switch. What you can do nowadays is quite fantastic.

"But I still work quickly. Beggar's Banquet only gave us a small budget to make The Fuzztones album so we worked hard and made the album in three weeks, including mixes. Under the circumstances I'm proud of it. Interestingly enough, BILLY IDOL was in the next door studio to us and we recorded his Harley Davidson revving up in the parking lot for *Cheyenne Rider*. He'd been there for 10 months and spent over a million dollars on 10 tracks he hadn't even mixed yet. I don't understand that. I'd get so bored!"

Chas de Whalley

## ● HITLIST

- 45s
- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| THE BATCHELORS | Charmaine<br>Diane  |
| THE KINKS      | <i>You Really Got Me</i><br><i>All Day and All Of The Night</i><br><i>Dedicated Follower of Fashion</i><br><i>Sunny Afternoon</i><br><i>Waterloo Sunset (Pye)</i> |
| THE WHO        | <i>I Can't Explain</i><br><i>My Generation</i><br><i>Anyhow, Anyway, Anywhere</i><br><i>Substitute</i><br><i>The Kids are Alright (Polygram)</i>                  |
| THE EASYBEATS  | <i>Friday on My Mind (United Artists)</i>   |
| MANFRED MANN   | <i>Semi-Detached Suburban Mr James</i><br><i>Mighty Quinn</i>   |
| AMEN CORNER    | <i>Paradise is Half as Nice</i><br><i>Hello Suzie</i>   |
- LPs
- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| PENTANGLE     | <i>Sweet Child</i><br><i>Basket of Light (Transatlantic)</i> |
| THE FUZZTONES | <i>In Heat (Beggars' Banquet)</i>                            |

## ART SGE MULTIPLE EFFECTS PROCESSOR ●

RRP: £629

**T**he explosion of multiple effects units continues; ART have added five extra analogue effects to their Multiverb II, and called it the SGE. This brings the number of simultaneous effects to a staggering nine, which is at least three more than any other available unit can offer. So does having the most make it the best? Or are there other subtler issues involved?

At the Frankfurt fair last February, the US company showed non-working examples of three new models based on their existing Multiverb; the Multiverb II, which is basically a Multiverb with improved frequency response (15kHz to 20kHz) and real-time MIDI control; the EXT - a Multiverb II, with two seconds more RAM for very long delays and simple sampling; and, finally, the SGE.

Now, as more multiple effects units flood onto the market, it becomes increasingly difficult to contextualise each one as it's reviewed. Each has its own complex pros and cons, and simplistic comparisons could mislead.

### But Is It Rock 'n' Roll

Having said that, there is one very simple line that can be drawn, dividing the dizzy swarm in two at a stroke; them with guitar - oriented overdrive/sustain effects and them's without.

The Alesis Quadraverb, for instance, is a truly wonderful sounding device with an unusually high level of programmability, but mean 'n' nasty raunch it wasn't built to provide, and that might be important if the guitar figures

amongst your instruments and you want a single effects unit to provide everything. So how does the SGE stand in this 'with raunch' class?

At £679 the SGE comes in under the Korg A3 (six effects at £899) and Yamaha's SPX-900 (five effects at £704) and SPX-1000 (also five effects at £1,199).

However, it's substantially more expensive than Yamaha's more recent addition, the FX500, which offers six simultaneous effects in a half-rack unit for an unbeatably modest £389. So the SGE could be seen as mid-priced, but then it does offer nine simultaneous effects, as follows:

**ANALOGUE EFFECTS** (all five available simultaneously): Compressor, Equaliser, Harmonic Exciter, Distortion, Expander-Gate/Envelope Filter.

**DIGITAL EFFECTS** (up to four available simultaneously): Low Pass Filter, Reverb, Gated Reverb, Pitch Shifting, Various Delays, Flanging, Chorusing, Panning.

The digital section really is virtually identical to the Multiverb II which, apart from the degree of MIDI control, is identical to the original Multiverb.

Hence, although I recap here, I would suggest that you read the Multiverb review in the April '89 edition of IM&RW, for a fuller account of its workings.

### The Five New Analogue Effects

**HARMONIC EXCITER:** Can be first in the chain, or come after the compressor and distortion. It just has a Range control which is basically threshold and

is adjustable from 0 to 100 through seven stages.

I'm not a great believer in such devices, but I did find this one unusually subtle and subjectively useful. Experienced users may bemoan the lack of a frequency control by which to adjust the band of excitation.

**EQUALISER:** This can be placed in the chain before or after the Compressor and Distortion effects.

There are three fixed centre frequencies, 100Hz, 1kHz and 10kHz, each offering three gain steps in either direction, +/- 3dB, 6dB and 12dB. The only eq included on the digital side of the SGE is a Low Pass filter, and so this is a valuable addition.

Personally, I find fixed band eq's very frustrating because it's simply impossible for the manufacturer to come up with

three centre frequencies to suit more than a couple of occasions, and so for the rest of the time you can't get what you want. The gain steps are also a bit coarse. For what it is, though, this has quite a nice musical feel to it.

**COMPRESSOR:** There are three compression Ratios to choose from, 2:1, 4:1 and Limit. The Release can be set to Quick or Slow but, although the manual suggests there's a big difference, it's hard to hear one, especially as some form of noise gate is constantly in line with the compressor and can't be switched out.

Though operationally a little strange, the 2:1 slope is gentle enough to be useful in a number of applications other than guitar, for which the sharper slopes are suitable. In this way it probably has the edge on the



Nine times better?

digital compressors found in other units. If you want transparent compression, however, you'll still need to buy a dedicated device.

**DISTORTION:** There are three types of milder distortion termed Overdrive 1, 2 and 3, plus three types of fuzzier distortion called Distortion 1, 2 and 3. To each of these six can be added a 'Turbo' component which boost the bottom end for a fatter sound.

You can also switch on the Bite which accentuates harmonics to give a brighter sound. So, you select one of the six Distortion types, with or without Turbo and/or Bite, adjust the Drive Level and finally the Output Level. To my ears, there are very few electronic devices that manage a really convincing overdriven valve sound, and the SGE is no more than average.

Happily, to prove that I'm not just blindly opposed to all electronic distortion, I can cite the Korg A3 as one unit that is capable of raunch and edge without the spurious fuzz, buzz and rattle that attends most other systems. As with other devices, the SGE has an expander always operative along with the Distortion in order to keep noise to a minimum - which it does quite effectively.

If you want heavy, very overloaded sounds mixed in with plenty of reverb, etc, the SGE will deliver. If you want to achieve some subtle crunch or brittle edge to your sound, it's a bit rubbery.

**EXPANDER-GATE / ENVELOPE FILTER:** There are two separate either/or options for this section. Let's take a look at the Expander-Gate function first: The input for this section can be

taken directly from the SGE's input, or after the Compressor or from the output (so that it's taking into account its own effect on the signal).

The Expander component has a relatively gentle 1:1.5 slope (1:2 is more common), whilst what the manual calls the Gate isn't actually a gate at all, but an expander with a 1:3 slope. This means that, once the signal has dropped below a given threshold, for every 1dB further it drops the output 3dB. A gate, on the other hand, is much more vicious and will turn the output off or drop it by a given fixed amount, when it drops below the threshold.

Nevertheless, it is effective as a two-stage expander in reducing unwanted noise, the 1:3 stage coming in 12dB below the 1:1.5 stage. You can choose whether you want just the first

stage, just the second, or both stages, and then you can adjust the threshold and the output level. A generally useful tool.

If you don't need the Expander-Gate you can use the section in its Envelope Filter mode. It has its own high Q (effecting only a tight band of frequencies) low pass filter which is swept by the dynamic envelope of the signal straight from the input or after the Compressor. Using the Range (threshold) and Tuning (frequency band swept by filter) controls, a fairly subtle automatic 'wow' effect can be created.

Those, then, are the analogue effects which can all be used simultaneously and to which you can add up to four of the digital effects...

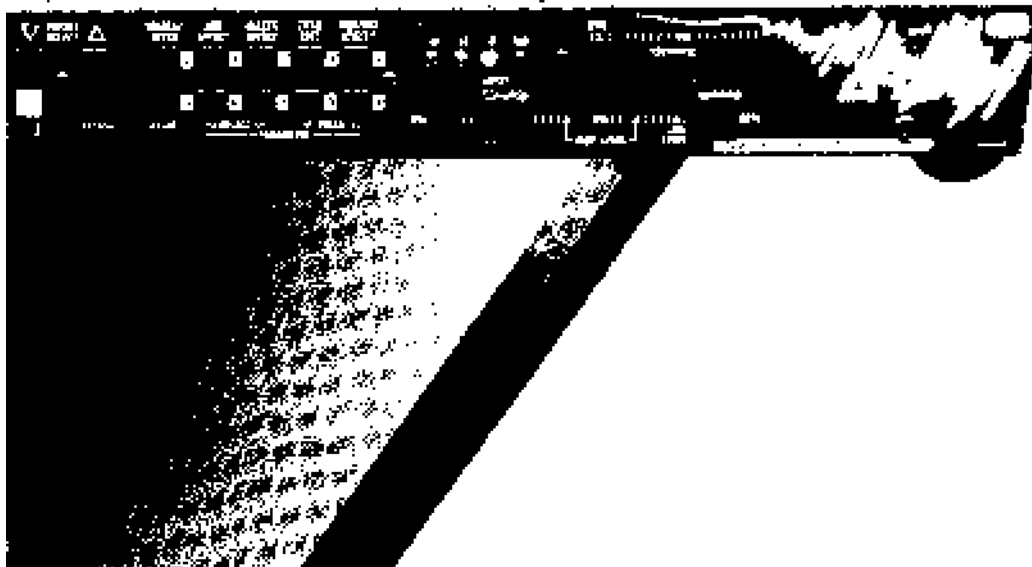
## The Digital Effects

First in line is the LOW PASS FILTER with a fixed slope and coarsely adjustable cut-off frequency.

The REVERB comes in four basic types - Hall, Room, Plate and Vocal. In each case you can choose from one of three 'qualities': One, Two and Three. One is the simplest and Three is the most complex, offering the highest fidelity and degree of programmability and using the most processing power.

Hence, Type One is used with the more demanding multiple effects patches, whilst Three is used for Reverb Only effects. Type One, it has to be said, is pretty rough, Two is very useable and Three is excellent. There's also Reverse reverb and three types of Gated reverb with different slopes and adjustable decay times up to 400ms.

The DELAY section provides a wide variety of possibilities including long and short multi-tap delay with up to seven evenly and unevenly spaced



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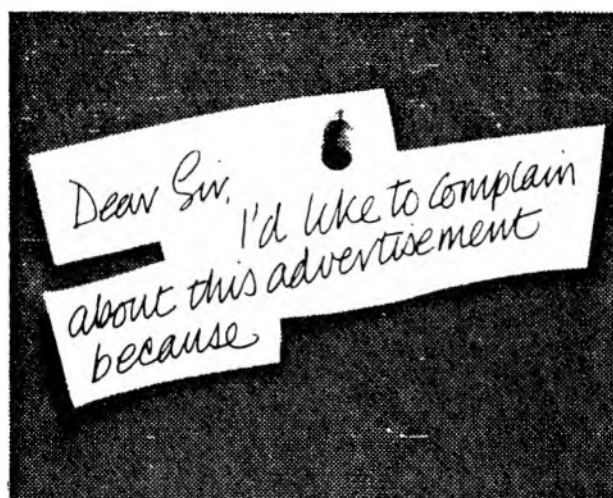
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repeats of decreasing or increasing levels; and short and long mono and stereo delays from 100ms up to 500ms per side, depending on what combination you're using.

The FLANGER AND CHORUS, though not true stereo, are subjectively very good, offering a reasonable level of programmability: speed, width and regeneration for the flanger and speed, width and delay for the Chorus. Cleverly, these can be placed in-line after the eq, Reverb and Delay or can be fed separately straight from the input with its output mixed in with the output of the rest of the chain. In this way the Delay and Reverb can remain clear and unflanged, or you can have them churning on to accentuate the effect.

Less common effects to be found here are PITCH SHIFTING and AUTO-PAN. The Auto-Pan can be used with Delay, Reverb and Eq, but not with Chorus or Flange. It has adjustable depth and speed and is actually a more useful and musical tool than the uninitiated might at first think.

The Pitch Shifting has three modes: Smooth - which causes a very noticeable delay but does a very smooth job; Normal - slightly quicker and commensurately rougher, and Quick - very short delay and a very glitchy result.

## Using It

As with the the Multiverb, the SGE is unusual in that it lets you add and delete individual effects from a chain more or less as you please, as opposed to having a number of fixed chains as all other makes do. The extra flexibility does result in it being operationally a little more fiddly in a number of small ways: editing generally tends to involve lots of nudging, and you can't quickly switch an effect in and out to see how it's

effecting the sound and whether or not you like it.

Though you can theoretically chain nine effects together, there is naturally a limit to the SGE's processing power and so as you pile on more effects, the options for what else you can add diminish. For instance say you've got a big, bright, sparkling clean guitar sound using six effects - Compression, Eq, Harmonic Excitation, Chorusing and Delay.

It sounds very good, but you are forced to use Type One Reverb and a simple Mono Delay up to a max of 240ms and no control over the volume of the repeat. Similarly, if you set up a chain with just Reverb (even Type One) and Repeat Echo you can't have Chorus or Flanging. Having chained the six effect mentioned above, the options left for additional effects are Distortion, LPF and the Expander /Filter Envelope; no Panning or Pitch Changing.

So the idea of being able to have nine effects at once is probably greater than the reality, and indeed the vast majority of the factory presets on the SGE use six effects or less. There is also among them a weighty preponderance of nasty distorted sounds with only a very limited number of the many subtler effects possible with the SGE.

If you're prepared to spend



A view of the back panel

some time with it, it's undoubtedly capable of a lot, and having such things as Auto-Wow, Panning and Pitch Shifting is a significant bonus for the occasions where they're wanted.

There's also the real-time MIDI control, which the alternatives mentioned have only in a relatively limited way. Though it should also be realised that when changing continuous digital controllers, via MIDI or not, there's generally an audible stream of clicks as the controller is moved. Thus, there is a limitation to their uses during a performance.

## Conclusion

The SGE is basically a good unit and, as compared to other 19" rackmounts, offers a lot for the money. The initially exciting claim of nine effects at once, however, shouldn't be lent too much weight.

In practice the nature of the effects and the limitations on available combinations means that it doesn't offer much more than other devices offer-

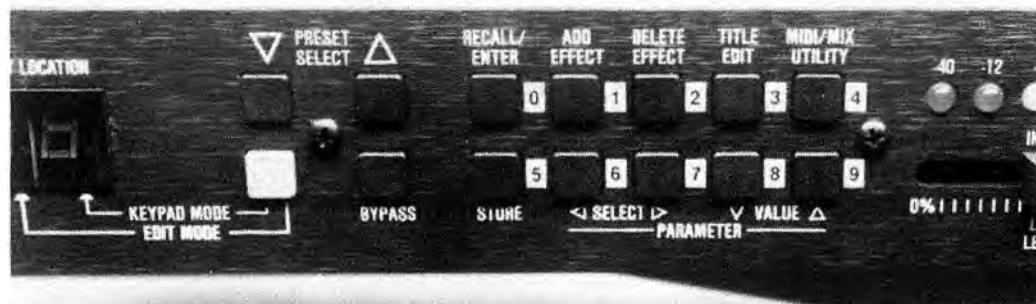
ing only six effects simultaneously. These same limitations also lessen the apparent flexibility offered by the Add Effect/Delete Filter facility - in reality there are only a limited number of possible/useful combinations.

For the home recordist not concerned with a 15kHz bandwidth, I think the Yamaha FX500 stands as the obvious, low budget option, nudging the SPX-900/1000 aside. As compared to the FX500 the SGE has more effects, more control, wider bandwidth, pro 19" rackmounting and stereo in and out.

The Korg A3 is still the all round winner as far as facilities go, but then it does cost nearly £900. Carrying a midway price tag, it certainly offers a viable compromise option between the two extremes.

Jim Betteridge

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Individual effects can be added or deleted

## ● TRACK LIST

- 1 Bass
- 2 Bass Drum
- 3 Snare
- 4 Hi Hats
- 5 Toms (left)
- 6 Toms (right)
- 7 O/H (left)
- 8 O/H (right)
- 9 Acoustic gtr. (left)
- 10 Acoustic gtr. (right)
- 11 Keyboards
- 12 Bjork (English)
- 13 Country & Western gtr.
- 14 Big Bon Jovi gtr. (left)
- 15 Big Bon Jovi gtr. (right)
- 16 Einar (Icelandic)
- 17 Bjork (Old English)
- 18 Bjork (Icelandic)
- 19 Bongos
- 20 Einar (English)
- 21 Einar (Old Icelandic)
- 22 Tambourine
- 23 Shaker
- 24 Keyboards (left)
- 25 Keyboards (right)
- 26 Snares
- 27 Bass Drum
- 28 Backing tracks (misc)
- 29 Backing tracks (misc)
- 30 -
- 31 -
- 32-SMPTE

## TRACK RECORD

# THE SUGARCUBES

## Regina

### ● Producer: Derek Birkett

If like most you believe in America, the land of stadium super groups, where the axe-wielding 'rawk star' is king, then it comes as something of a culture shock to learn that THE CURE sell out such venues several times over, when the likes of BON JOVI struggle to fill them once.

You will no doubt receive with even greater disbelief the news that THE SUGARCUBES are 'Big In America'. Of one million copies sold to date of *Life's Too Good*, at least half are accounted for Stateside. And now *Regina*, the first single from the forthcoming follow-up album *Here Today, Tomorrow Next Week!* is already making its way towards the Billboard Top 40.

Already playlisted on radio stations across the continent, it's not the first indication that they were going to break out of the college radio network and into the mainstream musical arena. A radical dance remix of *Cold Sweat* had to be deleted when it looked like it was going to be their first US hit, instead of an off-the-wall limited edition.

Six months of touring the US with the likes of NEW ORDER and PIL have clearly paid dividends and, according to their record company press officer, it's just as well, 'If it wasn't for America, they couldn't afford to be a band, they're very expensive to keep.'

One Little Indian, the label in question, is a record company where the accountant's recommendations take a definite second place to the

wishes and demands of the artists, as the man in charge, Derek Birkett, explains:

"Basically, the bands get what they want. Even if we disagree in the end, it's their choice and our part of the bargain often means clearing up the mess after them and paying for it."

If that sounds like a somewhat unconventional approach then consider that Derek engineered in the studio for CRASS who, in turn, produced early recordings for his own band, FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, who shared Crass' anarchistic ideals. Derek's aim in forming the label was simply to allow him to work with the artists he personally admired. He produced the first Sugarcubes album with Ray Schulman (*who most recently produced Ian McCulloch's solo LP*) and this one he produced with the band themselves. The latest LP had to go through three complete remixes and ran up a price tag of £148,000 before the band were fully satisfied with the results.

### No-Tech

"The Sugar Cubes as a band refuse to have anything to do with technology and they wanted the album to be a reflection of their playing live."

For Derek this meant striking a balance between the band's aims and the techniques which allowed him sufficient control as a producer.

"The backing tracks were recorded in Studio Syrland in

Reykjavik. It's a new studio, 24-track with a DDA desk and little else as yet. But it's got a brilliant live room, which is huge, which is why we used it. We spent three months recording reels and reels of live material. But I also used triggers from Siggis drums into the C-Lab Notator. He's a brilliant drummer, I've never seen anyone like him. He uses all the different parts of the snare. We did all the backing tracks that way, with drums, bass, guitar and the two vocals live but the drums and the keyboards also playing into the C-Lab. The compromise was that we could do it live and then go back and re-do whatever was deemed necessary on the computer

"So, after Reykjavik, we came back to London and went through and error-corrected the drums on the C-Lab, just enough to be rock solid but keeping the feel, mainly the bass drum and occasionally the snare. We had spent four days actually setting up the drum miking and working up the sounds and we sampled these sounds for use with the C-Lab. Where the C-Lab hadn't triggered properly, I went back and used the Akai ME-35P to pick it up.

"Where necessary, where the drums had been corrected, we went on and corrected the bass and guitar, using the S1000 and ended up with a solid backing track with guide vocals and a live guitar line.

"With the keyboards, things were easier because Magga



again

◀ would just play a single part using a screwed-up organ sound and I could break it down into constituent parts with different string, brass and organ sounds. Bjork and Magga came over and we went into Liquidator Studios (one week) and Berry Street (two and a half weeks) with programmer, Paul Ellis, who we chose for his work with HOT CHOCOLATE. We decided that we wanted to programme original sounds throughout, so Paul programmed up their own brass, string sounds, whatever, using Oberheim Matrix, Jupiter, D50 and S1000. These parts were all recorded onto a 24 track slave reel at Berry Street.

## On Ice

"I went back over to Iceland, to Syrland, to do the guitar parts as Thor didn't want to leave Iceland. The slave reel stayed here and I bounced the string parts back down onto the master in a stereo pair as a guide. We kept the original guitar and Thor built against it, creating all sorts of radical sounds, often just tracking up the original. He created the sounds with a variety of different amps, Peaveys, Marshall combos, Mesa Boogies and the Roland GP8 processor, which has got some really cheesy sounding effects. He used a Blade and a Telecaster for most of it, but also used a Strat, a Burns and a Gibson semi as well as six and 12 string acoustics. The guitar was miked using a stereo pair of 414s and a U-87 for the ambient sound. There was also a bass part that had to be repaired which just couldn't be done on the computer. The bass was a Washburn into a Trace Elliot Stack DI'd and miked using an RE-20 (I can't remember who makes it but it's the bulbous one that looks like it came off the top of a Dalek).

"We also did the vocals in Iceland. There's a great deal of interaction much of which is, to say the least, spontaneous, so they record it together and then go back and replace all the parts again on their own, because there are unbelievable amounts of distortion and spillage. Bjork used an AKG Tube and Einar an AKG414 and for Bjork's backing vocals, we used the U-87. I

compressed the vocals with a Urei LA-3 when the dynamics were fairly normal otherwise I had to use a 1136 (Urei) which is the only compressor that can handle Bjork's voice when she screams and then drops almost to a whisper - I've tried them all but it's the only one that works. She did two backing vocal parts on Regina.

"With The Sugarcubes, there's always the problem that you have to record the vocals twice over, once in English and once in Icelandic. There will be an Icelandic version available. Magga also played accordion on Regina which I recorded with a pair of 451s.

"I came back to London with Siggí and we went into Orinoco where he added some extra touches. On Regina, claps from an Octopad, lifted from Janet Jackson. They were already compressed and we compressed them even more so that they almost disappear into themselves in the middle. There's also the first explosion at the beginning which is actually a Vincent Price laugh, and the first and last claps had a lion's roars mixed in with them. He also played some live percussion, Bongos, Cabasa and Tambourine and some sampled percussion from a Hare Krishna record."

## All Mixed Up

"We mixed down at Orinoco, again on a DDA but the band hated it. They thought it was 'too considered' and they gave me copious notes as a guide to mix it again. Things like - 'Verse one, you should hear the guitar and the keyboard at the same time and at the same level'. But that didn't work either.

So then we went into CBS Studios (SSL Series G and two old MCI 24-tracks which sounded great) and we got Gordon Milne in to engineer (he'd done the

Beach Boys which we thought was a good reason for having him). I set all the mixes again as I saw them and we deliberated. The problems were the balance between the guitars and the keyboards and the balance between Einar and Bjork, who at times are singing different things but at the same time and at the same level. So we got their live soundman, Petur Gislason, to come in and balance it out. I couldn't get my head round it, it just seemed so wrong, the sort of thing that might be okay live but you would never do in a control room - it just went against all I've ever learned - but it sounds right now. All the songs except three were remixed, including Regina.

"The stuff on C-Lab, the bass

drum and bass guitar - that's sort of a bass equivalent to an Aphex that creates lower bass harmonics. On Bjork's voice, there was Lexicon 480L reverb and 224 on Einar's.

"Mix down was onto DAT and we mastered on Audiofile."

The sound on *Here Today, Tomorrow Next Week!* is far more developed than on the first album, utilising live horn and string sections as well as an obviously more sophisticated production, while at the same time capturing far more of The Sugarcubes natural edge.

"It's a much more accurate and honest reflection of what they are like and it's much more interesting even after working on it for six months. It has an openness to it but it's unreal



"An album as commercial and accessible as Abba." (it says here!)

correction and guitar correction and the various percussion samples and noises were all driven live in the mix - the keyboards and drum correction had gone down onto tape. I used Lexicon PCM 70s on drums and percussion, SPX90s on the guitars - electric and acoustic and on some of the keyboard sounds - for reverbs and delays. There were Dimension D on the bass guitar and some keyboards and a DBX Boombox on the bass

what's actually going on in there - on Regina there are 54 tracks."

The band are apparently under the impression that they have created an album as commercial and accessible as Abba or Boney-M. But I must say that I have obviously never heard the particular Abba or Boney-M songs they're apparently alluding to!

Keith Grant





# STUDIOMASTER IDP1 INTELLIGENT DYNAMICS PROCESSOR ●

RRP: £470

**S**tudiomaster, best known for their budget mixing desks are, with their Intelligent Dynamics Processor, joining the myriad of companies currently jostling for a position in the Digital Signal Processing market. The IDP1 is a third cheaper than Drawmer's M500 (RRP £695). The Drawmer M500 has seven basic processes comprising; De-essing, Gating Expansion, Compression Limiting Panning and Fading, as well as quite a few novel features like an adjustable 20 second pre delay on its gate. So is the cheaper IDP1 a worthy contender for the top?

The five basic processes of the Studiomaster IDP1 are Gating, Expansion, Compression, Limiting, and Fading in/out all in a 1U 19" rack mount unit. The front panel has seven operational features: Select, Mode, Link, Store, Recall, Increment/Accept and Decrement/Cancel. There is logic to the push button controls once you're accustomed to it, but if you are used to the Drawmer 201, it does take a little of brain re-adjusting. I soon became used to the layout and access to parameters. But being an old stick in the mud, I found some of the nudging a little tedious.

Intelligent Dynamic Processors are the successors to the old

Keypex and 201 type gates/compressor/limiters. The only real difference being that the intelligence allows the unit to be programmed. Studiomaster wanted to design "a versatile dynamic processor which allows comprehensive MIDI control, without losing the ease of the way it may be set up".

The overall operation is indeed faster, more logical and easier to learn than on other IDPs: it has two identical channels, 1 and 2, both of which share the same set of front panel buttons and display. The required channel has to be selected, before adjustments can be made, by pressing the Select button. This will switch from channel 1, indicated by a green LED on the display, to channel 2, amber LED. But it does have its drawbacks; with the two channels sharing the same buttons you have to be very careful that you select the correct channel - you could easily adjust the wrong one (*all you have to indicate is that microscopic LED*).

Selecting the Parameters is easy: every adjustable parameter has its own dedicated button. Pressing the button causes a red confirmation LED to illuminate the parameter value - its unit of measure is displayed on a four digit readout. Once the parameter has been selected, it may be altered by the increment or decrement keys.

The compressor is very clean

and punchy, particularly on transient sounds - my little old 505 suddenly found a new lease of life and crispness. Audio performance is exemplary; however hard I drove the unit, in whatever mode, it was very hard to make the IDP1 complain about what it was being asked to do, whether in terms of noise, distortion, pumping, or breathing.

## Memory/ Presets

There are 127 programmes, split into 27 factory preset patches (100 to 127), stored on 8kBytes ROM. These are unalterable, but can be used as a basis for editing and creating your own patches which you can then store in memories 0 to 99 (RAM). The 27 factory presets are very useful as a starting point for general compression, gating and expanding. For example, if I wanted a general Guitar compression, I would use one of the presets and then make small adjustments of my own. To store a program, press the Program button using the increment or decrement keys, select the program number you wish the current setup to be stored to, then press the store button. A message PLEASE ACCEPT OR CANCEL scrolls across the display and you have 60 sec to accept or cancel.

## MIDI Triggering

The IDP accepts MIDI in the OMNI OFF mode i.e. it only receives on one MIDI channel at any one time. The IDP responds to note on/note off/key pressure. In gate mode, note on/note off information is used as the triggering source: note on initialising the attack phase, note off initialising the hold/release phase. In Compressor mode, note on velocity is

used as the program level. After-touch is accepted, and is treated in exactly the same way as the note on information. I've been racking my brain as to what use this could be; the only one that springs to mind is that if you don't want to lose any attack from the front of the signal you can get the gate or compressor to open before the audio signal via a pre-selected MIDI time point.

The only other process offered by the IDP1 is an auto fade in/out. This is triggered by MIDI start stop commands.

## Conclusion

You may think that comparing the IDP1 to the Drawmer M500 is rather unfair, since the Studiomaster is £225 cheaper. But even when you take that into consideration, you may find it's worth spending that extra bit of cash, and investing in a far superior unit. The Studiomaster IDP1 performs very well and I have no gripes about the quality of the processes. But with that said why doesn't Studiomaster's IDP1 have a de-esser? For the price I feel that the IDP1 offers no more than a collection of simplified processes full of compromises. That one extra process would have made the unit more attractive to the home studio. Sadly, I don't see many home recordists spending large amounts of moolah on this type of subtle unit, as it's not as instantly gratifying as say a multi effect. And professionals, who put quality over price, would obviously opt for the Drawmer M500. Studiomaster seems to have missed the boat, all for the sake of a cheaper price.

Matt Wallis

RSD: (0582) 504931



The IDP1: it's good, but not that good

## DRUG FREE AMERICA



*Steve Cogan meets a band whose home demoing has landed them a place in the Indie charts*

Pix: Glenn Smith

**T**heir style of music is hard to pigeonhole; Drug Free America, naturally, claim it doesn't fit into any style, and reviewers have so far only been able to label their prominent synth lines, fashionably and inevitably, as 'Eurobeat'. These days, the proud possessors of a small but perfectly formed recording contract, DFA's first seven inch single *Throw A Crazy Shape* was well received; their first 12", *Dzlo Pussycat*, showed well in the Indie charts; and their third release, *Heaven Isn't High Enough* made the top 10 in all the Indie charts. Not that the road to their present level of modest Indie success been all plain sailing...

DFA, a four piece (Wolfe, vocalist; Blade, keyboard and drum programmer; Iguana Joe, guitarist; and Mutant, second guitarist) spent a long time building up a local following in their native Leeds the traditional way: lots of support gigs! Since securing the recording contract though, the band have played further away from their roots, and will shortly be appearing at an Indie Music Festival in West Berlin - like a number of UK acts under the dubiously-defined Indie banner, DFA seem to have a European appeal, and are beginning to sell well on the Continent.

This steady development was the result, in part, of meticulous planning from the time the band was formed. Wolfe (a.k.a Steven Ferris), explains how the DFA master plan came together:

"I write lyrics and I met Blade who made backing tapes. I'd never sung before but we decided that we'd do some live performances, and so it was down to me to start singing.

I think it's fair to say that originally we were influenced by groups like SUICIDE, but instead of it being a stripped-down version, we wanted to put things on top. Blade led it with samples, and we brought in Iguana Joe and Mutant to give it more of a Hendrix sound, a harder guitar edge on top of it."

The formula seems to have worked - so much so that their subsequent swift rise to local fame, including an appearance at the next Futurama festival seems to have left Iguana Joe (Andy to his mum) "...a little shell-shocked.":

"It's a big accolade for us being local lads and Futurama being the big musical event throughout my youth."

### Addicted To Cash

The band have a "sensible" attitude towards money, which translates into rehearsing and demoing new material extensively at home before setting foot in a studio, "...and paying £20 an hour, and ending up with really crap songs because the money ran out."

Blade: "We save a lot of money that way. We can do a single for £300 recording costs."

Iguana Joe: "What often happens is that Brian will get a rhythm or a bass line and then bring it over to my place and just jam around with it. Once we get it onto tape we just pass it around between us. We all work on it independently, and then come back together and swap ideas."

Blade: "I don't do any bounce downs. I put a MIDI code onto tape - hopefully later we will be using SMPTE. Then we take it to a 24-track which we use, Academy Studio in Dewsbury. We transfer our 8-track to 24-track including the MIDI code, and then do any more overdubs and make a backing track for it to be played live."

Their philosophy towards effects is that there's no point in a small band trying to compete with a professional studio in terms of equipment. So any effects used are added at 24-track.

Blade again: "We only need minimal effects because there is an AMS in the studio and a Rockman for the guitar. I try to keep things as simple as possible, no bouncing down figures and generations. Once the 8-track is used up that's it. Blat!"

The 8-track in question is a Fostex A8 which in conjunction with a Fostex 3060 mixing desk forms the hub of a set up which also includes an Atari ST, a Yamaha YMC10 MIDI converter, and a Yamaha QX7 sequencer.

"Owning an ST is a good thing in that you can write songs on it," says Blade, "...but you're not competing with a studio - just saving time and money and doing it at your own convenience."

DFA are not snobbish about their recording gear. Blade again:

"We use a Music Centre as the amp, a Winthrop Symphony," (cue laughter from the band) "On stage I use an old Juno 60 synth just because I've had it since it came out. It

The machine that handles the show, and much else besides in Blade's Prophet 2000 keyboard.

"The problem with it is when you sample something, you don't get the full range, you have to do various samples if you build a full keyboard. But whatever note is sampled defaults to C, so you have to transpose, unlike the Prophet 3000 rackmount keyboard. Sometimes it's an advantage in that you play things you wouldn't normally, because the notes have moved around on the keyboard. Sometimes it's an advantage in that you play things which automatically put it to the nearest note on the keyboard. Sometimes it's an advantage in that you play things you wouldn't normally, because the notes have moved around on the keyboard..."

Another problem is the single-sided one octave. "Since we've had the Prophet broken down twice - the disc drive both times... The Prophet only gives me 16 seconds of sampling time at its lowest bandwidth. Looping is bad on it too there's no autoloop, and it's very hard to avoid getting a click in the sample. I think the manual was written by a Japanese American. Most of it's alright, but there are just certain things, for instance, abbreviations that come up in a display on the Prophet that aren't even in the manual!"

### Sampling The Merchandise

Blade also has a growth against their Yamaha sequencer, indicating things are drawn out. Also there's no BPM readout. It causes problems if we want a SMPTE code onto tape (E-track), there's no way that it's going to be BPM exact. Also the metronome is too quiet, it's like playing to a canary!"

Steve Coyan

**HOMETAPING WANTS YOU**

YES, IF YOUR EARL IS GOING AT HOME, IT YOURS, WE SOKKLEHNG INTERESTING TO EAT, AND IF YOU P, LIKE HOKKAPARK, M&RW, THE NIGHTMARE & SHELL BUILDING, WILL HARBOUR, LONDON E14 9TW

Our humble aside: it's a mark of the band's forward thinking that once they finished their album, they bought the studio track, which would others have shared with the studio. Blade: "This is so we can always do remixes at our convenience. We've used 1/4" tape, E1 and DAT for mixers but the clarity of their approach to the business of making music suggests that Drug Free America will be around after less than a decade. Indie bands have gone to the wall."

### Drug Free Future

"It's not user friendly. You can do simple things quickly, but Blade also has a growth against their Yamaha sequencer, indicating things are drawn out. Also there's no BPM readout. It causes problems if we want a SMPTE code onto tape (E-track), there's no way that it's going to be BPM exact. Also the metronome is too quiet, it's like playing to a canary!"

**"We make our own clichés"**





*t a l k b a c k*

*Welcome to the new-look International Musician and Recording World letters page, Talkback. Each month we will be dealing, as best we can, with the problems (strictly musical, please!) of you, the reader. And, each month, the best letter or patch in our humble opinion - will win a year's subscription to this wonderfully fabulous tome. Remember, these are your pages and your views: let's not waste 'em, eh?*

*Please send your letters to:  
Talkback, International Musician and Recording World, P.O. Box 381,  
Mill Harbour, London E14 9TW. Thanks.*

#### **DEAR IM&RW,**

Having made the decision to print up a 1,000 copies of my own single, I happily set about recording. Everything was going smoothly until it came to sleeve design. Here I was greeted with a wall of silence. No one round here seems to have a clue. The truth is, I just don't know where to begin. What makes a good sleeve and what steps need to be taken to design one? I only have a limited budget.

Yours hopefully,  
Steve Rumney

*International Musician & Vaughn Oliver (sleeve designer for critically acclaimed 4AD Records and artists such as COCTEAU TWINS, WOLFGANG PRESS and COLOURBOX) reply:*

*VO: "Best thing is to look up sleeve designs you like and try to trace it back to the original designers. I think you should try to get someone professional to do the design because it's important to make it look good. Once you have the idea, there is one really good printer that I would recommend called Gothic Print, tel (0959) 71316. I've been using them for seven years because they are very good at dealing with people who explain things in layman's terms, like myself. They are prepared to spend time with you and see your ideas through."*

*IM: "Spend time looking at the different types of card and the different finishes you can get (eg glossy, matt, grain). Remember, black and white sleeves are a lot cheaper -between £40 and £75 for film and plates- and can look just as effective. If you choose colour, you could be looking at spending between £300 and £400 pounds.*

*If you provide the ideas and information you need typesetting, a graphic designer will set you*

*back a further £30-£60. Good Luck!*

#### **LETTER OF THE MONTH**

**DEAR IM&RW,**

I find your articles on individual keyboards very informative, but I still feel at a bit of a loose end when setting up a new rig. Please don't print this if some of the thoughts are rather asinine!!

Scenario:

- 1) Cash Available: Not a bottomless pit, but £3,000-£3,500.
- 2) Problem: What combination of physical keyboards and rack modules to buy. Whether to buy a mother keyboard and plug modules in.
- 3) Requirement: a) purely stage work, so no real need for sequencers, drum machines or 16 tracks. b) quality voices, Piano, Organ (various), Strings, Brass, Choir, Woodwinds & a few effects. c) would like to combine the best sounds of Ensoniq, Roland and Korg.
- 4) Sounds: To have the widest variety of different types of synthesis - analogue, digital, sampled.
- 5) Question: Because of the very nature of sampled sounds, is it worth getting sampled sounds for acoustic piano from two different manufacturers? So I thought: Korg AI Synthesis, Roland LA Synthesis, Ensoniq (VFX seems to have all three - Analogue, Digital & Sampled)
- 6) Proposals: Ensoniq VFX, Korg M3R, Roland's S330 & CM-32L. Feasible?
- 7) Venues: With smaller venues the least number of physical objects, the better.

Yours sincerely,  
Martin Plumb

P.S. I forgot to mention I would require multi-timbral effects, possibly up to four different sounds for a particular number.

*Jim Betteridge replies:*

*Dear Martin,  
Thanks for your letter. The questions you raise are common to many keyboard players, and clearly there's no one simple answer. My experience of the pub/club circuit is that space on stage is limited, as is set-up time. My feeling, then, is that one central keyboard plus modules is certainly the way to go. I would be inclined toward a mother keyboard because it allows for future expansion where more sophisticated levels of control may be necessary.*

*The Cheetah Master Series of mother*

keyboards undoubtedly seems to offer the most facilities for the money at the moment. See the review in the November issue of IM&RW for details of the 7P - an 88-note piano-style mother keyboard for under £700.

I still feel that, as an all round source of sounds and effects the Korg M1 is unbeatable, and in your case the M1R rackmount, currently costing £1,575, would be the likely choice.

For a wide variety of analogue sounds the Cheetah MS-6 multitimbral rackmount expander is an amazing buy at under £300, or the Matrix 1000 at £450 is also great value. Neither of these modules has onboard effects and so you may do well to invest in a multi-effect device. If you're a regular reader of IM&RW you'll know that there are currently many to choose from. In your position the Alesis Quadraverb is probably a good bet at £449, or the ART Multiverb II at £499 if you need more extreme pitch change facilities. Or, with expansion in mind, you might want the new Peavey Multiflex at £899. Another lower cost option is to wait for the imminent arrival of the new Alesis Midiverb III - more or less a simplified Quadraverb for £399. So that brings the running total to somewhere between about £3,000 and £3,500, although with the usual shop discounts you should come in well under that figure.

This is just one of many, many possible arrangements. If you don't think you need the full facilities of a mother keyboard or a piano-style keyboard, and you're not big on programming, you could buy the new Roland U20 synth (£999) which offers a huge wealth of strong sounds, and add the M1R and MS6/Matrix 1000 to that. Both the U20 and the M1R offer strong acoustic piano sounds plus convincing versions of all the other voices you mentioned, including some of the D50 favourites.

You might also consider a low cost, portable rack system for your modules: MTR do a 4U lightweight padded rack bag, called Soft Rak, for a modest £71.

As I said, there are no absolute answers to your questions, but I hope I've given you some food for thought.

#### DEAR IM&RW,

I am thinking of buying a portastudio in the near future. I am interested in the Tascam 246, but I was told that the 244 overloads very easily, therefore the levels have to be kept right down. If this is true, do you know if it's the same for the Tascam 246 six track, or perhaps it is true

for all the portastudios?

I am also interested in the new Akai MG 614 portastudio. I have been saving for some time and I have to get this right first time.

Yours faithfully,  
S Divers

Jim Betteridge replies:

Dear S Divers,

Thanks for the letter. First let me say that the Tascam 244 and 246 aren't unduly prone to overload distortion but the characteristics of their metering does require a degree of compensation when recording spikey material.

And so on to more exciting things:

It seems of your selection of possible models that your sights are fixed firmly on the upper end of the market, and in fact there have been some important developments in this area of late. Tascam have recently launched a new model called the 644 which, at £999 goes beyond any four track preceding it, inc Akai MG614 I reviewed in the November issue of IM&RW - a copy of which is in the post.

You referred to the 246 as a six track. It is important to realise that although it has six mixer inputs, the 246 has just four tape tracks. Until recently the only choice in cassette based portastudios have been either the standard four tracks or a rather impracticable eight track format. Earlier this year, however, Sansui launched the world's first six track system (reviewed in Oct ish) which seems to work very well and offers the considerable advantage of two extra tracks. I don't know your precise circumstances but if you also need a stereo mixdown machine and a digital reverb, the Sansui WF-X1 combines all three in a single unit for £1250. It does have some limitations as the review will show, but generally it works very well. I hope this will help you with your choice. Good luck. All the best.

This Month's patch comes from Ceri Payne of London. It's called MANDOLIN, it works for either the Yamaha DX27 or DX100 and it sounds like this...

VOICE NO./NAME	
<b>MANDOLIN</b>	
ALGORITHM (1 to 6)	3
FEEDBACK (0 to 7)	
LFO	
WAVE	SQUARE
SPEED (0 to 99)	44
DELAY (0 to 99)	
P MOD DEPTH (0 to 99)	
A MOD DEPTH (0 to 99)	24
SYNC (ON or OFF)	
SENSITIVITY	
PITCH (0 to 7)	6
AMPLITUDE (0 to 3)	3
	1 2 3 4
AMPLITUDE ON/OFF	ON ON ON OF
EG BIAS (0 to 7)	
KEY VELOCITY (0 to 7)	4 0 0 0
	1 2 3 4
FREQUENCY	1.50 0.50 1.00 1.49
	1 2 3 4
OSC. WAVE (W1 to W8)	W5 W2 W5 W2
	1 2 3 4
DETUNE (-3 to +3)	

EG				
AR (0 to 31)	1	2	3	4
	31	34	34	31
D1R (0 to 31)	15	3	5	8
D1L (0 to 15)	15	15	15	15
D2R (0 to 31)	0	0	0	0
RR (1 to 15)	7	3	3	3
EG SHIFT (OF 48, 24, 12)	OFF			
	1	2	3	4
OUT LEVEL (0 to 99)	49	84	64	64
SCALING				
	1	2	3	4
RATE (0 to 3)				
LEVEL (0 to 99)	0	31	0	0
FUNCTION				
MODE (POLY or MONO)				
P BEND RANGE (0 to 12)				
PORTAMENTO (0 to 15)				
PORTAMENTO TIME (0 to 99)				
FC VOLUME (0 to 99)				
FC PITCH (0 to 99)				
FC AMPLITUDE (0 to 99)				
MW PITCH (0 to 99)				
MW AMPLITUDE (0 to 99)				
BC PITCH (0 to 99)				
BC AMPLITUDE (0 to 99)				
BC PITCH BIAS (-50 to +50)				
BC EG BIAS (0 to 99)				
MIDDLE C (C1 to C5)				C5
REVERB RATE (0 to 12)				

## ● MADE TO BE PLAYED



All the way from the USA are a series of hand made, four or five string fretless basses. According to the manufacturer, M.V. Pedulla, very particular attention has been paid to the design and construction of the neck and fretboard. The taper, profile and string spacing have been specially design to give the neck a true jazz feel, whereas the fingerboard is Ebony, finished with a specially developed polymer coating called Diamond Coat. This, according to Pedulla, gives a completely smooth and extremely hard-wearing neck. Pedulla also claim these basses are probably the fastest around. If you fancy seeing/hearing these basses catch them while you can at the Audio Marketing Group: (0428) 58775.

## ● ORLA WAY

The Elka-Orla road show kicks off when John Currie and Phil Hillborne begin to demonstrate a number of products from both Ampeg and Crate on a roadshow throughout December. The tour starts on December 4th in Lincoln at St Martins Music Shop then moves on to Newcastle, Rock City Music, 5th Dec; Birmingham, Musical Exchanges Ltd, 6th Dec; Cardiff, Peter Noble, 11th Dec; and finishes in London, Gigsounds on the 13th December. For further information phone Elka-Orla: (0787) 475325.

## ● WORRA GENT

Rod Argent, for many years the key man in the early seventies rock beasts, ARGENT, has announced that his world famous Denmark Street keyboard shop has recently undergone something of a facelift.

According to Argent: "Gone are the grubby hessian wallcovering and the yellowed PolyMoog posters. Gone too are the ineffective lighting and the long, tangled clumps of wiring. In their place is a bright, custom-designed interior, complete with an accessory bar, shelving for books and magazines, purpose built display cabinets, and two demonstration studios."

It only the whole world was this beautiful...



## ● A DOD EFFECT

Rock Box and Double Play are two new dual function pedals from Dod Electronics. Designed to accompany the existing Digitech range, Dod's new pedals allow each effect to be independently controlled and offer, it is claimed, a noise ratio better than 90dB. The PDS 2715 or Rock Box incorporates distortion effects with a digital chorus, whilst the PDS 2700 or Double Play combines a 1 second digital delay and infinite repeat with a digital chorus effect.

For more Dod information contact John Hornby Skewes: (0532) 865381.



## ● ASTRO PROJECTION

October 23rd sees the launch of a major new series of 12 instrumental albums linked to the 12 signs of the Zodiac. Under the collective banner *Music Of The Stars*, each album will be performed by a musician of the relevant star sign and have a

300-500 word musical horoscope written by top astrologer, Russell Grant. Scorpio Richard Hewson kicks off the series with a set of songs imaginatively entitled *Songs Of A Distant Chameleon*. Any of you beautiful people out there who need some extra cosmic vibrations should phone the following number for further info: 01-960 8466.

## ● FAIR PLAY

The Bristol Music Fair will take place on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th November at The Watershed, Bristol. Along with the old member of the IM team, all the major manufacturers will be there to show off the key features of their ranges, including Roland, Yamaha, Casio, Korg, Fender, Carlsbro, Washburn, etc, etc. The show is jointly organised by ABC Music and John Holmes Music and admission will be £2 (£1.50 for students). For further information phone Kim Joseph: (0372) 66195.

## ● POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Klynstrom, a new-comer to the scene, have just released details of the Klynstrom Mostet 1000 stereo power amplifier. Features include Dual Speed Fan Cooling (*whooooo!*), XLR and Jack input Sockets and a Torroidial Mains transformer for low hum (*whoooooooooo!*). The retail price inc VAT will be £799. For further information contact Klynstrom Audio: (0622) 671863.

## ● THAT'S JAZZ...YEH!

Jazz Services is an organisation set up specifically to preserve that oh, so endangered species, the British Jazz musician. As such, it acts as a kind of pressure group designed to project the talents of British jazzers who, so JS claim, are just not given the credit and attention that so many of their American counterparts receive. Anyone interested in joining or finding out more should contact Chris Hodgkins, Francis Marriott or Celia Wood at Jazz Services: 01-829 8352/3/4.

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Tuesday	14	CARDIFF Four Arts Centre
Wednesday	15	NOTTINGHAM Old Vic
Sunday	19	MANCHESTER South Theatre
Sunday	21	BRIGHTON Gardner Arts Centre

## ● BASS PLAY

Washburn are expanding their acoustic bass line to include a new low-priced model called the AB20. Just like its big brother, the AB40, the AB20 features a cutaway body supporting a long-scale, Maple neck.

A transducer pickup, situated underneath the Rosewood and Brass bridge, is linked up to Washburn's EQ300 three band graphic equaliser

with a 15dB cut or boost. For more information contact Washburn: (0462) 896262.



## ● SIMMONS RETURN - OFFICIAL

As reported exclusively in last month's IM&RW, Simmons are back from the grave once more. It can now be revealed that all the company's trading assets have been purchased by Soundunit Ltd. An official press release on behalf of the Simmons camp claim that Soundunit will be shortly recommencing production of certain Simmons products while progressing the development of further products.

Soundunit Ltd has been established by a consortium including David Simmons and a number of other former employees of Simmons Digital Music Ltd, and will be trading under the name Simmons Digital Music.

## ● E-MU ON THE LOOSE

Small but beautiful American manufacturers, E-MU, have just struck up what looks like a lasting friendship with the Japanese Company, Matsushita Electric Industrial Company Ltd. Could this mean an extensive world-wide distribution deal for E-MU? Who knows, but congratulations anyway.

## ● RUMOURS

Akai are said to be on the verge of announcing details of a new digital recording system using Read/Write CDs, offering 55 minutes full bandwidth recording/editing system, and costing somewhere in the region of £8,000. The 5U rack will display and operate similar to the S1000. It is said to be of DAT quality but with the added bonus of extensive editing facilities. Our spy managed to ascertain that Akai will be looking at three main markets: Studio-Mastering/Editing, Broadcasting and Post Production Audio/Video. For further information, keep watching this space.

## ● BLUE STRINGS

After, it seems, the successful launch of the Blue Steel bass strings, manufacturers, Dean Markley have now added Blue Steel sets for electric guitars. As you may remember, producing Blue Steel strings involves a process called Cryogenics, when the temperature of the string is reduced to -320 Fahrenheit and then slowly returned to its original temperature. According to Dean Markley, this re-aligns the molecules of steel to increase brightness and allow a longer life. Blue Steel strings are available in a full range of gauges, from Extra Lite (008-038) to medium (011-052) and cost £6.99. For further information contact M Hohner: (0222) 887333.



# Record companies

*After you have checked out the venue and the booking has been confirmed, who are you going to invite? Your band may be lucky enough to have a loyal following of fans, but fans alone won't help your band get a record deal. Work out a bit list of record companies from the IM&RW Reference Guide, invite them to see your band perform live. Try to see the record company representative after the gig and ask him/her what they thought of the performance. They might not offer you a multi million deal there and then but most of them will be more than pleased to give you sound advice. Playing live is also a good way of getting that all-important press coverage: invite the local papers and the music papers. Stand out from the hundreds of tapes and requests that pour in to the record companies and papers by making up a small press package which should include a demo tape of no more than three titles, a good picture of the band, not one a mate took on his Instamatic just after you've finished a pub crawl, and a brief biography of the band. Good luck...*

**A&M Records:** 136/140 Kings Rd, London SW6 4LZ. Tel: 01-736 3311.

**ABC Records:** 1-2 Munro Terrace, London SW10 0DL. Tel: 01-351 3355.

**Abbey Recording:** 1 Abbey St, Eynsham, Oxford OX8 1PP. Tel: (0865) 246266.

**Abstract Sounds:** 10 Tiverton Road, London NW10 3HL. Tel: 01-969 4018.

**All The Madmen:** 96 Brougham Rd, London E8 1PB. Tel: 01-749 8709

**Alternative Tentacles:** 61/71 Collier St, London N1 9BE. Tel: 01-833 3456.

**A1:** 281 Walworth Rd, London SE17 3RP. Tel: 01-703 9062.

**Anagram Records:** 53 Kensington Gardens Sq, London W2. Tel: 01-229 8854/5.

**Ariola/Arista:** 3 Cavendish Sq, London W5. Tel: 01-580 5566.

**Arrival Records:** 39 Leyton Rd, Harpenden, Herts AL5 2JB. Tel: (05827) 5098.

**Aura Records:** 1 Liverpool Rd, Ealing, London W5. Tel: 01-579 4333.

**Backs Recording Company:** St Mary's Works, St Mary's Rd, Norwich NR3. Tel: (0603) 626221.

**BBC Records:** 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT. Tel: 01-743 5588.

**Beggars Banquet Records:** 17/19 Alma Rd, London SW18. Tel: 01-870 9912.

**Blanco Y Negro Records:** 61 Collier St, London N1. Tel: 01-837 6747.

**BMG Records (UK) Ltd:** 1 Bedford Avenue, London WC1. Tel: 01-636 8311.

**Broadside:** Studley House, 68 Limes Rd, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV1. Tel: (0902) 753047.

**Carrere Records:** PRT House, Bennett St, London W4. Tel: 01-995 3166.

**Castle Communications:** Unit 7, 271 Merton Road, London SW18. Tel: 01-871 2022.

**CBS Records:** 17/19 Soho Square, London W1. Tel: 01-734 8181.

**Celtic Music:** 2 High St, Starbeck, North Yorkshire. Tel: (0423) 888979.

**Chapter 22:** 6 New St, Warwick, Warks CV34 4RX. Tel: (021) 707 2147.

**Cherry Red Records:** 53 Kensington Gardens Square, London W2. Tel: 01-229 8854/5.

**China Records:** 27 Queensdale Place, London, W11. Tel: 01-602 5031.

**Chrysalis Records:** 12 Stratford Place, London W1N 9AF. Tel: 01-408 2355.

**Citra Records:** 60-66 Wandour St, London W1V 3HP. Tel: 01-491 8527.

**Claddagh Records:** Dame Hse, Dame St, Dublin, Ireland. Tel: (0001) 793664.

**Coda:** Hyde House, Crowhurst, E Sussex. Tel: (0428)83588.

**Cold Harbour:** 488/490 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5AG. Tel: 01-237 9748.

**Cooking Vinyl:** 97 Caledonian Rd, London N1. Tel: 01-278 5111/278 5160.

**Crammed:** 1 Clarence House, Rushcroft Rd, London SW2 1JS. Tel: 01-273 2025.

**Crashed Records:** 130 Slaney Rd, Dublin Industrial Estate, Dublin 11. Tel: (0001) 729714/47899/309077.

**Creation Records:** 83 Clerkenwell Rd, London EC1. Tel: 01-831 7132.

**Creole:** Music House, 186 High Street, London NW10. Tel: 01-965 9223.

**Demon Records:** Canal Hse, Stars Estate, Transport Ave, Brentford, Middlesex. Tel: 01-847 2481.

**EG Records and Editions EG:** 63a Kings Rd, London SW3. Tel: 01-730 2162.

**EMI Records** 20 Manchester Square, London W1A 1ES. Tel: 01-486 4488.

**Ensign Records:** 3 Monmouth Place, London W2 5SH. Tel: 01-727 0527.

**Excalibur:** 48 Broadley Terrace, London NW1 6UL. Tel: 01-258 0324.

**Factory Records:** 86 Palatine Rd, West Didsbury, Manchester M20 9JW. Tel: (061) 434 3876.

**Fellside Recordings:** 15 Banklands, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3EW. Tel: (0900) 61556.

**Fiction:** 28 Ivor Pl, London NW1 6DA.

Tel: 01-723 9269.

**53rd and 3rd:** 21a Alva St, Edinburgh Tel:(031) 226 3129.

**Flickknife Records:** 2nd Floor, The Metro Store, 5-10 Eastman Rd, The Vale, London W3. Tel: 01-743 9412.

**FON:** Karate Rm, Shelden Row, Sheffield S1. Tel: (0742) 754 644.

**4AD:** 17/19 Alma Rd, London SW18 1AB. Tel: 01-870 9774

**Fun After All:** 4th floor, 8 Carnaby Street, London W1V 1PG. Tel: 01-437 4688.

**Future Earth Records:** 59 Fitzwilliam St, Wath Upon Derne, Rotherham, West Yorkshire, S63. Tel: (0709) 872875.

**Futuresound Records:** 36 Wolseley Rd Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 5NB. Tel: (0782) 411589

**Glass Records:** Linburn Hse, 342 Kilburn High Rd, London NW6. Tel: 01-624 0060/328 9521

**GO! Disc:** 320-322 King St, London W6. Tel: 01-748 7973.

**Globestyle Records:** 48/50 Steele Rd, London NW10 7AS. Tel: 01-453 1311.

**Greensleeves:** Unit 7 Goldhawk Industrial Estate, Brackbury Rd, London W6. Tel: 01-749 3277.

**GWR Records:** 15 Great Western Rd, London W9. Tel: 01-286 7093.

**Heavy Metal Records:** 152 Goldthorn Hill, Penn, Wolverhampton WV2. Tel: (0902) 345345.

**Hollywood Records:** 38/40 Upper Clapton Rd, London E5 8BQ. Tel: 01-806 0071.

**ID Records:** 1-2 Munro Terrace, London SW10 0DL. Tel: 01-351 3355.

**IRS Records:** Bugle Hse, 21a Noel St, London W1 3PD. Tel: 01-734 3814.

**Island Records:** 22 St Peters Square London W6 9NW. Tel: 01-741 1511.

**Intape:** Unit 3, 104 Northenden Rd, Sale, Cheshire M33 3HB. Tel: (061) 834 5835.

**Inevitable:** c/o Amazon Studios, ISD, Stopgate Lane, Simonswood, Liverpool L33 4YA. Tel: (051) 548 5334.



# IM REFERENCE GUIDE

- In Touch:** PO Box 358, London W5 1TY. Tel: 01-998 5976.
- Jackson Music:** The Studios, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 2XD. Tel: (0923) 772351.
- Jive Records:** Zomba Hse, 165/167 Willesdon High Rd, London NW10 3SG. Tel: 01-459 8899.
- Jungle:** 24 Gaskin St, London N1 2RY. Tel: 01-359 8444.
- Karbon:** 19 All Saint's Rd, London W11 1HE. Tel: 01-229 7105.
- Kitchenware Records:** The Stables, St Thomas St, Workshops, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 4LE. Tel: (091) 232 4895.
- Klub:** 9 Watt Rd, Hillingdon Industrial Estate, Glasgow G52. Tel: (041) 882 9060.
- Legend Records:** Molinare Studio, 44 Gt Marlborough St, London W1V 1DB. Tel: 01-439 2244.
- Lightning Records:** 103 Bashley Rd, Park Royal, London NW10. Tel: 01-965 5555.
- London Records (UK):** 1 Sussex Place, London W6. Tel: 01-748 9998.
- Magnet Records:** 22 York St, London W1. Tel: 01-486 8151.
- Marathon:** 2 Dudley Mansions, 17 Hanson St, London W1P 7LN. Tel: 01-637 2256.
- MCA Records:** 72-74 Brewer St, London W1. Tel: 01-437 9797.
- MDM:** 101/109 Ladbroke Grove, London W11. Tel: 01-221 8585.
- Metalworks:** The Studio, 28 Durham Rd, London SW20 0TW. Tel: 01-947 8084.
- Midnight Music (Records):** PO Box 333, Bushey, Watford. Tel: 01-950 9507.
- Moksha:** PO Box 102, London E15. Tel: 01-555 5423.
- Mole Record Productions:** 291 Pentonville Rd, London N1 9NP. Tel: 01-278 0703.
- Motown Records:** Tudor Hse, Gresse St, London W1. Tel: 01-631 0380.
- Music For Nations:** 8 Carnaby Street, London W1V 1PPG. Tel: 01-437 4688.
- Mute Records:** 429 Harrow Rd, London W10 4RE. Tel: 01-969 8866.
- Neat:** 71 High St East, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear NE28 7RJ. Tel: (091) 262 4999.
- Next Big Thing:** 20 Albert Ave, Grangemouth FK3 9AT. Tel: (0324) 482 724.
- 1992 Records & Music Ltd:** PO Box 235, Beckenham, Kent BR3 2UT. Tel: 01-658 9058.
- Oil! Records:** 3 Machen St, Cardiff CF1. Tel: (0222) 21825.
- One Little Indian:** 250 York Rd, London SW11 3SJ.
- ON-U Sound:** 8 St Bernard's Rd, London E6. Tel: 01-552 5396.
- Oval:** 326 Brixton Rd, London SW9. Tel: 01-326 4907.
- Phonogram Records:** 1 Sussex Place, Hammersmith, London W6. Tel: 01-491 4600.
- Pink Label:** 26 Desford Rd, London E16 4NJ. Tel: 01-476 0474.
- Pink Pop:** 1 Hesketh St, Liverpool L17 8XJ. Tel: (051) 727 0435.
- Plastic Head:** Yew Tree Cott, Detrick Salome, Oxon OX9 6JQ. Tel: (0865) 891191.
- Polydor Records:** 1 Sussex Place, London W6. Tel: 01-846 8090.
- Powerstation Records:** Cromwell Hse, 13 Ogleforth, York YO1. Tel: (0904) 642451/642574.
- Product Inc:** Lawford Hse, 429 Harrow Rd, London W10. Tel: 01-969 8866.
- Pure Trash:** 18 Elmthorpe Rd, Wolvercote, Oxford OX2 8PA. Tel: (0865) 514432.
- PWL:** 4/7 The Vineyard, Sanctuary St, London SE1 1QL. Tel: 01-403 0007.
- RCA Records:** 1 Bedford Ave, London WC1. Tel: 01-636 8311.
- Re-Elect The President Records:** PO Box 35, Woodford Green, Essex IP4. Tel: 01-505 7530.
- Recommended:** 387 Wandsworth Rd, London SW2 2JL. Tel: 01-622 8834.
- Red Bus Records (International):** Red Bus Hse, 45 Broadley Terrace, London NW1. Tel: 01-258 0324/5/6/7.
- Red Flame:** PO Box 927, London W3. Tel: 01-993 8634.
- Red Lightnin' Ltd:** The Whitehouse, The Street, North Lopham, Norfolk IP22. Tel: (0379) 88693.
- Red Rhino Records:** The Grain Store, 74 Eldon St, York YO3. Tel: (0904) 611656.
- REL:** 40 Sciennes, Edinburgh EH9 1NH. Tel: (031) 668 3366.
- Rhythm King Records:** 429 Harrow Rd, London W10. Tel: 01-969 8866.
- Rough Trade Records:** 61 Collier St, London N10. Tel: 01-837 6747.
- Sain (Recordiau):** Cyf, Llandrog, Caenarfon, Gwynedd LL54. Tel: (0286) 831111.
- Silverword Records,** Crickhowell, Powys NP8 1LB. Tel: (0873) 810142.
- Siren Records:** 61/63 Portabello Road, London W11. Tel: 01-221 7535.
- Sonet Records:** 121 Ledbury Rd, London W11 2AQ. Tel: 01-229 7267.
- Special Delivery Records:** 50 Stroud Green Rd, London N4 3EF. Tel: 01-263 6403/1240.
- Stern's African Record Centre:** 116 Whitfield St, London W1. Tel: 01-387 5550/388 5533.
- Stiff Records:** 111 Talbot Rd, London W11 2AT. Tel: 01-221 5101.
- Sub Zero Music:** 46 Victoria Rd, Quarry Bank, W Midlands DY5 1DD. Tel: (0384)61539.
- Supreme Records:** 105a Torriano Way, London NW5. Tel: 01 482 5212.
- Survival Records:** PO Box 335, London W5. Tel: 01-847 2625/7.
- 10 Records:** 61/63 Portobello Rd, London W11 3DD. Tel: 01-221 7535.
- Topic Records:** 50 Stroud Green Rd, London N4 3EF. Tel: 01-263 6403/1240.
- Triple Earth Records:** 1-8 Whitfield Place, London W1. Tel: 01-388 5533.
- Trojan Records:** 12 Thayer St, London W1M 5LD. Tel: 01-935 8323.
- Unamerican Activities:** 29 St Michaels Rd, Leeds LS6. Tel: (0532) 742106.
- Vinyl Drip:** 87 Anchorholme Lane, Blackpool, Lancs. Tel: (0253) 852945.
- Vinyl Solution:** 39 Herford Rd, London W2. Tel: 01-229 8010.
- Virgin Records:** 553-579 Harrow Rd, London W10. Tel: 01-968 6688.
- Waterfront Records:** 1 Leigh Hill, Leigh-On-Sea, Essex SS9 2LR. Tel: (0702) 714025.
- WEA Records:** The Electric Lighting Station, 46 Kensington Court, London W8. Tel: 01-938 2181.
- WEB:** One Ash, Leicester Rd, Loughborough, Leicester LE12 8YE. Tel: (0509) 413663.
- Wire Records:** 363-365 Harrow Rd, London W9 3NA. Tel: 01-969 9522.
- WOMAD:** 85 Park St, Bristol BS1 5JN. Tel: (0272) 290242.
- World:** 10 Myddleton Rd, London N22 4NS. Tel: 01-888 8949.
- YII Records:** 16 Blomfield Rd, London W9 1AD. Tel: 01-286 0642.
- Zebra Records:** 25 Fulham High St, London SW6. Tel: 01-731 8595.
- Zodiac Records:** 109a Finchley Rd, London NW11 0BD. Tel: 01-455 6620.
- Zomba Productions:** Zomba House, 165-167 Willesdon High Rd, London NW10. Tel: 01-459 8899.
- ZTT:** 8/10 Basing St, London W11. Tel: 01-229 1229.

# Publishers

This month's Reference Guide contains a list of music publishers and record companies. Once contact has been established with a particular company, don't just make one phonecall and expect them to sign you up straight away. Keep phoning, and try and deal with the same person each time. You must prove you are keen, articulate and knowledgeable, as well as the talented/greedy person you are.

A good press pack, containing quality photographs, press clippings, and a well-written blurb will do you the world of good. And, if they invite you in for a chat, try and make sure you have someone with you who knows a bit about the business side, and that doesn't mean a mate dressed in his best Next suit. Finally, if ever the situation arises where you are actually offered a deal, please, please consult a proper music lawyer first. It may cost you a few hundred pounds in the short term, but in the long term, it could save you thousands. Look out for a list of music lawyers in IM soon.

**Abrefa Music:** 11, Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4. Tel: (0865) 728447

**Accuff-Rose-Oppryland Music:** 129, Park St, London W1Y. 3FA.

**Alan Simmons Music:** : 146, Pilling Lane, Scisset, Huddersfield HD8. Tel: (0484) 862741

**Amphonic Music:** 'Kerchesters' Waterhouse lane, Kingswood, Surrey, Tel: (0737) 832837

**Anglia Music:** 39, Tadorne Rd, Tadworth, Surrey, KT20. Tel: (073 781) 2922

**Arena Music:** South Bank Hse, Black Prince Rd, London, SE1. Tel: 01-582 8492

**BMG Music:** 3, Cavendish Sq, London, Tel: 01-580 5566

**BTW Music:** 125, Myddleton Rd, Wood Green, London, N2. Tel: 01-888 6655

**Baker Music:** 55, Regent Sq, London, E3. Tel: 01-980 9718

**Banks Music:** The Old Forge, Sand Hutton, York, YO4. Tel: (0904) 86472

**Barry Collings Music:** TAC House, 49, High St, Southend On Sea, Essex, SS1. Tel: (0702) 347343

**Belsize Music:** 2nd floor, 24, Baker St, London, W1. Tel: 01-935 2076

**Big Note Music:** Comforts Place, Tandridge Lane, Lingfield, Surrey, Tel: (034289) 3046

**Bill Buckley Music:** The White House, 140, Tachbrook St, London, SW1. Tel: 01-821 0455

**Black Sheep Music:** Fulmer Gardens Fulmer, Bucks, SL3 Tel: (02816) 2143

**Blue Mountain Music:** 334/336, King St, London, W6. Tel: 01-846 9566

**Bocu Music:** 1 Wyndham Yard, Wyndham Place, London, W1. Tel: 01-402 7433/4/5

**Bourne Music:** 34/36, Maddox St, London, W1. Tel: 01-493 6412

**Bruce Welch Music:** 64, Stirling Court, Marshall St, London, W1. Tel: 01-434 1839

**Bucks Music:** 1A, Farm Place, Notting Hill Gate, London, W8. Tel: 01-221 4275

**Bulk Music:** 9, Watt Rd, Hillington Ind Estate, Hillington, Glasgow, G52. Tel: 041-882 9060

**Bullseye Music:** A.I.R. House, Spennymoor Co., Durham, DL16. Tel: (0388) 814632

**Cambar Music:** 27a, Queens Terrace, St. Johns Wood, London, NW8. Tel: 01-586 7576

**Carlin Music:** 14, New Burlington St, London, W1. Tel: 01-734 3251

**Champion Music:** 181, High St, Harlesden, London, NW10. Tel: 01-961 5202

**Chelsea Music:** King Henrys Rd, London, NW3. Tel: 01-722 7358

**Cherry Music:** 49, Greek St, London W1. Tel: 01-437 7418

**Christabel Music:** 32, High Ash Drive, Leeds, Tel: (0532) 685528

**Chrysalis Music:** 12, Stratford Place, London, W1. Tel: 01-408 2355

**Cinque Port Music:** Bank House, Queen St, Deal. CT14. Tel: (0304) 363282

**Complete Music:** 3rd Floor, Bishops Park House, 25-29, Fulham High St, London, SW6. Tel: 01-731 8595

**Cornish Legend Music:** Cramer Music: 23, Garrick St, London, WC2. Tel: 01-240 1612

**Creole Music:** Music Hse, 186, High St, Harlesden, London, NW10. Tel: 01-965 9223

**De Wolfe Ltd:** 80-88, Wardour St, London, W1. Tel: 01-437 4933/4 & 01-439 8481

**Dejamus Ltd:** James Hse, Salisbury Place, Upper Montagu St, London, W1. Tel: 01-486 5838

**Demon Music:** Canal Hse, Stars Estate, Transport Ave, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8. Tel: 01-847 2481

**The Designer Music Co:** 8, Berwick St, London, W1. Tel: 01-734 5750

**Diamond Publishing:** 45, St Mary's Rd, Ealing, London, W5. Tel: 01-579 1082

**EG Music:** 63a, Kings Rd, London, SW3.

Tel: 01-730 2162

**EMI Music:** 127, Charing Cross Rd, London, WC2. Tel: 01-434 2131

**Eaton Music:** 8, West Eaton Place, London, SW1. Tel: 01-235 9046

**Edward Kassner Music:** Broadmead Hse, 21 Panton St, London, SW1. Tel: 01-839 4672

**Edwardson Music:** 106, Bickenhall Mansions, London W1 Tel: 01-935 7615

**Eleestar Ltd:** Unit 4, Willow Farm, Allowood Green, Ricklinghall, DISS, Norfolk IP 20 Tel: (0379) 898 148

**Empire Music:** 27 Queensdale Place London W11 Tel: 01-602 5031

**Evita Music:** 139 Picadilly London W1 Tel: 01-629 7211

**Faber Music:** 3 Queen Sq, London WC1 Tel: 01-278 6881

**Fable Music:** 67 Maltings Place, Bagleys Lane, London SW6 Tel: 01-731 6699

**Fay Gibbs Music:** Suite: 1A Lansdowne Hse, Lansdowne Rd, Holland Park, London WC1 Tel: 01-727 4214

**Filmtrax Plc:** 7/8 Greenland Place, London NW1 Tel: 01-482 4979

**Flying Intenational Services Ltd:** 11, Ruston Mews, London W11 Tel: 01-221 7799

**GL (Music) Publishers:** 42, Lamb's Conduit St, London WC1, Tel: 01-405 6058

**Global Music:** 171 Southgate Rd, London N1 Tel: 01-379 2974

**Golden Apple Productions:** Beckley, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 Tel: (0425) 617106

**Graphicsound Ltd:** P.O. Box 34, Maidstone, Kent ME16 Tel: (0622) 675403

**Green Dream Music:** Amazon Studios, Music Hse, ISD Stopgate Lane, Simonswood, Liverpool L33 Tel: 051-548 2000

**Halcyon Music:** 11 Howitt Rd, London NW3 Tel: 01-586 0288

**Handle Music:** 19 Upper Brook St,





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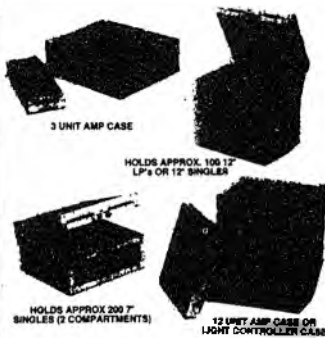


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Rates: The following rates are complete:  
We do not charge V.A.T. or tape and equipment hire,  
just basic recording cost which covers the use of all  
studio facilities.

Per hour	£10
Per day	£85
Per 40 hour week	£350

## CHESHIRE

**Swallow**

South Cheshire's most conveniently  
located 16 Track Soundcraft studio  
goes from strength to strength. If you  
require demos, masters, backing  
tracks, rehearsal facilities, conference  
recording, cassette copying or full  
production for radio, TV or commercial  
programmers ring, SMALLWOOD  
(04775) 201  
or write to  
**SWALLOW STUDIOS,**  
Cogleton Rd, Smallwood, Nr.  
Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 0UT.

# STUDIO GUIDE

## CIRCUS STUDIO Greenwich

16 TRACK + 60 TRACK MIDI/SMPTE LINK FREE USE OF SAMPLERS/EXPANDERS/DRUM MACHINES ETC. FULL RANGE OF OUTBOARD EQUIPMENT. DRUM/VOCAL BOOTH. ALL INCLUSIVE £10 PER HOUR. 01-858 8546.

## BERKSHIRE

### WoodcraY Studio

Located in farm buildings on a 200 acre farm near Wokingham, Berkshire only a 45 minute drive from West London by M3 or M4 WoodcraY is equipped and run to the highest 24 track professional standards with an automated in-line console, Otari tape machines and a comprehensive range of outboard.

Studio and control room are large, naturally lit and air-conditioned. The control room has recently been acoustically treated and refurbished by 'Sound Advice'. With the studio complex set around a courtyard, WoodcraY offers the chance to record in a peaceful environment away from the bustle of the metropolis in an atmosphere many well known clients have much appreciated. A good studio isn't just the best hardware, it's the service and the people who run it too.

WoodcraY also offers, with or without residential facilities, the best next door to the studio, rates and packages which are highly cost effective and make the studio an attractive proposition not just for those with record company finance, but a wide ranging clientele.

#### FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

DESK: MCL 636 in-line console with JH 500 automation, TAPE MACHINES: Otari 90 MK II, Otari XT II 12 I, Studer B67, Revox, MONITORS: Tannoy Super Red, REVERBS: SPA 90 MK I, SPA 90 MK II, LEXICON 200, EMT Stereo Plate, CURA Major Space Station, DELAYS: BEL BD80, MXR Digital, GATES AND COMPRESSORS: 2x DRAWMER DUAL, 6x A&D SCAMP gates 2 SCAMP comps, 2x vocal stressors, 2x COMPEX Limiters.

OTHER: 2x Auto panners, Rebus parametric, Bel Stereo Flanger, MXR Harmonizer, INSTRUMENTS: Yamaha 7'6" Grand (A real beauty), AKAI S900 Sampler, LINN D DN 7 By Arrangement Steinberg PRO 74 Simmons SDS S.

RESIDENTIAL: A cottage sleeps 5 comfortably. Extra accommodation nearby.

...a breath of fresh air

WoodcraY Manor Farm, Finchampstead Road,  
Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 3HG  
Tel: 0734 792258

## CHESHIRE



### The Cottage

24 TRACK RECORDING £20 PER HOUR

SOUNDCRAFT Series 1600 32/8/24/2 console.

STUDIO MAGNETICS MT24 2" multitrack with autolocate.

2 x REVOX PR99's.

2 x SONY pro-DAT machines.

Full SMPTE/MIDI sync.

PRO-24 with full synth rack inc. S900, D550, TX816, MKS70.

REFLEX console automation coming soon

FX/outboard too numerous to list • Most instruments available

In-house production (if required) • Cassette duplication

Record/CD pressing • Artwork and printing

Friendly, relaxed atmosphere

Phone for full spec./brochure **0625 20163 (24HRS)**

COTTAGE RECORDING 2 Gawsworth Road Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 8UE

#### CAVALIER STUDIO

280 Wellington Road South,  
Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6ND.  
Tel: 061-480 6073 & 483 7294  
Contact LOL COOPER

24 Track Studio • Record Pressing Service • Real Time Cassette Duplication • Tac Matchless 35-24 Desk • Otari-Tascam Mastering • JBL 4435 Monitors • Yamaha NS10 • Auratone Ref. Mon. • 2 XREV 7 • 4xSPX90 • EMT Gold Foil • Roland Digital Delay • 301 Chorus Echo • Scamprack • Gemini comp • 6 • Drawmer Noise Gates • 3 • Drawmer Compressors • Drawmer Multitracker • MXR Flanger • Yamaha Twin 31 Band Graphic • Yamaha Acoustic Grand Piano • DX7 • TX816 • Akai S900 With 80 Disks • Linn Drum • Simmons • Gretsch Kit • Gibson Fender Ovation Guitars • HH Combo • Neuman Sennheiser Claret Electrovoice AKG Shure Mikes • Beyer Sennheiser Headphones • Formula Sound 04 Feedback System • Rockman X100 • Air Conditioning • Otari MX80 24 Track Machine, 3 Roland DF5, T.C. Electronic 2290, Yamaha REX50, Trace Elliott Bass Combob Marshall.

## CLEVELAND



### TEESBEAT

The North's Leading 16 Track Recording Studio  
Atari Steinberg System  
records, Tape Mass Production  
C.D.'s etc  
Daytime 9HR Session £120 + VAT & TAPE  
Overnight 9HR Session £60 + VAT & TAPE  
Special Deals in Block Bookings  
DAT Now Available  
Phone for details 0642 602839

## CORNWALL



### SENTINEL RECORDS AND STUDIOS

The Old School, Paul  
Penzance, Cornwall. TR19 6JD  
Telephone 0736 731246  
FAX 0736 731238

Record Production and Cassette Duplication Residential 24-track/Sony and Otari Mastering  
ATC Monitoring/Live Area - 1,000sq feet

Outboards - Lexicon, Yamaha, Eventide, Drawmer, Alesis, TC, DBX, Audio and Design, Roland BBE

#### KEYBOARDS AND MODULES

Yamaha TX88, DX7, TX7, DX100, EMT 10, Kurzweil 250, Oberheim Matrix 6, 1000  
Akai S1000 Korg M1R Kawai K1R B1T 01  
Roland NT32/Octopads EMU SP1200  
Sequencing - Atari/Steinberg

## DEVON

### Red Rug

16 TRACK PROFESSIONAL  
AHS SABER PROGRAMMABLE 24:16:2 DESK +  
24:2 MODULE SUBMIX  
88 TRACK PROGRAMMABLE (OTR./HYDD.  
CONTROLLER)  
JBL CONTROL 10S  
VARIETY DIGITAL PROCESSING  
(DRAWMER/YAMAHA/ALESIS) CLAB/PRO 24  
SAMPLING/D110/RXS/TX81Z ETC.

DIGITAL MASTERING/ALL STUDIO SERVICES  
SESSION MUSICIANS AVAILABLE.  
PRICES FROM £90 PER 10 HOUR DAY (INC  
ENGINEER & COFFEE EX. TAPE HIRE)

PHONE TORQUAY (0809) 294680

### ENDSLEIGH RECORDING STUDIO

26 ENDSLEIGH PARK ROAD  
PEVERELL, PLYMOUTH PL3 4NH  
TELEPHONE (0752) 670831

The Small Studio with a big sound  
16 track audio up to 70 track  
sequencing

Recording Equipment by: Fostex,  
RSD, Yamaha, Alesis, Drawmer,  
JBL etc.

Studio rates from £10 per hour.

## ESSEX

### PIER HILL RECORDING COMPLEX

Essex's Top Studio  
Spring Sale for limited  
period only Normally  
£225 Now £130 per  
day £60 nighttime rates

DON'T MISS IT!!  
TEL: 0702 339216

### The AMill Recording Studios

Clevedon first  
24 track

Comfortable studio with natural light  
overlooking the River Tees

2" 24 Track recorder with BBX 32'16:24:2  
Automated Mixdown, Digital and Analogue  
Mastering!

Steinberg Pro 24 Midi recording

7 Digital reverbs, Axreman and Bassman,  
Tannoy Monitoring, Lots of other goodies  
too numerous to mention

In suite Wine Bar and Pub grub.  
Comfortable relaxation area with TV, Free  
Coffee

Package deals for records, cassettes and  
Compact Discs

Reductions for block bookings

Rate from £19 per hour

Ring Brian or Ian on (0642) 679189

Castlegate Mill, Riverside,  
Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS18 1BZ

## DERBYSHIRE

### TAPE Recording

A quality 16 track recording  
facility at Castle Donnington in  
the East Midlands (Only 2 miles  
from M1 Junction 24)

- ★ Digital Mastering ★
  - ★ 24 Track Sequencing ★
  - ★ Sampling ★
  - ★ Loads of Toys ★
  - ★ Free Use of Instruments ★
  - ★ Equipment Hire ★
  - ★ Full Air Conditioning ★
  - ★ In-house Catering ★
  - ★ Accommodation ★
  - ★ Free Parking ★
  - ★ Pleasant Location ★
- and much much more!  
FOR MORE DETAILS ON  
EQUIPMENT & RATES  
PHONE 0332 810933 NOW!  
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER!

TO ADVERTISE IN  
IM & RW PHONE  
SIPHO JOZANA NOW  
ON 01-538 5211

# STUDIOGUIDE

TO ADVERTISE IN THE IM & RW GUIDE CALL SIPHO JOZANA ON 01-538 5211

## HAMPSHIRE



**THE OLD CHAPEL** - a Grade 2 listed building, idyllic surroundings near Winchester on the edge of open farm land and a National Trust Country Park.

**RECORDING** - Amex Mozart 56 input chassis - 40 lited with full Steinberg automation. Atari MKR90 MkII 24 track, with auto locator. Atari MX55 with centre track time code. Sony DTC 1000ES DAT recorder.

**POST PRODUCTION** - Video and Synchronisation JVC 6650 low band u-matic VCR. 2 x Timeline Lynx modules. Lynx keyboard control unit. 2 JVC TM 150 14" Video monitors.

**ACCOMMODATION** - For five with bathroom and WC, large lounge dining area and luxury fitted kitchen. Engineer's suite with shower and WC

Phone: 07054 61253

## LANCASHIRE

### ASSEMBLY LINE

RECORDING  
STUDIO

8 TRACK RECORDING + 8 TRACK SEQUENCING

Top quality equipment includes:

EMAX, Neumann, Alesis Midverb II and MMT8 Drawmer, Gator, DBX, Audio + Design, Roland, A.R.T., Beyer, MSD, AKG, Gibson, Shure, Trace-Elton, Gordon-Smith

THE CENTRAL LANCAS STUDIO FOR MUSICIANS

0772 - 794433

## LONDON



QUALITY 16-TRACK IN LONDON DOCKLANDS

£12.00 per hour with engineer.

Community discount rate \$5.00 per

Studio designed by Andy Munro of Munro Associates. Soundcraft 1600 desk. Tascam 85-168, Tannoy Little Red, Quad amps. Yamaha & MXR digital reverb & delay units. Drawmer gates & compressors. EXR exciter. MXR pitch transposer. SPX90 MXF units. mics available include Shure SM57s & 58s, AKG 451s. Sennheisers, also available. Peavey Export Kit with Zikojan cymbals. Broadwood baby grand, DX7, JX3P and Poly 800 synths. Marshall, Peavey & Trace Elliot Amps.

Phone Brian, Jon or Iesy on 01 987 2738

TO ADVERTISE IN  
IM & RW PHONE  
SIPHO JOZANA  
NOW  
ON 01-538 5211

### TIME SQUARE STUDIO

24 TRACK WITH DIGITAL  
FULLY AUTOMATED MIXING

Studer A80, RSD 32i/p Console, Yam DMP7's, Sony DAT, Fostex E2, Tannoy, Yamaha, TC, Bel SPX50/90/1000, Korg, Del, Drawmer, Otban, TC, C Lab, \$900, FZ10M, D50, Cheetah MS6, M1 avail.

Current clients include: PP Arnold, Pirhanas Morris Minor and the majors, Gaye Bykers, Stiff Little Fingers, Psychic TV, etc.

£17 PER HOUR + NIGHT RATES  
£160 PER 10 HOUR DAY + VAT  
CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED  
01-994 1288

### MEANTIME MUSIC

16 & 24 Track Studios

NOW OPEN IN  
GREENWICH!

16 + 24 Trk, Air Cond, modern recording complex with reception and recreation area. Great acoustics for monitoring in both studios - Tannoy, JBL, Yamaha, B + W's L5M 50's.

Live areas in both studios. Great clear foldback systems: 24 Trk - Soundcraft 21/Soundcraft 24 input desk, 40 inputs with EQ on Mixdowns; 16 Trk - F15/Soundcraft 24 input desk extensive digital FX in both studios SMPTE/MIDI-Arari 1040+ Pro 24, C-Lab, Feltlight, Akai S950, 550 (seq package) D-50, MKB 200, D-110, HR16, S330 samp, extensive range of disks, all the usual rates and we know how to use them - experienced engineers who are fast, efficient and friendly - productions are constantly being released.

Studio 1-24 TRK - \$225/h, £150 for 10hrs (nights)  
Studio 2-16 TRK - \$112 p/h, £100 for 10hrs. (nights)  
Tie-lines for transfer from 16 TRK to 24 TRK studios.  
Block booking discounts available.

Ring Georgina on 01 692 4227

or send us a Fax 691-9322

### SCARLETT

RECORDINGS LIMITED

Power Plant  
Power plant studios

1) Studio 1

76 square metres, capacity 45 musicians, nice big live room. Unique sound. Steinway grand piano with force mod. mod.

Hammond Organ, Harrison series 24 desk.

2) Studio 2 "The Jade Room"

A totally new refurbished room with a custom built Neve 8048 console, 46 channel plus 32 monitor channels giving 78 input on mixdowns. George Massenburg Automation. A rack of ancillary equipment that's never been bettered in our opinion such as Pultec, Feschid, LA4's, AP1 EQ, Neve Compressors etc. 30 square metres live room, fantastic drum sound.

Harrison MR3 44 channel console, Sparkling top end.

Large control room 200 square metres, full patching front end back for synths, drum machines, sequencers. Specially designed for control room recordings. Small overhub area 8'x12'.

3) Studio 3

1000 square feet. With separate 'hire' room & isolation booth. SSL 4048E 8" channel console with G-series computer with total recall. Neve 12 into two consoles, 4 band eq for that nice VCA sound. Studer A800 & A820 (Coby SR)

4) Studio 4

1000 square feet, 3 isolation areas, SSL 4048E 44 track channel console with G-series computer total recall. Studer A800 & A820 multitracks with Coby SR. All ancillary equipment being updated.

Rates for Power Plant and Maxon lounge on application.

Contact: Sharon Lora or Colin Farley (Senior Operations Manager)

on 381-2001



**24 TRACK 2"**  
30 hrs for  
£329 inc.

**MIDI PROGRAMMING &  
24T. ENGINEERING &  
COURSES**

**01 608 0231**

**VONS 01 609 9450**

- \* Atal S1000 & SP00 & Emu EMAX samplers; Roland D550, D110, Juno 00 & 5H101, Yamaha TX802 & 2 DX7's, Ensoniq ESQ1 & Korg Poly 800 synths; Yamaha RX11 & Roland TR808 & TR909 drum machines; Yamaha 9000 drum kit & Roland Octapad II; Gibson Les Paul & Fender Strat guitars; Fender Precision & Herby Active bass guitars; 6/12 strings acoustic guitars; Roland cube, Marshall 100w Marshall HA4 amp; Linec TRS32 24TR & Foster E10 & B16 16TR recorders; Studiomaster Series 1 40-16-24-2 & series 1 24-16-16-1 monitor; 2 Atari 1040XT computers & Steinberg Pro 24; Coda DAT digital & Tascam 1/4" analogue mastering; Tannoy super & little goods & Shofar's Yamaha NS100 8/9W-Quad-Tascam monitoring; 4x31 bond graphics; 6 bayer D71001; Lexicon PCM70 & LXP1, Roland SRV2000, SDE1000 & 2 space echoes; 2 Yamaha SPX90's & 2 R1000's, Alesis XT-C, Bel BD80, Defacto Effectron II, Bomez HD1500, Drawmer M500-71 721-1 500-4070011, Auzemini guitar effects, Lexicon stereo compressor, Aphex dual editor, GJ stereo carrier, Otban De Eser, Bocke SVR & Fostex 4050 SMPTE, Yamaha MUC6 midi patchbay; extensive collection of microphones (Neumann, AKG, Sennheiser, Beyer, Shure & Inc. U87, 24144, C415...); Studio Regularly updated & maintained.
- \* Songs constantly released (vinyl & CD). Clients include: Killing Joke, David Gilmour, Jimmy Buffet, Cliff Eastwood & General Saint, Bad Manners, Weather Prophets, Primal Scream, Wahing Stones, The Jack Rabbits, The Sundays, Turkey Bonee, Bob Potter (over 30 gold & 4 platinum records engineered/produced), Capleton, Island, Polygram, Akai, Steve Virgin, Warner Chappell, E.G., Rough Trade, Creation, Channel 4, School of audio engineering, National Film & Television school, members of the Allen Sex Field, The Jesus and Mary Chain, The Blow Monkeys, Rebel, Rocky Horror show, Steppers Wheel, The Studios & many more.
- \* Studio one-24TR: \$190h/\$135 per night  
Studio one-16TR: \$140h/\$99 per night  
Studio two 16TR: \$70h/\$70 per night
- Prices including engineer/producer & instruments  
Own engineering desks. 50% discount, 7 in house engineers, producers recreation facilities (caves, waterfall, pool).

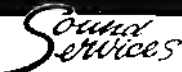


Recording Studios  
(Purpose Built/Professionally Designed)  
**24/48 TRACK RECORDING STUDIO**  
DDA Console/Otari Multitrack  
Air Conditioned Control Room  
400 SQ FT Studio with Isolation Booth  
All Rooms with Natural Light.

**PRE-PRODUCTION SUITE**  
16 Track recording facility  
Atari & Steinberg Pro 24 Comprehensive range of synths and samplers.

Rural setting, 5 minutes from The A3M/M27  
Separate kitchen, Dining and Lounge areas  
Car Park Adjacent to buildings  
**PARKLAND RECORDING STUDIOS**  
THE SPINNEY, FOREST ROAD,  
DENMEAD, PORTSMOUTH PO7 6TZ  
PORTSMOUTH (0705) 258985

## HEREFORDSHIRE



In addition to existing 8 Track Facility NOW OFFERS 24 TRACK RECORDING for a limited period (until July) at only £12.00 per hour + VAT.

MACHINES:

Studer A80 MkII, Otari M225060, Neves, Tascam, PCM Digital

Mastering:

AMVC Lab 68 Track M81 Sequencer, Nabolat, Score Printer, DX7, RX11, SMPTE

OTARI: 24

Drawmer, SPX, D1500 Dig Delay, Alesis XT Digital Reverb, Yamaha Compressors, Aphex, AHS Desk, Tascam

Perceptics, etc.

MICROPHONES:

Neumann, Sennheiser, Clesco, Shure, AKG, E.V.

MICROPHONES:

JBL, AKG, Beyer.


Large Studio Space, also Real Time Cassette Duplication

Side Labels and Inserts, Mobile Recording.

Accommodation available.

Telephone Dave 09818 471

Sound Services, Pump Row, Broad Oak, Hereford.



**KONK ONE**  
NEVE desk + NECAM.  
STUDER tape machines.  
48 track & 32 track  
Mitsubishi  
Digital  
JBL Monitoring

84/86 Tottenham Lane, Harnsey, London N8 7EE.

**KONK TWO**  
SSL 6000 with Total Recall  
OTARI Tape Machines  
48 track & 32 track  
Mitsubishi  
Digital  
Quoted Monitoring.

01 340 7873/4757

## ISLE OF WHITE




**STUDIO RECORD & PRODUCTIONS**  
**16 TRACK STUDIP, 24 TRACK SEQUENCER 2 D50'S, 2 DX7II'S, DS4 SAMPLER S1000 SAMPLER ASWELL, OCTOPAD ESQ 1 & MUCH MORE.**

**RING PAUL ON:**  
(0983) 616884  
OR  
(0983) 614349  
3A WEST PLACE, WEST ST. RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT

## THE WALL STUDIOS

18-21 MIDDLE STREET  
LONDON  
EC1A 7JA

**TEL: 01-606 2492**



**Twenty Four Track Studio**  
£16/Hour

ATARI/Steinberg Pro 24  
24 Track Aces Recorder  
Tascam 2 Track and Sony F1 system  
Mother Keyboard, Oberheim DPX1 plus Disc Library  
Oberheim Matrix 1000, Roland D110, 2 F80 1's  
Grand Piano  
Vocal/Drum booth  
Plate & Midverb 11  
Tannoy/Quad Monitoring  
Tape copying  
Contact: John Borthwick 01-888 6655

# STUDIO GUIDE

TO ADVERTISE IN THE IM & RW GUIDE CALL SIPHO JOZANA ON 01-538 5211

## MAKING TRACKS 16 TRACK RECORDING STUDIO

Equipment includes:  
Atari 1040ST, D50, S900, Kawai K1R, Roland Digital Piano, Bokske SM9, HR16, E16, Bel 24:16 Desk (40 inputs on mixdown) Lots of outboard! (5 digital Reverbs, 3 delays, gates, graphics etc) EXCELLENT LIVE DRUM SOUND

FULL DETAILS  
01-697 8568

## IdealSound Recorders

24-track  
Specialist in live music recording  
400 sq foot. Live room.  
Extensive range of microphones.  
Large selection of outboard: Lexicon A.M.S. Roland, Alesis, Drawmer, Bel etc.  
Ludwig Drum Kit with Zildjian Cymbals.  
Bechstein 6'6" Grand  
N London Based  
£240.00 per 10 hour day  
£26.00 per hour  
Phone David Kenny  
01 263 1240/01 263 6403

## We are proud to announce the GRAND OPENING of QUANTUM DIGITAL STUDIOS London

Exclusive, state-of-the-art technology for your digital masters or demos.  
• 24MB tracks, 66 inputs. • Ultimate isolation.  
• audio catering, TV/Video lounge.  
• Mesmeric, spacious studio complex.  
• Parking facilities  
• Rehearsal and storage facilities.

Studio equipment - a wide range of brand-name equipment available including:  
SONY, AKAI S 1000, S 600, IBM, YAMAHA, REV 5, REV 7, SPX 1000, SPX 900, SPX 90, 1 AND 2, APPLIED MICRO SYSTEMS, ALLEN & HEATH LEXICON, ROLAND, NEUMAN (VALVE AND TRANSISTOR) SENNHEISER, SHURE, AKG.  
Monitoring: 1000 W SUPER TANNOY, TANNOY DTM 8.  
Aurators: Bechstein available: BECHSTEIN GRAND PIANO, MARSHALL, VOX, FENDER, GIBSON, OVATION, RICKENBACHER, TRACE ELLIOT, YAMAHA, KORG, PEARL.

A Studio of unbelievable capacity with an unbelievable INTRODUCTORY OFFER of £16.00 per hour for a LIMITED PERIOD ONLY BOOK NOW before we charge normal rates.  
Phone us on 01-608 4351 or 01-272 8377  
(nearest Tube Station: Caledonian Road)

## MANCHESTER

### NOMAD Recording Studio Manchester

High Quality - Low Price  
In house producers  
available  
Masters/Demos/Pre-Production

Call 0836 675920 Anytime  
Our Demos Get Deals

## CLUB Studios

• HARD TO BELIEVE •

THE MOST ADVANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE 16 TRACK RECORDING FACILITIES FOR £12 PH. PLUS VAT LOOK HERE FOSTER NEW 16 TRACK MACHINE. TAL SCORPIO 47 INFLU DESK. REVOX P999 MASTERING ROLAND SRV2000 & MIDYBER DIGITAL REVERB - THREE ROLAND DD'S - DRAWMER GATES & COMP LIM. MOTIFER DIGITAL EFFECTS

• HAVE WE GOT ANY REVERBS? •

ENSONQ ESQ1 - YAMAHA DX21 - YAMAHA TX - KORG DB200 - CASIO CT201 - ROLAND JMD106 ALL WITH HUGE SOUND LIBRARY WHAT ABOUT SAMPLING? WE HAVE THE NEW AKAI S900 MULTISAMPLER THAT BEATS EVEN THE EMULATOR!!!

• AND SOUNDING •

YES, YOU CAN HAVE UP TO 48 TRACKS, PERFECTLY SYNCHRONIZED BY OUR ROLAND SB800 SYNC BOX

PLUS WE HAVE TWO COMPUTERS - YAMAHA O5 & COMMODORE 64 WITH A CHOICE OF FOUR DIFFERENT SOFTWARE SEQUENCERS INCLUDING THE STEINBERG PRO 16 AND THE CLUB "SUPERTRACK"

• ISN'T IT COMPLICATED •

DON'T WORRY, IF YOU WISH YOU CAN JUST CONCENTRATE ON BEING CREATIVE. OUR INHOUSE PRODUCER AND OUR EXPERIENCED ENGINEERS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF IT ALL

• ALL THIS FOR £12 PH (PLUS VAT) •

HARD TO BELIEVE THEN?

COME AROUND AND SEE FOR YOURSELF WE ARE ONLY A FEW YARDS FROM BARRICAN TUBE STN (CIRCLE LINE), SO RING US NOW ON 01 250 1910

## MILO

What's good for you is good for Milo ...

Ask The Communards, Joany Hates Jazz, Zeké Mavika, Matt Johnson, Zodiac Mindwarp, and Marc Almond.

They've all used our 24-track studio with garden large recreation room and catering facilities

Studio: 24' X 14' fully air conditioned.

Desk: Amek Angela 28:24.

Tape machines: Studer A80 Mark IV 24 track Studer A810 1/4" 2 track. Sony F1 & 701 digital.

Monitors: Sean Davies 841'S Yamaha N910's, AR 19's

Amplifiers: BGW Turner, Quad.

Microphones: AKG, Neumann, Shure, Electrovoice, Sennheiser, Beyler.

Effects: DBX 160's, UREI 1176's BSS DPR 402, Drawmer 201's, Klark Teknik Digital Reverb, Lexicon Prime Times, Bel DD 80, Delta Lab Electron, AMS Reverb, AMS Delay, Klark Teknik 27-way Equalisers, Evenide 910 Harmoniser, ElectroSpace Spanner.

Music to picture facilities: Fostex and Q-Lock 310 synchronisers, Sony 5 Series U-Matic, Sony Profil Monitor.

Special night / weekend rates available

CALL HENRY CRALLAN OR CAROLINE MOSS ON 01-729 4100

MILO MUSIC

43/44 ROXTON SQUARE

LONDON N1 6PB

THE  
BEST  
24 TRACK RECORDING STUDIO  
1ST CHRISTOPHER  
PLACE, LONDON NW1  
PHONE NOW  
ON  
01-387 3059



Recording Studios Ltd

STUDIO ONE  
24 Track Recording Facility

STUDIO TWO  
24 Track Mix-down Suite

PROGRAMMING/  
SONG WRITING SUITE  
Atari+Steinberg Software  
12 Track Recording Facility

PHONE TREVOR ON  
061-797 2908

For Rates

## LEICESTERSHIRE

fully equipped 16 track professional  
Sound recording & rehearsal Studios  
\* Open 24 hours a day 7 days a week \*

Recording from only £10 an hour  
Access & Visa Accepted  
For more details call:

SPYDER SOUND STUDIO  
UNIT 808, CUMBERLAND TRADING ESTATE,  
CUMBER LAND ROAD, LOUGHBROUGH,  
LEICESTERSHIRE LE11 0DB  
TEL: 0509 231686

## YEW TREE FARM 24 TRACK

Control Room: 23' x 16' with natural daylight.  
3M A179 24 Track 2" Tape Machine with Audio Hiredles.  
Soundtracs 32 Input CM4400 with  
CMS2 Computer Automation Desk.  
Steinberg Pro 24 Track MIDI Sequencer. Atari 1040 ST  
Trackman MIDI Sequencer.  
Sony PCM Digital Master/Revox B77/Revox A77  
Proton cassette Deck.

Monitors: J.B.L. Altec Auratones. Muesel or Quad.  
Outboard: Akai S900 Sampler with Library & Triggering 2 Akai  
MF 90P MIDI Partitizers ? Akai MF100 Mididelays.  
2MK901 Stereo Digital Reverbs.  
5 Yamaha SPX90 Multi Effects.

2 BEL B080 Digital delays MKR Digital Delay. Furman Reverb  
Klark-Teknik DM36 Time Processor. Midiverb 11.  
ART Multiverb. MKR Stereo Comp/Lim.  
3 Drawmer Noise Gates.

Drawmer Comp/Lim Yamaha Guitar Effects Processor.  
MKR Graphics. Roland 707 Drum Machine.  
Yamaha MS51 Synthesiser.  
Yamaha TX812 Expander. Roland D110 Expander.  
Akai MX73 Mother Keyboard.

Studios: converted stone barn with natural daylight.  
30' x 16' 15" high  
Live Area: 16' x 12' 15" high

Sonor Acoustic Drum Kit. Simmons SDS7 Electronic Kit.  
Fender/Ampeg Bass Rig. Musicman, AC30 Combos.  
Hammond Organ with Leslie Cabinet.  
Fender, Gibson, Dan Armstrong Guitars.  
Microphones by Neuman AKG, Shure, Sennheiser  
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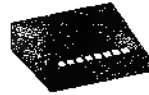
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# AD INDEX

ABC MUSIC .....	140	MARSHALL .....	OBC
AKAI UK .....	62	NOBLES MUSIC .....	118
AMPEG .....	122	PEAVEY ELECTRONICS .....	41
A1 MUSIC .....	138	PERCUSSION PLUS.....	114
AUDIO TECHNICA .....	126	PULSAR .....	102
AXESSION .....	127	ROLAND NEWSLINK .....	67-98
BANBURY MUSIC.....	148	ROLAND UK .....	1FC, 60
BARNABY MARDER MUSIC .....	122	ROSE MORRIS.....	12, 18
BEYER DYNAMIC.....	53	ROSE MORRIS (DI MARZIO) .....	148
CARLSBRO RETAIL.....	34	SAE.....	118
CHEETAH MARKETING .....	45, 47, 49	SOUND TECHNOLOGY .....	9
GIGSOUNDS .....	124	STUDIOMASTER.....	IBC
GROOVE ELECTRONICS .....	178	TASCAM .....	24
HAYDEN LABS .....	16	TECHNICS .....	3
HAYNES MARKETING .....	136	THATCHED COTTAGE AUDIO .....	142
HOHNER .....	108	TONIC AUDIO .....	148
HUMBUCKER MUSIC .....	138	WASHBURN UK.....	130
H.W. INT .....	38	YAMAHA .....	10
ISLAND RECORDS.....	118	YAMAHA (CHAPPELL).....	138
JOHN HORNBY SKEWES .....	57, 64	YAMAHA (PULSE).....	118
KAWAI .....	105		

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